

I. Index

II. Transcript

I. Index

ED MUHSAL

Potlatch; b. 1903

sawmiller

2 hours

minute page

Side A

00	1	Father was sent out by Weyerhaeusers from the Midwest to grade lumber. Ed started working for the company as a kid, the only employer around.
08	4	Arriving in Potlatch in the rain and mud as a boy.
10	5	The company made good money on house rentals. They had to keep their houses up.
13	6	He didn't like school, but it was the best school around the country.
16	7	In summer kids picked potatoes for farmers. He piled lumber in the yard, and then worked on the edger and other jobs. He always worked for the job that paid the most money. He couldn't get along with the boss in the sawmill, so quit and went to the planer. Women pulling lumber in the mill during World War II had hard work. The boss that Ed didn't get along with.
25	11	The kids that work in the mill now don't know lumbering. In the old days the men really had to work. Men who got in good with the boss were "sitting pretty." Today's bosses are company informers - a union steward who did that.
31	13	He and his friend fought two brothers from Alberta in Palouse - three rounds for five dollars. (continued)

Side B

00	14	He broke his thumb at the beginning of the fight but kept going. He taught boxing to a group of kids for free, and had trouble raising money for their gloves. He learned from a professional boxer who worked at Potlatch. He is mismatched with a much bigger fighter.
06	16	Fighting with a man at a dance at Onaway. He drove a dance band to dances around the country. Rock music isn't very good. Popularity of dances in the early days. It was easy to get dates. There was more mixing in the old days - if people were sick, the town helped, but now people don't trust each other. Popularity of band musicians.
18	21	He is stopped by the cops when the real bootlegger tried to set him up. Getting moonshine from bootleggers. A highly

Ed Muhsal

minute page

Side B (continued)

successful moonshiner kept his still hidden from everybody. Bootleggers were likely to get caught. Lack of enforcement against drug use in school. Princeton was an open town.

Side C

00 27

Early doctors in the area. Dr. Lepard treated his infected finger as a boy. Ed helps Dr. Gibson set a leg.

05 29

Death of father, struck by an engine in the lumberyard (1924). The one witness who saw the brakeman improperly running the engine was taken out of town by the company. His mother didn't sue because she didn't want to be kicked out of town. Two other deaths in the mill - a leg cut off by a switch engine, a man ground up in the green chain. Safety a personal matter.

18 34

Band saws and resaws broke easily. He lost his finger on a novelty saw; the doctor's treatment. Company paid for disabilities. Hard to fight a company.

28 38

Company didn't kick people out of town, except when they asked the Japanese to leave during World War II. Japanese were good people. A man picked a fight with a Japanese in the mill. (cont.)

Side D

00 40

Stopping Japanese from getting hurt in the mill. Selling clothes to the Japanese.

05 41

Greeks and Italians - didn't mix very much in Potlatch.

08 42

Father, a German, had little trouble during First World War. gave to the war effort, but was harrassed by a couple of Canadians.

13 44

IWWs were after better conditions, and improved the camps. People who were ignorant of the situation called them communists. The company would only give what they had to. Propoganda against IWWs. IWWs fought in woods, not mill. He belonged to Potlatch militia in Second War. Most men in camps were IWWs.

23 48

In Second War men had to work in the mill (getting classified 4) or go into the service.

25 49

A man who kept working until he'd saved \$50,000; he died a month later from drink.

28 50

Working and getting in debt in the depression. Dr. Gibson cancelled his doctor's bill; the doctor got mad at a pushy patient who owed money.

with Sam Schragger

II. Transcript

NAME: EDWARD MUHSAL
Date of Interview: September 16, 1975
Location: Potlatch, Idaho
Interviewer: SAM SCHRAGER
Reel #3045-0346

INTRODUCTION: This conversation with Edward Muhsal took place at his home in Potlatch, Idaho on September 16, 1975. The interviewer is Sam Schrager.

SS: I'll start by asking you how your father wound up coming out here.

EM: He was sent here with the Weyerhaeuser Lumber Company- Potlatch Forest was the same as Weyerhaeuser then, see. He was sent out here from the East, to grade lumber. See, there was several of 'em sent out here from the East, Wisconsin, all over to work in this mill when they first started here. That's where all of your lumbermen come from was from back East in Wisconsin and Michigan and that.

SS: You mean your father was working for them back there?

EM: Yeah. Yeah, he worked for Weyerhaeuser back there. Of course, those were just little mills then back there in that time.

SS: Did he care much about the idea of coming out here?

EM: Oh, yeah, yeah, he wanted to come out here. I guess, I don't know, I was only five years old then. He musta wanted to come out here or he wouldn't a come.

SS: What was that town in Wisconsin?

EM: I don't know just exactly what it is-from different places, Marinette, Michigan and Menominee, Michigan and different places there you know. Saxon, Wisconsin, all little mills, you know, all around, you move from one place to another.

SS: Had he followed that lumber grading right along?

EM: Oh, yeah. That's all I've done ever since I come here. Forty-four years now, here.

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0345

SS: You followed in his footsteps?

EM: Yeah. Well, there's nothing else to do here in this town then. Just lumber business, that's all there is here. Of course, when I quit school in the eighth grade and I went to work down here. Us kids all during the summer months, we'd work here in the mill—cut thistles and stuff like that around the yard, you know. Had a long handled rig with sharp point, blade just about like that used to go along and dig these dandelions out, out of the yard and every place else.

SS: Is that the first time you worked for them?

EM: Yes.

SS: What did they pay the kids for doing this?

EM: Heck, I've loaded lumber out here in the yard for ten cents an hour, ten hours a day. Ten cents an hour for ten hours. People don't believe that, but, by golly, that's what they were paying then.

SS: Was that for—

EM: I worked for twelve and a half cents an hour in the mill edging in the mill for twelve and a half cents an hour. Eight hours a day, sometimes ten hours.

SS: What about back in the midwest, do you know what your father used to make when he was working back there?

EM: No, not very much. Heck, when they was only paying about ten cents here they wasn't paying very much back there then, cause wages never were in the East like they are out in the West. He made—I imagine he made around thirty dollars a month, maybe a

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0345

little more than that. Probably lucky to get that.

SS: Had your father graded lumber-is that what he'd done for all his working life? Or did he do other work, too?

EM: No, that was all. That's all he knew. Of course, well, he worked in a brewery back East for a while before-but I don't know, I think that was in Chicago where he worked there in a brewery.

SS: Was he born in-

EM: -in Germany.

SS: He was born in Germany.

EM: Yeah.

SS: Do you know about when he came over-how old he was, I mean- was he still-

EM: No, I don't. No, I don't know, my sister might know but I don't know.

SS: It doesn't matter. I understand that they had pretty much cut-out in the midwest-Weyerhaeuser-by the time he'd come to Idaho. Do you know if that's the truth?

EM: Cutout-what do you mean?

SS: Well, they'd already cut most of the timber, the big timber there?

EM: Oh, heck, no. Just started in here. First mill they had was down here in Palouse.

SS: I meant in the midwest-not here-I hear that they were just starting here.

EM: Oh, yes. Well, in the East is where the lumber business started; then they kept moving out and they come out in the West. That's where it really started right out here. Because you take the middle-Montana, North Dakota that's more farming, cattle

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0345

country and your lumber business is out here.

SS: Do you remember coming out here when you were just a kid?

EM: Yeah. Yeah, we come here-come to Palouse from Spokane-got to Spokane then come down on the train to Palouse and they had the train here and we come on here on the tenth of May-come here. Got down here-come in here about noon, twelve o'clock from Palouse down here to the depot. And raining, boy, it was a'raining! Course, no roads, old mud roads, you know and we walked those mud- course we had those old shoes on, button shoes, then and wading mud all the way from that depot clear back up here-those trees back of where we used to live. All that old mud road, packing suitcases in that rain. No raincoats or anything! The clothes we had on, boy, we were soaked when we come up here.

SS: Did you bring much with you from the midwest?

EM: No, just a suitcase is all. No, my dad'd already been here and he'd got stuff, you know, for the house.

SS: He came out first and got settled?

EM: Yeah. Yeah, that mill, they put that up here in 1906-is when they moved the mill up here and we came out here in 1908. Nah, there wasn't much of a town here then. Of course, they showed pictures of it-like the whole town is right now-said the whole town was already here, I don't know where they got the pictures. They claim that was in 1902. Well, the town wasn't even here in 1902. (Chuckles) I don't where anybody got that idea. Somebody had a picture here on the calender that the school puts out-had a picture of the town, said it was taken in 1902-well, I know a darn sight better, because it wasn't here in 1902! They

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0345

couldn't very well build a mill here in 1902 when there was nobody living here.

SS: What was the idea of a company town? Did they just build the whole thing up?

EM: Oh, yeah, they built these houses and then rented them out, see to people that work here. Yeah, they rented the houses out. They probably cost-these houses-paid a couple hundred dollars for this house here, then you go payin' ten or twenty dollars a month for it, didn't take long to pay for it. (Chuckles) And did that for years and years. So, you can just see over sixty years, they paid twenty dollars a month for this house for sixty years!

SS: You think the company made money on this sort of thing?

EM: Oh, they had to make money! Figure it out for yourself; sixty years at twenty dollars a month how much that amounts to and it cost them about \$200 to build it at that time.

SS: What about the maintenance?

EM: Oh, they had to take care of it, they took care of all- of course these houses weren't modern; none of them modern. All outside toilets and everything. Of course, the company, they put on this tar paper roofing then shingles, stuff like that. And they'd paint the houses and paper inside the house and that. Wallpaper it. They did that. But that's all they did do. They had to do something to keep it up, their houses, and they couldn't very well ask the renters to do it. No, if you wanted your house papered inside or anything, you'd just go to the office and tell 'em and they'd come up and paper it for you. Pick

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0345

out any kind of paper you wanted, wallpaper. And they didn't have electric lights either, had lamps. Then finally they put in electric lights.

SS: Well, why would they want to own it all themselves and have to keep it up instead of having-just let people buy them?

EM: Well, they was making money off of these houses; wasn't costing them anything, just for material, paper and stuff like that; you was paying for that in the rent. Naw, they didn't lose anything on it.

SS: Did you start going to school as soon as you got here?

EM: Oh, I started to school when I was six years old here and I went through the eighth grade and I quit when I was in the eighth and went to work. I didn't like school!(Chuckles)

SS: I've heard the school here was better than most places.

EM: Oh, yes, yeah, there's been more kids graduated from this school here and got into better jobs than any other school around the country. They've always been good teachers here and everything here. Well-can't think of his name now- was from Potlatch. He graduated from here, he's one that designed that Lewiston Hill. Oh, there's several of 'em here had good jobs. Most kids around here that had an education, they went out and did pretty good so far. Oh, I don't know, Potlatch seems they put more money into the school here than any other school. Better teachers and everything. They pay more in here than they do in Moscow.

SS: Was that the company in the early days that was running the school?

EM: No, I don't know whether it was the company, no, I don't think it was, it must have been state or somebody because the company didn't

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0345

keep it up. Of course, we didn't have to pay for our books or anything, all we had to pay for was pencils and paper and stuff like that. Our books were all furnished.

SS: How old were you then-you were about thirteen or fourteen when you started working?

EM: Well, let's see-I started in-six and eight- about fourteen-fifteen-sixteen years old when I started to work.

SS: Was it hard to get hired by then?

EM: No, all you had to do was during the summer go down and ask 'em for a job and they'd give it to you. Always had something doing: lot of 'em, of course, worked for farmers and everything else, you know. Go out in the summertime and pick potatoes. Farmers they'd come along with a plow and plow the spuds up and we'd pick 'em for ten cents a sack! (Chuckles) Boy, you wouldn't catch anybody doing that now! Go out in the field and pick spuds for ten cents a sack!

SS: So, what was the first work that you did after this, pulling weeds for 'em?

EM: Oh, went out in the yard, workin out there and picking up lumber-pieces of lumber and cleaning up and then loading lumber on trucks from the pile, put 'em on these four-wheel trucks that they had. One man'd be up on the pile and he'd hand the lumber down to the guy on the truck and he'd build it up and send the load. Those loads go to the planer, see. They surfaced the lumber any everything there. Get way up on those high piles and reach way-sometimes you'd have to get on the pile and you'd have to take two boards and hold your fingers this way then clear over

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0345

to the edge of the pile so the guy below could reach it. Yeah, then I went into the sawmill. Worked in there picking edgings and helping edgermen and then edged and then I rode carriage. Then I worked in the lath mill; then I worked in the firehold during the Depression and then went to the planer. Worked over there in the manufacturing plant. Then they did away with that and I went back to the planer again and fed machine there. Then I run a resaw. Oh, I did about every kind of work there was around here in the mill.

SS: How come you went from one kind of work to another? I thought a lot of guys-

EM: You're always looking for a better job, that paid more, that's why. Yeah, well, wherever you can get the most money's the job you was looking for. Because, heck if you was working for, say, eighty cents an hour on one job and you got a chance to, say, eighty-seven and a half cents an hour, naturally you're going to try to get that job there. You just ask for a job, see, and then if they'd see that you wanted a certain job, maybe that guy that had the job you wanted-they needed him on some other job, see, and they'd transfer him and then you'd get that job. Just put your application in for a certain job, you know,-

SS: Did you go to a foreman and ask him-

EM: Yeah. Yeah, you could do anything you wanted and get a job then, but, boy, now, why, you take what you can get. If they want to put you on a job and you don't want to go, you're just out of a job, that's all.

SS: Wasn't that way then?

EDWARD MUSHAL

Reel #0345

EM: No, uh-huh. No, I quit the sawmill. Boss that they had there and I didn't get agreed and I quit, went over to the planer and asked the general manager over there for a job; says, "Yeah, you're just the man," he was looking for. Sent me over to the replant there, that's all there was to it. I quit at noon and went to work that noon on the other job.

SS: What made you decide to quit?

EM: Oh, I couldn't get along with that boss down there. He'd come along and he didn't like me and I didn't like him and I was edging in the mill and he come over there and he says, "Let me have your apron." I had a leather apron on; I handed him the apron and didn't say anything more and I went at noon- why, I just walked over and told the assistant boss there that he had, told him, I said, "You'd better get another edgerman." Says, "I'm through." That's all there was to it. Well, during the war, why heck they had a lot of women working down there, too. Wife she worked down there.

SS: Which war?

EM: Second World War. Oh, she worked down there, too; lot of women working in there. In the remanufacturing plant where I worked, there was pretty near all women working in there except the graders and the guys running the trimmer and myself. The rest of 'em were all women, pulling lumber and stuff in there.

SS: Was it hard work for them to do?

EM: Oh, bet your life, when you get those 2x12's-red fir, 2x12's, sixteen and eighteen feet long and you pull one of those off the chain, that was pretty hard work for a woman to do. But ^{they} ~~it~~ did

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0345

her. A lot of times I'd go over there and help, when I didn't have nothing to do, I'd help 'em pull lumber. But they had to do it, if they didn't do it, why, they was out of a job.

SS: Well, take like this boss that you didn't get along with; I've heard that some of the bosses were not--were really pretty bad to work for. What was the matter with this boss, I mean, what was it that made him a bad man to work for?

EM: Oh, I don't know. He was a guy--he was a barber in the first place, never knew anything about sawmills and he got in with the general manager here and the general manager give him a job bossing down there. So, he worked up here ^{at Elk River} _^ for a little while, up here in the sawmill sawing and I don't know how he got in with the general manager, but he got in anyway, got to be a boss down there. The guy that was boss in there, he used to--my mother lived down there and she had a few boarders, just guys come in and board, you know, eating their meals and one of these boarders was the boss then, so when this other guy come in and took his job, why then that made me mad, too, and that's where we didn't get along.

SS: Well, to get to be a boss, did you have to have an 'in' or did you do that--

EM: Oh, the company had general manager and superintendents and that and they were the ones that picked their bosses. Because those days you had to know your lumber business or something, you know, to get in. But they had a lot of bosses--now, why, heck, the kids that come out of school up here, high school, go down here and ask for a job and work there a couple of weeks

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0345

they put 'em as graders and bosses and everything else down there now! They don't have anybody working in there any more in the lumber business. They're all retired. All these kids-I watched 'em several years ago at the planer, kids grading down there- and they wasn't grading lumber, they'd see a board come along and put a mark on it; pick up a knot and throw it at some other kid down there and(chuckles) oh, they get by with anything down there now.

SS: Did they watch pretty closely when you worked in the old days?

EM: Oh, you bet your life! You had to know what you were doing, if you didn't know what you were doing, why, you didn't get a job. You didn't fool around, play around, then. Some boss seen you fooling around, wasn't doing anything, just playing around, why, you got canned right now. Naw, these kids now, these guys down there now, they get by with murder. Of course, some of the bosses they got down there don't know any more than the kids that are starting in. (Chuckles)

SS: Did the bosses really know their stuff then?

EM: Oh, yes, they had to. Yeah, they had to know.

SS: I've heard about this 'easy hire, easy fire'-easy to get on and the bosses could can you for almost anything they wanted to.

EM: Yeah. If you was in good with the boss, why, you was sittin' pretty then. But very few of them-once you get in with them. The most of these guys that they get as job bosses now, are just suckers for the company, that's what they are. Guys that run to the boss or something, squeal on somebody else or something. Just like one guy here, young fellow, working down here and he was a

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0345

job steward for the union. Every night he'd run up to the office and tell 'em what the union was going to do and everything else. Go to the meetings and tell 'em, see.

SS: This is now?

EM: No, he did that. And, by golly, he did that and finally they put him in as a boss down here. He's still a boss down there yet. They kicked him out of the union. Yeah, he'd run up and tell the guys in the office all the time what was going on, union meetings and everything.

SS: Well, didn't they go for an awful long time with no union there?

EM: Oh, yeah. Yeah, there was a long time. They had what they called International Workers of America and then there come in the AF of L come in. First the IWW's and then this other and then the AF of L and CIO. Well, you didn't have to belong to the union then if you didn't want to, but now after you're down there and work thirty days, I guess you have to sign up for the union now.

SS: What were the conditions like when you started working in there in the mill? What were the conditions-the working conditions like?

EM: In what way do you mean?

SS: Well, you said it was a ten-hour day, instead of an eight. And what about breaks and stuff like that? What about even your meals?

EM: Oh, well, they had their regular hours like start in at seven o'clock and then at noon-had your hour at noon and then til four o'clock. And then from one o'clock til four o'clock. You didn't

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0345

get no ten-minute break or anything like they do now. You had to work straight through-say you wanted a smoke, you'd get some guy to take your place and say that you was going to the toilet. When you did that, why, you'd go down to the toilet and smoke, see. That's the way the break that you'd get.

SS: You wasn't supposed to be smoking there?

EM: No.

SS: --You got somebody coming to visit, who's this?

EM: Oh, Dewey Mc Cain. He's an old-timer here, too.

SS: Oh, he's getting his paper.

EM: Yeah. When we get through with the paper we let him have it and then he gets the Review and brings it down here to us, see. That's the Lewiston paper. He usually goes down every morning and gets the mail and he gets his mail then he brings us ours. He lives up on the corner and he owns the next two houses here. Yeah, him and I used to box together years ago.

SS: Box?

EM: Uh-huh. Yeah.

SS: You mean-

EM: Yeah. Oh, heck, that's been over forty years ago. Yeah, him and I both-and we had one match here down to Palouse-two brothers had come from Alberta, Canada and Dewey fought one of 'em and I fought the other one down there at Palouse and we got five dollars apiece for it!(Chuckles) Where they get thousands of dollars now and we had to fight three rounds for five dollars!

SS: Each had to go three rounds?

EM: Yeah.

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0345

SS: Did you go three rounds?

EM: Yeah. I busted my thumb there when I fought this guy. First thing I did-when out and hooked him and I busted my thumb. I didn't have my hands wrapped or anything else, see, just the glove. Then, boy, you didn't get no twenty-five, fifty dollars for a bout. If you got fifty dollars you'd have to fight about six rounds and maybe ten rounds.

END OF SIDE A

SS: You busted your thumb when you first started-right away? and kept fighting?

EM: Yeah, the first thing.

SS: You can still see it.

EM: Yeah. Yeah, the manager there, I told him about it-"Oh, no," he said, "that's just a sprain." So, I went out there and I just faked with this guy all time, see. Finally in the third round I come along and hit him right in the stomach and I turned my hand in there and boy, he - it just turned his stomach right upside down. And, boy, you're not allowed to do that, you know. That's the only thing I could do-I had to do something. You know, I had a boxing school here for a long time-for about a year. Yeah, one kid over there-well, I had about six or eight of 'em-kids- down here, had a little boxing school, they wanted to learn to box. I had to go up-went to people and asked 'em if they wanted to donate, the ones their kid's in there, learn to box and that, fine, but you go around and ask 'em for four bits or something to help buy gloves with and that; they didn't have it. I'd go in the beer parlours and and some guy'd be sittin there, "How about donating four bits to buy some gloves or

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0345

something?" "Oh, I haven't got the money." But yet he had the money to sit there and buy beer all day long. And I'd go down there and get a radio-buy a little radio-turn around and raffle that off, to get some money to buy gloves and I bought the gloves and ropes and everything else for these kids.

SS: Did you charge them for learning?

EM: No. Charged 'em nothing. Now, that one kid over there and another one, this one here, he won the gold cup and the other one took the silver cup in the welter weight class.

SS: Where?

EM: Up here at-in the tournament. We fought- one guys was from Washington, Canada and Sandpoint, St. Maries, Spokane, all around the whole country. They held the tournament up at Sandpoint.

SS: Where did you pick it up? Where did you learn to box?

EM: Oh, there used to be a guy here, he was a professional fighter and his dad was a professional wrestler-Mel Mortison, was his name. He come up here from Salt Lake City. And he got a hold of Dewey and I and talked to us one time, says, "Come on, you guys, I want to start a boxing club." So, we went down there and he taught us how to box. So, we kept it up. He had guys down there wrestling and boxing and everything else. Had the old guym down here then and they had it down in the basement there then. And, heck, they held boxing matches and everything here then in the old gym. And now, they don't have anything.

SS: When you and Dewey fought, was it just friendly?

EM: Huh?

SS: When you and Dewey fought each other, was it just-

0694

EDWARD MUSHAL

Reel #0345

EM: Oh, no, it was professional. No, when you fight amateur you can't take any money, see.

SS: But I mean did you fight against each other-

EM: Oh, no, no, we fought others. And this, oh, what the heck was his name? This coach over at WSC? Boxing coach. And he come over here first before he went to WSC. He taught school up here and he taught boxing here. And put on a match down here one night and he wanted me to box another guy and I went in there and this other guy was, oh, he must have been about 6'6" or 5" tall, weighed 185 pounds and I weighed 132. Couldn't hit that guy, all he does is stand out there and jab and I couldn't even get to him, great big, long arms, you know. I stayed with him for three rounds and boy, I blackened my eye and bloodied my nose.

SS: That doesn't sound like much of a match.

EM: No,-oh, what the heck was his name? From WSC. He was the boxing coach over there for years.

SS: Did you ever use those-that fighting for real? Did you ever have to fight-

EM: Oh, lots of 'em. Never asked for one. One time a guy over here at Onaway, at a dance over there I went over and asked his wife for a dance and she said, yes, and I danced with her and all at once somebody tapped me on the shoulder and turned around and wham! he let me have it. So, after the dance we went outside and I asked him what the big idea was and he and- both of us were drunk-and so, he told me says he didn't like the idea of me dancing with his wife. I'd danced with her before, a lot of times.

EDWARD MUSHAL

Reel #0345

And so we started in there and the first thing he did grabbed ahold of me and threw me down-it had been raining, muddier than the dickens over there-I'd just bought a brand new suit, a blue suit, serge suit, and he threw me down and started wrestling and I just got my hand under his arm this way, squeezed on him, said I was choking him. I said, "I'll choke you, alright. Get up and fight like a man." I says, "And I'll let loose." So he didn't say anything, just all he could do was to holler, "You're choking me." So, I says, "All right, if you'll get up and say you've had enough, I'll let you up." He says, "All right." He says- he got up and quit. But that's the way we used to do. Heck, you'd go to a dance and get in with some of those guys.

SS: You were telling me about-you used to drive the band around?
Is that what you said? You used to drive the band around?

EM: Yeah.

SS: And what's the story on that? How did it happen that you drove 'em?

EM: Oh, I just happened to have a car and these guys, these kids- guys, why, they organized an orchestra-there was five of 'em and they used to play all around at the dances, all around the country, you know, and I'd haul 'em around to these dances, see. They didn't have no other way of getting there. They'd buy the gas and oil for me and I'd haul 'em around. I'd go to these dances anyway, so it didn't make any difference, you know. They had a pretty good orchestra then, too.

SS: What kind of stuff did they play? What kind of dances were they?

EM: Oh, everything; waltzes and two-steps and everything-a kind of

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0345

jitter bug and all that. Yeah, and a darn sight better music than what they play now. That stuff they play now, why, and they're kind of getting away from that-oh, what do they call that bunch now?

SS: Rock-and-

EM: Rock and Roll stuff. They're getting away from that now. You never hear those guys anymore. You couldn't understand what they was singing or anything else anyway. And that music they had, wasn't music, just bump-bump-bump, that's all they did. Couldn't dance by it or anything else.

SS: Well, now, what were these dances like? Would it be just a little town putting one on-everybody would come? What were they?

EM: Yeah. That's what they'd do. Say, they put on a dance down here at this old gym down here-well, they'd stick up posters around the country, you know dancing a certain night. People'd come from all around the country, you know. Just like they do now.

'Course, they don't put on these dances anymore now like they used to. No, heck, about every Saturday night there was a dance, sometimes twice a week. But now, all they do-people-grownups- don't go to dances any more cause it's all mostly kids now-jitter bug stuff, you know.

SS: What towns would you go to from around here?

EM: Oh, all around here-from here to Palouse and Tekoa and Garfield and Colfax all around. Genesee, Moscow, Genesee, Colton, Union-town.

SS: All over.

EM: Pullman. They'd have these outdoor dances, you know, Platform

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0345

built pavilion built outside and they'd dance out there a lot of times, over to Moscow, Pullman, Colfax. Sometimes when dancing inside the building was warm they had these dance floors outside.

SS: Would it be mostly young people or would they-

EM: No, heck no, everyone-young people and old people all mixed together. Yeah, the young people would just waltz and everything just like the old people do-grownups.

SS: Did you tell me that it was pretty easy to get a date when you went over there too?

EM: Yeah. Yeah, it isn't like now, you go to a dance and see some woman there and you'd go over and ask her for a dance and maybe she'd come there with somebody else or some other woman or something and you'd ask 'em for a date and take her home. Lots of the girls went to the dances without dates then. Yeah, people mixed more then than they do now. Heck, in this town here, when everything was going good years ago, why, if somebody was sick way up in the other end of town, why, you knew about it right away, you was up there helping them. Now, you don't even know your neighbor across the street. People don't mix any more like they used to. No, if anybody was sick or hurt or anything here in town then, why, the whole town went in to help 'em. Now, why, you can't even trust the guys, you don't know who your next door neighbor is or anything else. People don't care any more.

SS: When do you think it changed like that?

EM: Oh, I don't know. I don't know people just don't seem to trust the other people any more like they used to. So much of this rape

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0345

and burning and stealing and everything else; breaking into homes. They never used to do that. Years ago you never had to lock your house or anything. You could go out and go on vacation and come home and everything's just the same as you left it, nobody'd try to break in your house or steal or anything. 'Cause your neighbor maybe across the street, boy, he'd be watching your place, you never know-you'd watch his or something-but people didn't worry about anything then. And everyone trusted everyone. But, now, boy, you can't-don't know who to trust or anything else now.

SS: We were talking about these dances before; there was one thing you told me-you were saying that the band was really popular, too, with the girls, sort of like it is today.

EM: Oh, yeah. Yeah, them guys you know in these bands and of course these girls they'd all go for these guys, you know, lot of 'em. Course then, why, boy, if you could play an instrument of some kind, why, you was all right. Course, they had taught music in school, but it wasn't like they - dance, like they have now. All the music we taught there was mostly singing and stuff like that in schools, see. Choirs and stuff like that, but they had bands alright, but not very many. Kids didn't go much for school bands and stuff like that then. Like your basketball games and football games and that-they didn't have bands then-school bands or anything- everybody turned out for their team, people in town and everybody else turned out for their team, you know. They didn't have any bands and all that like they do now.

SS: Was there lots of drinking at those dances?

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0345

EM: Oh, yeah, yeah. It wasn't like it is now though. Those days, why heck, guy would be drinking and that, but they wouldn't fighting all the time and everything else, you know. Of course, the kids couldn't buy anything either, only thing they could get was beer and moonshine and whiskey, like that in those days. You had to be twenty-one before you could even buy tobacco or anything else or smoke.

SS: Can't imagine that stopping the young guys from smoking, though.

EM: No. They'd always get some older guy to buy tobacco for them, you know. Course, they didn't pay much attention to it. As far as drinking, you couldn't go into a poolhall or anything and buy- if you wasn't twentyone you couldn't go in there and buy a glass of beer or anything. You had to be twenty-one. And, heck they didn't argue about it or anything else then. Everyone knew you had to be of age and that's all there was to it.

SS: What was the story you told me about-was it Jordan that stopped you on the road?

EM: Oh, yeah, that time coming from Farmington. Some guys had been peddling liquor over there and that's when I took the orchestra over there, Farmington. And coming back, the guys that was bootlegging they wanted to get away, see, knew the cops were after 'em. And they went and said it was me, cause I had that bunch see. And, of course, naturally they stopped me on the road. And those guys turned me in were the ones that went the other way they went over to Garfield and then come up here-come home. And I took over the Woody grade-shortcut, see.

SS: What grade?

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0345

EM: Woody grade. That's out-you go out here by Viola-not Viola, but oh, out the highway out here and then cut across the country. No, they figured by saying that I was the one-cause I had that orchestra, hauling them around, see-those guys ^{got} away with it, too. Three guys from here.

SS: So, what happened? You got stopped?

EM: Yeah, they just stopped us and went through the car and that, looking for-I told 'em, I said, I asked 'em what they stopped us for. "Well," they says, "You got liquor in your car?" And I said, "No." "Well, we was told that you did have." "Well," I says, "you better take and look the other way," I says, "the guys that you're after, they've gone another road; they didn't come over this way." And not only that, I says, "The only reason they turned me in was because I had these guys' orchestra, see." And they couldn't do anything about it; turned me loose.

SS: Had they ransacked your car?

EM: Oh, yeah. Took the seats all out, Jordan did, took the seats out, the tools and Summerfield made 'em put 'em all back, too. 'Course, they didn't have a warrant to search my car, see. But Jordan he just went ahead and did that. I told 'em, I says, - when Summerfield says, "Well, come on, we'll go." I says, "Oh no, you're not." And he says, "Why?" I says, "How about putting those tools and seats and stuff back in the car?" Summerfield says, "What tools?" And he asked Jordan, "Where'd those tools come from?" Jordan said, "I put 'em there." Says, "Well, you put 'em back just the way you got 'em." He put the tools back in the car and the seats and everything and says, "Okay, you can

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0345

go." That made Jordan mad though.

SS: Was Hap Moody with 'em that time?

EM: Yeah. But Hap Moody he was clear over on the other end, he was watching for 'em to come out the other way, going to Garfield, see, and those guys went by him all right. They was looking' for me, cause those guys turned me in, see. (Chuckles) Threwed them off the track, see.

SS: Did you ever talk to those guys about that? About giving your name?

EM: Yeah. They lived right over here at Onaway. I asked 'em and they just laughed they just wanted to do it, so-

SS: Do you think they tried very hard to catch you guys-I mean was it a big-did they really try hard?

EM: Na.

SS: The cops?

EM: Na. They'd go around to all these dances, you know, trying to pick guys that was there-it was all bootlegging then you know. Heck, everybody that had a car, why, you was under suspicion. And there wasn't very many around that had cars then and if you was around with a bunch like that naturally they'd go after you. When there was just one or two guys together, why they didn't pay much attention to them.

SS: How would you find out where there was moonshine to buy?

EM: Oh, there was always guys around. One guy that knew tells somebody else, you know, and you always knew some guy that was bootlegging; heck, right here in town there'd be three or four guys here in town that you knew that was bootlegging, see. Yeah, they

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0345

would come right out in the open with it. But, you had to catch 'em though. Cops had to catch 'em, you know. Heck, you could go to a dance down here and go to one of those guys and he'd probably have bottles all over the-in ditches, covered up with a little dirt or something. He'd go along the sidewalks-wooden sidewalks-and pull out a bottle here, some of 'em, you know, find bottles.

SS: He'd sell 'em right on the street?

EM: Oh, yeah. Like at a dance if you wanted a bottle, see one of these guys and they'd be right there at the dance and just tell em, "I want a bottle." "Okay, come on." And you'd go outside and get you one.

SS: Were the guys that bootlegged the guys that made the moonshine or were they-

EM: No. Oh, no, somebody else'd make it, you know. And heck, those guys-there was one still down here by Palouse and then one up at Cheney and then there was another one out here in the country out here. They had three different ones that they used to get it from around here. One guy down here at Palouse he had a little farm out there out of Palouse and when he got through he had a great big home out there and owned thousands of acres of land and everything else.

SS: That was all from moonshining?

EM: Yeah. Of course, he did a little farming, too, you know, but-

SS: On the side?

EM: Yeah. And the cops have raided that place of his, well it was right out of Palouse-raided that place time after time and never

Edward Muhsal

Reel #0345

could find it. I don't think they know today where he had it. And you could go up to his place there--there was only certain guys that could get it from him, you know, and they didn't even know, the ones that got it, they didn't even know where he had it. They'd go out there and get it and he'd tell 'em, "Well, now, you wait." And they'd have to stay at a certain place then he'd go out--and he probably had it cached all around his farm, you know, all over-jugs of it. As far as the still nobody ever knew where that was.

SS: That sounds like a pretty good way to do business, if you didn't want to get caught, you know.

EM: Yes. But the guys that was selling, most of those got caught a lot, though. Cops'd be watching for 'em all the time, you know. 'Cause they'd go out and have bottles scattered all over--like down the riverside--Kennedy Ford dance and those guys would have bottles spread all over. Of course, the cops'd be watching, see and they'd try to get a bottle and they'd grab 'em right now. Give 'em thirty days in jail; \$100 fine or something. (Chuckles)

SS: Were the moonshiners the one that got the big sentences, if they got caught?

EM: Na. They never caught--well, they'd catch 'em, yeah, some of 'em would get--and some of 'em didn't. Probably give 'em a month or two in jail and that's all--a fine.

SS: Did he go after guys just for drinking, though?

EM: No.

SS: It's hard to believe that they had a law like that, you know, that nobody would pay any attention to, and you'd still have the

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0345

law against you.

EM: Well, they used to catch a lot of these cops who were in on it just as much as the bootleggers. Bought off, you know. Just like it is now, selling this dope and stuff. Like over there in Moscow, guy can get all the dope they wanted but those cops were in on that. You don't see 'em picking any of 'em up. I guess they're getting now so they've got a few of 'em down in Lewiston now in the habit, but I think that bunch over there in Moscow, I think those cops are all in on it-the dope peddlers over there. They don't seem to do anything about it. The same way here, they had a meeting here one time, the school superintendent, and he wanted to know.-asked all the people to come to the meeting and wanted to know what we could do to clean up this town and if they had any grievances of the school or anything else. And we told him about the kids having dope and smoking in school and all this and that. Alright, he'd mark it down on the big board there what he was going to do and all that-come right down to it they haven't did a darn thing about it. All those meetings you go in there and tell 'em about the school and they never did do a darn thing about it. Asked him-I says, "Do you know if these kids are smokin'?" He says, "Yes, I know they're smoking up there at the school." "Well, how come you don't do anything about it?" "Well," he says, "you can't go around and tell every-see every kid, 'Now you quit smoking.' What good is it going to do?" He says, "When your back's turned they're going to smoke anyway. How you going to stop it?"

SS: Did Potlatch try to stop the booze from coming into town. I know

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0345

they couldn't sell it? They wouldn't let anybody sell it in town.

EM: Na.

SS: I mean, there was-you couldn't buy it.

EM: No. But Princeton up here they had certain saloons up there before when Potlatch was first built. Princeton is an older town than Potlatch is and they had saloons and everything, you know, up there then. And guys'd walk from here up the railroad track there to Princeton and get their stuff up there, you know liquor and stuff and bring it home. Bring it home in gunnysacks. That was a wide open town up there, Princeton, you know. Palouse used to be an open town, too, years ago. Had saloons and everything there then, too.

SS: I've heard they had a-

End Cassette 1 End Reel #0345- Begin Reel #0346 side 1

SS: These red-light districts.

EM: Colfax. Yeah, and Princeton was the same way and big dance halls and everything else up there, you know. Yeah, used to get those horse and buggies and go from here clear down to Colfax with a horse and buggy. (Chuckles) Palouse. Well, they had a doctor down there in Palouse-he used to drive up here with a team all the time. The hospital was down there in Palouse and he'd drive up here, you know; people were sick. Then there was another doctor, Le Pard, used to be over here at Onaway and he had an oxen team that he used to drive. He come into town here. He had his office over there. Then after that, why, they brought in two doctors here. Then he died over there. He was a good doctor, too, old Doc Le Pard, old fellow. Now, that finger there- I was

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

out here one time as a kid and a bunch of us playin'-I jumped over a bank over there and a darn piece of glass, bottle or something, and I cut my finger there. And I didn't pay any attention to it. It festered up and that and, by golly, it all turned blue and everything, went to that doctor over- Le Pard and he looked at it and said, "Well," I was a kid then, and he said, "I'm going to have cut that finger off," he said. I said, "No, you're not." And I started out of his office and he laughed and he says, "Come on." And he took that finger and he opened it up where it was festered and I had to go over every day and soak that finger for two hours in some blue medicine that he put in a pan. And I had to set there and hold that hand in that for two hours. Brought that finger-there isn't a scar or anything else on that finger now. But blood poison had set in it, you know. Oh, he saved that old finger. No, heck if that had happened now, you'd go to a doctor and he'd probably cut the finger off.

SS: What was the name of that other doctor that was here in town, that was a surgeon?

EM: Oh, Gibson?

SS: Gibson?

EM: Gibson and Thompson. They're the ones who were in the hospital here. And then there's Dr. Deprey. He left here and he went over to Moscow and he got killed in an accident coming from Pullman. And he was all in; one of these doctors that'd get up in the middle of the night and work day and night, you know traveling around. If somebody was sick he'd get up and he was all

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

in coming back from Pullman one morning. I guess he went to sleep or something and went over in the ditch and killed him. He was a good doctor, too.

SS: You told me that Dr. Gibson--was it Dr. Gibson you set a patient's bone for?

EM: Yeah. Set his leg. Yeah, he broke his leg I guess it was down here, up in here someplace and I set it.

SS: How did it happen that he asked you to do it? There wasn't a nurse around?

EM: Well, the nurses were all busy, see and he had to have some help and I was just walking around there after an operation I had. And he just asked me to help, because there was nobody else there. 'Course then after he set it then one of the nurses happened to come up there and 'course he told 'em to get that stuff ready for him, you know, and put a cast on it. And while one of the nurses was doing that, why, then he set the leg, see and when he set it and then this nurse come up and wrapped it all up and then put that plaster stuff on there. No, that didn't bother me at all.

SS: It would bother me to do something like that.

EM: No, my dad got hurt down here--got killed down here--had his head split wide open and brains and everything all laying out--head wide open--and I helped the doctor down here put his brains in and sew his head up and I helped him do that, too.

SS: How did that happen?

EM: Oh, he got hit with a switch engine down here. They would switch in down here and the engine was just coasting along.

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

They used to have warehouses down here and they were close together. Had a platform across here-across the track-and he just walked between these two warehouses there and just as he stepped on the track this engine come along and it hit him, knocked him clear over into-they had a sheep corral there-knocked him over into that. And where they was supposed to be ringing a bell or blowing a whistle to come across that crossing there, they didn't to it, they was just coasting along, see and he didn't hear 'em and just as he stepped in it hit him.

SS: Did he die right away though?

EM: No, that happened around noon and he didn't die until about twelve o'clock that night.

SS: Did you think he had much of a chance to live?

EM: No. Naw, his head split wide open, part of his nose cut off and that head split clear open, his brains all hangin' out.

SS: So, what did the doctor do? Just-

EM: Put it back in, just sewed it up, that's all he could do. No, when you get hit that way, why, there ain't much they can do for you.

SS: Was he conscious?

EM: Huh?

SS: Was he conscious?

EM: Oh, no. No, he never regained consciousness. Naw. No, when your brain quits functioning that way, why, naturally there's nothing to work for-your heart, see, it's just like if you were in a car wreck and got hit on the head or something, knocked you unconscious-lot of people didn't injure their inside, but ne-

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

ver regained consciousness and they live for a little while and they're gone, you know. So, it must work on your brain or your brain works on your heart, too, you know. Have to.

SS: Well, do you think that it was the company's fault?

EM: No, railroad. The guy that was running the engine wasn't supposed to be in there. He was a brakeman and he got in there just to-learning to run it, see, and he had no business in there. He was sittin' up there in the cab, you know, and the engineer let him run it, see. No, there was a guy seen the whole thing there. When I went down to find him he was gone, the company had got him out of there right now 'cause the company owned the railroad, see, that was company railroad the WI&M-Washington, Idaho and Montana, see.

SS: What do you mean, he was gone? They took him out of Potlatch?

EM: Yeah. Because heck, if we'd a got ahold of him, you could have sued the company for anything they had. Of course, these guys that was in the train they seen this guy sitting there, see, and knew that he'd seen it cause after they hit him-this guy hollered at 'em and stopped the engine, I guess. Of course when they found out who was-naturally they--the company when they asked about it, why they told 'em about this guy being there and they knew him, see, and they got him out of town right now.

SS: You never got to speak to him at all?

EM: No. Couldn't even find out who the guy was.

SS: None of the men who were on the train could-

EM: Oh, they wouldn't say anything because they're afraid of their jobs. They wouldn't say anything. But there was one guy that

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

happened to be down there at that time, walking down there, happened to be there right as it happened, see, and he talked to this guy that was there and he's the one that told us about it. 'Course, naturally when he told me I run down there to see that guy and they'd got him out of there, he was gone then.

SS: You never sued the company then? Or, I mean the railroad.

EM: No. Mother didn't want to sue 'em 'cause at that time if you'd- if we'd a sued the company, they'd a kicked us out of town, see. So, Mother just took the payoff of a couple of thousand dollars and she took that and that was all. 'Cause she didn't want to leave here 'cause she'd been here all the time ever since the town was built, you know, and she didn't want to leave here, 'cause she knew everybody here and didn't know anybody else. Oh, the company they could do just as they please then, you know, in those days. You sued the company for anything, boy, you had to get out of town.

SS: Do you remember about when it was that that happened?

EM: Let's see- this is '72 and 20-about fifty-one years ago. Yeah, I was twenty-one when that happened. Fifty-one years ago.

SS: Do you know of other deaths in the mill? Other people dying besides your father?

EM: Oh, yeah, there's been lots of 'em hurt down here and that, you know, and killed. One little Swede got run over-they had these electric motors- electric motors that pulled loads out of the yards on tracks, you know. Hook up on these trucks, see, haul lumber out and he went to kick a switch; got his foot caught in the switch and this guy run right over his leg and cut his leg

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

off and he died, he bled to death. Time they got him up from that mill-they had to bring him up in a wagon then, horses-and they got him up to the office, before the hospital was built where the library is now, but it used to be a little building there-the doctor was in there and they brought him up and time they got him up there, why, he bled to death. Didn't do anything for him. And another guy was oiling down there at the mill and the sawmill went down into a greenchain and he crawled under the greenchain there to oil it, gears and stuff under there and his clothing got caught someway and he-it just drug him right in and chewed him right up; nothing left, just ground him right up. And they went in there and dug him out. I helped dig him out there with shovels, scrape shovels, and pull his body out that way. he was just all ground up. Caught up in these gears and just kept going around, you know. Nobody knew he was under there til finally somebody come by there I guess or something and seen stuff flying out and they went up and stopped the sawmill-stopped the chain and that and they went over there and pulled him out, got a piece of canvas and just pulled his body-just put it out on this canvas, that's all there was to it.

SS: What did you use? What kind of shovels?

EM: Just some great, big scoop shovels. The only thing you could get it out of there with. No, when they buried him they didn't bury nothing, just ground up stuff; hand, you'd see part of his hands and legs and stuff like that, you know.

SS: Do you think that the men tried to be real careful? Did they think about safety a lot in them early days?

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

EM: No, they didn't go much for safety then. That was up to you, if you seen you were ready to get hurt or something, why, you'd stay away from that job, that's all. 'Course, if a boss seen you going into someplace where you wan't supposed to-somewhere where you could get hurt he'd tell you about it, you know. Tell you not to do that. But it's pretty hard those days, why, heck, you wasn't thinking about getting hurt, you was in there just doing your work and that was all. You take around the sawmill-were you ever in a mill?

SS: Yeah.

EM: You know those big band saws they had on the carriages where they cut the lumber, logs? Lot of times those great big saws would break-boy, the steel would just fly all over there. Wonder somebody-nobody ever did get hurt on that, though. A lot of times it would come in there and the carriage would be just making the cut and probably get about half way through a log and one of those saws would break, boy, that old steel'd just fly - those old saws'd fly all over. Guys were lucky that way, never did get a man hurt. I had a lot of-when I was running the resaw-have lots of saws break. Just fly around inside. Just lucky that I wasn't very close to them. Well, I was close to 'em, alright, just right by 'em, but, of course, they were all covered up, you know, and just happened to get on the inside of these covers, all you'd hear was just one big bang and all you could do was just run away from it and after you figured it was all broke up you'd go to push the button and stop it. Course, we didn't have time to stop it-the minute you heard it break, why, boy, you had to get

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

out of there. A lot of times I've had 'em break and fly all over around there.

SS: You just ran?

EM: Yeah, it's the only thing you could do, just get away from it. And then you figured you could walk up to it and see that you wouldn't get hurt, why, you can go up there and stop it. A lot of times you could hear it-the saw'd just break about half way through-you could hear that clicking, naturally you'd push a button and stop it, you know, then just step back a little ways in case it did break all open, you wouldn't be there. Oh, I've had lots of 'em break that way. Just like that finger there, run a novelty saw and a darn sliver got caught on the saw and I took a lath, went to push that in there to get that sliver away from that saw and I'd stopped the machine, had't complete stopped, just barely moving and that lath broke and it threw my hand in, just chewed that finger up and this one here-cut this one about half off and this one here.

SS: It broke and threw your hand in?

EM: Yes, just threw my hand in there. See they had a little wheel with little cogs on it that pulled the lumber into the saw, see, well that lath caught on that little cogwheel and that threw my hand in, see. It just numbed it right away. And of course, I pulled my hand out, I could see that glove-that finger just dropped down in the glove there-just took my glove off and threw it down on the ground and cussed a little bit put my fingers in my hand this way and went over to the boss and told him and he took me over to the electricians there and took me in a pickup

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

and brought me up to the hospital up here. It was in the winter-time it was in December, cold, oh, man, it was cold! And brought me up there and called the doctor and he come down, old Dr. Gibson wanted to know what happened and I told him. He said, "Alright, lay down there on the table." I laid there on the table and put my arm out that way and he shot a needle in there in my fingers, and I just sat there and watched him and he just bandaged 'em up and sewed him and cut this one off there-and I watched the whole thing there. After it was done, I come home here, I just come home and I just sat down on the davenport. Oh, and the blood just a'coming all over the bandages and so I had to-he told me, "stay there." And I said no, so when I went back he said, "Well, I told you you'd be back here in about five minutes." And so, he says,- I had to soak my hand then-took the bandages off and had to soak my hand in some stuff there. Set there on a chair and when he got through he bandaged it all up again. I had to go upstairs-and stayed there in the hospital overnight and the next morning I got up and went home again. 'Cause there was no use setting there in the hospital, there's nothing he could do anyway. I had to go down there and have it bandaged up again. I was eight weeks with that darn thing there. A lot of times now, if I get ahold of something, by golly, just slips right on through. Forget about it- the good hand, this one here, you forget about that finger being off of there and it slips right out of your hand.

SS: I never noticed even when you were starting to tell me.

EM: No, a lot of people don't. Heck I'd write a letter and that

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

and people say they don't see how it happened. Take my hand away and that finger goes out that way, I only got four fingers there. Now, I knew a guy here, a kid that used to be here, he had five fingers-two little fingers-one growing right the side of the other one-five fingers. I've seen 'em with toes, five toes. But, you know, I don't know why, you don't see that any more, people growing that way, I don't know what causes that.

SS: Did you get any compensation for that?

EM: Oh, yeah. Yeah. The company had insurance and they paid you so much a finger and that for it, see. They still do yet; pay you so much a finger-all depends on what finger it is. That was the ring finger-they pay so much for that, so much for a little finger, ring finger and then so much for the number of fingers you lose or your hand. It's all got different - you get different prices for it, you know. I got paid for that little finger there just the same as if it was cut off because Gibson told me, he says, "I'll sew that on there and that'll give you a finger there and you'll get paid for it just the same as if that finger was off, because it's no use, can't do nothing with it, see. But still it gives me a better looking-if he'd cut that off I'd only have those fingers there then, see.

SS: Did the company-do you think the company cared a lot about the men that worked for 'em? The Potlatch? I mean, did they really try to look out for the men-it sounds like when your father died that they just tried to, you know, to look out for themselves and not for your family.

EM: Well, they knew we could sue 'em, see, if they had that guy there.

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

Because when they found out who was running that engine, why, naturally they were in the wrong. Naturally they'd have to do something because, heck, we could a sued 'em for millions there for that. When you go fighting a corporation, you got to have- now like us being here, Mother and that-in a town like this where they could tell you to get out, company town, well, what could you do? You couldn't do anything. But now, like this here-anything happened to somebody down here, why, the company couldn't- they can't say, "Well, get out of town." They can't do that; they probably make it tough for you-they'd keep putting you from one job to another until they'd find some fault with you and can you or something, you know. But now, it's different, they can't kick you out of town like they could before.

563
SS: Other people would be kicked out of town in the early days?

EM: No.

SS: Nobody ever got kicked out?

EM: No. No, only time was during the war, when they kicked all the Japs out of here in World War II, that was the only thing. They didn't rush 'em right out of here, they just old 'em to leave, that's all and nobody did anything to 'em or anything. They just let 'em move right out of here. As long as they got out of town that's all the people cared about. The most of 'em- some of 'em left here and went to Spokane, lot of 'em were put in concentration camps and like that, you know. Some of 'em, the younger ones, they went right back to Japan to fight, you know. They sent 'em right out of the country, shipped 'em right out.



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EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

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hard for her. And now, he's fine and dandy, you know, whether his conscience bothers him or what, but-

SS: I wonder why a guy would be like that?

EM: Have some kind of meeting, he's always got to get his nickel's worth in, you know.

SS: What happened? You said that you stopped him from hurting those Japs?

EM: He was going to push 'em through the edger and I jumped over there and grabbed ahold of him and pulled him off. (Chuckles)

SS: Did he know what he was doing?

EM: Huh?

SS: Didn't he know what he was doing?

EM: Old George? Sure, he knew, whether he was trying to scare the Japs or what, or whether he really meant it, I don't know. I just happened to be right on the side about from here to the wall over there, nearer than that-nearer the chair and I just jumped right over a table there-rolls- and grabbed ahold of him. Old George, he come almost getting canned over that, him and his brother both.

SS: What about the Japanese guy? He must have been scared.

EM: Oh, they was scairt to death.

SS: Did he do anything at all to cause that?

EM: No, George and his brother just had it in for them, you know. They just didn't like the Japs. That was before the war broke out. Of course, after that, why, that's when-they made the Japs leave then, they all had to quit then.

SS: Did you ever get to know any of 'em-any of the Japanese that were

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

here working in the mill?

EM: No, just those- no, I never had anything to do with 'em. No, after the war broke out-course, these two that they left and went back to Japan and joined the army over there, of course. I asked different ones there, I knew a couple of 'em, they was up there in Spokane and I asked 'em about 'em and they said they'd went back to Japan. They didn't know whether they was killed in the war over there or not.

SS: Did you ever go in their boardinghouse down here?

EM: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I was trying to sell rain coats and shoes and stuff on the sideline, you know, and I'd go down there and they'd order stuff from me. Yeah, they didn't bother anything. 'Course, there only a couple of 'em that could talk any broken English anyway, you know, you couldn't-they couldn't understand you, you'd have to show 'em the stuff and explain to 'em and we'd show 'em the shoes or rain coat and ask 'em what size they wore and stuff like that. I'd go down there and they'd all order stuff from me a lot of 'em, and get the stuff and bring it back down there to 'em and they'd pay me for it. They didn't argue and say, "Well, that ain't what I ordered or this and that." They'd take it and say nothing. I did the same thing with the Greeks and Italians. Sell them stuff, too, that way. Make a couple dollars on the side.

SS: Did you notice much differences between the Greeks and Italians?

EM: Oh, yeah, they never mixed very much together. However, the Greeks they'd stay on their side of the street over there-two rows of houses there and the Greeks'd be on this side and the

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

Italians'd live on the other side. Some of 'em down at the other end of town. They didn't mix together very much. 'Course, they all worked together down to the mill and that, you know. (Doggone wind-yesterday was hot over at Lewiston-was it hot over to Moscow yesterday? Around 90 and I was sitting out here on the front porch all day. And this wind, I can't take that wind out there.)

SS: Did you think in those early days that there was—that the Greeks and Italians were very different types of people—from each other? Or do you think they were pretty similar?

EM: Oh, they all lived about the same kind of a life. There wasn't much difference in 'em.

SS: Did the Greeks do a lot of drinking, too, ^{like} the Italians did?

EM: Oh, yeah. Italians, too—the wine all the time, you know. And the bootlegging—those Italians did a lot of bootlegging with wine—wine all the time, selling wine.

SS: Did either group mix much with the townspeople?

EM: Huh?

SS: Did either the Greeks or Italians mix much with the townspeople?

EM: Yeah. Whenever there was anything going on everybody mixed together, didn't make any difference whether you were a Greek or Italian or what you were. No, everybody was the same around here. They couldn't very well hold it against you what you were. Just like in World War I, why, my dad was a German and there was some Canadians here. Well, they, of course, they come down here and they'd stand around and they wouldn't work or anything else and they hollered at my dad one time, tried to stop him downtown and

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

they were standing up against the hotel down there, that building and they stopped him and told him to get out of town, that he was a German and that. He was just a little guy only five foot tall and they told him to get out of town, he told 'em, says, "I don't have to go any place." And says, "Why don't you go back to Canada? How come you're not fighting?" Says, "You're not even working down here, standing around; waiting for people to feed you?" Of course, my dad, heck, he bought bonds and everything else, you know and that, nobody ever said anything to him. And he had a garden, grew a squash, oh, a great big thing-like that- and he gave that to the Red Cross and they raffled that off and got \$500 out of it.

SS: Out of a squash?

EM: Uh-huh. People bid on it, you know, different ones and they got \$500 on that in donating. People come in, they'd bid, well, now say you went in, "I'll give \$5." Alright, you give that \$5- that was a donation-your bid and somebody else'd bid-"Well, I'll give six or seven. Well, whatever they could, they bid on it, whatever they bid is the amount they'd have to donate, see. And they got \$500 out of it that way-out of that squash. But, heck, people never come around said, "You're German." And all this and that, they never bothered him at all.

SS: I know someplaces there was a lot of suspicion, just because you were German.

EM: Heck, my dad worked down there and they never said a word to him. He never bothered them and they didn't bother him. When they asked for donations or anything he give it to 'em and bought bonds.

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

And that's a lot more than a lot of people did in this town-Americans. Just like those Canadians, they come over here across the line so they wouldn't have to go into the service, see. And after the war, why, they went back into Canada again. 'Course, they come in here because they had relatives here, see, and they said that they were just visiting here. Well, they stayed here and anything to keep from going into the Canadian service.

SS: Did most of the Greeks and Italians stay here right through the First World War?

EM: Oh, yeah. Yeah, just like Gus over here and the others. A lot of 'em have left here now. Some of 'em went to Lewiston, some to Spokane and a lot of 'em are dead now. Yeah, there's a lot of those old-timers-some of 'em still down at Lewiston, some are in Spokane-all over. Gus is the only one that's left around here.

SS: What about the IWWs? What do you know about them?

EM: Oh, I didn't really know them-what they were or anything. They were a bunch of loggers, that's all, guys that worked in the woods, lumberjacks, that's all. All they were after was better times, better food and lodging. Where they had these old bunk-houses and they'd give 'em little thin mattresses or something to lay on and they wanted better bunks and better mattresses and stuff like that, you know, and better wages, better food, they're the ones that built these camps up, what they are today. If it hadn't been for the IWWs they'd a never got it. And a lot of people think-talk about 'em being communists and all this and that, hell, those people, they don't even know what the IWWs were. All they know is just what they heard, see. But to be around 'em

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

and know what they were, why, there's a lot of difference. Of course, there's a lot of people that just because the IWWs were in the camps and lumberjacks, why, they were called communists any everything else by certain people, you know. They'd go around and spread that old stuff.

SS: Do you think the company had much to do with the propaganda against them?

EM: Oh, yeah. Naturally, because they didn't want to give in to the demands for that. The companies aren't going to give you any more than what they have to.

SS: Did they have much to do with the eight-hour day? The IWWs?

EM: Oh, yeah. Yeah they're the ones that done away with that ten-hour law more than anybody else. Yeah, they were after the eight-hour. They're the ones that really started these unions getting organized. That's the way your-Independent Workers of the World they called 'em-and then the AF of L come in and then the CIO. Yeah, they were the ones that really organized-started these organizations.

SS: Did you hear about-in those days did they try to pin a lot of sabotage on them? I've heard that they tried-they said, people said, that they set fires in the fields.

EM: Oh, that was all propaganda stuff. They never went around and building fires and everything like that. All they did, stayed right there in the woods and they wouldn't go out and work unless they got their demands and stuff like that, that's all.

SS: I've heard though that they didn't get much in Potlatch, in the town, they never made much of an impact here.

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

- EM: No. Course, as far as the mill was concerned they didn't worry about the mill, they were after the camps, the logging camps and that, that's what they were after; better times there. Because they were loggers, they weren't sawmill men. They were guys that worked in-they were loggers, that's what they were, see. Of course, naturally, when they didn't get something, go out for wages or something, naturally the guys working in the mills, naturally tried to back them up, see. Because if they got it the guys in the mill would get it, too. They tried to get the mills to go on strikes and that, and some of 'em did and some of 'em wouldn't. But they never went on strikes very much, just the woods mostly. Because the mills couldn't run unless they got logs in here, and that was up to those guys in the woods.
- SS: Did they ever have to shut the mill down here at Poatlatch because of the strikes out in the woods?
- EM: No. Naw, when they went on a strike, why-well, the woods'd call for strikes, naturally if they belonged to the union the sawmill would have to go out with the woods, see. Because they was all working together, the sawmill and the loggers, the woods men, they all worked together. If the mill goes out, the camps will go out, too, because, heck, wouldn't do no good for the sawmill to go out down here and the camps working, too. So when they go out they all go out at the same time.
- SS: Did you have anything to do with that militia they had here during the war?
- EM: Oh, I belonged to it, yeah, there was a bunch of us belonged to it here. But we didn't do anything. We were just around here

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

in case any trouble started that way, you know. But there was no trouble around here. After they made the Japs get out of here, why, heck, there wasn't any trouble. 'Course, they'd send us down to Lewiston or someplace like that for training more than anything else. And we'd go down there and guard that bridge across going into Lewiston and put some of us on there walking back and forth on that bridge. Maybe two guys'd go and walk half way and the other two guys comeing the other way and we'd meet. Then we'd do that for maybe an hour or two and then four more guys'd come in and take our place and that's the way we'd do that.

SS: Was this Second World War or First World War?

EM: No, second.

SS: I'd heard something about in the First World War they had a Home Guard, too, didn't they?

EM: Oh, yeah.

SS: And I heard that one of the ideas of that was that if there was any trouble from the IWWs that they'd use the Home Guard against them.

EM: Oh, yeah, they did. They said that they'd call out the Militia and all this and that. They never did, though.

SS: Do you think most of the guys in the camps were IWWs?

EM: Yeah, most of 'em were. 'Course, during the First World War they had to try to keep these mills and everything going because they had to have that lumber, you know. They had to ship that over to France and all over to build-for buildings and everything else and shipyards-they had to have lumber for ships and that.

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

They had to keep these mills and that going. But they never had any trouble here. They just kept right on aworking as they always did. And, if you didn't want to work, why, you had to go into the service. The Second World War, why, they come around- and if the company didn't want you to work, didn't want you on the job, why, you had to go into the service. Now, like they put me in 4F 'cause I had a certain job to do down here, why, I had to do that or else go into the service, see. So, they come around and asked you now, "Do you want to go into the service or what?" "Well, don't make any difference." "Well, alright, we're going to put you in 4F because we need you here." So they put you in 4F. They ^{didn't} come around-service men come around and say, "Well, you're going to go whether you want to or not." They just asked you if you wanted to go in, that was up to you, if you wanted to and a lot of times they didn't give you a chance, you just had to take what you were given. You work here or else we're going to put you in 4F, if you don't want to go in 4F you have to go into the service. So what're you going to do? Naw, they kept quite a few, most of the guys, old-timers, guys that had worked here for a long time, those are the ones they really kept. But if you were a certain age, why you got into the draft then. And, of course, you had to take an examination, too before they put you in 4F. 'Course, I was sick then, I had had an ulcer operation and that and they examined me and told me that, why, they put me in 4F then.

SS: Ed, do you think people could make much money working here in the early days-enough to save and really build up?

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

EM: Oh, yeah. There was a lot of 'em did it. Work here and save every nickle they had. Hell, but it didn't do 'em much good. Had a couple of 'em here. One of 'em lived two houses down here, a fellow worked in the planer and I worked with him down there. And he was saving and saving and saving all the time and he got to be over seventy years old and they wanted to retire him. "No", says, "I'm not going to retire yet," he says, "I got to have \$50,000 in the bank," he says, "then I'll retire." And he worked there til he was seventy-six or seventy-eight years old. Finally he quit. He retired. Says, "I got my \$50,000, now, I'll retire." Well, he was quite a drinker and he got to drinking and that. And I'd go downtown, a lot of times I'd see him down there and he had an old Chevrolet car and he'd drive it down there, he was all right driving down there, but he'd stop at the Confectionery and go in there and drink and he'd get so drunk that he couldn't drive his car home, and he'd see me or I'd go downtown or else I'd be going downtown and his wife would holler at me, "If you see Henry down there, would you see-help him home?" And I said, "Yeah, I'll go down." And I'd go down and look in the Confectionery and he'd be in there; "Henry, your wife wants you." "Okay. You got to drive my car home and I'll go." So, I'd get him out to the car and drive him home. And he lasted about a month; drank himself to death. Yeah, soon as he retired, boy, just hit that bottle all the time. Go down there and drink and drink and drink down at the Confectionery and he'd bring a bottle home with him.

SS: Do you think most people just managed to keep their heads above water, I mean, just managed to get by?

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

EM: Well, most of 'em. Boy, when I first got married during the Depression I worked three days a week. Boy, you think that wasn't something! I guess you was darn lucky to get three days a week. Working for 18½ cents an hour. And I had about \$1,200-company store and they'd give us credit, you know, as long as they knew we was going to stay and work and that, they give us credit. I was about \$1,200 in the hole in the store from groceries and stuff you know. And, of course, after things picked up, why, you pay so much a month til you got your bill paid. But they always gave us credit. The company always give us credit.

SS: Was that for everybody or just for some people?

EM: Yeah. Oh, there was a few-they let you go in debt for so much you know if you was working, but if you didn't work and they knew who to give to and that- guys they figured was going to stay here you know and that, they give you credit, but I knew a lot of 'em they wouldn't. Lot of people here, boy, that went on the county and everything else. Yeah, and then the wife she had to have an operation. And old Doc Gibson, I told him, "I don't know how I'm going to pay you." He says, "Well, pay what you can." And I'd get a couple of dollars or something and I'd go down there and give it to him; fine and dandy. And then my son-stepson there, he had to have an operation, appendix operation and Gibson operated on him. And I told him, I says, "I don't know how I'm going to make it." "Well," he says, "do what you can." So, I did and by golly, kept going on and on. One day I went in to make a payment, the woman there at the desk, why, she says, "Your bill is paid." I says, "What do you mean? My bill is paid." "Well," she

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

said, "that's it. I have the books here, your last payment says, "Paid in full." Old Gibson, by golly, he'd cancelled my bill right off. And he told me, he says, "Well, a lot of the people came in there, and they was just ravin' because he wouldn't go out-one guy out here at Rock Creek-and he come in and I happened to be in the office here waiting for him and he come into Gibson and he says, "You got to come out and see my wife, she's sick." Gibson says, "I don't have to do anything." He says, "I don't have to go out and see your wife." "Well," he says, "you do, she's sick." He says, "Listen," he says, "you've owed a bill here and it's been going on for months and months," he says, "you never come in and even offer a dollar or anything," but, he says, "you go down there to the Confectionery and those beer parlors and set and drink beer," he says, "you can't come up here." He says, "If you see me downtown you hide around the block, go around the block to keep out of my way." Says, "I know, I see you." And this guys says, "Well, I'll sue you, if you don't go out there, if anything happens to my wife." He says, "Alright, have you got a lawyer?" The guy says, "No." Gibson says, "Here's a phone. I'll call a lawyer for you and you go ahead and sue me, will you." He says, "Now, there's the door there in the outer office," he says, "You get out and don't ever come back here again." He says, "Well, my wife dies," says, "you'll be sued." He says, "Alright. There's other doctors here, another one over in Moscow, go get one of them." Boy, that guy never did- I don't know who he ever got or anything but Gibson told me afterwards when I went in there in his office

EDWARD MUHSAL

Reel #0346

and he said, "Well, you heard all that." And I says, "Yeah."
"Well," he says, "there's the difference. You come in and paid
it a few dollars a month on your bills and that guy wouldn't
even come in and offer a dollar." Says, "That's the difference."
He says, "If people show me that they are willing to pay," he
says, "I'll do anything for them," but he says-

END OF TAPE

Transcribed by Frances Rawlins
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