

GLEN GILDER
and
AGNES CLARK GILDER
Fifth Interview

Interviewd by:
Sam Schragar

Oral History Project
Latah County Museum Society

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I. Index

GLEN GILDER

Harvard, Spring Valley; b. 1903

farmer, laborer

1.8 hours

minute page

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Glen Gilder

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00 18 If he'd been left alone for two years on the place they would have made it. Dislike of wheat, preference for stock. They left place with \$1,000 after selling stock. It was sold without him knowing in advance. They refused to give him a break. Profit on sheep the last year. He refused to give a mortgage on stock to the Federal Land Bank, which angered the commissioner. His acceptance of responsibility. He could have made it because he did make it with far less to start with on the next place.

13 21 Having a place of your own was an advantage over being in town. He determined to keep up payments at whatever sacrifice. He wouldn't trade places with a wealthy bachelor friend. Obligation of family. They took all that you could make. It'd have been easier if he was born earlier or later.

19 22 Attractions of where he moved: less frost, good soil. Loss of pea crop to frost was written off by seed company. His requirements for the new place: water, road, no renting. Condition of the place was undeveloped. First work on new place; a barn roof and fences. Tininess of the house. No buying except with cash.

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00 25 Building present house. Trading for fencing materials. Buying a tractor in early fifties; he wouldn't go into debt for it. Advantages of horses to use in addition to tractor; tractor was much better to use with mowers.

14 28 Working out was off and on. Winter work. Desire to get things done immediately. Importance of getting car for \$100 in '48. With Sam Schragger

December 9, 1976

II. Transcript

GLEN GILDER

This conversation with GLEN GILDER took place at his home not far from the Spring Valley Reservoir outside of Troy, Idaho on December 9, 1976. His wife, AGNES GILDER, also took part in the conversation. The interviewer was SAM SCHRAGER.

SAM SCHRAGER: Were they active when you were kids?

GLEN GILDER: Oh, very. Yes, when I was a kid, they were. You see, we had a good organization in Deary, and they had one here in Troy, but the membership just kept dwindling, dwindling, dwindling. In Deary we were down to seven active members ~~It's~~ Not enough. ^{So} We argued for two years and finally we went in with Potlatch. And Troy argued for quite a period and they went all to Moscow. So, all the Odd Fellows here in town go to Moscow once in a while. Al Peterson and Monty Helm and, oh, quite a number. Arch Fiedler.

SS: When did you first get interested in them?

GG: Well, when I was a kid, I was pretty young, I was all fixed up to join the Odd Fellows along about 1919 with another group of young guys, and somehow or other, I got a job clear out of the country and had to go take it, so I didn't get in on that bunch and ^{then} I didn't join until about 1965, probably, before I joined 'em. And, I wouldn't a joined 'em then but Carl Lancaster and Henry Jones and Dwight Cory-Well, Carl and Henry were to go in with me in that first bunch and then they made up their minds, by golly, that they were going to get me in there and they did. But 1920 to '65 before I did it, now, those fellows had been in the lodge all that time. I see in one of the last papers where Eunice Jones was given a fifty-year pin at Potlatch. Well, Edna had more years than that in it. I'll bet you that Edna-

SS: Butterfield?

GG: Uh-huh. I'll bet you that they joined long before the teens. I'll bet you they joined up that lodge in-

AGNES GILDER: Well, didn't it say in that paper?

GG: I don't think it did.

SS: Was it a big, major thing in the early years? Was it a really big organization?

GG: ^{You bet}, it was.

SS: How did it compare to like the Grange?

GG: Much more percentage- volume- much more percentage and the Grange does now. Take a little place like Princeton; back during the early times that Grange had around seventy members, and it dwindled down, down, down and they went in with Potlatch.

AG: Potlatch?

GG: Uh-huh. Princeton went to Potlatch.

AG: In the Grange?

GG: No, in the Odd Fellows. Yeah, it was strong, not only here, but all over the United States. Had a tremendous membership. Fact it was ~~and the~~ Red Men Woodmen, ^A Masons and the Odd Fellows. And I think the Odd Fellows were the highest of all, but I think there was times for long periods when they were second. The Red Men, I think, have completely quit. The Woodmen of the World, I think have quit and the Odd Fellows ^{then} _A are probably second or third place.

SS: The Odd Fellows, it was a lot bigger than the Grange at the time, wasn't it? When you were growing up. I mean around here.

GG: I ^{think} so. The Grange was pretty popular, too. Well, a big percentage of the Odd Fellows were Grangers. Same then as they are now. Here in Troy, there's Alfred and Art and Monty- they're all Odd Fellows.

SS: There's a lot of overlap between the two.

GG: Yep. Yeah, yeah.

SS: Is there much difference between the Odd Fellows and like the Masons? As a group?

- GG: Oh, they have different policies. I don't know but very little about the Masons, but their purposes have always been pretty parallel, I believe. Fellowship to benefit everybody involved in it, all they could.
- SS: How old were you when you started working out?
- GG: Oh, I don't know, about twelve.
- SS: What was the first work that you did out?
- GG: Oh, driving horses for somebody, I suppose. Yeah, I think that's it. It was just natural for me to drive horses; be around horses as anything could be. When I first started hauling wheat from Kennedy Ford into Palouse for my uncle and granddad, I could no more lift a sack of wheat than I could fly. Somebody else had to load me and unload me, but I could drive the horses; four of 'em. And I didn't take a backseat there from any of the big fellows, either. And then from there I went to driving- oh, one of the first jobs I had was driving a grader team. On a highway grader from Harvard to the Hoodoos. Old Duf used to come get me every spring and take me up with him and I'd stay up there two weeks and we'd fix all the culverts and clean out the ditches and grade the roads, and I'd go home and have about- oh, maybe fifty dollars. Didn't make much in ^{them} days. About two dollars and a half a day.
- SS: Did you quit school by that time?
- GG: No. If I'd need to I'd take a week off. (Chuckles) I'd go back and I was going to catch it up, but I don't think I ever did. It was nothing uncommon. If you got a job, go do it. Lots of times we could get a job for driving a team and wagon putting gravel on the road, you know, in the fall of the year; we could get a couple of week's work. ^{there} All we had to do was drive a team back and forth. Some-

body else loaded us and ^{then} somebody helped us unload with dumpboards. That's what I would sooner done, and that's what I did.

SS: You mean sooner do than sit in a classroom?

GG: If I was sittin' in a classroom- I don't know for sure, but I think I must have spent a lot of my time lookin' out the window! I don't know, but I think I must have.

SS: Was it true for you that- now, I've heard a couple of people say that to do a man's work, was really what they wanted to do as a boy, to be able to do a man's work, was what they were looking forward to. Would you say that was true with you?

GG: Yeah, it was true. To compete with a man was ^{seemed to be} the height of our ambition. If we would be lucky and could keep up with him, why we thought we was pretty big. If we could catch one a little older or a little akward and could surpass him at something, then we had the swellhead. Take two kids out shocking hay with a pitchfork, and they'd race from morning til night; try to get that row done quicker than the other guy. I worked one year for ^{Lindsay} and he had me shocking and she'd come out in the field pretty early in the morning after she got the housework done, and her and I would race til noon. And she'd go in and get dinner and after she got the dishes done and all that, why, she'd be right back out there and doggone, if we didn't race then til she had to go milk. Laugh and make fun of each other like a couple of kids! She was forty, forty-five years old when I was about seventeen or eighteen. She worked awful hard. ^{Seriously.} But they made it.

SS: Was that pretty common to do like what she did - for the women to get out and work when they were done with their housework?

GG: Yes, it was really common; the women got out and helped. Sometimes

they eliminated the hired ~~men~~ altogether. Many, many, many of 'em. They could drive horses as good as a man. Wives and daughters, they ^{were} right out in the field.

AG: Yeah, but they didn't work so long.

GG: Huh?

AG: They didn't ^{live} so long.

GG: I don't know, Amelia's still going good.

AG: Amelia who?

GG: Lindsey.

AG: She wasn't the last time I saw her, which is about fifteen years ago.

GG: She wasn't going real good, but then she's still agoin'.

SS: Do you figure that that was pretty - rough on the women to do that then? Agnes, is that what you're thinking?

AG: Yes, I do. They didn't get over it so good, may have looked like it but they didn't. She worked her head off, that's for sure and paid for it.

GG: Her big trouble is, she got awful heavy; way overweight.

SS: When she was still working?

GG: No, no, when she was still working she was right down to good workin' order, I think. I think she weighed around a hundred and thirty, or forty, fifty; somewheres around there. But now, she's over two hundred.

AG: Well, I didn't know her when she was younger. When she was about-well, her kids were about five or six years old, she had a hired girl ^{there} too, that she helped and then went out in the field.

GG: Well, she did after they got well started and established. She had Genevieve and Naomi and some of them, but for a number of years, she just didn't. But she wasn't alone in that. All ^{of her} neighbors; the

Hansons, the Hallgrens and all those people right close to them, it was all the same thing. The Gregorys.

SS: Was it just necessity that dictated it; that that's what a woman would do? Or was it more trying to get ahead?

AG: Quite a bit of it was necessity, because times weren't a great deal better than they are in this day and age. Might have had less money but it ^{he} came just as hard as it did in the last few years.

GG: Well, they had to sell a couple of hogs, a calf or something to pay us fellows our wages for the help they got in harvesting and haying. Money was hard to get. It wasn't easy. And they all were starving, they had places to pay for and outfits to pay for and living to make.

AG: It's one thing though, in those days, young men had a chance to get a better start than they have any chance of having now.

GG: Oh, yes.

AG: Of course ^{they were less than} roughly a hundred and fifty thousand now and now maybe fifteen thousand was taking care of the whole deal in those days. Pretty hard to get.

SS: It's funny that there's a lot less opportunity now than there used to be. Think there'd be a way that you could still compete.

AG: Well, up until this last year it has been possible, but boy, I don't think anybody can get ahead now. They're awful lucky if they are able to come out even.

GG: ^{Back} before 1928, if a man had a hundred dollars he could start farming in a good shape.

SS: A hundred dollars?

GG: We rented eighty acres and I had what I'd made in harvest and Harold had an equal amount and we bought a Ford car with it. And we went to work in the mill, and every time we'd get a paycheck we'd buy a

horse or calf or a harness or a plow or some damn thing, and we got started. We didn't have any cash. Every time we could make a dollar we just applied it to some little thing that'd probably grow. And most of it did.

SS: You didn't have to spend much of that money just to live on at that time?

GG: Oh, no, eggs and beans and spuds were cheap. That's about all we knew how to cook; we was baching before we was married.

SS: Now is this your place you had at the time?

GG: No, we rented our eighty acres from my grandmother and got a start there. Did pretty good in '27, '28 and '29. Made some pretty good headway, and then the Depression come and we went the other way.

SS: What was the deal with your grandmother? Was it a certain amount of money you paid, or what?

GG: Well, we give her \$125 a year for that place. She was tickled to death to get it; just for rent.

SS: Did you grow a crop on it?

GG: Oh, you bet, a good one. Our first crop on that place- forty acres- I think it was only about twenty-eight acres in wheat, but it made forty-two bushel. And we got two dollars and fifteen cents a bushel. And that was making darn good money. But, had ^{two} years of that and then the Depression hit and wheat was worth twenty-five cents a bushel. That was a different story. That wouldn't pay for any part of it.

SS: What about the stock that you say you were buying? Were you raising them up then? Said you'd buy a pig or-?

GG: Yes, we did. We'd buy little pigs, little calves. And they grow and ^{that} actually, that was all the gain we made was about what they grew, but

even that was pretty good for that time. (Chuckles) Oh, it's a different world, I don't know. I asked a lady in Wyoming last fall what would it cost to start ranching over there, and she told me that it would cost \$1,000,000. ^{That's} If they could get ahold of a lease- if they could get ahold of the land that is the home ^{stead and home} ranch and then to get ahold of a lease and keep it up, keep up their water rights, and stock enough to stock it and the machinery enough to take care of it, that that's about what it would cost. A young guy can't start unless you got a Dad or a Granddad with money to put him on the place. And it's the same in wheat.

SS: It doesn't sound like it was easy, though, even in the '20's when you were doing it. It certainly seems like not an easy haul to build up.

GG: It wasn't. But we were talking it over before we leased this place and said if we could get a job in the mill, which we thought we could; that was eight hours, but it wouldn't hurt us to go home and do chores after those eight hours anymore than it would if we drove a team on a plow all day and then went in and done chores in the same way. No, it wasn't easy; Long hours, and hard work. It could have been a lot of going without, but we were young and didn't know enough to go without anything. If we wanted something, why, we went and done it.

SS: Well, will give me an instance of what you'd do instead of go without?

GG: Take our girl to the show or go to a dance. It was probably a couple of dollars, and now it would cost you twenty-five. We didn't go without, because we didn't- they didn't have things like they've got 'em now. The only thing you could do was go to a show or go to a dance or go to a party in somebody's house; that's all there was. Couple of dollars was plenty for a weekend. But that couple of dollars was so big then that I don't know ^{whether} the twenty-five is any bigger

now than that was. I don't know. Don't think so.

SS: Were you really holding down two jobs at once when you were doing that?

GG: Yes. That's exactly right. I had some plowing to do after I home from the mill at three o'clock, if I was on the dayshift, I'd go out and plow til six or seven. And that's the way I got all the work done; ^{is} after work, do it. It was a small place and by figuring and scheming, taking turns. And another thing, ^{we could do} we had fairly good horses. I traded with my uncle, he put my crop in and then take my horses over to his place for the summer. Well, that's all I had to do as far as putting in my crop in was to buy the seed. And we did that one year. ^(End of side A) I did the work, but I don't think I did the thinking.

SS: Scheme and work and did a lot of thinking. Why didn't you do the thinking? I don't know what you mean. You mean, you didn't think about it enough?

GG: Well, yeah. Well, I don't know, you had to scheme and plan and wonder how the devil are you going to make it. What are you going to do to make this come out right? What are you going to do to make that come out right? I didn't always hit it right. I missed it a few times, but that's what I mean by thinking. I don't know.

SS: Were there real choices that you had to make? You could have gone two or three different ways all the time?

GG: Well, you could have invested in different ways in the stock, or you could have lunged in and hit it or you could have ^{lunged} in and missed it. You know, things then were like they are now; cattle could be a good price this year, hogs could be a good price this year, which they were in those first two years, in '27, '28 and '29, why, hogs

were clear up to thirteen cents a pound. In 1930 and '31 they were ^{balancing} between two and three cents a pound. I had some of both.

SS: Well, is that thinking or is that just rolling the dice? Seems to me like it's maybe a matter of luck.

GG: Yes, this rolling the dice- any time that you start farming, you start rolling the dice, and you never quit rolling the dice until you quit farming. There isn't any way to quit. Sometimes you can guess ahead, but, it's not all head work either, it's an equal amount of pure luck.

SS: How long did it take you to decide that you'd be better off getting out of that place?

GG: Oh, after three years it was going so darn good we thought we'd get a little bigger. We did. We got a little bigger and put so much produce on the market I guess that's why hogs went from thirteen cents to two. 'Cause everybody went with us. Oh, you always- reaching out trying to boost yourself; lift yourself up another notch. And sometimes you do it; sometimes you didn't. When wheat was twenty-five cents a bushel, a sack would hold two bushel and a half, and it cost us thirty cents to get the sack. And I think it cost ten cents a sack to get it threshed; that's forty cents. ^{a sack} And your seed had cost you around two dollars an acre, and your work and your horse work went into it and finished out the crop. But, even so, that wasn't enough money to break even. When that depression come, we did have a few cows to milk- fairly good ones- and by working out after my crop was in or during the winter, if I could get work during the winter, I'd take it. But I generally couldn't. If I could cut around three quarters of a cord of wood a day, that was enough to eat on. For ten years, that's about what we did. We ate. Never had any

or relief or WPA; we didn't have it. We could have got it, I presume. I never tried, I didn't want it. I don't blame the guys that did get it. I think it was, more power to 'em.

SS: So, really then, it was just holding on, not trying to- there wasn't a chance of getting ahead during that time.

GG: There wasn't. There wasn't any. The only way ^{that could have} you possibly gone ahead, and some did, they'd acquire more land or more equipment and then when the prices broke back to a dollar a bushel, why, then they went right ahead. They had it made. But guys like myself didn't have the guts or foresight or whatever it took to do that. Didn't do it. When it did come up, we went ahead, alright, after it came, but we went awful slow.

SS: But you didn't own the land to start with, right? I mean, you didn't have anybody give you, or you didn't inherit it or you didn't have the money to buy when you were a young man, right? I mean, that seems to put you in a different position to start with over some of these guys that had land.

GG: Well, we did finally buy that place up at Harvard, and we went five thousand dollars in debt. Didn't we?

AG: I don't remember.

GG: We lost it.

SS: When did you buy it?

GG: '34, wasn't it? '35?

AG: '34. I think, I don't remember.

SS: You'd just been married a pretty short time then, right?

AG: Six years?

GG: Well, wheat was thirty cents then; on the way up. Got up to sixty cents, finally. Still wasn't enough because we were back on payments

and we were back on interest- our taxes were kept up but you couldn't pay anybody if you owed somebody, you couldn't pay 'em. So the only thing to do was just not owe 'em. Go without.

SS: How long did you keep that place?

GG: Til 1939. Yeah, '39. We had our walking papers, and then we came over here. Still hard sledding, it wasn't easy going. I think wheat was seventy-five cents then. I think cream was- what? About- clear up to fifteen cents a pound.

AG: Eleven cents, *I remember.*

GG: Well, eleven cents for some of it, but I think it had kinda gained a little by the time we got here. Then the war come on. But even that didn't make any difference to us for- oh, what?- it took two or three years for that to affect us here very much.

AG: Didn't affect anybody but the ones that had it already paid for til for a pretty long time.

SS: Why-

AG: Prices didn't come up. Prices didn't come up for two or three years after the war.

GG: Slow starting, but they did eventually start. But during the war all the neighbors around here pulled out and went to work for war effort.

AG: Ship yards and Boeing.

SS: Lot of people did that, huh?

GG: You bet. Sheltons, Pelfreys, Davises, Fountains, Bensons.

SS: Did they go to Portland, Mostly? Seattle? Portland, Mostly?

GG: Oh, no, they went to Bayview and went to every place. Any place there was war efforts. One of 'em went to work up there at the hospital on construction work.

AG: The shipyards and Boeing were the main-

- SS: They took their families or just the men?
- AG: Most 'em did, yeah.
- SS: Kept their places, though?
- AG: Some of 'em did and some of them didn't.
- GG: Most of 'em didn't.
- SS: Really?
- AG: Some of 'em were so badly in debt they weren't ever going to come out of it anyway, so they just hauled their freight out of here.
- SS: That was right around here? On the creek here?
- GG: Yeah, right here.
- SS: And in the hills?
- GG: Allen's place and Wally's, Huttons and the next one beyond Anna Marie's.
- SS: So what did you figure then?
- GG: Huh?
- SS: So what did you figure then? Were you tempted to go for the war?
- GG: Oh, you bet. But I didn't. (Chuckles) I could get a job here and a job there and keep what little headway I had made- I thought I'd make more headway that way than if I did pull out and go into war effort. I believe, for once, I was right, because I could get my work done here and go out and go to work for Steelsmiths or Vollmer or whoever. Pretty good wages. And when harvest or whatever was over, come home and have enough to eat on and keep the kids in some kind of clothes. We did it. I don't know whether it was right or wrong.
- AG: At least we didn't have the expense of moving and moving back and ~~finding~~ ^{finding} a house, which at that time was just about as bad to find a house anyplace then as it is now.
- GG: Well, everyone of them that did that spent the rest of their life

working for wages, and I did, too, in a way, but I still had my own incentive here to go ahead and hang on and had my own home. And I knew if I got out of a job I could eat and sleep under the roof. And it's a long, hard haul but after while we retired and Uncle Sam went to giving us a little money.

SS: Did you take sawmill jobs at that time?

GG: Sure. Anytime, all the way through. Short jobs, long jobs, anything. Work in the sawmill and come home here and- we only had about seventy-five acres to farm. And the kids were getting big enough that they could help quite a bit. And if I'd come home here Friday night and work til- well after we got a tractor and work til ten or eleven o'clock at night and work all day Saturday and all day Sunday, I could go back to work at the mill Monday morning with everything pretty well caught up.

SS: Which mill was this?

GG: Oh, Roush's, Murphy's, Conklin's, Bennett's.

SS: You'd stay there for the week? Or did you come home every day? Drive?

GG: I come home every day, yeah, you bet. I had a cow or two to milk, morning and night. After the war and after we got started here and got things kind of leveled off, why, things got a lot easier. Got a car and could hold a job by going back and forth from here to Moscow. I always got top wages, or just about. And financially it was a lot easier. We did alright.

SS: Well, during the war how did you get to work and back? Did you have a car then?

GG: I worked around here close and if I couldn't find some neighbor to ride with, why, I didn't go. That is, unless they was here close.

AG: Mostly worked as a fieldhand there up til 1950, ^{I think} he started to work at the mills.

- SS: So Roushes and Barretts and those places were mostly in the '50's?
- AG: It was before Bennetts came. But Bennett didn't come in there til about '56 or '57.
- SS: Well, when you got the place at Harvard, were you working there at the mill then, too?
- GG: No, I was working in the woods. Skidding logs, with horses.
- SS: Was that contract work you were doing yourself or were you working with other guys?
- GG: Oh, both. I generally liked to gyppo contract if I could. If you made a dollar or two extra, why, fine. Most of the time did, sometimes I didn't.
- AG: Mostly the mill comp^{ies} knew just about what the gyppo could make and just about kept it pretty well even, or a little less, but tried to make it look like you was going to make more.
- GG: Well, they did, they knew exactly what you could make. And the only way you could make that extra dollar was just really tearing into it and working. Didn't stop to take a drink; you took a drink on the walk.
- AG: *I think it's probably about the same now.*
- SS: I remember hearing from some guys that when they first started gyppoing in the early '20's they made real good and worked real hard and cut their own throats.
- GG: Yeah. Yeah. Company'd cut us down if we made too much.
- SS: Was that true in the '30's, too?
- GG: That's always true as long as Potlatch has been in existence.
- AG: Any of 'em, as far as that goes.
- SS: That place that you got near Harvard, was that a place that you had known pretty well when you were growing up?
- GG: Oh, yeah, lived on it. My dad owned it before I did. No, we went

there in 1910 and there was one or the other of us on it ^{UN}til 1939.

SS: Who did you buy it from?

GG: Well, I just took over my dad's debts and he couldn't pay 'em, he was stuck and we thought I could make it so I tried to; didn't.

SS: He retired then?

GG: Yeah. Practically. He was getting up in years and had a heart condition. Yeah, he retired. He had to.

SS: How long did it take you before you could tell you were really, you know, going to have difficulty, on that place?

GG: About thirty minutes! (Chuckles) But we never gave up. We fought her right til the last inch.

SS: What made it so hard on that place? Was it the debts that you started with?

GG: You couldn't make-- all that cheap wheat- you couldn't make a dollar to pay the debt with. And we'd work out in the woods; we could make our groceries and pay our taxes and most of the expenses. But that wheat just wasn't high enough priced to pay that bill. It just wouldn't pay it.

AG: And then beside that, there'd be frost ^{about the time} you thought you were going to make something of it, a frost would come.

GG: Yeah, we lost one crop- two crops- from frost, and one from rust. But this was on a Federal Land Bank contract and they had no sympathy for us. It was just, "You'll have to control your weather better!" I don't know why a man farmed or I don't know why he done anything! They shoulda had brains enough to work it like they do now. Just go on welfare!

SS: Was it just the idea of being independent?

GG: Independent. Right!

GG: Fighting to get that few dollars ahead that would put you so that you didn't have to--

AG: In fact, there wasn't any jobs and the mills had shut down during the Depression. They had their problems, they had said they were out of order about the time- just before that October- whatever it was. Said they were out of order and they would have to shut down for a while. And they never started up again for several years, I don't know how long it was.

GG: A little over six years that they was not operating enough to keep people employed.

AG: Had some, oh, the mill part- what do you call it? Planer mill ^{was} going ^{part of the time} and that was all. The mill just didn't start up til after or just about the time the war started, is the way I remember it.

GG: They started operating a little bit in '36, I think.

SS: So that was the condition in '34 - it was already that way?

GG: Yes, it was.

AG: One guy saw Glen on the street, one of the head ones there, said, "What we need is a good war!" We finally got it.

GG: That was one of the officials of Potlatch. And he was so right.

SS: Doesn't really seem like a very dependable answer, does it? I mean, you just can't go and have a good war every twenty years to bail you out! (Chuckles)

GG: Well, it took that to start the economy back to where a workingman could live a decent life.

AG: Have you been by [?] Potlatch from the Y to the town?

SS: Yes.

AG: ^{When my folks} When they came, ^{came in 1919} that field there was half full of lumber. Just all ready to, I don't know what, but sitting

there air drying.

GG: It was out there drying. Eighty acres of it.

AG: Well, there wasn't quite eighty acres.

GG: Yes, there was.

SS: How much clear land was there on your father's place?

GG: Oh, right close to a hundred acres.

SS: Do you feel that under favorable-- (End tape B)

GG: If they'd a left us alone for two years, we had her made. We had her made, if they'd a left us alone for two more years. No question in my mind about it because we had two years here, but we had all the expense of moving here and building this place up and then in two years we went right ahead from that day on. Yes, if I could have stayed there for two more years I'd a been wealthy. No foolin'! Because I had my mind made up that I was going to grow hay on every inch of it and I had worlds of pasture in that range back there and I would have stayed with the livestock. I didn't want grain. I don't like to wheatfarm, never did. It always seemed to me, always, unstable. I know we woulda made it. The guy that took over did make it.

AG: But he had help from everybody in the family, too.

GG: Well, he made it, working. But he borrowed \$500 to buy that place. And when we got through selling what we had to sell in order to get off the place, we had just, just I think, a thousand dollars. Sheep was the main part of it, but there was about twenty-five head of cattle; a couple of horses-

SS: You had \$1,000 that you got out of it when you left?

GG: We come over here with our outfit and \$1,000, yeah. But ^{that} was all of it made by that little stuff growin'.

SS: How much debt did you have then?

- GG: We was behind doggone near \$3,000. Now, if we had sold what we sold to get out of there, why we woulda put ourselves in a pretty good position, but they didn't give us that opportunity. They sold that place in haying, out of a blue sky, I had no idea they were gonna sell it. My contract was behind, there was nothing I could do about that part of it.
- SS: They didn't talk to you and really give you the opportunity to deal with it?
- GG: No. They had offered me all kinds of things and all kinds of deals in advance of that, but they never offered me anything but, "Pay it up and you're a good boy, and pay it up or you're a bad boy!"
- SS: And so they turned around and gave this other guy a pretty good break on the place?
- GG: Yes, they did. They give him a better break than they ever give me. Much better. We were coming alright. We bought a bunch of sheep ^{the fall} before- about seventy-five head- give a dollar and a half a piece for them. And when I sold 'em in the fall of 1939 I got three dollars and fifty cents for the old ones and I got around six dollars apiece for the lambs; and most of 'em had twins. That give me twelve dollars for the lambs and the two dollar profit on the ewes. ^{And that sheep was there,} If I had had another year I'd a paid 'em up.
- SS: Who was it that had the mortgage on the place?
- GG: The Federal Land Bank.
- SS: That just sounds crazy; unfair.
- GG: It ^{was} unfair. But, I had some horses. I had six darn good horses and I had around twenty head of cattle; young, old and indifferent. And they wanted a mortgage on them. And I told them the mortgage on the place is all I can handle; it's all the place is worth, and I

refused to give 'em a mortgage on my stock and outfit, and this made this commissioner mad. Because they told him to come and get it and I wouldn't give it to him. So, he was mad and he thought he'd just fix me so that I'd be a good boy next time. Well, I'm not as bitter as I sound. I think it always- just things that had to be. I'm to blame for as many of the wrongs as I am for the rights. I know it.

SS: What kind of strikes me is the fact that you then turned around after having been given such a tough time on that place and start right up again. You know, come right back at 'em for another place.

GG: That's what makes me think so damn sure that if I'd a had the time there- just a reasonable, little bit of more time, I'd a had ^{her} made. Because I come here on a darn sight smaller place and it was completely rundown and I come out of it. I don't know, what would be the answer- I always thought that I had ^{her} made there if they'd a left me alone and made good.

SS: Well, between '34 and '39, did you have a much bigger mortgage in '39 than in '34 on the place?

GG: No, I think we just almost kept even, but there'd be-- yes, I think there was added on, I think there was '600 or \$700 interest. That's what they was screaming about. Well, it's just a case, the Federal Land Bank had to have their income or they couldn't stay in business.

SS: Would they have been satisfied if you'd paid off the interest?

GG: I think if I had of paid off all the interest, I believe they would have been satisfied. But they were gonna get that mortgage to cover my back interest. I just refused to give it to 'em, because if I had to move, I was going to keep something ~~something~~ to move with. I wasn't going to just walk away with my pocket full. I wouldn't give in. They broke me suckin' eggs!

- SS: It really didn't discourage you from the idea that you could make it on a farm? Because you moved down here right away from there. And you didn't give up for five or ten years.
- GG: No, I didn't give up for a darn minute, because I wanted to farm and I knew that a man had some independence. I knew that he could gain a little bit, not very much, always, but a little bit. But, I had a family and I had to have a house over 'em, I had to have food for 'em, and I'd seen the guys in town; when they got out of a job they was stuck. And, the guy out in the country wasn't quite so-- he was in hard shape, but he wasn't stuck, he could eat, and he had a place to sleep that was dry. And he wasn't in any great deal of fear ^{of} somebody was going to boost him out of it, because, believe me, when we come here I kept them payments up. If we had to sacrifice a few clothes or an automobile or maybe some food, by gosh, we kept them up.
- SS: Having a bunch of kids really made a big difference, didn't it? I mean, in terms of what you had to do.
- GG: Sure, you bet it did. Oh, I don't know. I had a good friend that was single, same age, practically, he'd stayed single a ll of his life, and he told me a couple of years before he died that he had a half million dollars. And I told him I had darn near half a hundred, but I wouldn't trade places with him. Yeah, our family was a obligation then, same as it is now, it was no different. Took just about all your could make to keep 'em going. I was just lucky: Mine did finally grow up. I heard a man say along around 1914, I was about a fourteen or fifteen year old kid, said a man never could make any money til after his family was grown up and gone. I thought that was a kind of funny statement, but, you know, it sure as heck proved

right. You couldn't then and you can't now.

SS: You know, just to think about it it doesn't seem your kids ought to require that much besides food to eat, which you could grow a lot of yourself, and clothes.

GG: They helped. Well, food and clothes, but then, you know, through most of that time wages were from a dollar to three dollars a day. And milk, or cream, by the pound, butterfat, was around, oh, gee, it did finally get up to fifteen, twenty cents, but that only just barely, well, it bought most of the groceries, probably not quite all. But it was just kind of a hard time to live, I should have been born earlier or later. *If I wanted it easier.*

SS: Easier earlier, you think?

GG: Oh, I don't know. Yeah. I don't know what I think. A man don't know what he'd do under a little bit different conditions. Don't know.

SS: What made you come over to this area to look for a place to move to?

GG: I'd heard that there was less frost hazard and it was good dirt and there was quite a bit of land for sale here, which there wasn't every place. And land was cheaper around here for some reason or other than it was on the Palouse River. I wanted to get away from frost. A little frostier over there than here. I never lost a crop from frost here in the forty years, but I lost two over there in four. This is good dirt. I've seen some tremendous crops of grain and hay around here.

SS: What was this frost like over there? When would it hit?

GG: In order to hurt the wheat just when it was in bloom, it would have to hit it in July. Have to hit it about the 10th of July, and that's

what it done. I had a contract on forty acres of peas and I got 'em in about the 20th of May and around the 20th of June got a frost and just positively killed 'em. I had that contract with Spokane Seed Company and I called 'em up and told 'em what had happened and they said, "Well, there's nothing you can do about the weather, is there?" And, I said, "No, there isn't. What am I going to have to do about the bill on it?" And they says, "There isn't anything you can do about that either, is there?" And that's all that ever got done about it. They just forgot it. Wiped it off.

SS: So with hay there's no such a problem. Right? You didn't have to worry about it.

GG: It's a little bit-

AG: Well, you never know, really, ^{although} sometimes you do, ^{sometimes. It WAS according to how the contracts worked.} they charge for court.

SS: I was thinking that growing hay would be- instead of a crop would be a lot less likely for it to get ruined; isn't it?

GG: No, the hay's more resistant.

AG: Sometimes it gets spoiled entirely.

SS: Were you attracted to this place as soon as you saw it?

GG: I'd made up my mind I was going to have two things: three things, I didn't give a darn how small it was, there'd be no more renting. It was going to be mine if I went onto it. It had to have water and a road, and it had all three of 'em and so we bought it. We looked all over the country. We looked around and around here, for how long? For a solid year?

AG: I don't know. *We did it.*

SS: What did you think of the place when you saw it, Agnes? Did it look good to you?

- SS: Did you hear what I asked you?
- AG: No, I didn't.
- SS: I asked you if this place looked good to you when you first saw it. What you thought of this place.
- AG: Well, yeah, it looked alright. ^{It looked} As good as the other ones to me.
Yeah, it was okay.
- GG: It didn't look like-
- AG: Didn't look like big enough house for the whole family, but our family was really growing at that time.
- GG: It didn't look like the last word in anything; there was no buildings, no fences. It needed everything. There wasn't even a great deal- there was twenty-five acres of cleared land on it. But we could get ahold of it without putting a big mortgage on it. We sold our cows down too close over there and the sheep too close, so we wound up finally putting a mortgage on this for \$1,000, but it was in order to get restocked; have something to work with. And then I started in. I built a barn and fences piece by piece. The barn didn't cost me only the nails that was in it; poles and shakes.
- SS: Where did you get the lumber from?
- GG: What lumber? (Laughter) There wasn't any in it. There wasn't any in it for several years. And then I traded and got a couple of thousand feet from Rousch. But it wasn't sided up or anything for a couple of years, but we did have a roof over the hay and I could go in there and sit down and milk the cows in the dry. There was no floor under 'em or nothing. But for ^{half of the first} the first winter we were here I milked 'em out in a snowbank! When I got a big enough roof over that barn to put another cow in there, I thought I was a lucky guy; run her in there and milk her. Well, I'll tell you; if

I had always had things nice and easy and rosy I wouldn't a had the guts to stay with it.

SS: What about the house? Was there no house here at all?

GG: Well, there was a little tiny house. There was one, two, three rooms- there was four rooms, but they were so small that if company came and we all in there, why somebody had to stay outside and push the door shut, because we couldn't close it from inside! It still sits out there, a little bit of an old shack. But by shoving 'em three in a bed, why, we got by! Soon as we could, we built a back- an addition onto it and that took care of the boys. The girls had a good room then. Everything was pretty good until we got squared around and started this. Took us ten years to build this.

SS: Ten years from when you first moved on?

GG: No, from the time we started it til it was finished like it is now. We would need lumber or we needed ^{this, or} nails, or whatever. We'd get along without 'em until we could pay cash for 'em. We didn't have any debts. When the house was done, it was ours. I'd had my debts so I didn't want any more. Took a long time to do it that way, because, ^{be easier}, earn it piecemeal.

SS: What year? (End side C)

GG: Well, it didn't cost us a lot of money at that. I logged the logs and then I had a gyppo pull in here and saw the lumber for half. And that made it so that about all I had to dig down in my pocket for was nails and get it planed, til we got it up, and ^{then} 'course it took in wiring and pipe and windows and all that stuff, but we just got it a piece at a time and got by.

SS: Did you wait til it was finished before moving in?

GG: Not exactly. It was all pretty well done.

- SS: When you were saying that you put up the barn when you first came-- besides that what were the first things you attended to?
- GG: The fence and the barn was first. That had to be. There just wasn't any. The neighbors on two sides of us were awful good to help, and then, later on, the neighbor on the other side came in and he helped. They did their share and I did mine, but even so, there was none of us had money enough to work with, because there was no wire, there was no posts, there was nothing.
- SS: So what did you put up the fence with?
- GG: Who?
- SS: What[?] What were the materials that you used for--
- GG: How did I get the fence?
- SS: Uh-huh.
- GG: Oh, it wasn't easy. I bought ^{A lot of} new wire ^{all} I could, and I'd see somebody out here that had started tractor farming and he'd taken up his fence, so I'd trade him something for his old wire and then I'd bring it home and put it up and go out and see if I couldn't trade with another one. I traded a sheep--some fellows down at Gene-see, for a truck load. And I traded a horse for a guy down here on American Ridge for a mile of hog wire fence. And the Anderson boys give me enough wire for about a mile of fence--^{for} three wires. Wound up with the darn place-- around seven miles of fence on it and you could turn a sheep or a hog anyplace on it and he'd stay there. It was tight. And now I've taken it off, ^{it's} all in the way. I quit the stock.
- SS: At that time had most farmers around gotten rid of their horses?
- GG: No. No, there was lots of horses then. But they started right after that to get rid of them. No, but right around here close, ^{NO} there

wasn't any tractors. Back a mile or two there was a few. But they started coming in about then. We didn't buy a tractor until about 1952 or '53, did we?

Richard Gilder:
(SON) Had one about '50 or before. The old ten-twenty.

GG: Oh, that's right.

SS: Were they really a lot better than horses?

GG: No, those old wheel tractors weren't. No, they weren't better than horses, they were just-- I don't know. We couldn't plow on a hillside with ours. I don't know whether it was us or the tractor, but we never did get so we could do a good job of plowing on a steep hillside. If we couldn't go up and down it, why, that was it. The horses would go around and around or up and down, they didn't care. I was next to the last in the whole area to quit the horses and go to the tractor. Charley Barkett down here hung on for a year or two after I did. The only way I could see to get a tractor was to go in debt and I didn't want to go in debt.

SS: Did you see any advantage at that time to get one? I mean, was it an attractive idea to have one and to get rid of the horses?

GG: It was ideal for us because we could pull the mower with it. I took the horses off that. And we could harrow and do things like that, but the horses filled in most places that were difficult or not effective with the tractor, they were effective with horses. And it was a good system and it would still be good today if we'd do it. By the time we got our tractor we had about sixty or seventy-five acres of hay and that was an awful job for horses. Slow and it was terrible on the horses. And the mower was really something. They could rake and they did.

SS: Why was the mower hard on 'em? On the horses.

- GG: Was it hard on 'em?
- SS: No. Why was the haying?
- GG: It was heavy and it was hot, and they hadn't done much from the time the spring crop was in til the haying started and that give them about a month's layoff and they were soft. It made it bad on them, and a man felt awful bad about working them that way. When we got that mower; Lloyd mowed twenty acres back there in one day and with the horses it would have taken three. Next day, why, the horses went out and raked it. But I still think it'd be a good idea.
- SS: Yeah, I would think so, too.
- GG: For a man to have a good team and use them where they'd work the best and forget the tractor. ^{There's} So many jobs they can do, it is not necessary for 'em, that rake in haying time or hauling it in- they're actually better than the tractor. They're not faster, but they're better. And as far as cost goes, why, there isn't any.
- SS: I was going to ask you, through those years with all the working out that you did; was the work steady most of this time, or would it be just sometimes on and sometimes off?
- GG: That's the way it was, yeah. Have to be. 'Cause I couldn't go back. I didn't have a car or couldn't stay away from home on a job, so I just had to take hit-or-miss jobs, but that's fine. If I wasn't busy at the job, I was busy here, so if you keep the financial end of it up, that was all that was necessary. And it did.
- SS: Did you work as much in winter, or was there a lot of layoff time in the winter?
- GG: Oh, to work off the place, the only thing you could do- you might be able to get a job skidding logs someplace, but I generally cut wood and sold it or worked at the buildings. I didn't have to have

the wood to eat on. No, it was hit-or-miss

SS: Would you have time to sit around in the winter, like now, or would you be up and out working every day?

GG: Be out working every day at something, because the stock required it. But, I was young and husky and ambitious and I liked to do it. Oh, when the snow would get unsufferably deep or it was terribly cold, I could lay off, yeah; and I did. But when it was nice working, why, I liked to be out at it. I had some plan or something I wanted to accomplish, the time to accomplish it was right now, couldn't see it being tomorrow or any other ~~thing~~ thing. After we got squared around and got a car, why then I could go back farther- go to Moscow or someplace to work and that made quite a difference, too. But we didn't have a car. In order to have a car, you had to go in debt and I wasn't interested. I didn't mind a debt if I knew that there was some course to pay it off when the time come, but I had to have that. I had my wings trimmed and I never got over it.

SS: About what year was it that you got the car to go?

GG: I didn't hear.

SS: About what year was it you got the car to go with?

GG: About 1948, I suppose. '49- '48, I think. Got a \$100 one. But it went and come back, that's all that was necessary. After we got squared around and got a car, why then, I could go back farther, go to Moscow or someplace to work, and that made quite a difference, too. But we didn't have a car--