

WILLIS ESTES

Interviewed by:

Sam Schrager

Oral History Project

Latah County Museum Society

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# I. Index

## WILLIS ESTES

Viola; b. 1893

Rural letter carrier in Viola from 1914 - 1944

1.5 hours

minute

## Side A

- 01 1 Took Post Office Exam and got the mail route out of Viola. Traded work horses for travellers and started work May 6, 1914.
- 05 2 One full blooded Hamiltonian he used 14 years. Got soaking wet the third day out. At first just an open cart. Twice weekly Spokesman Review taken by many. Got frostbitten one day when it was -35°.
- 13 5 Spots where the snow would melt off and he walked while the horses pulled the sleigh through the mud. Mail route 19.56 miles when he started and 24 when he transferred.
- 16 6 One year the Inland couldn't get through for one week so there was no outside mail but he still went out to deliver the mail. Weather was so bad he did only half the route each day and did much of it on snowshoes. Made a short-cut one time and broke his snowshoe strap and fell in up to his chest and barely got out.
- 23 8 A 5" thick tree fell across the road and he cut it with a pocket knife. Another time he broke his wagon tongue. He chases a runaway colt and caught him with a neighbor's help.

## Side B

- 00 12 Breaking trail in the snow for the horses.
- 03 13 Learned to shoe horses when a boy. Lee Chaney, the Viola blacksmith, and he try to shoe an ornery horse. He tried to pet it out but he had to rope her and handle her rough. Another gentle horse that would lay down when you put the ropes on her and then fought all the time she was down. Snowballs would slip on the ice. A mare pulls a muscle.
- 13 17 Would work in the harvest some summers and in the fall piling 200 pound sacks. Preferred the Hamiltonians.
- 19 19 Just the Boles store there when he arrived in Viola. Not much mail order then and people traded wood for goods.
- 22 20 Filling the mail cart with packages. Most mail to distant relatives. First few years he delivered on Christmas Day. Got a Model T and could tell whether he could make it by how much rain fell. Misjudged it once.
- 25 21 One good year no snow till after January 15 and got just enough for good sledding. Once drove sled 121 days straight.

Willis Estes

minute

Side B (continued)

31            23            Learned butchering from his father.

Side C

00            23            Raised cattle and sold it to the stores dressed out.  
Guessing weights on four steers (1650) and they weighed  
out 1674 pounds.

05            25            Got rid of his shoeing outfit right before he transferred.  
Knew there was a storm coming up one night. Set the alarm  
for midnight and drove to Potlatch and slept in the car.  
Stayed overnight only once when he used horses.

12            28            Often borrowed matches from Hale Price so he could read  
the names on the letters at night. He'd get wet clear  
through up to the hips. Always got people their medicine  
if they were sick. "I hired out to do the job, and I  
did it"

17            29            Joined the Rural Letter Carriers Association in Genesee in  
1924. Vice President for Idaho a long time and then  
President.

20            30            Mail box improvement week. One new patron used a 5 gallon  
can and he refused to pick up the mail. Paid by the mile.

23            32            Went to the national convention when President of the  
Idaho group. Tried to transfer so he could get a longer  
route. Retired May 31, 1955.

with Laura Schrager  
July 9, 1974

## II. Transcript

WILLIS ESTES: I made some notations here. I didn't know just what you would ask, but I can tell you quite a little about it.

LAURA SCHRAGER: Okay.

W E: You know, after so many years something'll slip your mind, you don't remember exactly what all happened; and then sometimes something'll come back to you. Yeah, I took the examination here in Moscow, and there was eleven of us took it. I found out afterwards that I had the highest grade of any of them. The Post Office Department notified the acting post master at Viola to write to the three highest and see if one of 'em would take the mail route out there. And as soon as I got the letter, why--see the Inland train was running from Moscow to Spokane, it was making three trips a day each way at that time--and I was out on the morning train and went to the Post Office, and went out with the carrier. He wasn't the regular carrier, he was the substitute that had been carrying the mail after the main carrier had moved. He left there; he didn't like it. I went around the route with him and when I come back I told the postmaster I'd take it. He wanted to know when I'd be out and I said I'd be out a week from that day. He give me a week to do a little horse trading. The team I had wouldn't do for on the mail route, at that time. So I went out ahead of time, was there, and I started carrying on May the sixth, 1914.

L S: You were pretty young then.

W E: I was twenty. I would be twenty-one in the fall, but I was twenty then.

L S: What kind of--did you have to trade work horses in for a different kind of team?

W E: Yes, the team I had wouldn't do for on the road. I wanted to get travelers, smaller horse. Yeah, one that I had wouldn't have been any good on the road

at all but she was a good work horse. And I knew horses, so I went out with one unbroke horse and one that was broke. And I soon broke the other one and used those two for quite a while.

L S: That one that wasn't broke--you mean it had never been in a harness before?

W E: No. It'd never had anything but a halter on it when I got it. Of course I was used to horses and used to riding, and a fellow wanted--I was looking for a horse and I heard he had one, and I went and talked with him and he said he had one and told me where it was. And I says, "Well, is it gentle enough I can get a hold of it?" And he says, "Yes. You can probably lead it in." So, I don't know, I took something out 'cause I knew the horse wouldn't like it, and I didn't think of taking the halter but I took a ridin' bridle. And before that horse knew it I had that ridin' bridle on 'im. And pretty soon I was on 'im. And I rode him to town, bareback. I never had any trouble with him. 'Course I knew I could ride before I got on him, but I didn't know--I didn't think he'd throw me (chuckles). Anyway I worked him for four or five years and then I got a hold of another one. I traded horses different times. I had one horse that I traded for after, let's see, it was about three or four years, I traded for a full-blooded Hamiltonian. I worked him for fourteen years, and he was still a good horse at that time.

When I started, that was the days of the two-cent letter mail, postage; one cent for the government postal card with a stamp on it. And I used one horse and the cart one day, and the other horse the next. Changed horses that way. That way each horse made three trips a week. And the third day that I started, I went out and it was a fine looking day, same as the others had been. And about ten o'clock it clouded up fast and pretty soon it just



poured rain. I really got soaked. So I got initiated (chuckles).

I stayed with it anyway.

L S: You just had an open--?

W E: Open cart. Later on I got a little heavier axle cart. And I built a box and put a canvas on it that I could push ahead. And it would lay down over the dashboard and pull it back over my lap and the mail and have my feet and legs inside. And then if the horses wasn't afraid of an umbrella, I could carry an umbrella. But lots of times I had to jerk that umbrella down, and they'd get scared of it and start running. But then I soon got 'em used to it. If it wasn't too windy, why I could hold the umbrella and wouldn't get so wet. And then I soon got a raincoat and put it in the cart, strapped it on the underneath side of the seat, strapped it in there. The box that I had was about as long as this table and almost as wide, so I had lots of room at my feet and had a lot of room in back under the seat for packages.

And the papers that came, I've forgot for sure which--there was two papers, part of the time, published here in Moscow. And one of 'em I think was what they call the Idaho Post. A fellow by the name of Fields, I knew him. But whether that was right on the start or not I don't remember. Anyway, there were two papers, and I don't know which one was the first. Of course I carried the Daily Star Mirror and this Idaho Post. And one time there was one of 'em published that they called the News Review. And the Spokesman--there was a twice a week Spokesman-Review, delivered on Tuesdays and Fridays. And it was quite a while before they started the daily Spokesman, or at least it's quite a while before any of them on the route took the daily Spokesman.

L S: Did a lot of people take the newspapers?

W E: Quite a few of 'em did. But there was more took the twice a week than there was that took the daily, later on. There was--oh, must've been better than half more took the twice a week than they did when they started the daily because that's more expensive and they just dropped it. (Pause) Do you have any more questions before, or shall I just go ahead and tell yea-?

L S: Yeah, I'm interested to hear some of what you have down there. I have more questions, but. . .

W E: Well they were nearly all dirt roads. And sometimes the mud got awfully deep during the winter months and in the spring. And in the fall of the year I soon got a sleigh ready and put that box that I had on the cart on the sleigh, and I drove one horse to that sleigh. And then, after ten years I went out one morning, and it was thirty-two degrees below zero and facing a northeast wind. And I froze a spot on my cheek here and froze part of my toes. I didn't know they was froze but I got around over, oh, a little better'n half way around, and one of the patrons come out, over in what they call the East Cove. And he said, "You know how cold it is?" And I said, "No, but I know it's cold." He says, "Ten degrees below zero," right then--the sun was shining bright, but there was just little sparkles of frost in the air. And I got home that night and I went in to the house and begin to thaw out, and I had to get outdoors--boy that hurt. Had to thaw out more gradual, outside. And then the next morning it was still thirty-two degrees below zero, but the wind wasn't quite as strong. And, of course I went right on out anyway. And that spot on my face here, if it'd get down around pretty close to zero that'd turn blue yet from where I had it froze. And my toes that got froze--they swelled up and never did go down entirely, they get chilblains.

L S: Would you get stuck in the mud much?



W E: No, my horses I had was good and the rig was light, and I never got stuck in the mud. However there was once later on. . . Well after I froze part of my feet and the spot on my face, well I had a fellow over at Palouse build a metal cab, and I put in on the buggy chassis, and I could close it all the way around. And then I had to--I drove two horses then--I had to get two more horses. And my salary when I started out was sixty-eight dollars a month, for me and the team. And then I finally got the front part of the bob. And then I could go with a team and take that nearly anyplace then. Anyplace they could go, why they could take that along with 'em because it was light and if the snow was on, why it'd pull easy. But over in the Cove there'd be spots over there when the snow would melt off. And also around Viola, the wind'd blow in there and melt the snow. And I have walked sometimes two and a half, three miles a morning while the horse pulled the sleigh through the mud till we would get to where the snow was because I knew that the horse couldn't pull the rig through the deep snow on farther back. You see it was pretty hilly back there, and I crossed five ranges of mountains, and the snow got deep on them. And in the draws, why, some places I had to jump out of the rig and walk, rather than have the team pull me through the mud. But I did have the axle of the cart drag in the mud on one hill several times. So the mud was deep. 'Course I'd get out and walk up the hill, I'd walk out to the side.

L S: How long was the mail route when you started?

W E: Nineteen and six-tenths miles. But I got some extensions on it, and before I transferred to Potlatch I was up to twenty-four miles. And the mail route that I got transferred to in Potlatch in '44, it was thirty-three miles.

And it was an all year car route, so I sold my horses than and drove a car from that on, until I retired.

L S: If the weather was good, would it take you very long to deliver the mail?

W E: No, it wouldn't take very long. 'Course I always give the horses plenty of time. But I'd leave about nine o'clock in the morning with the horses, and if the roads was good, why I'd be in by two-thirty or three. But in the wintertime when the snow was bad, why. . .

There was one time, I don't remember what year it was, but there was one year that there was a week that the Inland couldn't get through from Moscow to Spokane nor Spokane to Moscow for a week. And, of course that carried the mail in there. But there wasn't any mail for me to take out, only just what would be dropped in the post office at Viola or mailed from one rural route patron to another for me to deliver. But I'd go around and pick up what there was and left it there at the post office so it'd be delivered as soon as the train come through. And that one particular time--it got so bad that I couldn't get a team through, couldn't make it clear around in a day. But I could make it out as far as Flannigan Creek, then I'd leave my team there, and then I'd walk up around quite a loop and back to Flannigan Creek--take me an hour and a half, two hours, afoot, back to Flannigan Creek. And then I knew I couldn't go on from there either, so I'd drive back to Viola with it. And then the next day I'd go out on the back end of the route, and I'd get <sup>out</sup> as far as Bert Crooks' that was right at the foot of the big hill going from Viola to Potlatch and leave my team there in his barn. Then I'd walk clear over to Flannigan Creek and back, take the mail. I carried my snowshoes with me, and that's the way I did--you see I couldn't've walked through the snow without my snowshoes, and when I was doing that walking I was on snowshoes.



One time I though, "Well I can save about three-quarters of a mile or maybe close to a mile by cutting back through." See when I went out I went around the back way, I had to go out this way, and then when I come back I didn't have any mail so I cut through here. I was on snowshoes, and it was snowin' hard and blowin', and that hail and snow was just cuttin' on a fellow's face. Well I cut through there and through the timber, and that was fine for a while. And after I got over there quite a ways--the snow was deep too--I got in there quite a ways, and I broke the strap on one snowshoe. Well it'd been carrying up so good, and I thought, 'Well I can walk on it maybe anyway.' So I put the snowshoes over my right--no, over my left shoulder, had 'em over my left shoulder, had a hold of 'em--and the mail sack on my right. And all at once I broke through and went in clear up to here (chest level) and I couldn't walk agin' it.

L S: You went in all the way up to your chest?

W E: Yeah, yes. Just could get my arms out over the top of the snow. So I beat down some of it, enough so that the mail sack wouldn't slip. See, when that mail sack, leather, hit that crusted snow, why it started--and I threw up my arm and caught it so it didn't go down the hill. And then I beat the snow down in a place there in a drift and set the mail sack there, and I tried to walk agin' that for a way but I couldn't walk agin' it. And there was brush underneath anyway. I didn't know just what to do for a while, and finally I though, 'Well I've got a leather shoestring in my pocket. And if I can jump out of here and light on one of these snowshoes, then I can fix that and put the snowshoes back on and go on.' So that's what I did. I was pretty active those days, I couldn't do that now (chuckles). I jumped up and lit sittin' down on one of them snowshoes, and it held me. So I sit right there and fixed that strap with that leather shoestring that I had; I always carried a leather shoestring in case the horse'd break some

harness. They would, once in a while, get in a snowdrift dloundering around- why once in a while they'd break some of the harness. And I'd either patch it with a shoestring or baling wire and a pair of pliers or something, and go on. But anyway, that shoestring come in pretty handy. I kinda wondered for a while just what I was gonna do, but it didn't worry me too much. I figured I could bore right back in the snow, get back in there quite a ways and then poke just a hole, shut up where I went in, underneath the crust and fill it up all with just a breather. And go back in there, and I was dressed warm, and I'd've made it all right till morning. They'd've had trouble findin' me, because it was around three-thirty then.

L S: And you were way off the road.

W E: Yeah, I was clear off the road. There was one party knew that I had cut through their yard. She happened to be out there doin' chores, and I went through there and told her I was going right on out through there, save goin' around. Of course they had phones, but then I made it all right. But after that I didn't go through there anymore of course (chuckles). Not on snowshoes I didn't.

L S: Did you have to use snowshoes a lot?

W E: Well, I didn't have to use them so awfully much, but I had 'em with me in case that I--you see, you never know when you might need them. And there was one big storm came. It came with the night--and a wet, heavy snow. And they had one place on Flannigan Crick that the black pines were thick on both sides of the road, and there wasn't hardly any room to meet a team. If you met one, there there wasn't hardly room to pass. And it broke one tree down between four and five inches in diameter, and it laid



right across that road, and I couldn't go around it. And I'd a had to drove the team--I'd a had to unhook then and turn the rig around by hand--of course that was in the spring after the snow was down, and I was driving a wheeled rig. And I didn't have anything but a pocketknife with me. And I started whittling on that tree, and I cut it near enough that I could break it. And then I could handle the top part of it, and move it enough so that I could drive the team through.

And then in about the same place, later, the snow was fourteen, sixteen inches deep yet. And there come a rain and washed across the road there, and washed a ditch through the snow and then washed through the road. And

it cut the road--it looked like it was a foot deep. And I had a span of mares, one four year old and one five year old. The four year old I had just broke her the spring before, and I knew I was gonna have trouble right then. I got out and I tromped some of the snow down, and I tried leadin' 'em across. And I knew whenever one of 'em started--they'd jump. And I didn't know whether I could hold 'em or not. So I got back in the rig, and I had the front window up--you've probably seen pictures of the mail wagons, haven't you? Well, anyway they have two little doors on the side, and then the window you can slide right on top of them doors, on either side. And then the front window is on a hinge, you can drop it down and there's a slot there for the lines to come through, or you can hook it up to the ceiling. Well I had it hooked up to the ceiling. And I got in and I tried to get 'em to both jump at the same time. But one of 'em jumped and the other one backed up and broke the end of that tongue off, right back of the neck yoke. Broke it right square off. And then the other one jumped. Well, as the other one jumped it rammed that tongue into the opposite side of that ditch, and that rig just vaulted right up over that tongue. And when it come down,

why it made such a noise, and of course the team was both a-runnin' their best (chuckles) by that time. And you couldn't guide it of course, because the tongue end was stickin' out between the back wheels of the buggy. I glanced back and saw what had happened. And the rig started for a big, black tamarack stump out to the side, and I knew they was gonna hit it. Well I grabbed pretty tight agin' the lines, I wasn't gonna let that team get away. And when they hit that stump, why they jerked me right outta that window--headfirst. They drug me for about two hundred yards before I could get 'em stopped. But they just mashed that right front wheel. And I went back and got the mail sack, put it on one and jumped on the other one and rode on down to the next neighbors there, and he happened to have a buggy. I borrowed his buggy and went on around with it.

And then I had to--ther was a wagonmaker by the name of Anderson down in the blacksmith shop of Zumwalt and Collins--down about where the theater is now, on Main Street--at that time. And I called him and told him what I'd done, broke my doubletrees and singletrees and broke one wheel. And I went in then the next night--I took and used that feller's buggy the next day--and then the next night I went in there, and he had made me a pair of heavy doubletrees and singletrees. And I had told him that I thought I had another wheel that would work. And I took it out and put it on and got by all right. That was one little experience that I had.

Then another time, ~~it was while I was~~ drivin' the sled. I got outta the rig and was walking, walkin' up a hill. And in places, let's see, the snow was on the leftthand side of the road, and I let the team walk along there. And I run over to the mailbox on the other side. And (?) had a dog out there, and I had a colt, a young three year old, and the three year old was on that same side I was in. Well, the dog run out a scairt that



colt, and he took off, and I couldn't catch him. And I was dressed pretty heavy. And they ran fer--let's see, they made a mile west and then a quarter of a mile south and another mile west, and hit the highway down there by Bert Crooks'. And I ran into the house there where the dog was and there was nobody there. So I ran into the next mailbos, went in there and had him phone over to Bert Crooks--tell 'im that my team was a-comin' in ahead of me. (laughter) And he said he got out there just in time. He said, "They come on down that hill there, comin' west and hit that highway. When they hit the highway that rig went"--you see they made a square turn see. And he said, "When that sled hit the highway, it went clear over and hit the snowbank on the other side but it didn't upset." And he caught 'em. Well, I wasn't very far behind 'em; the team was still pantin when I got there. But I was a-pantin' too. But they didn't lose but one package. I had left one door open, and when they jumped they jerked it when they jumped to start runnin'. They jerked it and that door went shut and the window went shut. So all the mail was in there.

L S: Did you have times when you did lose mail? You know, when something happened and it would get soaking wet or something like that?

W E: Oh, yeah. I've been wet clear through. And I've waded, got out and waded snow ahead of the horses.

ELSIE ESTES: He misunderstood you.

L S: That's all right. I was asking about the mail, whether the mail would get wet.

W E: No. No, I kept the mail dry.

L S: Not yourself, though (chuckles.)

W E: Yup, you see they had a leather mailbag, and it would turn water. I've had it wet all right enough, but it wouldn't wet through. It was kind of oiled

I guess, 'cause it wouldn't wet through. It'd be kinda stiff after it dried off for a while, but then it'd soon be back again. No, I kept the mail good and dry. But I got out and broke trail ahead of the horses when-- well one was on the highway, after I had. . .

(End of Side A)

W E: I started up there from Bert Crooks' and I got to the top of the hill. I couldn't go up the way I was supposed to. And I got to the top of the hill and got up there, and the snow was drifted awfully bad. I had a team that was gentle--one of 'em was a runaway horse but he never knew when he was runnin' when I had 'im 'cause I'd run him just for fun and stop him whenever I wanted to, and he just got ~~some~~ didn't know whether he was runnin' or not (chuckles). Anyway I got up top of the hill there and the snow was so deep. And I came down this side of 95 (U. S. Highway 95) there after it passed Bert Crooks' place. Got up to the top and started downhill. And the team, they'd battle it for a ways and stop and rest. Well when they'd stop and rest, I'd get out and walk down ahead of one and then walk beack, ~~w~~ walk down about a hundred yards and walk back facing the other one. And they got so they'd just lay down, just relax right there, and just lay there with their heads up looking around. I'd come back and pick up the lines, and they'd go--and they'd take off. And whenever they got to the end of my trail, why I'd stop 'em, and then go ahead of 'em again. That gave 'em an encouragement. And I finally got down there.

And after I got into the post office at Viola, why they wondered where I'd got around. I told 'em I come down the highway. They said, "No, you couldn't have come down the highway." I said, "I did come down the highway." "Well," they said, "there's a snowplow up there stuck. It couldn't go on



through." And I didn't know it or I didn't see anything of it, but I sure come down that highway with that team. And then, that was on a Saturday, and Sunday evening that went out with the rotary and was opening that up. And I went out to see if they'd get it opened up. And sure enough, there was a snowplow out there. But my tracks, you couldn't see where I'd been because it'd all blown full.

And I have driven 'em twice that I've put the team across the top of the barbed wire fence and never got 'em into the barbed wire. The sled didn't catch it either; the snow was deep. I don't know how deep it was, but I was afraid with one of 'em that I'd have to loosen 'em. But the team that I had, I knew then that I could do most anything with them; and that if I said, "Whoa," I know they'd stop right there, even if one of 'em was caught. I knew he wouldn't battle anything.

L S: Did you shoe your horses?

W E: Yeah, I shod my own horses, most of the time. See I helped a fellah here by the name of Elliott. He had the blacksmith shop right there where Martin's Tire Shop is now. Well when I was sixteen, seventeen, I was down around the shop there quite a bit, and a bad team come in there, why he'd get me to hold their heads. He said so many times that there wasn't anybody'd stay with 'em. And I held their heads and I watched him shoe. And then when I got out to Viola, why there was a blacksmith there and I helped him a little bit, at times, just to learn because I thought maybe sometime I'd have to have that learning. And then for a while, why there wasn't no blacksmith there at all, and I had to do my own shoeing. But I'd take a pattern, sometimes I'd take a pattern in and give it to Elliott here and tell him I want the shoe to fit that foot, that pattern. And he'd make a shoe out, and I'd take 'em out and then I'd nail 'em on. And sometimes that was quite a job too.

And later on there was a fellow by the name of Lee Chaney. He was working there in the blacksmith shop, he was learning the blacksmith trade. And I had a bad one. She was an animal--she just wouldn't let you handle her feet. She was just gentle as a dog outside of that, but she'd fight just every time you got ahold of either foot. Well, she broke in so nice and gentle otherwise, and I took her down to the blacksmith shop to shoe her. It was probably on a Thanksgiving, I'm not sure now, when I had a day off anyway. And when I was shoeing her, why it took me half a day to get the shoes on her front feet. And I'd just pet her and fool with her, and finally I decided that I'd have to shoe her hind feet. And I picked up one of 'em to look at it one day, and she started kicking. And I had held a lot of 'em, but I couldn't hold her. And pretty soon I saw I was loosening, and she wouldn't even let my feet hit the floor, she just--(rapid kicking sounds)made on the table). She threw me clear across that anvil and across the bellows, they had the wind bellows there. I lit on all four in the scrap iron pile (chuckles). And I still went back and petted her. I thought maybe I could pet ~~it out of~~ her, but I couldn't.

So, the next time I went down there I took a rope along. Once in a while I'd have a horse that I'd have to put ropes on him and lay him down, and then shoe him with his feet tied. I took the rope down with me, and I decided that if I had to, I'd have to throw her, but I knew she had to be shod. And I chained her and took her front shoes off, and I had her right front up on my left knee, just finishing it off, rasping it off, and just ready to let it down. And she reared up and struck at me with both feet. And that was just one too many. (chuckles). When I got through with her, why --she was trying to get away from me, and when she tried to get away from me I was still after her with that rasp. And she hit the wall, and when



she hit the wall--why she lifted up the foot on my side, her back foot, trying to go forward with it and I went in under it. And boy, I handled it rough. And when I got through I told Lee Chaney, I says, "Throw me a shoe; I'm gonna nail that on." And I told him, I says, "When I come in here I told you I thought maybe I'd shoe her standing up, and I'm still going to." And I shod that foot and let it down. And just as she let it down I hit her a rap with that rasp across the thick part of her leg and hollered, "Get over!" And she went over, clear around trying to get away, and she hit the wall and then she lifted up that foot on that side. I went under it and jerked it down and went to the shoeing her. And she went out of there shod, without anything. After that, why she never bothered at all. She was just one of them that you could <sup>n't</sup> pet it out of her. I tried every way. But anyway, I could pick up her hind foot or front foot or front foot any time I wanted to, do anything with it. But she found out she had to. Some of 'em you can pet, some of 'em you can't. But she was such a nice disposition otherwise.

L S : That's funny that she'd be so nice and just not want to be shod.

W E: Well there's some horses that way. I know I had a horse, it wasn't mine, someone had to drive it for the winter for it's feed. And she was, oh, eight or nine years old. And I asked him if she was gentle, and "Yeah," he said, "she's gentle. The kids crawl under her belly." And I said, "Did you ever pick up her feet?" And he said, "Yeah ." He went over and picked up her front foot, and pretty soon she wanted it and he let her have it. I said, "Did you ever pick up a hind foot?" "No," he says, "never did." He didn't try it either. But he says, "She's gentle, you won't have any trouble with her."

Well, I took her right down there. And one evening I thought I'd take a look and see how much hoof she had left, when I'd have to shoe her hind feet. I picked up her hind foot and, boy, she ~~was~~ pretty near jerked my arm out of my shoulder. I wasn't looking for it, I thought she was gonna be gentle. I though, "Well, I won't fool with you. I'll just put the ropes on you." So a few days later I went out, I was gonna shoe her.

And I tied the rope around her neck, or the loop, and let her out off the barn and got her outside where I could lay her down. And slipped the rope back between her hind legs and drawed one up on each side and put 'em through the rope that was around her neck. And I hollered, "Back," and hit her over the face with my hat. She backed up, why I jerked her hind feet <sup>right</sup> up under her. She lit a-sittin' down and toppled over, and before

she got up I had all four feet tied together (chuckles). And I took ahold of her feet and lefted 'em up and rolled a fence post under, just high enough so that I could work on 'em knee high. When she got up she had shoes on, but she fought all the time she was down. I never tried to handle her feet otherwise after that. And it's funny about her--I've hid several of 'em down and I never had one act like she did. When I put the ropes on her and led her outside she laid down. (Laughter) Just laid down and I'd hog-tie her. Then she'd fight all the time she was down. I never had one lay down just because I had the ropes on 'em, but knew she had to I guess. And that was smart.

L S: Did you have to have shoes on 'em year round?

W E: Well, whenever I was workin' 'em I did. I had to have sharp shoes on 'em on ice. And that's where--sometimes you'd be in deep snow, other places you'd have solid ice. And the snowballs'd sure slip on that ice, so you had



to be awful careful. Yeah, I had one mare--well it's the one that I had trouble shoeing that time. And I had her slip over the edge of the road, and she strained a muscle in her hind leg, and before I got in you could see that muscle as big around as my arm where she'd strained it. Well I had to lay her off for a week. She had a snowball on her foot that caused it, see. Oh, it's pretty rough on horses, as far as that goes. I was sure glad when I didn't have to drive them. But then anyway, I was getting to where I had arthritis in the hips, and I knew in '40 that I wasn't gonna be able to shoe my own horses very long.

L S: Do you figure that arthritis came from working out in the cold and stuff in the rain?

W E: I don't know, it's hard to say what it is. I don't know what caused it. 'Course I always did work, worked at heavy work too. And when I was carrying mail, why my wife or some substitute'd carry mail for me and I'd--I'd worked one harvest out in the harvest field. And I thought, well, I could get a job in the warehouse, piling sacks. They're a hundred and forty to a hundred pounds, every one you handled. And I'd get a job in there and I won't have any vacation, won't be any time when it's raining but what I have work. So I did. And I worked several years in the fall of the year in the warehouse there at Viola, piling sacks. It was heavy work, but them sacks didn't feel like letters. (chuckles) And then, one year a fellow by the name of Ediie Gray out there, he's gone now, but he had a farm, I don't know how many acres, a thousand or better. And when sacks were hard to get, why he got some extree good sacks, stouter. And he got another young fellah to help him load 'em and got 'em in there. And five sacks is what we'd take on a truck, off of their truck see, take 'em on a truck to roll 'em back into the warehouse. And five of them sacks would weigh from nine hundred and ninety to a thousand pounds, almost two hundred pounds to the

sack. And I piled them right along. Of course, when you star to pile, until you get 'em three or four high why the two men work at it, one on one end of the sack, and one on the other. But when they start that piler, why there's one man feedin' 'em down at the bottom, puttin' 'em on the piler, and the other man takin' 'em off on top. Well I was always on top. I'd take 'em off. And then these sacks were a little bigger than--ordinarily the piler will reach up sixteen ordinary wheat sacks high, and with these bigger sacks why fifteen was as high as you could run it up there. And then you'd have to stoop right down and get 'em, and we piled them twenty-two or twenty-three high. So, I had to build that just like stairways, stair steps going up. I'd grab one of them sacks right off it, you might say, right off my toes, and turn around and walk upstairs with it to the top of the pile. Two hundred pounds. Not quite two hundred, but some of 'em would weigh two hundred, some of 'em a hundred and ninety. And I weighed about a hundred forty-five, fifty pounds. (laughs)

E E: No wonder he has broken down hips.

L S: That's real hard work.

W E: Yeah. And up there underneath that galvanized roof, and the sun a-beatin' down on her, and whenever you come down off that pile you'd be wringing wet with sweat. And you'd get in the breezeway where the door was open and, boy it was cold when it was hot there. That air hits ya and it just felt cold. It really got hot up underneath that galvanized roof. You was sweating like a horse anyway. (chuckles) No, I don't know what caused it. Nearly everybody as they get older, they get a little arthritis some way. And I don't think anybody knows exactly what causes it.

L A: Were there any breeds of horses that you preferred?

W E: Well I liked Hamiltonians. They're crowding the Appalooses nowadays, but



they didn't have any of them. I have often wondered about their Appaloosies. They had an Arabian horse, and they also had Indian cayuses. And there's an old story about a mare around Nez Perce, that she outran anything that was in the country, and she was just an Indian cayuse. And I have often wondered if that Appaloosies--you see the Arabian, they're dappled in spots--and I have often wondered if some of those Indian ponies wasn't crossed with those Arabians, and then they got the spots. And of course if they got a real spotted one, they kept that spotted one for breeding purposes and kept breeding that spotted until they got 'em nearly all spots. But I don't know. I have wondered, I'll say it that way. I wouldn't say that that's the way it is, but then I have thought lots of times that they might be just that. I know those Indian ponies used to be real tough and fast. But the Hamiltonian, the standardbred Hamiltonian, they're race horses right from the word "go." Pacers and trotters. And you get on one of 'em and you've got a horse under you too. I know, 'cause I had one.

L S: What was there in Viola when you first came there?

W E: Well there was just the one store there.

L S: Is that the Boles store?

W E: Boles, yeah. It was a general store--merchandise and groceries. The postmaster that was there, that had been postmaster at Viola for years, he passed away the winter before I started carrying mail in the spring.

L S: So you remember who that was?

W E: Yes. R. M. Boles. And the winter before I got the mail route, I was making wood up here for Bud French, he lived on the north side of the west of the Twin Buttes, back up in there. And I made four-foot wood all winter up there. And then when I come down after we got through making wood, why I come back and was living in Moscow. Of course I lived up

there at French's when I was makin' wood there. Part of the time there was four of us there, making cordwood. And during that winter, why Mrs. French said that the phone kept ringing, and she rubbered on it and said that R. M. Boles had died. But I never met him, never knew him.

But his son Archie took over the store after he passed away, and Archie went ahead and he had the blueprints of the mail route there, and he showed 'em to me one time when I was out there. But when I went out to find out about it, why there was a fellow that had been here in Moscow by the name of Arthur L. Oatney. I never knew him but I knew his son, and he was acting postmaster when I went out to see about the mail route.

L S: Did the Boles' store, did that do a good business when you were out there at first?

W E: Yeah. They had been, you see there wasn't too much catalogue business those days. They'd bring wood in and trade it to Boles for groceries and dry goods, overalls and shirts and such as that. He had quite a store there, they claim. But his store gradually went down after he passed away. And then there was more people ordering from Montgomery Ward and Sears and Roebuck. They did quite a business there for a while.

L S: You'd carry a lot of packages from them?

W E: Oh, yes, yes. Sometimes I'd have that rig clear full of packages. Just have room for my feet down in there (chuckles) Then I have gone a few times--I've had to go horseback when I knew I couldn't get through with the team any place. If I didn't have too much mail, why I'd take a horse. And once I thought I'd take a horse, and I went down to the post office and I had too many packages. So I went back up and put a packsaddle on another horse and packed the other one and went on anyway, horseback.

L S: Would that be around Christmas time, that people sent a lot of packages?



W E: Yes. Yeah, they'd get a lot of packages, mostly for their own relatives, I think. They didn't send 'em out too much.

L S: Was there a lot of mail that people sent just to other local people?

W E: Well, not too much. There wasn't too much of that. Generally just relatives, distant relatives. People, maybe from back east come out here to live and, of course, they'd be writing back and forth. And the first few years that I carried mail I had to deliver mail on Christmas Day. I don't remember just how long it was and I didn't keep track of it. Of course after I got a car, a Model T Ford in '24, then I'd drive the car during the summer months. But I always had horses where I could get to 'em, either at home there or pasturing right close where I could get 'em and hook 'em up in case there come a rain because I knew I'd have to have 'em.

L S: Did that car get stuck a lot?

W E: Oh, yes, I'd pretty near know. It'd set a pan out and see how much water'd fall overnight, and I purty near knew whether I could make it or not. I know one time I thought I could make it, but it'd rained more in another place. And I made it just about half-way around and I couldn't go on' from there. So I drove back home and saddled up one of the cayuses and took the rest of the mail and got on him and went back out to where I come in, went around the rest of the route on a saddle horse. And I think that's only once that I did that. 'Course I have made the entire route horseback. But when I did, why I didn't have too many packages, except that one time--and I took a pack horse along.

L S: Were there some years that there wasn't much snow?

W E: Yes. There was one year--the best winter that I ever carried they didn't have a bit of snow until, oh we may have had a little too, but then I didn't hook onto the sleigh until after the fifteenth of January. There came about a foot of snow and it didn't blow and it made good sledding, and

when it started off, why it just went gradual. And it wasn't drifted at all, you might say. And just about a foot deep, but the one snow. Oh, we had little skiffs after that, but just a few inches at a time and it just kept the sledding good for just about a month, and then it just disappeared. But also, there was one year that I drove the sled 121 days straight, without a break. And I drove it all through March and six days in April. And then I'd drive out to Flannigan Crick with a team, and then I'd go afoot around until I come back to Flannigan Crick again, around one loop there, and then go on around. Because I knew I couldn't pull a wheeled rig through the snow back in there without breaking it up. No, when that snow gets crusted and won't quite hold a wheel up, boy it pulls hard.

L S: How long would the snow usually be on the ground?

W E: Well, that's just awful hard to say. Just like I said a minute ago--that one winter was the best they had, and then that one, other one, it was the worst. But generally I think that not more than sixty days of sledding. And some of the old loggers back there, they used to say, "Well, we'll get enough in February so that we can get our logs in on it." And they purty near hit it right. They'd get snow in February, enough so that they could use their sled and get the logs in to the mill, in February or early March.

L S: Were they still logging of a lot of timber right near your mail route, when you were out there?

W E: Yes. they were. There was what they called the Meeks mill, it was just about half-way, well it wasn't half-way, about a third the way around the route. And then there was the Co-op Mill that set in there on Flannigan Crick, and it was put in there. . .Oh, let's see. . .in the early thirties, I believe, I wouldn't say positive. Anyway it was there, I remember. And



And they were loggin' off Meeks' mill run for quite a while. Meeks' mill was just about a half a mile off of the mail route. And then there was a mill over on this side of the mountain, Manson's mill. And there's a pond up there yet, where he had--I've been out to it from this side- the pond is up there yet where he had his mill. And he was loggin' off too.

L S: Did you board in town when you first carried mail?

W E: At Viola? For about two weeks. I boarded there with the acting postmaster, Mr. Oatney. And I rented a house and went to batching. I think it was just two weeks. I rented a house as quick as I could, and I had batched some before, anyway, and I batched then until I got married.

L S: Did you go to dances, parties, or anything?

W E: I didn't, no. No, I didn't go to the dances at all. No, I helped my folks, didn't have no money to go on (chuckles).

L S: There was something else that you told me about last time which was: the butchering that you did on the side?

W E: Oh, yeah.

L S: You told some about how you learned from your father how to do it.

W E: Yeah, my father, he butchered quite a bit. And not only that, but he bought cattle for the markets here then, too. And if he didn't have anything else to do in the wintertime, why he'd go out and buy one on his own and butcher it and peddle it around. Of course you can't do that now, got to have it. . .

(End of Side B)

W E: And I had twenty-one head there for a while. And I'd raise 'em and whenever I had one ready to butcher, why I'd dress it and take it in with the hide on and sell it in the market. And then anything that was prime, read good

stuff, the markets didn't want to buy it unless that had some utility along with it. So a utility would be a cow or something that wasn't up in shape. So I'd buy something and tell 'em, 'Now, I've got a No. 1 out there and also got you a utility,' whatever it was, steer or cow or whatever it happened to be. I said, 'I'll butcher it and bring it in at the same time.' They'd say, 'Okay, bring it in.' So I'd take it in. And at one time, I had three hanging up out there on the north end of a barn there at Viola, and there come a big snow right away after I butchered and couldn't get 'em out of there for a week. But they stayed froze, got froze and stayed froze, 'fore I could get in there to get 'em and get back out to the road, take 'em in. They finally opened up the roads around there, bulldozer or something, and I could get out with 'em.

L S: I remember something about--you got pretty good at guessing weighte, didn't you?

W E: Well, I sure was. Yeah. After I had been buying and selling to Mr. Leakey for a while there, why he asked me--this was during the war, before the war closed, in about '44 or '45- I think it was. And he wanted to know when we were going to bring in some more cattle--I met him on the street. And I said, 'Well, I haven't anything to sell now, sold everything I got except what I want to keep for brooding purposes.' And he says, 'Well don't you know where there is something?' And I says, 'Well I know where there's four steers, but I can't buy 'em.' He says, 'What d'ya mean you can't buy 'em?' And I says, 'He wants too much money for 'em.' And he quizzed me down, and he says, 'What does he want for 'em?' 'He says he wants four hundred dollars for 'em.' He says, 'Well, what would thay dress out?' I says, 'I don't know, Carl.' 'Oh,' he says, 'you know so close that--(chuckles). And I had a book in my pocket and I pulled out that book and I had the



weights down. I looke at 'em, and put down what each one of 'em, I figured,would dress out . And he added it up and he says, "It's 1650 pounds." And I said, "Yeah, that's what I would buy 'em at." He says,"Will they dressout that much?" I says, "I don't know, but I would buy 'em at that." "Well," he says, "you buy 'em at that--I'll buy 'em. You go get 'em and bring 'em in for twenty dollars?" "Yeah," I says, "I'll go buy 'em and butcher 'em and bring 'em in for twenty dollars." And he says, "All right." So I did. And I brought 'em in and they weighed 'em, and they weighed just twenty-four pounds more than what I told him they would. That was getting pretty close on four head, when you miss 'em twenty-four pounds. But I was guessing awful close on 'em. I could walk around the critter out there in the field and guess within twenty pounds right along what that one would dress out. But that was because I was looking 'em over and guessin' at 'em. Every time I'd guess at one, if I'd buy it, then I'd see it weighed. If I made any mistake on it, I'd know how much. And it takes the experience; I couldn't do it now. (Pause)

Well, after I got transferred to Potlatch, I, as soon as I could, I bought one of them little Jeeps, four wheel drive, and got a cab built for it. Had it sent down to Spokane. And I transferred to Potlatch the first day of August '44. And I had, just before that, I knew that I couldn't shoe my horses, as I said before, knew I couldn't shoe them very much longer. And my youngest brother was out there one day and he wanted to borrow my shoeing outfit, wanted to know if he could borrow 'em, he thought he could shoe his horse. I said, "You can have 'em under one condition." They had been wanting me to shoe different horses around, the neighbors around, wanted me to shoe their horses, and I had shod some of them. And I says, "Under one condition." He says, "What's that?" I says, "That is, if you don't bring 'em back." I said, "I'm through shoeing horses." (chuckles) So he

took 'em. And they didn't anybody bother me after that--because I don't have my tool, I give 'em away.

I had something else on my mind here a minute ago, but I lost it. Oh yeah, after I was carrying mail out of Potlatch, see I was still living in Viola. And I knew one night it was gonna storm. Told Elsie it was gonna storm and I said, "I'm gonna set that alarm for twelve o'clock." Went to bed about nine or nine-thirty. And I said, "It'll be storming before morning. It's gonna be bad."

L S: How could you tell?

W E: Oh, I can feel it, and see the way the weather is. I'll watch the weather and watch the sun and the moon and the stars, and I could purty near always tell when we'd get a storm. When you're out in every day you git so you can. And so I got up, I think it was at twelve, maybe twdve-thirty, that I set the clock for. Anyway, I got up and it had just started. Storm a-comin'. And I went right down to the garage and put chains on all four wheels on the Jeep, because I knew that it was already snowin', it was a-blowin'. And I made it over to Potlatch and got in there and went to the hotel, and therewasn't anybody around there. Nobody awake. no place, nobody in the office. So I thought well--I had taken a comfort along just in case I got stalled along the road so I could wrap up and tay 'till somebody plowed me out or something. And the garaged there at Potlatch, where you go into the garaged, it stands about like this. (Illustrates with pieces of paper). Here's the highway road out here going up to Princeton, and here's where the door is going <sup>in</sup> to the garage. Well, when I got to Potlatch, then after I saw I couldn't get into the hotel without waking somebody up, and I didn't know which door to knock on, and I didn't want to bother 'em so I backed that Jeep down right in here, right up agin' this--and the storm was coming from the west, of course, and I was pretty well sheltered in there.



And I laid down in the seat, put the cover over me, and went to sleep.

And about one-thirty for some reason or other I woke up, and when I woke up there was somebody comin' he was, oh, about thirty, forty feet from me. And I slid the side window open on the Jeep--Charlie Olden, the

night watchman. And he says, "What are you doin here this time of night?"

And I says, "I thought I couldn't get here in the morning, Charlie. There was nobody over here up at the hotel, and I didn't get in." And he says, "Well, after about another hour and a half I'll be there, in such-and-such a room,<sup>and</sup> you come over and I'll letcha in." And I said, "Well, I'm here now." And he said, "You c<sup>o</sup>uld get cold though." "No," I said, "I don't think so."

Anyway, I'll drive up to the top of the hill over here but I won't be going on ver to Princeton. I'll just drive up to the top of the hill where I know I can turn around and come back." And he said, "Yeah, the top of that hill will be bad tomorrow." I drove up thereafter a while and had the heater going, and that warmed me up a litte. And drove back down and backed right in where I was before, and stayed there till morning. And then that night I couldn't get home. I started and I had made that day, making thirty-three or thirty-four miles, whichever it was, I think it was thirty-four then. Anyway, I started out and I got down and started up the hill, and all at once I thought, 'Well now I wonder what's happened? I don't believe I'm moving but the car's still runnin'.' And I slid open that side window and the snow was right up half-way on that window on that Jeep and spinnin' all four wheel with chains on. So I just backed up and went back to Potlatch and got me a room, stayed overnight.

L S: Did that happen when you were using horses? That you'd get hung up and stay overnight somewhere?

W E: Just once that I had to stay overnight. One horse--well I wasn't much more'n half-way around at four o'clock, and the horse'd been wading snow till

he was gettin' pretty tired, and I wasn't going to crowd him anymore. And there's that fellow by the name of Hanso, Adolph Hanson, and his brother lived there, Sig Hanson, right by the side of him. And Adolph come out and he says, "You can't make it on in tonight." And I said, "No, I can't." "Well," he says, "come <sup>on</sup> in. We'll put you up for the night." So I went in and stayed overnight with him. And I didn't get in the next day till purty near twelve o'clock, so I didn't start out that day again. But then the next day I made it again.

L S: Would you sometimes get in really late at night?

W E: Oh, yes. Yeah, lots of times that I'd get up above Bert Crooks' there, a fellah by the name of Hale Price. And I'd get up to Hale Price, and he'd be out there, and if it was gettin' pretty dark, I'd say, "Hale, can I borrow some matches so I can read the names on the mail as I go on?" And he'd go in and get me some matches. And then when I'd get to a mailbox, I'd light a match and see, you know, to see the names on the mail. Put the mail in the box and go on. Yeah, lots of nights I wouldn't get in till eight, nine o'clock. And I'd be wet clear to the hips. I'd walk and the overalls'd just, you know, they'd be froze and just pop and crack--the ice on 'em. Well I stayed with it, I kept in the hopes that I'd get transferred to a better route. When I took the route I thought, "Well, this isn't very much and it don't pay much, but maybe now that I've started, maybe I can get transferred." But I stayed with that for a little over thirty years before I could get a transfer.

L S: Did you keep applying for a transfer?

W E: Whenever I knew of anything, or somebody was gonna retire, but seemed like they always had a substitute that the postmaster was in favor of, rather than to change to let anybody else in.

L S: They probably didn't want to let you go in Viola.



W E: Well, probably not, I don't know. I thought maybe they'd be glad to get rid of me, but I don't know (chuckles). No, I did a good job. One thing I did do, whenever anybody was sick, if they sent in for some medicine to come out by mail, I'd get it to 'em some way. Even if I had to walk in on my snowshoes and the mail sack on my back, I didn't leave the mail out of sight, no time. I'd leave the rig sometimes, quite a little ways, but then it was always ~~were~~ I could see it.

L S: Your story really--I mean a mailcarrier in those days, that <sup>was a</sup> really hard job. It really took a lot just to deliver <sup>the</sup> mail.

W E: Yeah that's right.

L S: I think of the slogan that the mailmen have: "Neither rain nor--." Was that slogan around when you were working there?

W E: Oh, yes. I've seen that lots of times.

E E: There's another one you got; "Service with a smile."

W E: Yeah. "Service with a smile." But also: "The mail must go through--rain, snow, or shine." I hired out to do the job, and I did it. Yeah, I've had lots of patrons tell me, "Well, better turn around and go back, you can't make it." "Well, maybe I can't. I'm gonna try it." No, like I said, I hired out to do the jobs, and I always did the best that I could. That's all anybody could do. (Pause) Well the patrons, they appreciated it too, 'cause when I retired one fellow went around and made a purse for me and bought me a real nice pair of binoculars. (Pause) And I belonged to the Rural Letter Carriers Association for years. And I was Vice President for a long time, and then--I forgot what year it was--anyway I was elected President of the Rural Letter Carriers Association of Idaho. First elected for the District No. 5, that's from Grangeville north to the Canadian line. I was first Vice President and then President of the District for several years. And then at one of the meetings--

L S: What kind of association was that?

W E: It's just the rural letter carriers.

L S: Was it for the letter carriers to work out problems together?

W E: Yes. Yeah.

E E: It was affiliated with the National Association.

W E: It wasn't like these unions, but it was the carrier's association, they'd work out problems together. And then they'd have their National Conccention, have their district meetings and state meetings. And generally at the state meeting they'd have a national officer there for any information, any new laws, and what-not. And, I'm still a member of it and get my paper.

L S: When did that start up?

W E: Well, I don't know, but as soon as I got a car, and that was in '24, why I got notice that there was a meeting of the rural letter carriers of this district in Genesee. So I drove there and joined. And I've been a member ever since. Still am. And then. . .

L S: What were some of the issues that people would talk about? You know, what would they complain about the most, you know, in terms of their job?

W E: Well, there's so many different angles there, I couldn't start to tell you all of 'em.

E E: They were for higher salaries.

W E: They'd try to have mailbox improvememnt week, you know, and have everybody have their mailboxes up like they should be and the names on 'em, in place of some of 'em leaning over- not hang down. And also they have the rules about what kind of mailbox you can put up. Now there was a patron on the Viola mail route, they moved in there one day and stuck up a five gallon can out in front and put a letter in it. Well, I was afraid that letter'd blow away, so I took it out. Then the next day there's another letter in there, and I thought I'd better not start doing that anymore, so I quit.



And then one day, a short time after that, why the lady came in to the post office. And the postmaster was out, and I was back in there putting up the mail, and she thought I was the postmaster, I guess. So she jumped onto the postmaster and was givin' the carrier the dickens, you know, for not picking up her mail (laughter). And there were three or four out in the front part--see, they had a little store there, too, at that time--and they was a-laughin'. She was just givin' that carrier a fit because he wouldn't take the mail out of the box (laughter). And finally I told her, I says, "Well, if you put up a regulation mailbox, the carrier will take it out of the mailbox and also bring your mail out. But he won't take the mail out and put it in that tin can you've got setting up out there. I'm the carrier!" And boy did she wilt. (chuckles) I told her it's agin' the law--postal laws and regulations. They have to have laws to govern every one of the carriers. And they try to keep 'em all somewhere near straight, like they should be and doing the business just like Uncle Sam wants it done. And if they get to losin' mail or not having the mail right or something, why the post office inspector will jump all over 'em, no doubt. I never had him jump onto me, but then I tried to be all right so he couldn't.

L S: Oh, did you ever switch to being paid by the hour, rather than being paid, you know, just for doing the job?

W E: No, no. I never did. Never had that chance.

E E: Well, there's none of 'em did. They were paid by the mile.

W E: Some of 'em do, yeah.

L S: Oh, you were paid by the mile.

W E: Yeah, I was being paid by the mile. And they give you a regular time to make it in, if you can. Of course lots of time you can make it ahead of time, and sometimes you can't, but you had to fill out your trip report every day.

Fill it out when you left and when you returned. And also, once a year, why, you had to count the first, second, third and fourth class mail: how much you handled, how much you took out, how much you collected of each. And also the value of the stamps on all of 'em, both going out and coming in.

(Portion on Rural Letter Carriers not transcribed)

L S: Did your pay increase very much in those. . .?

W E: Well, it did before I retired to be sure. Yeah I started, I don't remember now what I was gettin' finally, but then anyway, when I transferred to Potlatch why I got quite a bit more money than I did on the shorter route because they paid so much a mile. That's one reason I was trying to get off of that route and get onto a longer mail route. I begun to think I was never gonna make it (chuckles).

L S: Well, it only took you thirty years.

W E: Yeah, little over thirty years. The sixth of May in 1914 until the last day of July--the first day of August I transferred to Potlatch. Then I carried until the last day of May, 1955. Then I was getting crippled up so bad with arthritis and hurtin' so bad, I just figured I'd better get out of it. So I retired. Then I went to work as night clerk in the Moscow Hotel. Worked there for fourteen months. Thought maybe if I got in where I wasn't out in the cold, maybe that'd help my arthritis; it didn't, it just kept gettin worse. So they told me to go down to Arizona where it's hot and it'd help me. So in the fall of '56 I drove down there, went down there, and finally rented a place. I liked the winters so well down there, and before we left in the spring I bought. . . .

Transcribed by Frances Rawlins

Typed by Kathy Blanton