JOHN B. MILLER

Interviewed by:

Sam Schrager

and

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Oral History Project

Latah County Museum Society

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I. Index

JOHN B. MILLER

Tape 126

Bovill; b. 1912

exploration geologist for Standard Oil of California;
Bovill historian

1.7 hours

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John B. Miller

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with Rob Moore
and Sam Schrager
July 18, 1973

II. Transcript

John Miller has not lived in Bovill since he was a young man. Most of his working career has been with Standard Oil of California, as a field specialist in exploration geology. Yet his interest in the early life of Bovill has endured, and after a great deal of research in his spare time, he published The Trees Grew Tall in December of 1972. The book is beautifully written and photographed, and is highly regarded by oldtimers who remember those days well. In this conversation, John Miller touches on the writing of The Trees Grew Tall, early life in Bovill, and problems that society has today.

SAM SCHRAGER: The first thing I wanted to ask you was how your interest in local history came about, whether it started when you were a boy or when you were looking back on it?

JOHN B. MILLER: Well, I think it did start when I was a boy. I think I really started to be aware of it back in 1928. We were back in Wisconsin in '28 and '29, we spent a winter back there, and we used to get this Bovill high school paper here. And they published it, oh, probably about a two page resumé of the history of Bovill that they'd gotten from T. P. Jones. And my dad was going through that and picking out things that he thought were wrong in it, as all oldtimers do. Every time anybody mentions a history or publishes a history, why the oldtimers all always start to pick it to pieces, and then they pick. He started to do that, plus embellish it with a lot of other things that he said ought to have been mentioned. And, of course, I'd always heard him talking about the pioneer days and the early things and so forth, and had quite a background in it. And I think at the time I began to get aware of it; plus the fact that I was always very much interested in old photographs, they always intrigued me. I guess it grew out of that, I don't know that. . .

SAM: When were you born and how old were you then?

J.B.M.: Well, I was born in 1912. In '28 see I was about sixteen at that time.

SAM: And your folks had moved from. . .

J.B.M.: They'd moved from Bovill. Well, we'd gone east, we'd just gone east to visit some of his folks, and when we got

there, why his brother talked us into staying over a winter. He wanted us to spend the winter back there. My folks decided to stay; they rented a house. Among us we picked up work to support ourselves over winter, and spent the winter there. Moved back the next year. That's when we moved from the place there just south of town here. (We already owned the meadow, the Little Meadow out here southeast of town, and we also owned this forty-seven acres south of the treating plant. And we had a house on that but we'd rented that out, so when we came back we moved onto Little Meadow out southeast of town here, and built a house there.)

SAM: Do you feel that it just continued to grow, your interest in history, as you grew up?

J.B.M.: Oh, yes, I think it did. I suppose I was always interested in history. History was interesting to me as a small child, but a small child doesn't quite realize he's living among history, and that his own small community has a history too. This doesn't quite come to you until you suddenly discover that things are getting a long ways behind, and that you know things that or heard about things that other people or younger people haven't experienced and known, and it suddenly comes through. I don't really believe that pioneers in general are very much aware of history, they're so tied up in the present. When a community begins to develop a little past, why, people are going to start to get fascinated with it, and that's the trend I see in the present day people. That's why I think people are so interested when somebody does sit down and write up some thing that is readable.

SAM: Could you tell how you went about collecting the material

that made up The Trees Grew Tall?

J.B.M.: Haphazardly (laugh). I had no experience in it at all. I suppose if I didn't have a framework, a thread of a story, of the sequence of things in mind, it would've been a terrific task. But I did have a framework, and that gives you something to hang something on. And it also sort of serves as a filter for, you know, when you hear something, if it fits in... Well of course if it's true, it always fits in, it has to fit in. But when you start talking to people you hear of so many things that you were just unaware of completely, and it fills that framework, begins to fill that framework in pretty fast.

ROB MOORE: Did you decide to write a book and then start gathering material? Or had you been gathering material first?

J.B.M.: I would have to say (I think I say a little about that in the introduction of the book here), I had started gathering material, but perhaps not actually noting things down in note form and things like that. But I had put several newspaper items aside that had covered history, and I had been already grabbing pictures whenever I had a chance. Whenever there was a chance for me to get ahold of a picture that was of historical interest, I had put it away, either a clipping out of a newspaper, or in some instances an actual photograph. To this extent I had gathered some material. When I started working on this book, I had no intention really... My original plan had never really been to write a book, but do something in a much smaller scale, of the type of thing that you people are interested in, you know--just getting the information and recording it and putting away

someplace where somebody else could get ahold of it, before it was lost. It just seemed to me such a shame that all this information was being lost, because it was in people's memories and nobody was getting it down.

SAM: Are there certain people you depended on in particular for information, and if there were, why were they such good informants for you?

J.B.M.: Only to the extent that I knew who the old people were around town that were associated with the town in the early days. I knew them all. They were the natural people to go to. My facilities to reach people out of Bovill were rather limited because it takes time. If you have to go a hundred miles to talk to somebody, and you can probably talk to three or four people locally while you're doing that. Since I had a pretty limited time budget I had to think of that a great deal. I did go to a few of those people and I wrote letters to others. And I sent inquires to a few through friends, to settle certain issues. But it was pretty apparent, after I had done a couple of stints up in the Bovill area interviewing people, that I pretty much had enough material, so far as volume was concerned, to do me. The main thing was to verify as much as I could, and settle on dates. There were so many discrepencies.

SAM: How did you go about resolving the conflicts?

J.B.M.: As much as I could, I finally had to go into the University library and dig out newspapers and things like that. Well, Gwen Lawrence's (the former Gwen Bovill's) diary. It was her mother's diary that she had used, and she had compiled

this into a manuscript for a book. I had access to that. That settled a great many things. And then I went into the library stacks down at the university to scrounge up more data. In the odds and ends of course there are a lot of things there was just no way to really resolve. Very often on those things, I reported them in such a way that my wording is not that specific about small details. I didn't give dates sometimes, or when I told something as a story, I told it as a story rather than as necessarily an absolute fact. Or I mention a question, that some date is questionable at times.

Nevertheless I run into challanges all the time on the veracity of what I've said, and I feel in many instances it comes to this nitpicking type of criticism that I've mentioned. It often hinges on the fact that one person remembers things differently than another, and I'm very well aware that the day after something happens you can ask two people a question as to what happened, and you don't get the same story. After fifty or sixty years it's kind of easy to understand why it might happen.

SAM: Do you think that's the most difficult thing about trying to capture the past of a small place?

J.B.M.: It's very difficult to interview people and actually come up with precisely what happened at any time or precise thing about the order of events, and things like this. This is what they're very often confused about, is the order which happened. While I was interviewing on these railroads for example, I had a spread of about three years there that

nobody seemed to be sure what happened, or what year the... They couldn't agree on the year that the railroads were completed, for example. I knew pretty well, but still, you begin to question your own information when you hear old-timers say, "Well no that wasn't so, something else was so." And until I could get papers that actually showed, to prove the dates of completion, why, you have to wonder if you might not be wrong about something.

For example, that first meeting we held over here at the church, they argued around about this, and so-and-so says, "Well, the excursion train came in here in 1910." "Well no it didn't, I rode it in 1907," and that sort of thing. When you start going back into history and inquiring what happened, there were two excursion trains, one in each year--one of them commemerating the completion of the W.I.&M. railroad thru and the second one commemorating the junction of the two railroads when the Milwaukie completed their line. And both stories are true.

ROB: You said you already had established a filter, some idea yourself of what had happened. How much did this idea have to change through that sort of...

J.B.M.: Oh, there had to be changes. There were things that I had in my mind that were probably basically correct in context, but were shifted off in time, or were a little wrong in some part of the details. As I would have told the details they wouldn't have been wrong, I mean, from my own recollection. They wouldn't have been out of context with what happened, but they would not have been entirely factual.

And these are the things you have to check on, and get as nearly factual as you can. But, as I say, it does form a framework to fill in, and you're surprised at how fast it does fill in, when you start interviews. But the time is taken, then, when you run into discrepencies.

And it's also taken filling in. I found that I was quite unskilled at interviewing people and the first interview getting all the detail I wanted. They'd go over the information, and, for example, I didn't have a tape recorder, and I'd try to sit there and take notes. And I'd end up the notes, and I'd go back and start to write something about it, and I'd find I'd missed two or three names. Well, they mentioned names there, see, and I don't have those names, and so I'd have to backtrack to people and ask them again. I had that sort of thing happening all the time.

SAM: Do you have thoughts, from your study and your own experience here, about the character of the Bovill area, about what's unique to it?

J.B.M.: Well, I don't really know that there's anything so unique about it. Among these communities back in this part of Latah County, of course, it's tucked back in the woods farther, and depended almost entirely on timber, rather than on farming, which, as you go westward, the county becomes more and more dependent on farming and less and less on its trees. Then the Bovill community of course depended just almost totally on the forest as a source of occupation. Another thing, as compared with towns such as St. Maries and other towns to the north that are fundamentally logging com-

munities, of course, Bovill was a Potlatch Company town. Not owned by the Potlatch Company, I don't mean that, but it was established because of the forests of the Potlatch Company, rather than other logging interests. It was a juncture point, of course, for the railroads, and that was very important to the town. And of course Elk River then was a mill town, Potlatch was a mill town, and Bovill was primarily a town that was set up to move logs.

And it was really in the prime part of the white pine, I think the best white pine in almost all North Idaho was right around Bovill here. There was a lot of white pine in North Idaho but there was none of it that equalled that stands that were around Bovill. So those are certain things that characterized this town. The fact's that more logging crews moved out of Bovill than any other town. Even much of the operations around Elk River and Deary (had) Bovill men involved, much more than there were Elk River and Deary people involved at Bovill, because this is just a kind of a natural center for all of this logging area.

SAM: Could you draw differences between the way people were in Bovill as compared to a farming town like Kendrick or Genesee, that's just besides the fact that here they log and there they farm? Does it make for a different kind of society?

J.B.M.: I'm sure that the logger fundamentally has a different attitude than the farmer. Anytime that you go into the family people, the old time family people were conservative people in general, but the farmer by nature is much more conserative and careful. He has to become much more businesslike in his

attitude or he would go broke. He has to run a closer business, whereas a logger up here of course is working for a monthly wage.[2] He's got a steady income, and he knows just about what it will do, and he lives in this way. He is not forced, as a farmer is, to maybe work fourteen, fifteen hours. He's on a regular work schedule, and he has more free time at night. The logger very often, if he was engaged in a town, and worked right there in the community, lived at home. But many of these people, of course, spent their time, their nights, in a lumber camp, excepting perhaps weekends with the family--those who worked out in the camps. This is quite a different life than the farmer has.

ROB: Loggers, especially the oldtime lumberjacks, have a really strong reputation for their so many tall tales, they're pictured as being hell raisers, and that sort of image surrounds them. Do you think that was a fairly accurate representation?

J.B.M.: I think it probably overstressed. Mrs. Wandke down here was showing me a book that came out, what community is it? It's one of the North Idaho towns, anyway, it deals with, it's something about caulked boots or something, I was just glancing through it.

SAM: Bert Russell.

J.B.M.: Russell, that's right. I got the impression from it that it tended... I din't read the book. It's an unfair criticism, I guess, but just looking at the chapter headings and the way the book was set up, I sort of got the impression that it might be written a bit for the sensational side, you

know, and may tend to overcharacterize the lumberjack as a ruffian. The lumberjack was a hard drinking man, there's no doubt of it. They used lots of liquor, and they lived back in the lumbercamps, you know, until they were really bent to get out and let off steam, and they'd head for Spokane or something and do it. But still, they weren't really that ruffians as storybooks are inclined to picture them. Anytime that you engage people in a hard and dangerous physical work, you're sure to have people who have a ruffian's point of view, I guess, about things. As I say, I think it was that part has been overstressed in books, probably. They were pretty plain people in general. They were transients to a large extent. They were largely bachelors, excepting for these key men that lived in areas like Bovill, who were family men. But the typical lumberjack in the lumbercamp was a transient bachelor, I would say probably three-quarters of the crew.

ROB: Did you have much contact, in this thing, with what with what lumberjacks thought of themselves? I know the whole thing about an outsider looking at lumberjack has his image of a rough-and-ready sort of, you know... What did the lumberjack think of his own job, his own self, his own relationship to the company, things like that?

J.B.M.: Probably the man that ought to answer a question like that would be somebody like Homer Pelton, who was one and who worked closer to them, or a man like Jerry Carlin, who lives down the street, because they knew these people a lot better than I do. I have the impression that the lumberjack,

like almost every class of people, they have a pretty good opinion of their own image. If they are rough-and-ready people, it's because they admire people who are rough-and-ready, and like to fit into the image. I didn't know of very many fights among lumberjacks, for example. They're pretty amiable people. They get along well together. They like each other. Each man appreciates that the other man is a hard worker, that he's tough, and he can get out, and take it and do a man's share. And he can swear as good as anything and he can drink as hard as any, and so forth. And these are sort of the images that they aspire to, and they try to fit the pattern as well as they can. But I don't really think they enjoy brawling and that sort of thing any more that anybody else does, you know. Occassionally somebody gets drunk and probably gets in a fight. But no man is going to go around with a chip in his shoulder, and be spoiling for a fight all the time, and be very popular in any crew. And when you talk about somebody rough-and-ready, as much as anything I think you're probably talking about his ability to get out and do a hard day's work and not complain, and take all kinds of rough knocks on the job, and get along well with the people around him, and behave pretty much like they do. And I think this is really what you're... The life is a rough and ready life, that's kind of what it boils down to. Now someplace in this book I have this picture of this man they call the Lumberjack Preacher.

SAM: Right, Dick Farrell.

J.B.M.: Dick Farrell. I suspect that one of the reasons he was admired so much is that he had been a pugilist. The lumberjacks followed the--an awful lot of them, they followed the professional prizefighters. They admired them. They were physical men, and the lumberjacks appreciate a physical man. And here was a guy that had been a prizefighter, and he'd turned preacher, and probably much more interesting to 'em because he was a prizefighter, and not only that, he was a good rough and tumble fighter. They knew that here was a preacher that come along and lick any man in camp, probably.

My brother-in-law was kind of the same way, you know--Bill Musch. He had been a prizefighter in his younger days. I don't think there's, in the average lumbercamp that he worked, I don't think there'd be a man on the crew that could lick him. But I never knew him to fight anybody. When he went to work for the CCC camps out here, he gave boxing instructions to the young kids. He was a man then, I guess, of close ot fifty years old. He had the fastest hands I ever saw. Gosh, he could move those hands. He'd take--he'd pour these hotcakes out on the griddle like that, and he'd go along with a flipper, and just a series of movements up and down with his hands, and as fast as that hand'd move up and down, why that hotcake turner'd get under the edge of a hotcake and flip it over. He'd flip over sixty hotcakes in about sixty seconds. Precision hands.

And when he worked for the CCC out here, he gave these boxing instructions; and we used to pick up these fellows

and haul them out to camp once in a while, when we'd be driving out that way. I remember my dad talking to one of the boys. He says the boy was telling him Billy Musch was showing them how. They had boxing teams on the CCC camps, and he said, "Billy Musch is our boxing coach." And dad says, he says "Yeh, he used to be a pretty good boxer when he was young, " and the kid says, "Yah, there isn't anybody in camp he can't slap now if he wants to." But of course he had been a pro boxer, and he'd get those hands through there and you just couldn't stop 'em. A person who wasn't of that category... Sure, he didn't have the stamina to fight any more or anything like that, but those hands were just as vicious as they'd ever been. He'd sneak them through.

SAM: Do you think that pretty definite lines were drawn between the guys who lived in the camps and were transient loggers, and the people who were loggers with families here? Was there much of a distinction in Bovill life?

J.B.M.: Well of course the loggers were just back and forth through here, mainly, I mean the transients were back and forth through. They often had good friends in town, usually did. An awful lot of them at least did have good friends in town that they knew. They knew the local people and the local people knew them, by and large. There was a tendency for the same crew to come back to the same area. There'd be some filtering back and shifting forth, back and forth between lumber camps, you know, but an awful lot of the loggers get to liking an area, and they like a certain boss,

and they go back there. So even though they are in and out... They'll quit a job and go up to Spokane and blow off their steam, and spend their money, and very often they came back into the same area to work.

ROB: Would a lot of the transient men stick around, like when the camps were closed during the mud season or during the bad season, when they weren't working? Would they stick around, or would they go off...?

J.B.M.: Some of them did. There were places, for example, the boarding houses and hotels here. The big ones of course were the Bovill Hotel and the Spokane Hotel and the David Hotel. I have the impression--I don't know whether this is quite true all the way along the line, but I think that, by and large, the David Hotel and the Bovill Hotel catered more to rather long-term boarders and people, you know, who would maybe stay over winter, or, being and working out of Bovill, might go out just on jobs out of town, but they board in town. Whereas the Spokane Hotel had an awful lot more overnighters that were just, you know, in town for a night or two and headed out. But then there were old people like Pat Malone, for example, who boarded all full-time at the Spokane hotel. Yes, there were places here where lumberjacks stayed for fairly long terms, but many of them did go out when they were over winter.

But the camps ran during the winter a lot, perhaps more than now. Because you have to consider that these heavy machines that they're using today--rubber tired log haulers or even a tractor--you get it out and work in deep

snow and in mud and so forth, and trucks particularly, and they will mire down. Well, in the old days everything was on rails, and the mud didn't bother the teams so much. As a matter of fact, so far as the teams were concerned, the mud up to a skidding log is a good lubricant, and snow is also a good lubricant. In a heavy snow they could use sleighs, and haul logs on sleighs, or they can skid through the snow, much better than they can get out in deep snow with this equipment. So they ran in the winter a great deal.

SAM: There's one guy that I've talked to, said he quit logging when they went to the more seasonal logging, when they started getting the heavier equipment, because he couldn't work as long as he used to be able to before... What about the difference in morals between the lumberjack and the family man? Was that a problem in the community, or how was it dealt with?

J.B.M.: I can't remember that anything like that was a problem, excepting of course in those days drinking was something of a problem. Drinking was, in the years of prohibition, was against the law, and possession of liquor was against the law, so there was always a conflict between the drinking lumberjack and the law from that standpoint. I don't,-- I was probably too young to appreciate altogether the aspects of the moral life of the lumberjack otherwise, but I suspect for his women he generally went to Spokane. There were plenty of them available up there, and in a small town they just aren't very available.

SAM: You do talk about houses though, at least for a period of time in the early days.

J.B.M.: That was in the saloon days, and of course it was legal at that time. So far as I know, the open prostitution disappeared when the saloons went out of business, because they were kind of tied together, I think, the serving liquor and the prostitution. I don't suppose there were any town hardly but what you will find a small percentage of immoral women. It was much more underground, anyway, after that, whatever did happen. I don't actually know. I so know about the bawdy houses, but just for a time.

SAM: The picture you paint of Pat Malone has really been borne out by people that I've talked to who agree, in fact, have given me other stories about Pat's ideas about having a good time and drinking himself, which makes it seem that prohibition was sort of a farce out here.

J.B.M.: Well, it certainly was. Pat Malone was probably the most, in many senses, the most colorful guy that ever hit the town. (Laughs) He was a character, and there'll never be another like him, probably. It was just that sort of a situation.

SAM: I've been trying to figure out who he ever did arrest, 'cause everybody that I've talked to seems to have been a good friend and went out drinking with him and...

J.B.M.: I think he preferred it that way. When he made an arrest, why I think somebody was pushing him. He'd better get busy. Yes, you'll find the town is full of stories about Pat Malone, and you probably could never come to the end of them. I mean, if you could have gotten into town twenty

years ago you'd have heard twenty times as many, because there were twenty-nine times as many people that knew old Pat as now exist. He was just the character that people most liked to laugh about, that was all, but it didn't mean at all that they didn't like him. I think his actual value to the community was largely ignored, because it didn't fit the image that people liked to have of him, and it really didn't... Since he was a kind of a laughable character, of course, he was going to have that image. I don't imagine that people would have had nearly so much to laugh about, about old Pat, if he hadn't been in the law enforcement side of things, and obliged to at least make token manifestations of doing something with regard to liquor. And, of course, since people were going to drink anyway, why, they just made as much fun out of it as they could. (Chuckle) He was part of the fun.

SAM: Well, what do you think then that his value was?

J.B.M.: Well, in my mind there's little doubt that the presence of a man in an official category... If there really is a situation develops where authority is needed, the presence of such a man does stabilize a community. If anything ever does happen that the law needs teeth, why people will back up the man who has the authority. And knowing that this is so, why, it keeps things in hand.

ROB: Do you recall any situations like that?

J.B.M.: Oh, I recall times when Pat made arrests. I do know also that Pat, to a certain extent, he helped the town keep control of such laws as, say the herd law, where it has to

keep the cows out of town. They had a town pound where they would pick up cows if they were wandering in the streets, which was illegal, and put them in the pound and there would be a fine. He enforced that sort of thing. I told in my book about one arrest he made out here at Camp 7. There were other arrests that he made, I know, where the offenses were less severe, minor thefts and things like that. I just, I don't recollect names at the time, but I'm aware that things like that happened from time to time.

There was the instance out here where they had the fight in the cedar yard. The two men fought and one of them was killed. Well, an arrest is needed. The presence of the deputy sheriff makes it possible. But I think more than anything in the very early days, when the saloons were here, there was more rough and tumble fighting where drunkenness is common in the streets. There are many drunks in the streets. After prohibition, the drunks generally try to become inconspicuous. They try to stay off the streets. But when there's no prohibition, they're out in the street, and when you get a bunch of drunks together you're gonna have trouble. Pat would haul them away to jail, if it got too bad. And he wasn't a firm man, he wasn't a man who would just, you know, dominate the people. But still, by and large, the people are law abiding people, and if he needed help, why these men were his friends, basically. And if one man got out of hand and Pat needed to haul him away, why there was somebody to help.

ROB: Basically what you're saying then is he interpreted the

law himself. He interpreted things that were neccessay to have a legal...

J.B.M.: I suspect if he had been a club-swinging cop or a gun-toting cop that tried to handle the law in a hard-fisted way, he might have run into more trouble than he did just persuading people, you know. (End of Side A.)

I've heard young people mention that they were afraid of Pat. It never occurred to me to be afraid of Pat. But young people, just the fact that he was a policeman, he had authority and that was enough, you know. There's very little doubt that fear of the law is probably at least part of respect for the law, at least for some people. They probably go hand in hand, to some extent. But he was such a mild-mannered fellow that it never occurred to me to be afraid of him, because it didn't occur to me to be doing the type of thing that I had to fear him.

But I did hear one instance... I don't recall the individuals, I know Davy Ellison was one of them that was mentioned, that was involved in this. One time when some of the kids got fairly noisy at some affair, and somebody tried to quiet them down with very little effect, and Pat, ususally, you know, he generally didn't take a hand in such things; but in this case he did step up, and he just stepped in among the boys and said, "Well, quiet down," and they just shut up right there. The law had spoken, so that was it. There's a psychology there I think, from that standpoint, I think he served the town's needs to a large degree.

ROB: It sounds like he really understood, not intellectualizing

anything, just understood the town's needs and responded to them.

J.B.M.: I doubt if he did. I just think he was a kind of an easy-going affable man, and he hated to... I don't think he understood hardness or authority. I don't think he was a tough man at all. But he was a man whose habit, his way of dress, his way of talk, his way of living, was very much like the lumberjack's way. I suspect that the fact that he was affable made him much better liked among the lumberjacks than if he had tried to be hard-handed. They didn't pay much attention to him most of the time. They know they didn't have to. They could kind of do what they liked to do. If they got too far out of line, and he spoke up... Why, if somebody was too drunk to listen or something, why Pat, just because he was authority and he was kind of the natural leader, at that point, the friend would calm down the rowdy one. This is the way I picture it. And I think it probably worked; in that type of people it probably worked better than if he'd actually tried to just, you know, handle a guy.

ROB: He tried to hold himself apart from...

J.B.M.: Right.

SAM: You seem to have a special feeling for Pete Olson in the book, the way you describe him. Was that a feeling that a lot people in the community had about Pete?

J.B.M.: Yes, I think Pete was another one of the people that you could call a real character. People looked at him as a character. And off by himself in many ways. He was comical in many ways. He was certainly a good citizen. He

certainly had a wonderful mind, there's no doubt about it. People realized that he could remember things, and be more accurate in many ways in his memory, and was better informed by far, than a lot of people with possibly much more formal education than Pete had. I don't really know what Pete's education, formal education, was, but he was not short suited. He certainly must have been up someplace in the high school grade, or something like that. Beyond that, he had a mind that acquired information. He had a curious mind, and he had a very retentive memory, and he was an ardent reader of anything and everything, almost. He admired knowledge, but he had very quaint ways.

His place, that's his meadow right up there, that's his farm. (The slaughter house set up in the middle of it, the old slaughterhouse set up in the middle of it. That's where they butchered the meat in the older days. Pete acquired it somewhat later than that. In that period he was just a logger, but he acquired that place and it became his farm.) And you'd see old Pete up there twelve o'clock at night making hay by moonlight, and certainly this isn't...(laugh).

ROB: That goes counter to the old saying, "Make hay while the sun shines."

J.B.M.: Well, he made hay all night long if the dew didn't get too heavy. He never fit the conventional pattern hardly in anything. I don't know how straight he came here from Sweden. He did come into the community from Sweden, I think probably around 1910. I never knew the exact

date.

(Incidentally, this is one of the things that I found out about from the Moore family. I had thought the Hayes family came in here about 1909, and I found out from Mrs. Moore's record down in Potlatch yesterday they were here at least in 1907, at least two years earlier than I thought.)

Pete evidently liked the United States from the start, and became a very good citizen. He was a volunteer into the U. S. Army. I doubt if there was a more patriotic man in the whole town, than Pete Olson, a man who regarded himself more as an American.

SAM: Do you think that there was a general attitude towards Potlatch Forests in the community? Was it very individual, or...

J.B.M.: I think anything like that is individual. There was a lot of antagonism toward the company, of course. I think anytime you have a company or a corporation who is big, and regarded as rich, and that has policies that are tough on the workmen, that there is going to be some antagonism. People continue to work for them. A great many of them admired the bosses, and what-not, that they worked under. Still, there is awareness that the company has got lots of money, and they're making good money, and they're carrying on with policies that the workman feels are not to his best interest. The fact that there's been worse in the past, it leaves the employee with a feeling that he only makes progress when he demands better things, and that the company isn't really ready to give him anything. There has to be some truth to this.

I doubt--in the struggle of the workingman against big business, I doubt if the workingman would have ever made, gotten, very far if he hadn't struggled, if he hadn't unionized, and so forth. And yet today I'm not very much a friend of the unions. I think they probably do us more harm than good in the present world, but in the past they have done us a lot of good.

The IWW's, for example, were the big beginning union among the loggers here, and they were hated by many of the people who regarded themselves to be the more law-and-order type. I know my dad... Almost the worst thing he could call a man would be an IWW, and he felt that was kind, hunh, of bottom of the well. I guess my--the Olson family in Deary, my uncle and aunt, they must have had about the same opinion. I was talking to my cousin down in Deary last year, just when I had this manuscript ready, and she was reading about the IWW's. And her father, Emery Olson, had been a clerk out at Camp 6 during World War I, when the Wobbly trouble was bad. And he'd been deputized by the sheriff's office over in Moscow to make arrests and to conduct the suspects to Moscow to be held by the sheriff. And she was remembering that their father used to come through every once in a while with somebody he'd picked up, that had been an accused IWW member, and accused of something or other. And he'd pick him up in camp and bring him through, and perhaps stop at home for a few minutes, and maybe give him a meal or something. But the fellow would sit down in one of the family chairs someplace, and afterwards the girls were almost afraid to

sit in the chair because it had been contaminated by an IWW.

This is one place where you'll find an awful lot of discrepent opinions about... first about the worth of IWW, second about what acts they did. For example, I tell about this dropping a boom across a pole pile in the cedar yard here, by a man who, well, he'd been newly hired. It was his first day on the job and they'd put him on to operate the loader, and the first thing he did was just drop the boom across the pole pile and there are the two intrepretations. One is that he was trying to sabotage the company; he was an IWW. The second is that he was just an inept operator. Which story's right I don't know, really. My family always believed he was an IWW, because this was a typical IWW type of thing. They were out to do this when they could, they were out to hurt the companies. The companies were all bad and you hurt 'em whenever you can.

Not all IWW's members were out doing damage, by any means, this is surely true. A lot of them were in the union because they felt that it was beneficial to them and they would not do... but on the other hand they would't do anything unethical. But there was some sabotage, and in the Bovill area so far as I know it was not very bad. There were fires that sprang up in the woods that were laid to IWW's and I'm sure some of them had to be deliberately set just to cause trouble. There were many more grain field fires in those days. These people would go through, you know, and set the grain fields on fire. Farmers hated this. They were afraid of what they were up to. But it only takes, you know,

one in a hundred. If one man in a hundred is prone to sabotage, why you've got a lot of trouble, because...

SAM: Do you think that these sympathies one way or the other were... like your family's, or another family that might like the IWW. Did these things stay private, or did they sort of determine your friends, or have to do with who your associates were?

J.B.M.: Your good or bad opinion of people is always influenced a little bit by their sympathies with things like that. It's a little bit like this late pro-war and anti-war group, you know. This isn't the right wording, because I don't think anybody was really pro-war as such. Let's say between the group that says "Stop the war" and the other group that says "Well, lets get on with it and finish it." And you have the two schools of sympathy, and if somebody doesn't agree with you, why they're not quite as nice as if they do.

SAM: This kind of disagreement could be a pretty public thing. I mean people would talk about it. It wasn't something like religion, that you'd keep more to yourself.

J.B.M.: A little bit, but then doggone it, it only goes to a certain point. So and so down the street, the Culbertsons, (I use that name because it isn't a Bovill name). They're IWW's, but you knew them long before they were IWW's, and I mean, maybe they're not IWW's, because you'd very seldom know whether they actually carry a card. These cards were carried secretly. You know that they are sympathizers. But you knew these people a long time, and you know that they're honest people, they're hard working people, and they're good

friends, they're good neighbors. Your're not going to think very bad of them in the long run. You wish they weren't sympathetic to the IWW, it kind of amounts to that. But on the other hand, a tough lumberjack who's a stranger to you, and you hear him expounding IWW talk, and if you're against it, why them you right away classify him, he's one of these so-and-so's, you see. He can't be trusted. So it's a matter of degree, and it's a matter of who he is and how well you know him, to a certain extent.

ROB: You said about the burning of the grain fields. If the IWW was primarily in this area in a dispute with Potlatch, why would they want to carry the dispute over, or why would they want to antagonize the farmers?

J.B.M.: The IWW was deeper than that. You have to remember that the IWW didn't even start in the woods. It was present up in the mines much before it was among the lumberjacks. It was something of a country-wide movement,and it was a communist led thing, originally. And again, I don't think that every IWW sympathizer, particularly, certainly not in an area like Bovill, where you're dealing with labor matters, labor disputes... They don't look deeply into it to know whether it's communist or not communist, or care very much, if it serves their purpose, immediate purpose. But the communist doctrine actually is aimed at undermining the government, so that anything they could do, if you got among the real hard core communists among them, anything that they could do to create disorder, to hurt the government in any kind or a backhanded way, they were ready to do.

Now the average lumberjack who took part in this movement, he was more concerned with something else. He was living out in a lumbercamp that was very inadequate for his needs. He was infested with bedbugs and lice and perhaps other things, vermin, that he didn't much like. He didn't think he ought to put up with them. He didn't like the fact that there were not clean beds in the camp, and laundry facilities. If he wanted to wash his clothes he had to go down, get an iron bucket of some kind and go down and bust a hole in the ice at the creek, and dip out water and get firewood, build a fire and heat the water over the fire, and launder his clothes. And there was no place to dry them after he got 'em laundered, and you try to dry clothes in the middle of the winter without facilities. And he came in dirty and wet maybe after a stormy, rainy day, and his clothes were wet with rain and sweated full and so forth. Wool smells bad when it's wet if it's clean, and when it's dirty, it smells ten times as bad. And here he is in a little narrow bunk house, a bunk shack with tiers of bunks on both sides of him, and up the center of aisle they stretch a line, and all the men hang their clothes on the line, and they're about that far from your face, and you're trying to sleep. Those things are stinking to high heaven. And there was nothing being done at all to clean up the beds, or to provide clean bedding or laundry facilities in camp, or anything else. And the company wasn't concerned with it. And he's in a conflict with the company. Well, the IWW is a means of getting back at the head of things and getting this thing put to rights. It went a long ways in accomplishing that.

SAM: I understand there was at least one strike. I've been told there was a strike, and do you know about that? And I've also been told the strike resulted in the change of conditions.

J.B.M.: I heard about strikes in the logging woods, and about the mills being stopped and things when I was young, and I'm not aware where these things happened. And I questioned some of the locals here, and they tell me that work was never stopped in the Bovill area due to strikes. I'm not in a position to dispute it. I know in some parts of the Northwest there were some fairly serious stopages. There was also sabotage in the mills and things like that. Equipment was broken. I do know that the Potlatch Company was very worried that they were going to suffer some severe loses due to, not only to strikes but to... They were very much afraid of fires and damage of equipment and that sort of thing. But I don't know of instances where there was very much done, nothing serious in the woods around Bovill. I don't know whether the Potlatch mill ever might have been shut down, but if it was, it was temporary. And it didn't stop, apparently it didn't stop any of the logging operations. I don't think the Elk River mill was ever shut down by strikes. But I have not investigated that point thoroughly, and I have run into people who swear that it didn't happen. I think you might have to... To investigate it thoroughly, you might have to get newspapers and other sources.

SAM: I've been told that Bovill is strong Democratic politically. Now, do you know if that's true and if it is, how that's come

about? It was about election returns that someone said to me it goes strong Democratically.

J.B.M.: I wouldn't be surprised if it's true today. Most so-called blue shirt communities, where you have a wage-oriented people, do tend to go in the present day Democratic. In the days of my boyhood I think Bovill went mostly Republican. There was a strong swing toward the Democratic, as these was nationwide, in Roosevelt's time. I don't think since that time that you can... I think there are relatively few communities where the livelihood is largely based on physical work, or blue collar type, blue shirt type work... That's a poor term for lumberjacks because they use plaid shirts (laugh) I guess, but...

SAM: Plaid shirt work.

J.B.M.: I think when you have that kind of a wage base, ever since the Depression years there has been a tendency for a Democratic vote. And of course today the Democrats nationwide outnumber Republicans almost two to one, I guess, and the only salvaging thing is there's an intervening group; I mean the non-affiliated voters help to balance things out a little bit more. But I would guess they probably do, and I would guess it dates back to the Depression years. But I haven't been in the community at voting time to really know the sentiments very well.

SAM: What do you think has happened to Bovill in recent years, since you've left and you come back and see what it's like now? And does it give you any ideas about where it might be headed?

J.B.M.: Well, the area in general, so far as natural beauty is concerned, I think is coming up, or has been coming up, in the last forty years. I think about the low point might have been about 1930 when the very hard logging of the prime timber in the near vicinity of Bovill was finished. And of course the logging operations leave just almost an unbelievable litter and mess behind. And particularly that type of logging did leave the woods badly littered, with the broken trees and unburned litter of all types. Of course that had been obliterated by time to a large extent, and you've got the new growth. And it's getting large enough now to restore an awful lot of natural beauty. In the meantime, though, the town has run down just unbelievably. Bovill, I think, has... perhaps of the small towns in this near vicinity, it has the prettiest natural setting of any town, and it has kind of a nice layout to the town. You come across the hill from... Beginning at the time you cross the hill and look at the town, and the way it lays down here against the mountains, and the background and so forth, in among the trees and so forth, it has a nice look. But nowadays, when you get down in the middle of the town and see how shoddy everything is, and so many of the houses have been let run down; and worse than all, you go down and see what happened to Main Street, the lower part of Main Street, it's just an absolute wreck. This is very depressing.

Now as to the future. I would suppose that the future may not look... At times the beauty may be marred by logging of the young timber, because the young timber is getting

large enough so they're beginning to cut it. I feel they are cutting it prematurely. Evidently the timber is needed that badly, and it is cheap enough to get the nearby small stuff out so that it can be done. And unfortunately, in our type of political situations, ah, set up... You can say this against that capital, capitalism: it's all profit-oriented, and that means getting goods form the producer to the consumer as cheaply as possible. So even though it may not be good for the long-term benefit of the public to do something now... It might be much better to wait another twenty years to cut this stuff. And here they're cutting stuff now that's perhaps twelve to sixteen inches, and if they waited another twenty years, why they'd be cutting stuff that might be fifteen to twenty inches in diameter, you see. And this would make much better timber. And in the meantime there is, back towards the headwaters of the Clearwater, other areas, I understand... there is still matured timber that is being... it's just over--mature and the bugs get in it and are ruining it. That stuff ought to be taken out, ought to be taken out now before it goes bad, and this stuff allowed to grow.

SAM: Do you think that there is a general feeling in the old-timers about how the forests have been managed?

J.B.M.: It seems to me that everybody must be aware that there is some mismanagement. I don't actually know what is the best way to handle forests. The present trend of course has been, at least in some areas, they've gone on this strip logging type thing, you know; and they just knock down every-

thing and just leave nothing standing. I'm not an expert enough in this kind of field to weigh one thing against another. In the old days T. P. Jones' policy, for example, was to just set the brush and slash on fire and let it burn, and if it burned some small stuff, why fine, but usually some small stuff survived. And if you go back over those areas today, most of those areas have grown up to a pretty nice stand of timber. Maybe there's a lot to be said for doing it that way. It was certainly... At the time it was done for expediency. This was the cheapest way to get the timber out and to leave the ground, you know, to leave the area and get rid of his mess to a certain extent. But these areas are grown up to nice stands of fine timber. And just leveling everything to the ground may not be the best thing to do. I think foresters are going to have to take, should take a long, hard look at what they're doing. But more than anything, they shouldn't be letting forests go to waste in one area just because it's cheaper to cut logs in another; and this is the type of thing that's done too much.

They shouldn't... Well, you get the same thing in mining now, for example. People go underground after some ore. You've got some low grade areas and high grade areas, and it really pays to mine the high grade. So you bypass the low grade and then you perhaps never can afford to go back after it, you see. You're going to leave metal in the ground that is going to be badly needed in the future. Or, certain parts of the body run to zinc and others to copper, and there's a good sale for copper so you leave the zinc behind. And

this is not economical on the long term, because all of these metals are going to be scarce someday. So, as I say, the same thing... We're on this, now so much interested in the environment. But our economic system is set up to help, to buy the product from the man who can sell it the cheapest. And if he goes out and ruins the land to get the product to market two dollars a ton cheaper, why, his product is bought. This is the way our system works, and it's not right. It's a short term thing.

SAM: How would that change? Is it an ethic that people have to have, or is it government that would have to change the situation?

J.B.M.: The public viewpoint on this is changing, but I'm not sure it's changing in an educated way. I wonder if people understand. They want to do things better, but I do feel that, probably, in the background of the average individual, there's not enough knowledge about the economics of things, about resources and their nature, our ability to replace them. There are too many people with the idea, for example, that the earth's resources, oil and metal and things like that, is limitless, and that as you use up what you've got now, you'll find new ways to get more. And this only has at best a degree of truth in it, but it's certainly not entirely true. Too many of these things, once they're gone, they're gone forver, unlike the forest, which can be grown again.

There is a breakover point where it is no longer feasible to go in and mine low grade ore, for example. For one thing, the lower grade the ore, the more energy it's going to take to process it into metal. The lower grade

the ore, the bigger machine is to get it out, to move it economically. You get to a breakover point where you can't afford to operate it anymore for the metal you extract, why it's not gonna work.

ROB: You also use more energy to get it than you get back from it.

J.B.M.: And you're using up energy that you can't afford, in a situation in which the energy supply is diminishing. Can you replace the inner resource? Nobody knows yet. Can you replace it with something new? And I don't think anybody knows for sure. With regard to oil, even if you could re-place the energy, what do you do for lubricants, you see? You run into that kind of a problem. You can't help but use your raw materials, but you ought to use them with an eye to the future. You shouldn't be using them just with the degree of "how do I do something the cheapest and easiest today, and the heck with the future." It shouldn't be done in that way, and yet that's that way we operate.

ROB: Well, it seems to be sort of a frontier mentality that is now becoming... People are realizing it's really no longer viable.

J.B.M.: They're realizing it's no longer viable, but I don't think many people realize the degree, or in some ways, even the proximity of possible disaster in this area. You stop to think that, in metals, for example, you know how much was used up in the late war alone. It was tremendous. And yet since the war, the world has used more metals than in all the previous world's history, including the war. And

you are going up on that exponential curve all the time. How long can this happen? How long can we exist on an expansion economy? We think we have to expand the economy by something like five percent per year in order to have a viable economy. This is disastrous, you can't do that. There isn't a supply of material, raw materials or anything, that can take care of the type of demand you'd have ten years from now on this exponential curve. Mathematically an impossibility, and if you can proceed in this way, the end, the disaster, is just as inevitable as death, because it's the only thing that can happen.

SAM: This makes me think of the past again, because it reminds me of what you say, you know, at the end of the book. At the very end you say, "Were it possible to go back, there's little doubt. It would be a rush." And it does seem like the a lot of oldtimers do remember the past as being better. And it makes me wonder, do you think that we idealize the past as compared to the present? Is it because the people that are old now were young then and vigorous? Or was life really fuller then, and not faced with these kinds of problems?

J.B.M.: I think that in the older type of life there probably was more satisfaction in a way. Part of what I talked about, I guess, part of what I had in mind, is the sentiments. I think it's very natural for people to be sentimental about the past, and that's one of the things that you're thinking about. Among the American people, I think there is a tendency to be sentimental about pioneer things. Their attachment for, for

example, antiques, reflects this mentality. There is a desire also, of course, to get back to the old conditions of availability of fish and game, for example. That appeals to a lot of people. There are just all kinds of motives that are behind that sort of thing. The old life appeals to a lot of people even though they know that it was a rough life. If they got back and had to live that kind of a life, I'm not sure they would want to stay ther very long, but still the idea appeals to them.

There was a contentment about it, there's no doubt about it. The life was tranquil, fulfilling in many ways. I think that the human being has... I've always kind of felt that an individual has a kind of a capacity for happiness, and if his aspirations are fairly well met, he's a happy person. And of course people in those days did not aspire to an awful lot they didn't have, any more than they do today. People always want something they don't have and probably the relatively quiet life that people enjoyed in...

(End of Side B)

J.B.M: We were talking abbout the kind of life that people enjoyed in those days. I was mentioning the fact that the life was built around home life. You had the conveniences that you were accustomed to. You didn't always have the same that you aspired to, and I think the same thing is true today. And you may be less frustrated, because you were less aware of better things elsewhere. You didn't get around to see what other people had so much. You lived at home. Now,

in a town like Bovill, there wasn't really that wide a difference between the way one family lived and another. But people, as I say, people have a capacity to be happy, and they were happy under it. I can't today think that I enjoy life at all more because I have, let's say, better conveniences I had them, which was all I knew about and was used to having. And there was an enchantment about the times, and it's part of this whole sentiment that you have for the past. It's kind of hard to describe, but I guess that's at the bottom of it all.

People worked awfully hard. I do know that, for example, my mother's life, her workday, would absolutely amaze women today. I just can't imagine a woman today working the way she worked. I know she got very tired of the long past, but she never complained about it, and she was happy. When she got old she was was very thankful that she didn't have to work as hard as she used to. But I think if she had been young again, she would have gone right back into the old schedule and would have been just as happy as ever, and perhaps in many ways she might have been happier with the old life than the new. As I think most people might, because it interests them, it's the thing that, they kind of feel that it's right. There are many things they would not like to go back to, but they would probably face it and do just like the people then did then, they would struggle to make things better, you know.

For example, when I was young, I just give you an example of what kind of day my mother might have. She was

probably up at no later than five in the morning, build a fire first thing. She and my dad would take the milk pails out to the barn and milk the cows, and she would milk probably six cows before breakfast, come in make breadfast. Like as not the two girls might wash the dishes at that stage, but her and my dad's job then was delivering milk to town, not only milk but maybe garden vegetables and meats and things like that as well. So that would take perhaps the next two hours in the morning. They'd go by team, go around house to house and make the deliveries. And then she had the laundry to do, the cooking to do, in canning season she probably put up hundreds of jars of fruits and vegetables. She used to can meats in the same way; everytime we butchered she'd maybe can a couple hundred jars of beef. We carried our water from probably three hundred feet from the house. She had probably two hundred milk bottles a day to wash from the milk deliveries, had to carry all the water to do it to the house. There was no water piping, in the earlier days there was no water piping. I don't know how she did it, but she found time to help put up hay, cut wood, clear land out there with my in the field, grubbing out stumps and trying to make a hay field. Whenever she wasn't busy in the house, she was doing that. Or we never had, you know, enough clothing to buy new clothing when they were worn, so that it was patched, the socks were darned and things like that. And she'd sit there by kerosene lamplight darning socks or patching clothes until ten o'clock at night. From four in the morning until ten o'clock at night I don't think she ever rested. And

she was one of the fastest people I ever saw to get work done, I mean she just, work just fell behind at an amazing rate. She worked at high speed. She was quick person very, very, very rapid. Women today can't do it, won't do it or can't do it, but I don't think many of them know how.

ROB: I don't think many men today could keep up with the schedule that, say, that a farmer used...

J.B.M.: Physically they probably couldn't. Well, take a lumberjack out on a crosscut saw. Did you ever swing a crosscut saw? Your shoulder gets kind of tired, but the lumberjacks did it all day long, twelve hours a day. We talked about this guy Pete Olson. I remember the year that he and I cut hay out. It was the year after the forest fire out on Little Meadow there, and my dad broadcast timothy in among the ashes there, and we had timothy. I guess it would have reached up to that wind chime there, which is standing about five, five and a half feet from the ground. Very, very heavy, and it was all in among the stumps and the litter and the logs, and you couldn't get at it. We needed the hay, and Pete Olson came out with his scythe, and I got my scythe, and we were in there for, oh I guess we worked two or three weeks with the scythes just going around cutting that stuff. It was at least three weeks, and then we had to carry it out. I mean there was so much litter on the ground that we'd get the pitchfork, and get a fork full, and we might have to carry it a hundred yards before we'd get it to where we could load it on a slip or a wagon to haul it to the barn. And we put up I think about eight or ten ton, all hand cut, and

all carried out by hand among the stumps. You finish a summer that way you're in pretty good physical shape, I'll tell ya.

Men, sure men today could do it, but they'd have to get in physical shape for it. But they're not used to it, the majority of them aren't used to doing that. But still there is a lot of physical work in the woods. Tractor logging, for example. You cut a log up a steep hillside like that, and these men that grab one of these cables and hooks and run up that hillside, and they often go up at a run, dragging that cable behind them to hook onto a log to drag it down, and it puts you in shape.

ROB: Right, setting chokers.

J.B.M: Yeah. These people liked that life, and except from the fact that they wouldn't have television and washing machines and things like that at home, it wouldn't be too alien to them. But I suspect among farm women you still have some people that work very hard. But generally speaking, city women have forgotten what work is, relatively.

SAM: Do you see any major turning points in Bovill's history?

J.B.M.: The turning point as I see it in the town was the Depression years, which more or less marked the time of the exhaustion of the large stands of prime timber near the town. After that they had to step way back into the headwaters, and lots of times over the divide into the Clearwater drainage and that sort of thing, for the extensive amounts of timber. There were little patches of big timber left, here and there, but nothing very substantial. The

Depression put a stop on the logging that had existed, and it more or less coincided with the time of the exhaustion of that kind of timber supplies. It went straight on in through from there into the war, when timber was needed, but there was a limited opportunity to log in a big way because of the war situation. They were coming out of it during the war. Logging did start to expand again, but it expanded in a new pattern. They started a railroad out of town (the grade runs up south of town there), and it was to go on out through the East Fork and across into the Clearwater, and sometime, I think that was actually during the early war years they started that thing... And somehow or other they realized that logging was going to turn around, and that rails was not going to be any longer the way of moving logs. So they backed up and built a crushed rock road, and this was really... So you see it led, bridged from the end of the lush logging of the twenties into the depression, and then into a new type of logging that began about during the war and stopped back much farther for the primary supplies of timber.

Then another thing that happened (I think this was about just after the war) that was rather a cricial thing for the town, was moving the high school out, suspension the high school here. (I can't date this in my own mind, I was in South America at the time, and I don't have precise dates in time, but I know that her (Mrs. Musch's) older daughter went to high school in Deary already. They were riding busses to Deary at that time.) The merging of the school districts... I have a feeling that it was was very bad for the Bovill

community, for example, being put in with Troy. This end of the county has always been outvoted by the farmers down at Troy, and the Bovill interests have kind of lagged through the political setup that emerged, that arises from that kind of a merger. But particularly Deary getting the high school instead of Bovill has hurt the town of Bovill quite seriously.

SAM: Deary as the pivotal middle is really more like Troy than it is like Bovill, isn't it?

J.B.M.: Well, it's kind of in between, in a way. It's less dependent on farming perhaps than Troy, but yes, I would say the Deary outlook is probably more like a Troy outlook than it is like a Bovill outlook, in the main. It is based more on an agricultural type rather than a town dweller's. and they're dependent on wages for the for their living.

You have gone from the time of continuous logging, year round logging operations, to a time when the logging is very seasonal. And another thing of course, with the exhaustion of the tremendous supplies of cedar, there's still cedar around, but not in the supplies that it once had. The demand for poles has probably slacked off partly from the availability of poles, and partly from the availability of new metal type poles for suspending wires, and of course a tremendous trend toward going underground with wiring or using no wiring at all. They just use electronic systems for communications, transmitted waves. So there is not the demand nor the supply of poles, and you have to realize that Bovill in the past, at least through the 1920's, this pole industry here was tremendous. And now this cedar yard

here, where it used to be is dead completely. What is left of it is up above the Y up north of town. The only thing they use here is the treating plant anymore. (I believe it's still in use, it was last year. There's new ownership this year, I understand, but I don't quite know how they're operating.)

SAM: Do you think that the composition of the population in Bovill has changed very much?

J.B.M.: Yes, it's changed quite a lot. I feel that there's... I have a feeling that all of the public throughout the land, there has been a degeneration, in a way, of moral fiber. Seems to me there has, and I know I'm fully aware of the fact that historians have always claimed this is so. There certainly are ups and downs through time, but I think we've gone through one of the downs, at least in recent years. You can see it in Bovill as you can in other places.

SAM: What does it mean in actual... to the town.

J.B.M.: Well, the family is no longer, at least many families are no longer as tightly bound and loyal. There is... I think that there is a much more lax view toward, say, things like marriage, and that sort of thing. But as I say this has gone throughout the whole land, and it strikes Bovill like it does everyplace else. You do see, I think, a larger percentage of people around the town today that seem to have very little interest in keeping up their places, and maintaining a nice, neat looking home, than there used to be. Yet some of the homes are as nice as they ever were. It just seems to me that there is a larger <u>number</u> of people

that become shoddy in the way of doing things. This is part of what I call moral fiber of the community, or of the people in general.

SAM: I wonder if it doesn't reflect a difference in the attitudes towards work too, as we've been talking about the tremendous amount of work that people used to do and expect to do.

J.B.M.: That's right, and the existence of social programs, the existence of government support of the needy and that sort of thing is... I think the need for such a thing is very real. But there is no doubt that it is abused, and the existence of such a thing seems to demoralize certain types of people, make them unwilling to do for themselves what they think the government will do for them. This is one of the bad factors, one of the bad features of having programs of that kind. And I don't deny the need for such programs, but people become less progressive when they feel that things might be furnished anyway.

You have to look at at it as good, I think, anytime when you provide ways of properly taking care of your old people, that part you certainly have to. I don't think anybody could help but underwrite that part of the program. But where do you go from there? I don't quite know. But certainly there are some people that really are needy, and there are other people who manage to become needy if it's possible.

But reviewing that, I would say that the Depression, the beginning of the Depression and the exhaustion of the

large stands of timber, coninciding more or less... That's probably the most critical point of all in Bovill history, since the building of the town itself.

Transcribed by Debbie McNeilly

Typed by Sherrie Fields

These amplifications were made by John B. Miller, with regard to the newspaper article that was based on this interview.

1 "I speak of "nit-sized" items as minor, and as things based on small points of understanding and interpretation. Only rarely do the nature of these disturb me. However, I have made several more substantial mistakes that do bother me. All history books contain a few errors, I would suppose, but these should relate only to matters that are controversial or where there is not enough knowledge to straighten things out. The ones in my work, that bother me, happened because I failed to cross-check my story thoroughly. Mark them down to haste, overconfidence, and inexperience."

2 "except for the gyppo"