

GEORGE SCHMALTZ

First Interview

Interviewed by:

Sam Schragar

Oral History Project

Latah County Museum Society

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# I. Index

## GEORGE SCHMALTZ

Elk River; b. 1893

millwright, lumberjack

2 hours

minute page

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George Schmaltz

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with Sam Schrage

May 17, 1976

## II. Transcript

SAM: You say most of your friends left and came to the United States. Why did they leave? Why didn't they stay in Sweden?

G S: No work. That's before Sweden industrialized. There's no Swedes immigrating anymore. They're even importing labor at times. <sup>SINCE</sup> industrialized. You see, I'll tell you, Germany and Holland and France and England and Spain and Italy and them, they all had colonies, you know. And they kept the trade tight. You stay out of my colony, see. They couldn't sell hardly to any of those, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, all a whole lot of little countries like that that didn't have any colonies. They were just left without. But now, since those colonies have broke away from the mother country, they even had China, you know, each one had their conclave, ain't that what they called it, huh?

SAM: Something like that.

G S: Yeah, they had it all divided. And they kept other nations out. So a lot of them little countries, they <sup>were</sup> just nothing to do.

SAM: One fellow whose parents came from Sweden told me that his parents came to get away from militarism.

G S: Oh yes. You see, there was compulsory military training. But that, I'll tell you, lot of them stayed and took that. But that's what <sup>really</sup> gives you a kick in the ass to go. But it isn't really the reason that they go. The reason they go is there's no work. *There was no work.*

SAM: Was it kind of <sup>feudal?</sup> I mean, he indicated to me that a few rich people owned most of the land, and most of the people didn't have anything.

G S: I guess down in the very southern part there's quite a few landowners.

SAM: I mean then, when you came over.

G S: No not up north where I were. We had the most independent farmers you ever saw. And they all own <sup>ed</sup> their land. But in southern Sweden I guess they still have some big estates. And then they have people that work it for them. But not up north.



SAM: Wan't there a big strike about 1910 in Sweden?

G S: Yeah.

SAM: I read about that. Do you remember that?

G S: Oh, yeah. I was in high school then. Hell I <sup>!!</sup> tell you, there wasn't a goddamned soul worked. Nobody worked. They really had a strike. They tied up the whole country. Oh, yes, I remember that.

SAM: How do you figure the strike was so effective, that it shut everything down? You could never imagine doing something like that in the United States, but in Sweden they shut everything down.

G S: Oh, yeah. They shut everything down. Well, you couldn't make them work. No, they shut it down tight, I tell you. They really shut her down. Labor unions were just getting strong then. They were just starting. And of course, all <sup>in</sup> the Baltic, along the coast down them islands and stuff, <sup>there</sup>'s old log cabins all over where fishermen used to live. And then, fishing petered out and those log cabins just stand there empty. I tell you, I guess every one of them were full that summer. There's people that were on strike you know, and <sup>had</sup> the sailboats, you know, go out there and fish and lay around. I guess they had a good time. Yeah, I can remember that. I was in high school. Was that 1910?

SAM: I think it was.

G S: I think you're just about right. Yeah. I think it was 1910.

SAM: You decided to come to Elk River though, because you knew somebody that was already here?

G S: Yeah.

SAM: Now who was that?

G S: Eric Solderberg was his name. He 's retired and lives in Reedsport, down in Oregon.

SAM: You had known him well from your hometown?

G S: Yeah, we went to grade school together.

SAM: What did he say to convince you to come all this way?

G S: Well, I read a lot of stories about <sup>all</sup> the good hunting and fishing, you know. I always had itchy feet. And then there was another kid. He's retired and lives in Seattle. He ended up as planing mill foreman for the Elliot Bay Lumber Company. Rubuen. His name is Rubuen Runyon. We came over together. We traveled together, Rubuen and I.

SAM: Was it easy to get the papers to come to America at that time?

G S: Yeah. If you hadn't signed up for the army. If you do it before you register for compulsory military training, you can go. You're free. <sup>But</sup> Once you register, then they got you.

SAM: That's why it's a kick to come. To do it before you have to sign up.

G S: That's right. That's why a lot of them <sup>they</sup> hate to spend all that time with the army. It's alright. It ain't bad. But I hate to lose that time, you know.

SAM: How much time was it?

G S: Of course, it's not all in one hitch. But it's close to two years altogether. (pause in tape)

G S: Have you got it on (Referring to tape). I always laugh about that, has the name George LaValley come into your <sup>very much?</sup> mind. You've heard of him. There was two George LaValley's. But George LaValley, my chum, he was the father of George LaValley that is depot agent in Bovill. And George was telling me one time about when George and a couple three other guys got drunk. And one of them got pinched and thrown in jail. Well the other fellow <sup>S</sup> felt sorry for him. So they went and smashed one of the windows in the back of the jail and they flattened the stovepipe and stuck it in there, then they poured whiskey up the upper end of the stovepipe and the guy guzzled it at the other end. They called it "stovepipe cocktail" <sup>S</sup>. And when the sheriff came to let him out the next morning, he was drunker than when he put him in the night before. (Laughs). I always used to get a kick out of that story. But you can cut tape there.

SAM: Oh, sure.

G S: You know one time, I'll tell you a good one. You know where that maintenance <sup>San</sup> pile is along the highway, about three miles out of Elk River?

SAM: Towards Bovill?

G S: Yeah. Well they used to be a logging spur go up and up along those meadows, those last meadows before you go over the hump into Elk River? They had <sup>a</sup> logging spur there. And there were two sporting houses <sup>up</sup> at the end of those meadows. The logging spur went right by these houses. So there was Coyote Smith and Sonny Nelson. They got drunk one night and <sup>here</sup> was the Milwaukee engines tied up for the night by the depot. So they get on the engines and went down round the <sup>pond</sup> and down to that place <sup>where they got to</sup> where that maintenance pile is now and then they <sup>switched in</sup> on the track, and went over to the sporting house. And every thing went alright and they went back, they got out on the main line and threw the switch and <sup>went</sup> back into town and when they <sup>came</sup> in front of the depot they went through an open switch and put it on the ground. The next morning, you couldn't find Coyote Smith or Sonny Nelson in town. Coyote Smith had a friend, <sup>Scott</sup> homesteader, <sup>he</sup> had a homestead right above Bob Haines. You know where the lower basin is on Elk Creek?

SAM: More or less, yeah.

G S: Well, Bob Haines was down by the lower basin and Scott was right up above, so that's where the guys took off. For Scott's homestead. And Bloom, the general manager, the old Swede general manager, <sup>he was</sup> looking for them. Then Elmer Torgenson, he was running the pool hall <sup>down</sup> on Front street down by the depot and the homesteaders'd send word into Elmer what Coyote Smith and Sonny Nelson needed. And he'd get it, butter and coffee and eggs and sugar, <sup>he</sup> whatever <sup>he</sup> needed. And he'd fill this pack sack and set it back of the pool hall, in the evening. And the next morning it would be gone. And that's how they put in their winter. Well, I guess in the spring, Bloom had kind of got over most of it and they went back and went to work. <sup>Finally</sup> They worked for years <sup>for the Potlatch after</sup> that. That's how they went to the

sporting house on the Milwaukee engine. (Laughs)

SAM: That's a real good story.

G S: I had to laugh one time, Elmer Torgerson, he had a shed in the back, instead of having woodshed with walls, he just had four big logs post. And then a roof built. And it was all open. And he had a <sup>S/a</sup>returant in the back of the pool hall, Elmer Torgerson did. And you know them old-fashioned fly-traps that they used to have?

SAM: How did this one work?

G S: Well, the flies got in there somplace and they tried to get out but it was <sup>screened.</sup> And every morning, no, every evening, the cook used to take them out and pour hot water over them to kill the flies. And then he'd shake out the dead flies, put back sugar water and stuff in them and set them inside and that's the only way they had to <sup>catch</sup> flies in those days, you know. Well, Charley Johnson and George LaValley were sitting on the chopping block killing a quart. And the cook had hung up one of these fly traps on a nail on one of these <sup>posts</sup>, but he hadn't killed the flies yet. And they set there, and they got drunker and they got drunker and finally Charley Johnson looked at those flies buzzing up there and he grabbed an axe and he <sup>said</sup>, "Bee tree! Bee tree!" And he chopped down the poles and the goddamned shed fell down! (Laughs). Oh, Elmer was mad for a while, but he got over it. He had another <sup>post</sup> put in. "Bee tree! Bee tree!" (Laughs). Can you beat that? (Laughs). Have you ever heard anything about <sup>that fellow's name</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~? <sup>who</sup> used to run the pool hall down by the depot? Adams.

SAM: Yeah, I've heard his name.

G S: What was his first name?

SAM: I've heard his name.

G S: Well anyway, what the hell was his first name?

SAM: It doesn't matter. I can check his name.

G S: One time, that was in the days of traveling salesmen, you know. Harry Adams.

Harry was his name. And oh, Harry was an awful liar. Well, here was this traveling salesman, and hotter than the dickens in the <sup>middle of the</sup> summer, and here he came with a big suitcase. And he just missed the train. And he came in the pool-hall and he was a-cussin'. Well Harry said, "Where do you want to go?" Well, he wanted to get to Lewiston. Well, Harry said, "You can catch the steamboat. to Lewiston." <sup>So</sup> he asked him where the steamboat left for Lewiston. Well he said, "Just go down there towards the coal dock, <sup>down the pond</sup> that's where the steamboat goes to Lewiston." Joe Delaney, another friend of mine was <sup>pond</sup> boss and here comes this guy <sup>dragging</sup> a big suitcase and sweating like hell, looking for the steamboat for Lewiston. (Laughs). So Joe Delaney said, he just died here about a year ago in <sup>Carson</sup>, he said, "Who told you there was a steamboat <sup>for</sup> Lewiston?" "Well that man up in the pool-hall ." Oh, oh. "No wonder", he says. So here this guy came back in the pool-hall and started to cuss Harry. And <sup>Harry</sup> didn't know what he was talking about. "Why man, I never told you that. You must be crazy with the heat." <sup>That's as far as he got.</sup> There used to be a family across the street where Harry ate lunch. Harry was bald-headed as hell, you know. <sup>His head was just</sup> like a billiard ball. I guess old man <sup>Bell</sup> had all kinds of reasons not to trust his wife too far. Well Harry never hung around there at all, you know. Old man <sup>Bell</sup> was an old fool, anyway. And Harry was sitting up at the counter eating his lunch and old man <sup>Bell</sup> was putting some wood in the stove in the middle of the pool-hall, the resturant, and he went over and felt of Harry's bald head. "You know," he said, "that feels just like my wife's ass." And Harry <sup>Yes sir, it does!</sup> "By god, it does! It feels just exactly like it, yessir!" And old man <sup>Bell</sup> got so mad he wanted to fight. (Laughs)

SAM: It sounds like he was asking for it.  
 He was asking for it.  
 G S: <sup>^</sup> But the best one though was...(end of tape)

(End of side A)

G.S: And I guess he was quite a duck hunter in Montana. It was in the fall. And Charley <sup>McNue</sup> a friend of mine, we were partners loading cars those days and he was just as honest as the day is long. Charley never told a lie in his life. <sup>Well</sup> Harry had already, you were asking, do you want a cigarette?

SAM: I could smoke one.

G S: I got lots of them. This had already happened before Charley got in the pool-hall. Harry had told Bob <sup>Muir</sup>, he hung around there for a week to see how the trade was, see. And he wanted to know about ducks. Well Harry said, "There's a three mile long lake above the lumber yard and it's just black with ducks." So Bob <sup>Muir</sup> went and borrowed a shotgun and bought a box of shells. And then he came back down the pool-hall, and that's when Charley <sup>McNue</sup>, this friend of mine was sitting by the stove. <sup>of course</sup> Coyote Smith, he's one of the guys that went to the spotting house with the engine, <sup>and</sup> he came in and he was just as bad as Harry. <sup>and</sup> Here in came Bob Muller and Coyote Smith. Harry said, "Hey, Coyote. That lake <sup>up</sup> above the lumber yard, are there very many ducks up there?" Right away Coyote start, "Ducks! Why that lake is just black with ducks from <sup>one, from</sup> three miles there's nothing but ducks!" And oh, they talked about the ducks up in that lake. And here sat Charley by the stove taking it all in. And finally he couldn't stand it no longer.. He said, "By god, I've lived here <sup>for</sup> twenty years and there ain't no lake up there!" (Laughs). He spoiled it all. And always afterwards when Charley <sup>would</sup> McNue kid Bob Muller about the lake above the lumber yard, he talked a little through his nose Bob Muller did, (mimics him). Oh, I'll tell you, that Harry. About every three months, there was a sawyer there. <sup>Du</sup> Duvey Lavoy was his name. Little fellow, little short fellow. He was a sawyer in the sawmill. <sup>And, well</sup> He'd always come into the pool-hall and buy a chocolate bar before he went to work, and he'd eat it while he was sawing in the <sup>evening, in the</sup> afternoon. Harry'd get him back <sup>by the</sup> (unintelligible), say, "I'll tell you, the overhead

was up this forenoon. They're shutting her down Saturday. But don't tell anybody. Don't tell anybody, it's supposed to be a secret. She's going to be shut down Saturday." When the men came by the pool-hall from work in the evening after the whistle blew, a dozen guys came in and told Harry <sup>that</sup> the sawmill was shutting down Saturday. (Laughs) And he pulled that on Duey all the time. (Laughs).

SAM: You'd think they learn never to trust anything he said.

G S: <sup>You'd think that.</sup> Not of stories I could tell, they ain't fit for tape.

SAM: I don't know about that. So far they've all been awful good for tape.

We just keep the tapes. We can always soften it down or change the names if we ever used it. They're awful good stories.

G S: One good story, Bill Morris, the <sup>druggist</sup> was a very good friend of mine. He'd been eating beans or something. And he'd just got him a new Willis Knight. You remember the Willis Knight car? And he was going down to Lewiston. Him and his wife. She's still living up at Elk River. And they were coming down that Kendrick grade. And Bill couldn't hold it any longer. So he'd sneak one. And he always waited til he <sup>a car, til</sup> met a car. Then he'd sneak one. And Mabel said, "Hey, Bill. I can smell something." "Oh yeah, it's that car that we just met." So he'd wait, he'd hold her til he either met or passed another car, and then he'd sneak another one. <sup>And,</sup> "Yeah, it's that car we passed." And when he passed the third car, "Yeah," Mabel said, "I can smell <sup>that</sup> now. You know I never noticed that before." (Laughs). Isn't that a pretty good one? I'll tell you, Mabel, she never could take a joke. And she was just about as straight laced and good woman as there ever was, you know. <sup>And,</sup> Bill had been out hunting on Meadow Ridge with the boys and a couple three of them decided to go home. So he came home in the middle of the night and came and <sup>looked,</sup> knocked on the bedroom window and Mabel said, "Is that you, Will?" "Yeah, who was you expecting?" Goddamit, she didn't speak to him for two weeks. (Laughs) <sup>We used to, we used to.</sup> I don't know. Have you ever run across the name Albert

Wylie?

SAM: I don't think so. Not yet, no. Who's he?

G S: His father had a homestead at the bottom of the falls, *you know.*

SAM: Right there by the falls?

G S: Right where Deep Creek and Elk Creek come together. The homestead was right there in that point. I *id* always get a kick out of Albert. Miss Mervin was the *school* teacher out in that little schoolhouse. They used to call it the Stoddard schoolhouse. It was just up from the falls, little ways. And he said one time Miss Mervin asked Albert what was the most important, the sun or the moon? Well, I guess Albert had walked home from Elk River in the moonlight so many times that he *really* appreciated the moon. So he told her that the moon was the most important. Well, Miss Mervin asked him what he based his opinion on. "Well the moon shines at night when it's dark and the sun shines in the daytime when it's daylight anyway." (Laughs). The funny thing, the old man, he talked alright. But not all the kids, but Albert especially, *he was* talked awful slow. And they were hauling wood into town. The old man was selling wood and Albert was helping him. It was in the winter-time, and snow, you know. They pulled up this alley and right in front of the hole where you throw it in to whoever was going to buy it, Albert said, "Go a little further, dad." "No, it's alright here, it's alright." *yeah* "I wish you'd go a little further." "No, it's alright here. We can throw it off!" "Yeah, I know it's alright, you stopped the sled runner on my foot." (Laughs) You know, during the Depression, *I was* working for the road crew. And we tried to get all the fellows that wanted to join the CCC's. And Albert was staying in an old cabin, on the Orofino road, that Dent road, you know. And the fellow that was in charge, he wanted me to see Albert. I was out running road truck. All I had was oil and gas and stuff and I just tagged along behind, you know. So when we came to Rollis(?) cabin, I stopped and I walked down and there was Albert. I tried to talk him into, he was sleeping



on some boughs in a corner. There were no doors or windows in the cabin. And he didn't have any socks. All he had was shoes. I don't think he had any underwear. <sup>and</sup> I told him he'd get three meals a day and he'd get paid and he'd get some clothes and stuff. <sup>and</sup> I tried to sell the CCC's to him. Albert says, "Well," he says, "I tell you George, I got quite a <sup>little</sup> little stuff to eat here and I got a good bed, and as far as clothes is concerned, I got just about all I care to pack around right now." So he needn't join the CCC's. But he finally joined later on in the season. And at the end of the season he came up to Elk River. <sup>and</sup> Bill Morris and I always kind of kept him under our wings you know. His folks were all gone. And after he <sup>had been</sup> the CC's awhile, he joined the blister rust. <sup>CC's, the</sup> And Bill asked him about the blister rust. Oh, it was alright. "How did you like the CCC's?" "Oh, that was alright too. I would have had a lot of money, too, if the other CC boys hadn't borrowed it from me." That's all he thought of money.

SAM: It sounds like he was kind of a simpleminded guy.

G S: He was a little. And still he could take a little flour and sugar and a .30 .30 carbine and go out and live in the woods for weeks and months. So he wasn't so simple either in a lot of ways. You know a lot of smart people couldn't do that. You know that?

SAM: Yeah.

G S: Oh, Albert could take a little flour and salt and a .30 .30 carbine and he'd make her.

SAM: Would he do that? Live on his own?

G S: Oh, yeah. He did that lots of times. He's in a nursing home in Bend, Oregon now. He said, telling about, we went out to look at some traps, and we had a bobcat in one of them. So we killed him, and I stuck him in my pack sack. We couldn't shoot him 'cause my brother, Levi had shot all the shells away at the ground squirrels. But after I had him in my pack sack awhile, he started to bite and scratch. So we had to take him out and kill him again.

I used to get a lot of kicks out of Albert.

SAM: Was he a friendly man?

G S: Very friendly. Oh, he was a nice boy that way. Oh yes.

SAM: Were there many homesteaders around in the country when you came?

G S: Yeah. Especially south. Yeah. Especially south and east of Elk River.

All the land was taken up by homesteaders. There was a log cabin on pretty near every quarter section. <sup>But</sup> They're all gone now.

SAM: Was their idea to up and sell to Potlatch?

G S: No, there was an awful hunger for land about that time. About the early part of the century. And they actually tried to make a go of it a lot of them. But them prices kept on going up. And then <sup>First</sup> the World War come along. And they got jobs in town. Prices went sky high, even then you know. Compared with the stuff that you had to buy. And so that finished the homesteaders. Lot of them tried to cut a few ties and haul to town, sell cut wood, you know. They'd go out and work and live on the homestead. But their original idea was to make a home out there. A lot of them. But the first World War fixed that. They just had to go out and go to work <sup>in order</sup> to live. Did you ever on your tapes and stuff, did you ever have anything on Summerfield when they caught the bootleggers in the Park country?

SAM: I heard about Summerfield but not about the Park country, no.

G S: Oh yeah, he went out there.

SAM: I know he went all around the country.

G S: You know where Park country is don't you?

SAM: Yeah.

G S: He went out there you know. And all those moonshiners out there <sup>they</sup> wined him and dined him, you know. And he was going to sell their moonshine for them. And he told them, he said, "I'll have to be <sup>awful</sup> careful so that goddamn Summerfield don't catch up with me." He told them. And oh boy, then after he got them all rounded up, he just went to town and got a bunch of deputies

they just rounded up the whole works. Haven't you ever heard that?

SAM: No.

G S: Oh, yes. <sup>Fora</sup> fact, I know one guy that got caught in it. Name was Earl Hammer. I don't know what ever became of him. He used to live <sup>up</sup> in the orchard here. <sup>He</sup> Just disappeared.

SAM: So Summerfield put it over on all of them, huh?

G S: Oh, yeah. I guess he really made a haul that time. <sup>yes</sup> They hired everybody they could get ahold of. to haul moonshiners into town. You bet. You never heard that story?

SAM: No. I've heard about Summerfield going after moonshiners, but never about that round-up.

G S: Oh, yeah. He was going to sell their moonshine for them. They wined him and dined him out there in that farming country.

SAM: Did you ever know Pat Malone?

G S: Oh yeah. I knew Pat Malone. He was in Goble.

SAM: That was his job. His job was supposed to be rounding up moonshiners, too. Although I don't think he ever did much of it.

G S: No.

SAM: I spoke to Hap Moody in Moscow. You might know...

G S: Is he still living?

SAM: Yes, in Moscow.

G S: The hell he is. Well he ain't no spring chicken.

SAM: He's in his ninties, I'd say.

G S: Yeah. Oh yeah. Well Moody was with him when they rounded them up. I'm sure Moody was with them when they rounded up that outfit in the Park country. You ask him about that.

SAM: He told me a number of his escapades, Hap has, but didn't <sup>mention</sup> that particular one. Listen, there was moonshine being made all around Elk River, too, wasn't there?

G S: Not too much. There was a few.

SAM: I heard there was a black man sold moonshine around Elk River. Do you remember him at all? A negro.

G S: Oh, yes. He was a lumberjack, wasn't he?

SAM: I don't know. I just heard that he was here.

G S: Yeah. I tell you I know that for a ... he used to work, oh he was a great cantook<sup>h</sup> man. I think he bootlegged. He didn't moonshine. I think he just bootlegged. I come along on a saddle-horse one time when I had a quart of whiskey in the saddlebag and I just came by the roadway where this <sup>Nigger</sup> was working, and asked him if he wanted a drink. You know, I never seen whiskey go down in a bottle as fast as that. Boy he just glug, glug, glug. But I let him have it. <sup>That was right</sup> in Shaddock's Meadow there where the road crosses Shawdow Creek going into that road there, where he had the roadway. He was tending the roadway. They were skidding down to him with a team from up above.

SAM: Do you happen to know if he was one of the Wells' from Deary? Cause I know Chuck Wells worked in the woods and he was black.

G S: No, I don't. No. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if he was.

SAM: He had a reputation for being quite a hand in the woods, Chuck Wells.

G S: Well this guy was an awful good cantook<sup>h</sup> man. He was, boy, he could just make one of them things sing. But you know, one time a man was held up and the gun was just that far from me, just where my hand is now. And I never made a move. Have you ever heard of Billy Holmes? The camp foreman? I was working for Billy Holmes. And my bed was right next to the door. This bootlegger came into camp. He had bullcooked<sup>h</sup> in camp. He was an old penitentiary guy, this old bullcook. And he was going to sell this suitcase full of, we called it "whiteline". <sup>you know</sup> It was alcohol. You diluted it with water and you got whiskey. It was pretty stout, you know. Well, Billy Holmes had taken his suitcase away from him. And he was coming through the car with the suitcase. And right in front of me, the door opened up. And this

guy stuck a gun right in Billy Holmes' stomach. <sup>and said,</sup> "Gimme that suitcase".

Billy Holmes so gave him the suitcase, and the guy took the suitcase and held the gun and then I guess he closed the door someway. The door opened in, see? And he closed the door. So there was just Billy Holmes and I and Billy Holmes turned to me and he said, "I'll tell you, George, <sup>When ever anybody</sup> sticks a gun up my gut is jake enough with me." But that ain't the last of the story. They had a hog pen and a hog house in this camp. But they'd butchered all the hogs in the fall. So this hog house just stood empty, oh, up from camp, probably a little further <sup>from here to</sup> that house. Towards Elk River, up the track from the camp. And we'd been to town, a bunch of us, stayed in town over Saturday night and <sup>were</sup> walking back Sunday evening, back to camp. And when we came close to camp and looked at the hog house, <sup>were was</sup> there ~~were~~ a couple of guys standing back of the hog house dancing and having a hell of a time. There's about eight inches of snow on the ground. Colder than hell. And we went over there. And here was the suitcase with all the 24 quarts uh, pints of "white line" in it. Well I tell you, we was a drunk camp that night. We just took the whole goddamn works into camp and we just distributed it around. We never sold any of it, we just gave it away. I'll tell you, we had a time. We never <sup>saw</sup> that bull cook again, though. Evidently, he just cashed his suitcase there and took off.

SAM: Maybe he was afraid that Billy Holmes was going to be after him.

G S: Yeah, I think so. <sup>'Cause</sup> it was the same suitcase.

SAM: What camp was this?

G S: Camp B.

SAM: What were you doing in that camp? What was your job?

G S: I was hooking on the landing.

SAM: How far was that from Elk River, the camp? Fairly close, wasn't it?

G S: You know, after you leave, you go up Elk River, you leave where the <sup>Park</sup> road takes off. And then the road bends to the left.

Have you noticed there's <sup>a</sup> kind of a flat place there on the other side?

That's where the camp was. Right there. Where the camp was.

SAM: Was that the old kind of bunkhouses they had there, were they log bunkhouses?

G S: They were on flatcars.

SAM: Oh, they were on flatcars. What were those like to live in?

G S: They were alright. You bet.

SAM: Do you remember that 1917 strike? The I.W.W.'s in 1917?

G S: See, I worked in the sawmills then.

SAM: What happened in the sawmills?

G S: They didn't strike. No. They didn't strike. Sawmills didn't strike.

SAM: The mill never went down?

G S: No, uh uh.

SAM: A lot of guys had cards though, who were working in the mill. It's what I've heard. Maybe that's not true.

G S: Very few. Very few. For a fact, I don't know of anybody around the mill that had cards. No, I don't. I was millwright. In the planing mill. There was no strike at all. I tell you, I went down to St. Maries. I was going with a girl down in St. Maries. I took a few days off and went down there. I got through with my visit and I was going to go back to Elk River.

So I came downtown with my traveling bag and of course, I was <sup>all</sup> dressed up, <sup>and</sup> necktie, you know, so on. <sup>And</sup> I see somebody that I knew when I got back downtown, from Milltown. And he said, "Well, where you going George?" I said, "I'm going up to Elk River." "Oh, you can't get out of town! You can't get out of town. You got to go up to the Grand Theater." You know it's a big house, they used to call it the Grand Theater. "And you got to go up there and get a permit to leave town!" Anybody that looked like a lumberjack they'd put him in the stockade, you know, in St. Maries. And, Jesus Christ, we were getting close to <sup>where</sup> the train was going to leave and I came up the Grand and here was a line from here to here across the street. Guys waiting to get permits to get out of town. Well, I thought

Hell, I thought, I'll never make it here. So I just walked down the depot. And here was a bunch of guys on both sides, you know. I just took my traveling bag and <sup>just</sup> walked right straight along. <sup>And</sup> Nobody said a word. I just walked. I didn't look like a lumberjack. They just passed me up. I looked more like a traveling salesman, I guess. Got necktie and overcoat and traveling bag. <sup>you know</sup> That reminds me of a friend of mine back in the old country. During the second World War it was export ban on quicksilver from Sweden. They had very little quicksilver and what they had, they needed for blue ointment, if you know what that is. That's lard and quicksilver mixed...

(End of side B)

G S: ... He was going up to this town on the border, to Finland with a bunch of quicksilver. They were going to smuggle over. The train was about twenty miles from this town, when the conductor came through and said, "This train isn't stopping at the depot. We're pulling down on the pier. There's going to be body inspection." In a minute, he got to sweating. He didn't know what to do. And he was just loaded with quicksilver bottles. Finally, when the train stopped down at the <sup>on the</sup> pier, he just took his traveling bag and he just ~~walked~~ <sup>walked</sup> through the line. Here was custom officer lined up on both sides, to search people. And nobody woke up until <sup>after</sup> he got past the end of the line. <sup>one of</sup> The last guy said, "Hey mister, <sup>wait a minute</sup> where you going?" "Oh, that's alright. I'll be a colleague with you tomorrow." "Oh, okay, okay," he said. He passed himself off as a customs officer.

SAM: That takes guts.

G S: <sup>that</sup> takes guts. He's got two brothers out in Seattle, this fellow has. This fellow never came over to this country. <sup>that</sup> takes guts, I'll tell you. I don't know what I would have done. I think I'd ditch the quicksilver. Quicksilver, they call it salver salm it's <sup>the</sup> 606. <sup>you know,</sup> what they use <sup>to</sup> for syphilis. Them two things there was an export ban on. Course they didn't know when Sweden was going to get into it and they might need it.

SAM: Did the men in the camps, around Elk River, what did they use for lice?

G: There was a lot of bugs and graybacks.

G S: Yeah, yeah.

SAM: Is that what they used for that?

G S: <sup>Sabidilla</sup> and blue ointment. <sup>Sabidilla</sup>, you get that at the drugstore. And you just have to doctor yourself up and doctor your bedclothes up with <sup>sabidilla</sup>. And you get rid of them. Oh, and those homestead cabins, they were lousy with them. Any time you took a hunting trip down to <sup>wards</sup> Big Island and <sup>I had to laugh.</sup> stayed in a few log cabins, you came home lousy half of the time. Oh, God. That's the only time I had body lice. I had <sup>I don't know</sup> to laugh. I'd been out on a hunting trip, and I got lousy. And I got some blue ointment and some <sup>ab</sup> sabidilla and I went back to camp and I was fixing myself up. And here was a fellow by the name of Earl Hood. His older brother run the store there in Elk River, <sup>I don't know</sup> if you ever run across the name Hood. And Earl, he was quite a guy. He'd been through high school and I guess part of college, and he'd been through some kind of <sup>a</sup> military academy, you know. He came out to camp and he didn't have any bedding. He got a job. Billy Holmes put him on to go to work the next morning and he came over and asked me if it would be alright if he could sleep with me. "Sure," I said, "you bet, but I tell you Earl. I'm lousy. I'm trying to get rid of them. <sup>But I'm lousy,</sup> But if you want to take a chance, you can sleep with me." "Oh, that's alright. I'm lousy too." (laughs)

SAM: So did you sleep with him? Were you willing to sleep with him then?

G S: It didn't matter. I had my bedclothes pretty well taken care of then.

SAM: How did that work. Would it happen oftentimes that two lumberjacks would have shared the <sup>same</sup> bedding? That happened a lot, didn't it?

G S: No.

SAM: I thought it did.

G S: No. Everybody slept alone. Be a few south Europeans and so on that'd sleep



together, but, the main lumberjack, we wouldn't do that. I just let Earl sleep with me because he didn't have any bedding. And we were good friends anyway. We used to be out hunting together way out in those White Rock Springs and Free <sup>Trout</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ and up in through there we used to go ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ <sup>wood</sup> Earl was a regular ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ rat. He felt best when he was out in the woods with a gun.

SAM: Did many lumberjacks have syphilis and have problems with that?

G S: There was not quite a lot, but there was some gonorrhea. But not too much syphilis that I know of. To actually know... I only knew one guy. He was supposed to have syphilis. Of course, I might have been all wrong in this case. There was a young fellow <sup>there</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ in our bunkhouse and there was a syphilitic guy too, and he was taking off and he wanted to sell his bedding to this young fellow. And I told him, "Don't buy that goddamn bedding, he's guy's got syphilis." <sup>so</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ This guy got madder than hell, but I didn't give a shit cause I didn't know if it <sup>gonna</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ affect this guy or not. Maybe not. But course I didn't know too much about it then. I was very outspoken in those days. Nobody argued with me <sup>very</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ much. If you understand what I mean. I was pretty independent. I wasn't used to be argued with.

SAM: In that way, were you different from most guys? Do you think most guys would just kind of be quiet and not say anything one way or another? Sounds like, well I hear a lot of lumberjacks were kind of mean at times, if they got riled.

G S Yeah. I was mean all the time. (Laughs). Oh, not all the time, no.

SAM: But you spoke your mind.

G S: You're goddamn right.

SAM: Did that get you in trouble?

G S: Oh, yeah, sometimes. I always managed to get out of it on my terms. Just like a friend of mine from Seattle talked to ~~my~~ <sup>the</sup> wife here a couple two years ago. "Hell," he said, "in the old country, even ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> police were scared of him."

I got a grandson. Downtown here. And here two years ago he got on a, he went to the bank. He was eleven years old. He went to the bank and drew out some money and bought himself a motorcycle. And then he takes off down the street. And the police got after him. And he hit for home. He just give her the gun and hit for home. So Mark got pinched for driving without a license, driving with a vehicle that wasn't registered and alluding the police. I was reminiscing with my wife and I said, "Well," I said, "Mark is doing alright," I said, "But of course, if he's going to catch up with grandpa, he's still got to get to the point where the police are alluding him." (Mimics his wife) "Don't you put anything like that in that boy's head!" (Laughs) I said when the police start alluding him, then he's catching up with grandpa. He was up before the judge here a week ago, too. He's thirteen now. And he got himself another motorcycle. And I don't know what happened, but he came across the street, and here this other motorcycle come and Mark banged up his machine and he banged up the other guy's machine. And he was up for the judge. It cost his dad seventy dollars for the other guy's machine and I guess all happened to Mark. He got all scratched. He got a bent fender on his motorcycle but he got out of it preety lucky. He didn't have to have any stitches or anything. I never...I'm going to see the judge Thursday. The judge used to work for me. You know Martin Huff? He worked for me one summer when he was a young fellow. When I see Martin... He goes to Unity quite a bit, Martin does. Sometimes we go to Unity. The next time I see him, I'm going to ask him how my grandson performed in court. He was up before Martin. And Martin didn't know it was my grandson.

SAM: I heard about lumberjack fights.

G S: There was very little fighting like that, you know, like in that back east. That wasn't here. You know, they used to have 'bull of the woods' back east. Fights you know. And court shoo 'em and all that. No.

SAM: Not here?

G S: No we were too civilized for that. <sup>here</sup> No.

SAM: I wonder what the difference was. Why?

G S: I think that was a lot among those French Canadians, you know. No, we were a pretty decent sort of a bunch. Awful independent, but pretty decent. No. As a rule, we were good friends. The whole camp was friends. We were friendly. The whole camp, you know. You take Billy Holmes' camp. Everyone was friends. I guess old Charlie Regott in Elk River, I guess he used to be a kind of 'bull of the woods' back east. He was built like a gorilla. Bill Morris, the druggist, would get him mad once a day. Regular.

SAM: You would?

G S: No. Bill Morris, the druggist would get Charlie Regott. Charlie Regott would go by the drugstore and go down to the post office and get his mail. And <sup>then</sup> he'd have to go into the drugstore and see Bill about something. Before he left the drugstore, Bill had him mad. And he'd always come back for more. Now one time, that was during the Depression... you know, for a while you could buy eggs down there for six cents a dozen. Did you know that? They were six cents for about a week and then they went up to seven cents and they stayed that way for quite a while. For a month or two. Seven cents a dozen. Well Charlie Regott [redacted] got him a car, and him and his wife went down there and bought a <sup>half</sup> case of eggs for six cents a dozen. So when he came back from the post office he had to go in <sup>the drugstore</sup> and tell Bill about it. After he got <sup>through</sup> telling Bill, he said, "I don't believe it." (Mimics Charlie getting mad at Bill). Bill says, "I still don't believe it." Oh Jesus, Charlie Regott was so mad, he was just hopping up and down. Finally Bill said, "Now listen Charlie, you know that that don't pay for the wear and tear on the hen's asshole." And Charlie <sup>Regott</sup> just tore out of there. Just tore out of that place. But he come back for more the next day, He'd have to see him about something and Bill'd have him mad before he'd leave. And he could be so sober about it. "I don't believe it," he'd say. Yeah, I hear

Charlie used to be 'bull of the woods'.

SAM: You know you're saying that you did pretty much what you wanted to and having people listen to you. What kind of situation would make you be outspoken as hell and lay it out your own way?

G S: Well, if I think I'm right, I say it. I'd make a damn fool politician. You know. I'll say it.

SAM: I'm thinking of back in the woods. What kind of thing would you stand <sup>up</sup> for?

G S: Well, I'll just give you an example. You heard of T.P. Jones?

SAM: Yes.

G S: Well, I was working for T.P. Jones and Bill Morris up at that placer mine. Up in Swamp Creek, you know, when I was putting in that steam shovel in there. So we had one fellow there by the name of, I can't think of his name now. He was a steam shovel man. And he was the awfulest yes man I've ever seen. Baker was his name. He was from Bovill. Anything, T.P. Jones, he was just old enough that he'd lost his good judgement. But anything that T.P. Jones said, Baker'd say "Amen". Well if I could find anything wrong with it, I'd say, "You're crazier than hell." Well here came up, we had to make a rocker arm. We had a pipe and we had a bar and I said to T.P., "We'll just flatten that pipe and stick that bar in it and drill a couple three holes and put rivets through and that will hold the bar." We had a drill press right there, one of those <sup>n</sup> had presses, you know. "No, by god George, we're going to weld it." So T.P. and I, we were all forenoon trying to weld that thing with white fir bark. And I was either pulling that hand ford too fast or too slow. And we weren't <sup>e</sup> no further along at noon than <sup>we were</sup> in the morning when we started. And then Baker, oh yeah, Baker thought it could be welded. So we went up and had lunch. Mrs. Jones cooked. She run the cookshack. Mrs. T.P. Jones. And then after we had ate, T.P. came in the men's tent where we gathered after we ate. T.P. figured it around, "George!" "Yeah?"

"We're going to weld that thing this afternoon or I'm going to bust a gut!" I just turned to the other men, I said, "You know, the old man is going to bust a gut this afternoon." And he look<sup>ed</sup> at me. He was the big boss, you know. So we went out in the <sup>blacksmith job,</sup> [redacted] And T.P. He figured it around, and he figured it. "George! We're going to rivet that goddamn thing!" Another time, we had to buzzsaw those small rails, <sup>that</sup> they use in lumberyards, you know. And we had to hacksaw <sup>rippers</sup> them off for the sluice boxes. They were going to use them for <sup>you know</sup> [redacted] in the sluice boxes. And you know what one of these blacksmith vices are, they have a kind of a stand that comes down? You've seen them. Well, Baker and T.P. was putting up the vice... And after they got it all put up, they had the vice this high. And Bill Morris, the druggist, he was right there too. Because I was his man, see. He... after they got through he says, "George. What do you think of that vice?" <sup>well I says</sup> "It's too goddamn high. What the hell is the matter with you? Jesus Christ, who the hell is going to be able to use that vice?" "Ah, Baker says it's alright." <sup>OKAY</sup> [redacted], okay. So Baker and T.P. got to hacksawing off pieces. T.P. Jones, he just barely made one piece and Baker made another one. And then, "George. Will you hacksaw one for us?" "No," I said, "I won't hacksaw one or nothing for you." I said, "You put up the vice and you hacksaw it." And Bill Morris spoke up. He said, "George told you in the first place that it was up too high." "Well I guess it is too high." They lowered it and I helped them. Hell. You got to stand there where you can bear down, not up like this. Hacksawing, you know. Christ. <sup>almighty</sup>

SAM: I'm surprised that T.P. Jones would be working with his hands after all his years of giving orders. **Wood Superintendent.**

G S: He'd lost his good judgement. He just got old enough that he lost his good judgement, when he was out at the mine there. He did a lot of things that <sup>WAS</sup> [redacted] crazier than hell.

SAM: He'd had a lot of financial problems before that too, hadn't he?

G S: Yes, I think so. They had a crooked banker there. Course, I never heard anything about that. Yeah, I wouldn't wonder. There were a lot of old people lost money on that bank.

SAM: What was life like working in the mill in Elk River?

G S: I worked planing mill. I never worked in a sawmill in my life.

SAM: You were millwright for the planing mill.

G S: I worked in the planing mill, yeah. That was good jobs. Those planing mill jobs were good jobs. Yeah. You never had to work hard, you know. You had to be on your toes all the time, but there was no hard work connected with it.

SAM: As millwright, your job was to keep the mill running?

G S: Well, not exactly. You see, those machines were wore out. So, I had to take a machine all apart. And take what ever needed to be turned down or planed down to the machine shop and get it all in tiptop shape and <sup>then</sup> put the machine together again. I wasn't set up man. I was just a mechanic that took a planing <sup>wheel</sup> machine <sup>all</sup> apart and then had everything... see that the guide was right and lot of time those tables, you know, you see, this cast iron table<sub>s</sub> in the framing machine, well everything runs against a guide. Here's a guide. So if you're running four inch, four inch runs against the guide. If you're running six inch, six inch runs against the guide. And eight and ten and twelve. Well, you see, this end <sup>wears</sup> more than this end. You see, the law of averages, course there's more four than six, ~~course~~ no matter what... if you're running twelve inch, it's still wearing on this side. But if you're running ten inch, there's two inches here <sup>that aren't wearing</sup>. See? And I had to take all those out and take them down to the shaper and plane them off so <sup>that</sup> they were the same thickness. And all sorts of stuff like that. Crooked shafts I had to replace. And stuff like that. It wasn't a herd job. You didn't have to ... oh if you had just good common sense and know a little about planing machines, which

I did.

SAM: In breakdowns, did you have to do much emergency work?

G S: <sup>some</sup> Yeah, but not very much. After you get a planing machine all in tiptop shape, there's very little breakdown. There's the set up man. He takes care of that. <sup>what little there is.</sup> And, oh, course those were touchy machines, see that was all bad bearings, you know. Now they have all ball bearings in planing machines. I understand that Troy Lumber Company quit that outfit in Clarkston. You know, they had quite a planing mill there, <sup>where they could plane</sup> they had an old Swede there that knew all about those bad bearings and when he quit, they discontinued the planing mill. I think he's <sup>here now</sup> that same guy that is that fancy gunstock maker. He's in a nursing home here in the Orchards <sup>someplace.</sup> Name is Alvin something, seems like.

SAM: Well, who was working in the planing mill? Was it different nationalities a lot of different backgrounds represented there? Or were mostly the same kind of people working there? Were there <sup>Chinese</sup> Japanese and <sup>Chinese?</sup> Chinese?

G S: Yes. Japs and Chinks and Greeks and Italians and Swedes and Norwegians and Americans, it was very mixed in the planing mill. <sup>I'd say</sup> It was very mixed.

SAM: What was it like with all these different people working together?

G S: We got along fine. We got along fine. Oh, yeah.

SAM: What about the Japanese and the Chinese guys. <sup>?</sup>

GAS: I never worked with any Chinks. But I worked with Japanese and they were nice fellows. Absolutely. They were as nice as boys as you would run across. You bet. Yeah. I never had any kick against the Japanese. They're good conscientious men, <sup>as a rule</sup> And they're real gentlemen, too. For a fact, we had one guy, Charlie <sup>Segera</sup>, the only single guy. The rest all had families. All the other Japanese had families. Charlie <sup>Segera</sup>, he was single. And I think he was a, what do you call it, industrial spy. I think that's what Charlie <sup>I think</sup> Segera was. He was a lumber grader. I think he... course, Bill Morris, the druggist, he went back to Japan on a trip. And he showed Bill Morris

lot of pictures that he took while he was there. God, they were all uniform guys, high muck muck guys, you know. And Charlie Segerera was awful dressy. He didn't look, when he dressed up on a Sunday he was really spick and span. And he was the best golf player we had in Elk River. *For a fact, I got hell. Bill...*

(End of side C)

SAM: ...his brother?

G S: His younger brother, yeah. He lives in Carmel, California. I seen his daughter the other day. She says he's just sitting around waiting to die. She's disgusted with him. The final <sup>o</sup>turnement was between Charlie Segerera and Harry Morris. And they wanted me to referee the match. No question, no two ways about it, Charlie Segerera won the golf match, that's all. I said so. *by god,* And you know, there was a couple guys mad cause I didn't throw it for Harry? Can you beat that? No way.

SAM: Does all this add up to him being a spy? What really makes you think he was a spy?

G S: That's what Bill Morris thought, the druggist. He thought cause he traveled with such high caflutin' people when he was back in Japan. Army officers and stuff, you know. That's what, why... he was here to find out the work and our mills, see what I mean?

SAM: Was he a nice guy?

G S: Oh, a swell guy. You bet. They don't make them any nicer. A real gentleman. Oh, I'll tell you, he was a real gentleman.

SAM: One of these fellows I heard was a real fine pool player, one of these Japanese guys.

G S: Up around Elk River?

SAM: That's what I heard. I didn't know his name.

G S: I wonder if that was Charlie Segerera. I wonder. (Laughs) Do you know Mi Lew in Moscow?

SAM: I sure do.



G S: You do?

SAM: Yeah.

G S: (laughs) Do you know Marie too?

SAM: Yeah.

G S: God, you remember those 'Confucius say' jokes? We use to spring those on Marie in the restaurant there. Oh, God she'd get mad. "Confucius never say that!" "Oh yes, Marie, yes sir." (laughs) "Yeah, he said it, said it." Oh God she'd get mad.

SAM: Can you give me an example of the joke?

G S: Shit on the wall, Who Flung Dung. I forget now all the... Oh, she wouldn't go for that, no sir. Confucius hadn't said all that stuff. I forget, I don't know none thing in Confucius ...

SAM: It doesn't matter.

SAM: But, oh, Marie used to get so mad. Mi, it didn't bother Mi, he's so easy <sup>going</sup>. He's got about as much expression as that wall, on his face. Do you know, I was coming <sup>through</sup> the kitchen one day, I could take a short-cut through the kitchen and get back in the alley on my way home, when we lived in Moscow. And he just pulled a ham out of the oven door. And he sliced off a slice and, "Taste that, George, see how you like it." You know, that's the finest piece of pork <sup>that</sup> I ever ate in my life. That <sup>is the</sup> pork that they put in pork chow mein, <sup>or</sup> is it chop suey?

SAM: Probably both.

G S: Yeah. God that was <sup>just</sup> seasoned right too. <sup>a gnat's ass</sup>. I'll tell you. Course, you don't get the flavor too much with those little strips, you know, but he gave me quite a slice of it where I could really chew down on it, you know. But you know ... The first job I had, I run one of those electric motors in the yard. And then we got snowed in, the mill couldn't run on account of snow that winter. You see, there was six, eight feet of snow on the level, you know, and the mill shut down, there was no train up <sup>there</sup>.

for eleven days. We run out of food up in Elk River. Yeah, there was no food hardly left in the store. When that train finally came in, they had three Indians on that train, they had two Indians pushing the rotary snow-plow and one Indian pushing behind. And they finally made it. Oh, I'll tell you. Yeah, the stores, they were almost licking clean. You know, eleven days, you know, that's quite a while.

SAM: How much snow was there at the time?

G S: It was almost six feet on the level. Well that's lots of snow. And you know, they didn't have the equipment those days that they have now, you know. Even the rotary snow-plows weren't as good as they are now. And everything was tied up on the main line, you see. And oh, I'll tell you the last time I went to the store all I bought was... ginger snaps used to come in a big round box, and they had the picture of a drum, you know those strings down on it. That's the only thing you could eat ~~that I could get to eat in that store.~~ <sup>that</sup> ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> Was ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> big box of ginger snaps. It was really, there were no airplanes or helicopters to shuttle food in those days, either.

SAM: I can imagine Elk River would get pretty isolated in that bad winter weather.

G S: That's the worst. Eleven days.

SAM: What were the people thinking?

G S: A lot of them were starting figuring on shoes on snowshoes they were to snowshoe out to Bovill. ~~Came to Bovill.~~ <sup>trains</sup> Came to Bovill. But they were pretty sure that they were going to get a rotary to come up on the... we could of ate the horses in the barn.

SAM: What about some of these other European groups like the Italians and the Greeks? They were working in the planer too? Were most of them married or single?

G S: No, most of them were single. Very few married. Yeah. But Tillie Carson, she can give you a lot of stuff about Elk River. She probably remember ~~some~~ <sup>some</sup> of them names... That the truth is so much more interesting than fiction

or a damn lie. Isn't it? That's what I always contended. And if I tell you something, it's going to be that way to the best of my knowledge. If I tell you something.

SAM: I feel the same way. I can never understand why people want to make it a story instead of what it was. Because what it was was good enough.

G S: Yeah. Yeah. You know, I had a fellow, he came up to Elk River. He was a good shot, a very good shot. And he, course in those days, we hunted deer year round, you know, up around Elk River. It was open season year round. Name was Oliver Neal. And my neighbor across the street, allittle Swede<sup>he</sup> was quite a deer hunter too. And him and Neal went~~to~~ out a couple of times, and Neal was an awful, he liked to exaggerate things. And Bur<sup>g</sup> told me about all the deer that Neal had killed. Well, it got to be too many. I said, "I'll tell you, Bur<sup>g</sup>. I don't believe Neal has killed <sup>hear as</sup> many deer as he says he has." "Oh yes, yes, he's killed a lot of them." "Okay," I said, "Bur<sup>g</sup>. Next time you go out on Meadow Ridge and kill a deer with Neal, be sure that he cuts the gall bladder out of the liver." And Bur<sup>g</sup> looked at me. "Well," he said, "they ain't got no gall bladder." "Yeah, that's what I mean." So, by God, Bur<sup>g</sup> did. The next time they went out, Bur<sup>g</sup> had him be sure and cut the gall bladder out of the liver and Neal looked all over<sup>hell</sup> for the gall bladder. And Bur<sup>g</sup> had to tell me. "Well that's what I told you. That's what I told you." Did you know that?

SAM: I've never shot a deer.

G S: I've shot, I don't know how many I've shot, but it was a hell of a lot of them. And they ain't got no gall bladder. They got a hell of a swell liver for eating. You know that don't you? Yeah. No, it's one of the few animals that <sup>I know of that</sup> ain't got no gall bladder.

SAM: It was open season<sup>year round</sup> for real, or just as far as everyone in Elk River was concerned?

G S: As far as everybody in Elk River. And specially when the Depression started

to hit, you know, and we were layed off a couple days a week and then we'd work two-three days and then we'd lay off two-three days you know, orders were getting short, you know. We just had plenty of meat. Yeah. I went out with Neal a couple of times and we used to sit around and talk. And I said one time, I said, "Well, I'll tell you, Neal". We were talking about bullshittin<sup>in</sup> general. ~~again a little~~. But you know, Neal the truth is so much more interesting to me than a lie. You know, as far as I know, that guy never lied to me. After I said that. "Yeah, that's right." he said. I had to laugh one time we were sitting in a scaffold, you know what a scaffold is, don't you? Where you, <sup>use</sup> ~~use~~ boughs, I made it myself by King's homestead. And the lick was out a little, <sup>over</sup> ~~to~~ the left. And the old Meadow Ridge road run right on the other side of the lick. And by the bright moonlight. And we were sitting there talking you know, just having the best visit you know and talking and I got to looking around. There was a white pine about so big over to the right. I'm looking. I look. And here was a deer head sticking out behind the white pine. The deer was standing there looking, taking in our bullshit. And I bumped Neal. I said, "Sh, sh," I said, and all he had was a 38 super. Do you know what they are?

SAM: No.

G S: Do you know what a .45 army Colt is?

SAM: Yeah.

G S: Well a 38 super, if you lay the two of them along side each other, you can't tell them a part only to look in the end of the barrel. The 38 super has a faster shell. And more of a punch than the .45. That's all Neal had. Is a flashlight and the 38 super. So. After I poked him and pointed like that, he looked and he seen the deer and he just set there. He was still. And the deer finally walked in front of us and over to the lick. The lick, the lick was like so. The <sup>deer</sup> ~~generally~~ walked down to it and licked. But this

deer come over here and stuck <sup>its</sup> head down and it was with its hind end towards us. And every time Neal touched that flashlight, the switch would go, "Click, click, click." And the deer would look at us. (Laughs). So we set still. Pretty soon the deer stuck its head down and lick some more and Neal'd try to get his flashlight and the damn switch would go "Click, click, click." And the deer would turn around and look at us <sup>again</sup>. Finally the deer took off. <sup>But</sup> Neal got him on the run. He got him on the run.

SAM: Where would you build a scaffold?

G S: In a tree.

SAM: About how high up would you put it?

G S: Well, I'll tell you, we always used to figure that if you're in level country, if you get up forty feet, you got a good scaffold. You know. Course, if the lick is down here and there's a raise, you don't have to get up so high, unless the runway comes in below you. Then you really got to get up high. But if they're coming in the other <sup>way</sup>, then you don't have to get up so high. But in level country, forty feet, you should be forty feet up.

SAM: What would you use for platform?

G S: Well lots of time <sup>just</sup> we made a platform out of haywire and boughs. That's all we had, I think for a fact that thing is still up there in the white fir by King's old homestead. By the old road. It was there four five years ago. Yeah. I had to laugh at that damn switch on that flashlight. We had a five cell flashlight you know. It don't take very much of a noise in the woods at night you know. That deer...

SAM: I want to ask you about the mill going down. About the mill being closed in Elk River. I heard that most people weren't expecting it to happen.

G S: That was an awful blow. I never, I never, I don't think I'll ever, I know I have never seen where a town got hit such a blow. Every man, woman, and child, it was just like you'd socked them between the eyes. We were waiting

for it to start in the spring. And then spring came and then the word comes "We ain't never starting again." Here we set all winter waiting for the mill to start. And bang. Just like that. Was a fellow there from Chicago. He was Bill Morris' brother-in-law. Frank Modine was his name. And oh, he wouldn't believe it. Oh, no. Why, Al Capone wouldn't do anything like that. By God, they did. Oh, I'll tell you that <sup>really</sup> hit us hard. And, I'll tell you, it was the Depression there was no place to go. You couldn't go any other place and get a job. You just sat there. And of course, there was no farm<sup>ing</sup> country around where you could go out and work a few days for a sack of spuds or anything. All we had to do was raise garden and kill venison. That's all.

SAM: Was there anything that the town could do when the word of the mill closing came? There was nothing they could do at all?

G S: Nothing. Nothing. There was nothing you could make to sell or anything like that you know, to make a living.

SAM: It seems they could have at least given the people some warning.

G S: All at once. All at once. And we just sat there, by golly, we knew that you, well, let's see, when did it shut down? Was it in '31?

SAM: It was in '31 or '32.

G S: The Depression was on. And there was no place to go.

SAM: Were people pretty mad at the company?

G S: Oh yeah. I don't know why they did that.

SAM: Didn't they ever say what they were doing <sup>it for</sup>?

G S: No. You know what I think they did it for? Now, I don't know, this is just what I think, and that might not amount to anything, but you know, I think Potlatch had to borrow a bunch of money to build this mill here. And the people that they had to borrow money from didn't want this Elk River mill to compete with the mill that they were going to have money in. See what I mean? Cause the Elk River mill was 'sposed to put lumber in the

cheaper  
 the car than anyone, than Weyhauser mills around here. That's what I  
 heard. That the Elk River mill put it into the car cheaper than any of  
 them.

SAM: Why? Because it was right in the middle of the timber?

G S: Yeah. And we had some awful good camp foremen. Like Malker Anderson.

SAM: Do you know Malker Anderson?

G S: Oh, yes, yes. You know, no matter how much drunken Swede he was, he still  
 put logs out cheaper than anybody.

SAM: I heard he was a good foreman. What made him such a good foreman? What  
 was the secret of that?

G S: There was no secret whatsoever. He was just a good foreman so all the hot-  
 shot lumberjacks head for Malker's camp when he started. That was the whole  
 secret. <sup>And</sup> Of course, he was a good foreman. And he was a good joe. And he  
 was a good friend to all the lumberjacks. And that's the only secret. And  
 of course he had lot up in the upper story too. When it come to figure  
 out how log a certain quarter sections or section. Malker could figure it  
 out.

SAM: Was it that he was good to the men who worked for him?

G S: Yeah.

SAM: But he knew how to get the logs in too?

G S: Oh yes, he was sharp, Malker was sharp, you bet. And then <sup>he</sup> worked hand in  
 hand with his men. And the men worked like hell for him cause they liked  
 Malker. Yeah.

SAM: Was drinking always a problem for him in the woods? I heard he <sup>had</sup> that off  
 and on.

G S: I think he was what we call a 'periodic' drinker. He'd be sober for a while  
 and then he'd go on a tear.

SAM: Do you <sup>have any idea</sup> why he killed himself?

G S: No, I haven't. But, I'll tell you. I got my own idea. I always said it was

too bad. You see,... have you heard of Eddie Erickson, the timber cruiser?

SAM: Yeah.

G S: He was engaged to the woman that Malcker married. They were engaged to be married. And he bought her a diamond ring, too, I'll tell you. And then, Eddie had to go out round Helmer, he always cruised with Bill Helmer to start with. They had to go up around Helmer and Deary and up on the Palouse, I guess and do a lot of cruising. Eddie Erickson was a top notch cruiser. Oh, don't ever think he wasn't. And while he was gone, Malcker beat his time. And when Eddie come back, she gave the diamond ring back to Eddie. And Malcker married her. And you know, Eddied never got over that. From that time on, he just about stayed drunk all the time til he died. And I always said it was too bad that Eddie turned into a drunk cause he didn't get her and Malcker turned into a drunk and committed suicide cause he got her. And by God, I'll tell you, I think I'm just about right. She didn't have brains enough to come in out of the rain. But women was scarce in Elk River in those days. Finally Eddied died and a good friend of mine, Mrs. Vine, you know her don't you? She's my huckleberry partner. And she lives right next to Eddie. And some of his relatives from Minnesota came out and took care of him after he died. <sup>the funeral</sup> And here they found this diamond ring. In the cupboard. They went and asked Mrs. Vine if she knew anything about that. <sup>she said.</sup> No. She said she didn't know. (calls to his wife to come out )  
(pause in tape)

G S: ...and Dobb, there were kids out in that homestead country towards the falls, you know. And they had one rifle between them, and they were playing "Indians". And one'd ~~pack~~ <sup>awhile</sup> the gun and they'd look for Indians in the trees. And then the other fellow'd ~~pack~~ the gun awhile. And Bob was packing the <sup>gun</sup>. And they came out on this break, you know what is only grass, you know, that grassy <sup>south</sup> ~~slope~~ <sup>generally</sup> slope. And they came out the edge of the trees and they stood there awhile. And finally Albert said, "Well if you don't want to shoot, and



then give me the gun." So Bob just handed the gun to Albert. And Albert he would go like so, you know. At the bottom of the glade at the edge of the woods, here were two deer. And Bob could see them. "Which one do you want me to shoot first?" About that time, Bob was ready to jump out of his shoes. (Laughs). You ain't got <sup>that</sup> thing on have you?

SAM: Yeah, I just put it back on. It's a good story.

G S: Turn it off.

(pause in tape)

G S: ...with some trout. And he got trout in a couple of them old milk cans, you know? And hauled them into Elk River and dumped them in the creek. And then they made up their mind between the two families that there were both two Trumbull families, that they wouldn't fish until those trout got started. So they just kind of forgot about it. And I guess one of the boys one day came home and he said, "Dad, that creek is just full of trout." So they decided to fish. <sup>And</sup> After that, they were Eastern Brook, that they had. And that's how there come to be trout. There were no trout above the falls in those days. Not at all.

SAM: Trumbull got this from a fish&game man?

G S: Yeah. Down in Kendrick. The fish& game man <sup>and him</sup> had made up a date. So he... Well I'll tell you, I'll read this and when I get through...

(End of side D)