WILLIAM KAUDER
Third Interview

Interviewed by:
Rob Moore

Oral History Project
Latah County Museum Society

I. Index

Tape105 .3

WILLIAM KAUDER

Southwick; b. 1868

farmer .7 hours

minute	page	
Side A		
00	1	Came West to better his condition, and did a little. Took Union Pacific from Omaha, Nebraska. People who took the train were mainly "ruffians" with "no solid holdings." He couldn't sleep on the train. They sold everything but their clothes and bedding. New scenery kept him occupied on the train.
08	2	Coming to Cedar Ridge from Dayton. Had to cut brush to be able to turn wagon around. It was harder on their family bacuse they had to take what was left. Discouraged the first winter. Working out on farms. Clearing land. Neighbor's slash fire.
15	4	Neighbors helped back and forth. He wished he had rented land instead of homesteading by clearing land. Remoteness from market. The extremely long day's drive to and from town.
19	5	Little work for people to do for pay. You took two neighbors to show you'd proved up on homestead to the land office in Lewiston (a "hot town"). He gave up homestead to live with mother after father died. The Wellses homesteaded; that was the way to get a home.
25	6	Lawsuit after he relinquished the homestead; he got no money for the years of work. People were "crowding the edges" of the reservation before it was opened. Indians were peaceable about it. People generally respected the Indians. Reservation opening helped local economy; people who lost their mortgaged farms got a new start.
29	7	People could get by with a hundred dollars a year if they gardened. Threshing gave him the money.
Side B		
00	7	Eight pounds of coffee for a dollar. Raised enough wheat for stock only.

Tape 105.3

William Kauder

minute	page	
Side B (continued)		
03	8	Party games; chance to cheat and get the girl. Kids were brought up "with a saw and ax". Schooling. Getting by. People aren't happy now. Struggle after father died. One room cabin.
(11 minutes)		

with Rob Moore

II. Transcript

ROB MOORE: Billy, first off, I wanted to ask you, about when you came west. How did you feel about coming west?

WILLIAM KAUDER: Well, I felt that very possibly it would be better than our condition.

RM: Do you think you did better your condition?

WK: Well,yes, I think we did, a little.

RM: How did you come out here?

WK: The old Union Pacific. From Omaha,Nebraska.

RM: Was it a regular train or a special train?

WK: I don't know, but it was what they called a immigrant train, 'cause there was, I don't know how many cars there was but it took two engines to pull us over the Rockies.

RM: The train was full of immigrants?

WK: Yes. Cars were full.

RM: What was that like?

WK: Oh, pretty hard to explain. It was something new to me. I'd never traveled before.I was working on my father's old farm. Back there in Missouri. And they kind of broke up there and into Iowa and we finished breaking up. That was a full move up into Iowa.

RM: Do you remember how much the immigrant train cost?

WK: No. Our tickets were thirty three dollars a piece.

RM: Do you think it was mostly rich or poor people riding the train?

WK: They looked to me like ruffians to me. I suppose they were mostly stragglers through the country that were not as, that had no solid holding.

RM: Where did you sleep on the train?

WK: We had bunks. Plus our old blankets.I didn't sleep any. I was tired but I couldn't do it.

RM: How did you get the household goods out?

WK: What?

RM: The household goods, did they go on the train with you?

WK: We sold everything only our clothing and bedclothes. We boxed up the bed clothes. There was two young fellers went with us. And we put in our luggage with their tickets.

RM: Did many people know each other?

WK: Well I don't know about that. I didn't get acquainted with anyone. I suppose we were generally occupied with our fathers and mothers. The one car, we never got out of that. We stayed right in that one car.

RM: Was there much socializing on the train?

WK: I didn't hear of any.

RM: How did people keep themselves entertained?

WK: Oh, I don't know. They were pretty quiet in the car we were in. There wasn't no fussing around. We had our own lunches.

RM: What did you do to keep from getting bored?

WK: On the train you mean? There was always something new appearing. That is, scenery. We watched the country pretty close. I remember one place that was in Wyoming. I think We were in the canyon. I looked ahead, I don't know how far of course. But It looked to me like we were going to go into a city, a town of some kind. Then when we got up in there, it was nothing put a lot of piled up rock. It looked like buildings.

RM: That was in Montana?

WK: No, Wyoming. In a canyon.

RM: How long did that trip take?

WK: Well, we left on the seventeenth day of March and got in to Walla Walla probably the twenty first.

RM: What year was that?

WK: 18, I'll be darned if I remember. Probably it was 1880.

RM: How old were you then?

WK: Twenty one.

RM: After you got here, did you work around the Dayton country?

WK: Yeah. Worked out from Walla Walla. in Walla Walla. They had their crops in. The farmers were always passing the streets.

RM: What were the farmers doing?

WK: Passing out on the street, walking by.

RM: What did you do?

WK: In Walla Walla?

RM: Yes.

WK: Didn't do anything. Couldn't get a job there. We come the seventeenth of March and they had there crops in. Wasn't nothing doing anymore. Went up to Dayton and got tangled up in a sawmill. Up the Touchet. We made enough to buy a team harnass and moved up to the Potlatch.

RM: When you moved there, were there people there who had been there a long time?

WK: As our destination you mean?

RM: When you moved up on Potlatch Ridge were there already people there who had been there quite a while?

WK: Oh yes, 'cause it'd been settled ten years before we saw it.

RM: Was proving up on your homestead hard work?

WK: I guess so. When we moved in there timber was thick. Had to cut brush 'fore you could turn your wagon around.

RM: Do you think it was harder on you than most people up there?

WK: Yes. It was. Because we had to take what was left. And the others had a little more of a choice.

RM: Were you tempted to give it up?

WK: Well I was at times, yes.

RM: What time?

WK: It would happen at different times of the year. Sometimes in the winter, first winter we was there, had a snow about three feet deep, I rode around in that.

RM: Did most homesteaders have to work out?

WK: Oh yes.

RM: What kinds of things would they do?

WK: It was principally farm work. In the spring and summer and some just after the harvest.

RM: Was clearing land usually a co-operative effort?

WK: Not much.

RM: If you cleared by yourself, how did you manage to move around those big logs and pile 'em up and things?

WK: Well, cut down a big tree,cut 'em into logs, what we could handle,pile 'em up next to the stump and burn 'em.

RM: Did you just move them around with horse teams?

WK: Move around with, yeah, we had a team. We had to clear land and raise some feed for that team.

RM: When you burned the stumps in the logs, did those fires ever get away?

WK: Not from us, they never.

RM: Did they get away on different people?

WK: No, not very much. One family 'bout a mile and a half northeast from us, they had two grown boys and they cut off about twenty acres I guess, slashed it and then had probably caused a burn, slashing in the fall of the year. That was a big fire. It never got away.

RM: Did you get much help in proving up from your neighbors?

WK: Oh yes.We helped back and forth.

RM: If you had the chance to homestead again, would you do it over again?

WK: I doubt it.

RM: Why not?

WK: Well, in the first place I couldn't strip the tree on the plough and loosen some ground and dug a hole a lot better because the trees are all in a patch and try to farm it. 'Cause we were about 15 or 18 miles from market, and all the way down hill to town and all the way uphill coming home. It was a killing job. Often I got up at three o'clock in the morning, a little before, go out and feed my team, corral 'em and harnass'em, took out the rest of the stock and hitch up to the wagon. I'd get about five miles from home before it got daylight. And it'd be about nine o'clock at night when I got home. And I'd never sleep but about two hours of sleep, we'd get into town about eleven o'clock, hitch the team and tie 'em to the wagon, feed 'em, go do what shopping you wanted to do, or was able to do and get ready things. It'd be about eight, nine or ten o'clock at night when you got home.

RM: What other kinds of things could people do to get ahead? Other than homesteading?

WK: There wasn't anything much to do. Nobody was able to hire anyone.

RM: How were homestead claims investigated?

WK: Well, when you proved up, it took two of your neighbors that knew you when you moved on the farm and at the time that you would go to prove up.

RM; Where did you take them?

WK: Lewiston. A hot town about that time.

RM: Do you think many people would cheat on their proving up?

WK: No, they were mostly pretty honest.They show that they had two witnesses. They all saved each others.

RM: What office would you go to in Lewiston?

WK: U.S. Land Office.

RM: Where was that office?

WK: It was located on Main Street and I don't remember the number. Their office was upstairs.

RM: Do you think some people took advantage of pre-emption and stolen timber? To get more land then they deserved?

WK: Well they might have, but not in our neighborhood, I never noticed it.

RM: Why did you give up your homestead and work your father's?

WK: There was just the three of us, father, mother and myself. And then father passed away, just a year or two after he had proved up. I had to take care of mother, and I couldn't live on the homestead and then live there and take care of her. So I just jumped, never was improved.I don't know who's got her now.

RM: Did the Wellses manage to prove up?Did they move with you from Dayton?

WK: Yeah.

RM: Did they prove up?

WK: Yeah, they proved up. They got a little, there was three of 'em. To get their expenses, the three of 'em proved up the same time. That was father, Wellses and then the other one.

RM: Did they all vouch for each other?

WK: Yeah. Wells, and the other one was and dad and I was and so on.

RM: Why did the Wellses become homesteaders?

WK: Well I guess they had no other way of getting a home. there was quite a family of 'em. The old folks, two boys and four or five girls. Three boys. Claude and George and Erin.

RM: Did you prove up your homestead?

WK: No.

RM: Did you sell the pre-emption then?

WK: Well, I sold it, got into trouble over it and I come out loser on it.

RM: How did you get into trouble over it?

WK: There was two of us. The man I sold to, he wasn't really in possesion. The other man kind of snuck in. And made trouble. When I relinquished, I relinquished to the first party. And the second party butted in there. They had a lawsuit in Lewiston over it and the fellow lost.

RM: So you didn't get anything for all the years of work you put in there?

WK: No. I come out loser on it.

RM: Do you think that happened very often?

WK: I don't know. Didn't there.

RM: Do you know why they opened the Indian Reservation for homestead?

WK: No, I don't know exactly. But the people were crowding the edges on the reservation pretty close.

RM: Do you think it was a good idea to open the reservation for homestead?

WK: Yes.Indians picked their allotments first. Then what was left, the homesteaders could have.

RM: Did the Indians react badly?

WK: No, they were pretty peaceable. They didn't, wasn't many of 'em farmed their land, the rest was outlaws mostly.

RM: Do you think it was a bad deal for them?

WK: No, I don't think so. It didn't turn out any too good. On account a lot of 'em were squatters.

RM: What did most people think of the Indians?

WK: They kind of respected the Indians. In one sense of the word. They dealt with the Indian. Rented their farms. And the Indian was right there to sell you his share. You had to make your rentals through the agency at Lapwai.

RM: Did opening up the reservation help the local economy?

WK: I think so. Lot of the farmers there on the Potlatch, the first ones in there, I guess it was pretty hard. But the places, I wasn't able to redeem 'em. And took a homestead over on the reservation.

RM: How much cash money did you need to get by?

WK: that's different. You could raise a good garden to help yourself, hundred dollars would take you through the winter.

RM: How long would it take you to make that hundred dollars?

WK: One fall I worked for a man by the name of Baker, lived out on the edge of the prairie and he owned a thrashing man. And I earned pretty near a hundred dollars with him .That helped us buy everything.

RM: What were some of the prices of things around 1895? How much would a pair of overalls cost you?

WK: A bushel of wheat in 18, when was Cleveland elected the second time? 1882?

RM: I'm really not too sure. Might have been '92. Before the depression.

WK: '92, that's what's I mean. 1892. 'Cause 1890, he was elected in 1892...

(End of side A)

RM: What were the prices of things around that time?

WK: Well, In 1896, no, in 1892 or 3,3 or 4 I bought eight pounds of coffee for a dollar. It was in pound packages and it was coarse ground, but not ground. Eight pounds for a dollar, which is just a dollar.

RM: Was barter common? Did people trade instead of using money?

WK: They might have. I never noticed it that way.

RM: Did you have to pay cash for all your supplies, or could you pay in wheat?

WK: Father took up a homestead and it was all timber. We just raised enough feed for the horses and the cow. And couple three hogs.

RM: Did the settlers gather camas or couse?

WK: I don't think so. I never heard of any of 'em gathering the camas.

RM: Did they do quite a bit of hunting?

WK: Yes, some of 'em.

RM: Do you think the land was more productive in those days.

WK: Yes, I do.

RM: Can you tell me what a play party is?

WK: A play party. Lot of young people get together, you know at a certain house, and they'd play games. Like Miller Boy and Snap Tug Away. A boy and girl would hand another one would snap anobher one and they'd run around and try to catch one another. Snap and catch you.

RM: What was Miller Boy?

WK: I kind of forget those days. It's , a long time we played 'em. Well, a lot of couples went around in a cirtle. And there was a lot of cheating to be done in that. Like, see how would that go? Miller Boy. I forget how that song went, anymore. Anyhow, You either turn back or you went forward."Happy is the miller boy that stands by the mill. The mill turns around of it's own free will. And we'd all turn back. The ladies step forward and the gents fall back." Your chances of getting somebody else's girl, or losing out altogether.

RM: Were the parties very common?

WK: No. Two or three in the winter.

RM: How did they bring up kids in those days?

WK: Out on the farm. Give 'em a saw and axe. They had a pretty good school, too. But there wasn't that much to learn, proved up in the country. Only could have from about four to six months a year.

RM: Do you think the changes have been for the better?

WK: Oh y es. Some of 'em.

RM: Which do you think haven't been for the better?

WK: The improvements of the properties of the farmers.They get along better, have more to eat. I've raised a good garden. A lot of rutabagas and turnips, potatoes.

RM: Do you think people were happier than or now?

WK: I don't see any happiness in them now.

RM: Why do you figure you've lived so long?

WK: I have no idea. Father, he had a bad heart. And he dropped off on us right in a hard time. Mother and I had a pretty hard struggle there for a few years.

RM: The first winter on the homestead, did you all live together in a little cabin?

WK: We had a one room house and it had two beds in it. And that was our living room, dining room, kitchen.

RM: Did you get along pretty good?

WK: Oh golly yes.

RM: Did you feel sometimes like you were stepping on each others toes?

WK: No.

<u>(End of tape)</u>