

ALBEN HALEN

Interviewed by:  
Sam Schrager

Oral History Project  
Latah County Museum Society

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## ALBEN HALEN

Big Bear Ridge, Deary; b. 1896

farmer

1.5 hours

minute page

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with Sam Schrager

February 9, 1976

## II. Transcript

This conversation with Alben Halen took place at his home in Deary on February 9 1976. The interviewer is Sam Schrager.

ALBEN HALEN: ...at the time. I said, it's an earthquake and Oscar says no, heck no. That's something else." Made me go out and look in the barn. <sup>Always</sup> traded horses and bought horses and that. Had a cow and four horses in the barn. So I went down and looked in there. I didn't see a darn thing wrong. But when I come up town next morning here why they were telling me about the earthquake. *But to make it bad, I was over at so and so's. I said* that's nothing. Down home there, why, shook the chickens off the roost.

SS: Had it hit in town too?

AH: Yeah, it hit here. Hit in Troy, Montana while I was up there afterwards. It rained so everything was ice. And the crack that ice, you could see all them *streaks* run in it. So it kind of hit here too, I guess.

SS: How long did it last?

AH: Just a matter of a minute, the one we had here that I felt. And I was inside and my dad couldn't figure out, when the folks lived up here in town years ago in '27 and '28, it made a pop, my oldest <sup>sister</sup> <sup>there</sup> was <sub>A</sub> visiting with them I lived further out. It sounded like the piano was popping against the wall. And she couldn't figure it out but then she noticed that and they had them swinging lights with the long cable coming down, it was rocking back and forth and she figured out what it was.

SS: Was this the same time as it happened out on your place?

AH: That <sup>up here</sup> <sub>A</sub> was in the daytime and out there was about 9 o'clock in the evening when we heard the earthquake.

SS: Was that in the '20's?

AH: No, I should think, yeah, around '27 or '28 <sup>or something around</sup> <sub>A</sub> in there. I don't never paid much attention to it. Now, so it can't be helped, but you know, <sup>after</sup> <sub>A</sub> you take all your oil and everything out of it, out of there, earth has got to sink someplace. Nowadays they're getting different ideas. They take the oil out but they pump water <sup>down</sup> <sub>A</sub> there in a steady stream, but that ain't going to

stay there in the rocks either. But that washes the oil up and then it purifies, dries<sup>it</sup> up fast.

SS: Maybe that's going to cause earthquakes too.

AH: I wouldn't be surprised. That earth, that's down in, I don't know, must<sup>be down</sup> getting<sup>it</sup> it<sup>a</sup> couple miles probably down to where the oil is at. I know that shop up there in Montana years ago, drilling for oil 2800 feet. They put in a charge of dynamite or glycerine, a quart of that and a few sticks of dynamite<sup>in with it</sup> to explode it. <sup>they said</sup> It shook the town in Montana. I don't know, I guess they got the oil there someplace, but how much, I don't know.

SS: Where were you born?

AH: I was born right out here on Bear Ridge, four<sup>and a half</sup> miles out of town. I sold that place three years ago. I didn't want to live here, but she wanted to live here, so I figured it's alright.

SS: You lived on that place your whole life?

AH: I was born on that place and when the folks died why, what we going to do with it. I was farming it at that time, renting it from the folks. But I said as soon as the folks pass away, why, I'm leaving. Heck, dad died, why, didn't do nothing then. <sup>of course,</sup> We had a house, went and farmed it. Mother was alive. When she passed away, about three years afterwards I guess, well then there was nine kids in the family at that time and what you going to do<sup>with it</sup>, nobody wanted to buy it. Things was worthless. Farms was not, you went down to the farm, you couldn't get 5-6000 dollars for a good farm. So you know, you didn't always figure on big time.

SS: How old were the kids? Were they grown up?

AH: All grown up. There was just two kids younger than I was. And the youngest one of them was dead and there's just<sup>we said</sup> the youngest one under me living. Out of the whole family. But they had kids. Some of <sup>em did.</sup>

SS: You kept the place and kept living there?



AH: Well, the oldest, you were there and you stayed there and you buy it. I didn't want to buy. My older brother says, "I'll take over half of it, If you farm it." Finally talked him into it So I farmed it til, and I paid the rest of the kids what they wanted of their share and they set their price. After it was probated, well you couldn't, I think I paid 4500<sup>dollars</sup> out, 4500<sup>dollars</sup> is what I owed. Thing was, the machinery that was there was all mine before. I could have bought down at Whitebird on the ~~MAN~~ had 400 acres. And he had 4000 dollars left to pay. And a hundred head of cattle on there. He says, "If you want to buy that, I owe that much if I can get the money so I don't have to send it back to them, I'll take a thousand dollars and I'll give you a deed on the whole works." That guy didn't have the money, I couldn't have took that. You know, when you take something like that, you think, what you buy. You got <sup>to have</sup> hay and the stuff for the stock. Course, that's <sup>is</sup> pretty worthless anyway and cattle, that was nothing. I could go out there and buy a steer in the country and buy it for ten dollars.

SS: That's all?

AH: Ten dollars for a live steer. I bought, I went out to a sale there and bought five head of cattle, I ~~wasn't~~ young, there was 6, 7 months old and I <sup>wintered</sup> them in the pasture til next fall. And all I could get out of them would be ten dollars. One fellow says down at Moscow, "I could give you 7 cents a pound for them if they <sup>was</sup> butchered." Well I said, I'll take that, but I figured I'd better go down and see. Well, he says, "I got 2700 pounds of meat hanging here." People paid him for the lockers. "What am I going to do with it? I got to give that up." It's a bad deal when you go out and buy a butchered hog that dressed 200 pounds. Pork was six cents a pound. And then the government wanted two dollars for inspection. So what did it leave the <sup>other</sup> fellow that raised them? I had a neighbor out there, he had five, six, nice hogs, ready to butcher. I didn't have any hogs at that time, come up

wanted to sell me one. I says, you could probably sell some to the buthcer shop."Yes, I can. But if I sell to you I can get two cents a pound more." So you know it's not been so bad lots of times.

SS: About when was that, the '20's or '30's?

AH: Well, I don't remember just exactly. It must have been in the '30's. They had the WPA workers working on the road and give 'em a couple a dollars a day so they could live and then some couldn't get on. I used to, I wasn't starving or anything, I had cows and horses and chickens and I wasn't exactly broke either, I had a few dollars. But I stirred up a hornest's nest <sup>up</sup> town here. One fellow, I don't know how in the heck he ever got on, but he was always there looking at in the store there, <sup>whether</sup> they could work that day, so many days, who was going on next day. And I went over there and looked. A fellow by the name of Gore had a store, he said, "Do you see your name?" Yep, it's here. I said, you know, I don't write nothing <sup>no</sup> more than <sup>no</sup> for my name. And he said, "You got a right to be on there! Got a farm!" And the other fellow standing there, he got hopping mad, he says, "He got a farm, probably horses and probably they're starving and he's in worse shape than you are." He said, "You're staying with your folks and as long as they eat..." Well they went back and forth. I just left. When I went out, the storekeeper said to me, "Anything you need?" Oh I said, I need a deck of cards so I can play solitaire. I could take a drink of whiskey too if you've got it here. (laughs) He laughed Course, I knew damn well, I wouldn't get on, then I took them calves, I had a cow. I wanted to buy a horse, so I went up to Elk River and looked at horses. And I come back to Bovill, fellow by the name of Hughes up there, <sup>he had</sup> a bunch of cayuses running there. One two year old and one three year old and a five year old and a mare that's seven. And he wanted to buy a cow. I told him I'd sell him a cow, but he set the price on the horse. More of a kind of a trade anyway. And I paid him for the one horse, but for that three year old, he thought he had to have a little more. No, I paid him on the first one. And then he went down and looked at the cow and he seen them big heifers running there and

he says, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll take the heifers for a horse." So I traded a cow and two heifters and I paid for the one horse. And he come up and got the bunch and took 'em to Bovill and I was up and got the horses and they were never in the barn, they run out, they had them on the outside. But the fellow that got the cows, he beat me down there pret'near, I led the horses down. And he come with that <sup>truck</sup> he was going to I get his cattle. We had to push one or two of them young ones into the barn. I done pretty good at that, I sold a saddle horse, I got fifty dollars for it. And I sold that to a guy that didn't have a goddang thing. To live on. I guess he had five dollars, but I didn't tell him, that's all he paid down on the horse. I knew he was good but he was working on that job and that was going to put him off and he comes to me <sup>so excited,</sup> "He bought a horse from you." "Yes he did." "How much did he pay for it?" "He didn't pay a goddang cent!" So I guess he got back on the job.

SS: Did you get to work on that government work?

AH: No. But I had plenty stuff to eat and I had hay and stuff for the horses. And cows and chickens. I always kept plenty of grain. No, and <sup>then</sup> I took and put the harness on the three year old, drove him down a time or two in the field with an old horse. I had. Guy came up and asked 85 dollars for him. He took out the money and paid me. And then the two year old, I kept that til spring so I could ship <sup>an</sup> old horse off and I thought I'd work her a little. Well then my brother-in-law come up, "You take my horses and you can run three foot burners and you put in my crop." He had about 25 acres to put in on the forty <sup>I guess</sup>. Well, I got them horses and then, that young one had to go right in with the other ones working. That was the best little animal I ever drove. And I rented a lot of ground, I had that <sup>Harsh</sup> place. And ...

SS: Harsh's place?

AH: Yeah. He had a farm next to me on the north. He overtook for debts, I guess. After I left my brother, I was cutting peas, 110 acres of peas, and I went

up to work <sup>4 o'clock</sup> in the morning and started cutting and I had a kid bring in my breakfast and another team 8 o'clock in the morning, and I ate my breakfast and he unhooked the horses and put the others <sup>on</sup> while I was eating and I went til noon, he come out with the horses I had in the morning and I ate my dinner and he come back out with the other team at 4 o'clock, a little before, and then I worked til 7, I quit. <sup>but</sup> I cut one acre with a five and a half foot mower every darn day.

SS: Sounds like a lot.

AH: With horses it is. And that's a job to hold them on ~~that~~ carrier in one bunch and when they're going. And then <sup>after that</sup> when he was cutting grain I had to go back so he could get through places. I slept a couple of hours. But 120 acres when I cut, wouldn't take so long. And he was *meowing* about those horse, they were no good and finally I let him have the best horses, But I says, I got to have 'em at least two days more. That was too long. I says, take the two year old and put him <sup>it</sup> the grain and put the other one of mine on the tongue on the binder and put the colt next to the grain. "Now, help me hook her up." I says hook her up nothing. But you start up that binder it makes a noise, she gets a little nervous, stop. She knew there was something wrong, she laid her feet down like that and going to make a lunge and I said, *Belley* what's the matter with you? And I pet her on the head and went around and crawled up and got the lines and he drove up under her feet and stopped. He looked around and she had that real strong back of her, *steps* after that, she come to a corner then two would take that choke so got dang short that she barely missed the wheels and instead of when they give it a pull, that platform <sup>just</sup> flew right <sup>there</sup>. After he had them a day, I says, do you want the other horses pretty soon now?" "NO, heck, I'm going to keep her on there."

SS: What made her such a good horse ?

AH: Well I don't know. I put her with, as a saddle horse. Just a two year old and turned three in August, I believe and I said to my brother's wife, we were working together, and I says, I couldn't leave that colt going there and I

took him where I was working. And he go home and feed my chickens and this and that around there. I says, bring the harness over. I had a harness fixed up. He says, "What are you going to do with her?" I says hook her on the plow, on the foot burner, because you know, it's stumpy ground. We plowed. She come up and looked at it and I said, you better give me a whip. And I laughed and I knew I wasn't going to have to whip her. And he says, "I'll start <sup>out</sup> ahead of you and then I'll put her on the inside on the turn on the corners, you know they come right against, I thought probably she wouldn't get out of the way from the <sup>tug</sup>. I plowed a half a day with her and put her in and then the next day I come out and she got a sore in her mouth. I stood and looked at her and I left the halter on and I snapped the reins, the lines to the halter. No, I broke lots of horse, but nothing like her. I worked 'em with that same horse. He's a good horse. I broke all kinds of colts with him. And she worked beside of it. And I got home to plow some of ~~it~~. I was plowing that alone. I had more horses than I knew what to do with. So I turned her into pasture. When I come home at noon, why, that horse was there where he was, she went on that side of him. She walked up with me, took 'em some water, she walked up to the barn. I laid the bars down, she turned around and walked into her stall. (laughs) But you had to be with that horse to work with. You want her to stay by the side of the horse that she worked with when I took her home. Says, I only done that when she was working. She worked beside the horse and I led them home. She got in there beside the horse and I didn't even lead her. She followed just like I was leading her.

SS: Did you always try to work those two together?

AH: I worked her by side of the horse all spring work. But after that I shift her back and forth, <sup>anywhere's</sup> it didn't make any difference. It always looked like she'd been a mother to it. That about. They had her jigger who worked her, who went to haul <sup>a little</sup> wood with her, why all they done, they run her back and forth on the trot. After I got to working her, it turned out she was awful fast. Fast walker. When she was young she would just follow right up. She wouldn't

hang on the bit any. They looked alike. I had her for years. Finally she went and cut her whole front hoof off. *I had to shoot her.*

SS: How did she do that?

AH: She cut her foot off. *And* fought with other horses. Went up, raced them and got the dang thing and sawed it back and forth and pulled a wire fence with her. *cut it off*. I guess I sold her to the Fox farm or something. And after that I never had no luck with horses. Of course, we had the tractor after that in with them. I bought a big mare for ten dollars that weighed fifteen hundred pounds. And I traded horses back and forth. So I didn't have more, cut down *to* I didn't have more than two of them and one of 'em got sick. Walked around, I walked around and after that she laid down in the barn and when she go and get up, why she couldn't. She couldn't take her front feet ahead, she kept 'em and tried to get up. Til I strapped on 'em, give 'em a jerk ahead she fly up like a bullet. Finally got rid of her too. My brother had a horse, a young horse when we got him, but we had him many years. He didn't want him over there, so I had him to cultivate with and he got so onery when I was driving the milk cows home in the evening, why he drove them to the farthest end of the *farm*. I got rid of *that one too* and I never had no horses after that. I traded horses and *o*ught horses and sold horses. My dad left two horses there, belonged to him, when I rented the place. He says, "I want 75 dollars a piece for them." No I says, I'm not going to give you 75 dollars for them old horses. He looked at me. "Well, I give 'em to you on one agreement. When you're done with them, take them out and shoot 'em and put 'em out of their misery. Don't let anybody else get 'em." I did. I broke them when I was a kid. I broke them *and* I had them for years and years. My oldest brother, he come, at first he didn't say nothing til I come home with them. I went into the barn, harvest them up and took them to the house and showed them to mother, what they looked like. I went and hooked them up and harnassed another one of the horses and took them out and hooked the lines on them and I went out and drove them in their lines down to the mail box. And that's half a

mile over to <sup>get</sup> the mail and I got the mail and drove 'em back. Thought I'd get 'em used to the bit. And he come, he says, "You know that colt can run away with you any time he wants to. Why don't you tie him down to the other horse?"

(laughs) for doing that. I never had a bad colt, breaking a bad colt. They don't try to run away unless <sup>it's</sup> some goof of some kind. They don't run away the first time you hook 'em up. <sup>They</sup> Pay attention to the horse that you're working with. I had that old brown horse, he finally got old and <sup>he</sup> got wobbly, he couldn't hardly get up and fat. But his legs <sup>seemed to</sup> die out on him one evening. He laid down, the ground. And finally got rid of him, took him up and shot him and buried him. Otherwise, I sold a lot of horse<sup>s</sup> and traded but I did a good deal on the cows that way, I got a little money. Then I had two left and I went down to my sister and she was married and lived *by herself*. I asked her, do you want to have a beef? She says, "I could use it." I'll give you half a beef if you can half of it, Boiled it four hours and <sup>sealed it and</sup> put it in fruit jars. "Yeah, I'll do that." I think I got meat every three, four days. And she canned that and a lot of her own. Made hamburgers, meat balls and put them in fruit jars. So I had plenty to eat anyway.

SS: When you were working the colt that you got in trade...

(End of side A)

AH: My other two brothers, the one that I bought in with, I paid him so much a year til I paid for the place. Rented it and first I give him, I was supposed to have a third. When I rented it, I got <sup>or</sup> a half I should say, on his share. On half of the crop. That's what he got. I paid him off and then the rest I paid cash and finished him out so I had it on my own. Course, he stayed with us til he died. He had about six operations. And then he broke his hip, the last time. And that put in the socket in there but they took out pieces of guts that long and piece that long out of the colon and showed us the *division* between here and then they cut him open and cut, and sewed him up because he got a hernia in that cut. Then they put that leg, they cut that just like mine. Put in a steel joint in there. But that was broken off on his leg.

His leg was out like this til they done that. Then *his guts*, he was chicken that way too, you know. I think he stayed there 19 years. With me for sure.

SS: Could he walk around?

AH: Yeah, he walked around. With a cane alright. But everything else was the matter with him.

SS: What made his health go bad?

AH: I don't know. Nothing go through him when he got that way. Had to douche it out with water and *raise cane* and fool around with him. Jumping around. As long as he lived, I took him down to the home there. I was the one left taking care of him, because he sleep in the daytime and at night he'd holler and rave about this and that. And *never* went to sleep, so that's how that worked.

SS: Which brother was this?

AH: The oldest brother. And then the next brother, he had a beer parlor up here, my brother Gus, he was killed in a logging accident. His wife lives out on the farm *yet*. At times, *But* She's working at Pullman.

SS: What happened to Gus?

AH: Log load slipped over, when they were loading, *split up* and fell on him. An he worked in the woods, it was an all day job, but Oscar didn't after he got sick, he didn't work. He had social security and you know that was an awful lot, 57 dollars a month. And after he figured out how much he got left, it cost him 25 dollars a month for just medicine. Well you know, there wasn't much left.

SS: How much land were you farming when you were using horses?

AH: Heck, we had me and him together, *we* had 160 with a hundred and thirty acres of field on it. And then we found another place that *Lester* Nelson has got, we farmed that, but we had an old Fordson tractor at that time too. And we farmed his place, that was 80 acres. You *turn* an awful lot of work with horses if you've got enough on.

SS: How many did you usually have?



AH: Horses? Well I'll tell you, that's all according to how much I could trade one year when I had that colt I sold and traded and when I come to spring work I only had my own place 130 acres, why, I had two colts. I went up and bought a saddle mare up there. From Bovill. That butcher up there. And three year old colt and two older horses, I put in the whole works. But of course, I had hay too. I raised, there was probably 30 acres of hay and 20 acres of summer fallow and didn't have no trouble putting it in.

SS: What else did you raise?

AH: Wheat. Oats, barley. That was the main crop. I went heavy on fall wheat but I got that golldang government stuff and fooled with it. And I had that other place, I had 55 acres of wheat on my own place. Every year. And you know, long before I quit, I kept cutting it til I was down 18 acres.

SS: That's all you could plant?

AH: That's all I could plant and then I had to leave so much land idle. <sup>for that</sup> Over production. They'll never be that again, you know it?

SS: 55 acres of wheat can't be overproduction.

AH: Well you know, I had another place <sup>just</sup> the same as mine. I'd shift on mine and I'd lay off. Back and forth. And then I raised peas and all that went into wheat in the fall. And I had 120 acres, that's a lot of peas. I didn't have so much on my own place that year anyway, only twenty acres.

SS: Were you rotating peas and wheat?

AH: Yeah. I take a crop of peas and then disc up the ground, plant it into wheat. Course, I always had some summer fallow. I raised good wheat. Put fertilizer on every year. Like they do now. Them years they didn't put any fertilizer on. That come on later.

SS: Did you raise a pretty good wheat crop?

AH: Well I raised about 35,40 bushels to the acre and that's good wheat. Lots of 'em don't raise any more, not with fertilizer on 'em, A little of 'em will, I'll admit that. Straight summer fallow, some put fertilizer on the

year everything went <sup>over</sup>. My wheat went out, I had 20, I was allowed 22 acres then. I got 65 bushel on 11 acres and other field that I had went 43. And one neighbor, he had a renter on there and he ~~stayed~~ <sup>us</sup> ~~with~~ late. And he seen a spear standing every two feet. Well one neighbor there on the west of me, he, I don't know what the heck he come up with <sup>on</sup> spear so far apart and then you could find a little bunch <sup>in</sup> there. They had to disc everything out and put it into spring wheat. But nowadays they're getting 3000 acres. Or more. The fella that I sold my place to, his dad and <sup>dozen</sup> the boys had 3-4 acres. And that McKenzie, he's got no less. But right around home there, the place on the north, that's farmed by this big farmer. And then he goes back over and he's got 200 acres that he, another fellow used to live and farm, he's got that. And right on the west 40 of me there's another farmer. The same farmer, he's got that farm. 120 acres. But then he jumped over one place. This fellow that was renting from me was renting that, it's one of the big farmer's boys. He sold that place. So he didn't get that, but then he jumped around on each side of me. <sup>He got a</sup> <sub>farm</sub> there 160 acres. and on the south. That's Ingle, you know, he's a big farmer on Bear Ridge. He owned that place. After a little while, it gets agoing like that. They can do as they please if wheat prices ain't what they want. They just say, "We'll cut it out. We'll cut it." What is the government going to do? They can't come and tell you, "Put that in or we'll shoot you." They're farming it the way they want to. And they'll have the control over the whole darn works if they keep agoing.

SS: When you were growing up there, was it all small farms?

AH: A farm about 160 acres or less. People living. All on that part and raise a big family. On the south there's a family <sup>south of my place</sup> of 5, 6 kids and turned into it was a family of 5 and one that comes right down beside of mine, there was a family of, on that 60 that goes out, 9-10 kids. No, they was family on every 160 acres or less. And you go down on that thing they call Texas Ridge and look and see how many <sup>that's</sup> farming there. There's less than 10-12 farmers on the whole dang ridge. And there was probably 30-40 out. Things have changed.

SS: What year were you born?

AH: Well, I'm 78 years old.

Unidentified Voice: 1896.

SS: When you were growing up, was it mostly homesteaders that were still there?

AH: Yeah. There was homesteaders, the place that dad got was on that homestead. He come from<sup>m</sup> Sweden, but he went to Minneapolis, thought he'd stay down there and took out his citizen papers and come back up here. And got a, filed on a place and stayed here. He didn't have nothing down there, but he took out his citizen papers.

SS: He homesteaded here?

AH: Yeah. He homesteaded. And so did all the rest of them.

SS: Do you know why he came to Idaho?

AH: Well, that I don't know exactly how they come.

SS: He might have known somebody here.

AH: Oh, my uncle, he come from Sweden too. And mother, he was married to mother's sister. But then, the whole darn country on Bear Creek there was nothing but Swedes. Ever darn one. And they sidled up along that creek so they could have plenty of water. And then the thing they called Pine Creek, that was never dry, them days. Water, all the timber standing, solid timber. With million of feet knocked down on the home place. Ring the trees and went around hacking with knives til it got dry. Took and put a fire to 'em and burnt 'em down and burnt 'em up. That don't sound right, does it?

SS: Sounds like a big waste.

AH: Well, where the heck they going to live? I hauled wood after I was 15 years old. And hauled wood up here to Deary and up along the track by<sup>where</sup> the warehouse at the woodpile. They got six, seven dollars a cord, big price. You look what it is now, you can buy a<sup>10054</sup> cord of wood for 40 dollars.

SS: Did you clear any of that land, or did your father clear it all?

AH: Well, my father had most of that cleared. Cleared some patches here and there. He took the best parts where the best ground was and then he probably left

the <sup>stumps out.</sup> We took all that out. After we boys started farming.

SS: I heard that land on Bear Ridge is better than land on Bear Creek. But the Bear Ridge land was settled later?

AH: Well, they come in, I guess Bear Ridge down below us was pret'near homesteaded <sup>at</sup> the same time. That's figured pretty good ground. Well, you know the division of, what divide Lower and Upper Bear Ridge, when you go out of town <sup>there</sup>, that's Lower Bear Ridge and this is Upper Bear Ridge. Now it's, <sup>fella</sup> <sup>stop</sup> to think, well if them farmers wanted to starve to death, <sup>or homesteader,</sup> they went out and worked outside where they could get work. They made a hundred dollars, they live on that a year. Five hundred dollars goes now. My uncle, he took a contract cleaning out that ~~cut~~ there by Moscow. He had a farm down there at that time. <sup>already</sup> And he went bankrupt. My dad worked on the road come from Moscow to Kendrick. He worked on that road. He didn't, he told me he worked there but that druggist man, not the druggist that's in Troy now, the one before, <sup>by the name of</sup> Johnson too, he said, "Your dad, he stayed at my folks and boarded here when he was working on the railroad. That's before I was born, I guess.

SS: It was.

AH: Yeah. There was only three kids born, Freida and Oscar and Robert. Three kids. They come from Sweden and I guess about four, five years old, the oldest one. Five, probably. And the rest of the kids was all born out here.

SS: When your uncle went bankrupt, was that on the railroad?

AH: He took the contract to put that up for so much money, to clean that cut out. He went behind and he didn't have enough money to pay the workers or nothing. He had to file bankruptcy.

SS: I think that happened to a lot of folks.

AH: They took everything away that he had. He was one of them guys that said, "Only one thing to do. Put on new bristles and start in again." And he'd buy anything, if he could buy it on time, he'd buy it. He had debts that he was so old that he quit farming and then he had a couple thousand left to pay on

that place. He had bought 2,3 places, but after he got so far, he sold them and then he bought another one. So he wasn't any further ahead. But this place he had, now last time, I can't figure out where it, when I was there when I was a kid, And stayed with Auntie too, and Uncle, but it had two big silos on it and big barn. But je lived in town at the time and went out to the farm and farmed. He was a town man. He come home every night and dressed up and went downtown.

SS: This buying on time...

AH: He did pretty well. He sold a place I guess at that time for 17 or 18 thousand dollars. Well, probably 19. Because I think he had 17000<sup>dollars</sup> left after he paid my dad. I didn't know if that was big money at that time.

SS: Sure it was.

AH: That place out there, where you come over the divide? And it goes, Lundquists on the side, they go right down to the old road, I farmed that and the fellow that bought that <sup>from</sup> the fellow that owned it before him, they thought he got a big price, he sold out for six thousand dollars. I bought his place as a home place once before. The First World War, I saved up a little money and tell the truth about it. And dad, we got ready to move to town. He stayed out there anyway. What the heck, <sup>wheat</sup> went up, when dad had the last crop, wheat went up to two dollars and fifty cents a bushel after the first World's War. And dad was one of them fellows that was always lucky any way. He says, "I was hauling in the grain in the fall. Whenever you get in there, it's 2.50 by the time it's sold." And then it took us long pride down like that. Wheat went down to 65 cents a bushel and oats, I don't know. Less than a cent a bushel, I guess. Goldang it, what in the heck you going to pay with? There was a fellow down there. He had a big crop, he hauled in his crop and went down to 65 cents. He left it lay there <sup>for</sup> 4,5 years. I guess the storage ate it up. He got to start at 65 cents, you know, so much a ton. A month for storage. And you think for three, four years, I imagine the crop had to go.

SS: What happened to you when you got the place and the bottome fell out of the

market?

AH: Well I tried to pay, I bought it from my dad. So I went to him and I sold him mine, you bought a place."No, I didn't."<sup>yes you did.</sup> I give him a quick deed back on the place. He stood and looked at me a while. He said,"Well, the money you paid in, I'll give you a break. You take the crop."So I didn't exactly go broke<sup>exactly</sup> on it. I got that crop and he had it and <sup>we</sup> farmed it for him a couple of years. Me and my brother Gus. Then he moved into town and I was renting it then of course, when he moved in. Made pretty good at that, some years. I raised peas there, the whole darn thing for four thousand dollars. Besides the other crop. That's good money at that time. So I shouldn't holler too much.

SS: When that happened after WWI it caught a lot of people.

AH: Well it wasn't only, we went broke, a fellow up on Bear Ridge he went up and bought our place on Texas Ridge there, a <sup>darn</sup> nice place and sold his place there and he had put so much on it and I'll be danged, of course, bigger money on the last one, he lost everything. He couldn't pay. And he wasn't the only one, quite a few others the same way. One fellow brought, he had a place next to me there, Horsted, he overtook that and this other fellow, he had a mortgage on all his cattle, horses <sup>and</sup> everything. And he got mad and he took and moved them down to his place and says, "There you are. Do with them what you want to."For the money he'd borrowed on the bank. The bank went broke here you know, too. I didn't lose such a heck of a lot on it. I think <sup>I had</sup> 15,1600 dollars I think, in here at the time.

SS: Did you lose that?

AH: I didn't. I got a little payment. But I had money out ~~in~~ the Troy bank. They went in and got the money, them big money men went into the bank. They had to have so much cash. Well they just went in and put it in the bank. So the bank never went broke in Troy. Didn't have any trouble with that part.

SS: Was the Deary bank a good one?

AH: They got in bad 'cause they loaned out money to these ranchers ~~and~~ stuff. And

they couldn't pay and got a farm and this and that. Cattle. And you didn't have enough backing for it. To collect the stuff and he collected there for his wages and this and that til the people that had money there went in and closed them out. Divided up the rest of it. Or he'd have stayed there yet. He says, "I would have collected it." Well people are crazy. That First World War, what was the idea to raise everything up? And the wheat, you couldn't save a sack at home, you were supposed to take it to the warehouse. And then when you bought a sack of flour, you were supposed to buy that much rice and that much corn and this substitute to go with it. One poor farmer out here, he had bought for sacks of flour and he had laying at home there. Somebody seen it and went squealing, he had to take it in there, haul it up to town. And stuff like that, people are crazy. And the sugar, they holler about sugar went up high now. Took and raise that <sup>up to</sup> 100 pounds for 25 dollars. Ma did a lot of canning. Me and my brother were working, we'd come home and mother was kicking about this and that. Sugar was so high. Didn't say nothing, went up to town and bought a sack of sugar, 100 pounds of sugar and took it out. They did <sup>that</sup> rationing, but later on, the other war, why then you couldn't buy only so much. You had to get stamps. I don't know what the heck the idea of it. Pure foolishness, all of it.

SS: When you bought the sugar, you paid 25 dollars for that?

AH: We paid <sup>25</sup> dollars for <sup>100</sup> pounds.

SS: You bought it anyway.

AH: We bought it and took it home and gave it.

SS: So she'd stop complaining?

AH: She was doing a lot of canning. Of course, we fellows, we didn't work. When we was idle, we'd go home to the folks, <sup>We had to</sup> do something for the board. 'Cause like when I was home there and I went out a while in the summer, why then I worked in the spring and in the harvest and that is all over and went back to the woods.

(End of side B)

AH: ...worked out and lumberjacked. I sawed a lot of logs out in Helmer there one winter. But them prices was up that year. You got a dollar a thousand. We tried to knock down twenty thousand a day. We did, we had nice timber. Big yellow pine, big as this table across. Six, seven logs out of 'em. But loggers scale a thousand feet. We slaughtered down a lot of timber there. With a cross cut saw.

SS: How many guys was working on this together?

AH" Only two.

SS: You and a brother?

AH: Yeah. <sup>Used</sup> an old crosscut saw. And then on the other side of Camp 6 we was sawing Camp 7 timber and we staying at Camp 6. Camp 7 was down in the canyon there, we had closer to go. So we stayed there and the fella that logged behind, <sup>us</sup> he stayed there, At Camp 6. But they had a highline put in. They paid 20 cents.

out of strips. And the fella that cut the middle strip, or the one that got it off first with the line, he got, they paid him extra money, see. Twenty dollar bonus or something. I never thought of fighting for that, but then, heck, I didn't, I never sawed on that. My brother Oscar did. And the guy above me and Gus, we worked the other way. We had all nice yellow pine timber.

SS: You were working for Potlatch?

AH: Yeah.

SS: What were the camps like? What was Camp 6 like?

AH: Well they had two or three big buildings there that double bunks and great big cookhouse, enough to handle a hundred men or better. And all them big barns in there, I guess they're all torn down now. Never went over to where Camp 6 is at. It was out north of Helmer on the other side of the railroad track.

SS: What was it like with all the lumberjacks?

AH: Well, it's heck of a life as far as that goes. They had single bunks



two high. Single bunk, that wasn't too high. And an alley to walk in, about that high. Between the bunks. <sup>Upper</sup> bunks had a step ladder . . . they walked up. Now it's quite a layout. But you know, before that time, not many years, I remember the lumberjacks when they carried their bedding on their backs. Believe it or not. That's when the Wobblies, oh you know, the union got in and they had to furnish the beds. Course, you paid for the board, if you was working. But if you come into camp and look for work, go in and eat, there's no charge. So it wasn't bad, anyway.

SS: What did the IWW<sup>s</sup> do, did they do very much?

AH: Well, they formed that union, anyways, got that to go through. Then they wanted more to sign, <sup>and</sup> join than joined. That First World's War, you know, lot of the thrashing rings burnt up. "Oh, the Wobblies are burning them, the Wobblies are burning them!" So they got a meeting down in the schoolhouse, going down there to get the farmers to sign to fight the Wobblies. I told a fella I was working for, I'm not going down. "Oh, come go along." And then the ~~stepson~~, he says, "I'm not signing..." they all signed up and asked me, I said no, I have to work with them fellas when I go up to camp and <sup>work and</sup> what the heck you think I am? And then this other guy there counted, counted every one that's in there. And there was one man on each side of the door standing watching so the Wobblies didn't blow up the building. Foolish things. And they said, "There just two?" And ~~I~~ said, no there's four of us that ain't signed it yet. And don't look for me to sign up. If I lose my job <sup>from</sup> the farmer I'm working for, why okay. He signed up and one other of the boys signed up. But the stepson didn't sign up. And I don't know if one of his boys did sign up. Well then they went down to Moscow. Oh they <sup>fixem</sup> out with guns and stuff to fight the Wobblies, heck, there wasn't a Wobbly on the whole goddang ridge! (chuckles)

SS: I heard that most of the guys like in Camp 6 signed up with the Wobblies.

AH: They belonged to the Wobblies, but the farmers didn't belong to it.

SS: Did you sign up when you were working in the camps?

AH: I didn't have to. I never did. And there was lots of them ~~m~~ didn't make any

difference then because they got so they didn't carry their blankets and stuff. But there was lot of union men<sup>in</sup> there at that time.

SS: Did they try to get you to sign up? In the camp.<sup>?</sup>

AH: They did probably sometimes, but after a while they never hardly bothered with it. They went out and tried to get people to join <sup>em,</sup>

SS: Didn't they strike, didn't they shut the camp down?

AH: They did, they closed down everything, once or twice. For higher pay, I guess. But I was working at that time in the camp. They made a vote, they took the men out that were staying in camp and they said, "The Wobblies, you go on one side, and the other, you go on the other<sup>side</sup>." Well, they broke about even. But I guess they had the strike for a while, didn't amount to much here, but up at Pierce, I guess they had a shooting scrap over it. They went to shooting at, the Wobblies went to shooting at the fellas going to work. But. I guess they shot one guy. (pause) Fancy nurse. Old fellas that been with the company for years all come up from back east and up here to work. And all of them <sup>that</sup> have a little better job, you know. I don't know. Kid get in there, they looked at him like he was a badger or something.

SS: A badger?

AH: Yes, was just, they hated to see a kid come in. Old Tom Mallody he was good that way. He liked the kids. I seen that old guy, about six kids come in there, must have been about 15,16 years old. I guess you had to be 16 before you got in. Some of them lied on their age, anyway. Well, he sent 'em out to clean skidways. He says, "I'll find a place for you to work kid, if you stay with us for a few days." He give 'em a chance to work hard, anyway. Sometimes a flunky would quit in a cookhouse wagon, he'd <sup>go</sup> and get one of them <sup>to come in and wait</sup> tables. No, it's quite a different, nowadays there's no camp. I guess they got a camp up at Headquarters.

SS: Most of the lumberjacks in the camps were old guys?

AH: Well not all of the, but lots of them oldtimers they had back east, they

brought them with them up here. Some was, the later years, I was already 20, there was some of them alive that give 'em a chance to go out and burn brush along the skidways and stuff. And honest to god, one guy, I seane him, a fellow by the name of Lind<sup>had a</sup> camp back of Spud Hill, they come up there and burned brush around so the skidway would be safe. It took 'em two hours to walk out to work and he didn't have far to walk. He was too stiff to go to the bunk-house, he slept in the barn there where nobody bothered him, but he was drawing wages, I don't know. He was worse off than I am now. He couldn't hardly walk. But I don't know, seemed like ...

SS: They kept him on.

AH: They kept him on anyway. But the Malloy's and the O'Keefe's, all out there, they come from back east, I guess. And Pelton, I don't know where he come from. I guess he was one too.

SS: Was T.P. Jones out there when you were in the camp?

AH: Yeah, I know T.P. Jones well. He used ~~to~~ come out there to the farm. It was different then when Nogle was there. He go out to a farmer and buy a bunch of hay or a bunch of grain. If he had a beef, butcher it, bring it in. And Nogle got there, he tell<sup>he'd haul the stuff out,</sup> that's all the different they was. Old T.P. Jones was a swell old guy. Dad had two acres of fruit trees and stuff. He <sup>o</sup>bught the apples. First bought the prunes. He says, "You pick 'em." They had all kinds of camps going. Picked prunes til we were blue in the face. I don't remember ~~what~~ we got, a couple of cents or a cent a pound or something. We picked 2200 pounds in, he weighed them in the boxes and then they took them out and dumped them in a big truck and he hauled 'em around to the camps. But then the apples, he sold 250 boxes of apples in the fall. And then you picked up about that much more<sup>around</sup> in the early winter or late fall, way late, why, took another 200 boxes. But you couldn't Nogle come in there, you couldn't, you could on something that was hard to get, like that didn't get hay on any place, why, tell you to bring it in, or oats or something, that's about the only thing you could sell there. For all them horses. I logged with horses them

days. Oh they tried everything. I even seen when we were sawing logs over east of that Liberty schoolhouse going down towards Potlatch. And it come in up above here and they put in a highline. The highline had a bend in it. Oh, they had an awful time. They had a million feet <sup>of logs</sup> they were going to take out on that crooked highline. And that god dang big heavy trolley jumped the track when they were going to make the turn. <sup>I guess they got 'em in.</sup> But then that highline stuff, that was pretty, worked pretty nice on a straight line.

SS: I wanted to ask you, did you know Cougar Jack?

AH: Yeah, I knew Cougar Jack. I knew him, lived neighbors with him, just about.

SS: I heard he was a real strong man.

AH: No. He was a big strong bluff. (chuckles) I know his brother Sam Sturman and Jack Sturman, I know the boys, I guess there's still one working up there in the camps. Probably more of them. I mean, grandsons.

SS: Where did Cougar Jack, he had a reputation of being somewhat of a character.

AH: I don't know, I never had no trouble with him, he's a nice <sup>enough</sup> guy. I lived neighbors with him. But I guess he was one of them that was a bluff. I know a guy that didn't weigh near as much as he did and take him about ten minutes to clean him up, so I don't know what. Got into a fight.

SS: The two of them got into a fight?

AH: Oh yeah. He run his bluff. Fella at work. He lived right out, about four miles out of town. Kind of go up on the second road. The left hand road that goes up here, he went over that and into the other side of that hill, and there was his house, his place, laying there half on each side of the road. And Sam, his brother, he had a place kind of south of that. See, them places in there belonged to the Potlatch Company. Took the timber haul. And my brother, he lived right on top of that hill there, the house up there, <sup>little</sup> white house and barn and sheds on this side. And Louis Hanson had on the other side. That was also Potlatch Company land, took the logs off and to clear down to Bear Creek, see. Pine Creek on that side. They owned, they bought the places to get the timber.

SS: How much did they pay for timber then?

- AH: Four dollars a thousand. At the track. We sold logs off of the place that we were on. We hauled it into a spur right below the place there. I think it was four and a half for yellow pine at that time. And three and a half for fir. So you know, it's no prices like it is now.
- SS: Could you make money doing that?
- AH: Well, I got timber off of the home place, they was farming around 37 acres. They <sup>took out around</sup> two or three hundred thousand of pine that was in amongst the fields and stuff. Wanted out. I had standing timber on the place there. When I sold the place. It wasn't logged clean or anything. But I let that go with the farm. He logged it off, so it was alright. I waited after three payments and he paid me in certified government money and...
- SS: Potlatch would take it on the stump, wouldn't they?
- AH: Oh yeah, they bought it stumpage. If they could get it. But lots of this land up above here, Elk River, I think they took the timber off and probably didn't pay taxes on it. Goes back to the state, I don't know how they got that.
- SS: Sounds like the kind of money they were paying, nobody would do too well. Selling their timber to them. Sounds like they had a corner on the market.
- AH: I don't know. You sort of figure that up in there. But it was the state or the company or Weyerhausers, I don't know which. But most of them fellas that took them timber claims, they sold it, land to the company.
- SS: After they proved up?
- AH: After they proved up. I guess they made a little money.
- SS: It took them some time to prove up, too. Take years.
- AH: Well that didn't take so long up in there, you know.
- SS: It was different?
- AH: <sup>It's not a homestead.</sup> Yes. You filed a homestead, you know, you filed your place and paid the filing fee and all this and that. And then you got your deed to it. But if you took a homestead you had to do so much work on it. For the buildings and you had to work so much field on it.

SS: Was that called stone and timber?

AH: I don't know. Years ago there was one claim they called pre-emption, but I don't know if anybody ever took that. And a homestead, I think you could take it either way. But it works out just about the same, I guess. But these timber claims, just like Bovill living up there, <sup>he was</sup> nothing but a warehouse in there. All these fellas that come up, he had a place there for to go and take and a locator to go with them to show them what places they could get. Bill Helmer and probably quite a few others, for all I know.

SS: Bill Helmer was a locator?

AH: Well, he took these fellas out <sup>as near as I understood</sup> and showed them where they could get the place. And after that he was a cruiser. He'd go out and take out the line if they bought a place. And he was like a surveyor and he knew everything about it. They surveyed it. And then they, the railroad spur going out, why he surveyed that out and staked it out for to go. He wasn't working alone at it. He had two, three guys with him. Cutting stakes and moving them if he wanted them moved.

SS: Did you ever work with him?

AH: I never worked with him.

SS: I've heard that he knew his way around the woods.

AH: I knew him well enough. And, the walker?

SS: Walker? Axel Anderson?

AH: <sup>he was one, but he wasn't before.</sup> Ed McGuire. He was over all these camps. Walking from one camp to the other.

That was his job. And there's just about as swell a man that ever walked into the woods. <sup>Everybody say it.</sup> He was a swell guy. He looked after the sawyers and seen that the logs were sawed right. Went from one camp to the other. And if he come out there and you were sawing or working hard to beat heck, why, two on the <sup>saw</sup> why he'd get on the handle and help you saw. Tree fell down lay a fella down and he'd get the ~~mission~~ phone, he'd measure out for a log. My brother and I wr got next to him. As long as we worked like heck, he would probably stay there and work with us. Measure out cross holes and swamp them out and we'd

saw like that. <sup>We'd fall another one</sup> He'd stay in camp and go in for dinner and he'd probably work  
 tow hours swamping cross <sup>saws</sup>.

SS: He'd work with you?

AH: Yeah, he worked right with us for to be doing something. He was never in a  
 rush, but you could fall a tree and ho~~ll~~er "timber!" and when that tree fell  
 you start at the bottom and that fella could come from the woods someplace  
 and walk down to by where the tree fell. He knew what tree <sup>he</sup> <sup>was</sup> <sup>working on.</sup>

SS: That sounds different from most of them foremen.

AH: He wasn't, he was called a walker, he walked from camp to ...

SS: Was he in charge of the foremen?

AH: He was in charge of the foreman. He could hire and fire. He could go out and  
<sup>saw a gang and</sup> fire 'em if he wanted to. Course, I don't know if he did, but he  
 just got mad there, Camp 7 we were working. They had a strip and nobody wanted  
 to, they sawed a while on it and quit, sawed a little while and quit. I went  
 up there and told Malloy, he said, "We got to strip <sup>there</sup>, I wanted to look  
 at." I said, it don't look like nothing. He said, "If you saw ~~it~~, try to make  
 it right. You get so many a thousand if you <sup>saw it!</sup> We went  
 in and sawed it. <sup>It was</sup> Junk most of it. Cleaned it up and we were just done one morning  
 and Ed McGuires come down. And he says, "Them darn bohunks up there are splitting  
 timber to beat heck and they're fired. See that you go in on that strip and  
 start sawing. <sup>To make another strip.</sup> and tell Malloy, "if he had his say he  
 would probably send it over to Malloy. But it was just, they were good enough  
 sawyers, but they never sawed in the woods. They had two roads coming out.  
 One went that way and one went up this way. And right in here was a bunch of  
 trees. They said, "Don't fall so many trees over that road." Well they started  
 falling, they fell 'em back and forth and they felled them four, five deep.  
 And they didn't prop up the ends when they sawed the log off the split. <sup>end</sup> And  
 I got up there and looked at it and Ed didn't leave ~~there~~. We went up <sup>move your</sup>  
 tools up. Tom come up there and I says, I 'm not going to fall the trees that  
 way, I'm going to fall ~~them~~ that way <sup>5</sup> and that way. Some of them have to go

across the road, I don't give a darn what they say. Well Tom Mallo~~dy~~ says, "We got in five teams, that ain't doing anything in the barn." Put 'em in on them <sup>here</sup> to skid out a log out of this road and take it, horses trying to pull <sup>'em</sup> on logs. We never pick 'em up with the team, we didn't pay for that right or anything. We fell 'em right across. He skidded it down and laid 'em on an open place for other skidders.

SS: Did he fire the bohunks?

AH: I guess Tom Mallo~~dy~~ fired 'em. I didn't think it was exactly right. But they didn't know better. If they'd had somebody to tell them what it was, they would have made alright. But they got in on a tight place like that on a timber stand, one every eight feet, why ten feet, I ...

SS: I better go.

AH: We sawed up on that strip, <sup>that</sup> was the nicest trees that I ever saw <sup>ed</sup> in my life. There was spruce trees there that were three feet on the stump. <sup>9</sup> Logs in 'em. And the first four logs wouldn't be that much different in size. Four 16 foot logs. We all used to say when we fell 'em over <sup>Bear Ridge</sup> just nice to saw it must have been. Twenty five, thirty trees.

SS: Was this on the job? That he put you on?

AH: We was sawing. And we fell them trees and sawed them up and a log scaler come along with, and scale 'em for the day, every evening. How much we sawed.

SS: Was this the same job the bohunks had been on?

AH: Yeah. We got farther out. We got away from the road. Stuck them in there in part of the road. But that looked to me like they had a stump house out there. I can't see why in the heck he didn't tell the fellas what <sup>the heck</sup> to do.

(End of tape)