

CARL OLSON

Part 1

Interviewed by:

Sam Schrager

Oral History Project

Latah County Museum Society

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I. Index

CARL OLSON

Troy, Dry Ridge; b. 1895

thrasherman; miner; sawmiller; service station owner.

1.5 hours

minute page

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Carl Olson

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with Sam Schrager
August 6, 1973

II. Transcript

Carl Olson has a great store of vivid recollections about early times in the Dry Ridge--Bear Ridge country, and the town of Troy. He speaks of why his parents left Sweden, and of the man, Per Johanson, who told the people in Minnesota of new land opening up around Troy. He talks of his large family's homesteading, and the copper mining and brickmaking they did. He explains the effects of early land use, and the extensive commerce that centered around Troy. He touches on early law and order, and how criminals might be dealt with. And he recalls characters: a mean sheriff, a real giant, a foolish miner, and a phony hunter.

SAM SCHRAGER: I think the first thing I was thinking of asking you, was why your parents decided to leave Sweden, and come to America?

CARL OLSON: Oh. Well, I don't know if I should put that on the tape or not.

SAM: Oh, its okay. No, do, do.

C O: Well, they come here for to get away from the militarists, capitalism, and religion. That sounds pretty bad, you know, in our country, don't it? Well, I'll tell you why religion is here. They run the country at that time. And the church had power over us, somethin' like the Catholics had, y'know. But they started breakin' away when they left, so now religion is just like it is here now, you know. Well, there was one kind there then. And you had to go to church, you had to do everything, y'know. They were boss, y'know. Practically run the country. And then the militarism. You didn't believe in wars, I guess--not very many fellers believes in that. But that's one reason. (He gets a picture.) See there, it was like it is here now, y'know-- you're forced to go in the army. There my dad is. That was when he was in the army, see, in Sweden.

SAM: Hm. So he had to serve?

C O: Yeh (chuckles). I don't know how, they went so two or three years, but it wasn't very long each year, I don't believe. I don't know for sure how long they had to, I think they had to spend a couple of years, anyway.

SAM: What about the capitalism that you say?

C O: Well, you know, all the people were poor there, you know. They didn't have nothing. It was a pretty poor country, you know. Rocky, and just like goin' up in the mountains here maybe, y'know, about the same thing, where my folks come from. 'Course down there around Stockholm and down there, it was fairly good land, y'know. But that was all taken up. All the people owned that. And then, you know, the system was over there just like what they called it feudalism, if you ever know what that is. Well, if there was a

family there, and when they died, the oldest boy got everything, see. The others didn't get nothing. And that's why it grewed that way, you see, you got bigger and bigger and bigger estates. And that's the way it worked in Sweden at that time. But that isn't there no more, either. Feudalism died out, y'know, finally. They had slaves to do all their work, y'know. I think capitalism is on the way out too. Don't you?

SAM: It wouldn't surprise me a bit.

C O: Well, here. If you go back in history, you know. First there was the real slaves, y'know. There was nothin' but slaves that worked for the people. Well, that come under the feudalism system, too. And that went on then, so long as there was room enough for the people, y'know, to live. And when that got too tough, then they got a rebellion, and they took it over. Then the kings come in and ruled, see, all over Europe--the kings ruled after that, after the feudalism did. And then the kings got taken out, so they went into democracy now, you see, of course; and it's capitalism here now, 100%. And it can't last for these reasons. When they settled the United States, they settled on the East Coast, y'know. And when it got too tough for the people there, they kept moving west, see? They'd take a homestead and so forth, and they'd have a store, or a little sawmill. And all such, it was a future for them to go through, see. It's none here now, you know that. The small businesses are dying out all the time. The big chain store is takin' all the business, and big factories are takin' all the business there. And the big farms, you know where they're goin'--10,000 acres, you know, 2-3,000 acres. Where are you gonna go? It's just a job, that's all you got. And that's gettin' so rotten, that the union are ruining that now, y'know. Sure, go on strike, strike, strike, that's what caused the inflation now. If there're anything you're gonna guide, it's to guide the wages. I believed in the--when I was young, y'know, I believed in the union awful, because when

I went out and worked, I had to carry my own bed, and sleep in an old bunk-house, see? No baths or nothin', y'know. Just lay there, and stunk in them from the sweaty feet, y'know, they'd hang the socks up (chuckles). You couldn't hardly sleep from the stink. So they cleaned that up, y'see, the union. But now there gettin' so big that they're startin' to ruin the country. Ruining it, for the strikes. You know just as well as I do, there is a saturation point on everything, isn't it? It costs so much to make somethin', and then your price is set there. Well then, if they strike, then that thing is gonna cost more. So they don't gain anything; when they buy it back, their money goes back, see. And what to do then? So, all I heard around here, "Save your money, save your money, so you don't go in the poorhouse," and so forth. What's the use in saving money if it's gonna go like this, now? The money I saved when I was young, two years, be wiped out.

SAM: What you're saying is that the way it is here, it reminds you of the way it used to be in Sweden, when it made your parents come over here.

C O: Yah. So you see how that is. And that's the way it was over there at that time, because that country was settled all over, y'know, full of people, see, and there was no other place to go.

SAM: Did your parents have a farm of their own over there?

C O: Oh, they had a little bit, y'know. They didn't have many acres, y'know. They had a coupla cows, and they used the old scythe, y'know, to cut the hay with. They didn't do any thrashing or anything like that, because, what, they didn't have fields enough, most of them. And that's the way they lived there, you see.

SAM: Do you know if he had to hire out and work for bigger farmers?

C O: Oh well, they worked up north. I don't know if my dad did, but he was pretty young, y'know. He was only 22 years old when he come here. But they went north and done some logging, y'know, in the winter, and worked. But

then, that wasn't very big, very much for all of them to do, you know. And it was pretty tough, too, y'know, when you get up north there. It's colder, and the days are short, and you can't put in more than five, six hours and it's dark, y'know. So they used to tell about that a whole lot. They floated the logs down the creeks, y'know, to the mills, and so on.

But now Sweden has got a pretty good government, y'know. It's pretty good. You're taken care of 100% there, 100%. If you ain't got a home to live in when you get old, they got a home for you. You ain't no villas and stuff like they have here, that pokes in a whole lot of sick people. Everybody thought that was so darn good, y'know, here, but it's no good. It's good, better'n nothing, y'know. But when the people gets broke, or he gets so he can't work, he's got to live somewheres. Well, then they poke him into those big homes, you see. And there's half-crazy people in there, and there's everything in there. They can't, they don't want to live that way. You wouldn't want to either, if you have pretty good shape, y'know. Well, they poke 'em all in one bunch. They shouldn't do that. You should have a, they should have a little house for 'em. And then have a house like they got here, and then put the people in that's got to be taken care of. Then they can live the way they want to. But before they only had a poorhouse here. You don't remember that, I guess? They had an old building, y'know, and they'd poke 'em in there, and it was ragged, and half starved to death, and fighting and quarreling all the time.

SAM: They had those out here too?

C O: Yeh. I talked to a feller that come from down South. They had a poorhouse there, he said (chuckles). They had one out in the desert, y'know. There they got all kinds of people in it, he said. They got miners and farmers. And they were quarreling and fighting all the time, he said. And they'd run away, and then they had to run and find them, you know--

mix up, you see, like that. That ain't no way to take care of people. My way of taking care of a country is two things they have to do. One thing they have to do is take care of the people. And if you take care of the people, the people will take care of the country. You'll never have any trouble in the country. And that's the whole secret. 'Course they're gettin' there a little better now, than they used to be here. Now we got Social Security and all else, y'know, that's pretty good. If they wouldn't have Social Security, you'd have to build 15, 20 houses like they got in Moscow to take care of the people. You'd be all broke. Well, you can see it yourself. The inflation'd took all their money, see. See? You got to regulate things, 'til you got somethin' to go by, the people. And that's why the young people, they don't know what they want today. They run all over and they don't know what they're lookin' for, because there's no future, you see. Job, that's all it is left. And then the old tax system they got here. Tax your home. If you don't own a home, you don't own nothin'. You don't own it now, you're just leasing it. Paying so much a year to live in it, don't you? Taxes, that's same as a lease. Now they're getting so, well, we're paying \$525 on this little thing here, taxes alone. Then we get an empty building, what happens? You lose it, or else pay taxes on an empty thing that there's no income from. That's what happened in the last depression, that's before you were born. Big building in Moscow there, y'know, a feller had named David, y'know, four stories high. Lost it on taxes. Then it was \$4,000 taxes against it, and 4,000 then was same as 50,000 now, pretty near, y'know. So he couldn't pay it, and it sold on a tax sale. Pret' near everybody that had an apartment house in the '30's lost, lost 'em. Because the people that lived in the apartment houses couldn't pay the rent, see. And you couldn't kick 'em out. They had to keep 'em there. And they didn't get enough money to pay the rent on the damn thing, and keep it up. Rich

people, millionaires went broke on having apartment houses. No, I'll tell ya, there's a lot of stuff here that's got to be corrected, if they ain't gonna lose the country.

SAM: Let's go back and start with your parents coming over here...

C O: Well, they come over here in 1897. Come on a boat. They were six weeks on the ocean. And they had to come in what they called the steerage, that was the cheapest rate, y'know. And they lived way down in the boat then, you see. There's where she rocks. See, we get up here in the boat, on this, it doesn't rock so much there. Y'get way up, then it rocks again. So all the people that had money, they always took that place, you know. But that was a whole lot, cost a whole lot. But they had to take steerage, way down the bottom. And they feed them, fed 'em, all right, but they had black coffee, my mother said, and a little bread, and that's about all. And the storm come up, and that old ship was goin' like that (tipping hand), and it laid over. They never thought they's goin' to make it across at all. And then when they got to Minnesota, my mother stayed there, and my dad come out here a year ahead, and took the homestead, y'know. And then when they come here, why it was no railroad here. It ended in Moscow. And he had to pack everything on his back from Moscow, that's 22 miles out to the ranch, and so forth.

SAM: How did he happen to come to Idaho? Do you know?

C O: Well, it's because there was land to take here, you see. See, a lot of the Eastern stuff were taken. And it was some left on the prairie, just like Dakotas, ya know. But it's cold and windy, and no timber or no nothin', see. They couldn't even build themselves a home there, unless ya had money to buy lumber, see. But here you had the timber, see, and you could make a log cabin. That's what my folks did. They lived in that, y'see. And then you had firewood. So you see, it was whole lot of advantage to comin' out here, than go on the prairie in those days, unless you had the money, so you could

build yourself a good home. And that's the reason they come out here, it was. They could've homesteaded in Nebraska, and Kansas, was quite a bit of land there, and in Montana, y'know, too. But prairie land, and cold winters, and blizzards so you couldn't see 50 feet, even. My mother said, when they stayed with their relatives there in Minneapolis--not Minneapolis, but out of Minneapolis--the barn was about 150 feet away from the house, y'know. And they had to have a wire, and a rig to take ahold of, when they went out and fed the cattle in the winter, because if you didn't, you couldn't find your house. You had to take ahold of that thing and slide on the wire, to guide you (chuckles). Yeh. My mother said they done that when they stayed over there. They had to when a storm come up, they had to catch that rig and go out and milk your cows, and take ahold of it, and come back to the house.

SAM: How did your father happen to find the homestead that he found? Do you know?

C O: Here?

SAM: Yes.

C O: Well, they surveyed the country, you know, and then they had locators, they called 'em. See, you'd stay in Moscow, y'know. And maybe they wanted five or ten dollars to go out and find a place for you that isn't taken. That's the way they found them, see, they had a map then. Then they'd mark on the map this is taken, and this is taken. And when the next man come, they know where to go with him, you see. That's the way it worked out. I don't know if they paid those locators anything or not. Maybe the government had 'em, y'know, free of charge. I don't know about that for sure. But I guess they had 'em free all right, maybe, so that you could help 'em out, y'know, to find a homestead. 'Cause the country, at that time, they want to grow, you know, so they helped the people quite a bit, that way.

SAM: Were there many farms around him when...

C O: Well, after you get to the divide here, they call't, between here and Moscow, that's halfway between here and Moscow. On that side was quite a few farms, Genesee country and all that, because that was open country, so you could get field quite quick, y'know, was no timber there, you know--all open. But here, in here was timber all over, just like you see it there now. That took quite a while, y'know, to get a piece of field. You had to cut the trees down and let 'em...You ringed the trees, they called 'em, big yellow pines like that? You'd take the ax and they'd cut a ring around it, cut the bark off, y'know, and then they'd die. That's the way, and then they died. When they got dry, then they bored a hole in 'em, and set a fire in 'em, and burned 'em down. That's the way they burned the tree up, too--all the way, a big tree down. They'd bore a hole this way, and then they'd bore one here, and they'd come together. And then they'd put some coals in there, and had the little bellow out here, see, to start the fire. And then when you got it started, it burned that log up, see. That hole here was the smokestack in other words, see. That's the way they cleared land. And then they used a lot o'timbers to make fences with, if you had a lot of it. They'd fall trees down, to keep the cows (chuckles) from running away. See, it was pret'near that high, and then the limbs, you know, and the cows couldn't get through.

SAM: When did that area come by the name of Little Sweden?

C O: Well, there was so many Swedes here, that's why. They named it that, the people. You had names for everything in those days, y'know. You made 'em yourself, because the country wasn't settled. Now you say Moscow, and Troy road, and this road, and so forth, and Genesee country and that, y'see. And that's the way they had to name the stuff, so they'd know where they were, the people. See, we had names on everything on our farms. So when we talked to each other, we'd know where the folks were, or where they were goin'. Like the Big Point, the Little Point, the Mining Point, we had, that's our

names now. East Around, North Hill, and North-up-in-the-Lane, we said-- that's a road that runs there. If a man was comin', we'd say, "There's a man comin', North-in-the-Lane," and all that. And named like that all over. That's the way they named. And the Mining Hill--where we had that mine, that was the Mining Hill. It was hills, y'know, that run out kinda ridgy, see. They named 'em Big Ridge, and Little Ridge, and all that stuff, so that they knew where they were. And that's the way all these other names were, y'know. Now, now we talk about people. Well, we had a neighbor August-by-the-Creek, see. See, he lived by the creek, and that's the way we'd know what or who they were talkin' about. So on, and all that kind of stuff.

SAM: So what were the first years like for your parents out here?

C O: First years?

SAM: First years.

C O: Oh, they were tough. Very tough. Because, well, it wasn't too bad after one year, because next year the railroad come, y'know. My dad worked on the railroad. So he made a little money that way, so he could buy a little stuff. But else it was pretty tough. I asked my mother why she didn't go back to Sweden? "Well," she said, "this country looks so much like Sweden, so we didn't get homesick." Because the living wasn't any better here than it was in Sweden, you see. 'Cause they had to start with nothing. Yuh.

SAM: So it really reminded her of Sweden, this country?

C O: Yeh, it reminded her of the hills, you know, and the timber. Y'see, where we live out there, where we lived, it's pretty hilly country, you know. But it isn't sharp hills, it's big ones, you know, so they have big fields on all of it now. And canyons and draws, you know. And then there's a big creek run below our place, that we used to fish in all the time.* And then when we got enough money to get a gun, then we'd shoot a lot of grouse, y'know, to eat. We had a lot of blue grouse down there, canyon. We was huntin' all

the time, y'know, fishing all the time, the creek too. No, no, no gamewarden to fool with you. You'd shoot all you could. My brother shot three birds with one shot one time, y'know. Three blue grouse. And then catch all the fish we could. Nobody to look at your basket like they do now. So that helped quite a bit. But the deer, they were shot out pretty fast. It was deer in here, y'know, but they bought the deer for \$5 apiece, y'know. And those fellers had guns. They made a livin' that way so long as they could catch. They'd shoot 'em and take into Moscow and sell 'em for \$5. So the deer was cleaned out pretty good when I grew up, there wasn't hardly any. But there's a lot of deer here now though, again.

SAM: Yep.

C O: They move and go back, see, when they start loggin' in the mountains, then they scared 'em back. That's why they're here now. And then they a got limit on 'em, you know. You can't shoot more'n one.

SAM: Tell me how the country was different then in the woods then they are now.

C O: Different? How you mean?

SAM: How it's changed. Well, when we were talking before, you were explaining to me why the creeks used to run, oh let's say year round?

C O: Well, that's because they didn't cut the timber off. See, the timber is cut off now all over. And the snow goes off right away, and the creeks get way up, y'know, in the spring. Flows off. This creek here used to run all year, y'know. (Westfork Little Bear Creek, in Troy.) This isn't very big, y'know, but it'd be about this wide and this deep all year round. There was fish in it all the time. Now it isn't a drop of water in it, now. This year is awful dry anyway, but...That's what raised the hell, y'see. When the timber got cut off, and a little wind come, then the snow'd go just like that, y'know. Chinook wind will take it all off, y'know, 'cause there's nothin' to protect it; but when the timber was there, then snow fell between the

timber, and there was shade around them all the time. Up on Moscow Mountain there, the snow would lay off 'til July, y'know, before it was all gone.

SAM: So the runoff was a lot more even.

C O: Yeh. Even all the time, see. Never got real, like it does now. You can see, in the spring when they get quite a bit of snow here, you go down and look at these creeks, and it's just pure mud comin' down. In those days the water was just as clear as a crystal. (Chuckles.) So now the country is going away too, y'know, on the top of it. You can imagine that this country isn't a hundred years old yet. And you go out and look and see what's happening to it. Go out in the fields in the spring, there'd be ditches this deep all over. Mud, topsoil is goin' away. That's somethin' they have to stop too; 'course they're workin' on that quite a bit now. I tell you they should change the way of farming. You take a steep side hill, y'know, you should plant grass on that, and hay. Don't put wheat on it, y'know. They put wheat on everything, the easiest way to farm, y'know. Well, we get a lot of rain, and, why heck, ditches this deep, and a foot apart maybe, just like the hill over here now, heck. All of it goes down in the creek. And it's only a hundred years old, so you know how fast it's deteriorating. Y'know, they had, when the farmers got so caught up here in the Depression days, you know, then they paid the farmer for not puttin' in any wheat, you know, 'cause they had too much. But then they didn't tell 'em what land to put out. So some fellers that had a little money, they went and bought land all over, no matter how it looked. And then they turned that in, you know, and drawed money on it, see. Instead of that, they shoul'da told the farmers that, and paid 'em a little more money, and said, "Now this side hill, you take that out. Don't farm this, because here's where we lose the mud, you know." They had no regulation like that, see. It is the country they thought they never could ruin, but we are not far away from it, unless they change. We're running out

of water everywhere too, now. Troy is pretty near out of water now, Lewiston, everywhere. No, I don't know.

SAM: Let's go back to when you were a kid, and what you remember from then-- from being a little boy on the farm, and what the life was like when it was just a homestead.

C O: Well, it ain't much to say there, because we didn't see much. I didn't see a town 'til I was 10 years old. I didn't know what a town was, 'cause we only had three horses on the place, and you couldn't get everybody to ride a horse-- there wasn't enough. Ten, 12, kids, and three horses, y'know (chuckles). And it was nine miles, that's quite a hike. But when I got about 10 years old, we used to hike to town, y'know, and carry butter. And sell, y'know, sell the butter. And some days it was so hot, when we got to town, the butter was melted. Then we carried eggs, too. And then walk in dust this deep. There was no rock roads then, y'know. The farmers rode up and down with their wagons, y'know, and dust was this deep. Hot there, burn your feet off and go barefooted beside, because we didn't have enough shoes. So it wasn't any fun.

SAM: Were the first winters really hard?

C O: No, they were pretty easy, it wasn't too bad. The winter was pretty good here. We never had any wind, y'know. And in Minnesota there, they had so much wind. They wrote back here and asked how the wind was. "Oh heck," they wrote back and told them, "you can throw your hat on the roof, and it lay there all year!" But you can't do it now since the timber is cut off. Didn't blow at all hardly then, y'know, the timber stopped it in here. 'Course down around Moscow, they had a little breeze, I guess, but up here you didn't have any.

(End of Side A.)

SAM: Well, how was your father making a living?

C O: How he made a livin'? Well, it isn't so tough as it looks, because we live different now. There's a lot of kids in our family, y'see.* So when one of them grew out of his clothes, the next kid wore it. So we had patches on everything, y'know, more before we threw 'em away. They were real wore out, y'know. And the same with the shoes, see, the next one, next one. My mother, she made the clothes, she had a sewing machine, y'know. And she bought the cloth, and sewed our pants, and shirts, and everything. And you could buy cloth for 15 cents a yard then, y'know, that is, shirt stuff. And for overalls I guess it was maybe 25 cents, maybe, a yard. So you could make a pair of pants for two bits, and you sewed it yourself, y'know. And then we raised our own food, spuds and everything, y'know, and had a little orchard down there, too. But then you had to wait two, three years before that would bear. And then we had chickens, and eggs to sell. We didn't get to eat too much eggs, because we had to sell them, for groceries, to get sugar and stuff like that. And they all were pret'near in the same pickle, y'know, with nobody that had any too much.

SAM: What jobs was your father doing then?

C O: Oh, he worked out quite a bit. He was a carpenter, y'know, and a bricklayer--not an expert bricklayer, but he laid the brick in the chimneys and stuff like that, see. And then we had a little brickyard home, so we made brick, and we sold them for a cent apiece. We didn't sell too many, but we sold quite a few to the neighbors, y'know, where they have the chimney in their house. Get the old stovepipe out, because that was a hazard to have a stovepipe, because you might burn up your house, y'know. So they all put in chimneys. And then he was pretty good with that broadax, y'know, cut your log and make it about that wide, y'know. And then he'd dovetail 'em together in the corners. And they'd cut and make their own shingles. Get a knife, you know, big, long, like this. And then they had a wooden club,

they'd hit that, knock off a shingle, see.

But the nails, you had to buy the nails, you couldn't make them.

(Chuckles.) And I remember, the nails when they first come out, they were square, you know. I don't know if you ever seen any, have you? Yah. So my dad, he sent the older brother to get, buy some nails, y'know. So he gave them a sample of how big it should be, y'know, so they wouldn't forget. And they went down to the store. Then the round nails had come out. And the kids didn't buy any nails then. They come home, and told my dad that they didn't have any nails. They told him they had the round ones only (chuckles). So they had to go back and get some round nails. They were made of cast iron, I believe, then. Square ones, most of them. They'd break easy. I don't how they made 'em, those days. They tapered all the way, you know, them square nails, they called 'em. But the round nails, they was sharp on the end a little, y'know.

SAM: Did you say that you made your own bricks?

C O: Yeah.

SAM: How did you do that?

C O: Well, we had, your rig was about this big square, see (about five feet).

And then in the middle of it, run a pole down. And you took old iron rods and stuff, and drove in that pole, see, all over, see. And then they had a sweep on it here, and a horse out there. The horse walked around this thing, mixed the mud, y'see. One of us would throw the mud in, and the other one stand there and take it when it come out, and throw it in the mold, see. Catch it by your hand, and throw it in the mold. Five, I think it made five brick at a time in that mold. And then we had a stick to smooth it out with on the top. And then we'd carry it out to the dryer. We had a place where you dried 'em, you know, boards they laid on. And that's the way we made them. One guy was shoveling in there, in, dirt all the time. And then they'd

throw in so much water to get the mud the right thickness. But they weren't number one brick, you know, because--well, some of them were good.

Then we had a kiln, and we'd set the brick in the kiln, you know, leave 'em about that much apart (about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch). And then where the fireplace come in, come together like this, see, and then you'd put in more on the top. But in that fireplace there you put your wood in to burn 'em, to make 'em hard, y'know, see. And that's the way we burnt the brick. But they had to be re-burnt too, you know. You'd have one kiln'd be about as big as this room here, and about that high (10 feet). And they'd set the brick all over there. And the top brick then, you see, and the one on the sides, they didn't get burnt enough. So that meant you had to throw the brick out, you picked out all the burnt brick, and reset it again, and then burnt 'em again. That's the way you had to get 'em hard enough. (Pause.)

And then we made our own skis and own sleds, made 'em ourselves. My dad finally got a blacksmith shop, and there we'd make our sleds to ride on, for ourselves, y'know, small ones. And then we'd cut down a fir tree that was crooked in the bottom. And then we'd peel that off, and that's what we made the ski from. See, so you'd have that, up on the end. So we had to make everything that we wanted, couldn't buy nothin'. Then, when we go older, we trapped coyotes, and sold them, but you didn't get much for a hide then. 50 cent, two dollar and a half, was all you got for a coyote hide. I guess I showed you the picture here I had. Yah.

SAM: Did he have to learn to do all of this for the first time, or did he learn a lot from his neighbors or did he know most of it?

C O: My dad?

SAM: Yeah.

C O: No, he musta learned that in the old country, because he done a lot of work here for them. I guess, y'know, some people, it's nature to some people

to do things like that at all. Just like my oldest, heck, not the oldest brother, but the third boy, Albert, he's still alive. He's an automobile mechanic, y'know. He knew everything about a car, he don't have to see it, even. That's no fooling. And they used to say that, that man Albert, he can fix a car with a plier when the other feller is looking for the tools, they say. He was that good, y'know. And I asked him one time if he ever got stuck on an automobile, so he didn't know what was wrong with it. "Pretty near, once," he said. A feller come up from Lewiston, and comin' up the grade, and he said, he turned to the right, the car would die. And so long as he went straight ahead, and to the left, it was all right. So Albert, he was in Moscow then, when this feller come up from Lewiston. So he tried it and took a look at everything he could think of, and he went out and tried it. When he turned to the left, why, yump, or the right, either one, then she'd die. So he thought, and he didn't know what the hell to look. And then he said he took the carburetor apart, and he took the float out. And it was one of them hollow float, it wasn't a cork float, it was the other kind. Then he happened, he said, he took her up to his ear, and by God, there was something in there, it was leakin'. So it got water in it, or gas, see. And when you turned quick to one way, float went down, see, and choked the car. That's what happened. That's what's so funny, he said. He pret'near went stuck on that one though, he said (chuckles). Yeh, he was a good worker. And fast, Jesus Christ he was fast. When I had the automobile business, he was my mechanic, you see. In those days it was so much for a job, you know. You'd put in the spindle so much, and everything, y'know. He could put them in so darn fast, could make good money on it.

SAM: So, what was Troy like back then, in the old days?

C O: Well, you seen the picture here, didn't ya?

SAM: Wasn't much in the picture.

C O: Well, it was a little better than that. It growed pretty fast though. There was a few people that come in here that had a little money, y'know, and they put a big store down there. So it was pretty good little town. And then, there's a lot of railroads built, y'see. And they cut a lot of ties here, the people--hand, hand. And they hauled 'em down here, and they shipped 'em from here. And then there were small sawmills goin' up all over. So people, it started gettin' work for 'em. And then they start gettin' fields. So you go out in the haying, and put in 10 days or somethin'. Then the harvest come, that was about 30 days, y'see. Then they had small sawmills, and they hauled the logs in on the sleds in the winter. And sometimes they'd have a half a million feet to saw, and that'd last about a month in the spring. And that's the way you got your work outside. I've worked on seven different sawmills in my time. Seven, seven, there isn't any left here now. They were all over in the canyons. They couldn't log in the summer any in those days, because you had to put the logs on a wagon, y'know. And you couldn't haul any logs on a wagon in that rough country, y'know, and uphill. Horses couldn't pull no load. But the sled is different, y'know. Put it on the sled it slides, and you could haul twice as, three times as much on the sled as you could on the wagon. And the wagon is so darn high, y'know. When you had wheels this high, you had to roll the logs way up there and the sled was down here, so that you could roll 'em right on, y'know. That's why they done all the logging in the winter. And there was a lot of mills around here.

And then, take Genesee, now. They didn't have no timber, so they sold a lot of wood down there. And Lewiston didn't have any timber, so they sold a lot of wood down there. Was a heck of a wood town here, y'know. Gee whiz, y'know, 100 feet long, y'know--a wood pile laying by the railroad track to be loaded on the cars. Went to Spokane, some of it went to Moscow, and Genesee, and all that. It was the biggest shipping center between Spokane

and Lewiston, Troy was. They called it "the biggest little town on earth," was the nickname for Troy for a long time. Yeh, and that's why it got its name that way--for all the stuff they shipped out of here. Then they started gettin' fields, and then they had the wheat and oats and all that that come in here, and they shipped that out, y'see. So that's why it was such a shipping town. (Pause.)

Yeh, and it was a rough town, too, you know, there was a couple, three murders in this town. That's plenty for a small town, ain't it? (Chuckles.) And the sheriff to get shot, the policeman. And he was a mean guy anyway, so people up north here--they were pretty heavy drinkers, all of them, y'know. They said they celebrated for three weeks when they found out that they shot old Hays (chuckles).

SAM: Did you hear about that when you were a boy?

C O: Yeah, I remember it. I was four years old when it happened. My dad come home from town and said, "They shot the policeman." And I talked to an old feller yesterday, he was here. He said he seen him, he seen him shoot the policeman. He lived right down where it happened. He was 84 years old, this guy. Yah, Corrin, a feller named Corrin. He lives in, out of that little Albion, Washington. That's above Colfax, y'know. Yah.

SAM: How did your father say it had happened, do you remember what he said at the time?

C O: Well, he didn't know very much about it then, when he first told it. But he went out of town too, y'know. The town wasn't taken in then, so there was a few buildings on that side of the railroad track that was out of town. And he had no business goin' out there, y'know. And the old lady and the old man, I think, got in a quarrel, see. And they hollered for the police. So he got his old rifle out, and told him if he ever crossed this fence, I'll shoot you. But old Hays wouldn't stop. So he shot at him, shot him. He

coulda shot somebody else, too--one of the bullets went through the hotel sign down here, on the corner.

SAM: I guess Hays wasn't too well liked, huh?

C O: No, no. He got paid so much for each guy he throwed in. That's the way they paid him, too. That made it bad, y'know. He put one man in because he had a lame back, one day. Yeah, wagon, y'know, pretty high them wagons, y'know, and they had the seat way up. And then they had a step here. And this feller, he was gonna get up in the wagon, y'know, and he got a kink in his back, and he fell (chuckles), fell back, and there was old Hays that grabbed him, and throwed him in jail. (Laughs.)

SAM: For what reason?

C O: He told him he was drunk. (Laughs.) Yeh, he was mean. They said he went out and got 'em and he'd tie them, tie a rope on 'em and lead 'em in to town here, when he caught somebody that was drunk. And he put his own son in the jail, too. Yeh, he had two sons and they were twins. One was a barber, and the other one was a farmer. And I don't know what they done. There was somebody else that had a blacksmith shop here. And his boy and the Hays boy done some damn thing, and he arrested both of them, y'know, his own boy and the other one. And one of the boys was sittin' in the jail there. He said, "The old man can't do this, can he?"

"Well," he said, "he's already done it, hasn't he?" (Laughs.) And then, they were tricky, that Hays bunch was kind of a tough bunch, I guess, too. I don't know what he done, one of them. He was a barber, see, and they was twins, so you couldn't tell them apart. So when the sheriff come down to arrest them, they changed places. The barber went out in the country, (laughing) and he took the wrong guy!

SAM: His own sons, huh?

C O: Yah.

SAM: What was the other murders that you were thinking about?

C O: Well, there was a feller named Driscoll, he got stabbed in the stomach.

He come from a dance down here in the hall. He got quarreling about somethin', he turned around, and stabbed in the stomach. His name was Driscoll. And then the other one was, he had a restaurant, he had a little restaurant, this guy. I forgot if he was a Negro or was a nigger or got killed, one of them anyway. He threw him out on the sidewalk, y'know. I guess he was cuttin' up or somethin' too much. Then there was a spike in the wooden sidewalk, see, that stuck up about this far, and it hit him right there, and it killed him. He didn't want to kill him, y'know, but...

SAM: Right in the forehead.

C O: Yeh, this spike stickin' up, y'know, went through his head here, in his brain. Then Hays shot that burglar, too. 'Course I guess he had the right to shoot at him, but he didn't have to shoot him. He died.

SAM: What was this?

C O: It was downtown in the post office, upstairs of the post office. He laid behind the stump down there, waited for him. (Pause.) Yep. Oh, you know, it was a lot of the crimmals, too, y'know, that come from the old country, y'know. They skipped, get away, y'know, from crime. Two or three of them around here, I found out that they come to this country to get away from gettin' caught, y'know. I guess I told you about that feller that stole the pig, huh?

SAM: Tell me that one again, 'cause I forget it already.

C O: (Chuckles.) Well, a couple of farmers up there, they lived there, pretty close together. So they butchered a hog, and hung it up in the barn, y'know. And then they went to work, I guess--I don't know if they went to work or went to town. Anyway, they went away from it for awhile. And when they come back the hog was gone, you know. So all they done, they took a piece of rope

with 'em, and walked over to the neighbor, and he said, "You give us that hog or we'll hang you in that tree!" And here he come with the hog! So y'see, they didn't need any courts of stuff here, to penalize them, see. See how quick they got rid of that case? They got the hog back, and the other feller sent home, and that was all there was to it. (chuckles). Now they go to court and fight here for three months over a thing like that. That was a slick way. (laughs).

SAM: You're saying that they knew, they could tell, who the guy was that would rob somebody.

C O: Oh yah, they knew every...Now you take here, all up here north where we lived. T'was only two people there that would steal and raise heck. And they all knew them, y'know, all, all around, they knew who done it. And that's what these people did, y'know. They knew right away who'd done it. And that's why they took the rope with 'em and went over there, and told him he'd hang him if he didn't come right out with it. But nowdays you don't know where the crimnal lives at all. No, you can't tell. Those days they did. They knew them all. Hell, and then there was other rough stuff goin' on here. A feller on Burnt Ridge, he took a homestead there, and at night they come and kidnapped him.. They never found that guy anymore. So then they took the place, y'see. He hadn't proved up yet. But they found one man hangin' down in the canyon in the tree here, but I think that was after that happened, though. But they never found out who he was, either.

SAM: Why was this guy...How do you know he was kidnapped?

C O: Well, he lived there on this place in the cabin, see, to prove up, maybe he had a couple of years left. Then he'd go and get--oh, and I showed you--land paper, y'know. And he hadn't proved up yet. So they wanted to get rid of him, see? So they took the place.

SAM: So did people suspect the people that took the place?

C O: Yeh. The people that took the place, they're the ones that kidnapped him, but nobody seen it. There was no proof what happened to him, y'know. See? But he disappeared anyway. And that was tried again on another place. But they got the wrong guy that time. His name was Big Anderson, they called him. He was so goddamn big, y'know, his arm was just that wide.

SAM: As wide as both of your arms put together.

C O: Yah. Yah. Yah, just about. And big and tall, y'know. He had whiskers, and he walked with two canes this way, when I seen him. And he had a sore on his leg here. When he homesteaded, they tried the same trick on him. They come up there--he lived on Big Bear Ridge, this Anderson. You know what he done? He just took one of them fellers by the legs and knocked the other feller to hell, and chased them off his place. Took one guy and used him for a whip. He was that big and strong. That's no fooling! (Laughs.) I seen the guy. He come home quite a few times. And he was a giant, believe me. He was out clearing land with one guy, y'know. And they had a log laying on the ground, as long as this room here. And one end was about that big, you know, and the other one was, y'know how they taper off. So Big Anderson said to this, was a guy about my size: "You take ahold of that end," he said, "I'll take this one, and we'll carry that log over on the logpile" where they burnt them up, they were clearing land. (Laughing.) Anderson picks up the log and the other feller, he was hanging up there! He took the log and the man and all, see, it's balanced!

SAM: Geez, he must have been big.

C O: Oh, he was big. He was an old sailor. Old sailor. He had a sore on this leg that never healed here. And he washed it in the cold water in the winter, and he put this tar that come from the tamarack tree on it all the time. That's what he used for it. He was quite a character, too. He was going to make a machine that would run forever, y'know. He worked on that all the time. He lived in a little cabin, you know. When somebody'd come in there,

he'd throw a blanket over it so nobody would see it. Then they'd ask him, "How is your machine comin'?"

"Oh, it just lacks a little bit now," he said. "I just about got it."

(Laughs.) But he never got it made.

SAM: What was this machine supposed to do?

C O: Well, he said I have, y'know, a machine that would turn itself, so you don't need no power on it, you see. That's what he was workin' on, see. See? That'd go itself.

SAM: Nobody ever saw it, huh?

C O: No. No, well, it wasn't...I guess after he died, they seen it. He had a kind of a wheel there. I think it was kind of buckets on it, or water or somethin' that's run into, see. Some way like that he had it figured out.

SAM: Did he walk with a cane usually?

C O: Oh, he had two of them. My brother, one of them--he met him. We hadn't seen him then yet, you know. We didn't know much about him. He met him. He had been to town, Troy, too, and he met this guy. My brother, he run and hid in the woods. He thought it was some kind of an animal. Oh, y'know, you can think--God, he was big, too, you know. His whiskers this way, and then he'd come like this...(chuckles.)

SAM: All bent over.

C O: Just like that he walked, see, he was bent over just like that. And he come home once, and we had a dog. And that dog ran and hid when he seen him. And when he left, the dog took after him and barked, and barked, and barked (laughs). He thought it was some big bear or somethin', I guess. Yeh, he made his own clothes. He had overalls. He made his shoes of overalls. He'd make 'em about that thick, and then he'd put a copper rivet through here on each side, and put 'em together. And then he had them big overalls, he made them about that big, big so he could pull 'em up easy. For his sore here,

y'know. So, he was dressed funny, y'know, too. When you seen him, y'know, pret^dnear scare you, all right.

SAM: You mean he made shoes out of his overalls?

C O: Yah. He had about five, six thickness, see.

SAM: Did he work?

C O: Well, I don't know how he lived, even. I can't figure that out yet. I don't know. I couldn't figure out if he ever worked. He sold his place. I guess he lived on that, when he sold his homestead, y'know. He took a homestead. That's the guy that took the other guy and hit him with, y'know, the same guy. So I guess he had that money, and that would last him a long time, y'know. Nope, he was a giant, all right. I don't know. He said-- we asked him if he ever been married. "Oh, yes," he said "I've been married."

"Did you have any kids?"

"I don't know," he said (chuckles). Then he said he was on the boat, y'know, and the captain got mean. And he said he took and put a rope around the captain and throwed him in the ocean, and he held that rope until he begged for mercy, before he pulled him out. I suppose maybe he done that, too, I don't know (laughs). Yep.

SAM: Did he say how he got the sore?

C O: No, I think it was a kind of a cancer, see. It was big, too. I seen it, y'know. It was about this big, right in here. It never did heal, see. It didn't seem to get much bigger, either. It was all meat, y'know, red.

SAM: It was about eight inches or ten inches long?

C O: Yah, about that long. But he got pretty old before he died. I think he was up in the 80's when he died.

SAM: Are there any other guys like, that were as eccentric as he was, that you knew when you were young?

C O: Well, there was another one that lived in Park. (Softly;) I don't know

what we called him now. Well, he was a queer guy, anyway. He was always lookin' for mineral, y'know. Mineral, he was diggin' it. Had a mine there, he had a homestead down there in the Park country. Way in on the breaks, there's nothin' but rocks, he said, where he lived. Then he'd start mining, and he's just lookin' in the basalt, y'know, where there's no mineral at all. They asked him why he was diggin' there for? "Oh," he said, "that was a tree standing here," he said, "it was goin' like that, and there's where the mineral laid," he said. "So I started mining there."

SAM: The tree was pointing?

C O: Yeh, tree, the tree was bent over (chuckles), see? So he mined right under there. He said, "There's where ya find it." Then he'd take his rock to Moscow, y'know...

(End of Side B)

Then he'd take them rocks to Moscow, you see, so to see if it was any good. No, well they told him, "That's no good." You know what he done? He carried them back home. He thought they was cheatin' him. Yah. And then he had a gun, y'know. And it was a 45.70. And he thought all the guns were the same. So, if he seen a 22, he'd say, "That's a small 45.70, isn't it?" (Laughs.) Yeh, he was quite a character, that guy.

SAM: And he really meant it?

C O: Yeh. Oh yeh, he didn't know any different. He was kind of a foolish, y'know too, you see.

SAM: What did you say?

C O: Well, you know, kinda silly a little bit, in his mind, see. And then we had one they called Wild Bill, here. But he wasn't any silly, but he had a lot of dogs. He had four, five, six dogs with him all the time. Then he had a belt here, y'know, full of shells, and a gun. And long hair--he was in the

same style as the young people are today. I seen him only once. And, he, oh he was a, he'd shoot all the time. He'd shot cougars and he had done all that stuff, y'know. And he never shot any shot. They said that his bullets were wore off on the end. He had worn them so damn long, y'know, on here, that they were wore off. So they thought they'd try him out over there at Boulder. He'd lived in Boulder Creek too, or Park. So they took a gunny-sack and put it up in the tree, and make it look like a cougar? And then they had a guy below there, and he had a rope on it, so he'd jerk on that rope. And they told him, "There's a cougar down here now. You'd better go now and get it."

"Ohhh, yesss," he said. Bang, bang. He didn't dare to look that way! (Laughing:) And they'd jerk on that rope, that thing would wiggle! He shot up all the shells, and the cougar was still there, alive. Those were wild days. Yup. I suppose you want to hear that story about my dad and the Indian, then, huh?

SAM: Oh, yah that's a good one.

C O: Well, my aunt come out here from back East, and they were talkin' and talkin' about...She was kinda religious, y'know. So she thought everything was terrible. She said, "I heard you'd killed an Indian."

"An Indian?" my dad said. "Killed an Indian? I went down to Lewiston to get my citizen paper," he said, "and the first thing they asked me, he said, 'How many Indians have you killed?' And, I said, 'One.' 'Ho, you can't get no paper on one. You got to kill 12 first.'" (Laughs.) I think she went home and believed that, too. Yah.

SAM: Had he ever killed an Indian?

C O: No, hell, he never killed no Indian.

SAM: I didn't think so.

C O: The way it started out, dad figured out afterwards, y'know. He's workin'

for a farmer out there at Moscow, he's comin' down Paradise grade, y'know. And he had a wheat load, y'know, on the wagon. And it was steep grade too, y'know. He met two Indians there, and they were drunk. And they were swing-in' their guns and hollering and everything. And my dad said that, "If I had a gun, I believe I woulda shot those Indians. They scared me to death," he said. "But I took the brake off," he said, "and used my whip, and the horses started off to beat hell, and then they all stopped," he said, "and seen that funny rig go down." They never seen a wagon, I guess, before, you know, or somethin'. And that's what saved him, he thought. And that's the way I think it started, from that. Because he said, "If I had a gun, I woulda shot those Indians," see. And I suppose that worked off that way, and got back East, y'see.

SAM: Um-hm. Were there still Indians...

C O: No, the Indians didn't bother any people here. They were here around Lewiston and everywhere. They had trails up here. They didn't come here very much after they settled here, but it was trails all over. They come up here and hunted deer, y'know, and fished in these creeks, too, the Indians.

SAM: They kept coming after people were homesteading?

C O: Yah, then they quit then, y'see. Then they stayed on the reservations, y'see. But before, y'know, in the summer...They're the ones that, they claim they're the ones that kept the ridges so clean and nice, y'know. You take a ridge here now, y'know, it's high, y'know, and dry. They kept grass fires a-running there all the time, so the brush never growed up. And that's the way the Park is got its name there. That's over in Boulder Creek, that's out of Deary. And it looked like a park in there to people when they come, y'know. It was big yellow pines and no underbrush at all, y'know. And they claim the Indians done that. They set fire to that long grass, y'see. And then in the draws, y'know, the timber was just thick, because it wouldn't burn

there, y'know.

SAM: Did sawmills pretty well handle the timber that was being cut off this country when people were starting farms? The sawmills around here, is that where the timber went?

C O: Yeh. You see, they homesteaded first, y'know. The sawmills didn't come in 'til it was homesteaded, because that was government land, y'know, all of it then. You couldn't take any timber off'n that. But when they settled here, the Swedes, a lot of Swedes stopped in Minnesota, because they got started there, y'know. And there's ^h were they'd stop, when they come. And then they'd find out where to go from there, the Swedes. That's how they happened to get that way here. A feller named Per Johanson, he found out that they had surveyed this land east of Troy here, y'know, ready for homestead, see.* They had to survey the land, y'know. That was a lot of work, and when they got into timber, it took slow. But you take Genesee and Moscow in there, it was open country, and that was surveyed 10, 12 years earlier. So that was all homesteaded, y'know. And he come back here, and told the Swedes over there in Minnesota to go to Troy. It wasn't no Troy then, but he told 'em where to go here, to Moscow. He said, "It's land open now, and if you go out there," he said--he had the sawmill back--"I'll bring my sawmill, too, and go with you." And that's how they got started, the Swedes, see. And that's what he done. He took a sawmill with him, and come down here too. And then whenever another Swede come from Sweden, they'd tell him to go here, you see. And that's how they got settled so quick, in that one spot.

SAM: He found out about it back here. He was in Idaho when he found out about it.

C O: Yah, um-hm.

SAM: Were a lot of the Swedes in Minnesota, had they come from the same places in Sweden?

C O: Oh, no. They were mixed. They were mixed. They had so many small countries in Sweden, you know, not bigger than Latah County, most of them, you know. Vermland was the name where my folks come. And then they had Smoland, "small land," and several others--Smolanding,¹ and all that, names like that, y'see. And they talked a little different, too. You could understand 'em all right, pretty good, but they had their little different language each, each one of them over there. And then the real Swede language, I didn't understand that at all. See, I didn't talk English 'til I started goin' to school, I had to learn that there. There was nobody to learn from. They were all Swedes around, y'know, when you grew up. And I was in Elk River, and my brother was working, there then--this was about 1912, though, that's a long time after. We was standing out there in the street, and two guys was talking to beat hell. I said to my brother, "What kind of language are those people talking?"

And he said, "That's Swede." (Chuckles.) That was the real Swede, you know. See, they come from Stockholm, y'know, where they had the schools a little different too, and that was the real Swede. But I didn't understand 'em. And that's the way it was with the others, too. They had different words for, like flika they had for "a girl," y'know. And yenta, yenta is a "girl," too. That was in our language, yenta, and flika was Smolanding's, see, and so on. So they're different.

SAM: Well, when you went to school here, there were mostly Swedish kids that you went to school with, right?

C O: Yeh.

SAM: So, how did you learn English?

C O: Well, we had an English teacher.

SAM: Did she teach all the kids English?

C O: Oh, yeh. They got her from Moscow and in there, y'know. I'll show you a picture of the first school here. Yah.

¹Smolanding-a person from Smoland.

SAM: But at home did you still speak Swedish?

C O: Oh yeh, my mother never learned English. She was home all the time. She never got the chance to learn English. But dad, 'course, was all over.

(Break.)

(Carl is saying that because the kids in his family had no shoes, they seldom went outside in the winter.) Well, I don't know how to start it again (chuckles). We didn't have no shoes, so we run barefooted between the house and barns. We run a race, races between the barn and the house, barefooted. Then, if we had any shoes, they'd get so hard as a rock, so we couldn't get 'em on next morning, anyway, 'cause we didn't have no overshoes for them. See? If you get that leather wet once, y'know. So we had a lot of problem with our shoes that way. And we got 'em softened up a little bit, put tar on 'em. We made our own tar from the roots of the stumps, y'know. Pitch. Put that in a kettle, y'know, and then you put a fire on the outside, and then the tar would come out, y'see. Then we mixed that with tallow, and that made pretty good shoe grease, y'know. And that's the way we got our shoes greased up, if we had any (chuckles). Yah.

SAM: Would you have to stay inside if you didn't have 'em?

C O: Huh? Oh yeh, we couldn't go out then. We run barefooted in the summer all the time, y'know. Yeh, only time we were afraid of anything was when we crossed the creek barefooted, when the crawfish was there. They'd bite ya, y'know. You know what a crawfish is? We had a lot of them in the creek down there. They were about that long, y'know, big claws on 'em. They see anything white, y'know, they think it's food. So we had to watch ourselves goin' across the creek (chuckles). Yah.

SAM: You started to talk about the winter of 1910, too.

C O: Yeh, well there isn't much to it. It started at Buffalo Hump country, the way I understand it, and it kept goin' around and around 'til it got over to

Clarkia, and then those people got caught there in that canyon, y'know. See, the smoke got so they couldn't get out. I think it was 16 or somethin' that died there, if I ain't mistaken. It was quite a few of them killed, in that fire. And the crops, y'see, they didn't have the machinery like they have now to farm with, y'know. They had horses, y'know, and the crops, they got in pretty late all the time. And it was dry and heck, some of the oats wasn't higher than that. So it was pretty near as bad as this year.

SAM: Were people around here afraid that the fires were going to get all the way down here?

C O: Well, it didn't seem to scare them much in those days, for some reason. I don't think this timber here would burn like it does up in them countries. It wasn't thick enough, y'see. And then we had the creeks here, y'know, running too, you know, and pretty cold nights here too, at that time. So I don't know...But it never come this far anyway. It seemed like it followed that mountain range around there, y'know, and it went clean up to Coeur d 'Alene. I don't see why we didn't have more fires here, for all the land we had to clear, y'know. Cut them, and slashed the ground, then stick fire on it-- I done that on the farm we had. And we had to do it when it was pretty dry so everything would burn up good, y'know. You'd slash trees about this big. 'Course we watched them, too. But they never had any bad fires here at all, I don't think. I don't think there's a house burned up from a fire yet, that is, before grass fire, that I know of. It was kind of funny, all right.

SAM: Do you think, most of the homesteads that got cleared, did the lumber just get burned up, or did it go to the sawmills?

C O: Oh, it went to the sawmill, quite a bit of it. But I think there was more burned up then went to the sawmills. Because the sawmills, they didn't take so awfully much timber, you know, because they were small, and they had to log in the winter only, on the sleds, to get 'em in. And so up in our country,

I know that there was more timber burnt up than there was any other place. But when you get up in the mountain here, you see, where there was no farmland, that timber was sawed up, pret'near all of it. But down on the ridges down here, that was wasted, most of it. And of course, in the bad canyon, now, where they couldn't farm then, that was finally sawed--like Bear Creek Canyon. Oh, we never figured that they could take the timber out of there, when we lived there, y'know. See, you didn't have no riggin's then. But the last war--or the first war--then they built a railroad down that canyon, and took pret'near all that timber out. There was a lot of yellow pine in that canyon, big trees, y'know. And they had a fire there too then, but it didn't do much damage. So I guess they sawed up more than theywasted, all right, when you figure it all out, y'know, in the mountains and the canyons. But it was a lot of wasted timber.

SAM: About when would you say that these little sawmills started going out of business?

C O: Well, oh they been goin' out for the last...The last 10 years around here there hasn't hardly be any small sawmill. Used to be one up here in town, but that was bigger than they had in those days. But all those that sat up in the countries, they've been gone for about 20 years or more. Yup. But there were a lot of them, y'know.

SAM: What did you know about this guy Vollmer?

C O: Vollmer?

SAM: Vollmer.

C O: Well, he was here, y'know, and they named the town Vollmer after him all right. He had a lot of money, I guess. He was an Englishman, I believe. And then when they borrowed money, y'know, he'd charge about 12% on it or more. Then if you borrowed \$100, y'know, you'd get only about 80, because he took the interest out, see? (Chuckles.) And the people didn't like him at all,

y'know, so they lost the name. He lost his name here too, y'know, Vollmer-- it was named Vollmer to start with. But they named it Troy. I don't know how they happened to put Troy on, though, but they didn't like Vollmer anyway. And then he went up on the Camas Prairie there, and there was a town named after him there, and he lost that too. He lost that name. They call it Cottonwood now, I believe. Yeh, the people didn't like him at all. 'Course a little jealousy there too, because he was rich, y'know (chuckles). Oh they didn't have much use for him.

SAM: Was there a lot of helping out between the farms?

C O: Oh yeh, oh yeh. Yep. They done that, pret'near all of them, because they were all pretty poor, y'know, they didn't have anything. So they always worked together, helped each other, where they didn't have any boys. But the woman worked quit a bit those days too, you know. Take all the Swedish women, y'know, they done all the milking, y'know. That's what they done in the old country too, 100%. The men never worked, never milked the cow in Sweden. So they done that, all these Swedes up here, the women done pretty near all the milking. And they worked in the field too, a lot of them, in the hay, hay business. My mother worked out in the field quite a bit. She'd even sow the wheat, by hand. Then my dad, he'd come behind with the harrow and harrow it down. They didn't have no seeders those days, y'know. So they didn't have much farm machinery, either.

SAM: How did he harvest?

C O: Well, we had the thrash rigs come around, the old horse power come around. And then they had, after awhile they got the steam rig. But the first steam rigs they had here, they pulled the engine with horses. It wasn't self-propelled. Should have been here the other day downtown, there was a woman that stopped down on the bench there, and she had a whole boxfull of pictures. She

wanted to know who this was, and this and that. And she had the picture of the thrasher, old thrash rig there and picnic picture. We used to have a picnic up here, this Nora Church, y'know. Every year the 24th of June, outside picnic, y'know. She had one of those pictures. And I pretty near forgot about that. But I don't know where she got all those pictures from, though. They were pretty old, a lot of them.

SAM: You told me that the family had a mine when you were a kid.

C O: Oh, we done the mining, not him. We were the miners.* Yeh, we done the mining. I showed you the picture of 'em here the other evening, didn't I? When we had that tunnel in the ground. Did I show you that?

SAM: You showed me the picture. What I was wondering is if you'd tell me how the thing came about, and what you did with the mine?

C O: Well, you see that mine there was right next to our place pretty near, a half a mile away, see. A feller named Cox, he's the one that started it the first time. And he mined there, and nobody could take that land because there was mineral on it. See, you couldn't take a homestead then, if somebody contested it for mineral. So there was 40 acres there, there's never been a homestead on it. It's still that way. So he mined and mined there, and he was a bachelor, and he had a shack. All he had for a stove was a whole lot of rocks, and he'd make a sourdough, and he'd put 'em in them hot rocks when they baked them (chuckles). And he was diggin' away there, and it was on the ridge like that, see. And they had to tunnel in here. A feller come down and asked him, "Well, have you found anything yet?"

"No, no," he said, "if I don't find something pretty soon, I'll hit daylight." That meant he'll go through (chuckling). Well, he quit. I don't remember him very much. Then a bunch from Troy here took it over, and they drove a tunnel. And they had copper, a stringer of copper about that wide in it. And sank a shaft there, and then they connected Cox' tunnel with this

one, so you could go in one and then climb out through the other one. Well, they gave up. And then my brothers, they jumped the claim, and then we took it over in 1912. And we drove a tunnel about 300 feet ourselves. And then we drilled, core drilled it too, beside. But we didn't find nothin' either.

SAM: What did you think you was going to find?

C O: Copper. It was copper stringers there all right, right on the top. But it wasn't big enough, y'know. They thought they'd widen out if they went down on them, you see. But they didn't, they seemed to hold the same. It was rich copper ore, but there wasn't enough. So we spent the winters there, you know, mining. In the summer we was thrashing, or doin' somethin' else. I was telling you about them two old fellers that said, "I never feel like greeting." Remember that?

SAM: Tell it to me again.

C O: Well, there was two old guys there. They had a machine there, how to take the copper out of the ore, see. Leaching it, see. When you leach it, you got to burn it first, so the sulphur goes out, in the copper ore. And then they put it in the acid, and then they put iron in there, and the copper will stick on that, see. And they were experimentin' with that machine. And they were halfway between our camp with that rig. And every time they come home from the mine they'd say, "One day closer to the grave, and I feel like greeting," the old man would say. And we didn't know what in hell he meant by saying, "I feel like greeting." (Chuckles.) It sounded kind of funny, I thought. So he finally told us then. He said, "That's 'crying' on Scot. 'Greeting,' that's 'crying,' you're crying. Well, I feel like crying," he said. "Because you're workin' so hard, and I'm afraid you're going to get hurt down in that mine, see." So that's what he meant (chuckles). Yeh. Well, you know mining is kind of unsafe work, and we were pretty young kids, most of us. Not kids, but 15, 16, years old, I guess, three of us. And we

had to drill the holes, and then put the dynamite in, and light the fuses. And then we'd come back next day, we had to dig that out, and haul it out. But one of my brothers, he was left handed, so he worked pretty good that way, you see. You see, when you're down in the tunnel, you know. Like this, the tunnel? (He frames the tunnel in a doorway.)

SAM: Yes.

C O: See? Well I'd be up here drilling holes, see, and he was left handed, so he'd been on this side. And that worked out perfect. Then we'd drill a two holes here...

SAM: You'd be each on one side.

C O: Yah. Then we'd drill the other holes here and they were uppers, drillin' this way. That was the easiest hole to drill. You stood and held your, you'd swing your handle there, and you'd drill them up. Do you know what they were for? The uppers?

SAM: No.

C O: That's to break the rock out, so these holes would break out, and the lower ones would break. These holes go in straight.

SAM: The high holes go in straight and the low holes go up?

C O: Yeh. The middle holes, not the lower ones. The ones on the bottom had to be straight, too.

SAM: Ah, I see.

C O: See, we had six holes in it, see? And then when they light them with the fuse, and then run out of there, so we won't get caught. I think I've got a picture of that here, I'm lightin' fuses.*

SAM: You kids must've gotten a little tired of not finding, not hitting paydirt in there.

C O: Well, I never hit any paydirt in my life. I don't care what I tried (chuckles). I tried everything. We were in Montana and drilled for oil. Same thing

there. You'd hit oil, there was oil there, but it wasn't enough. That's around Shelby, Montana. I never was lucky. Oh someday they might dig there. If they go down deep enough, it might be enough there, y'know, if they get down deep enough. And the copper mine, I don't know. But, it was fun. We done that in the winter. There was nothin' to do anyway in those days in the winter. Couldn't find no work then.

Transcribed and typed by Sherrie Fields