

ELLA OLSON OLSON
First Interview

Interviewed by:
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Oral History Project
Latah County Museum Society

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I. Index

ELLA OLSON OLSON

Pleasant Hill, Troy; b. 1897

worked at many jobs, including pea picking

1.2 hours

minute page

Side A

- 00 1 Learning to talk English in school - as soon as they were outside, the kids talked "Swede". The country kids were so bashful of Troy that they forgot what they knew and flunked the eighth grade exam. Going to Troy and Nora for supplies. Superiority of town children.
- 07 3 After a year of high school, she worked as a housekeeper in Spokane and then as a cook for the sawmills and a threshing crew. Fifty days' threshing in rainy harvest (1920). Inside of the cookhouse. Rush of cookhouse work. No chance to marry husband because they were too busy working. Money went to father to build barn.
- 16 6 Mother worked as housekeeper in Moscow, and her father came to collect her money. Mother and she both helped with farming; she "worked like a man." They wanted to get everything done so they could dance all Saturday night at Pleasant Hill Schoolhouse. After their wedding they had an all-night party and then a cleanup at the school. After dancing, they'd walk back to the logging camp and cook breakfast.
- 23 9 Swedish Church at Nora, and Sunday school. If kids didn't obey mother, she "tattled" to father. The family had three girls first, and spoiled the boys because they were so glad to have them. She always tied up her mean brother when parents were gone.

Side B

- 00 12 Doing work for the family at home. Dating was all local.
- 04 14 Met by a friend of a friend in Spokane. Getting work through the newspaper. Better to get a housekeeping job in a family with children. Working for a rich family. Leisure time - going to dances at Odin Hall. She ate in the kitchen,

minute page

Side B (continued)

09 16

Met husband when he dried dishes for her at sawmill. The first time they went to church together.

12 17

Cooking for the mill crew was like being at home. The men saved her from trouble at the mill. No drinking at the mill; she wasn't scared of the men. All the poor pay went home to pay for piano and barn; her brothers' musical talent. In Spokane she spent earnings on herself. Going to school while working in Moscow was too hard and unrewarding. Parents couldn't afford to pay for her board to go to school in Troy.

21 20

Getting household goods at marriage. Husband's work. Her work at Troy hospital. Picking peas in Moscow was employment for many Troy women. Cutting mica. It was hard to stay awake picking peas. Gas stolen from the car caused her to be stranded one night in forty below weather. She worked all the time until retirement. Surplus food in Troy in the depression; public work on the sewer. They couldn't pay \$6 a month rent, and still owe \$18. Their children wanted things they couldn't have. Enough food to eat despite depression. Getting old, selling house.

Side C

00 24

The family had to do without when she was growing up. She didn't work out when she had small children. Cutting mica. Her work helped the family income. Children wanted toys in the depression.

05 25

More closeness of neighborhood in the country than the town - everyone had to do things together. Rebekhas and Oddfellows were their social groups, along with church. Not much time for visiting in town then; there's no time now. Young people have so much now that they wouldn't know what to do in a depression.

Ella Olson Olson

Tape 140 .1

minute page

Side C (continued)

12 26

She was glad to work. Backaches from pea picking. Wages mica cutting and pea picking. She picked peas six days a week, and got ready for the new week on Sunday.

(13 minutes)

with Sam Schrager
October 1, 1976

II. Transcript

ELLA OLSON OLSON

SS: ...pretty rough for the family to get by?

E00: Oh yeah. It was. It was an old school house that stood on the back way from our place, but it was close to our place. And I started to school there when I was five years old. And I didn't understand an English word. And I sat with, we had seats that two kids sat in the same seats, you know. We sat two in each seat and I didn't understand the English word and Bertnell French, did you ever hear of him?

SS: Oh yes.

E00: ^{Yeah, well} He was the teacher. This teacher said something to me there and she was s'posed to tell me what he said. And she told me that he told me to go up on ^a stump and the whole recess to keep agoin' around and around on top of that stump. And I did it. And I had to do what she told me 'cause I couldn't know what he said. And so we had three months of school in the fall and three in the spring. And there was too much snow in the winters to get there so there was no way to go. ^{Then} My dad donated an acre of land on the corner up this way and, for the new school house. He got a dollar for it, you know, he had to get a dollar. But he donated that land and they built a nice school house there. And there's where we went ^{UN} til they consolidated here in Troy, they had the eighth grade. And there was as many as 44 kids in that school and one teacher in all the grades.

SS: Did the kids have to learn English in school?

E00: We had to learn English. And as soon as we'd stepped out the door, everyone of us talked Swede. And there was a family of Germans lived up there and those kids learned to talk Swede as good as any of the rest of us. 'Cause that's all they heard. And then the teacher was trying to get us to quit this Swede outside, he wanted us to talk English. And we just wouldn't do it. We just would talk Swede. Didn't make any different what the teacher said, we was talking Swede outside. And all we learned English was right inside of the ^s school house, ^{then was} what we was learning there. They had all eighth grade there. And there was a boy, two boys that came from Sweden. And they were quite old, and they went to school there to learn to talk English. And they stayed there at Nelson and that's on

this side of ^{Emil} Pierce's place. And they went to school and ^{Pleasant} Hill was just north, well, it was on our land there. So there we all went to school.

SS: Did you learn a lot in that school with all the kids?

E00: I learned everything I knew, I guess. Yeah. We were so bashful. We went to town, we had to go to town to take our eighth grade examinations to the school here. And we were scared to death coming from out there and ~~there was~~ ^{ever see} hardly any other people but just ourselves there. And we'd forget everything we knew and we flunked ~~the~~ eighth grade test. ~~And then~~ we had to go another year and take it over again. But I finally made the eighth grade.

SS: Because it was so upsetting.

E00: Yeah. With all these here town kids and everything, it was so different that we just forgot everything we knew. (laughs) We had an awful time.

SS: How often did you get to go to Troy to do things?

E00: Well, it was, they'd write down on a slip of paper, Louie Wallner had a store down here, and he had everything in there, groceries and everything and I'd hand him that slip of paper and I would never even look up and he'd fill the order and give it to me and out the door I'd go as fast as I could. And we walked, we walked down but there was, Nora was down there on that flat. ^{and there was} The post office and the grocery store and it was blacksmith shop and the barbershop and the saloon and the saloonkeeper's house and that's all that's left there is the saloonkeeper's house, but that's remodeled. And we went down there every other day to get the mail. And we lived on top of the hill. And I started to run up on top of that hill and I'd run clear down to that store, 'cause it was all downhill. But going back ^{it} was all uphill and I made that trip before time to go to school. ^{in the morning} And then when we went to town we rode with, my dad hauled ties, or wood or something and we'd ride on the load to town and when he ^{went and} unloaded we was s'posed to go in the store and get the groceries, whatever they had written down and be ready when he came back, 'cause he made two trips a day. And so we made it then that way. And we were so bashful and the whole bunch, all the

kids up there were bashful. Didn't dare to talk. And then he'd buy little bit of crackers and cheese and that was in place of candy or something, that's what we, riding home.

SS: To eat?

E00: To eat, yeah. We didn't have too much at home, just what they raised in the garden you know, and spuds. Then they'd kill, butcher an animal in the fall and so we had plenty meat, we had plenty. And so we, we lived on what we had out there.

SS: Did the town kids act like they knew more?

E00: Oh yeah, course, they were home you know. ^{AND} We were strangers. We thought they were dressed so much nicer and they were so much smarter and they ^{were so much forward} ^{you know, AND everything} and they knew where everything was. We were just some little green Swedes from Pleasant Hill. Annamarie taught school up there. I was out of school by that time.

SS: After you finished the eighth grade, what did you do?

E00: I went one year to high school in Moscow and then I thought, "How foolish to go there." so I went to Spokane and got me a job. To work. Housework. And then I came home at Christmas time and then in the spring they come and wanted me to go out to the camps and cook. And me and another girl, ^{OUR} a neighbor girl, we went out to the woods, ^{AT} White Pine, cooked at the camp, logging camp and then we moved on to the new White Pine, that's the old White Pine, then we moved on to new White Pine and there was a cookhouse there for the logging crew and one for the sawmill crew, 'cause there was a sawmill there. And they had two cooks in the sawmill cookhouse and then up in the other one, we were two girls there. So then that winter, then in the spring I went to Spokane again and worked and then we got word that they wanted me to come down here and to go up to the mill and take over, the head cook there. So I went, come down here, and ^{then} my sister was with me then so we cooked at the sawmill and then we started in and they had a thrashing machine, ^{AND they} had a cookhouse with the thrashing machine then. And it was probably from eighteen to thirty men out to cook. And we went down to Genesee country, ^{AND} on the reservation and we was down there cooking then for the thrashing crew. And then it was fall again and that was go back to the camps.

And then the next year was 1920. Then the war came. 1918. My husband and I, we was going together for about two years before the war. And then he was gone, went to that and come back and he came back in January, 1920. 1919 he came back. So we kept going together. Then in 1920, and we was in the cookwagon at the sawmills, and in 1920, went out in the cookwagon again. And I got in fifty days, 'cause it rained, and then the bundles were out in the fields and it rained and by the time they had turned those bundles and got 'em dry in the sun for two-three days, then it was ready to start thrashing, then it started to rain again. And he didn't want to lay us off, he just kept us there. And in that cookhouse, you know what that cookhouse looked like? You know what a cookhouse look like?

SS: I've seen photographs.

E00: They have little square tables, it was four on each side.

SS: I've never seen the inside.

E00: Wide, it was an aisle in the middle about that wide and they come in and the cookhouse stood in the field ^{AND it rained} and they come in and you can imagine the mud that come in. And we had a shovel, we had to shovel out that mud before we could do anything, clean the floor, before we could start to work. Oh.

SS: It was crowded inside that cookhouse then?

E00: Oh yeah, and then at night, they'd thrash til dark and then they'd come and eat their supper and we'd clean up the dishes and get things ready for morning and then we'd have to clean out the floor and get our bedding out from under the house and make the bed on the floor. And then about four o'clock in the morning we'd have to get up and roll that bed up and start in again.

SS: How much sleep did you get at night?

E00: Well it could be from nine o'clock, nine thirty til four. I don't think we needed much sleep, the way it looked.

SS: Was that hard work?

E00: Oh, yeah. We was washing dishes there. We baked all our bread, all our cookies, ^{AND they} had lunch in the afternoon, baked everything. And they'd come in right after breakfast, probably say, "We're going to move before dinner." And then I'd hurry and set bread 'cause when we was moving, it kept shaking, you know

and that bread just raised, you could see it raise. And then we took our peeling, we peeled our spuds, and peeled everything that we were going to have. Did that while we were moving. So ^{then} when we got to the place, ^{why} then it was to hurry and fix 'cause then probably it was time they wanted to have dinner pretty quick. And it was just a rush. And then in the afternoon we had to have fresh cake or something baked and have coffee and send out to them in the afternoon. And then it was to have supper at night. See, it was hard work, I don't see how we could do it.

SS: Was it rushing all the time?

E00: UH-huh. Same thing day after day.

SS: Did you have time to sit down and relax?

E00; ^{iv} Not much. We didn't have much time, it was just akeep agoing. That was at 1920.

And they didn't finish thrashing 'cause it was mud and rain, they couldn't finish.

SS: When it rained, did they just leave the cookhouse where it was?

E00: Yeah, they left it there and some of the men stayed. And they left the cookhouse, and they didn't want to lay us off 'cause he was scared he'd lose us, that we'd go and get another job someplace. So he just kept us and paid us and we were there cooking for the ones that stayed there. And I don't see how we could do it, myself. Now I couldn't.

SS: Did you serve all the men in one shift?

E00: No. They'd come, ^{AND} probably these four at this table would ^{probably} be done and then they'd go, why then we'd set out clean plates, stuff, another ones that come in a little later. And then it got so that we had to feed the ones that hauled the grain to town. And we wasn't supposed to do that, but they fixed it so that we did and those came anytime. But we had to see that we had something for them to eat. ^{It was hard.} Well, so then in 1920's when I got married. After this harvest. Thirteenth of November. And they finished thrashing there. They sent us home in October and then the finished thrashing in November, 'cause they straighten up pretty good and the grain was black. The shocks, everything was black. But they finished it. Then after that harvest we got married, the thirteenth of November.

SS:

SS: What did your husband do at that time?

E00: He was working in the woods, in the camps in the logging and all that type. We went together for about four years, pretty near five years. We didn't have time to get married, there was too much work.

SS: Is that why it took so long to get married?

E00: Yeah. I didn't took time. I wanted to get some more of that cooking done and some more money and then we only got a dollar a day.

SS: For the cooking?

E00: Yeah. And that last year when we had all those fifty days, we got a dollar and a half.

SS: Did you get to save all the money you earned?

E00: We sent it home. That's how that barn was built. Dad had to have a new barn and so we cooked and worked, my sister and I then and sent the money up and paid for all the stuff they built the barn out of. So we didn't get any of it.

SS: That doesn't sound fair to me.

E00: But that's the way it was.

SS: How did you feel about it then. Did it bother you?

E00: No. We just figured that we should have that barn paid for and that we wanted to have that ^{done} help him to get that barn paid. Didn't bother us, we was just going to work.

SS: How many kids in the family?

E00: We were nine kids. And I was the oldest. And there's only three of us left. All five boys are dead, one sister.

SS: Did your mother have to work very hard?

E00: Oh, yeah, she went out to work when she was real young, they even sent her to school in Moscow. She worked for these places, housework there. And she was real young. She was only nineteen when she got married, and then she had worked out for many years. And with her, now they had to walk clear from this country here ^{and} up to Moscow, there was no Troy here. And they walked up, walked to Moscow. And her dad would be there the day that he knew that she had a payday and get the check. And they were a big family and they were homesteading

up the country here. I call it hard times, but then when depression came, why I thought that was worse.

SS: Your mother was working after she stopped going to school in Moscow?

E00: She didn't go to school, only those people where she worked, she didn't get any schooling. But they sent her to school so ^{that} she'd learn a little and then she worked her way through that way. She didn't have much schooling. And my dad, I don't know if he had any schooling at all. My husband, in Minnesota, he was born in Minnesota, and there they had instead of the fourth grade or something, they had fourth reader. And he went as far as the fourth reader. And he thought then after he seen how our kids was, he thought that was pretty near's far as the seventh ^{and} eighth grade, but they called it fourth reader. That's as far as he was. So they didn't have much schooling.

SS: With such a large family, did that mean your mother only did housework or did she do other work?

E00: Oh, she had to do outside work, she had to be there and help with the grain and the shocking and hay and stacking hay, grain. She had to work outside. And help. He plowed it and then I had to harrow it, afterwards. And I walked behind that harrow til I had great big blisters on my feet.

SS: So you followed behind?

E00: Yeah, walked and harrowed that whole fields there and then he seeded it. Then in the summer, when it was ripe, why then he'd cut it and then I had to rake it. See, it was me and then we were two more girls and then they got a boy after that so I was the only one that could help with anything.

SS: You did some pretty heavy work yourself then.

E00: Yeah I worked, I can say I worked like a man. (laughs)

SS: As a girl, did it exhaust you doing work like that?

E00: Oh yeah, we was pretty tired, but we still wanted to go out on Saturday night.

And if we didn't have everything done like it supposed to be, we couldn't go out.

And we worked so much harder so ^{that} we'd have everything done, so we could go out

on Saturday night. And they used to have dances then in the Pleasant Hill schoolhouse

or the White Pine schoolhouse. And that's where we wanted to go. So we was still able to go out and dance and that, Saturday night coming.

SS: What were the dances like then?

E00: Oh, we'd dance polkas and square dances and schottishes and waltzes and two-steps.

SS: Did you go there with your fiancée?

E00: No, he wasn't around yet then, this is before. We just walked up there and had a good time with everyone.

SS: Just local kids?

E00: Yeah, well they come in from other places. It was packed full there.

SS: Where the parents there too?

E00: Oh, they could go if they wanted to, yeah.

SS: Did they serve lunch too?

E00: No.

SS: Just the dancing?

E00: Oh, we just danced til morning.

SS: Til morning? Til Sunday morning?

E00: (laughs) Yeah, and our wedding, I was married in our house, in that house there and after the wedding we asked if we could go to the schoolhouse to have the dancing, to have the party. And they said we could. And they cooked coffee in the boiler and they just kept drinking coffee all night long, those staying in the house. And then we went up ^{there} to the schoolhouse and it was five o'clock in the morning when we left, got done. They got done to go home. And then we went home and changed our clothes and we had promised that we would scrub and clean that schoolhouse so it was ready for school on Monday morning. And this was five o'clock Sunday morning. We had to get water hot and get it hauled up there and clean that schoolhouse. So nobody could do what we did. Now in this time and age.

SS: So you and your husband went up there. Did any friends go with you?

E00: Some of the kids from home went with us and helped him, move benches and stuff.

So it was just from the house there. 'Cause then everybody had gone home.

SS: So that was for your wedding?

E00: That was our wedding.

SS: You had all night dancing?

E00: Yes we had an all night dance.

SS: That sounds great.

E00: All day after^{to} be all scrubbing. Cleaning.

SS: These Saturday night dances, would you usually go til Sunday morning?

E00: Oh yeah, they went all night long.

SS: That sounds great, but I'm surprised people would be able to do anything on Sunday.

E00: And the trouble, now White Pine school^{house} was quite a ways off and when I cooked up at White Pine mill, that was pretty far to walk, but we walked over to that schoolhouse, and we just got back up to the camp in time to fix breakfast. We had a lot of fun.

SS: Did many people go to church on Sunday?

E00: Yes. We went to church and Sunday school every Sunday.

SS: After staying up all night?

E00: Oh yeah, we went. We went and then, we didn't go to bed, we didn't go to bed Sunday, we wouldn't go to bed til Sunday evening when we went to bed, was supposed to go to bed. We didn't go and sleep like they do now. 'Cause I know ^{if} they're up now til twelve and one o'clock, they got to sleep the whole next day, pretty near. Half a day anyway.

SS: Did you go to the church at Nora?

E00: Yeah and that is the, what is the Lion's hall here now, it was the Nora church.

SS: What was the name of the church?

E00: It was a Congregational or the Swedish Mission Church.

SS: Do you have any idea what happened to the church records?

E00: UM-um. I don't have any idea. But the church is this Lion's hall. And that church, I was born in 1897 and on the eighteenth of November and the first meeting in that church was on Thanksgiving, just one week, I was born on a Thursday and the next^{Thursday} was Thanksgiving and that was the first meeting held in that church.

It was that new then. So it was built in 1897. And then they sold it, they could

never leave anything stand still. The schoolhouse was tore down, the church was sold here to be the Lion's hall, but it's still alive anyway so it's a church, that part of it there.

SS: What do you remember the church services as being like?

E00: All Swedes. All in Swedish. Sunday school and preaching and everything was Swedish.

SS: What kind of services would the preacher preach?

E00; Well, what's in the Bible. Same thing as in the English Bible, but it was in Swede. Yeah he preached.

SS: And Sunday school?

E00: We had Sunday school at 10 o'clock and then he preached at the meeting at 11. And then in the evening they had meeting. And I went to ^{confirmation}, I was confirmed in that church and we went to confirmation on Saturday forenoon, studied then. So...

SS: Who taught the Sunday school?

E00: Oh, it was Sandquist and Emil Peirson was married to a Sandguist girl. And Alfred Johnson and Ole Bowman and all those were teachers. Yeah. All in Swedish. It was a lot of fun though. That's quite a while ago.

SS: I heard that the oldtimers from the old country, that the men were used to telling the women what to do.

E00: Well that's still ~~further~~ back, that's before my time. It wasn't that ^{way} after, when my ~~dad~~ and ~~mother~~ was married or anything. That's before, in the way before that.

SS: So your parents sort of shared decisions together?

E00: Yeah. So they, more like it tis now, yeah. But long, long time before their time was this way they had the man was the head.

SS: Who told the kids what to do, your mother or father?

E00: Well, my mother told us and did what she could, and if we didn't do with that, why she'd tattletale to dad and then we got a good lickin'. (laughs) So we thought we better do what she tells us or she'll tattletale, tell him, and he wouldn't spare the rod.

SS: Was he easier on the girls than the boys?

E00: Well, I don't know, course, they had three girls first and then they got two boys and course, then when they were so tickled to have those boys that they got more

spoiled than us girls, ^{did} And made over. And us girls was so much older then, we was, we could work and do some things where those boys were, just pets. Pests. 'Cause I know my oldest brother, whenever they went to town, I had a rope ready and we had a stove that had legs on it, square stove, had legs on it. And when they left and as soon as they went to town or, and I was home there with the kids, I took that rope and I tied him and I tied him to ^{that} leg of ^a stove there and he was tied til I seen 'em come home, then I let him loose. 'Cause he was so mean. He'd hit us and he'd, I just couldn't have him loose. One time I didn't get him and we, it was a pantry, that little window on the side there, that was the pantry and we got in there and we locked ourselves in, we didn't dare go out 'cause he had an axe and he was gonna kill us. He had a butcher knife and everything so we was locked in that pantry til they pretnear come home. And ^{so} I just learnt that "I'm going to find a rope." And I did find a rope and I hid that rope and just kept it and nobody knew where that rope was but me. And as soon as they left, they wasn't more than out by the gate til I had him and tied him. And I had him tied to that stove til they got home.

SS: You did that more than once?

E00: Oh, all the time. Every time they went. Wherever they went I did that because we couldn't let him go loose.

SS: They let you do it?

E00: They didn't know it.

SS: Didn't he tell?

E00: No sir, we told him if he does, why we're just going to beat him to death. And he never told. There to do that, because I could handle him pretty good.

SS: Why was he like that do you think?

E00: I don't know. He was just going to show that he could take over and be boss. He wasn't going to take orders from any of us girls. He was going to run it.

SS: How much older were you that he?

E00: Five years. And I was seven years older than our next brother. So there was the two boys.

SS: When did he start getting over that?

E00: Well, I don't know, he was quite big, he was in school and got over it more and more so he got better, but this was when he was really hon'ry, four, five years old. Awful. Yeah, they spoiled him 'cause they had the boys and then we had us three girls and when they got a boy, why they were pretty tickled and he got too spoiled.

SS: I heard that they liked to have boys.

E00: Yeah, they wanted boys, they wanted boys.

SS: Why was that?

E00: I don't know.

SS: I heard 'cause they worked in the fields better.

E00: Well, I don't know, probably they thought it was cheaper to raise 'em and I don't know ~~what~~. But there was five boys and we were four girls. The one girl died and now all five boys are dead. This one that was so onery, him and his wife went out fishing past Bovill and they had a camper, they lived in Lewiston and they had a camper and they went up there and got there in the afternoon and they had drank some coffee in there, in their camper and went out and got the limit of fish and then he said he wasn't feeling very good. So he says, "I think we probably better go home." And when they got up to the camper he said, "You'll have to drive," he said, "I'm getting worse," he said, "I'm gettin' awful sick." And they got ready then to turn around...

SIDE B

E00: Before they got into Bovill, he said, "I feel lots better now," and he says, "but we'll keep on going home." And then in Bovill, when she got into Bovill she stopped and then he was dead. So it went that fast. Yeah.

SS: Because you were the oldest girl did you help your mother a lot in raising the other kids?

E00: Yeah, we had washing, we had to have a tub and a washboard, wash the clothes that way and bake bread and ^{learn't that,} I don't think I was more than five years old when I started to bake the bread. 'Cause I could...and when they went to town they left me there with the kids and they'd show me on the clock ~~when~~ when that little

hand would come over to that, they'd be gone eight hours. And when that little hand got on that number there, then they'd be coming home. And, well, I'd clean the house, I'd do all I could and we'd go down to the canyon, there was a little canyon ^{below} there and we'd play in the playhouse. Then we'd watch that clock because we knew they were going to come home then. So we had everything in order when they got home.

SS: Did your parents tell you how you should behave?

E00: Oh yeah, they said we couldn't go no place unless we behaved and they said they don't know what we do, we'd behave pretty good. All the kids up there were good. There wasn't any bad kids. There was no dope and no drinking or nothing. It was just to have a good time, that was all. Now, if they'd have a dance at that schoolhouse now, if that schoolhouse was there, I bet there wouldn't be one kid up there, young people there. They wouldn't go to a place like that. We didn't have no cars, it was just to go. And if the boys from town come ~~out~~, we had livery barns here they had two livery barns here. They had horses, they could rent the horses and the buggy and they'd come and take us out. And then the farthest we could go was up to Deary. 'Bout as far as we could ride.

SS: Did your parents put a lot of stress on being honest?

E00: Oh yeah. We had to be honest. We had to know everything where, we couldn't cheat anything. ^{we} Couldn't swipe a penny or anything, 'cause they'd know just exactly what we should have. What we should bring back from the store or something. We were made honest. So we were all brought up to be honest.

SS: Was all this work on some of the women and girls hard?

E00: Oh, it must have been. It must have been awful hard to be parents in them days.

SS: Do you think it was hard on your mother?

E00: I think, well it must have been. She was little. I don't think she ever weighed over 97 pounds. Real small woman.

SS: She did all that work?

E00 Yeah. You can see. She's on the picture there. She's just a little woman. And she lived to be almost 99. My dad was only 54 when he died. And I think what he died

from was cancer and they didn't know it, know what it was. They didn't know what anything was in them days, that long ago. And he was paralyzed clear from here down to his legs and they couldn't even touch the bed, he'd holler. So he died, I think he had cancer. What I think was the start of it was prostrate gland and they didn't know it. Doctors didn't know it. And then it turned to cancer. That's what I think he died from. 'Cause they never said what he died from. Doctors didn't know.

SS: When you went up to Spokane, is that where you heard was the best place to work for a young woman to get a job?

E00: Well, we heard that there was housework and people wanted girls to work and ^{that} when we went ~~to~~ Spokane it was, the neighbor girl across the road and I went and we'd never been to Spokane, we'd never been to any big town. And then it was an Adventist minister that lived out there and he, his wife knew a girl in Spokane, she lived in the basement of the Advenist church in Spokand and she knew hereand she said she's going to write to that girl and have her carry a magazine, and ^{could} meet us at the depot. And we were supposed to carry the same magazine so when we got off the train we had that magazine, she met us and we went with her home. And then we got ahold of a newspaper and we read ⁱⁿ there where we should go and look for work and we went and found those places, she helped us so we could get, know where we were to go. So we got work, ~~we~~ worked clear til Christmas.

SS: What kind of people did you work for? Were they well to do?

E00: Oh yeah and they always told us when we go to Spokane to work we should always go where there were lot of kids in the family 'cause if it were an old couple or just a couple they'd expect more from the girls that worked. But if there were kids there, you know how kids could drag out things, ^{all the time} so, in the place where I got there was four kids and the one the other girl got was three kids. And we made it fine. We...

SS: Why, what would the kids do, would they help you?

E00: No, if we didn't make everything perfect, well then kids would drag out stuff, you know how kids are. So we got by with lot of, otherwise if they'd been just

a couple, ^{or that} why they'd expect everything to be just perfect. So we got along just fine.

SS: Did the people you worked for still expect a lot of you?

E00: Well I don't know. We kept their house clean and cooked for 'em and washed the dishes.

SS: Were they rich?

E00: Oh yeah, they were well to do people. And they took care of their own kids, they had a woman that took care of kids, a nurse I guess they called it, I didn't know what it was then. ^{But} I guess that's what they called them, somebody to take care of the kids. And they sent all the washing out, and so I didn't have to do any washing and she'd tell me what to fix for the meals, you know. And so it wasn't too bad. And then we'd have one afternoon off and then Sundays off, Sunday afternoon off and one afternoon during the week to go to town. So we got out. And then we could go out after nine o'clock in the evening, we would be through with all our work at nine. Then if we wanted to go to a dance or something downtown we could go.

SS: Was this friend of yours nearby?

E00: Well, we met. We met downtown on Riverside and she'd take a different bus and I'd have a different bus, but we'd meet ^{there}, whoever'd get there first just waited til the other bus come and we...

SS: Where would you go to dance?

E00: We went to Odins hall, that's a Swedish hall.

SS: Where?

E00: Odins hall and that was a Swedish hall and we went there and so that's where we went to the dances.

SS: Did the people at the house treat you well?

E00: Oh yeah.

SS: They didn't just treat you like a maid?

E00: Uh-unh. No they were real nice.

SS: Did you get to eat with the family?

E00: No they ate in the dining room but, I wouldn't've wanted to eat in there anyway,

but they ate in the dining room and I ate in the kitchen. So I learned to cook and then I got the job to cook at the camps...

SS: You didn't know how to cook before you went up there?

E00: Oh I knew, yeah, I learned at home, so I knew how to, I could get along alright, but I had all my cookbooks with me and I read 'em and cooked whatever they wanted I fixed it.

SS: What did you think of the city of Spokane?

E00: We thought it was so big that, oh my, and Spokane wasn't very big then, as it is now. Oh we thought it was so big and oh my, we was really...(laughs)

SS: Where did you meet your husband?

E00: Well, up at the camp^s, when I was cooking, yeah. He was at old White Pine and the boys come and kinda hung around the cookhouse a little bit and come in and dry dishes for us, and one thing and another, sometimes another one, another time... and you can take a better liking to one than you can to another, you know. He'd come in there and he'd get the dish towel and he'd dry the dishes and he'd come in and sit around and that and pretty soon, he had another girl up at Deary when the, first, so this man that run the camp and this girl that I'd been with all the time across the road there, we were cooking there and he was kind of going with her. And so he asked me if I wanted, he, one of the other boys in the camp there to go with him, and we were going to go down to the Nora church. He was going to drive with the hack and the horses down to Nora church. And ^{he wanted to know} if I wanted no, I said I don't want any of them to go. And we got on the road.

SS: He wanted to know what?

E00: He wanted to know if I wanted one of the other boys to go with. And I said no, I didn't want any of them other boys to go. And my husband, he already, he had a girlfriend in Deary so he was up there, he'd go up there. And when we was driving from the camp up to there, we met him on the road. So this Joe asked me, he says, "Should we pick him up?" And I says yeah. So we picked him up and he went with us to church and ^{then} he quit going to Deary and he started in coming to see me I guess. So that's the way it started.

- SS: It just happened that you met him on the road?
- E00: Yeah, we just met, he'd been walking, he'd been to Deary and he come walking back to the camp and we were going driving out, and we met him there.
- And then he got in and then we went to church. So that's how it started kinda.
When we went together.
- SS: Did you kind of like each other from when you...
- E00: I guess so.
- SS: What was it like cooking in the lumber camps?
- E00: Oh, it was just like in the house. They had a dining room and a kitchen. The dining room, there that long tables, and we'd set them tables and we fixed the meals, fixed roasts and whatever ^{meat} we got ahold of. They butchered right up there and hung it up and we'd have to go out there and whack it off ourselves. And I got scars all over where I chopped the knife into the, into my hand. I pretnear chpped that finger off one time.
- SS: Just cutting slabs off the meat?
- E00: Yeah, because I'd miss, the meat was frozen part of the time. And it'd slip and it'd get into my, oh I was all burnt up, got scars all over from that. And we'd ^{whack} ~~whack~~ off, if they wanted steak, if we was gonna have steak, why it was to cut off so we could get steak, whatever, roasts, we'd have to go out there and saw off, get some roasts. And then we ^{just} cooked great big kettles of spuds, vegetables. We'd bake bread and just kept agoin'.
- SS: What were the living conditions like there?
- E00: These were all just local people and it wasn't any rough, it was just like being home and everybody was clean and they cleaned the bunkhouses and everything was clean. And we'd scrub the dining room floor and the kitchen floor and it was clean. I don't remember that we were ever awfully tired.
- SS: So the work wasn't too hard?
- E00: It couldn'ta been or we were terrible strong, I don't know. We just kept on agoin'.
- SS: Were there some men around there that the girls didn't trust?
- E00: I don't know. I trusted everybody that was there. I was there alone, down at Stanter mill I was there alone a whole summer with a bunch of 'em there. And in

the evening, they'd sit down by the mill and play cards. And I'd go down there and I'd sit there with 'em and then one time I got up and I stepped on something or roller ^{it started going} and I was just ready to roll under the mill when one of the boys caught my leg and so I didn't go down. I didn't know that thing was going to go when I stepped on it. And another time I went out on the pond, there was boys walked on them logs and they never moved. And I thought well I don't see any reason why I can't do it so one Sunday morning I went out there on the pond and I was going to walk on those logs like they did. And the logs started ^{to} going, you know, and jump on another one and that'll keep agoin'... and they come running from the bunkhouse there and got me out of that mess. But I thought I could walk th^{ose} logs just as good as any of those could. But they laid still f^{or} them, but when I got on 'em they start rolling. I should've balanced 'em someway, I guess and didn't know it.

SS: I heard that at the mill at Nora, the men drank quite a bit, the loggers.

E00: If they did they went out on Saturday night at town, and if they did they drank when they were out, but they didn't have any drinking much, they didn't have any drinking there where I was. And I was alone oh, with about six men down there in Standard mill one whole summer. I wasn't scared of any of 'em. I trusted all of 'em. They were just real good all...

SS: How many cooks for the crew at the White Pine?

E00: That was about seventeen I think. And then the logging crew, the must have been ten or twelve.

SS: And how many cooks?

E00: Well there were two cooks for the sawmill and two for the logging camp. It was work but poor pay. But everything was cheap then.

SS: At th^{at} time all the money you were making there and at Spokane went to your folks?

E00: Not what I made in Spokane, that was, I spent there for clothes and stuff there. They didn't get any of that. But what we worked for in the mills and the camps there we sent home ^{that all} to pay for them. We bought a piano, that was the begining, we sent them a catalog for a piano and then we had to pay that. And then they

built the barn and then we started paying on the barn.

SS: Did you use the piano a lot?

E00: The kids at home did, the boys played. My brothers could pick up any instrument there was to play on. And they could play on the comb, they could play the mouth harp and the comb and the acordion and guitar and violin and piano, anything, they just sit down and just play. And there isn't a one of the grandchildren, well there's one, one of the grandchildren that's the ^uyounger kids, their kids that is that way. And he plays anything. Can just pick up anything and can just play anything.

SS: You said you went to school in Moscow for a year and said a few things about that. Why didn't you think it was worth your while to go?

E00: Well I worked for my room and board and I had to work and then I had to do my studying, 'cause I had to know my work from school, and I just thought, I'm not going to go there no more. 'Cause I just couldn't see that it would pay.

SS: Why wasn't it worth it, too much work?

E00: Too much work, had to work for room and board and that was a lot of work and...

SS: Did you work for a well to do family there?

E00: Well, no, not too well. But they didn't have any kids it was just him and her there but I had to do all the housework after I got home from school and worked Saturdays and Sundays, cleaned the house and cooked for 'em. And then go to school, I had to do ^{my} studying sometime, and I just couldn't see any sense in that.

SS: Could you have gone to high school in Troy if you'd wanted to?

E00: Well, my folks didn't want me here. They sent me up to Moscow to work for my... 'cause here they'd had to pay and I had to work for my room and board to get to go. 'Cause they didn't have any money to pay for it. And this way I worked myself through the first year.

SS: Where you lived in Nora was about five miles from town here?

E00: Yeah.

SS: That was too far to go everyday?

E00: Oh yeah it was pretty far and there was no buses, no cars, no nothing. Lot

of snow.

SS: So that must have made it rough for all the kids to...

E00: Yeah, there wasn't any of the kids up there that went to school. They couldn't go to any higher school than what they got there.

SS: When you got married did you feel you needed much in the way of dishes and clothes, etc?

E00: Well, we had a big wedding and we got an awful lot of stuff. We went to sales and bought furniture and we got that chair there was a wedding present. And we got married in 1920. And that's how long we were, 56 years ago, isn't it? Yeah. That chair we got from Hotel Thompson, he had the hotel down here. He gave us that chair. So that still is a wedding present. And we've used it. And when my kids, we had two boys, and when they were small I'd put a pillow in there and I'd put a chunk of wood under the runner there, ^{and} that's where they slept. I didn't have any baby buggy or anything for 'em.

SS: Slept where?

E00: Slept there in that chair. And it's in good shape yet.

SS: Looks like. So where did you live, in Troy here?

E00: No we bought a forty acre farm east, between Deary and Troy. And there's where both our kids were born. And then he got work here at the warehouse, at Green's warehouse then, and then we moved to town. And then we lived in town the rest of our days and he worked, he worked at Green's and then he got to be manager at this Latah County Grain Growers. So he was manager ^{there}, then when he was 65, he quit and got social security and then he worked, where Rouch's had a sawmill up here and he'd pile lumber for 'em on the top ^{of the hill} there. And he'd work with the rock crusher and just a little bit here and there, you know. Just a little.

SS: Was he stationed in Troy for the grain growers?

E00: Yeah. He was right here in Troy at the grain growers at the warehouse there.

SS: What did you do after marriage?

E00: Well, I, we moved to town here and then that house across the street from that hotel, that was a hospital, we had a doctor there. I got work there, I cleaned and I washed there. And that was a real hospital. He operated there and everything, that doctor.

SS: Who was that?

E00: Dr. Meyers was his name. And then I started in to get in on this pea picking in Moscow, and all those women here in Troy almost went up there, picked peas, sorting peas.

SS: You went into Moscow?

E00: Yeah. We worked up there, we worked at Washburn and Wilson and we worked at Pure Line and at Sampson and then we picked beans down here at the warehouse, it's a belt comes towards ya and the peas come rolling and you have to pick out all the mixtures and say that these are... seed peas, peas they want and if there's any round peas in there we had to get all those round peas out^{of there}. They didn't want any mixtures in it. So we worked there, oh I worked there for many years. Til '64.

SS: When did you start working there?

E00: Oh I don't know.

SS: After the depression?

E00: Yeah. It was after the depression. And then they cut mica down here, and so I, we got mica cutting down here in between picking peas.

SS: Where down here?

E00: Down in that schoolbus garage is where the mica, where we cut mica. Yeah.

SS: Was pea picking tedious?

E00: The worst was to ^{keep(?)} stay awake. And we had eight hours a day and those would come and you know, you'd just sit there, course we had a recess in the forenoon and one in the afternoon. But then we'd drink coffee so we should be able to stay awake. And we, it was in the winter it was, we was on the shift from three in the afternoon til, well, eight hours, what would it be, ll? 'Cause we got time off for our supper and it was ⁺ fary below zero. And the car was frozen, we was gonna go home and when we got out by the cemetery, Moscow cemetery, the car stopped. And we found out they had stole the gas out^{of it}. So we didn't have any gas. So we tried to make people stop and nobody wanted to stop 'cause you know how cold it was. And there we stood. And so ^{then} none boy, it was a boy and a girl and they

were going into Genesee and he stopped and he took the lady that drove ⁱⁿ to Moscow and got them to bring us some gas and the next day when we come to work, we could see where they had taken the gas out of the car 'cause it was on the ground, you know, that snow, ^{ice} had melted on the ground where the gas had come down on it and they had stole our gas. And it was cold, boy it was cold. It just hit and popped in trees and everythng else. But we kept on all winter til spring. And next year we went back again. But then we got on in the morning so we worked from morning til, got off at three o'clock.7.

SS: When was the evening shift from?

E00: It started at three in the afternoon and then eight hours, when it would be that. Eleven o'clock wouldn't it, yeah.

SS: Then you got home...

E00: Around midnight. And then we had to do our work at home too.

SS: So you worked out quite a bit.

E00: I worked all the time, as long as I was able to work. Until I, I took my social security when I was 62. I didn't get as much as if I'd awaited til 65 but I took it and after that I haven't worked much at anything out.

SS: In the '20's the work that you did was all at the hospital?

E00: Yeah, in the, and then, we got food from, they had food, ⁵⁶ we could get beans and different kinds of canned meats and everything, just to go downtown and get it.

SS: During the depression?

E00: Yeah. And so we got food there and then they put in the sewer here in town and they got so many hours to work on that, each person would get, would get in some time. And they paid 'em for that and we were renting a house, over that way there and we paid, the rent was six dollars a month and we couldn't pay it. And it was a bachelor, he's a rich bachelor that we rented from. Well, rent six dollars a month and we couldn't pay him and he says, "Well, let her go," he says, "til later." And then he died and we still owe him for about three months of that rent, and he died. (laughs) Six dollars a month, we couldn't pay it.

SS: Were you and your husband both out of work when the depression hit?

E00: Yeah. And he couldn't get work and there was no work so that's how I got being

at the hospital there, to work there. It was hard. It wasn't, it wasn't anything, and the kids wanted this and the kids wanted that and they couldn't have it and ...

SS: Was it worse do you think, than when your parents were raising a family?

E00: I think that depression was worse. I think so.

SS: Did you have to worry about ^{HAVING} enough to eat before the commodities?

E00: No, we got enough because, we'd get plenty from there and then I'd get ahold of some and can some you know, something in the summer so that we had some canned vegetables and fruit and such. But we got an awful lot, we got big sacks of beans and peas and stuff to cook you know. So we got lots to eat from that relief.

SS: Before that relief there was a time when there wasn't any relief in the depression, was there?

E00: Yeah, it was pretty hard then. But that started in pretty soon after, that wasn't too long til we got this relief food. Then I worked until I quit. 62. I'll be 79 next month now. Next year, I'll be 80 next year.

SS: That's not that old.

E00: Oh, that sounds awful.

SS: I know lots of people in their 80's and 90's.

E00: Oh yeah. Yeah, but there isn't much future ahead for anybody getting old.

SS: You just live your life from day to day.

E00: Yeah. Then when he died in 1973, then I lived up in the house there for two years then and then I thought it was gettin' too much yard work and too big a house to keep. So I sold it, I sold my house. I got 15 thousand for it. And we bought it we paid 3100 for it. So I sold it for 15,000. Then I...

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E00: ...our groceries and that and then when we got some money we paid on it and it went on until we could pay it out. And so they had a lot of patience with people.

SS: The bank did?

E00: The stores. The bank we didn't ^{have anything,} we didn't have anything much to do with the bank. I got a book here shows what, maybe you've already seen it.

SS:

SS: Troy was like then in the 1920's.

E00: It's there, it's a picture of it there.

SS: But I mean what do you remember the town as being like. Had it changed much from the pioneer days?

E00: Oh yeah, it sure has 'cause they were wooden buildings and now it's all brick...

SS: I mean between then and the 20's. When you moved here to live, was it very different than it had been when you were a child?

E00: No it wasn't much different because it was wooden buildings and the bank was where the post office is now. It was just that little bank. And the post office was at the other end down there where, by the hotel there someplace on this side of the hotel. It was, one big store that they had is the schoolbus garage. That was one big store, Williamson had that store and he had furniture and clothes and groceries and everything you wanted in there. And then he quit that and they just had grocery stores here. Now we only have one grocery store left.

SS: Did you do much of your shopping at Williamson's/at that time?

E00: Yeah, we bought lot of stuff there.

SS: When you were growing up, did your parents make do without a lot of things.

E00: Oh yeah, we all had to do without. We couldn't have this or that or anything. I don't think any of the kids in that day and age could. They were all poor, just settling there. It was woods cleared and up to your door. There wasn't hardly any fields or anything there when my dad moved in there, got that place. Just start in breaking up land and cutting wood, selling wood. Yeah.

SS: Between the time you were married and the depression did you just raise a family, or did you work out too?

E00: No I didn't work out then because he was working then and the kids were small so I stayed home. I was home then. We just had two boys. So then I didn't got to work til I started at the hospital down there, then it was, I worked all the time after that. 'Cause I started picking peas and cutting mica and everything. Cutting mica, that's hard. That's awful hard. And it's dust, mica dust, fine, real fine stuff flying.

SS: How do you cut it?

E00: We had a sharp knife and we'd have to cut so it slanted and get it peeled off so it looked nice and smooth.

SS: Was that being mined near Deary?

E00: Yeah, up in Mica mine.

SS: When you went to work, did that make a big difference in the family income?

E00: Well I guess so because we got the house paid for in a hurry and, so I put my money into the house and we had, so it helped. Helped a lot.

SS: What kinds of things did your kids want during the depression that they couldn't have?

E00: Oh they wanted a bicycle and they wanted a, things to play with, and different things, you know that they, that some of the other kids had. So they couldn't have it. Yeah. But we lived through the depression and everything.

SS: Do you think the community was as close here as where you grew up in Nora?

E00: Oh, I don't know. There it was just like one big family, all the neighbor kids played together, more that way. But I don't know, I've always liked it here, I've always been here, so...

SS: So you think the people weren't as close here?

E00: Now nobody has time to go and visit anybody else.

SS: But I mean back in the 20's.

E00: Yeah, no I don't think was like being up there in the country. And then they got cars and started going in cars. And nobody stayed home any more then..They didn't go together like they did before the cars come. Then we couldn't get no other place but up to Pleasant Hill school house and...

SS: And everybody went in wagons.

E00: Yeah, we went where we could go to, get to.

SS: You went together.

E00: Yeah, well we went up there and met there, stayed there.

SS: Did you take part in any of the activities they had in town here?

E00: I did belong to the Rebekahs once. My husband belonged to the Odd Fellows. And that's all that I ever joined, was into. Then they died, both of them died out, so they go to Moscow now, those that wanted to go on. And then we went to the church, that was all.

SS: I think I've stayed long enough, I should be going. They didn't care for it...

E00: Is that why she quit then and sold out I wonder?

SS: I think it might have been part of why. The depression, things have changed.

E00: Oh yeah.

SS: Did you have women friends that you spent much time with?

E00: Well, we didn't have time because we were working all the time and we were together then and visiting all the time while we was riding, whenever we was eatin' our lunch and everything. So we didn't have much time for, when we were home we had to work at home get caught up ^{at} our own house. So we never went visiting very much. And now nobody has time to visit. Nobody comes and nobody goes. And now I've gotten so I can't go up the hill so now I'm stuck 'cause it's wherever you go you go up here. See they operated on my knee and put in a piece of steel here and a piece of steel there and ^{up} took this cap off and scraped it and here is two drains here and that's a year ago. Yah, that was a year ago in August. So that gets pretty stiff. The depression would come now, I don't know what in the world these kids would do. 'Cause they're used to getting whatever they want to and big wages and work wherever they go. I don't what they'd do if a depression came now, for these kids. All of 'em have cars and whatever, everything. Boats and cars and even airplanes. I don't know what they'd do if the depression come now. They couldn't take it.

SS: Do you think there could be another depression?

E00: Hard to tell what's going to be. Never know. It's hard to tell what it'll be.

SS: Did you enjoy that you did or would you have rather not have had to work?

E00: Oh no, I wanted to, we wanted to work. I wanted to work. But I don't want to work now any more. I couldn't get a job or any work if I didn't try, 'cause I'm too old.

SS: The work that you did sounded pretty hard.

E00: Well it was all hard work and that sorting peas there, that was awful hard, 'cause you'd sit there and your back would just about break. And that's, we all got backaches from it. It was all hard work, there wasn't any easy work. I got easy work now though with this house.

SS: Was the pay any good for that?

E00: Mica cutting, we got paid by the pound.

SS: No the pea sorting.

E00: Oh yeah, we got a dollar and a half an hour. We started out at thirty five cents an hour when we started. Then they raised the wages off and on til we got a dollar and a half. That was good. But we started in with thirty five cents an hour. When first we started picking peas.

SS: Was that in the 30's, after the depression was on?

E00: After, yeah. And eight hours 8x35, that wasn't very much in the day, was it?

SS: That'd be two dollars and eighty cents.

E00: And ^{then} they raised it up to forty cents and then up to fifty and then it kept going up and I don't know what they pay, they must pay quite a bit now. 'Cause they're still picking peas. It went up. And then we'd work on Saturday, we'd get time and a half for that.

SS: Did you work eight hours on Saturday?

E00: Um-huh.

SS: Did that mean that you and your husband didn't have much time together?

E00: We didn't have any time together then, 'cause we were just working and Sunday I had to clean up the house and get ready to go to work again on Monday, so, we didn't have time for nothing. It was just to work to try and get ahead. See we bought the house and then we had ^{to work} to pay that. And I made good on that, I made pretty good to pay for, we paid only 3100, that isn't much for a house in this time and age. It was quite a bit then. We lived in that house for thirty five years. And I just sold it then 'cause I just couldn't take care of it ^{any} more. And big yard. I had flowers all around the yard and trees all over.

END OF TAPE