

AGNES HEALEY JONES  
Second Interview

Interviewed by:  
Sam Schrager

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AGNES HEALEY JONES

Genesee; b.

housewife

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with Sam Schrager

May 6, 1976

AGNES HEALEY JONES

Genesee; b.

farm wife.

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Side A

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with Sam Schrager  
May 19, 1976

## II. Transcript

SAM: This conversation with Agnes H. ley Jones took place at Latah Convelescent Center on May 6, 1976. Interviewer is Sam Schrager.

AGNES: And, my grandmother said, of course, she died early in life, but anyway, when she was living why they used to come there to the place and they'd get sugar and sweet things like that. And that's the way they got their fresh meat, you see. Grandpa, he'd drive 30 miles to Palouse for the provisions.

S: The Indians, did they find it harder to get their camas once the land was starting to be farmed? Didn't they take a lot of that camas out? I would imagine they would have dug it up when they plowed it over.

A: Well, the Indians, you know, they were after wild roots and stuff like that. They didn't have that canvas stuff, you know, they dressed in Indian clothes. And the Indian women used to have an old stove outside and cooking, or a bonfire, and those tripods, you know. And they'd - those tripods and then they had an iron over <sup>there</sup> and then they'd roast those here camas and they'd make flour out of that.

I think we better let this story go and tell you more about it at home, because I've got it all written out down there.

S: Well, I recall, (break) ...quite a lot of work.

A: Yah, it was. I raised 805 geese and I killed them all. Sew the feathers and sew the geese. And I liked raising them too. But I had to stay home all the time 'cause a cloud would come over <sup>why</sup> there would be a shower, well, if the grass was just so high and their feet would get cold and they can't walk. So I'd have to cart them all in boxes and take them in and dry them off and then take them out again. I raised about 35-40 geese every year.

S: They can't walk?

A: No. Their legs would get cold, you know, and the grass would be so high, you know.

Then they'd all just get in a pile and I'd take them in the house and <sup>I'd</sup> dry them off, you see.



That's why I had so many geese every year. I've got pictures of 'em that I've taken, oh, at different times. I used to like 'em.

S: Well, how did you keep them? Did you have them just all penned in in small areas?

A: Well, the old hen, old chicken – you see, the old hen goose, of course, the old hen goose, I'd break her up and I'd set her eggs and then the second batch why she'd hatch herself. And I had good luck with 'em. I always had good luck with geese. And I'd raise 35<sup>or</sup> 40 every year.

S: What did you feed them mostly?

A: Well, for 48 hours I didn't feed them anything – only water and sand and green grass. They learned to eat themselves. And then after that they make their own living then. They're about the ~~cheapest~~ thing there is to raise.

S: You mean they didn't take grain or anything to keep 'em going?

A: No. They made their own living after two weeks, then they made their own living only I just had to keep them dry, you know, and watch it so the weather didn't get 'em too cold. And <sup>then</sup> the hens then would hatch and I would pour four to five eggs under a hen. And she'd raise 'em. And some times, a chicken – well, a chicken will take care of – let's see, I'd have five geese under a hen and then the hen would take care of the geese, you know. I'd turn two batches of geese with one chicken and that way I raised them.

And then after the first frost after all the pin feathers are grown out, why I'd take and get rid of the old hens then and let the geese – I'd put them all together and they'd <sup>by the</sup> go flock then. And I had a place under the chicken house and I'd keep 'em there.

S: Through the winter?

A: Till the butchering time. When the first snow would fly, I'd start in then. And I'd start in running around for market prices and I'd get my prices and I'd write and tell 'em what I had.

S: More prices?

A: I'd watch <sup>for</sup> the prices then. The prices begin to move then. Perhaps – oh, the turkeys, the turkey weren't so good then. The goose prices are better around Thanksgiving. And I'd butcher them all. And every fourth boiler – I had two wash boilers, two number nine wash boilers and I had a place to do this work. And I had – let me see – that's two wash boilers and I'd change the water every fourth boiler so the feathers wouldn't get dirty, you know, and things like that. And then after that, why, I'd get them out and after all the geese were washed. I'd never sell 'em by live weight, very seldom, because it didn't pay.

S: It didn't pay to sell...?

A: Live weight, no.

S: Oh, oh.

A: No, it was better to sell – well, it'd pay all right but it didn't make as much money, you know. I made more money on them if I didn't sell them live weight. And then I took and had the feathers to sell and <sup>I had</sup> the geese to sell, and that's what I made money on. Otherwise, they can make their own living. Geese are easy to raise.

S: Well, now, would you tell me how you killed 'em? How was the best way to do that that you found?

A: Well, I'd put 'em in a sack and then I'd cut their throat. I'd cut their throat and break their neck. And <sup>then</sup> I'd wrap and none of the blood would get on their feathers. And then I had nice clean feathers and I'd grade 'em as I picked 'em. And I'd have three kinds of feathers. So I <sup>sold</sup> the feathers and the geese the same way.

S: How easy were the feathers to pick?

A: Oh, it was just – well, at first I'd take 'em by the neck, after I'd killed 'em. I'd take 'em and stick in – put 'em in the water first. I'd let the water come to a boil, I'd see it bubbling up and I poured cold water in the boiler and then I'd put the goose in. And put them in by the back first and then try the wings. And then the wings were all right,

well, last I'd put the neck in. I'd put the rest in and then the neck in. And that's the way I fixed 'em. And they were all nice and there wasn't a blemish on 'em or anything. And I had a place in Spokane I shipped 'em, two brothers. Every year I had geese to sell. And ducks, oh, my I had lots of ducks. One time I had the incubator and 40 eggs in the incubator and I had – let's see, I had 44 ducks. I hatched out 40 ducks. And the black ducks I find were the better duck to pick, and after the first snow flies. The first duck, why they'd be all pinfeathers and everything and I figured well, I'll clean them nice. And you didn't have to draw them or anything them days, but, **now** of course, they are more strict about things like that. I'd ship them over to Seattle and Spokane and places like that.

I was busy from the time – well, I called it all set about seven days, and we'd have poultry in the wintertime around the holidays. Oh, I liked it and it was profitable.

S: When you say "profitable", what was the going rate for the geese then?

A: The geese them days you only got ten cents a pound.

S: That was butchered, that wasn't live weight?

A: That was butchered, yes, that wasn't live weight. And then after a while why they give me – oh, I can't say now. Well, I ~~so~~ sold them anyhow, ten cents a pound dresses.

And <sup>goose bring</sup> about – well, anyhow, two dollars when it was dressed. Oh, you didn't make very much on anything then. A lot of work.

S: You'd have to butcher them, though, all at once, pretty much, wouldn't you?

A: Yes. I'd go over and <sup>I'd</sup> butcher for a while – I'd dress from 8 to 11 a day.

S: What do you mean by 8 to 11? Eight in the morning to eleven at night?

A: No. That many geese, you know.

S: Oh, 8 to 11 geese.

A: Yah. I'd prepare a week a head of time. I'd go get everything all ready, get all my breadmaking – and make all my bread and I'd make everything ready so I could just keep

working, keep the clock going, you know. There was a routine I went by and so I got along just fine.

S: How many days would you – would you do it right one day after another?

A: Oh, yes. I'd get all ready and it would take me about 8 days. 8,9,10 days. I'd ship away ~~a~~ lot – lets see...I had enough pictures each year that I could frame it and put them on the walls of the geese I'd raise each year. They're awful nice.

S: You do geese and ducks at the same time – the butchering?

A: I'd butcher the geese first and then I'd butcher the ducks. And I'd wait a certain time before the ducks – the geese were ready, you know, because they were always full of pin feathers, you know. And I'd wait until all the pin feathers were out and then I'd start in. And the duck will loose a pound a night – in one night, you got to take to work. I'd just hide some down in one pasture and then I'd hide quite a few – well, about half a dozen – in another pasture. And that's the way I'd butcher 'em. Because if they know you're butchering, they loose a pound a night.

S: Really?

A: Oh, yes. They're touchy.

S: No the geese, but the ducks?

A: The ducks, um-hum. They're touchy animal. And then you have a band of ducks, and you – too many ducks in one bunch will cause, they be frightened, you know, and they loose that weight when they're out that much.

S: Were they hard to catch when you wanted to catch 'em?

A: Oh, you've got to raise them gentle. You've got to raise them with care, you know.

S: Then they're not afraid of you?

A: Um-hum. And my goodness, I'd have 35, 40 ducks and I'd have <sup>about</sup> 35, 40 geese and

put them both in the yard. And I'd go out there and oh my! the noise. Oh, it was just terrible. I guess the neighbors out there miss me.

S: What did you say – the neighbors miss ...?

A: Yah, on account of the racket, you know.

S: Oh, that's funny.

A: The geese, the geese and ducks both were noisy. The drakes don't make as much noise as the hen ducks. The hen ducks make the noise.

S: Did you get used to that noise or did it always seem to shatter the silence?

A: I didn't pay no attention to it. I haven't paid no attention to any of the noise or anything. I'm used to it.

S: Did these animals, the poultry, did you have to keep them pretty well keep them penned up or did they have the run of the place?

A: The coyotes are plentiful around out in the country there and I'd pen them at night. And in the morning I'd let them out, and I'd watch 'em. That's the way I sort of raised them. And then I sold the feathers for a dollar and a half, two and a half a pound.

S: Did you sell those to Spokane too or ..?

A: I gave each girl a feather bed and two pair of pillows and then I had a feather mattress I made myself. I had two of 'em – a single one and a large one. And they are the nastiest things to work around, my goodness. Down all over everything.

S: I can remember my wife making a sleeping bag out of down and having that same trouble. How would you go about making a feather mattress to..?

A: Well, the best was to make them, is – I made eight sections, you know. You make eight sections to go across that way. And I made eight sections, two eight section beds. And one side would be flat and the other side would be smooth, or biscuit like. And I had those. I never liked the feather beds to sleep on. They were too cold in the winter time

and they're too hot in the summer. That's why I never liked them.

S: But how could you keep the feathers down so that they didn't fly all over the place when you were trying to put 'em inside that?

A: Oh, I worked with them a lot right away. And one time – I had sugar sacks, you know how you'd take sugar sacks and I'd sew – let's see I'd put a pound and a quarter I think it is in each sack. And then I'd hang 'em on the clothesline to dry. So one time I had a sugar sack that had a little hole in it. I didn't think anything about it. I hung it on the line. The next morning I got up and I had feathers from one end of the ranch to the other. The wind just took them through. And they go through a little bit of a hole. And I was – they went right straight through that – wind that streak, you know. And took all my feathers away for that one year <sup>out of</sup> that one sack. And a goose will produce a quarter of a pound, less than a quarter of a pound. Oh, yes, it was a lot of work. But I'm through with that now.

S: Oh, but to look back on it to me it is so interesting to know how people made do.

And what they had to do and what they enjoyed doing, too.

A: Yah, I liked to work with poultry. I always did like to work with poultry. And half the time I never bothered with chicken feathers at all. I'd just fool with the geese. 'Cause with 40 geese, you know, will bring you a lot of feathers.

S: Would you then sell most all the feathers or ...?

A: I had eleven orders for feathers when I quit. Eleven orders and I couldn't fill 'em. And one woman, she got so ornery about it, why she didn't understand how much work that was. She got awful cranky at me because she – well, they all asked for feathers, you know. So one woman got awful ornery.

S: She just wanted the feathers to make pillows and ...?

A: Un-huh. To make pillows for herself. But people use these rubber bands now, these rubber pillows. And those who have the allergies too, they <sup>like to</sup> use just the rubber. So that's

it. But I can tell the difference, goodness. Even when they're sitting on the bed. I can just touch them, you know, and I can tell what's in 'em.

S: By the way, did you get attached to the geese that you had?

A: Yes, there was some of 'em I did. Oh, yeh, I ~~got~~ kinda attached to 'em. But you get so you get so much of that stuff, you know, that it's just, you know, you get rid of them. And Bud always used to say, "I don't see how you can kill those things."

S: Bud, your husband?

A: Um-hum. He said, "I don't see how you can kill them things." I said, "They're just a bird."

S: They're just a bird?

A: Yah.

S: Did it bother you, the birds that you liked, to have to kill 'em?

A: Oh, I kinda hated it. I found a way to kill 'em. You just cut their throat and then break their neck, you know, and then they don't know anything. And only one gander, I had the worst time, he weighed 17 pounds, and I had the worst time with him, to get him to die. I don't know why, but he was so hard. And I threw him up in the wagon box and he layed there and I thought he was dead and, by gosh, he was still alive when I went to get him. I'd save the blood and I'd give it to the chickens and the geese and things like that. No, they were all a lot of work.

S: Did your husband help you with this process?

A: Oh, no. He <sup>wouldn't</sup> – I don't know, I don't think he ever picked a goose or a duck. He just didn't like 'em. Made me a watering trough and I'd go and put – I'd nail boards around the top of the watering trough so they couldn't reach in there and get their dirty beaks in the water and get the watering trough dirty. I had to take care of that and so I went to work and I put

a board in<sup>a #3</sup> wash tub and I took and put a board in that and left one end of the board sticking in the water and the other end sticking out. And then I put a rock in there so they didn't bother to waste the water then.

S: You know, when you say that the ducks got real touchy – they'd loose weight if they knew they were going to be killed, do you think they were smarter than the geese?

A: Oh, I don't think so. I don't hardly think so. But he<sup>wouldn't</sup> eat 'em, goose or duck.

S: He wouldn't eat 'em?

A: Un-uh.

S: Why not?

A: I don't know. He didn't like 'em. Children and I liked 'em and everybody else did but he never liked 'em. And then he went back east to Pennsylvania to visit and he said, "Oh, my, they had a lovely dinner – a special dinner." He said, "Guess what they had." And he wrote in big letters "DUCK". They thought they had something special. Gosh that was funny.

S: He wrote you this in a letter?

A: Yah. Huh-huh. Duck. Yah, I always liked roast duck. My dad always liked – the whole family liked duck, you know. Takes about three and a half hours to roast 'em. But some of these hunters think it's terrible, you use so much time to roast a duck but I like 'em done. When I go to cook 'em, why I want 'em done. And not too fat.

S: Do you think they're better than chicken as a meat to eat?

A: Oh, I don't know, it's just a variety, that's all. And I'd have a variety, just for variety purposes.

S: I've always liked duck a lot. I've always considered it a delicacy to have it. You don't get 'em much.



A: . I guess not. No. But I've always liked duck. Yah. And after the first snow flies. And mating time too, the meat is stringy, it isn't good.

S: At mating time?

A: And geese the same way.

S: When do they mate?

A: Oh, from – well, February on, I guess.

S: When would the young be born?

A: It takes 28 days to hatch a duck – a goose, and 26 days for ducks. That's what it took.

S: Would the babies take a lot of care before – ?

A: Oh, yes, you got – you got to stay home, you can't run around if you're raising geese and ducks. Un-un.

S: You/couldn't trust the flock to take care of the babies, you had to kinda watch 'em and ...?

A: Oh, yah. And, what they geese had, the old gander, the mother hen or such, she'll cover 12 eggs – 14 eggs – 12 to 14 eggs.

S: Really?

A: Yes. And the old gander too, he's awful proud. But you break off the first setting and then they start laying the second time and then you can raise two batches of geese that way, you see. And that's the way I did it. Oh, I'd have so much poultry and stuff around the place – goodness!

S: Would you let some of the hens and the ganders – now the ganders, would you let them live more than one year?

A: Oh, they had to be more than one year old.

S: To mate?

A: Yes, because they are better geese, whenever you raise geese they are no relation and they should be a year old when you get 'em and they should be taken care of that way – no relation at all. I used to swap with 'em, you know. And people would come in and sometimes they'd bring me some of the darnest geese. They used to make me mad. And geese – it will

be just like anything else, where ever you pasture them or pasture 'em, why the taste just goes to the meat.

S: You mean its no good when they - ?

A: Oh, it tastes ugly, you know. One time there was a fellow - I always raised such nice geese, so one of the neighbors, he thought he'd - and he was kinda a cheap skate anyhow, - and so he <sup>says</sup> to Bud, "Well," he says, "I own a gander and so save one for me and I'll trade with ya." So Bud traded with him and he wanted two dollars and he hollared because I charged him \$2 for the gander. Well, he was just a cheapskate, that's all.

S: What would be the matter with these birds that were inferior, that weren't as good as yours? And what would make them worse?

A: Oh, nothing would make them worse if they were inferior because they didn't have the right pasture, you know. You had to have the right pasture. Apples and chaff. I'd finish them up with apples and chaff. And that would make the nicest fine grain meat. Oh, yes.

S: How long would you put 'em on that?

A: Two weeks.

S: But you say some of these birds that came that weren't any good - what kind of pasture were they on?

A: Oh, pig pasture, I think, or something. And I never would trade with that fella again. We just swapped, I just did for accomodation purposes, that's all.

S: Sure, you kinda have to do that kind of thing.

A: Yah, be neighborly. So that was it.

S: Did many people raise geese and ducks around Genesee?

A: No. Un-un. No they don't like to . . . bother . . . They don't stay home long enough.

S: You know I wanted to ask you about the community on Cow Creek. Now, were most of the people there - what was there cultural background? Were they Germans, a lot of 'em?

A: Oh, they were just like any place <sup>here</sup> else. Just all kinds all scattered and they

just called 'em Cow Creek. Cow Creek was east of Genesee and Thorn Creek was west of Genesee.

S: You were on Thorn Creek?

A: Yah, we were just half way between. My folks homesteaded and that's the way they lived.

S: Well, were there many Catholic people around there besides your family?

A: Oh, my goodness yes. The first one was Catholic<sup>s</sup>. And Father Cataldo used to stay at Granddad's and help take care of the children and help raise 'em. And he helped Grandfather<sup>^</sup> <sup>with them</sup> He was awful good to those children.

S: You mean Father Cataldo actually helped raise the kids?

A: It was his stopover place and then he'd go down over the Lewiston Hill. He'd walk down the Lewiston hill a lot of times. And one time I remember my - (aside) Leave the door open.

SOMEONE: Leave the door open?

A: Yah. He'd come there and he'd stay overnight<sup>^</sup> <sup>and that</sup> And they were bachelors and they'd sit and talk and visit and everything. And I don't think they played cards. And Grandfather used to have this old iron kettle, you know, the pot bellied iron kettle, and he'd have that full of water and make that full of this here rolled wheat, you know. And make that full of mush. And then they'd <sup>this</sup> syrup. They'd go up to Palouse and they'd get their supply of groceries in the fall of the year and he used to go down there and get all of his groceries at Palouse, Washington from Thorn Creek. And he'd have all the syrup and everything else. And he'd have big jackets, what they call jackets. You know, you've seen those jackets. They're - you don't see 'em anymore. Oh, they're t<sup>i</sup>n and then t<sup>i</sup>n on that side and then t<sup>i</sup>n on the other side. And they'd hold from two to three gallons in size. And he'd always have several of them sitting around. And then by midnight that was their lunch. They'd use that syrup on their cereal.

S: Well, how long would Father Cataldo stop over there?

A: Oh, until he made the rounds of the territory. He would say prayers and masses on

the prairie – on the open prairie.

S: Where would he hold his services?

A: Right in the open service.

S: Right outside the home?

A: Yah, right outside, and that's the way he held the services.

S: So you think he'd stay for – with your Grandfather – maybe for a couple of weeks at a time or something like that?

A: Oh, yah. Yes, he stayed there. And he'd batch.

S: Your grandfather wasn't married at that time?

A: No, his wife was dead.

S: Oh, that's right, she had already died.

A: Um-hum.

S: So Father Cataldo would stay for a long time. That's so interesting to me. That's so interesting.

A: Yah. He'd stay there and he'd help the cook and everything like that. And so mother, she was 11 years old and he urged her to take her up to DeSmet Mission. There she stayed five years.

S: Do you think he personally took care of her up there?

A: No. Un-un.

S: It was kinda of a fairly big place at that time?

A: DeSmet Mission?

S: Yah.

A: Well, there was a school up there, made by the Sisters of Providence – Charity.

And he used to go up there and <sup>mother said</sup> Grandpa put her in the cart. He had one of 'em two wheel carts, you know, and he was traveling around the country, you know, saying prayers.

S: Did he have a horse too or did he –      END OF SIDE A

AGNES: And they called 'em sulkies, and he took Mother on that and it took 'em three days to go from Thorn Creek up to the DeSmet Mission.

SAM: No kinding.

A: And it rained all the <sup>way</sup> up. They stopped at Catholic places. You know, people them days were more different than they are now. And so she stayed there at DeSmet Mission and she never seen her home for <sup>three</sup> years – or five years – I don't know which it was now. And that's the way she went. She went to school up there then.

S: Why did he think it would be better for her to go up there than to stay at home with her father?

A: Yeh, well, she would be better off where there were so many – with her four brothers, with three brothers, and then other men always coming there and stop there so much and everything. Too many men around and he thought it would be the best way for her. He wanted her to learn how to cook and do things like that. She learned lots of nice things.

S: Like what? When you said "nice things", what kind of things would they teach her?

A: Oh, learn how to dress make, and how to make patterns and how to draft them and sew, do handwork and, ah I don't know. She just did everything.

S: Well, was it pretty isolated on Thorn Creek at that time?

A: Oh, the whole country of Idaho was.

S: She didn't have a chance down there to learn much like she could up there?

A: No, un-huh, no. Nope.

S: Would she have had much chance to go to school down at Thorn Creek if she had stayed?

A: No. If she had got to go – yah, they had a nice school down there. A little school district and Granddad was on the school district all them years. And she stayed there – so he took her on up to DeSmet Mission and she didn't get to see home <sup>then</sup> for four years, I guess. Or three years, I don't know which.

S: What did she think of the Indians up there? Did she talk about that?

A: Well, the Indians – the way the sisters had it up there, they had the Indian girls in one part of the place and then the white girls in the other part. That's the way they kept them, you know. And in the church the same way. They'd go in the church – they'd be in the church in the same way and the eating house the same way, too – the eating, the sisters would teach the sisters. And one time Mother said that she – they didn't take very good care of her and she got sick up there. I think she took chicken pox – no, let me see – was it measles or something? And then she got deaf and she blamed it on to that, I don't know.

S: When did she get deaf? Was it much later? .

A: Yes.

S: Well, that could have an effect on you, I think, it really could.

A: Um-hum. She took cold because the building that they were using took fire and burned. So they had nothing <sup>so</sup> ~~^~~ they had to sleep on straw. So they got along all right but – none of them died or anything but some of them got sick. But see, she got along all right though.

S: She slept in a barn then or something?

A: In an old house. No, it was an old building. So that's all there was to it.

S: I wonder where the other girls like her, the white girls, came from. I wonder, did they just come from around in Northern Idaho?

A: They all come from around – during holidays, there was Corpus Christi and – I can name 'em, the different holidays. And whenever there would be a big holiday they would all gather up their teepees and all their stuff and they'd go up there to the DeSmet Mission. And they'd have church services for two or three days. That's the way they lived.

S: Did she spend much time at all with the Indians up there?

A: Well, there were a lot of white girls up there. White girls, and now – Liberty Lake,

now, Stephen Liberty – that was named, and then Stephen's Pass, and lets see, Steven's Pass. Oh, now anyway those places were named after those – after the squawmen. They called them squawmen, they married Indian women because they could get some land that way to farm. So they had a little land and they farmed and they got along some way, I guess.

S: Well, wasn't there quite a few squawmen around Genesee, too?

A: Oh, yah, there were squawmen. And they called that "the reservation" our west of – or <sup>a</sup>est of Genesee. And there's where the Indian people – that's where the squawmen were living.

S: I've heard it said that a lot of times people didn't think too much of the squawmen.

A: No, they didn't like 'em atall. No. "Oh, there he goes. Well, he's a squawman." And that's the way they'd talk, you know.

S: Why do you think that was? Do you think they figured that they were making easy – too easy – 'cause to get land that way?

A: No. They wanted to get the land, see. The Indian woman would get the land and they'd get out there and farm it. That's why they wanted to marry them – marry squaws.

S: I'm wondering why people didn't care for them. What was the matter? Why they didn't think they were as good?

A: Well, they just didn't like the Indian women because they were taking <sup>up</sup> the white men, you see.

S: And, I guess, the land too? They held a lot of the land, too.

A: Oh, it was all prairie. I remember when we had our farm down there. Dad had 240 acres. He homesteaded, preempted and bought some school section land, so he had three pieces of land. He got his land that way.

S: He had 240 acres when you were growing up? That's how much land?

A: Um-hum. Yep.

S: Was that about as much as a person could handle in those days?

A: He could have had 600 to a thousand acres if he wanted it. Said he was just afraid he couldn't handle it. "Now," he says, "I wish I had of taken more now, if I'd a known what I know now."

S: Is that because of the equipment that he had?

A: Yes. And then he fell and broke his leg from a haystack and that settled everything. And so he had a hard time. He raised lots of hogs.

S: That must have meant he would have a had to work a lot harder than another man would, you know, who could get around more easy.

A: Oh, yes. He wore a peg leg for 27 years.

S: Did he ever – I mean, did he have a hard – do you think, a hard time to get the work done or do you think that he could do it just as easy?

A: Oh, no, he had a plow that – when he broke his leg – well, of course, he rode a plow that you put three horses on – a riding plow. And then he always had a foot burner, what they call a foot burner?

S: Um-hum.

A: And a man always rode that. It had three horses <sup>on that</sup> so he got his land for him.

S: So he had then, he had a hired hand at that place.

A: Yes. Um-hum.

S: Would the hired hand stay there the whole year around?

A: Well, most of the time, he was there most of the time. Dad had a lot of cattle and land, 30 head of cattle and oh, he had hogs and horses and everything else. He'd a made a good – he'd a been a well-to-do – if he had had a college education he'd a been a wealthy man.

S; If he'd had a college education?

A: Yes. After he broke his leg, it gave him an awful setback.

S: Did he ever get to go to college at all?

A: No.



S: Well, this hired man, was it hard to keep a hired man?

A: Well, he was so darn cranky sometimes they didn't want to stay. He'd have to get a middle-aged man.

S: How long would he be able to keep a man?

A: Oh, I don't know. Sometimes he'd keep them <sup>quite awhile</sup> and then again it'd just depend on, you know.

S: Would the hired man get to be a real part of the family or did they stay pretty separate?

A: No. Ah, they stayed pretty separate. Us children, after we got big enough, why we did the work most of us. He had a big long trench and he'd put a trough over that and fill it full of water and put potatoes in there and then he – so they were just about done – why he'd put wheat on top of that. And that would last a while. That's the way he fattened his hogs and then he'd ship 'em.

S: Can you remember the first work that you did around the house, some of the first work?

A: Oh, goodness, we started in pretty young. I don't know. We started in pretty young.

S: What were you expected to do as you were growing up?

A: Well, I don't know. We did the housework for routine. We did the regular housework. I can't remember. We fed the horses and cattle and things.

S: You told me there was some – you were talking before, I think you mentioned you had to help him with the pigs when you were just a kid.

A: Oh, yes, sure.

S: And you said that was rough.

A: That was kinda rough work when, what do they call it when you have two dogs and the hogs would get away and I'd have to go after 'em and <sup>get</sup> them home again. And oh, I don't know. Just a lot of work same as all farm work.

S: You know, you said you moved into Genesee you were still pretty young. How old were you?

A: About twelve – thirteen years old.

S: You mentioned the drummers. Seeing those drummers come into your father's hotel, and I was wondering about what those fellows were like.

A: Oh, those fellows were just traveling salesmen, that's all. Then lots of times they'd have a team of horses and they'd – or a single one and buggy, you know, – and they'd take and show their samples to the farmers and sometimes they'd buy stuff and sometimes they didn't.

S: Did those drummers dress up real fancy? And put on airs?

A: Oh, they were kinda picky, some of them were kinda picky. They couldn't expect too much.

S: Too much from – what? From people?

A: Yes. Too much, you know, fancy food and things.

S: Did your father's hotel do a very big business in those days?

A: Well, they did until the train came into Lewiston and then that settled it. That killed Genesee.

S: That was about 1898, right?

A: Yah.

S: If I'm not mistaken.

A: Um-hum. Genesee was going to the capital of Idaho one time but, I don't know, somebody got in and stold the papers or something in Genesee and took 'em down to Boise and they <sup>had the patent</sup> so that was it.

S: Did your father – sold his farm when he moved into town?

A: Un-uh.

S: He held onto it?

A: He held onto it until he died.

S: Held onto it but he bought the hotel though?

A: Oh, yeh.

S: Well, he must have been doing pretty well if he could afford to buy the hotel too.

A: Yeh, he <sup>was</sup> all right.

S: I was going to ask you about the Rosensteins, too, and what they were like. I understand they were Jewish people.

A: Yeh. And old Jake, he never worried about getting his money. I guess he had \$4,000 on books. But he never let anybody go in want.

S: Really.

A: Um, hum. He was the best old fellow you ever saw. But he was mean to his family.

S: Mean to his family?

A: Cross. He had nice children.

S: Were they real well accepted in Genesee?

A: Oh, yes. Um, hum.

S: He had a couple of daughters and a son?

A: He had three daughters – let's see, Gussie and Hattie and Erma and Molly and...then...

S: Mox.

A: You know, Mox. He used to awful mean to Mark and my goodness, he was cranky with that guy.

S: Mark, his son?

A: Yah. And he had a store down at Lapwai and it was mean the way he put him up to run the store. Expect him to run the store, and – oh, I don't know.

S: Was his son still pretty young when he was doing that?

A: Yah, he had a store up there on Monroe Street – Army Surplus Store. And then he done pretty good and his health <sup>begin</sup> failing and he got married. And his daughter – and he said he hoped he lived till his daughter got married and then he died. So, he was awful nice, though, Mark was. But, oh, <sup>old Rosenstan</sup> was awful severe with that boy.

S: Monroe Street, is that in Spokane?

A: Yah.

S: Was that Mark or the old man that had the store?

A: Mark.

S: Mark did. Do you know, are any of his children still living?

A: I think – they're all in Los Angeles now. I used to – see Bobbi, I corresponded with her for a long time, and I corresponded with the younger girl. And they all died, I guess. They were nice children.

S: Who did you know best? Was Bobbi a pretty close friend of yours?

A: Oh, I was friendly with all of 'em. Oh, Bea, she was kinda of snippy ~~but~~ the rest of 'em, they were nice to me. Hattie, she was a bookkeeper, secretary. She <sup>was</sup> in Spokane for a long time. I don't know if she went to Seattle. And then Gussie, she went down to Los Angeles, I think. I don't remember too much about them now. I can't remember.

S: But do you think that other people, that people thought about their being Jewish, at all?

A: No. Um–uh. We had German Jews, Pennsylvania Dutch. Mrs. Rosenstein was a real nice woman. They still have property down there yet, about 400 acres.

S: What was Mrs. Rosenstein like?

A: Oh, she was an awful nice woman. She was so Americanized and old Jake was just Jewish, you know, old country Jewish. Or, I don't know where he was born but she was more Americanized than he was. But he was awful good to us children.

S: Oh, I thought you were saying he was kind of mean to them too, though?

A: Yah, he was sometimes.

S: But he was good to them at the same – sometimes, too.

A: People took advantage of him, charged an awful lot on the books. That was awful.

S: Was that because he was kindhearted?

A: Yah, un–huh.

S: Money like that – was that money a lot of it he never collected?

A: Yep. Oh, there's a lot of the stores in Genesee lost money from crooked people down there. Honest to goodness, they'd go in <sup>there</sup> and buy stuff and never intend to pay for it.

S: Could somebody get away with that for a very long time?

A: Yep. They had nothing and you can't do anything. The food is gone and that's it. They had no security.

S: I would think a family or family would do that, they wouldn't be too welcome in the country once they found out.

A: Oh, things are a lot different now. No, they're run different now. They don't allow this credit anymore. It's a good thing, too.

S: Well, do you think that a family, say a family that did that, would they still be able to stay around Genesee?

A: No. They got so that's why they started this here non-credit business and such. You always have to pay cash for everything. Unless you had something to trade in – eggs and butter and vegetation, you know. Yah, people do different now. And the tricks that some of 'em would do, they'd go in the store and buy things <sup>there</sup> and trade stuff in there and then they'd buy stuff and the stuff they'd trade in would be inferior. And then the person that bought it, got stung on it. And that's the way they did.

S: Would you say that kind of thing was rare or common in those days?

A: Oh, it was just a common thing.

S: I would think good families would never do something like that.

A: No. You see, they'd have stuff down there and they'd pay a big price for it and pretty soon, you know, the bottom would drop out. And then there'd be the merchant with the high-priced stuff on his hands and no sale for it. And that's the way it went.

S: Did that happen to...?

A: Rosenstein, a lot of that. And Rosenstein was always great for that lute fiske. When Norwegians and Scandinavians used to go there and <sup>they'd</sup> get that lute fiske, you know. And it was like an old piece of wood, I guess. It would take about a week to get it cured, but oh, it was good after it was cured and all.

S: Well, when Rosenstein set up his son in Lapwai, was that something that his son didn't

want to do?

A: Well, he didn't like to do it very well. He had to go down there and batch and run the store too. And poor Mark, he had a hard time.

S: He was still young? Pretty much of a kid?

A: Oh, yes, I'm sure he was only a kid. And then he'd have to himself and do all that kind of stuff like that. And kids them days had a pretty tough time.

S: Do you think that it made a difference to the parents if their daughters married Jewish boys or not?

A: Oh, no. Nobody said anything. There wasn't any – well, Rosensteins, I guess, were about the only Jews. Well, Levi – Levi and Goldstein, too. They were Jews. They were in Lewiston. But they started in Genesee. Old Genesee was across the track, and Levi and Goldstein had a store there. And they moved across. And then they let that go and they had a store of their own – Goldstein did. And it took three months to move the store building from over across the tracks over where they settled down later – now. And that's where the Community Building sits.

S: Do you know who was the cause of them moving – who stopped the railroad? Somebody tried to hold them up for money, didn't they?

A: Oh, they had trouble. They couldn't get the land they wanted and they had trouble, my goodness. And Rosensteins had a piece of land picked out there on one side of the track – see... How was that now? Rosenstein, he wanted so much for the land so they picked some land on this side of the track then. And there's where they started Genesee then, on this side of the track. That's why it's on the other side. And then they called it old town and new town.

S: New town. Well, was it Rosenstein who was holding up the railroad for the...?

A: Yeh, oh, yeh. ...a big price. And it took him three months to winch his store over there.

S: I wonder why Rosenstein – it seems like he only hurt himself by holding up the railroad since he had to move his store.

A: Well, sure. But he didn't have no sense, you know. I don't know what in the world was involved, anyhow. There was quite a story out about that.

S: Um, what was I thinking? Oh, I was going to ask you about J.P. Vollmer, too.

A: Well, that stinker. He was just terrible. He had a store there, you know, that store building up there. And he had a bank and took – and this is actual truth about him, and nobody had any use for him. And he had a store there and had merchandise and had everything in his own hand. And he let people get everything they wanted, you know, said, "You can pay for it this fall." Well, when fall come, why it rained and rained. And my, that was a rainy season. Nobody saved their crops. They lost all they had and he took their farms and everything.

S: That was in '93? That's 'cause they were in debt to him for – through the store?

A: Yep,yep. He urged them to buy things, you know, and didn't give 'em no chance to pay for it.

S: He told 'em he'd give 'em a chance – he told 'em he'd give 'em credit?

A: Yep,yep. He gave 'em credit and everything and then they – well, I guess he didn't know any different either. And then the weather was so bad and he took their property away from 'em.

S: Did this happen – did many people loose their land to J.P. Vollmer at that time?

A: Oh, yes,yep. You could always tell a Vollmer place. It would lay along the – going along the roads, you know, when the automobiles come – always could tell a Vollmer place.

S: How was that?

A: Well, the barn and no house – just a barn, you know. The looks of the barn. There'd be just a barn sit there and that's all. And some places there was a house. And ,oh, some people had less than what they had on their backs and they walked off and left it.

S: Left the country?

A: Um-hum.

S: But you could tell it was a Vollmer place because there was usually no house on it?

A: Oh, yes, sure. And the barn, you know, would be sitting out in a field someplace.

And there would be no road, you see. They didn't have no road established yet.

S: So he held on to the land after he got it?

A: Yep.

S: I guess, my understanding has been that people didn't like him at all around here.

A: Oh, my no. He was too mean.

S: I don't see why he couldn't give people a chance.

A: <sup>then</sup> And Mother said they were running the hotel there and they had the ranch rented out.

And said they were running the hotel and Vollmer and his son come in there, and the weather had been so bad and they couldn't save the crop. Why they both come in there and dress in overalls and try to save what they could save.

S: Vollmer came in dressed in overalls?

A: Yah. And his son J.P., yeh. Yep, that's the way he did.

S: Was this after 1893? This was later then?

A: Yep. This was all during the year '93.

S: Oh, that was the same time. He was trying to save his own crops that year?

A: Oh, yeh, sure.

S: Well, he didn't stay around Genesee after that though did he?

A: No, he stayed in Lewiston, he was a Jew. He was known as a Jew.

S: So he got out of the country?

A: Yah, he stayed in Lewiston.

S: Well, you know, the people around Troy hate him too. That's why they changed their



name from Vollmer to Troy. That was called Vollmer to start with, the town of Troy was.

A: It was?

S: Yah, it was until –

A: Well, um, Troy is in one part of Idaho and Troy is Latah County. And the southern part of Idaho – <sup>why</sup> /that was Nez Perce County.

S: Um-hum.

A: Sure. Oh, they had all kinds of trouble.

S: Just sounds like '93 was maybe the worst year.

A: Well, you see, them days they headed the grain, you see, and lots of 'em bound it. So mostly headers and they'd have to wait for the other fellow to come, the machinery and everything like that. And that way they lost their crop and everything. They didn't have nothing left. It rained, the heads – the wheat grew on the heads while it was standing in the field.

S: So because they headed it, ~~than~~ they had to stack it. Is that right? Instead of bind it?

A: Yeh, they'd put 'em three to five stacks – two to five stacks.

S: Two to five stacks for a <sup>w</sup>hole farm?

A: Yah, for the farm, you know. For all the grain.

S: For 160 acres?

A: Oh, for – well,

S: Or even more?

A: Yeh, it would take more grain than that, more cut grain, to make five stacks. Take 'em about a week to ten days, according to how the weather was. And the weather was different then. The atmosphere and everything is so different than it is now. I don't know. It seems like the weather's changed and the country isn't like it was.

S: Well, you said that the air was purer around in Genesee?

A: Yah. There wasn't so many people and so many, you know, – so thickly populated.

S: How was the weather itself different then?

A: Oh, the weather was all right. Only, of course, if they'd have that <sup>deep</sup> snow, you know, and they'd have to take their horses and come to Genesee and they'd drive right <sup>over</sup> <sup>^</sup>barbed wire fences. They had so much snow. And then, mud, why – it was awful.

S: It was pretty rough to get – to travel through that mud?

A: Oh, yes. Un-huh. The wheels would be hub deep in the mud. And Main Street in Genesee was nothing but mud. They had mud there, my goodness, it was terrible. And old Felix Warren , he had six to eight horses – no, it was –

END OF SIDE B

Transcribed and typed by Karen Purtee