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# I. Index



HELMER RINGSAGE

Park, Central Ridge; b. 1888

farmer and logger.

2.4 hours

minute page

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| 00 | 1 | Roosevelt's help. Speculation on beans and wheat led to losses. Difficulties starting to raise hogs; moving the building for hogs with a stump puller to get it close to a pond.                                   |
| 18 | 7 | Lining the pond with clay so it held water for the stock. Laying peeled logs under the hog house for skids. Work was easy for him when young.  |
| 23 | 9 | The family move to Central Ridge. Climbing the ridge with the wagon and no trail. Father's early clearing and farming efforts. After threshing he brought home shoes for the boys. Broadcasting flax seed by hand. |

Side B

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| 03 | 14 | Grandfather and father's wood cutting with oxen in Minnesota. Grandfather loved Park and split wood even when he was old. They were driven from the Swift Falls area by grasshoppers and hail, and went to Park.  |
| 11 | 20 | Father started Farmers' Mutual Fire Insurance Company, a cooperative, on Camas Prairie. Father changed his name. Getting education in Spokane. No future in Norway.   |
| 16 | 21 | Opportunity to homestead on Central Ridge. Father made money raising horses. Father's arduous trips to Kendrick with the harvested flax. At eleven Helmer was ploughing the farm with a walking plow; he practiced on four horses so his father got a gang plow. Straw bottoms. |
| 27 | 26 | His last year farming on Central Ridge: good money on pigs, problems with summer fallowed land, desire to get out.  |

Side C

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| 00 | 28 | A bad neighbor was a major reason why he quit the ridge. They fought after his boys persisted in dogging Helmer's cattle. Bloodwurst then dragged Helmer's lead cow down to his pasture. He'd also stolen cattle from a big stockman, |
|----|----|---|

## Helmer Ringsage

minute page

## Side C continued

Helmer discovered from a lawyer. He decided to "neighbor" with Helmer. A fight and a near-fight with two other men as a result of tangling with Bloodwurst. Teaching neighbors to saw cordwood.

21 37

Helmer called him on stealing three cattle and two were returned. His sons harassed Helmer's boy.

25 41

Helmer's son got balky and ran away from home (1931). (continued)

## Side D

00 42

The agonizing winter drive to Parma in his Whippet with a bad case of stomach flu, only to find that the boy wasn't there. Locating his son in Pomeroy - urging him to stay with the farmer, who was providing him with a school education he couldn't get in Park.

13 46

Helmer himself ran away at eighteen to raise money for homesteading in Canada. His horseback journey to Gifford to find it still too early for farm work, then north to Park in a snow storm. His jobs working near Avon for a French-Canadian (who later killed his wife) and at Deary. His father discovered his whereabouts when Helmer tried to collect money owed by a farmer. His father persuaded him to work on the railroad from Craigmont to Nezperce, but the job was no good.

## Side E

00 54

Father persuaded him not to go to Canada when he didn't get enough money. In 1908 father had house and barn built. Father went to chiropractor school in Missouri.

07 57

The French-Canadian he'd worked for killed his wife and himself, becoming extremely jealous of her going with woman friends. Father's work as a chiropractor - helping Helmer's injury.

11 59

Pleasure of waltzing in homes. Learning from their aunt. Masquerade dance. Basket socials. Dances till daylight; you'd hear the violin as you were trying to sleep. Sneaking out of the house to dance despite father's wishes.

20 63

His brothers worked regularly for a good neighbor, Malcolm, whose offspring now hold a lot of land.

(22 minutes)

with Sam Schrage

Feb. 27, 1976

\*Note: Pages 14 to 17 are not missing pages, they are mis-numbered.

## II. Transcript

Second Interview

HELMER RINGSAGE

This conversation with HELMER RINGSAGE took place at his home in Moscow, Idaho on February 27, 1976. The interviewer is SAM SCHRAGER.

HELMER RINGSAGE: -- Years and the crop would a spoiled over there. And I woulda been sunk worse over there than I did get over here. Here I only owed a thousand to Deary Bank and I had forty-four head of cattle to offset. <sup>it</sup> They got their money's worth, or would have if they could have sold 'em. 1932, man, went down to two bits, over there to Park. And the only man that saved me was old President Roosevelt. Delano Roosevelt. He made the stipulation that any family man that had-- regardless, if he was farmin' and had -- he was exempt fifty-five acres of crop for his family. No mortgage could take it. So that's what I done. I had a little oats, two, three hundred dollar's worth, probably is all I had. I sold; pocketed the money every time I come in. Old Harsh was a nice banker, I didn't want to go borrow that much money to start with. I only wanted five hundred. Here was the deal; I didn't tell you-- I'd bought <sup>a</sup> state land on terms, eighty acres right there in Park, close to this Noland place. Well, it'd be west of where Gella-burg is, up in the mountain there. Just about as soon as you enter into Park, over the top of the grade. Well, anyway, I got that fourteen hundred dollars and my brother, Simon, the one that died with cancer, he lent me the cash to make the downpayment. And when I got to farmin' on the Ridge, you see, the first few years I was making pretty good; some of it, that is, one year, I mean I made <sup>good</sup> <sub>n</sub> -- I raised some beans on forty-four acres of ground that my dad had. And I got thirteen hundred pounds to the acre and I come pretty near missing it like some of 'em. One of the neighbors there he tried to <sup>hook</sup> me, "Oh," he says, "don't sell yet." Says, "They're retailing in Spokane <sup>ten, eleven cents</sup>



Well, I coulda got nine cents. I speculated a little bit. Could have got nine cents. But, old Guernsey, had to haul clear on the other side then, -- Old Guernsey he says, "You want to sell this morning, Ringsage?" "Well, I don't know, what's the price?" He says, "Nine cents." And he was laughing kinda, you know. Him and Magill was in partnership. And, I thought, "Goddam," that smile, maybe he had got something up his sleeve, I could get a little more, I said, "How about a dime?" "No," he said, "nine cents is pretty good." Well, it was. I was a damn fool not to take it, see. Well, I held that doggone crop til pretty soon the thresher man come<sup>down</sup> and he wanted his money. He wanted it RIGHT NOW. Old Ned . I said, "Okay, I'll call up Magill." I wasn't gonna fight him, he come and threshed when I asked him to; he wanted his money, by God, he had a right to get it. He said he had to pay his crew. Which was nothin' more than right.

SS: How long after the crop was in, was this?

HR: I had it hauled down to the warehouse.

SS: Was it very long after he'd threshed it?

HR: Well, not too long. I don't know. Maybe it was a month or two, I can't remember<sup>that for sure</sup>. But anyway, I called up Magill. I says, "How much are beans?" And he was kinda of a squeaky voiced guy, he says, "Beans are comin' down," he says, "they're still seven and a half cents<sup>in the dirt</sup> and you better sell." And, I said, "I'll sell my share." But my dad had told me not to sell his share, til I let him know. Now, he was a dang fool for not letting Magill know. He could have told Magill, "Here when that price is suitable; sell." What he shoulda done. He didn't do it. By the time I wrote to Dad and he finally piddled around like some of the rest of the farmers, he left it to Magill then, and he got five cents. The rest of the farmers' beans laid in the warehouse. They couldn't sell 'em. I was dang lucky I got that seven and a half cents.

SS: Your father sold for five cents?

HR: He sold for five. This third share. And I sold mine in the fall, you know for the seven and a half.

SS: The other farmers didn't sell at all?

HR: No, a lot of 'em didn't sell. They kept a speculating. This one guy, Dan Gone (?) that's brother to the one that threshed for us, by God, he was the one that told me about prices so good in Spokane. How they were retailing. They were retailing for that, <sup>ten, hell,</sup> you couldn't go by that, us little damn farmers; these grain buyers, you better listen to them. I got my lesson there. Then I went as far as--- one year then, by gosh, if I didn't even borrow a dollar and a half on my wheat. Wheat was a dollar and a half. I shoulda sold. No. I had the damn thing til the next year. Know what I got? <sup>I got the shirts.</sup> The warehouse took it for storage; eighty-four cents. (Laughter) That's what put me under.

SS: Cost eighty-four cents for storage?

HR: No. Yeah, it amounted to that. It amounted to that. Well, that is, counting what I borrowed. I borrowed a dollar and a half. I had to pay up. Don't you see? That dollar and a half I borrowed!

SS: A dollar and a half a bushel?

HR: Yeah. I borrowed the seed, let's see, that'd be eighty-five-- what? That'd be fifty, sixty-five cents extra that I overdrew. That I owed the bank.

SS: Which year was that?

HR: Oh, God, that was about 19-- wait now, I can pretty near figure that-- What year would that be? 1919's when I had the good beans. And, let's see now. 1919-- now wait-- I had the beans. The way I keep track is-- My oldest daughter, she was born in 1918, and she was a year old. Dad was working with the bean horse and my other boys and she was a year



old-- that'd be 1919 I had the good crop of beans, that I sold. And I got twenty-one hundred dollars for my share at seven and a half cents. Now, he could have got a thousand dollars for his. No, he didn't because he only got five cents, you see, so he lacked oh a couple or three hundred dollars of getting what he should have got. Well, anyway, I got this done.

SS: This idea of speculating, if you look back at it, would you do better to sell right away, as soon as you get your crop in?

HR: I did-- after that I did. Then, what I was going to tell you then-- I think it was 19-- Let's see, no. 1919 I had the big bean crop I sold. And then, anyway, in 1919; the bean crop, I sold. 1920 or '21, I can't remember for sure, that I got two and a quarter for the wheat. But I didn't have much yield. I only had sixteen bushel of that Marcus spring wheat, see. <sup>But</sup> it was clean. Crawford, the warehouse on this side, was the man that give me the big offer. He said, "How much of this wheat you got?" <sup>RINGSAGE</sup> I said, "I've a thousand and nineteen sacks, counting the Old Man's share. He gets a third of the wheat, see. "Well," he says, --wheat had been going two twelve, fourteen, sixteen, along there--

SS: I think you told me this.

HR: Yeah.

SS: You got good money.

HR: Yeah. So then, -- "Now," he said, "it's been jiggling up and down," he says, "How will two twenty strike you?" "Fine," I says, "Make it more if you want to." NO- let's see-- now I got that mixed up-- Yes, by gosh, it was two twenty. And the next day I come down and he says, "I understand the other warehouse is giving a little more." Oh, yeah, that's when he says, "How would two and a quarter strike you?" And so, that year I got good money on the wheat. Fifty-one hundred dollars!

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2+2



But, Dad had to have <sup>seventeen</sup> hundred of that, you see. But that still didn't put me out of debt. Then I got fed up with wheat. I happened to have one sow in a half an acre lot, that used to be the old orchard, and I'd planted it to oats for pasture. We didn't have no alfalfa then. And I had a little barley. I ground the barley; rolled it, fed it to this sow and just crowded 'em, I wanted to see what I could do. And, by golly, in five months I had two hundred pound pigs. And I got to figuring on that. I said, "Jesus, that beats wheat all to pieces." Beat the price for raising wheat on that little lot of ground. <sup>And counted the grain I fed and all.</sup> "Man," I said, "I can just go into hogs, if I can get a building." Well, the first year I didn't. <sup>First year</sup> I used Dad's-- he had a big machine shed and I made a mistake; two mistakes. One was, where the sows was penned off together, partitioned off, and I had one sow that would eat this other sow's pigs as fast as she hatched 'em, she cleaned up I think one sow's pigs, or damn near, before I caught on. Well, then another mistake I made that year was-- The first year I was there we had cattle, I sold them, though, quit, couldn't get no place. So, I said-- The salt I put in this big cattle trough, see, rock salt, and melted, and the pigs'd come and drink that. And they died off like flies. Went down to the water pond and swelled up and busted. I didn't know what was going on. Nice, fat, pigs.

SS: Just from that salt?

HR: Yeah. One of the neighbors come along there and he says, "Helmer, I'll tell you what's the matter." I says, "What?" "We had a sow we fed some ice cream salt, brine," he said, "an hour or two after she drank that she bloated and died." He said, "That's your trouble, you got this salt trough here." He said, "If you get block salt it won't happen." Boy, that's when I got busy. Only had seventeen pigs left out of ei-



ghty-five little pigs, that first year. I mean, that's the second year after I <sup>ok</sup>raise this one sow. Then I got busy. Boy, I said, "That's no good." I wrote to my dad if he'd let me move a house he had on the back field, that Skelton place, where I had the <sup>big</sup>bean crop. I said could I move that over? He wanted to know how I could do it. I said "I can do it."

SS: How did you do that? You started to tell me before.

HR: I done it. I got a stump puller down at this poor little neighbor, this poor little friend of mine that died last spring, Chuck Graham. His dad had a big Hercules stump puller, about this high, <sup>And they was all good in them days.</sup> His dad run a little sawmill up in the canyon there above Peck, besides he had a gristmill in Peck, where I get my flour ground. And he was a nice old man. Anyway, he says, "Go ahead and use it." I took it up there and borrowed another neighbor, West's, two hundred foot cable; that's four hundred feet of cable; spliced 'em together.

SS: You had two hundred on the stump puller?

HR: No, two hundred foot cable. I had to dig three quarters of a mile through a field- I'll show you that field over here--

SS: Yeah.

HR: Three quarters of a mile <sup>w2</sup> had to dig every four hundred feet, log ten foot long, three foot in hardpan to anchor, don't you see? You didn't have to fill the hole up. You had to have that deep in order to hold it. And we never did let one slip, always had plenty of anchorage.

SS: How did those old stump pullers work?

HR: Well, you had a team with a sweep, and they pull that around, wind the cable right around the stump <sup>puller</sup>. And you hooked one end of the cable over there to your building; she started coming. Oh, was I feeling good. Didn't move fast, It took us about ten short days. We was ten



*Short* days because we only put in about five or six hours a day, 'cause we both had a lot of chores, late in the fall, in November; cold weather. Which I was glad of. I'd plowed this field, I was pulling right through this field that I'm gonna show you, three quarters of a mile, and I was just wishing I could get through <sup>it</sup> before bad weather, cause that would have been a mess. Well, we did, we got it right down on some orchard grass, right by the pond, pretty close to where I wanted to set the house. And, I told my neighbor then, I said, "I can handle it now," I says. I knew there'd be a lot of work to it yet, but <sup>that's</sup> all I had to do all winter, chores and that, that was my job. The reason I wanted it close to the pond, so I could have handy to water for the sows. Dad had a good pond, but he didn't have it good enough to suit me. One winter, when we had the cattle, my little brother, Joe, was with me and we had to drive our cattle three miles to get to water. That little pond that Dad had froze over, solid. But Rogerses had a great big pond and we drove our cattle down there. Once a day is all you could afford to do, it was cold weather and they'd drink good once a day and then fed 'em straw, see. And so, I said to Joe, "Next spring we're gonna fix that pond." I says, "I think I got an idea." You see, you had to dig down the ditch and fill it with clay to make it hold. And I ~~said~~, "The water back into the field, but," I says, "I don't care, I want water. I don't want this kind of a job no more." Which I did, I raised the bank up, see. I forget now, three or four feet.

SS: Just with clay?

*Where the water stood at, you see.*

HR: Well, no, first clay in next to the bank. About three or four foot wide bank, that'll hold the water, and then finish filling the curb that you had to have to fill your bank.



SS: What time of the year did you get this done?

HR: Oh, this was-- we done that late in the fall when the pond was practically dry.

SS: Did that do it?

HR: You betcha. Instead of three feet of water in dry weather, I had seven or eight feet of water. Nice clear water. Dad was smart enough to have a pipe to pipe it into the tank outside. Then we had another pipe from that down to the hog lot with floats in, don't you see. I didn't have to bother with the water for the sows after they got their little pigs and they got weaned and they got outside, they had the water out there. All I had to do was feed 'em their grain.

SS: Did this clay come from the place there?

HR: Yeah, we just dug down, dug off the black dirt and down to clay and dug it out. By golly, it was work, but we did it.

SS: What did you use? Just use shovels?

HR: We had a team and what they call a slip. That's a two horse thing. They do have what they call a Fresno, four horse scraper. We had a two horse; little handier. You could handle it with two horses. You can do a lot of work with one of them, a couple of guys can. And get in narrower places, you see. And that's all you had to have was a little-- and they were only about three feet, something like that. And it's all one team can do to pull one of them when you fill it full. We filled that up-- I mean I got that all fixed up. Then one year I was out of money-- The year after I got this house put in, I had these fourteen sows; fourteen partitions<sup>off</sup> in this house, see.

SS: I think you told me how the hogs made good then.

HR: Yeah, yeah, well, maybe you don't want that.

SS: Well, there's one thing I do want is-- on moving that hog house how



did you get the-- how did you get it on skids? Was that a big job?

HR: Oh, no, we had to jack it up enough so we could work under that. And Dad had timber on the place, and I got a couple of big, bull pine trees peeled; green ones, they were slick. You see, you peel the bark off, and they would slip along easier. They'd wore off anyway, and I said "Peel 'em before we get 'em under there." God, I was young then!! I could work like a tiger. I was only-- that was, you see, in 1923 and '24--- let's see, '23, I was what? Thirty-five years old. And work didn't amount to anything to me. I just worked my tailbone off on that ranch, but, I tell you, I made a go of it.

SS: Listen, why don't we go back and kind of start at the beginning and work out way up to here, and see it all as a picture? The whole thing.

HR: Yeah, that's what I wanted to tell you. Yeah, I wanted to tell you when we first settled on the Ridge.

SS: Are you talking about Central Ridge?

HR: Yeah. Well, yeah, that's where we lived. That's where Dad homesteaded. Central Ridge. And, see, I was only eight years old when Dad moved over there.

SS: He moved from Park, did he?

HR: Yeah. With a wagon and cayuse team. Cayuse team. Got over on <sup>Big</sup> Bear Ridge first day, and the next day, I think, got, as near as I can remember, either Cavendish or Peck. And when we got to Peck, we stayed there-- we left all the family but me, I went with Dad. I was the oldest, but I was only eight years old. He took me along, anyway. And, God, there was no road up that mountain. You had to go right up that old ridge, the cayuses couldn't pull the whole wagon, so he just played smart. Dad was a good figurehead, he worked hard. Now if he hadn't had a little head on him, now, he wouldn't a done all that.



Now, what he done, he put a pole in this hind wheels, you know that makes just like one cart. Hooked his horses on that, all he piled on that was just the cookstove and some dishes. A box of dishes and cookstove. We got to going up this mountain and it was so doggone steep some places, they couldn't pull it, see? Well, Dad unloaded the dishes and I guess he finally made 'em pull the stove a little ways, and then he went back and carried the dishes up. I was too little to help him, eight years old, you know. But he done all the work and I seen him do it.

SS: Was there even a track to follow up the hillside?

HR: No. We got up the hill, well, there was kinda what they call a saddle after you got about two-thirds of the way up the mountain, kind of a level spot, see. We rested there pretty good.

SS: No trail or nothin' up there?

HR: No nothin'! Just a mountainside. Just a hill-grade. I mean, we call it-- I don't know what you would call it. Kind of a ridge. They did build a grade, later on, see. The farmers got together and cooperated and worked together, shovel and pick and maybe they had scrapers, I suppose they did, because it was quite a grade they made. About a three four mile<sup>grade</sup> see. Made switchbacks, on that grade. That was the old grade.

SS: So you rested two-thirds of the way up and then he---?

HR: Then when we got home-- I was gonna tell you that-- when we got home-- He had a little cabin on the homestead. He'd been over here and homesteaded, filed on it, see. You see he had a little homestead in Park above where Granddad's place is, where Steiner lives now, but, he could relinquish - them days, you could relinquish-- what they called relinquish. And he played smart-- Oh, everybody in Park thought he



was a fool, you know. Didn't figure he could make it. But he was smart enough that he took this place, it laid in the ~~Z~~ it was east and west there--- West, yeah, yeah. He got a eighty laying here, east and west and then anothere one over here, east and west. That forty joined -- the east forty joined the west forty, see. So it laid in a Z. Well, this neighbors place that he bought, as I tell you that I raised the beans on was the thirty or forty acres that laid in between - in the corner of this Z. Filled his place out, see. Beside made a lot of pasture land down in the canyon. That place had a hundred and fifty, sixty acres on it.

SS: Well, why do you figure the east-west? Does that give 'em more---?

HR: Well, it was the best land, the way the land laid, in between this draw and the canyon.

SS: So, it was all on the ridge?

HR: That's the Ridge, it's called Central Ridge.

SS: Well, if he'd a took it the other way, you woulda gotten canyon.

HR: Oh, he wouldn't a gotten near the land that he got. No, you betcha. He played smart taking it like he did. And, anyway, he had this little cabin built from these timber that was on there, you see, just pine logs. I think it was about eleven by twelve, something like that. And it didn't even have a door, just a hole, to jump in and out of. Just a dirt floor and he had some sourdough that he had made all ready to go, see. He had left that-- I guess sourdough you can leave it quite a while and it's still good, see. And he had a frying pan. And the only thing else we had to with was just some fat pork. He Didn't fry it very good. But, you know, when you get real hungry, it tastes pretty good. And he was gonna be smart; "Now look," he says, "I'm gonna show you how I can flop 'em." He threwed it up like that and it fell



down in the dirt. We just brushed it off, it was good. Tasted good. But, I can remember that just like it happened yesterday. There I was, just a little eight year old kid, see. Well, another little job he had me doing. After he got established, he scratched up twelve acres of ground. He borrowed a neighbors horse, so he had three on a little fourteen inch plow, scratched this twelve acres up with. And he butchered a cow along in the winter, I guess, he didn't have hay, he had to butcher her, and kept part of the meat, just part of it, and he traded the rest for some seed to sow this ground the next spring. And the next year, he sold hay off of this piece of ground that he'd plowed up to help them along. And do you know how much he made in the harvest field, when he went out? He had to leave all of us there and no water at home; wasn't no water on the place. And left a horse there for us with a couple of syrup kegs on each side of him, and we had to go down the canyon where there was a spring and pack water up. And us little barefooted boys, that was our summer's job! And so, when he come home, of course, he 'd bought some shoes for us; I think it was a dollar or a dollar and a half <sup>A PAIR</sup> those days. And, oh, us kids we was wild to get out and try them new shoes on. God, he'd come out there moonlight night and say, "You boys get in the house and take them shoes off, if you want to tear around, you save them for winter." Just that hard up. Well, I'll tell you, we had to obey him, little devils. Alright. And then the next year we got a little more ground plowed up so we had enough to sow flax. You know what flax is? And he was just lucky enough to get a good price for that flax. But, what I started to say, when he sowed ~~that~~, he broadcast with his hand, that way. I was a little boy maybe ten years old then, had to go walk in his tracks so he could see how far he had to go away from it,



see, you know what I mean? So he'd get it lapped just right. And he'd sow this early <sup>in the</sup> morning, about four o'clock before the breeze'd come up, cause that flax is light and the breeze'll blow it. There I was, just trotting along barefooted and cold.

SS: You would follow him?

HR: No, I'd go ahead of him.

SS: Oh, yes.

HR: He got a good job seeding that way. Later years, then, here's another improvement they made over that, or he got the idea. Somebody, I guess had done it, and he seen it. On these two hind wheels, that I was telling you about, that he'd fixed, you know.

SS: Locked.

HR: He put a tub - washtub- put grain in that and then he had me driving the team-- No- had one of us boys driving the team, the other one on a pony out here riding the wheel tracks with a rope to the horses so they couldn't only be just so far, and, Dad, of course, he'd stand there and sow with both hands, broadcast both ways, and he could sow forty feet wide. He could sow forty acres a day that way.

SS: He'd stand in the back of the wagon?

HR: Stand in the back of the wagon; grab his wheat out of this <sup>GRAIN</sup> and go this way. Forty acre a day. Well, then, we had to harrow that <sup>to</sup> get it covered so it'd grow. Later years, then he finally got him a broadcast seeder. They got little shovels and there's only about eight or ten foot, and that didn't sow nearly as fast, but you could sow-- oh, you had to go like the devil to sow twenty acres a day with that. Three horses I think's all that they put on that one.

SS: I asked you how much he made on harvest that first year and you didn't tell me. What happened in that first year of harvesting when he went



out.

HR: Oh, I forgot that. Thirty-five dollars. That's what he got.

SS: How long did he go?

HR: Oh, God, not very long-- well, that thirty-five dollars, hell the wages-- well, of course, he was stacking, but I don't know if he stacked that year, though. See, later years, when the farmers started to getting bigger fields and they found out Dad was a good stacker, gee, they hired him right and left. I had to go over and help him to pitch. When I was fifteen years old I took a man's place. Boy, I was out there pitching them big bundles on the stacks. And I'll show you the stacks right there--

SS: Did he work around Genesee or some place?

HR: Do you know where he went to work that year?

HR: Oh, Genesee country. They were more advanced, them farmers, see.

SS: How was it that your folks wound up leaving Norway and coming to Park?

HR: You mean my folks coming from Norway?

SS: Yeah.

HR: Oh, yeah, see Dad was only five years old when the grandparents come over the ocean, see. And they settled in-- Want me to tell where they settled?

SS: Yeah.

HR: Well, they settled in Minnesota. And they stayed there a while. And Dad didn't get married until he was twenty-five, see. And so, he got to working out after he got to be quite a little man-- young man, you know, and saving his money. Them days people would save their money better'n they do nowadays. Well, they had to. And Granddad had hauled oak poles. I think he said nine miles, Dad told me. With oxen. He didn't have much transportation. With oxen, see. And they stayed



there, and they had bad luck. But, Dad was smart, he was working out for wages; he wasn't farming. Didn't get big wages, but he kept saving what he could, see.

SS: They had bad luck with the oxen?

HR: No. No. They had bad luck with the crops. That's what I wanted to tell you, later. Maybe I shouldn't tell you about this hard luck he had getting his wood. He said they'd start at nine o'clock in the morning and him and his buddy, he was a husky man, Old Granddad- he lived to be ninety-seven. The sickest he ever saw, he stayed with us one year- one winter- over there in Park when we was on the Conn place- and coming up walking, "Helmer," he says,-- couldn't talk very plain- "You will haul the logs down here, I will cut 'em up. Split 'em up, carry the wood in." Them days, we burned wood, see. Cookstove and all.

"Well." I said, "Granddad," I said, "I did have a tree climber." You've those tree climbers woodsaws, ain't you? I traded a gangplow that I'd bought from <sup>the</sup> Ridge, fellow over at Park, <sup>had it</sup> traded even up. So I had this gas woodsaw, and there was a great, big tree up on the mountain-side there. "Granddad, if I cut this big log I can't snake it down," I said, "but I'll saw the blocks up and bring them down to you, and you split 'em up." "Oh, yes, dat be alright," he said. But he did saw the little logs. He was smart enough to roll it up on skids, see, and he'd stand straight. And I could file a saw because I'd learnt that when I was cutting cordwood the first year we's married in Orofino, 1914. That's how I made my living that winter, cutting cordwood. A dollar and a quarter a cord.

SS: Your grandfather, he was pretty old then?

HR: Well, he was about as old as Steiner is now, about eighty-five or six year old. <sup>Already</sup> But, hell, he was a husky. God, he was out there working



like that, see

SS: Right when he was that old?

HR: Yeah. And I felled this tree and knocked down five others, as luck would have it, the little ones got in the way, see. But it made it nice. They laid on the hill like that and the upper part of the tree, the stump part laid up the hill and I could move my saw down the hill see. And I hauled the blocks down. Oh, he was tickled. Oh, hell, they was four or five feet in diameter, great, big, blocks. But it made good cook wood. It was yellow pine.

SS: Okay, but you were talking about him and his logging when he was a young man, himself.

HR: No. Yeah, I am getting too far ahead. Now, we jumped from Minnesota to Park. Okay, we'll finish Minnesota, now. The way it was, he got his wood that way, him and his brother, Thrownen ~~...~~, he called him, they would go out there and he said they could saw-- No, they didn't saw them days, they just chopped-- that oak was hard to saw and them saws they had them days, wasn't a good saw, it was just a - like a hand-saw, no drag to it. So they made headway by chopping- he was a very good axeman, oh, God, they chopped four cords-- 'course that'd be four foot lengths. Said they could make four cords in a day; go there and come back. Took 'em six hours, see, to do all that and make that nine mile trip. That was agoing some, they had to go like the devil to do <sup>that work</sup> all ~~r~~ and make all that trip, nine miles. I don't know how they done it, but he claims he done it. And, so, they were farming there for four or five years. Two years, I think it was, they had hail storms; either two years, either hail storms or three years hail storms and visa versa, grasshoppers. Five years of hard luck. And Dad, he had enough money saved up that I guess he could move all of 'em;



see, they found out his homestead's  
in Park.

grandparents and all over to Park. And this Granddad of mine, of course, he was a husky and <sup>then</sup> he'd go out in the harvest field, too. And he was a good stacker. That's how he come to make a go of it. Every summer he'd come out here to Genesee country and stack grain for the people. And in the winter he would <sup>sit there</sup> and split shakes, that's what Ed was telling about, how he carried them shake blocks, you remember? They didn't have horses, they made snowshoes to walk on top of the snow. Split them shakes, see.

SS: He did that in Park?

HR: Yeah, that was in Park. Now you would think that a man wouldn't go across an old canyon- there wasn't no grade there <sup>then, see</sup> but he just loved that country. What he was after; the timber. He got all that cold stuff in the East, no timber close, you see. He wanted to get where there was plenty of timber close, and besides the water. He was smart enough to find a good spring on that place and it's still there. Water and wood. He had her made.

SS: Do you know where it was in Minnesota, more or less, where they were?

HR: It was close to Minneapolis. Let's see, what do they call that? Yeah, ~~Minneapolis~~, I believe was their closest place. Let me look at my birth certificate. - Looky there, I got it on carpentry, by God, I took up welding first and I only lasted on it-- I mean it got the best of me--Here it is, here it shows, Swift Falls, Minnesota. That's what I tried to think of.

SS: Did your grandfather ever talk to you about why it was that he left Norway and come to Minnesota?

HR: God damn, they'd starve to death back there. Yep, they had what they called-- that's how Dad come to get the name. Dad's name was Swenson <sup>like Ed's. They're full brothers.</sup> too. But Dad, he guessed a little bit better than the rest of 'em, a



little more brainy, I guess they'd call it, He went, and he was all ~~the~~ time reading. He hadn't got much education, but, by God, he read. And he took up-- down on the Ridge he got the idea that the farmers should organize and start a Farmers' Mutual Fire Insurance Company of their own, which Dad started <sup>there</sup> in Nez Perce County. See what I mean? That's what he started, and he'd go canvassing around and he left us boys to do the farming. He give us all just what to do. Well, he kept us together, five of us boys, after Mother died. She died in 1901. Seventy-five years ago.

SS: So this was a cooperative with all the farmers?

HR: No, Dad organized it that way. And he said like this, he only charged a dollar and a half a policy, but, they would be assessed according to whatever loss there was. Like if there was a hundred farmers-- we'll illustrate-- a hundred farmers belonged: alright, if one poor fellow lost say five thousand dollars by fire, these other farmers'd club together and pay that loss. And that <sup>was</sup> a lot cheaper way of getting along than it was to go <sup>in</sup> to these big companies. That company now, of course, is in <sup>the</sup> big hands now. Somebody got wise and made a little more money on it and kept fooling the poor farmers and she's big cooperative now, you know.

SS: Well what did it have to do with him changing his name?

HR: Well, that's what I wanted to tell you. Dad's-- after he got brother Edward and brother Gilbert, both moved over there, and Granddad, that's three Swensons, and <sup>his'n</sup>, is four. And his mail'd get mixed up pretty bad, don't you see. This mailcarrier'd put his mail - Dad's mail,-- and so Dad wanted -- this was the old name, I mean, the name of the old place, only it had an "r" on it, Ringsager (gives the Norwegian pronunciation) that's acreage. And so, of course, he had to pay for it. He went to Lewiston, County Seat, and it cost him forty



dollars. But, us boys could change our name before we had real estate. And the first year we went to school in Spōkane, like I told you, getting that college-- there I didn't finish that-- I was twenty-two, Steiner was twenty. We finished the seventh and eighth grades in eight months. The longest term we ever had. We had a private teacher. And I never knew grammar in my bones till she illustrated it and I could understand it.

SS: Was there somebody-----? (noisy)

HR: Oh, I wouldn't know that. Oh, they probably read papers or news gets around. Hard to tell how they found that out. But, anyway, that's about how old he was. They had lived in Minnesota about-- what did I say?

SS: Twenty-three years.

HR: Twenty-three years. So they struggled there for quite a <sup>little</sup> while, you see. But the last five years was the worst, that's when they had that tough time, and convinced 'em to get out of there, I guess.

SS: You said that people were starving in Norway. People were really starving?

HR: Well, I don't know. They just wanted to get out. They had no future. You know what Norway is, little old strip of land along the-- That's where Granddad got the habit of eating--- He could eat the fattest fish and pork. He could eat boiled fat pork, He'd got that habit, see. *But he was just naturally healthy.* But, Uncle Ed, his youngest son said that he musta had a good bile, or whatever you call it, that digests that *kind of stuff,*

SS: Okay, when your father got to Park, did they take a homestead there?

HR: They took a little homestead above of where Grandpa's is; right above him, in the lower edge of that mountain.

SS: Do you remember about that?



HR: No, I don't remember that time.

SS: It was before---

HR: Much. Everything was after we moved to the Ridge, see.

SS: Why was it that ~~he~~ decided to go to the Ridge and leave Park?

HR: Well, Jesus Christ, a big prairie land instead of that old brush land? Who wouldn't? Wouldn't you do it? Would you do it?

SS: Sure. There wasn't no timber on top of that Central Ridge?

HR: Oh, yes, we had timber in that little draw there, yes, for firewood that's all we wanted. The rest of the land was all a hundred and sixty acres of farm land.

SS: You mean it was prairie land before he found it?

HR: Prairie land is what it was. It was the Nez Perce Indian Reservation. Got opened up; ~~there~~ was a while that wasn't opened up for nothin', see; for settlement. And the government allowed 'em to get a homestead free; no charge. All they had to do was improve it. Get on there and plow it up and make something out of it. By golly, my little old daddy did, besides making us little devils help him. And that was alright. He made men out of us. Well, ~~than~~, you see, they got there and, oh, Dad-- I didn't tell you about that-- I don't know whether you want to put all that down in or not-- but, see, on the Ridge then when we got to going, he started raising horses, that's where he made his money. Them days everything was farmed <sup>with</sup> horses. And, boy, he had awful good luck with horses. He'd have four, maybe six colts sometimes. And he'd sell 'em to farmers that didn't raise them. And they brought all the way from two hundred and fifty to three hundred dollars a horse, them days. If it hadn't a been for that horse raising he never would a got any place. The grain wasn't much, he just fed that doggone stuff to the horses and made money on the horses. That's where he used his



head, going into horses, til machinery, of course, then when I got to farming that was clear out. Everybody started putting in machinery. I farmed with horses.

SS: How come these other folks in Park thought he was crazy to go to--

HR: Well, dammit, they just couldn't see the future over there, like Dad did, see. Naw, my uncle-- two uncles on my mother's side- Steiner was one of 'em he joined this Granddad place, one forty of his, joined on the north-- his north forty, he took his land north and south, this uncle, <sup>Uncle Steiner</sup> he had a nice place. It was really the best place in Park, almost. Laid a lot of it level, but it was a little bit on the wet side; swampy. But it was nice and level. And, you see, whoever come in there first got their choice, you might say on them homesteads, just like they did over on the Ridge.

SS: I heard, Ed Swenson told me, that there was one guy that they called a land grabber. One guy there that took a lot of good land in the bottom.

HR: Well, I don't know who that would have been at the time. Let's see--

SS: Oh, it doesn't matter.

HR: Well, I'll tell you, they sold out, but they couldn't homestead more than one quarter, you know. That's all they could do.

SS: Well, I guess from what you're telling me that Park just didn't have the potential that other places had.

HR: Oh, yeah, that's just a small place compared to-- well, it is <sup>not</sup> on the Central Ridge, when you get up to Nez Perce, there is all that Craigmont country. That spreads out wider, then there's another ridge to the east of where we lived, called Russell Ridge, another one to the west called Melrose Ridge, and then another little ridge down beyond that, north of it, called Angel Ridge. And then, here I wanted to tell you how Dad started, getting that flax out. There was no railroad



at Peck, Idaho for several years. But his flax-- delivering it to Kendrick, he got two and a quarter or two and a half a bushel. But he couldn't haul much, he only had two <sup>little</sup> cayuses to haul with. A wagon was pretty near a load, cause they had to go up that-- they went down to Peck, up the Sunnyside, Clearwater side, on top of big Potlatch, down to Kendrick and that Kendrick grade to get to the Kendrick warehouse. It took him pretty near a week to make one trip! Now can't you imagine that Dad was struggling? So, by God, he had to have a lot of guts to do all that. Not only guts, but strength. I said, "A man doing all that," I said, "He was alone." Then he had to do all the <sup>MAN</sup> work, we kids wasn't big enough, at that time. My God, he was <sup>struggling</sup>, boy. I tell you he was <sup>struggling</sup>. Then, to do his harvesting, all he had was a six foot binder, with three horses on it, that pulled it, and he <sup>had</sup> one old mare so goldang old that every time he'd hit her, you know, she'd speed up a little bit and then she'd stutter, brrrrrr--. (Chuckles) Oh, Dad'd come in and it'd be hot, But as luck would have it, you know, they'd learnt to keep cows. And do you know what he done? He'd come to get something to drink that was quenching, got over to the pan of sour milk, clabbered milk, and drank. <sup>He got just prineap making me ill with that sour milk.</sup> Then when us boys got big enough to do the shocking we had to get out and shock up the bundles. After Mother died, let's see that was-- I was thirteen, fourteen years old, you betcha-- we shocked them, we was working like mad. See, I was plowing when I was eleven years old. <sup>With one of them foot burners.</sup> I plowed that whole ranch for three or four years, til I was about sixteen, before he got a gangplow. I couldn't drive four horses, see before that. But I practiced driving these four horses because he had me go down and water his horses-- he'd go out and harness 'em, see, and feed 'em early in the morning before breakfast and then come in and get his breakfast while I'd go



out there and hitch 'em up for him. Well, I thought, "Here's a good chance to drive four horses." They wasn't hooked onto anything, I'd get 'em watered, hitch 'em up and I'd practice pulling the lines of this horse and that horse. Pretty soon I got confidence in myself, I told Dad, I says, "You can get a gangplow now," I says, "I can drive four horses." He says, "Do you think you can?" I says, "You betcha, I can handle 'em on the gangplow." And sure enough, he did. I set the plow around this big field, half a mile long, you know. Oh, it was a nice field. And got into<sup>a</sup> straw bottom.

SS: A what?

HR: Straw bottom. And I let the old plow plug up. I learned something then. Boy, I didn't go close to a straw bottom any more. (Chuckles) And another thing, I could ride that thing, see. That was easy work. The only work I had was to harness the horses.

SS: This straw bottom? *How deep would it be?*

HR: You see, the cattle would eat it down and it'd be piled up-- tromped down two or three feet of it, and that's what I thought I'd go through. I mean, go over it. I figured I'd go over it. It didn't go over it, it grabbed it and plugged it up is what it done. So then I stayed shy of it, I went around it.

SS: You were doing all this work with a walking plow, that's because you ---

HR: Well, that was when I was eleven til I was sixteen-- fifteen, or sixteen.

SS: Now, why did you do this? Was that because your dad was out selling  
INSURANCE?

HR: Well, he was probably out canvassing, yeah. He was out canvassing, or maybe fencing the place. He had to fence the place all by himself. Make his timber, posts. That's what I told Steiner, he thinks he's



doing something. I said, "Listen, Steiner, Jesus Christ, you got a little old dinky eighty acres, and you've got it all fenced in for years. Poor Daddy had to fence all that and I was the instigator to coax him to put hog wire on, and he never raised a hog in his life." Hadn't a been he had that hog wire on that I probably wouldn't a raised hogs, but because he had it I got the idea and went in there and raised 'em and made money<sup>on it</sup>. The first year, I told you, I didn't make any. The second year, '23, that's the time I want to tell you about. 1923, yeah, that's the first year, I had good luck. Fourteen sows brought me a hundred and nine pigs.

SS: Now, you told me that.

HR: Well, I saved them-- I saved a hundred and five, but I had to bor-  
row five hundred dollars to feed 'em over til my grain was threshed.  
Did I tell you that?

SS: Yeah. Yeah.

HR: You got that? Well, that was it. And then, the next year I didn't have such good luck, you know. But, as I said, that last year, that's when I borrowed that-- you see on summer fallow I had half corn, half peas, and I would hog the peas first, cause they'd come on first, and then soon as they were done, by that time the corn would be plenty ripe and the pigs'd go right into it. By then the place was hog tight, I'd just turn the hogs loose. <sup>The only thing,</sup> they had to come over to the pond to get their water, but that's all they had to do, go over and back and fill up and <sup>come and</sup> maybe the middle of the day was hot, they'd come and drink up and then along in the evening go out and fill up again. Hell, it worked slick. And so, that year, as I said though, I didn't have quite as many. I only had, instead of a hundred and five, I saved, I think it was about eighty-five pigs. And I let the brood sows run in with the fattening hogs and they got too fat, so they didn't have good luck



with their pigs. But I did save that many and the price come up. The first year that I borrowed the five hundred dollars, only got six and a half cents a pound.

SS: But this next year the price came up?

HR: The next year the price come up. The first half I sold, I got eight and a half cents and the other half, you see, you couldn't sell 'em all at the same time, because some of 'em didn't mature quite as good. And the other half I got ten and a half. Well, that brought me forty-four-- I mean, put me out of debt. I was in debt forty-two hundred dollars, besides I had a little money left to live on. And I told Dad what the banker and all said, and he said, "You just getting a good start. You're doing fine." I'd paid the bank up and I was able to pay Dad up and I said, "I want to get out. I've been there seven years struggling like mad." And I was just about petered out. I didn't weigh over a hundred thirty, or forty pounds. I'll tell you why, the missus was sick that spring and I had that last summer fallow that I was telling you about--wouldn't a got anything off a that ground, didn't get it planted-- plowed early-- it dried up in May. Well, his name is Wesley Thomas, John, I called him, at Deary, he was living on his Dad's place-- or his uncle's place, Wesley Thomas was his uncle's name. And he had this steel roller patent, and I got the idea then that this ground was so bad, that it plowed up, great big chunks, and I had a double disc, seven horses on it-- that's what I had to farm with, so I could plow the ground, it was dry, see. And that would chop the clods up, but it didn't pack it the way I wanted it, 'cause I wanted to put peas in, and you gotta have the ground in good shape for peas and corn. And it was so dry. Along about the twelfth of May, and I got over to Tom, said, "How about hiring your roller?" "Go ahead and take it. I'm through with it." See, he'd got his crop all in. So I



went and used it and I just rolled it, packed it, then I'd disc it, and harrow it and pack it again, and I just had that doggone ground just packed and worked up and it looked pretty good. Did the best I could. Then I planted my peas and my corn. Took til the Fourth of July for any of that to come up. And I thought, "Well, gee whiz, if I get something I'll be lucky." No rain! But there was moisture in the bottom. That land was rich, and in the winter it would absorb, in the winter this subsoil below would hold it, if there was enough moisture to go down. You see, I had plowed-- no, by God, that summer before, I hadn't plowed-- I generally did plow my ground in the fall, but hadn't got around to it. I was too busy, for some reason. Froze up or something. And there, that spring, I had two mares gonna foal and my wife was sick abed. Wheee. She brought birth to a dead baby boy, ten pounds, and pretty near died with him.

SS: And a neighbor family and their kids were giving you trouble.

HR: You want that?

SS: Yeah.

HR: Well, that's the reason I moved. One of the reasons, not altogether. No, no. But, I told Dad, Bloodwurst was their name-- they lived- see, he bought Uncle Ed's place. That was the dirty trick that Ed done to sell out to that old--B that's what made it bad. He had two mean boys, and they was torturing my boy. Not only that, but, when Dad and I had these cattle, and Dad had more pasture land along the road than he did, he only had a little strip there from our corner fence up to the hill wasn't over hardly a quarter of a mile of pasture land, and Dad had that Z all along the north side there; lot of pasture land. Well, I asked Mr. Bloodwurst, I said, <sup>one time</sup> down on the grade. His boys'd been dogging my cattle and I didn't like that idea.

SS: Dogging the cattle?

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Dogging my cattle.

HR: Sic the dogs on 'em, run 'em away, over the hill. I <sup>figured,</sup> Jesus Christ, I wasn't gonna put up with that. And I was a young man, boy, I wouldn't take nothin' from none of 'em. I was gonna have my rights. So, I met old Julian down, - I mean he was in the stock business down below. He had a little ranch down in the canyon, Shaw place, they called it, and he was there digging out the road for hisself to get up off the grade, after the new grade was made. <sup>That favored his place along the banks.</sup> So, "Julian," I says, "how about us making an agreement about not dogging our cattle?" I said. "Alright, Julian, I like to be neighborly," I says, "let's get along," I says, "keep them boys from dogging my cattle," I said, "I don't like that. Some of my cows is heavy with calf. And you wouldn't like it," I says, "if I was out there dogging your cattle. Would you?" Well, that didn't do a bit of good. Them kids kept it up dogging, dogging. And, Jesus, one Sunday it happened. This man that was in the warehouse business, Guernsey, had married a cousin, his wife's cousin, <sup>And he was baggin' this man with money once in a while to buy</sup> see what I mean; they was related that way. <sup>to buy</sup> They tried to buy Dad's place one time. So, I sure fixed him once. I was telling Dad about how-- I says, "I'm gonna go over the hill and get my cattle back, but first," I says, "I'm going to stop and see him." And he happened to be out there by the house washing his face, wiping his face with a towel. I seen another man there, and I couldn't hold myself, I wasn't scared. "Julian," I says, "come down here, I want to see you a minute." "Alright," he says. I says, "Julian, what do you mean," I said, "by golly, I asked you nicely the other day," I said, "to be neighbors and try and get your boys to quit dogging my cattle." "By God, we'll settle that right now," he said. He jumped over the fence. "Good," I said. I jumped off my horse. He called me liar about then, Bango! <sup>I knocked the son of a b down because</sup> I whanged him! I grabbed him, <sup>I</sup> I could see the other feller coming down



and I held him

and I grabbed him around the neck, and I said, "Goddam you," I said, I'm gonna fix you right, if that's the kind of a neighbor you are, we'll really have it." Guernsey come down, of course, he was a friend of mine, and his wife come down and she says, "I don't think it's nice for two neighbors to be fighting." "No," I said, "I tried to avoid it, but what you gonna do," I says, "when a neighbor-- I don't call that a neighbor." <sup>ISAYS "IF A MAN COMES DOWN AND CHALLENGES ME LIKE THIS, THAT'S WHAT HE WANTS IS A FIGHT."</sup> I says, "Your boys have been fighting my cattle all the time," I says, "that's not fair." "I didn't do that, my boy didn't do that, and they been picking on the boy besides, at school. They take his hat and rub it in horse manure and everything else. Two of 'em," I says. "Older and stronger. It just ain't gonna work." And he's the very man that I got to help me move, see. He got good after that. After he found out that I was a man of my word he got neighborly. I made a neighbor out of him.

SS: So, was that the end of the fight?

HR: Oh, yeah. Well, wait, not right then. "Let me up, let me up" I let him up. Then he thought he was gonna be smart, he thought he was gonna grab me by the legs, see; well, when he stooped down to get my legs, I grabbed him again around the neck, like that, and I held him. I was just choking the shit out of him. I said, "The next time I catch you out," I says, "you ain't agoing to last long." Old Guernsey, of course standing there, he says-- ? --"after the first of July," or something like that. "I says, "That remains to be seen," I says. noisy -- unless something drastic happened, see.

SS: What were you saying about renting pasture land?

HR: No. This was road pasture, see. But you know, that little struggle I had with him then, I guess is what started him to - he took a cow of



mine down to his his bench. And I got the hunches, you know, the kids was fooling around there all the time, and I happened to open up this pond, because the water was getting so low it didn't run in the trough, and that was over there by that place that Dad bought where this house I moved was- I got a hunch, it's funny how you get hunches, that Sunday morning. I got to thinking about that pond being open, I says, "Say, you know, I got a bad hunch. I wonder if I hadn't better go over and see about them heifers." If they're down in that pond-- I had my horses and my cattle running loose in the field, see. And I got the hunch that if them heifers got in there and the horses got in there, they could hurt it, maybe kill it. And, I said to the woman; she was husky then, "You walk the south side, and I'll take Barney and ride around on the north side and see if I can spot the cattle. Get 'em all gathered together, and see if everything's alright." And I got around by the barn, and this cow that <sup>we</sup> had a bell, we had a great, big bell, you could hear it for a mile off, see, and that very cow that he had drug down there the day before, left. <sup>I didn't know anything until</sup> I seen the missus, I said, "Well," I says, "I found," let's see what was it we called her? Daisy, I think, because she had a white strip backline, besides she was shaking the bell and I knew darned well she was there, the sound of that bell. That give her away, see. "Oh, I says, I found it." She says, I found a place where it looked like some cow'd been drug through the fence here, on the south side." I said, "You did?" Went down there and looked, I followed them tracks right around that trail over to where we joined fence. Hog wire and all, he'd torn that down and led her into-- he'd plowed his field there and showed the tracks, PLAIN. "Oh, good," I said, "now I know what I'll do. I'll just take old Barney and ride down there and get the cow." So, I got around by the house,



And he was road boss. He'd been dragging the road, fresh tracks. You could track fresh tracks, see, because the road was drug that evening before, Saturday. Sunday morning these fresh tracks showed and he had another cow to go with him; two cows. And I had the boy behind the saddle on my horse, 'cause I wanted him to kinda-<sup>cow'd lead very good.</sup> I didn't know if the<sup>boy</sup> to have him chase the cow along. Got down to where I turned off to go down-- see, our place run clear down, this corner, this new place that Dad bought, just like this, and he had his hitch<sup>down</sup> right across the fence from us. But this was our land here. And there he laid, behind a great, big boulder on my land.

SS: The cow?

HR: No. No. The man. He raised his head up when he seen me turn off the grade to go down the trail to meet him. He got leery then, you see. I got down there, and see-- he knew I was a better man already, because I'd a had hold of him. I said, "Julian, what the hell do you mean, take my cattle down here like this?" See, he'd butchered cattle right along for neighbors around there, but nobody could catch him. I was the slicker smart enough to get next to him. So then,-

SS: You called him on it?

HR: Oh, yeah. I called him, I was getting close, I was getting pretty mad. I Goddam near crawled his frame, but the two boys that was behind there they was either hunting birds, or making a camouflage shot, see, they was shooting a gun over the stacks. Of course, there were birds-- there were trees up on the bench there, I thought they mighta been hunting them and shooting at them. But, anyway, it was a lucky thing, because, if I'da beat up on their dad there, and them kids come around with a gun, no telling what they wouldn't do. So, I just held off and I told him. I cussed him out. "Julian, Goddam you," I says, "keep your fin-



gers out of the pie, or else you're gonna get burnt, and burnt bad." So, when I started back with the cow, you know. "Wait a minute." He got friendly right away, he knew <sup>a damn sight</sup> better. I made that man know, by God, I wasn't a perfect fool. So, he says, "Wait a minute, I'll help you drive 'em up." I says, "No, the boy'll take it alright." So, we did, I and the boy made it. But I got so mad that I went clear to Nez Perce to talk to a lawyer. And he had had law trouble with this big cattle man up the canyon, Old Sullivan <sup>Sullivan</sup> But old had played smart, he took a picture. He had a cow just like I had, a muley cow that had a star in the forehead, and not only that but, Sullivan had played smart, he was a big farmer, and he was going to catch whoever was a doing it. He did, too. But, this dang Bloodwurst had a friend that was running a moonshine still, that was going to be the witness for Julian, and he had told him that <sup>if he had told AGAINST him,</sup> he was going to squall to 'em on the moonshine still. So that's what the lawyer told me, he says, "Hell," he says, "Old Sullivan was mad enough," he said, "when we's atalking here in the office, that he just picked up a chair, and if it hadn't abeen for me, he'd a whammed him over the head."

SS: So did he beat the rap?

HR: Well, I told him, this lawyer, "By God," I said,— "Well," he said, "where you made your mistake, you got too mad. you should a got your neighbors." "Neighbors," I said, "they're scared to death of that man. They don't want nothin' to do with that kind of a deal," I said, "and I couldn't expect 'em to. That's the reason I come to see you." "Well," he says, "you can't do nothing. Sullivan tried it," he said, "that witness of his, got him bluffed out, because he was running that still, and he didn't come," he said, "Bloodwurst got away with it." But he probably learned a lesson." "By God, he'll learn a lesson from me, if



I have to beat the hell right out of him," I said. "By God," he said, "I admire you." I said, "Boy, I tell you, I hate to do it, but if a man gets as Goddamn stubborn as that, I'm willing to fight my rights." And, by God, from then on, that man, he was put agin it, he only had that hundred acres of farm land. He didn't have no machinery to cut that grain, and he found out that I was a man of my word. He come over there one day, he said, "By golly, Helmer, I'd like to get somebody to cut my grain. Could I shock for you," he said, "then you cut my grain?" I had bought a secondhanded eight foot binder, see, and I had four good horses on it. "Yeah," I said, "Julian, I want to neighbor, Goddamn it, if you want to neighbor. I'll forget the past." If he'd just behave himself. I said, "Yeah, you bet," I said, "that's fine." Well we agreed that it was a dollar and a quarter an acre for cutting, and two and a half a day for shocking, and that way he got his grain cut and I got my grain shocked, til it was paid up, see, whatever it took. And the neighbors, I didn't tell you that-- Along in the fall,--when I had this crop of beans, see, just before that, he was sewing sacks, this Bloodwurst was-- And a young fella there by the name of, Hunter Hunter Louie was sewing sacks. They kidded him, see, for letting an old man like-- young little pup like me get the best of him. And then they just razzed him, you know. "By God," he says, "he's a powerful little devil, I'll tell you that." Well, this made this young Louie Hunter get smart, see. He's big, he's a bigger man than I was, he weighed a hundred and eighty-five pounds. He was just husky enough that he could pick me up like that--'cause I only weighed a hundred and thirty-five pounds then, I was light, but I was all muscle. "Haw, haw, haw," stood there laughing, like I was nothin', then he dropped me down to his feet. Just the minute he dropped me to his feet, I just



threwed my arms around his legs and I set him on his ass, CABANG!  
Jesus, he lit harder'n I did. Then he got up, see. And boy, he got  
me. He'd get me here and then he'd on me. He was pretty stout.  
By God, I was just stout enough, I backed him around, clear over to  
the south feeder, you know. And some of them guys that was feeding  
there, Old Tom Smith, he was a friend of mine, farmer, we'd exchange  
work together, he was a very nice man. And, I says, "Louie,<sup>lets</sup> get out  
here in the field where we got a lot of room." "Alright," he says.  
We got out there, and Goddamn, I scuffled around ~~that~~ old son of a bitch,  
and he started, huh, huh, huh; he was panting, you know, about all in  
and I was still good. I had good lungs, Goddamn, I coulda wrestled all  
day. He says, "By God," he says, "let's quit." I says, "Whatever you  
say," I says, "Godammit, if you want to keep on, we'll keep on a while."  
If I'd a kept on five more minutes, I'd a had him. He was just big  
enough that he could keep me away, see, powerful enough. He come back  
to the sack pile and start sewing, you know. And old Bloodwurst said,  
"By God, I told him you was a powerful man!" (Chuckles) Well, then,  
wait now, - when I was a hauling grain down at Peck-- now that was a  
brother-in-law to this Louie Hunter, Frank <sup>DEAK</sup>. He was a big husky-  
he was big enough that he could just wipe the earth with me, you know.  
He'd been kind of a bully, and rich, too. And he come up to me, I  
was standing there watering the horses, there at Peck. "Hey, Helmer,"  
he says, "I got a notion," he says, "to push you in the water trough.  
I put Old Man Bloodwurst, Julian's dad in there." And I said, "By God,  
Frank," I said, "don't spoil a good notion. Never let something like  
that pass. Help your self..I guarantee you'll go in with me." He  
shut up. We were friends. He found out I could saw-- I mean file a  
saw, 'cause I'd learnt that when I was cutting cordwood, see in 1914



the second year we was married. And so I could make a saw bring the shavings out, see. And they couldn't. They couldn't fix their saw to cut. And we neighbored back and forth. <sup>We had dinner back and forth with each other.</sup> And his daddy, there's a fine old man, Doug Hunter, and I'd went to school with his wife, you know all of Doug Hunter's children, and we'd went to school and all neighborly. "Yeah," I said, "I'll fix your saws." "Well," he said, "I was just thinking, why don't you skid up some of them little bull pines you got," he said, "and make quite a skidway," he says, "and, we'll do the same, and then we'll all get together and help each other saw." "Good, Frank," I says, "that's fine." So that's what we did. And I said, "Frank, now listen, look at your daddy-in-law,"-- And this Louie was just a small boy then, hadn't growed up yet. They were standing there just like this with little short strokes. "Well, Frank," I said, "let 'er go full length. And I'll bet you we'll beat 'em. It's easier." And we did. I said, "I'll bet you," I said, "I can saw with any one guy," I said, "that does that short stroke and beat 'em." And, I said, "You could, too." They found that out, and boy, that just changed everybody's gait, don't you see. Well, we got along, I filed the saws, sawed our wood. I helped saw theirs and they helped saw mine. We just had a big picnic time of it.

SS: Do you think that time that guy was gonna throw you in the watering trough, do you think that was because you had been fighting with his cousin?

HR: No, because he was teasing me because I'd got the best of Bloodwurst, see. And he got good, and they was gonna try to get-- see if they could irritate me to start something, don't you see? They thought they would. By God, I just backed 'em. When he got that smart, see, I said, "By God, don't spoil a good notion."



SS: Let me ask you one more thing about Bloodwurst there, that time that he took your cattle down there, that he led your cow down there and got 'em in there.

HR: Oh, he done that in the night, probably or early morning.

SS: What was his thinking? What do you think he had in mind?

HR: Well, God only knows. 'Cause I tell you, -- here I got to tell you another place that he done for me that summer. There was three of my cattle disappeared, somewhere. And I just knew where they went. <sup>He'd take 'em.</sup> See, what they'd done, between him and Sam Porter, Sam Porter lived on, over on Russell Ridge, just above Peck, I mean, but it was Russell Ridge, you might say. It was a bench off of Russell Ridge, and they would transfer-- Julian would catch cattle over here and during the night bring 'em over there and he'd get 'em take 'em on, and they'd go maybe to Kamiah or some place else. Hide 'em somewhere. And an ordinary guy'd have a hell of a time them days to find 'em. Well, I just got that damn smart one morning, I told <sup>"I'm going to see if I CAN'T</sup> the missus, catch up with this son of a bitch, somehow." And I had a double barrel-- not a double barrel, but a repeater shotgun, Dad's old shotgun. <sup>12 gauge. Stiner's still got it.</sup> "I'll pretend I'm going bird hunting, and," I said, "I'll go along the breaks of the canyon, over to this Shaw place." Where Bloodwurst was, and I only had to go about a half or three quarters of a mile to get down to it from the top of the hill. And, I went down there, and what do you suppose I found? A critter just freshly butchered. Nobody around. Just freshly butchered. Well, there was a fellow name of Tom Norris run the butcher shop at Peck. <sup>Idaho</sup> And he wasn't any better calibre than the rest of 'em. Don't you see how they could work that? They could butcher that critter and divide the price or whatever agreement they'd made. And I got wise to that. So one day--



- SS: Was this on Bloodwurst's place?
- HR: This was on Bloodwurst's place where this critter was butchered.
- SS: You mean it wasn't even over on the other guy's place, it was on his place?
- HR: Oh, no, it was on his own place. I had this hunch to go sneaking up, don't you see, spying, in other words.
- SS: Was this after your three cattle was missing?
- HR: Well, I can't remember that for sure.
- SS: You started to say-- So one day--
- HR: Well, them cattle-- if you want that, that's what I'll tell you.- I scared him one time. I went down to the bench with a .30-30 that time, rifle. And I went down to ~~our bench~~ See, his land- he was pasturing outside land on this forty that was vacant on east side of our land, and our had a spring here. That was good land-- I'll tell you later-- that Dad wanted to sell, and I sold it to him for fifteen hundred dollars, cash. Made him dig up the cash. I worked the son of a bitch-- Well, anyway, first when I come down there with a gun that morning; he had a saddle horse and he was just about to - see we had a gate on the east side in case our cattle got out, we could open up and chase 'em back in. He was just getting off his horse to open that gate, and I was just a little too fast, and I come around and he spied me- got on his horse and went up the hill again, back home. That's the day that I might have done something drastic, if I'd a caught him a driving a cow of mine, but I went a little too fast, I shoulda stayed hid a little longer and I woulda got him in the act. But then he got pretty slick. After that's when I lost my three cattle.
- SS: He was right on the edge of going right into your land.
- HR: Oh, he could go in there because the gate - they wasn't locked. He could go in and out. We couldn't help that, especially when they



wanted to go through, it was a little closer, saved him going around down on the steep hillside, good bench to ride on, see. So, anyway, that's the time I told him again. And it happened to be a heifer calf like Sullivan had - a muley and had a star in the forehead. And I think it was a yearling steer or heifer, and the mother to this calf. I said, "Julian, some son of a bee, has got three of my cattle. And," I said, "I pretty near know who it is." I said, "If they don't come back pretty soon, I says, "before fall," I says, "something's gonna be a popping right." I looked him right square in the eye, let him know I WAS plumb mad. "Oh," he says, "I'll tell you. I think I seen them in the pasture up here by Jim Steele's." Sure, he'd seen 'em, he's the one'd put 'em there! I said, "You tell that son of a bee, that he'd better bring 'em back or hell's agoin' a be a popping for him!" And, I said, "I don't mean maybe." Well, he knew that *I WAS A MAN of my word* ~~that time~~. When fall come, the cow and the *yearling* come back, but the-- that calf, I had <sup>n't</sup> marked it, see. Pretty slick for him to put there. Next spring when my youngest brother went down to look at his cattle, there was my heifer; yearling. She was about a yearling then, with his brand on it. "There's old what-her-name's calf, but he had his brand on it." What could I do? I didn't start no more trouble, I just let him have it. But he never took no more! I didn't say nothin' either. I just give him one good ripping that time, see. And if it had a happened that he'd a taken any more-- I would. I guess maybe we sold the cattle about that time. I told Dad, I said, I didn't like to be fighting the neighbor there. He's a damn nuisance, but he'd been stealing cattle from Dad right along, but Dad couldn't catch him. Dad was too old a man. So, anyway, that's the way it went. That was why I wanted-- One of the main reasons -- You know what happened after I left and Dad

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got on there. "Course they claimed that it was the boy that set the barn afire, but I don't know, it could have been, and it could have been the neighbor boys, who done it.

SS: These kids really gave your boy a hard time?

HR: Oh, they was dirty as hell. That's the worst of it. You see, he wouldn't make them boys mind. They were devils. And I heard though-- they ain't none of them left over there now, ~~neither~~ one of 'em. The oldest one, I guess, was out in the woods working and he got killed, <sup>or died</sup> and, of course, Old Bloodwust was old <sup>st</sup> enough that he finally died, and I guess his wife, too. That place-- the house is gone. Some big farmer's got the whole works there now.

SS: Was your boy younger?

HR: Oh, yes, he wasn't able to take care of himself. I didn't want him to be fightin' anyway. I said, "You're too young." Now, here's the boy, here. him and his family. He's ~~un~~ married and got a daughter. That's their daughter there, she is ten years old there. We was down to visit 'em. I'll show you one when he was a young man. He's baldheaded. I told him, I said, "now, Myron"-- he was a boy that wanted schooling. And I was just so damn poor when we lived up in Park-- I was just so doggone poor that I couldn't afford nothing. I had three daughters, <sup>To feed and try to school,</sup> see. "Myron," I said, "you go out and work, you got a start, you're big, husky, and get out and work best you can and get educated, if you can, and I'll try and take care of the family. You don't have to help me at all, I'll do the best I can to take care of the family." Well, he did, he minded me. He went out and got him a job. He worked for the CC camp, you remember them days? And then he finally got a job down ~~at~~ at Pomeroy--no, that was the year he ran away, got made at me, see. Well, he had it a comin'. That's the fall that we's renting that Hoyt place and had to haul water, see, for the stock.



There was no water on the place, and it was a bigger job to drive the cattle to water than it was to take a tank and haul it. And so, I had four horses on this tank and had to open a gate to get into the pond. I said, "Myron, get off and open that gate, so I can drive in." And he got kinda bossy, "Dad," he says, "you get off." I said, "Myron," I says, "I told you to get off and open that gate." "No, you get off." I said, "Goddam, if you don't get off and open that gate, I'll give you a good tanning." ~~Some~~ of the boss, my cousin, Ervin Swenson-- there was a little devil and Harv De Groff <sup>bullshit</sup> had <sup>them to be bossy.</sup> the kids, see, had told<sup>n</sup> I don't know why. What steered Myron off, his little pal-- not Harv De Groff, but Warren De Groff, had got shot and killed and died and he just seemed to lose all confidence in himself, and was just a different boy, entirely. And I got made, I couldn't take that from him. My dad made me mind, made a man outta me, by God, I'm gonna make a man outta my boy. I loved him; sure. So, he got off and opened the gate. That was about January when he ran off. He didn't run off right away, but it was January. Cold weather and we was all doing the best we could, milking thirteen cows. Them there Guernseys that I didn't get any use of only the milk while we lived there.

SS: So he just ran away that night?

HR: Yeah. He went away. And he was gone, never hear from him, never wrote, nothin'. Well, the girls and wife, they cried their eyes out. I was just lucky I had a little old Whippet car. You know, they was economical on gas. Well, this neighbor, sister to the boy that he'd been so friendly with, her name was Rist-- Jean Rist, was her name. She had-- or told us that Myron was down in Southern Idaho with her sister at Parma, Idaho. Well, I got the bright idea that I should look him up. It was getting annoying to have the children and the woman worrying their heads off about him, which I didn't like either. I didn't like



that he could stay snuck like that.  
 the idea. We just didn't know what coulda happened because he didn't  
 have no money. <sup>Just some rag he had packed in.</sup> He had the guts to go. So, just like I did. By God,  
 I thought, OK, I got in this Whippet car and I happened to come out  
 here to Deary. Old Ed Swenson had his dad, <sup>in-law there,</sup> old Bricky there, you  
 know. Old Bricky wanted to go with me. "God," I says, "Bricky, I  
 ain't got no heat in the car," I says, "it's winter, it's gonna be  
 cold." Well, he was used to cold, he'd been up in Canada, he didn't  
 mind. Said he'd take his overcoat and he wanted to go and I couldn't  
 turn the poor bugger down. I said, "If you're gritty enough to take,  
 I sure am, too. I surely ought to be, I'm younger." And we took off,  
 one morning, and I got down to L Junction. It's funny how I-- It's  
 just like somebody said, "No, don't go there." See, the year before,  
 I forgot to tell you that-- the hear before he'd been staying down  
 at Parma-- Now wait a minute--Starbuck, Washington. That's below  
 Pomeroy a little ways. Now, that's where I shoul'da went. But I  
 wouldn't a found out anyway. Here's what I did do. I went down  
 there because of this influence that girl -- this boy's sister had  
 said he was down there at her sister's. Well, there we drove down  
 here to Riggins, that <sup>first</sup> night, that's as far as we got.

SS: That's a pretty rough trip.

HR: Yeah, it was then, you betcha. And snow! But I knew where I could  
 stop over night-- the next night. This first night we had to stop in  
 Riggins, we didn't get any farther. And I was cold, we'd had a cold  
 lunch for noon, and I said, "George, by gol, let's have a good supper  
 I got a few pennies." "Alright," he said. And I ordered beef steak,  
 and Jesus Christ, if I could have got a roast it wouldn't have been so  
 bad, but this beefsteak was so rawhide tough; but I downed it. And I  
 got sick that night. <sup>flu.</sup> Boy, maybe I was already catching it. Cold



sick. Next day, I got to running off at the <sup>mouth</sup> every few minutes I had to get out in the snow and do my number two, you know. George set in there, no heat in the car. He had to set there til I come back. And every little while I'd have to get out. "Well," I said, "we can't get to Parma today," I said, "but, I know a pla<sup>ce</sup> I think we can make." And that was my wife's stepsister's husband lived on a place down there on the Meadows-- beyond the Meadows a little ways. They had a farm out there in the country. We had to get off eighteen, twenty miles, off the main highway. I said, "We'll drive in there anyway," I said, "George, we ought to-- it's to far to go to Parma today, anyway." And, I said, "Let's go in there and stay. I know them folks, and I know we'll be welcome." Which we did. We got treated fine. Only, I was sicker'n a dog. And I told his wife, I said, "Don't give me much," I said, "all I want is a raw egg." That's the best I could get for stomach flu. And I happened to have a chunk of pitch with me about four foot long and eight inches in diameter. And this Moore, his name was, said, "You know," he said, "I'd like to have that to start fires with." "Well,," I says, "you know something ~~the reason~~ we brought that just in case we had a breakdown of the car and we'd get out here and we might set and freeze to death," I says, "I just brought that along to have a fire, keep us from freezing to death." Oh, he just begged, he begged and begged. I shoulda given him part of it, but I didn't, and he never charged anything even for stopping you know. But I just couldn't see it. I wasn't a well man anyway. I told him, I says, "Moore, I'm pretty sick, I don't know how much I can take of this cold." Well, the next day we got down there to Parma where this sister<sup>lyed</sup>. And the first thing I asked was, "Was the boy here?" "No." She didn't know a thing about him. Well, as luck'd



have it, I'd met this woman-- Mrs Rist's daughter, see-- so I said, "Golly," I said, "I'd like to stay all night." "Well, sure," she says, "you can stay all night." I says, "Have you got the room here?" "Well, that's fine," I says, "but have you got a drugstore in this town?" "Yup." I said, "Boy, good. I'm gonna go down and get me some"--  
Dad used to for WAS this  
them days use cokes when they got diarrhea, Chamberlain's Colic Remedy.  
I went down and got me two, three ounce bottle. "Now," I said, "lady, I'd like to have access to a little warm water," I said, "that's all I'm gonna do all night. I'd like to try to down this every so often." Get rid of this thing, this stomach flu is what it was. And I did.  
The next morning, by God, I felt pretty good. I didn't want to overload my stomach. I said, "Just give me a couple of soft boiled eggs." And, of course, it didn't cost me a cent, they wouldn't take no money. Well, then I got the idea not to backtrack. I said, "George, I'm gonna head for Walla Walla." Well, what happened, George had a friend over above Walla Walla, between Dayton and Pomeroy. Said, "We'll go there for dinner." "Okay, George," I said, "you know 'em?" "Yeah."  
"But first," I said, "I want to go to the police headquarters in Walla Walla and see if anything's on the scoreboard there about such a runaway boy." No, they hadn't. Then I says, "I want to leave word, I'll give you my address and if you find him, let me know. I'll pay the damage, whatever charges there is." Well, they agreed. So, we went and got our dinner at this friend of George's that day. Felt pretty good, had a good visit. "Well," I said, "let's go to Lewiston, now," I said, "we haven't found him yet." So we headed back to Lewiston. This way-- we was going right back by Starbuck. "If he's in this territory we could find out." It's about five o'clock in the evening, gettin' dark, you know. Short days in January. Got into a service



station, I said, "I've got to get some gas and let's get a lunch, I don't want to bother auntie and uncle this late in the night." Be probably nine, ten o'clock before we'd get down there. So, "Alright," George said. And we got a pretty good lunch, and I got to talking to this service man. I said, "You fella's didn't happen to see a boy—a runaway boy, did you? By golly, I've lost my boy. He took off and I haven't heard from him or nothin'" I said. He said, "Give me a description." So I did. "Why," he says, "I believe that boy is working out here for Ed Patterson." I said, "By golly, I wisht I could find that place." Well, he was out four, five miles out in the country. "God, I wouldn't know how to find him." "Well," he said, "you wait til I shut the service station down, I'll take you out there." "Fine." He took us out there. We got out there and nobody there! Then, it dawned on him that the boy and Patterson's nephew was going to school, 'cause Patterson was a rich farmer. He had a building in Pomeroy that the nephew was staying in, and my boy. And I come to the door, and this nephew had already gone to bed, it was ten o'clock at night. And this boy of mine was just getting ready to go to bed, and I knocked at the door and he said, "Huh!" Shocked him. "Huh, where'd you come from, Dad?" I said, "I just dropped out of the sky!" Well, he'd got shocked, you know. "You're going to take me home, are you?" "No, you bet I ain't gonna take you home," I said, "what I want to know, is what kind of a deal you made with the farmer out there?" "Well," he says, "I agreed to work for him for to get to go to school." "Oh, that's fine, you're doing alright, stay with it." I said, "For God's sake, give that man his money's worth. I couldn't afford it," I said, "and if you find a farmer that'll keep you and give you a job and work to go to school," I says, "that's just the thing to do." But, I said,



"For God's sake, write once in a while." I said, "The girls and your mother, they're just a cryin' their eyes out over you, going without money." I said, "I wasn't feeling a bit good either, that's the reason I took this trip." "Alright, Dad," he said. "Well," I said, "we might come down next summer and visit you and the people. We want to get acquainted. But," I said, "stay with him, whatever you do., and be sure he's satisfied. Don't play no trick on him. If he's that kind of a man that <sup>he</sup> could take you in to go to school, and give you work, you'd better stay put." So he did. And, God, they were nice people. I took the whole family down there the next summer, and they give us a big dinner. We got friendly, you know. By God, he even wanted to let me have the boy home. "No," I said, "Mr. Patterson, he's agreed to stay here and work for you," I says, "he stays." I said, "If he wants to come when you're satisfied with what schooling you've given him," I says, " we've moved to Moscow now." That was after we'd moved to Moscow.

SS: How old was he when he ran away? What grade was he in?

HR: Oh, he was-- wait a minute--I'll tell you. Now it was '32 we moved away and before that was about '31-- just a minute, now-- He was about fifteen, sixteen. He was born in '16, see.

SS: You said that he had the guts to go just like I did. Did you ever run away?

HR: Oh, yes. When I was eighteen years old, you betcha. <sup>I played a trick on my dad.</sup> You see, Dad was hard and I was young, spirited young then, and I figured I had worked hard there at home. I told Dad all time-- you see, we'd heard about to go to Canada and get a homestead, get a whole half a section. Because you could take a patch of land as a stone and timber claim, I guess they called it. And when you was eighteen you was eligible for



half a section alone, and I had two pals on the Ridge, Al Settle, a Swede boy, and this ~~Tat~~ <sup>Tat</sup> still, German boy, only he had made money, he'd already been out working and saved his money and he was gonna go and he talked us two kids in<sup>to</sup> the notion of making some money and coming up and joining him. The three of us could take pretty near-- what do you call it?--section together, see. There'd only be a quarter left, or half a section left. So, yeah, we all agreed that we had to make that money to get up there. It'd take money, by gosh, to get started. Well, I had a little pony, and I had plowed for Dad that spring, I plowed some timothy sod-- it was an open winter, something like this, plowed that ground and he wanted to sow his oats early, see, it was about March then. And had an open winter, nice. But you couldn't plow this timothy sod, too wet for old ground. But I'd got this ground plowed for him that he wanted to seed oats on early, and he goes up the Ridge about ten miles to get this seed oats. That's when I made my getaway. I told the boys, I says, "Now, listen don't tell him where I went. I'm gonna try and sneak away." And Steiner, too. And, I was, let's see, yeah, I was eighteen and Steiner was sixteen. But he was big enough to do quite a bit of field work then, you see. And Simon, my brother, now, let's see, he would be seven years younger; he was only eleven, but he was big enough so he could cook in the kitchen. This little Julius, he was nine, two years younger than that. Nine- eleven- and, of course, little Joe-- how old would he be then? I think he was over to Grandma's yet. Let's see, Julius was eleven- or nine- Joe would have been, well, I'll tell you when he was born. -- Now, let's see, she died in 1913- Yeah, 1906, sure. And I was eighteen.

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SS: Did you make your getaway?



RR: Oh, wait. I took this pony, see, and I knew I didn't dare cross the Clearwater River, he'd know right a way which way I went. I switched and went up Melrose Ridge. I kinda had a hunch I might get a job down <sup>towards</sup> Gifford, that was out towards the breaks of the canyon - Clearwater Canyon. I thought they'd surely be earlier there and they'd get <sup>croppin'</sup> and the farmers would hire me, you know. Huh, the first night, of course, overtook me right on top of the ridge, and I stopped at a farmhouse. And I said, "Now, I ain't got no money," I says, "but if you got some work to do, I'll work for my stopping." "Yeah, we got some wood." Them days they burnt -- all burnt wood, you know, "Chop some wood tomorrow morning, if you want to." Too dark that night. "Okay," I said, "I'll do that." And I chopped til they were satisfied. Chopped a big pile, split up cookwood, that's what they wanted. So, I got that <sup>settled then</sup>, so I went on down. That throwed me kinda late getting started. I went on down towards Gifford, and I found somebody kinda getting ready it looked like. Man and his wife they was out there in the barn working away. I guess they was getting grain ready to crop after <sup>a</sup> while and I said, "You people hiring any hands around here in the spring work?" "No, no, they hadn't got started yet, and they didn't know of anybody either. They didn't give me no satisfactory answer. And there was quite a bit of snow scattered along. Well, that's when I decided to switch back, turn back and get over to where my grandparents lived, see. Just lucky I did, too. I'll tell you <sup>later</sup>. So that night, night overtook me before I got back to even where I had been the night before. I stopped at these people and they had four grown boys, they had no room. "Well," they said, "if you want to sleep on the barn floor." "Well," I said, "that's better'n staying outdoors." I said, "I'll work for my stuff."



No, they didn't need no work. Well, they said, stay anyway. Them days, you know, they seen I was a young man, and I told 'em, I was trying to get a job. They kept me overnight, didn't charge me. I didn't have much sleeping quarters, but I rested. Next day I pulled out for Peck, <sup>AGAIN</sup> across the ferryboat. As soon as I was on the ferryboat,- I guess Dad had been down there that day inquiring- the ferry man asked me, said, "Did you see your dad uptown?-- or did you see your dad yesterday?" "Yeah," I said, "I seen him uptown." I lied, you see. Well, I didn't have no money to pay four bits to cross the ferryboat with a cayuse, but Dad had good credit. I said, "Charge this to the Old Man." I went up on the Ridge-- I mean Potlatch Ridge, 'cause I had school friends, that I'd went to school with, the Roch boys, there was three boys and a girl, Dola, Daryl, Ralph and Clayton. And they had a boy that wasn't all there; twenty years old. <sup>poor</sup> Boy couldn't talk. But, anyway, I got there and they treated me like one of the family, you know. I was welcome as could be. The next morning-- there was still snow on Big Potlatch, you know, quite a bit of it. The next morning it started snowing, from the east. I thought, "Oh, oh." This little pony I had couldn't go faster than I could walk. And I didn't have nothing but leather shoes on my feet anyway. No overcoat, just a coat. They tried their very best to get me to stay. "No," I said, "I gotta get there today," I said, "if I don't, I won't make it with this short legged pony, I got." There was twenty-two miles that I had to still go in that storm, see, and cold. It was getting around twenty below zero. I walked pretty near all the way. I got over there and my feet froze to my shoes. And Uncle Ed'd be there, of course, I knew he was there, grandparents. I knew I'd be welcome when I got there you know, Grandma's just as good



a mother, you know, and so was Granddad. But they had a big dog named Woods, come and met me at the gate, but it was luck, it was them slide gates, pole gates, see, and I was just hoping it'd open itself. I didn't dare get off, I was scared to death of that damn big dog. He was a ~~big~~ bulldog, you know. He growled at me and I wasn't about to get down, he mighta took a leg off, and I was so cold I couldn't hardly a moved anyway. I got to the house and I hollered and old ED come out and the dog was right between me and Ed, and he called to him, said, "You go on to the woodshed, Woods." He called him Woods. I said, "Ed, by golly, my feet are froze to my shoes." "Well," he says, "go on in, I'll put your cayuse in the barn. And we'll get some,"-- them days they used snow water in a dishpan or something-- washpan, I mean to thaw 'em out. Finally, they come out of it. Saved getting chilblains, you know, that thaws 'em out gradual. Well, they wanted to know what was up. I told 'em, says, "I's looking for a job."  
(Chuckles) And, it snowed, that was a big snow winter. ~~We got~~ <sup>it in</sup> the latter part of March and April, ~~It~~ snowed til it was-- hadn't been much snow before that, but that time it snowed so the fence posts was covered. About five or six feet of snow. And it didn't go off til way out in May. Well, then I had another uncle living out at Deary, Isaac. This Carlson's dad. Carl was a little bitsy-- 1906- he was six years old, see, he was born in 1900.

SS: You stayed with them in Park all the time?

HR: I stayed with Grandpa and Grandma for, I don't know, I guess it was two or three weeks, and I got restless. I said, "God, I'd like to get out and see if I couldn't get some work, somewheres." The weather'd kinda settled then, and it had snowed lots alright, but, I guess it had started thawing, too, before I ever took out. I think it was



April, already, then, I think. Yeah, it must have been, because the snow had gone off quite a bit. Oh, there was still snow at Deary. But I got out there to my uncle's, you know, and they happened to know about a French-Canadian, <sup>that's</sup> ~~he~~ <sup>Clemmens, or Clemenhagen, or something like</sup> ~~was~~. They thought that he might accidentally need, or I could work for them. I said, "By golly," I said, "let's go see him." "I don't care what kind of work it is." Yeh, <sup>slicing</sup> by golly, he had a job, ~~slicing~~ little pines. Dollar and a half a day and board. And I took it on. Ten hours a day; fifteen cents an hour! I thought that I was lucky. But he was a big, husky and he had a double-bitted axe, God, he could just slice those little pines agoin' and a comin'. I couldn't do it, I wasn't used to an axe then. Because I lived on a farm, all I knew was a hatchet. <sup>But I practised</sup> ~~A~~ But I told him, "I can't do it as fast as you can." "Well, do the best you can." And I tied in to it, and chopped as fast as I could. Young and tough then. Eighteen and ate like a little pig. He had a Sears-Roebuck woman, they called it. You know what I mean? He'd ordered, through mail, by golly. And I thought they got along pretty good when I was there, I didn't see any trouble. So, he decided he wanted to buy this pony from me for fifteen dollars, so I sold it. I wanted to get all the money I could get together, I could. I stayed there a while til my uncle, he found another job that was-- that he thought would be a better place for me, name of Swanson. Lived right the edge of town, <sup>of Deary</sup> and he was a nice man, nicer man man than the French-Canadian. And he says--

SS: Where was this French-Canadian's place, by the way?

HR: Huh?

SS: Where was this French-Canadian's place?

HR: Out towards Avon.



SS: Yeah. Keep going.

HR: And so, he says-- I quit him, you know, and I come over to Swanson's.

SS: Your uncle got you to quit?

HR: Yeah. He got me to quit, yeah.

SS: So he got you to quit and you went over to---

HR: Yeah. I got over to Swanson. "Yeah," he said, "I'd like to hire you." He said, "Tell you what I got to do", he says, "I got some stumps to burn and morning and evening I'd like to have you help me milk my cows. And I'll give you so much a month." His wife tried to jew me down--she says, "I'll give you a twenty dollar gold piece," just like that was more money than twenty-five." He offered me twenty-five. "No," I says-- I knew that much, if I didn't have much schooling yet. "By golly," I says, "I want the twenty-five." "Yeah," Swanson he's a bighearted old man, "we're gonna give him twenty-five." I went out to work. He showed me how to do it and I kept burning stumps and helping him with this, milking the cows. And everything went fine and dandy. Til finally, I had a little money coming from that Swede guy on the Ridge, Oscar Nelson, that I'd helped in haying. And the son of a gun never paid me, he'd owed me, I guess, for two, three years. One of these guys, he'd let his debts run quite a while, you know. I don't remember how much it was, but I'd pitched in the field for him for three wagons, and I figured I ought to have that money. Well, you know, them days, them old-timers they got it in their head they got to see the old man first or they might have to pay that bill twice. Now they say, they can't do that. They can't collect the young man's wages. But over there they did, and I don't know to this day if that man ever paid. But here's the way it went. He went and asked Dad, see, permission to pay me the money. Well, Dad found



out where I was at. So he writes over there and he said, "You know, Helmer, I could send the sheriff after you." "Yes, Dad," I wrote back. "But," I says, "I could run away again." Oh, the next time I got a letter from him, it was different altogether. I told him, "Dad," I says, "I want to <sup>try to</sup> make some money to get out there and go to Canada. Get a homestead and that half section of land." God, he seen I had something in mind, I guess so he got pretty civil. So he'd searched around and he found out there was a railroad shortline going to be built up there from Craigmont to Nez Perce. And I guess he had a Nez Perce Herald, thatway he found out. They was advertising for farmers to come and-- them days, they run four horse scrapers when they done any grading. There was no machinery. So, they was paying six dollars a day for that, but you had to board yourself, and they just really jewed you down, you know, them bastards. Well, I and this here Swede boy that was going to Canada, he got permission from his Dad to take his four horses and a load of hay and I did from Dad. Yeah, when Dad told me that, I told Swanson, I said, "My, oh, my," I said-- he had already got me to help him to saw saw logs over down side of Deary, that's when the Deary townsite was being built. Old Swanson, he jumped my wages. He said, "I'll jump your wages ten dollars a month to stay here. ~~I'll stay here~~ all summer. You'll be money ahead." And I would have. But I didn't see it. That six dollars looked awful big. And I thought, "Gee, I want to stay on the good side of Dad, he's offered it to me. I better go and pay attention." So, I didn't take the Swanson deal at all. He hated it and I hated it, and in a way I hated to turn him down, but I just got the idea that I liked horse work better'n I did crosscut saw work, you know. That was my talented work in those days.



SS: By the way, did you actually work on that townsite? Did you cut logs for them on that townsite?

HR: Oh, yes. Til Dad found out and talked me in the notion of coming there, you see. I don't remember how long I was there, probably a week or two, something like that.

SS: Okay, so you went over there.

HR: Yeah, I went back over to home and got to working on this railroad between Craigmont and Nez Perce. And, after we'd worked a week, they laid us off and we had to do rockwork by hand and still feed our horses. ~~We~~ couldn't see it, I and the neighbor boy and we quit. We was about of hay, anyway, and we had to come back and get a load of hay, and that was no good. We just quit him. I says, "Al, this harvest's coming on pretty quick now, I think I can get a job a harvesting." Well, that's when I got a job a harvesting, and so I made a little money there.

SS: So it didn't work out any better there?

HR: No, it didn't pan out at all. I had to quit and I went to harvesting. I tell you, I worked for Jeff Stample, the next one, in harvesting. I got two and a half a day there and board for twelve hours work. And he had a header, and I drove header<sup>box</sup>. And so, I stayed there all summer. Well, Dad he was pretty good. That learnt him a good lesson, see. Now, he got smart to help Stainer. Stainer stayed home, so he told him, and he told me-- he wanted this cash that I had, because I didn't have enough to go to Canada on, and Dad was hard run, and he said, "Now, I'll sell you boys a cow a piece, and you get the offspring and you'll just be increasing that way. Well, we agreed, and stayed there and worked and kept getting cattle ahead, see.

SS: You mean you gave up the idea--?



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HR: Yeah, I give up because I couldn't make money enough to go up there to Canada and Dad fixed it that way. I guess he kinda wanted to settle us down. I guess he kinda figured that he didn't want to let me go clear up there and try to struggle in that cold country, I suppose that's what he figured. So, we stayed with that, it was 1906-1906, see was it 1907, Dad took a notion, he was studying in Moscow and he could get to go to school, finish up his high school at the University, which he did. He passed his high school at Moscow University. <sup>He's a good-looking boy, there.</sup> Now here's Dad, 1908, it was-- first I want to tell you, about, it was 1907, I guess, that Dad was building a house-- I'll show you after while-- this fellow that he bought oats from up on the Ridge-- Fredrickson, was a good carpenter, and Dad them days, didn't have to pay-- oh, two, three dollars a day was a big wage, and he was hard run, he only had a small farm, forty acres <sup>up</sup> there on the Ridge. So he was going to have to get some work, but he was a good carpenter. Dad knew it, and Dad got him to build this house and also the barn. 1908, they had got the barn built--and that's what I wanted to tell you-- here he is, he took off to go to this school. (Wait, and I'll find it pretty soon. Here he is) That's my Dad.

SS: What school is that?

HR: Well, that's ~~Wittmore~~ School. That's chiropractor. He got the idea he wanted to take that up. And he did, he passed on it.

SS: Where did he go to school?

HR: Missouri. Clear back to Missouri. And he had rented the place to Steiner, see. Steiner then, it was 1908-- I was-- wait a minute, 1908-- I was twenty, wasn't I? Yup. Twelve years on eight, I was twenty. Steiner was eighteen. And I didn't want to rent it, see. I don't know why Dad wanted to rent it to him, but he did.

SS: And he went back to Missouri?



HR: Back to Missouri and he left us boys there, and I wanted to keep working out, whenever I had time, see. I helped St. iner on the farm. Well, he had a boy there name of Lee Galloway to help him plow. Them days,-- let's see, 1918-- or 1908, we had a gangplow,-- Oh, I know-- he was running a gangplow and a walking plow. That's what he was doing. That's what he was doing, 'cause I knew we had a gangplow and used lots of horses.

SS: What was your father's interest in chiropractor<sup>or?</sup> What was the idea of that?

HR: Because he thought that he could make-- being as us boys were big enough to do the farming, dammit, he'd go out and do a little doctoring. Which he did. He went over to Kendrick one year and practiced. And then, when he rented out to me after I was married, you know, 1917. Then he went to Kirkland, Washington. Bought a house and lot there. And the grandparents stayed with us that summer until fall, 'cause Uncle Ed-- see, was he sold out? Yeah, Uncle Ed had already sold out. So that was the trick that Ed played on Dad. He first got Dad to promise to take care of the old parents for twelve hundred dollars, and yet Dad had helped him get that place over there. He'd bought this property over here to Park for twenty-two hundred dollars, Dad did, to get him a down payment on that place. And then, Ed was lucky, that last year that he farmed he got two thousand dollars worth of beans off the place, and he got eight thousand from the place, and it only cost him five thousand to begin with. He got reckless with that money and he went down to Southern Idaho, where my aunt, his sister lived, <sup>And Oliver StAMPER</sup> and started in with some cattle, but ~~they~~ couldn't make it. It was a dry country, so he didn't stay there long. He just let it go. And then he got the bright idea to



go to ...

SS: Now, is that the one that killed his wife?

HR: That's the one. Yeah. He killed his wife. He finally shot her, with a rifle and then he took his own life with a knife; butcher knife.

SS: What did you hear? Did you hear about it after that?

HR: Nooo. Relatives told me. Uncle ~~and them~~ <sup>and them</sup>, They found out. News scatters, you know. Yeah, that goes like wildfire, something like that, you know. He was jealous of her. She would go out with the neighbor lady in her buggy. And, ah, he was nuts! I knew there was something wrong with the old bastard when I was there. He was sort of a bully sort of a guy. French-Canadian, you know, they're pretty hotheaded.

And so, I was glad to get out of there. Geez <sup>I got over to the SWANSON'S,</sup>  
~~they were nice people.~~

SS: Was he mean when you worked with him?

HR: No. he didn't order me around, he didn't do that. And that was when they was first married, <sup>to each other,</sup> they were pretty sweet, then, don't you see.

But this was, I don't know, a year or two years after when he shot her, that they got on the outs with each other for some reason. He got jealous of her going with the neighbors-- women, talking, I don't know, maybe some of 'em were pretty mouthy, or something. And he'd overheard something that made him mad, don't you see.

SS: Another thing I was going to ask you was-- Now did your father, did he do much practicing of chiropractyng?

HR: Yeah, he did. You see, he done a little in Idaho, in Kendrick, but when he got out to Kirland, Washington, he had to get some licenses out there. But he practiced out there, too. You betcha. He had a lot of time. Well, like I said, I farmed his place for seven years.

SS: Was he practicing all that time?

HR: Yeah. He was practicing what he could. And Granddad, he had him



there then, before Grandma died, that was before 1922. Granddad was cutting wood for him. They had wood around there, you see. And I guess he had a fireplace or something that he was feeding. Or, the neighbors, he might have been cutting wood-- I don't remember that.

SS: So he believed in that chiropractor pretty strong?

HR: Yeah, he's helped out- Now, I'll tell you, one time he did help me out. Let's see, but that was before I got married. I was helping him haul alfalfa hay in and this barn he had had hay chutes to shove the hay down, you know, down to feed walkway. <sup>Feedway.</sup> And I was up in the mow, Dad was down there unloading with slings-- we had two or three slings to a load of hay. And I was up there placing hay around, and tell him when to <sup>r</sup>tip it. Well, I stepped back, like that, you know in a hurry, and there was a little loose hay on this chute and lit right on my tailbone. Wheee! Put me <sup>near out</sup> ~~damn~~ <sup>L</sup>and all my weight right on my tailbone, board walk. Dad hollered at me, "What's the matter, there," he says, "what's going on?" I says, "Oh, Dad, I fell down the hay chute and I can't get out." By God, he come in there and he treated me for about a half an hour on my back and down my tailbone. By God, he took me out of it. And I learnt from then on, there was quite a bit to it. He treated the nerve, see.

SS: What he did? He massage you, then?

HR: Massaged me good. So if it hadn't been for him-- I never did get over it right away, but it started me, it took me, out of that shock, see. Him knowing something about nerve treatments, it took me out <sup>of</sup> that shock, and I went right back to work. Only half an hour that he had to treat me that I went back up there placing hay. Finished hauling his hay in. Another thing,-- well, maybe we better leave that til next time-- You see when he went East to get this schooling-



then I painted the barn, 'cause he had the carpenters leave their scaffolds up.

(Another subject)

HR: But the Torgeson girls, and <sup>her</sup> name was Emma Gurlingrud<sup>e.</sup> And she was just a good full-blooded Norwegian-- she could talk Norwegian good, but I couldn't, but I could understand it, 'cause I always talked with <sup>Grandma</sup> in Norwegian. So I could talk it plenty good, so we could understand one another. And she wanted me, damn bad, she'd a liked to got me. She tried her damndest. I just didn't cooperate she didn't suit me, see. I had a lot of chances, when I was young, you know. But anyway we's a dancin' away-- 'cause this was good music. We'd dance from one room into the other. That's how we danced. Small rooms, probably as big as this, and we just danced-- waltz around in this room into the other. The whole crowd did the same thing. It was just a lot of fun. And Fritz Olson, and Billy Osburn, they was playing violin and I think, I forget now whether it was a accordion or a harp of some kind that Fritz was playing for <sup>second</sup> music. Ohhhh, You just couldn't set still, you had to waltz, it just pulled you around, you know. When them old-timers played them waltzes, I tell you, that really moved your legs, if you had any waltzing in you. And we'd a learnt, Steiner and I had learnt, dancing on the Ridge when we was kids. You see, my aunt used to cook for Dad after Mother died. We's just kids but all the neighbor women over there would love to dance with us kids, just because they felt sorry for us that we were, I say orphans, no mother. So they never turned us down. We'd go ask 'em. Well, one lady 'specially, Mrs. Malcolm, her husband didn't even dance on the floor, for some reason, and she was a good dancer, I always got her to dance.

SS: Were these dances at homes on Central Ridge, too?



HR: What?

SS: On Central Ridge would they have dances in people's homes?

HR: Yeah, that's where it was.

SS: Just like around Deary, then?

HR: Just like around Deary. I said that's where we learnt. Yeah. We'd go from one neighborhood to the other, and once in a while we'd go clear up, what they call *Moore*, that was a little country town, you know between Nez Perce and Craigmont, kinda a little bit north. And this *Tatill*, this Dutch kid, you know, says, "Come on up, Helmer, sometime and we'll go up there, they're gonna have a masquarade." See they had masquarade dances, so you couldn't tell who they were." Oh, God, we had a hell of a good time that night. And there was all kinds of young people. He had a sister, Laura; I'd dance with her and all the rest of 'em. They was all mixed, God, there was no high-hattin' goin' on, everybody got busy and enjoyed themselves. See what I mean? Just like we did at Deary, too. When we lived in Park, we used to go over to Cedar Creek once in a while. And the Cedar Creek folks'd come to Park; dance in our schoolhouse there. That's what we did there, and over at-- over on Cedar Creek there was Smiths-- did you ever hear of the Smiths over on Cedar Creek?

SS: I think I've heard of them.

HR: There used to be Ben Smith, and George Smith- the two boys- and Eva Smith, she's the one that became the owner of the homeplace. They lived just across from the Longfellow place, if you remember where the Longfellow place is.

SS: Yeah, I've heard of that place.

HR: Well, we danced in Smith's house. They had a big house. And she was a good dancer, she was a big woman, but, by God, she was easy on



her feet. Oh, God, I could dance waltzes with her just like nothin'!! Just fine and dandy. She finally moved down to either Clarkston or Lewiston; became a nurse, I guess, after she sold out.

SS: This masquarade dance? Everybody got dressed up.

HR: That wasn't a masquarade over there.

SS: No, I'm thinking about--

HR: But, the masquarade, oh, that was. Oh, you bet, that was lots of fun. We just tore around together, you know. And, of course, about lunchtime, then they'd pull the masks off and you wouldn't know who the hell you had for a pardner, see! (Chuckles) Sometimes you'd be buying baskets, too, you know; basket socials.

SS: You'd bid on it?

HR: Yeah, you bid on it, you wouldn't know who your pardner was, 'til you got the mask off. Sometimes you'd get what you wanted, sometimes you wouldn't.

SS: Then you ate your lunch with the person that made it.

HR: Oh, yeah. You bought a basket from somebody, you had to eat your lunch with that pardner, regardless. An old lady, that didn't matter, you'd eat <sup>your</sup> dinner with her anyway. But there wasn't any old ladies out to the dances. Mostly all young youngs. Well, there was married ladies, but, that was alright.

SS: How long did these dances go? Did they go late into the night?

HR: Ohhh, yeah, sometimes, by God, we wouldn't get home til daylight. You take the Fourth of July, especially, we'd go to Peck, Idaho and then we didn't come home til daylight, you know. Dance til daylight. But you was a trying to sleep in the daytime and you'd hear that old violin agoing, and you couldn't go to sleep!

SS: You were trying to sleep after the dance?



HR: Yeah, after the dance at home in daylight. You just couldn't hardly do it. And, old Dad, you know, oh, oh, when we were there on the Ridge, I and Steiner, just learning, next morning, you know, after we'd been dancing, we'd be in the bed, maybe a couple of hours, and just nice and sound asleep, and Dad'd come up and holler, "Come on, boys, get your chores done." Whuuuu!! The way we snuck out, see, Auntie told us, Dad didn't want us to go to the dances--we'll put a ladder up, <sup>she was young,</sup> she was two years older than I was-- put a ladder up by the upstairs window, we got out on that. (Chuckles)

SS: That was some of the first dancing you did?

Hr: Yeah. That was when we was first learning. Oh, I guess we were little devils, but, thank God, I went through it all. And I'm glad of it. I get a kick <sup>out of</sup> thinking about what a hell of a good time I have had in my younger days.

SS: Now, these lunches, by the way, now they had real good feeds?

HR: Oh, we had cakes and donuts and sometimes they'd have some cooked, maybe beans or something like, you know. What do you call 'em, baked beans. Oh, you bet, they really fed. The country people, you know, they could bring their own. And those old farm ladies they could cook good, I tell you, they knew what a farm boy eat. They'd get 'em all plenty, too.

SS: The whole family would go?

HR: No, no. Well, now Malcolm, his children were too small, so it'd just be him and his wife. And them boys over there, that man started out-- There was a nice man-- nice couple. He come to that Ridge, he didn't homestead, he had to buy the land. He bought eighty acres from Old Man Mc Kay, and then he bought Cade's Mc Kay's eighty. There was two boys and the old man. Three eighties. Then when he got able



he bought the other man's eighty-- that was Dennis Mc Kay. Well, Rod Pfeiffer had bought one of them eighties, see, well, later on then-- Old Malcolm was a prosperous guy, he raised his own horses; had a stallion of his own. And he was pretty prosperous; he was a good farmer, and his wife a hard worker and they got up early. They had a long ways to haul to market, see. They were five miles up the Ridge and then five miles to Peck from there. He had ten mile haul on the old grade. But, anyway, old Malcolm, he had this money ready for the Pfeiffer place and he bought that. That made <sup>it</sup> two hundred and forty acres. And he had my brothers, Julius and Simon helping him plow. He had two six horse teams- gangplows- black Percherons- and he hired them boys, them days, dollar a day was big money- dollar a day and board. They plowed and took care of the horses the best they could. And they became good friends of Malcolm's and he'd hire 'em every spring, see to help plow, because he could depend on Simon, especially. The only trouble with Simon was he was a sleepyhead. He was hard to wake up in the morning. But Julius wasn't. Julius'd come right out. And so, that's the way it went and later years, after we moved away, they kept-- well, his boys growed up, see, he had two boys and a daughter. And she married a farmer over on Angel Ridge, that had a farm. So she was gone, but the two boys stayed and the old folks they just kept building up. The boys helped, helped, helped. And they got into this modern machinery and they coulda start grabbing more land, you see. If you got one section of land, or half a section to farm with and you buy another half a section and that makes two sections, you could pay it lots quicker, and he was smart enough to figure that out. That's the way he kept going. Today, them boys are farmin'-- the last I heard they was farming



sixteen hundred acres. And, of course, they got a lot of grandchildren. They're all grewed up and now it's the grandchildren taking over. You see, the oldest boy's-- he's around, now let's see-- the youngest boy's around sixty-five. He's younger than I am, quite a bit, about twenty some years, but the older boy he's a little olderhe's about, I guess, about seventy.

SS: It looks to me like that clock--

Hr: Yeah, it's one o'clock.

SS: Looks like it's stopped.

HR: Yeah, it's quarter after one. Yeah, I haven't wound it. I got to wind it.

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed by Frances Rawlins, May 5, 1976