

MIKE STEFANOS

Interviewed by:
Sam Schrager

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I. Index

MIKE STEFANOS

Potlatch, Lewiston; b. 1895

sawmiller; runs shoeshine parlor

2 hours

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| Side A | | |
| 00 | 1 | He is from Drizin (formerly Dimalis), near Poros, Greece. He came to America at age 17. |
| 02 | 1 | The people were poor where he grew up. Their work. Food to eat. Mother worked outside only to harvest fruit, or when neighbors needed help. |
| 08 | 2 | Father came to America in 1910 to work on the railroad in California. He came home with enough money to buy a little coffee house. Food from the land they owned in Greece. Father said the work in America was hard. |
| 14 | 4 | His coming to America with two friends. The brother-in-law of one worked in a steel mill near Chicago; he tried to get Mike a shoeshine job, but in the meantime he was sent a ticket from his friend at Potlatch. |
| 20 | 6 | Working and living at Potlatch. Five guys hatched together, sharing responsibilities. His first job was catching edges. He had good chances to trade jobs for a short while to learn new jobs. His last job, when the mill shut down in '31, was lumber grader. |
| 25 | 9 | A friend showed him how to shine shoes when he was off work in Lewiston. He bought and sold half interest in a parlor in Lewiston after the mill shut down. Then he hung around a friend's garden near Asotin. Purchase of his present shoe shine parlor from a black who was in debt and wanted \$600. |
| Side B | | |
| 00 | 9 | Buying shoe shine parlor for \$400. Purchase of new chairs and foot rests. |
| 08 | 11 | Enough business in Depression for him and partner to get by. Most people who got shoeshines are working people or outsiders, not the rich. Many ruin shoes with cheap polish. He had three girls working during World War II. |
| 14 | 12 | Segregation of housing in Potlatch as company town. Greek community living in Potlatch - gambling, weekends with a friend in Spokane. Italians in Potlatch made wine. Mixing of Ital <u>i</u> ans and Greeks. Greeks mixed with Americans in sawmill. |

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| Side B (continued) | | | |
| | 24 | 15 | A Japanese man who gambled with the Greeks and was their friend – he sent them silk from Japan. Friendship meant that people could loan and borrow money, but today borrowers can't be trusted. (continued) |
| Side C | | | |
| | 00 | 18 | Men would borrow money to send back to old country. Most of his friends at Potlatch were Greek – sharing house with Gus Demus. |
| | 02 | 18 | Gus Demus went back to Greece to live after he retired from Potlatch, but his relatives got most of his money and he came back. Mike's relatives think he's rich because he's been in America for a long time. |
| | 11 | 21 | He sent \$500 for his sister's dowry, but she died of the flu, so he decided to sign the money over to his father. |
| | 17 | 22 | Married Greeks in Potlatch sent some money back to their families; some Greeks returned to Greece during the Depression and married. He had chances to marry. Family life in America is declining. We would be in a depression now without welfare and social security. Prostitution was necessary to make a living in the depression. Women who tried to borrow money from him. |
| | 28 | 25 | IWWs brought eight hour day and higher pay. They organized in the woods because conditions were so bad there, but not in Potlatch. A Four-L meeting in Potlatch: the general manager told the men that they were making enough, but spending it. |
| Side D | | | |
| | 00 | 27 | Laird's defense of foreign workers when men wanted to replace them during the depression. Sign language in the mill. |
| | 07 | 29 | Rate of work in mill. In those days men could learn various jobs by trading places. Greeks worked inside the mill, Italians outside. John Meyer was a good foreman who liked Greeks because they were dependable. He docked Chris a week for staying home on Christmas. Greeks and Americans got along very well. Groups got together to shoot dice. Most returned to Greece when mill shut down in October, 1932. |

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| Side D (continued) | | |
| 19 | 32 | It took a long time to learn English because men used sign language in the mill. Some saved money; others like him spent money but had a steady job until the mill shut down. He didn't miss Potlatch after he moved to Lewiston. His brief stay at Elk River until the winter snows. |
| 27 | 35 | In 1914 about 50 Greeks worked in Potlatch – where they came from. Why he stayed in America. Name of the shoeshine parlor. |

with Sam Schrager

September 1, 1976

II. Transcript

This conversation with Mike Stefanos took place at the New York shoeshine parlor in Lewiston, Idaho on September 6, 1976. There is considerable amount of street noise on this tape and for the first half hour of the tape the fan was on, making it rather more difficult to understand what was being said. The interviewer is Sam Schrage.

SS: D-r-i-z-i-n. And then *Dimalis*, what is that?

MS: That was before, and they changed it to ^{that name} *Poros*.

SS: And then it's *Poros* ?

MS: ^{Poros} The ship port in the main town. They got the post office there and ^{they go there} everything. And from there they distribute all around ^{the villages from Poros} *Poros*.

Poros is the main town. Everybody want to shop, they go to there. *The town*

SS: How old were you when you came over here?

MS: Well ^{sir, I'll tell you,} I might be about seventeen, I think.

SS: What year was it?

MS: 1914.

SS: Would you tell me what it was like growing up there? Near *Poros*?

MS: Oh nothing was growing up. Just ^{working} people. Nothing growing up.

The little village where I come from, they produced lots of lemons.

^{they produce lots of lemons,} They got lots of lemon trees. And they produce lots of olives. Olive

oil. And they produced some grapes. And they got

for the other ports. Not too much.

SS: A little what?

MS: For each guy they got two, three other

SS: Were the people poor?

MS: Yeah, the people, ^{was} they had something in pocket, something to working for. They didn't come to this country. 'Cause here *the country ain't so poor.*

So that's, we come to this country a little ^{earlier}, earn a little money, go back there and stay. We came over here and we stayed ^{over} here.

SS: When you first thought about coming, you figured you'd come back.

Your family, when you grew up, did you worry about having enough to eat?

MS: ^{NO.} We never worried. ^{about anything} You know, a lot of people lives with all of us.

And lots of dandelions bred, nobody. Wine ⁱⁿ the mill, they drink
^{wine} as did coffee or ^{whatever} ^{Buy for meat} ^{See.} ^{they might eat, not very}
 often. Only when they are some holidays.
 They go on this Poras, they got ^{they}, kills some in a little

town. They got little butchers and they kill some lambs, goats and
 some like that. ^{No beef} So but when you are working on a goat down in the field
 much. Working on grapes or olives or lemons. Is only we take with us
 for lunch little bread, smash bread. Sometimes fresh, sometimes
 dry. And cheese. And if you can afford it you get a little bottle of
 wine a week ^{when} you eat with your meal. Not ^{too} much. And evening only
 dinner, then other, they might serve, like now in the summertime when
 they got a garden. They cook some string beans or spinach or cauliflower.
 Or celery, something like that. No meat. ^{Meat we eat} Like Thanksgiving or Christmas.

SS: Then meat.

MS: Yeah. Or New Year's. Except if you got a few chickens, you own chickens.
 Then you can kill them and butcher them and have them. You can roast
 them or you can make a stew. And cook some macaroni or something else.
 You have a good meal then. We ^{never worried} for ^{any} thing 'cause we
 are raised with that. With olives and dry bread, cheese.

SS: In your family, did your mother work outside the house?

MS: No. Stay home ^{all time}. Except she's working during at the, when they harvest
 the grapes. Or the lemons. ^{this time.} Now they start when
 they going to cut the lemons. There's a mother ^{go and} help. Or she could
 do something else. Or some neighbors, they might need a little help.
 They call, she go. Help 'em or sometime she get a dollar a day, some-
 thing like that. Then was pretty good money. But now everything is pretty
 high over there. ^{High living.} Like they ^{do} here today.

SS: What did your father do for a living?

MS: My father, he was doing the same thing. Working here and there and
 then 1910 I don't remember exactly, they came on this country. He came

to this country then he was in California. He was working on railroad.

SS: Working on what?

MS: On railroad. Well he stayed he might be three four years, and he come home 1912, between '12 or '14, I don't remember ^{exactly}. Well he been in the money and he went and invested a little money he got from here and bought a little ^{coffee} house. ^{Back} There they got same time they save a little ^{coffee} by the . They got there like they got here, beer parlor. ^{back} There they got a little profit, but most of it they sell lots of wine for the people ^{where} they go ^{or they have a little fun.} or they drink. And he was met pretty good with that.

SS: He did pretty good over here to make enough money to by this.

MS: Yes, ^{Buy this.} Them days, one United States dollar was five dracmas over there. And it was a lot of money then, you know.

SS: So it was worth more than a dollar over there.

MS: Yes. Then he was making pretty good. And besides that they had ^{a little, not} ^{too much} to make his own way to last for a year til next year, sometimes they make, sometimes they go in and buy flour and make bread. There they make homemade bread, they do homemade bread. They don't buy bread. And we got two, three baskets of grapes. Good grapes. And some lemons, about a hundred ^{trees} of lemons. And we had 'bout 100 or 150 olive trees.

SS: This was all on the place you grew up on?

MS: Yeah.

SS: Was this before he came to America?

MS: Yes.

SS: He always owned it?

MS: Yes.

SS: But it wasn't enough to make a good living?

MS: No. See he can't make a living before and that's why he came to the United States. And he stayed three or four years. I don't remember now.

SS: Did he come with a bunch of friends?

MS: Yes.

SS: Did they stick together when they were over here?

MS: Well, ^{when} they come over here, it's pretty hard ^{ON} everybody, you know, but he was in California at Sacramento, California and all over California. And them days there were lots of people around, lots of Greeks, lot of people from the same town working the railroad and extra gang. And they go by *fine*. After he got a little money he come home. Well then maybe he little bit *left*. Cheap living. Like go out here during the depression. Went out,

SS: Did he talk to you about the living conditions for the guys on the extra gang? *Railroad work.*

MS: Yes. He says, "If you go over there, you're going to work. No fool around." Working ten hours a day. Working outside on the track, sun too hot too. Wind, *rain*. Got to work. When I came on this ^{COUNTRY}, 1914, I came with two friends of mine from the same town. Neighbors. One of them, he was only, he had two ^rtips, coming and going and coming and going to the United States. But he never stay very long. The first time when he came, he stayed two, three years and he come home. And then he stayed back there, I don't know how long and ^{then} he come back again. And he come home again. And the time ^{when} I come, he come back again, see. Well he always *time was* when he was here in the United States, he always go to California, ^{always} he was working in Sacramento. ^{they know} Lots of Greeks in there and they know guy from the old town and he was section foreman. Gang foreman. And it was easy for them to get a job. And one of them, he was superintendent. And that's way they were getting easy jobs. By working ten hours a day. We come together to New York. And from New York, we stayed two or three days there and then we came to Chicago. Well, that guy that ^{was} ^{ing} coming two or three times, he had a brother-in-law outside *from* Chicago, built them factories...

SS: Steel?

MS: Steel. ^{factories} He was working there. Was about 25 miles from Chicago somewhere, I don't know. So he called him up and he come to Chicago and he meet us. Well, we stayed a couple of days and he says "Where^e you go?" And his brother-in-law told him, "You go to Sacramento with his friend." His friend, the first time he come to this country like I did. So he asked me, "What you going to do?" So I told them, he knows them guys from the same town. ^{I says} "I wrote a letter to my friend at Potlatch, Idaho. Right there were Gus is now. See. And he were working in sawmill. Then I wrote him letter, if I come over here. And I had another cousin in Sacramento, I wrote him a letter. And this fella who came and meet us, he asked me, he says, "I know good friend of mine and he got a barber shop. He can put you in there shining shoes. And you ^{going to} make pretty good money." I says, okay, that's alright. Better work. Now I don't know how, that guy, ^{where he go} back to work and he wrote me a letter, delay, I don't know, something wrong with the letter and I didn't got it. But the same time, I had a wire from here from Potlatch from friend of mine and he wire my ticket! To come here in Potlatch. At the same time, I had another one from California and they asked me if I wanted to go to California and send the ticket. Already I got the ticket from him! From here. So this fellow who told me he know good friend of his, he's got a barber shop and he can put me there, put chairs there and start ^{working} shine shoes. I didn't show up and he come back to Chicago to find out what wrong.

SS: Where was this friend's shop?

MS: On the place where he was working.

SS: In Chicago?

MS: Yeah. Outside from Chicago, some of them big factories, you know. There was little town there, I don't know the town.

SS: He came back?

MS: He came back to find out why he wrote me letter and I didn't answer

it, I didn't go there and he like to find out. So I told him, I said no I never got any letter. Nothing. "O h yeah," he says, "I wrote to you and I got a job for you." I says, yeah, but look ahere. I got a wire and a ticket and I got to go down to Union Pacific and get a ticket ^{and go} to Potlatch. Going to Idaho. "Well," he says, "you want to go west?" I says yeah, I got to go over there, they got a job for me. On the sawmill. Well I come to Potlatch them days they got a good sawmill, the mill was working ten hours a day. Working nights, the mill working ^{two} days. Two shifts a day. Day and night. Ten hours a day.

Well anyway, I stay out, I work three or four days, I build up more money, he put me to work there. I was working nights. And I was getting two dollars a day. Them days two dollars a day was lots of money. And we was four, five guys, we had rented house, company, they had some houses. Potlatch used to be company town. Now is not. And we was baching together. And it was nice, eat everything we want. And them days everything was cheap. Was four or five of us baching. And it cost us eight, nine dollars a month board and room.

SS A piece?

MS: A piece! Yes. Them days. ^{You do now.} Now, course [^] one day is seven, eight dollars.

SS: You cook for yourself?

MS: Yes!

SS: Take turns?

MS: Each of us, "Well, you cook." I always wash dishes. The other fellow go to store and buy things. What we gonna use, what we gonna need. And the other fellow from night, ^{to} day, that I knew, you are cook next day its got to be the other guy. Three cooks. And it change every other day. One all the time he ^{was there, he} go and buy things. And the other one might say was the dishwasher, all the time.

SS: All the time. You didn't like to cook?

MS: Well I was young, you know. They was big guys. I didn't know how to cook.

And Gus he come in 1915 I guess.

SS: Who was your friend in Potlatch?

MS: He left, he went to California. I don't know if he's still living or die, I don't know.

SS: What was the first job that you had in the mill?

MS: The first job I had in the mill was catching edges. You know? Catching edges? Little box you know, inside, I mean behind ^{on there so} when the boards came from carriage and they got to go through the saws so they can take the edge out of there. So the little box go right down and they go they got a little table there and they go on the little table and from there they got them saws, 10, 15, 20, 22. ^{Every three, four feet.} And little bit at a time. All them boys, they like a change. Come here and they try this, taking my place for a little while. Load this up? I say sure. We trade, you know. Come get my job and I go get this. Little by little I learn the job there. ^{pretty soon} I went up and got another. The last when the mill shut down 1931, I was lumber grader. 'Cause I was ^{over} there in the lumber all the time.

SS: That's a pretty good job, isn't it?

MS: Yeah. And I was paid pretty good money too. And after the mill shut down, during the depression, ^{place, no} no job or nothing, then finally I had a friend of mine over here and he had a shoeshine parlor. And during the summertime, always the mill, they down for something, repairing. ^{For weeks.} Gave the people a little vacation. NO pay. No overtime. Straight time. And I always come down and visit him, ^{get a shoeshine} and I had nothing to do, go up and down the street. I was stranger. So he told me one day, "Come in , I'll show you how to shine the shoes. As you go up and down the street. You see anything, do anything. Come on. You can't tell someday you might open your own shop." Like I did. So I got in. Little bit everyday. I pitch in, stay for a week and then I went back to sawmill. When the

sawmill shut down, 1931, ^{in October} I came down here and I bought a place. I had a little money. I bought a little shoeshine parlor down the street. Half interest with another guy. So I keep him for about, til '32. Til April, June, July. Til April. 1932. So another fellow come along from Potlatch, we work together. And he like to get into the business. He told one day, "You want to sell out, I'll buy you out." He had more money than the other guy, see. I said, okay, I'll sell it to you. So I did sold my half interest to him. He had a partner. So I know friend of mine here, little farm outside by Asotin. Mile and a half from Asotin. You know where Asotin is? Clamass addition, you know the Clamass addition? He had a little place there, couple three acres. And he was produce then vegetables. ^{Carrots,} some beans and lettuce and radishes. Little bit of everything to make a living. In them days, all those vegetables are awful cheap! So we could make a living. Good thing. Living was pretty easy. For a dollar you could go to a store and buy anything you want to. When I had this place here with another guy I went to a ^{store}, for a dollar I buy bread, I buy pound a butter, I buy eggs, I buy a piece of meat too. But now you can't do that. You can buy now even a loaf of bread. See.

SS: So you went to work for him?

MS: No. I just fool around with him, ^{to pass} the time with him. So another fella from Potlatch, he didn't have a job. And one day I had a little car and I went to Potlatch to visit them boys. I didn't have nothing then. I sold my half interest. So one guy, he says, "Why don't you look down there, you might find place so we open up a little shoeshine parlor?" Wouldn't ^{have stuff} to ^{make} the money, but we can make a living. Can still fool around, go here, go there. You couldn't get a job then. Them days you couldn't get no job noplac. And he says, I told him I ain't got much money. Well, he says, "I got some." I put that much for my part. And he says (Some one interrupts) He says, "Never mind. I'll put the rest of it

if you can find place so we open up little shoeshine parlor." I come back here and I use to stay out there with a friend of mine and she live out there and I was helping them. ^{DURING} the summertime put in the vegetables. Now this place here that was colored boy, he had this place here. And he was behind the rent three months. And he had ^{owed} only ^{been} .150 dollars, something like that.

SS: He owed?

MS: He owed that? So I came and I asked him if he can sell out. Yes, he says. I says, how much you want? "Oh, six hundred dollars." I says, ^{to him} 600 dollars? That's too much money. "If you're looking for a business, it's six hundred dollars." "Alright. I didn't say yes or no."

(End of side A)

MS: So they told me, who own this building and I went. Now the owner, the real owner, he was living here and he had store down there where is now Burma Shave. But he had a friend of his and he had the real estate. And he was the fellow who collected rent and he rented it. He was doing the business. He had to sell to put up the rent or if he can get a little more rent, if he can tell the boy, ^{"If} you can't pay that much rent, you move out. I got somebody else. ["] So I went and I talked to him and he says, "No," he says. I told him ^{MY NAME}. He says, "Mike, now listen. Don't buy that place before you see me. Before you talk to me. Now its a good thing you come and talk to me. Don't buy it. Because he's behind three months. He ^{ows} some money, American ^{BANK}." "First Security Bank used to be American Bank then. I says, okay. I like to buy in, but he ask me for too much money. He ask, "How much money he want?" I says 600 dollars. 600 dollars I says is too much money and he got, none of the chairs was no good. I says, if I buy that place I have to throw everything out and buy new ones. Well he says, "How much you want to pay?" I tell you, I says, I give you four hundred dollars. It's going to cost me ^{Another} three, four hundred dollars to buy this and buy that. Whatever he

got in, I'm going to throw everything out. He says, "I'll buy it for you." I says, okay. He came and he talked to this fellow and he says, "You behind the rent three months. You owe money. ^{If} You got any money to pay me, alright. Or I got somebody else. To buy this place." Well that poor guy, he had no choice, you know. He give up. Nothing he can do. He says, "How much he offer?" He says, "Four hundred dollars and pay the debts." He get out about 75 to 100 ^{dollars} to the good. Somewhere there. I says okay. Well I jump in my car and I went to Potlatch again and I see a friend of mine and I told him I got a place. And I bought him for four hundred dollars. "Come on," he says, "let's go." He jump in the car, we come down here, we go down there and the boss, I ^{introduced} him my partner. He came and fixed the papers. So that was July, last part of July. And we could get that Tuesday, Wednesday, something like that. When they already closed the deal. So we can ^{take 'em over} Monday, for next week. We pay them 150 dollars. We got the money. We pay the man what ever they left, we give 'em this for it. ^{Get out.}

SS: Was that this place?

MS: Yes. Not this place, this building they had the business here. He was pay rent like I do. See. This building belong to somebody else. And a lease. Pay so much a month. See. And he never did pay, for three months he was behind the rent. We bought it from them then. It was during the depression. We don't have money. ^{enough} (Sam shuts off fan)

MS: When we closed the deal, we pay four hundred dollars. Guy who was taking care of this building, we give the rent and this and that. Well a pal of mine and I were over here and we throw everything out. And he went to Spokane and he ordered them chairs that you sit there. We order five chairs, eighteen dollars a piece, them days. Now you can touch them chairs. We throw everything. Then footrests, they didn't have any, had some woods, footrests here. We throw that out. And we

sent to Chicago and we got this. We bought this *salesman* from Oregon. Leather Company. We ^{was} getting polish, he comes every month. Around shoeshine parlors and sell polish and shoestrings and this and that. So I asked him one day, do you know where we can get some more footrests 'cause we going to throw out this goddamn thing, its no good. He says, "Yes. How many chairs you gonna have and how many pairs you want?" I says, there's a chair right over there, but I took 'em out four, five years ago for a new business. Says "I order some high *pairs* for you in Chicago. Gonna cost you twelve dollars a pair." That's pretty cheap then. Now you pay *five* and you can buy them now. Brushes then was seven, eight dollars, and pretty soon she jump twelve, fourteen, fifteen dollars and you can't find brushes like there was them days. It was different.

SS: Were people having their shoes shined during the depression?

MS: Yes! Not too many, but a few used to. I get one or two go by. You pay for *rent*, lights, newspaper, ^{polish} And we had a little ^{shack} about three four blocks. And I was ^{we} baching. House. *Store* by us.

And the end of the month we have about five, ten dollars, each of us.

SS: Who were the people having their shoes shined?

MS: All the people as far ^{as} that goes.

SS: It wasn't just the well to do people?

MS: NO. Working people, they never did get a shine. I tell you right now, I got most of the business from outside people. You understand? These people now, businessmen. They don't get shines like they used to them days. Few people I know they got a business, they come and they come and they give shine, once every two months. Maybe longer than that. But my business, I got some friends around, so I told them, some doctors, they get a shine, but not very often. Nothing like them days.

SS: But even in them days the wealthy people didn't come for their shoe shine?

MS: Well, store managers, they make pretty good money. They never did shine

their shoes, they don't care ^{how} they look like. They shine it themselves. I don't know. Like I told you, I got more business from outside. Like the working people. Like you and somebody else. The rest of the people, they shine their own shoes. Because they got some goddamn cheap polish, spray. Lot of people their own shoes, they used the goddamn polish. They don't know how. ^{to do} And sometimes they bring me in a pair of shoes and you want me to take ^{that stuff} out and clean 'em up and shine 'em up. I says no. You put this on, you take 'em out. no. I can't do it.

SS: At the time, did you think you might go back to Potlatch after the depression?

MS: No. Because I had this place here. And I was my own boss. I was making pretty good then. Business picking up a little bit.

SS: Did business keep picking up as the '30's went on?

MS: Yes. After '37 and '38. But fall off '40, '42. During the war I had three girls working here. Yes. Shining shoes, three girls. I had five chairs. I put those chairs there, they last me to 1942, they finally wear out. And I know friends down here, they got a shoestore and I went down there and he had some like this, so I told him, can't you ^{order} me five chairs like yours? He says yes. in Chicago. I says I can wait two weeks. So he did order some. Cost me about twelve dollars a piece. And I took them out and I put these in.

SS: Three girls working, there must have been a lot of business.

MS: Yes. Yes, there was a lot of business.

SS: I wanted to ask you some about Potlatch and living there. Gus told me that the housing for people that had come from eastern Europe was different. Separate from the main part of town.

MS: Oh no. You know Potlatch was a company town. You understand?

SS: Yeah.

MS: Everything run by company, store, everything like that. All the big shots they were living up the high places.

SS: Nob Hill there.

MS: Oh yeah. And them houses where Gus is living now, they build them up I don't remember when ^{in the hell} they did that.

They had it down in the flat, you know, down in the flat pretty close in that pond down there where they throw the logs there. They had a company he build a big place 14 or 15 rooms, you know, long. And they had with a partition and you got three or four or five people there with two bedrooms and kitchen. That's all. Some place to cook and someplace to eat. And we had two bedrooms. And after that, they tear 'em down and they start a fire down there.

SS: Did you know about that fire?

MS: ^{No, I don't.} After they got the fire down there, then he built up them houses up there where Gus lives now. Down the street from Gus, across the street and up the street.

SS: Gus told me there was some kid that didn't know about the fire and started the fire by mistake. He dumped out the ashes.

MS: ^{Them} kids, of course, they can do anything. As far as that goes, they don't know any better. They dump something outside, they start a fire. Especially, you know them houses down there they build out of the lumber. Nothing else but lumber.

SS: Did the guys mind living in a place that was crowded? Kind of separated off. It doesn't sound too good that they separated the people.

MS: Well they had different places for the Greeks. And a different places for the Italians. And a different places, different building for the Japanese. Them days. And Swedes too. ^{They mix people.}

But we had one section, all Greeks. Was there, that long building there

and they had them all ^{divided} up. Live all Greeks, Italians, Japanese.

SS: Did the guys like that?

MS: There's nothing you can do, nothing else to do, you know. You got to stay someplace. They didn't have anything else to go and stay. You can go up to Onaway, but too far to go back and forth, you know. You can go out to Onaway, you can find little place over there. But hell, that's too far, you know. But there was rooms, they got 'em down there when they built up the big long houses there. Big buildings, I don't know how many rooms. They're nice rooms, two nice bedrooms. One room. You can eat and sit down and talk. It was pretty nice. We keep it nice and clean. Every Sunday we clean the floor and wash the floor and everything.

SS: Was there a place to meet besides in the houses?

MS: We go together today

At your house. Next day at mine. There was about four people live at each house.

SS: What did you do in your spare time? Did you gamble much?

MS: We gambled. We played a little poker. ^{We played} A little dice. And we played cards like in old country.

SS: Old country games?

MS: Yeah. So that's how we passed the time. And sometimes we get two, three together and we used to know somebody, he was engineer. He was ^{RUNNING} the logging train who carried logs from Bovill to Potlatch. And he had some friends or relations at Spokane, he always go to Spokane ^{to visit}. Every two weeks, every Saturday. Saturday night. We go together and stay overnight in Spokane and then next day. Then come Monday morning...

SS: Then back to work. There was still quite a bit of booze in Potlatch even though they weren't supposed to sell it?

MS: Oh, you mean bootlegging. Well of course, them days as far as that goes, there was bootlegging any place you go. Specially down here there

were lots of bootleggers. But in Potlatch there was some Italians. They were bootleggers. They ^{was} making some wine. Grapes wine. No from, make the wine out of the, grapes, dried grapes. Raisins. And we was making wine. And we'd go and ~~get~~ together. They know each other and the Italians, they mix 'em up. They were not scared of us. We go visit them and they always give us drink and a little, ^{buy a drink} and we had a lot of fun. Sometimes we play poker together and we get along fine. We had no troubles.

SS: So you spent time together?

MS: Yeah.

SS: What about mixing with the local...

MS: People?

SS: Townspeople, yeah.

MS: That's easy. We mix down where we go to work. See, if you're working out at the mill, it's all kind of people. As far as that goes, in the sawmill, most of 'em were all ~~G~~reeks. In the sawmill. There's some around, these American people. Down outside in the planer, or the box factory, it was all kinds.

Its easy to get acquainted in a small town like Potlatch. We see each other every day, we go to work every day and have the money, and every noontime we go home and eat. Where Gus is living now. At noontime we go and eat dinner. We go back to work at one o'clock ⁱⁿ the evening. So we make all of us together, specially, you know, Swedes, Italians and Greeks would get together, play cards or drink sometimes. Not to get drunk. No trouble, no nothing.

And there was some, right across from Gus was great big building and that was boarding house and that was all Japanese. Nothing else. All Japanese living there. And there was one ^{only} Japanese, he was associating with us because he was a gambler that fella and he liked to gamble. He was an awful nice guy, son of a bitch. We had a lot of fun with him too, you know. He don't like to stay with his people. He liked to

come and associate with us. You see?

SS: But the others pretty much stayed together?

MS: Yes. Only one guy. That guy. He was an awful nice man. And he liked us and we liked him too. Especially we play. He don't drink much. We play, he play, nice, clean. Now I'll tell you something: He left that job and he went to Japan. Old country. So friend of mine and I, I told him, "Jimmy, where you go back," he went by 'Jim', "when you go back to old country, if we give ^{you} money you gonna send us three gowns of material?" That is, that time you know, material, silk material. To make a shirt. We know some Japanese woman and she can do it. "Ya, ya, ya," he says "yes". And we says, "How much money you want?" "I'll take three dollars you and three dollars you, not to much. I will send you three yards silk material so you can make two shirts." Now that guy, when he went back over old country, ^{my friend} he did send us.

SS: Nothing?

MS: He did! Sent us the material. What do you think about that?

SS: That's good. Didn't you think he would?

MS: Sure! We had ^{confidence} because he was good man. He would borrow money lots of times when we'd play. He liked to play. Payday come, he pay. Sometimes we'd borrow from him, we'd pay him. Them days everything. In those days, if you got a friend you had a friend. These days you have no friend. These days, you friend is green stuff. You got to have greenstuff. You got a friend. No greenstuff, no friend. He went back to old country he send us silk material.

SS: In those days money had nothing to do with being a friend?

MS: No. Them days a friendship, I'll tell you this: Now, we know each other we work together ^{there a long} time. And sometimes you need a little money. I might say to him, thirty dollars. And he said, "Can I borrow thirty dollars til payday, I want to do something or I want to send it home." Next days comes, I got the money. We don't say no to this one. Payday comes,

he pay back. But these days, you know, if you've got a good friend and you loan him dollar, you never get 'em back. If you go down the street and he sees you coming down, he cross the street, goes the other side. Them days it was a different life. These days it's different, my friend, these days it's different. ^{EN}Them days you got a friend and if you ask him for fifty dollars, he give it to you, and you get 'em back. These days you can't. These days people, ^{they don't care.} they never return, loan somebody two dollars. I'll tell you what, there was a friend here, ^{that} was Italian fella, he's coaching American Legion baseball. And he come one day and he *always* come *get a shine*. "Can I have two dollars today? And I give it to you until tomorrow, after a week or two" and I said okay. Finally he give it to me back. He told me, he give it back. A month or two something like that. He come back again. Short little money. Them days ^{two dollars} you can go away, but now you can't. I give it to him, two dollars, because I give it the first time and he return. I said his credit is good. So the next time he came I gave him two dollars. That to him come back, I don't know three or four months. He come in to get a shine. I never ask him about the two dollars I give him. He never did offer or he never says anything. "I got no money and I know I owe you two dollars and I will pay you later." I never say nothing. I say customers. And he might be someday here too. If he do, alright, what the hell. Well in a year or two he come down one day, got a shine and he paid me for the shine and he said, "Can I borrow two dollars Mike? And I give it to you next week." So I told him no. Because you give, you borrow two dollars the first time and you return it to me. The second time, I says to him, you come back and I'll give you two dollars and I'll roast you for *customer* the first time you come here after five six months and now you want me to give you two dollars. You think I forget those two dollars I give to you? I don't forget and I don't *care* either. Some people are alright, some people aren't. Down at

Potlatch ^{where} I was working at Potlatch, you can borrow money. Somebody need a little money til payday and ...

(End of side B)

- MS: ...can I borrow twenty five dollars? Til next payday? And he give him hundred dollars, something like that, or a hundred a fifty dollars send him back over in the corner, you know. Payday come and he got and he pay back. You can ^{it} get 'em now. Anymore.
- SS: Twenty five dollars is quite a bit of money to loan.
- MS: Them days.
- SS: Of your friends in Potlatch, were most of them Greeks?
- MS: Uh huh.
- SS: They were the people that you spent most of your time with.
- MS: Of course, we all live together. Not in one house, you know, the houses now. Gus and I was living together, I don't know how long. ^{Gus,} he had a house by himself and he had a brother. And his brother, he went haywire. So he stay along. It was about three or four houses above where the house he got now. Way up in the same row you know. And then we had a house right next to Gus. And we had, the four of us. Living there. There was three from his hometown and and myself. We get along fine. So after his brother go haywire you know, he ask us if we got enough room to come and stay with us. We said yes. He came. There were five of us. We had two bedrooms and two beds in one room.
- SS: Is that the house Gus has got now?
- MS: No no. That was right next to him.
- SS: He told me that used to be his house.
- MS: Right next to him. He move in that house where he is now. Next to him. He bought it from the company. Company sell the house and he buy it and *he went back to old country for a visit.* But I guess he had a notion to stay. Back to old country. But he find the things different. He

bought himself a brand new car. ^{A Pontiac, I guess} He pay 35,400 dollars, something like that. And finally he go back to old country, he sold that pretty cheap. Two thousand dollars, something like that. He lost money on that. Because he figured out if he go back there, he have to stay back there. When he went back there, he find different, so he don't like it, so he come back. He come back broke! Good thing, he told me ^{came.} when he I went to visit him you know. And I asked him how you like the old country. Did you meet the fella who we stayed together, you was from the same town and Gus you know. Neighbors, you know. He said, "Yeah, we did. When they find out I was coming they come and meet me. When I get out of the ^{bus} you know. ~~But they're too old and poor~~ "And he says, "I'll tell. That's alright to go back there and stay if you got a little money. And you stay away from your relations, you be better off."

SS: They were asking him for money back there.

MS: Absolutely. Well, ~~they're in luck,~~ he says he's got a sister and a nephew back there. And of course, he was living in a hotel. In Athens. Of course he go to place where he born, you know. That's a long way from Didima. So he went there and visit the people where they were and they don't stay very long where he living in that place, and he come back and he went to Athens. And then he went back to his Didima again on Easter Sunday. And back there on Easter Sunday, they celebrate, ^{they} got lambs, roast lambs you know. ~~Barbequed~~ the lambs you know. And they got some music and dancing. Got a lot of fun. And he enjoyed that better than anything else. See. Yeah he told me. When he came I went and seen him. Well he had a nephew he was going there someplace, he was working for government and he got a sister there. They had an apartment. Gus, he was stayed the hotel. So his nephew, he asked him to go ^{to} stay with him at hotel. (laughs) He don't like to stay with his, because Gus he had lots of better room you know. He spent the money. He like to live like men.

He's not stingy or anything like that. He's a good man. So he says, "Well what I'm going to do? So I told him to come and stay with me." ^{pretty soon he says,} He went and he rented a motel room. Or furnished apartment, he got apartment. Furnished with everything, Left it, like they got 'em over here. For 70 dollars a month. And then you got to pay United States money. ^{he told me} Money, dollars. And the ^{one} pay ^{in advance,} month too, you see? He told me. Well, I give them money, they are not satisfied and they want ^{I go} more. Down in the restaurant, we get together he says, and nephew, this and that relations. Then we ^{get} together, I pay everything. That cost money. And give me, give me, all the time. The last time he says, "I tell ya, ^{that trip} I was broke. Good thing," he says, "I had my ticket round trip!" (laughs) Yeah. He was, when he go back there, he was going to stay. But he had quite a bit money and he was doing pretty good with social security. He sold his car, he sold ^{that} house that was next to him, you know. And when he came back he went to Moscow and from Moscow he bought that house where he lives now, see.

SS: How many years ago was that?

MS: No I can't remember.

SS: Was it in the fifties or sixties?

MS: Something like that.

SS: Just after he retired.

MS: Yes. He retired ^{first} and then he went back over.

SS: So it must have been 15, 20 years ago.

MS: Something like that. Maybe fifteen years ago. Well he says, "It's a good thing I had the ticket round trip and I had not much money with me to come back." — A good thing he had some bonds. ^{like} bonds, that he had with him. And he went United States Counsel in Athens. And he give it to him and he send back over here and he cash 'em, they give him money. He says, "No more. I don't write ^{I don't do} nothing, 'cause everytime you write, saying same things, "Gimme." ^{like} My nephew. They think we rich 'cause we ^{be here} in this country long time, we came with our money by the bushel." He says, "Send me, send me." Oh no, he says.

"I've sent them, got nephews there, I send them every Christmas. Send fifty dollars just for Christmas, spend for Christmas. And that's all. No letters no connection. All they want, they write a good note and they get along better. They ask me to go back there to stay with them. We take care of you. I says, I wrote to one fella and I told him, I know what kind of care you're going to take care of me. You want to take me for that green stuff."

SS: When you were first at Potlatch, did you send money back to your family then?

MS: Yes. I sent back to my family, yes. I did send lots of money too.

SS: Did you send it regular?

MS: No no, every pay check. Every three or four months, you know. I sent twenty five dollars, thirty dollars, ^{fifty dollars.} Only one time. That was 1918 or 1919, something like that. I had a sister back there, you know. And she was old enough to get married. And back there they got a bad system. If you got a daughter, ^{who want to MARRY} you got to give them something, money or property to him to marry your daughter. And it's not like it's here. But now it's like over here. They get together and they love each other, they have it made. But them days you got daughter and somebody come up, they want to have something, too. thousand drachmas, five thousand. You got to have something, ^{land}. All the time its gimme, gimme, see? So my father wrote me letter, he said he was a fine boy and ^{he's well to do} and he got around to marry your sister on such a day. Such a month. So we need five hundred dollars. Five hundred dollars, you know, was a lot of money. ^{then} But I had a little money in the bank safe, I had it in the bank you know. And I went and I draw check from Potlatch State Bank in Potlatch.

SS: Who?

MS: Potlatch State they used to be there. 'Cause it was old company town, everything, you know, company, it was owned all by Weyerhaus, ^(er) you know? So I got the check and I got the check for him, you know. Not my father or her name.

SS: In her name.

- MS: Un huh. But that time if you remember, I don't know, if you are young I don't know, the flu of 1918, the big flu, lot of people get it. By the time ^{when} I send the letter, you know, my sister's gone, she died. She had the flu you know. She and my father together but my father finally get off. He got well and my sister died. Now the check was only her name. They can't cash it. So they send my check back. Well I was little ^{bit} upset that time. *Disappointed*
- SS: You were upset?
- MS: Yeah. So I says to myself, now I go down to bank and I told them I sent this check to my father and everything. I sent him this check to go, might as well send it back again. So I sent the money over. Need a little money. Was sick you know, during that year. Lots of sickness like you are down here. And that's the way it goes. But that bank is now at the Potlatch. I think it's now Idaho First National. I think.
- SS: Or First Security.
- MS: I don't know if it's First Security or Idaho First. ^{National} I believe it is Idaho Bank. That's Potlatch, he went into business with this Idaho First National Bank.
- SS: I wanted to ask you about the women. It seems like they were all bachelors or some men had wives back in the old country, but there were no women living in Potlatch.
- MS: Some married guys you know, they had a woman back home, they had families back home. But see they make a little money and they send a little money every month. Whatever they can. Fifteen, twenty dollars was pretty good money then. (noisy) They try to keep their family alive. And for the single guys, ^{was different} lot of guys was all married. All of us single guys, we are single. The rest of them are all married. After the mill shut down in 1932 some guys from ^{Guys'} town go to California, that was old enough, they got married.
- SS: Most of they guys went back. Did all the guys that were married and have their wives back there, did they all go back?

MS: Not all of them.

SS: Some stayed?

MS: Yeah, some stayed. Some guys I know and we lived together, I know they went back, some of them don't. Sometimes the people a little bit different. You can't tell these days. But some of them, they did go during the depression over here, you know, they have a little money. Everything shut down, they couldn't get a job noplace. So they decide and they go back home. And somebody, they come back during the WWII when the German was took over the Greeks, Germans and Italians. And some guys, when they left this country and went back there, there was American ships. So they come back. They were in the Greek ^{coast} in Athens, and they show them ^{they WAS citizen} American and everything, even if they didn't have no money. But they give them the ticket when they come and they got a job. They pay the ticket. ^{And go} Because someone send the money for them to go.

SS: Take the men that had the wives back in Greece, did that make their families well off by sending back the money? Did that make a big difference?

MS: Well at the time, yes. If you got a little money you got to eat a little better, you got to dress up a little better. And if you are no money, you know how it is. Like you or me, if you got any money and you see something you like, you buy it, if you got any money and you see something you like, you can buy it. Or same thing, you go to store or you go to butcher shop or anything. If you got any money you see something you like and you buy it. Same thing back over in Greece.

SS: Like you and your friends that weren't married, you guys didn't have much of a chance to marry over here, did you?

MS: Well yes, I had a chance. Two ^{three} chances. But you can't get along, you can't satisfy the girls these days. I had a chance. To marry a couple American girls. I had a chance to marry one. We don't. I was, I don't know. I might treat 'em too good.

SS: What?

MS: Treat them too good. Nowadays you treat them rough they like you better.
^{you treat them good, and no!}
 ^ So I decide just the hell with it! And I says to myself, now I'm going to
 stay single and love 'em and leave 'em. I said this as a young man. I got
 a lot of ^{girls}. Good girls, young girls. So they are married, but ^{just the same}
 they don't care if they are married or not. These days married, it seems
 to me many, they like young women, this country, these young girls, they
 can not say. Especially if you talk to some girls. And if you know
 a little bit of bs,, they lay down.

SS: In those days, was there lots of whorehouses in Spokane?

MS: Yes. Here too, there were lots of it.

SS: Lewiston too.

MS: Yes! Sure! Here too. But no more since World War Two come, ^{they} clean 'em up. But
 you find lots of girls here. Lots of girls, young girls too, ^{MARRIED} girls, they
 come up. I don't know when they come to this country. Girls you know they
 like to step out. American ^{girls}. Young girls, 22, 24, 27, 30.

SS: But it didn't use to be like that in the old days.

MS: No, here, it never be like that. You see, during that depression, my friend,
 we was different. People then, they didn't have money, there wasn't, they
 are not like these days, now we are in depression and we cut 'em off this
 welfare and social security, just the same as it was them days. You know
 that itself, you know. But this welfare and this social security, it save
 a lot of people. ^{To go home} They might eat once or twice a day, but they don't go
 home. But them days they didn't ^{have ANYTHING} We used to go from Potlatch and we used
 to go to Spokane Saturday night and you see, if we go a little late, 10:30
 eleven o'clock, you get two, three girls. You can take 'em ^{for} all night, stay
 for all night for two dollars. ^{That was different} Cause they were hard times then. So the
 girls got to do something.

SS: To make a living.

MS: To make a living.

SS: Were some of them nice people?

MS: Well, you don't know if there was good people or not. It's pretty hard to tell. But now, I'll tell you this now, ^{for} my time, I don't trust them. If I don't know the girl real well, I don't trust 'em. I know a long time ago, about two, three weeks ago, after long time, I was walking up the street and I saw this girl coming right outside there. Good looking girl. And ^{well} was dressed up, ^{she} had nice pantsuit, you know. ^{She looked good.} She don't know me. ^{I see her and} ^{she is shaking her head. They have} poolhalls down there and you go alone sometimes, sometimes she's got a friend. And I was walking, I never did talk to her before. And she says "How about you give me twenty dollars and I pay to you on payday?" I says "Can I borrow twenty dollars from you and I give it to you pay day?" I says My boss, he didn't pay me yet. That's all I told her. (chuckles) Honest to God, I says, my boss, he didn't pay me yet. And other day woman come in, and she come in here once was gonna get a shoeshine. And one day he come in, and he was drunk son of a, and she says, "Mike." You get pretty close to her and she smell like a brewery. I said, now what do you want? She said "You know me, I come in here to get a shine." I said, yes, I know you, you come in here to get a shine. What do you want? She says, "Five dollars. I need five dollars, I pay to you sometime next week." I says, no payday. ^{yet} Payday no come. Boss says no money til payday. So its different ^{here} now than ^{even} it was then, you know.

SS: I wanted to ask if you remember the IWWs?

MS: Yes. Them was the guys who bring these fellas and bring these hours down to eight hours a day and more money. They were the first guys, IWW.

SS: I heard they were a good union, but I heard they didn't get too far in the town of Potlatch.

MS: No.

SS: They were mostly in the woods.

MS: Yes, they start ^{from} woods. Not the woods, working long hours, no showers no clean beds and and that's where they started, see.

Now you go out to the woods and everything, they got it ^{better} like you stay in the Davenport. Good food, good room, good beds, shower and everything. More money, shorter hours, overtime, doubletime. Make a lot of money. But them days, no. The IWWs they do that.

SS: In the mill, did many of the guys join?

MS: No we never did have that kind in the mill.

SS: Never got the cards in the mill?

MS: Only in the sawmill we had Four L. YOU know that one.

SS: I thought that was the company's union?

MS: Yes, that was company union.

SS: That didn't do anything for the men.

MS: No. Sometimes we ask for more money, they says the union men come from Oregon, there was the headquarters from and we get together. They had a hall and they hired men, they still got the hall up there where that store is now. That bank, they had a hall upstairs. Such a day and such a night and seven o'clock or eight o'clock we go there and have a union meeting and fella from union come and give a speech. General manager gonna give a little speech. All the people who work, we go there and listen what the hell he's gonna says. See if they can give us some little more money. When they start, they started a *fine excuse* and the general managers says, "You fellas got enough money, why you spend it." Yeah, that's what he says. "You spend that money, thousand dollars and you everything went down, you know. You see? They find some excuse not to give us little raise, you know.

SS: The union was his union.

MS: Yes!

SS: That's not what a union is supposed to...

MS: No. We were paid dollar more, fifty cents more. I don't know.

SS: Well what did you...

(End of side C)

MS: Them people, they ^{WAS} come pretty close to the depression you know and there was not much jobs for them. A lot of people was out of work. And they like to get in to take us.

SS: Who did?

MS: American people, you know. They didn't have a job and they tried to take us ^{boys} out of a job and get in themselves. See. So Mr. ^{Laird} you know, they call up union one night, that hall where everybody come. And the manager want to give good speech tonight. So we went there and he started talking and he said, "Now you fellas complain about the Greeks working, the Italians working, the Japanese working, the Swedes working. And you fellas stay out to work. You got no job. Now. You had a job, You was working there. You make a little money and you quit your job and you went a different place to get a job and you can't find no job and you come back. And that fella who's working in the sawmill, them Greeks there, they been working there for long time. And we can't get them out of there and put you. Or you or you. You had a job and you left it. And you go in a different place and get a ^{another} job where you get more money. And now you come back here and you like us to take them Greeks off or the Italian off or the Japanese off ^{them jobs} and to put you fellas. That's impossible. We can't do that. Because time, when we need them boys, we have 'em right on the job. But you didn't stick on the job. You ^{fellas} like to fool around. But them guys, they stick on the job. And we can do nothing with you fellas." He was a nice man. No more complaining or nothing.

SS: Was there other times that you can remember that they tried to discriminate against the foreign people?

MS: No, that didn't happen, nothing like that. No discrimination or nothing.

SS: I think Gus said that you guys didn't feel like you could use the gym too much. Didn't have much to do with athletics.

MS: No, we never did, no. We never did go there because we were, we didn't have

no time and we don't know much English to speak and we fool around ourselves
 — in the evening in the hall or the house or play cards or
 this or that and we didn't have no time to go in the gym. Now take this
 sawmill. We work in the sawmill, ^{there} you can't hear or you can't talk one
 person to the other. If you do, you like to go and talk right in his
 ear ^{be} cause there's so much noise. You couldn't hear nothing there. Its
 only if you have somebody to ask you or you ask him "What time is it?"
 You know, day. Well, if its ten o'clock he says, like this mean ten o'clock.

SS: Shake of the hand.

MS: Yeah. He goes like this, see. That mean ten o'clock. This shake down mean
 eleven.

SS: Two fingers down.

MS: Yeah, eleven. (chuckles) And this was twelve.

SS: Closed hand with thumb.

MS: Closed, you have them like this. Fingers too. Twelve. Or quarter, I say
 quarter to nine, eight would be that way. Seven would be that way. Eight
 be that way. Nine was one finger down. Seven this way, eight this way
 nine ~~that~~ way. Now quarter, if you say quarter to ten, says quarter, up here
 back. Understand me?

SS: Yeah.

MS: Or quarter to ten, before ten see. You would talk in sign language.

SS: Could you say other things besides the time?

MS: Sure, you work like I told you the gesture you got there
 to ask somebody the time, or if you wanted to ^{go to toilet},
 somebody come in to check, you

SS: You draw a circle on your stomach.

MS: Yeah. (laughs) You see? Got lots of things you know. When you're working in
 the mill especially. Too much noise, you can't hear anything.

SS: Was working in the mill hard?

MS: Them days was pretty easy, These days pretty hard. They change the work

all around.

SS: You didn't have to work too fast or nothing?

MS: No. Sometimes you do. It all depends how the lumber come in. Someplaces you got to working pretty fast, some places pretty slow. But it wasn't much because the lumber was coming ^{only} one inch boards, you know. Sometimes we get an order for five quarters or six quarters. Or eight quarters. Is only little ^{hard} job ^{was} taking this timber out to rip when they make a four by six or a six by six or six by eight. Otherwise it has to be... Them days it was pretty easy. ^{job} That mill there was like a school. You can go around anyplace. Now you can't.

SS: You could look and see how its done.

MS: Oh yes, yes. *But now you can't.*

SS: You weren't held in one place.

MS: Yeah, sure, you could move around.

SS: Was it harder, did a foreign person have to work harder than an American to get ahead in the mill?

MS: In the mill, they got different ^e jobs. Not very hard. But Italians, you know, all them Italians, they worked outside the mill in the lumber.

SS: The greenchain?

MS: Green chain or dry kiln or a planer. Them are hard jobs, you know. ^{pretty heavy.} But not inside the mill. That was nice job.

SS: How come they were outside the mill? *The Italians.*

MS: Well, they had been outside and finally they could get a job outside. They can't get in the mill like I did, like Gus did. We had a job there and we stayed ^{there} working for fifteen, twenty years. See? So no chance for anybody else to get in. But outside they could get in.

SS: Most of the Greeks were inside the mill?

MS: All inside, nobody was outside. Only one guy, one Greek fella, they moved from some mill, they took him down to the plant there and it was only

pull saw, they cleaned the lumber there. They put him in that lumber. It cut four feet or two feet. Big notch. All the Greeks was working inside the mill. Nobody worked outside.

SS: So you really had the better jobs .

MS: Oh yes, we had the better job, you bet. And we had a good foreman then too.

SS: Who was that?

MS: John Meyers. He liked the Greeks because he knew he had somebody on his job. See? Every morning when the whistle blows, seven o'clock, you go up and down, he ^{look around, he} see everybody on his place. See? And he didn't worry about anything. Sometime start night shift. He ain't got enough people to work. He comes and he says, "Mike, do you want to go to work tonight in such place 'cause we're short of men." I guess so. I'll go work, ^{No} overtime, straight time. Some different jobs were for the other fellas, so they, we helped some times. Not overtime, but sometimes it was a short hand. So that's had a nice foreman and you know one time, that was Christmas time.

Sometimes it's really below zero, those evenings, it would be Christmas or New Year, ^{or THANKSGIVING} that mill got to go. He want to shut down because they can do next day when they start, you see them ^{chains} busting. For such a frost see.

SS: What would bust?

MS: The chains. See. So below zero. One time was Christmas. So the foreman, he got a board, instead they get up the top here you know. Everybody go take that. Got a . And he like all

they got to cut and ship 'em out of the mill and go down the green chain and ship 'em out. Go there and he says then we run tomorrow. Christmas Day. So one fella, he didn't come Christmas. He stay home without asking the foreman. Because he knows it don't do him any good to ask him because he don't like him. They needed him to be there. All of us, we go to, and you

know, he didn't come to work because it was Christmas and he was Christian...
 And us Greeks you know, we celebrate *the name* here they celebrate the
 birthday. We celebrate the name day.

SS: His name was Christ?

MS: Because it was Christmas. We don't want to work that day because we
 celebrate Christmas and his name was Christ. So the foreman was coming, we
 saw him down there, he looked down there, he was working the trimmer, you
 know, and he asked fella, the boss, he says, "We're one
 man short today." This fella. said the boss got mad. He sent
 somebody else to take his place. The next day, this Christian, he come to
 work. Foreman, he see him, he was only job there. He get up, he go there.
 "Good morning Christ." He ^{+talk} like that. He said, "Good morning John." "What's
 the matter you yesterday? What you doing, you didn't come to work yesterday?"
 "Oh" he said, "I didn't feel very good yesterday." See, he got an excuse.
 "Don't feel very good?" "No," "Well you better go home and stay one week
 to be well and come back next week." (laughs) They look at him.

SS: He could have canned him.

MS: Yeah but he didn't want to can him, because he's been working a long time
 ago, you know. But you get the penalty. See. Well he says, "You don't feel
 very good, you better go home. Stay out a week, you'll get well and come
 back Monday."

SS: If you and American wanted the same job in the mill...

MS: We get along fine.

SS: But say you wanted the same job. Would he have a better chance to get it?

MS: If I quit, yes. But if he quit, I take it. Because I know it, see?

Because I used to work for him, you know? Sometimes we change a job, the
 jobs you know. See? Do you understand? Because I like to learn that job you
 got. So he give me change. It's okay. I change with you a half an hour. He
 let me for a half an hour, see? And he like to come on my job because my job
 is more light than his job. But I like to learn and he says yes. And if it

happen that he quit, I got a chance to get the job. You see? Like that.

But not the other way. We get along fine. We never did have no arguments.

We never did have no fighting or anything. We get along fine, very nice. No arguments, no hard feelings, no nothing. We are everybody good friends.

SS: Did you guys joke around much?

MS: Oh hell yes!

SS: Play jokes on each other?

MS: Oh yes. We was getting along fine. We are no arguements or no hard feelings. We mix sometimes Sunday we had some trees still they got some trees outside of Gus'. We shoot the dice down on the ground you know. See. And it mix Greeks Americans, Swedes, Japanese. Only that Japanese fella play dice. Down on the ground.

SS: Could a guy lose his whole paycheck like that?

MS: Sometimes. Yeah. You bet. Yessir.

SS: Did most of your friends stay for a long time in Potlatch, or did they, was there a lot of turnover, did many of the Greeks leave and go some place else.

MS: All them guys who left to go back to Greece, they went ^{time} the mill shut down, 1931, in October. Because they get no place, they get no job and if they stay, they gonna spend all their pay. The money they got. Still they get a little older and pretty hard to get a job. They left ^{and go} _{home}

SS: Did it take most of the people a long time to learn to speak English?

MS: Well, I'll tell you, now, if you mix with these people, all the time, you can learn English quick. And if you working in the mill like you would be for a long time, you know, you can speak normal with your friend. Like I told you, you got to go with signs, you know. You can learn any language. You can learn that. You got to mix. To learn the language. Otherwise you can't. Like inside the mill. You can hear nothing, all with the signs, you know. Except afterward working, in the evening you go to the store or walk up

the street all together. Yeah we talk a little English. You can learn English if you don't mix.

SS: When did you get a chance to learn?

MS: When ^{you} ~~^~~ mix. Mix with the people. You keep talk English.

SS: So you learned when you had to come down here?

MS: Yeah. Because here all the time you got to do business with ^{these} ~~^~~ people. They speak English. You can talk a little bit at a time, little bit here, little bit there. You speak English all the time. If you working in the mill you can speak English. You can learn it by yourself.

SS: Did most guys save money?

MS: They do, they did. *Yes.*

SS: Put some away?

MS: Some guys they was this tight, they don't spend any money, they save. And some guys, like Gus, we ^{a little} ~~^~~ too loose. We spend money. Money for us didn't mean anything. But remember this, my friend, we never stay anything *little bit. Alright.* Today we got steady job like we have. We know that. We went to Spokane one day, we might get in a game playing dice. We might lose twenty dollars or a hundred nd ~~^~~ fifty dollars. Win ^{back} ~~^~~ everything. Because we know when we go back the next day we got a job and go to work. But we never looked ahead though. Like the mill shut down and the most of us, we went broke. You see the point? And them fellas who are stricter, They don't go noplac, they had the money. That's the way it goes.

SS: Did you miss Potlatch when you left it?

MS: Oh yeah. No. Because I know I'm not going to go back there because I'm not there and I got to come down here and make lots of friends and mix here.

SS: Lot of your friends left there too?

MS: All of them friends left. Only Gus that was there and another guy. The other fella, he was living up at Onaway, he passed away I think ten weeks ago, and only Gus alone there.

SS: Didn't Potlatch treat the married men different than the single man?

During the depression they tried to help out the married people didn't they?

MS: They didn't have much work either, but they did try to help some guy that had big families. But they had not much work, you know. Nothing to go out, no ship lumber, no nothing. They might help some guy, give him a job he might work here, he might go over two days a week. Something like that.

SS: Not much.

MS: Not much. Of course, them days was different. Everything was pretty cheap.

SS: In Elk River I heard that one of the leaders of the IW^w_A was Greek. I don't remember the man's name.

MS: I tell you, I don't know 'cause I never been to Elk River. I went to Elk River 1924 or '25 or '23 I don't remember exactly ^{what} year it was. They sent me, they transferred me from Potlatch into go to Elk River and for lumber grader, you know. See. They were short, so they transferred me from Potlatch to go to Elk River. That mill shut down, I have to go back to Potlatch.

SS: Did you like Elk River?

MS: I tell you kind of when I went I didn't stay very long and I went about November I guess, sometime. They started that mill in November and before Christmas, the week before Christmas ^{something like that,} _A boy, she started coming down. That black ice, Snow. Then the next day there was about two feet of snow on the ground. You could probably shut the mill down. Then I went back to Potlatch, got my pay.

SS: Was there many Greek people at Elk River at that time?

MS: Yeah, there was. There was quite a few there. But here, I didn't stay very long, you know. I might stay about a month or five weeks or something like that and the snow come. And they shut the mill down.

SS: That's Elk River! That's the way it's always been there.

MS: Yes, yes. You know, about four, five weeks,

the son of a gun still coming down. And when it comes,
no
come. So they shut both shifts down, day shift and no night shift. Too much
snow. So I took the train next day and I went to Potlatch. I got my job,
my job was open.

SS: How many Greek people do you think there were at Potlatch?

MS: One time between forty ^{or} fifty. When mill was running two shifts day and
night. Time when I came, 1914. Yeah, maybe 50 Greeks. Working in both shifts.
Inside the mill, no outside. You understand? Both shifts day and night.

SS: Were most of them from certain places in Greece?

MS: Of course.

SS: Were a lot of them from Didima that Gus come from?

MS: Gus come from about 10,12 ^{less} or more. From the place I come from, there
was 6 of us. And the rest of the people was from different place. They are
not everybody from one town. Come from different towns. Only same state.
But we don't know each other.

SS: The same state.

MS: But it's different. We too far apart.

SS: Which state?

MS: Like *Idaho*. Idaho is a state, like a different one.
Like this counties. Like in Nez Perce county. But ^{of} ~~not~~ counties. Or this ^{county} ~~or that~~.
Same thing.

SS: Did you decide to stay here very quick?

MS: Absolutely.

SS: Pretty quick after you got here? What made you decide to stay?

MS: I'll tell you . I wanted this because after you live that long, I lost my
father, I lost my mother, I lost my ^{brother}. What to do over there. I got them
nephews over there. But you know, always you can't satisfy... You give 'em
a little money, give 'em a little money and ...(pause in tape)

MS:... I had a nice old man. He was .See this?

SS: Did you name this place New York?

MS: Yes I did.

SS: Why'd you pick New York?

MS: I don't know. You know I was in a shoeshine parlor in Spokane in the
some *Greeks*, they had ^{that} there, some shoeshine parlor in Spokane.
They had that name.

SS: New York?

MS: Yeah. And I come and we took this place up.

SS: Did you think much of New York when you first came to this country?

MS: I was too young. You don't know anything.

(End of tape)