

NELL WOOD SMITH

Interviewed by:  
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Oral History Project  
Latah County Museum Society

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## NELLIE WOOD SMITH

Bovill; b. 1892

homemaker

2 hours

minute page

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Nellie Wood Smith

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Edna chopped her finger by mistake. Cutting a mile road to the neighbor's. Nell's foot stepped on by horse while working on road with father. Building the house.

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Nell met Ernie on homestead while he worked at mine on Neva Mountain. He came to visit on weekends. She enjoyed "turning loose" on the homestead. Their outhouse was air conditioned. Supplies were brought in by a homesteader for everybody once a week. Making bread out of short wheat (seed grain). She learns to shoot pheasants by practicing with a twenty-two. Living in "man's style."

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The ornery family roosters and their fights. Helping father make shakes for the house. Glad to go to Bovill for school - moved in in October, 1907.

with Rob Moore

summer 1974

## II. Transcript

ROB : I wanted to ask you about the whole time when your family left Missouri.

NELLIE SMITH: Welll, I found a little picture this morning going through the dresser drawers in there. And a picture of my sister and myself, and that was taken in Missouri just before we left and that was about the same time that that one was taken. But let's see, maybe I can get ahold of <sup>it</sup> pretty easy. Then we left Missouri when I was just about I think I must have been <sup>about</sup> six there and seven here. 'cause this looks a little bit older than that does, and they were both made in Missuri.

ROB: How did you come to leave Missouri?

N S: Well, Dad did. Dad always kinda had a hankerin' <sup>to</sup> come out West. He wanted to know what this West was all about. He had heard so much about it. And so, that's a couple of my boys when they were little. That's the second and the younger one.

ROB: Those Buster Brown suits?

N S: Uh huh, yes the little Buster Browns all the way through.

ROB: Your dad had a hankerin' to come West.

N S: He always kinda had a hankerin' to know what all this West was like .  
<sup>He wanted to come out that way, he wanted to come out west he thought.</sup>  
So Mother wasn't very anxious about the idea, but well she didn't kick <sup>so</sup> much except he finally got a chance to go out <sup>with</sup>, you know, for a fella that's just working a little bit time here and there, and just odd jobs you don't have money enough to <sup>take a</sup> trip on very often. So there's a friend of his, they were shipping a carload of cattle out there to--I don't know whether they was going to Denver <sup>or</sup> whether they was going to northern Colorado or Wyoming. An yhow, Dad was supposed to go along with that car of cattle and care for

them and see that they had water and food and things all along the trip. Oh, he was all up in the air that he got a chance to go. Mother didn't want him to go very bad. She'd just as soon he'd stayed out of ~~that~~. (chuckles)  
 kind of  
 mess she thought.

ROB: How long was he going to be gone?

N S: Well, he was just going to go out there, and I think if I remember, he had this idea if he could get to work out there you know, he'd stay out there and work. Well, he got out there and he did all right on his trip, and then got work right away on the railroad. There was a wonderful man that run the railroad, he got acquainted with him. It was Mr. Lee, I guess his name was. Anyhow he was the foreman of that carpenter gang. And Dad was on the carpenter building bridges, bridge gang. So he went to work there and wrote back Mother that he'd gotten a job. And he said he'd wait there for, you know, to get a little stake ahead and he'd send for us. And Mother pretty near didn't get to go. She'd been pretty near getting killed just after he had left. And my aunt was one of her younger sisters and was going to be married soon. And she was having a big wedding and it was at home but she had this big wedding. And well, they were sewing on her dress on all the fancy frills that were to go on it and they ran out of lace to finish it up with. So her name <sup>WAS</sup> Chloe, the one that was to get married. But Mother <sup>her name WAS</sup> Amy and her younger sister was Lenora, and they went to town one morning and hitched up the buggy and little team. They always went to town for anything they needed. They lived five, six miles out, I guess. And they went down, oh just a little ways, within the sight of the house. It wasn't more than about a block or so from our house. And they would go right along the edge of the fence and <sup>then</sup> they had to go down a little dip across a little ditch that lead to bridges <sup>down</sup> over the creek. And the boys had trimmed up the orchard and put all the



trimmings of the orchard, threw it over in that creek down there. I don't know how come, but that's where they were anyhow. And they went over this way and down across the bridge and then go up again and along on their way. Well, when they got down here and crossed the bridge and they started up there again they--what is it? The neck yoke or whatever the front part, the harness goes across 'em here. That <sup>up</sup> hitch, <sup>d</sup> someway or other or something broke about it, and turned the buggy loose and it just rolled right down the ridge and off over the side and dumped them right out of that buggy and into that bunch of limbs and prunings. And they thought her neck was broken for a while. Then there was a stick that ran right into her ear and punctured the ~~er~~ drum, one of those limbs, those sticks. And she was unconscious for two three, four days there at the home. The other sister came running back in, and it didn't hurt her. She came running back in for help I guess one of them went to the doctor and the other brought her on in in the house And she was unconscious for several days and she finally come out of it though. But she never could hear out of that one ear. So that was kind of an offset. But I don't remember about that wedding. Maybe we left before the wedding, I don't know. But I don't think we did because that wasn't very long until the wedding. I don't think that they would be doing all this rushing and fussing around. So Dad worked there for awhile until, well he figured he had a paycheck or two and then he was--I think he had to work another month or something like that before he was entitled to a pass on the railroad. And as soon as he filled in his time he sent the pass back and said, "Come on." And so. . .

ROB: How did your mom feel about that?

N S: Oh, well she felt all right. She'd go try it and see if it was all right, you know. So we went out and landed in Laramie, Wyoming.

ROB: Did you want to come?

N S: I just wanted to be where the folks were; I wasn't old enough to think it made much difference Although I don't remember anything at all. Might as well skip it, I don't remember anything about that. But I suppose that we kinda hated to leave grandmother and all those folks. There was eight of their kids, they were all grown up at that time--all grown and grandmother and grandfather. But <sup>then</sup> still I guess I was anxious to see Dad too. So I guess it wasn't making much difference to me <sup>about</sup> that time.

ROB: Do you remember the train ride out?

N S: No, I guess I don't do that either. After we lived at Wyoming awhile I remember parts of the town. I remember we lived just about two blocks from the university there. And I remember the Wickter girl. What was her first name? But <sup>her</sup> last name was Wickter. And so Mother asked <sup>she met her, asked her</sup> her if she'd care to take me over to school with her when she went to school the next day. And she said, "Yes." And she didn't want me to go alone, she wanted the girl to look after me on the way <sup>there</sup> and back. I guess it wasn't very far to school, but it was a strange place to me, you know. So I went to school with her and got used to it. And she'd always come home and they just lived right across the street from us. So that was handy.

ROB: You didn't stay there too long, did you?

N S: Well, we were there a year or more I'm sure because I was, I think, promoted to the third grade while I was there. I went to school there, and of course they started me in the first grade but I had gone with my aunt to school. I had one aunt that was the youngest of the whole bunch of 'em, and she was still going to school. She was grown up, she was I suppose fifteen, sixteen years old. And she would take me to school with her once in awhile then. Well, partly they thought it would be good for me to learn then what school was all about. And mother said it was time that I was beginning to learn my ABC's. I can just remember them kind of talking about this time I was in school. But it was, I think, about a mile to go, something like that. So



I didn't go much during bad weather anything, I just - some days I'd go and some days I didn't. But whatever they said. But if it was a bad day, why they just kept me home. They'd take me to school; I was learning these little words to read, you know. I think I already knew my A B C's and things. I could count and everything. So finally the teacher would take me on his lap, set me on his lap, and talk to me about the lesson and teach me. And I was awful embarrassed because I thought he thought I was a baby and I just wasn't (laughs). And I was kind of - got me - I didn't say anything but I kind of wished that I didn't have to sit on his lap. But he just thought he was being real nice to me, you know. I guess I was the pet of the whole bunch, the youngest one around there and new in the school s.o. And so I was, oh, reading those little things that they do. I could - I do pretty good for, I guess I could do part of that at home. But I think I probably knew my A B C's before that, anyhow I was learning. They said they thought I was learning fast enough, I wasn't losing anything. But anyhow, that's in Missouri; that's the first hint of school I had had.

When I got to Laramie, why they put me there in the first grade. And I was in there two weeks and they sent me over to the second grade. So I guess I was getting along pretty fast and I was learning that real fast. And when they had the music, see, vocal lessons in there and the teacher went and told - I can remember just parts of that. I remember them going talking to the other teacher. I remember the kids in the room - two rooms. That's clear to me. But she told 'em, she said, "I think this little youngster- she's ahead of my grades," and she said, "I think she needs to be in the other class because," she said, "I think she's able to handle it quite well. We'll put her over there and try her." Put me in there and she sold me for the music and I fell for that. Put - me - in there, in the second grade, and when it came time time to - well I just - I eat that up, when it came time for the music. Why she'd have us 'do, re, mi', you know, they'd listen - training - voice training. And then they'd pick up certain notes and sound the cartain and I could do it. And the other kids - wasn't hardly any other kid do it readily. They'd have to make an effort to or a second or so. And I could run the scale upwards or backwards or which ever way you wanted it. So they got me right on that easy. So I was, I think, I remember right, I was

getting ready for third grade when I left there. I was promoted. Yeah.

Then we left out of Laramie and - now I don't know - yes, I do too. There was a - Robinson - was that - I knew that didn't sound like the name the bridge foreman, that boss. His name was Robinson.

ROB: Ohhh.

N.S.: His name was Robinson.

ROB: Instead of Lee?

N.S.: Instead of Lee. The next people that we got acquainted with were in Rexberg.

They were Lee. I knew that name didn't sound right but I knew it was Lee concerned. That was S.J. Robinson, I think it was. And he had a little boy about five years old. And his name was Stillman Robinson after his daddy. Stillman something-or-other Robinson. So after we'd been there

a while, well, Dad was still working with the bridge gang. Mrs. Robinson - she was there - well, she cooked for the men, you know. They had the cars, lived in there in the cars and they were all fixed up real cozy in there. But she had a hired girl and I think she was a Swedish girl if I remember right. Anyhow, she was a good worker and she used to help Mrs. Robinson with all the work. And Mrs. Robinson was a little bit of a wiffet - about as big as nothing. And so she said, "I wanted to know," of Dad she said, "Why don't you bring your wife out some time? Bring her out to visit." She got kind of lonely there and had no chance of <sup>her</sup> getting away to visit anybody. And she knew that we hadn't gotten acquainted - didn't know many people yet. So he said, well, he would try to do that. And so they arranged it. We were to go out and spend Christmas with her - with them there.

So everything was all set. Dad had been home the weekend before and he had made arrangements just how we were going. The regular line, the train came along here, but they were putting in a branch line into another place. And that's - and it wasn't, oh, it was about a quarter of a mile, I think, between that one and this one where he told us to have the conductor let us off here at this crossing here and about a quarter of a mile from the other. He said they'd stop if you tell them that. And so he took - gave all the instructions so we got already and it was winter time, well, it was Christmas anyhow. And so we were all outfitted for winter time.



And we got off <sup>of</sup> the train here and he put my sister, you see how big she was - this little picture. Well, and - she was light too, you know. She's always the punny thing. And I was a husky big old - but nothing ever bothered me, I was always hard to, you know, nothing ~~ever~~ seemed to hurt me. Everything that came along after I got out where I could... Now before I left Missouri, I was about six then, when we had the whooping cough. I don't know who got it first but anyhow, Edna, my sister, she was just coughing, just coughing her little head off. And she'd just cough till she'd fall over or something. Or soon as she'd got used to it so she started to cough she run and grab for a chair and hold on to it till mother'd get a hold of her. The doctor sometimes had to come a time or two during the day. Pret'near every day he was there, for about - well, two or three weeks, most of the time. He was just running over there. He lived right close to us. But ~~they~~ didn't know whether she'd pull through hardly. It just got her down and everything. I never did whoop mother said, the decent whoop. Said I coughed a time or two but just a <sup>kind of</sup> common cough mother said, there wasn't any whoop to it. And that's just the way everything went. After we got out West, I went to school and got the chicken pox and went home and took 'em to her and she just about croaked with 'em. She was just splattered with 'em - had 'em all over. And I had just about half dozen spots, I guess, was about all I had on me. Just all things like that. She always got the bad end of the deal.

But on this Christmas vacation we had the conductor to let us off at the crossing and put Edna off first. There was a wind like we had here the other day. And you know, the track was up high and then sloped down, you know, to the ditch thing. Well, Edna just went rolling right down - end over end - the wind was so strong.

ROB: Pulled her right over -

N.S.: And the train would stop, why she'd just go right along kinda toward the wheels but she was going toward the ditch, you know. And then by the time they'd gotten mother off and she dashed over between her and the conductor, and got Edna picked up and she hung on to her. And then they put me off next, and I don't remember what happened. I suppose mother grabbed onto me kind of, but I could pretty well hold myself. After the train pulled out, why we set down right on the track there and held to the rail, and kept from blowing. And we set there

quite a while. Dad was going to meet us, you know, when that train went through. Well, he was still pounding out those carpentering <sup>they were</sup> there and he was still working away at it and missed the time and didn't know that the train was due yet. And I can't think of that girl's name, a Swedish name. And I don't know, it wasn't Hanna but I'll guess I'll call her that for convenience. But she happened to be standing at the sink washing dishes and well, she

looked out the window and says, "Oh, Mrs. Robinson, look over there. Is that the Woods, Mrs. Woods and the family over there?" And they looked out there and there we set, you know, holding onto that track. And she said, "Yes, for heaven sakes." She said, "I'll go over to help 'em." Mrs. Robinson said, "I'll go get Mr. Woods, and I'll <sup>go</sup> tell him." And so here came that girl - the name just slips me each time, but anyhow as I said, I'll call her Hanna - and she came running and the wind just blowing every direction you could hardly run against it or walk even. But she was used to it and she came dashing over there to where we were and she got us.

By that time the wind had whipp'd our hats off, we're just pret'near strip'd. We didn't have our coats buttoned tight and we all had new outfits. Dad had had a pay check or two and we'd gotten new - Mother had gotten her a new jacket. They wore those short jackets at that time, fitted kind. Mother had her new brown jacket and her brown hat and, oh, all feathered and plummed. I don't know. It was all matched all kind of nice, and she outfitted me in a red coat, a jacket and then the red hat. Because of being so windy there some times, why we had veils too, and tied them on. And Edna had one of these <sup>little</sup> poke bonnets like they put on little kids, you know. And it was heavy and it was wool, wooly thing, and her blue coat. So we're all fix up nice and we had mittens and everything, and rubber galoshes. Anyhow, when we got off there and the wind had got us, first the veil would go there and then a veil would go the other way and then the hats went. "Course they weren't pinned on us but just a rubber band under the chin. And by the time we had the girl lead us - it strikes that that girl's name is Sophie, I don't remember. But anyhow, by the time we started across the meadow there to go over to the other place, why the - we had lost our rubbers or one of them, I remember one rubber. And we had our pockets stuffed full of candy and gum to take to a little boy, Stillman. And it had just whipp'd the candy and stuff out of our pockets and I don't know, I think, one of the rubbers was gone or else one



us did have and one of us didn't have. But I think just one rubber is all that left me with, I think. And I don't remember much about it. I know our mittens were gone and it just whipped the little dickens right out of us pret'near. So the time we had started back toward the house.

Then met Dad coming—he was coming on the run. By that time we'd told him what had happened and he let her then take us on over to the house and he started up across the track and up over the hill up on the other side of the track through the sagebrush. And he thought maybe, you know, he'd save some of our <sup>w</sup>raps and hats and coats and things or mittens and things. And so he'd take out and get them maybe, catch them before they got to<sup>o</sup> far, caught in the brush. He didn't get a thing. Not a thing could he retrieve. So – but – went back then and he was sitting feeling kinda, thinking he wasn't there when the train came through but there might have been a few things that he might have saved. But I don't think it was very much because you didn't dare let loose of that rail...

ROB: He might have lost some too!

N.S.: But didn't dare let loose of that rail or you would have went right on.

ROB: Did you have a good Christmas anyway?

N.S.: Oh, heavens, an awful nice Christmas and wonderful people. Had a good time but I never had had a red coat or hat or a red dress or anything. I don't think I had a red dress at that time because my hair was so near red that they just didn't dress me in red. It just didn't look good. But I had a deep dark red – it was an expensive coat and hat, and that was the first hat I had had. I just felt real dressed up and then I thought I'd lost a whole lot. But we stayed, I don't know, several days out there, I think, and then went back.

ROB: You moved on to Rexberg after a couple of years...

N.S.: Well, it was – let's see, I can't remember the ages exactly. We went to Rexberg. I don't know how we come to go over there. I know the small pox was going in the country in Laramie there. <sup>They got word.</sup> A bunch of 'em came down with it. They were afraid the men were going to come down with it on the bridge gang. And so the order came down the line everybody be vaccinated. And so there was a certain day set and the doctor was out there. Everybody come through the car – the office car. And the doctor ~~sitting~~ sitting there and everybody come through with their sleeve rolled up. So they got to Dad – he had his sleeve rolled up – and they said, "Go on." Said, "But you didn't get him." "You don't need it because he's got a scar about as big as a half dollar." He'd been vaccinated before and they

said anybody with a scar like that don't need it, don't need another one. And so he was ready for it but he didn't have to be vaccinated but the rest of them all had their vaccinations <sup>and went through</sup> in their . . . But after we got to Rexberg - I forgot, I don't know what the people we met at - I don't know at Rexberg. . .

(End of Side A)

N.S.: So we got acquainted there with a family by the name of Lee. I don't know what he did. He worked I guess away from home most the time. I don't remember him. But Mrs. Lee and they had one grown up boy, I think. He was about 17 or 19 or something and there was one about 15. They just had those two. And they lived over across the track from where we lived. And they - we lived, oh, quite a little ways from the track I would say, which is about a distance of maybe two blocks or three. And we used to go over to Lee's once in a while and they'd come over to our place. To go to their house we passed the home of the Judge Ricks. He was a high to-do Mormon at that time. I don't know what you'd call 'em but he was Judge Ricks anyhow. And I know Ricks College, I see, is down there. I guess it was named after him pretty much. But he - we passed their farm, home there and he had, I don't know, four or five grown-up boys and some little kids. They had quite a big family. And then, well, I used to play with the little girl about my age and so she and I used to play together quite often. She'd come to my house or I'd go up to their place. But later on one day - well, he had his office in town this judge and he was clubfooted too.

So one Sunday he come down - he was coming from town out to his home and he had just married a new wife. And the little girl come running back over to our house and said, "Mommy wants to know if she could borrow some ( I don't know) salt'or vanilla or something like that. Mother asked her, "Going to have company or is something going on?" And she said, "Yes. Pappa and ", I don't know - "Aunt Fanny (or something) are coming in and Momma is going to make some ice cream." Right after she was gone, Mother shook her head and thought, "She can make that other woman ice cream if she wants to. If it was me, I'd put on the tea kettle and scald her." (laughs) I remembered hearing that and I thought that was funny that she would say something like that.



'Cause she thought after marrying a new young girl and bringing her out there to visit - her out, the second wife- to visit her. Why she just didn't approve of that at all. Mother...

ROB: Do you think your folks got along pretty well in that Mormon community there?

N.S.: Yes, we got along fine. But Mother just kind of talked about that - that's why she sputtered about that. But she didn't say it to anybody else.

ROB: Your family didn't stay in Rexberg long did they?

N.S.: Un-huh. Well, we moved to town, I think, someway<sup>or</sup> other or I don't remember going to school there but there was some place where we just had, oh, a little old Red Riding Hood or Three Bears book or something like that to read out of. And Dad had a fit about that and said, "Oh, she's not learning anything there." Said, "That's not a school book." (chuckles) So I don't remember but I think there was a change about that time. And then we went to Parma.

ROB: That trip to Parma is really interesting.

N.S.: Well, we started out with a bay horse and an old gray mule, and, well, then we took - we had a big wagon with the sides up and he built a shelf out on each side of ~~these~~.

ROB: Your dad was really enthusiastic about this trip wasn't he?

N.S.: Yes, he was all hopped up to go. He was a more of an adventurer. Mother kind of, oh, she thought, "Oh, we do look terrible." The gypsies used to pass through there once in a while, and we'd see them with the funny looking outfits and dresses and outfits traveling, horses and things. And she'd say, "Come here, Poppa, look out there. Now there we go. See what we look like?" (Laughs) He'd say, "Oh, now we don't need to look like that." (Laughs) But anyhow, I don't know whether I told you that <sup>they</sup> built those wings out this side. Well, anyhow, he put brackets on <sup>for</sup> like a wide shelf, you know, and put those on the side of the wagon near the back end and, well, went better than half way to the middle. And then on both sides, and that was ~~ss~~ just wide enough then by those shelves on there to put the bed springs on cross-ways. The length of the bed springs would just fill that space in there. And, oh, it was his own idea. He had it all pictured out. And so they packed everything. Well, he had his big tool chest, great big, ~~old~~, chest, about so, you know, about that high and that wide and about that long. And that was all full of his tools

and everything. And they had that packed full and they had one of these old-fashioned trunks. I don't know, (but) I believe it was the round top kind. I'm not sure, but the old-fashioned trunk and all our clothes and everything went in that. And everything was packed just right solid and there wasn't an inch of space to spare and that was packed in there. And then what space that didn't take up, we had a tub and a wash board (and) everything we were going to need when we got there. Well, our dishes and kettles and everything were packed in the tub and the ~~washboard~~ washboiler, and so that's an awful good thing to pack them in anyway because <sup>they</sup> wasn't easily broken. Well, they were all packed in paper and they were all pushed back under that bed, and on top of the bed there was a, I think, she had two feather beds that we always ~~put~~ <sup>well those were</sup> put on there and then we put on all our blankets and sheets and pillows, you know. So our bed was made right in the back end. And then the front half, or a little bit, not quite half, maybe, was taken up <sup>with</sup> the seat - the driver's seat up there. And then right off - now this is the horses that would be <sup>at the</sup> head of the wagon. And there was a seat here that they'd ~~set~~ <sup>set</sup> on facing out so they could see where they're driving. And then right in this corner was a <sup>little</sup> pot belly <sup>ied</sup> stove, a little iron stove and with a little door that opened on this side. And lid on the top of it and then the pipe went up here and <sup>the</sup> ~~out~~ side of the wagon so they could have a fire if we needed it at all. It had legs <sup>at</sup> on <sup>it at</sup> the bottom.

Well, then right next to that stove was a, I think, it was an orange crate turned on end. And <sup>that</sup> it was stacked full of canned goods and stuff that <sup>we figured we'd</sup> need, you know, from place to place. And some of it - well, we didn't have to stop everywhere (cause we had a) stock (of) everything - but when <sup>ever we got</sup> ~~we~~ short of <sup>any</sup> things, <sup>why</sup>, put in a few - add to our kit all the time. And so - and then - and we had our - and we had our kettle, no, I guess it was a can of water to drink, you know. Then we had the <sup>red</sup> can fruits and stuff all over there. And then we had - that's about all I remember except that ~~we~~ just had a little bit of room to walk around <sup>there</sup> in between the two places. But you could just sit on the edge of the bed as you rode along, <sup>that</sup> it made a seat. We'd sit there and ride. But there was - if ever we were riding along, ~~we~~ if Dad would look up and see a jackrabbit head for the brush, he'd just reach over and grab his gun and let go and bang right over the horses heads. They never paid any



attention to it. If he saw the things fall, why, he'd go out and get it. And maybe he'd partly clean it or draw it. And then bring it on in and Mother'd sit there and cut it all up and wash and dress it all out nice and clean and put it in her kettle and lid on and it was ready for us to eat. Or else, you know, have it there so it was all clean and ready and fry it if we wanted to or put it on to boil as you drove along. And then get fool hens and sage hens and jack rabbits was our chief meat. And well, we stopped once in a while to pick up something at some little way station for a change. And the -  
<sup>or</sup> - maybe Mother would have a kettle of beans on cooking as we rode along.

ROB: And this was a canvas covered wagon?

N.S.: Un-huh. And so I think that was mostly - oh when we got to - I don't know, when we came to one place where we'd stop - oh - we'd come to little way stations like that, we'd stop and "How far is it to the next town?" And he'd want to know just so we'd know whether we need<sup>ed</sup> to stock up with anything that we were out of. Maybe a loaf or two of fresh bread or something like that. And so he got the - this one place where <sup>they</sup> gave us - I don't know what the formation of the rock was there and all. Because I didn't know enough about that, but it was the prettiest rocks I ever saw. And they, <sup>they</sup> oh, were just like eggs and they were from, oh, that size clear on up to that big, you know. And just as smooth as silk and there was a little kind of a creek that had ran there and that was all full of those snow white rocks. And sizes and shapes -  
 And then we'd pick up the prettiest ones, Edna and I were both walking. We walked, I think, about half the way. After we got started, why Edna, she could keep up with us too. She was enjoying it too. Dad told her - said, Mother <sup>said she</sup> just knew that Edna would be sick along the way and forty miles from a doctor. And she'd just ha<sup>ve</sup> the worst trouble with her. She ~~was~~ always <sup>was</sup> so ~~delicate~~ <sup>delicate</sup> anyhow. And Dad said, "No she won't." We get started, "they said, "She'd probably snap out of it and be lots healthier and better." Well, Mother kind of had her doubts but she went along with it. She pret'near had to. And it got so that Edna and I walked so much then. You know the team had to walk, you couldn't hurry them along on the heavy load.

And so we'd walk along and, oh there was so many pretty rocks. So we'd gather up our dress into a lap and pick 'em up as we went along and 'til it would get so heavy we couldn't walk with that heavy load of rocks in our dresstail

there. And finally we'd - I'd just have to dump 'em all out and start over and run - catch up with the wagon <sup>'cause it'd</sup> get a head of us. We just couldn't carry 'em, we couldn't catch up. And I'd hate so bad to give those rocks up, but finally I guess I didn't get away with any of them. I had to dump them all before <sup>we got</sup> I had to quit gathering. And we went on to another place and I think it was called Castle Rock. And I don't know <sup>whether it's</sup> if there's such a place in Idaho or not. And another place sometimes - I'll <sup>went sometime</sup> to look it up, I don't know, it might just be a nickname some of the people gave it to. I know <sup>of</sup> Castle Rock and that other place was the Devil's Dive and that's <sup>was</sup> over a deep canyon and then there's <sup>was</sup> a fill built across and <sup>that</sup> - was trouble too. Anyhow, when we got to this Castle Rock there'd be just, oh, just little rocks kind of, oh, as big as it would be around here. That big around you might say.

ROB: About as big as a coffee table or something like that?

N.S.: Yes, yes. That big or <sup>maybe</sup> a little bigger, little higher, you know, rounded off. And on top of it was another one, <sup>was</sup> big as a house - as big as a whole room, sitting on that little one, and it'd scared me to death. I just knew that big one was going to roll off on to me <sup>when</sup> I got close. I guess it'd been there <sup>a</sup> thousand years, but I couldn't see that. I thought it might still fall. (Laughs) But we were driving along and Mother looked over <sup>and was</sup> looking down in the canyon to the one side and she said, "Oh, look at that pretty" - how did she call it, - "pretty evergreen." And it was cedars - a big cedar tree. "Oh, boy, I'd love to have some of that."

And Dad said, "Oh, we haven't got time to stop. We better keep on." And she was - wanted to get some branches. Well, anyhow, I heard what she said. <sup>no</sup> I remember walking at that time. I guess Edna wasn't. I guess she would get tired quicker <sup>than</sup> I would so she'd <sup>maybe</sup> get in and take her nap, you know. Time for her nap. But I thought, "Well, I'll run right down there and get her a branch or two of that. She wants some branches of that tree." But I got started. Well, I'd go around one tall rock and I'd get around that one and I'd run across another one this way. I had to weave my way clear quite a ways down the side hill - way down to the - I guess better than about two blocks long maybe down that way. And those big old rocks just stacked up all the way down, big ones sitting on top of little ones. And so I went down there.

And did you ever try to break a cedar bough? And I had nothing to break



it with, you know, and I twisted and twisted and worked at it. And you can just keep on twisting. They won't break. And so finally I got some little wispy pieces off of the ends that I was able to pull backwards. And then I thought I've got to get back up there or I'll get lost or they'll leave me. And so I started back up the hill and I'd run onto those ~~awful~~<sup>terrible</sup> big and little rocks, The big ones and the littles ones, and I'd have to go way around 'em. They'd go clear<sup>GET</sup> in the way of another one to get there. Finally I got back up to the road with my few little twigs. And got up there in the road and ran on down and I couldn't see the wagon! And I kept running and running and I couldn't see the wagon anywhere and finally I could see where the road branched and that's quite aways down there and I thought, "Oh, my land."

I hurried, ran as fast as I could down there to get to that so I could see which way the wagon went - see if there was a wagon. And there was no wagon in sight on either road. So I said, "I guess something told me that it was time to pray, that I was lost. And I thought, I just said, "Oh, Lord, <sup>teach</sup> me the right road. I hope I don't get on the wrong one because I'll be that much further behind." And I just stopped there and thought about it and I wasn't very old but my grandmother and all those people were very religious. And I knew enough <sup>about when</sup> you were in trouble where to go for help. And so I prayed there that the Lord would teach me - and then I thought, "I'll take this road for aways down there and then if I can't see around the bend, <sup>why</sup> I'll come back and go the other one." And I stood and studied and finally I took the one road and that's when I <sup>thought I'd maybe but</sup> came back, <sup>when I</sup> got on that road why I got so <sup>that</sup> finally I could see way in the distance, I could see the wagon. Well, I'd run 'til I'd get out of breath, and they hadn't missed me.

ROB: Really?

N.S.: No, they didn't know but what I was right along behind the wagon - I was. And when I got there, I was a puffing and a crying and everything. And I said, "Why didn't you wait for me."

"Well, where you been? I thought you was right behind the wagon." And I gave her this (laughs) little bunch of twigs. It tickled Dad at the time, he couldn't hardly help but laugh either because I was just horrified, I was so scared. But I just stood there and prayed to myself about it. I didn't

have any idea - well, I examined the tracks too. I was examing the tracks. They looked just as fresh on one road as they did(on)the other.

I couldn't tell by that. That's when I asked for help...

ROB: You got some.

N.S.: And I got it. But that was one adventure <sup>and then</sup> that went on down at some time, I don't know which was first and which was last. But I remember these <sup>incidents</sup> stand out. And we went to across this - well, ~~across~~ this deep canyon <sup>and</sup> in the fill and it had been raining and it was just, oh, mud hub deep. And we had gotten out in <sup>to</sup> the middle of this fill and got stuck and there was no way getting out, and we tried and tried. And pretty soon we saw a rig coming. And he came down and mud was so deep, and this fill was quite narrow and there <sup>was</sup> no way of him passing us. And he was just a young fella. Quite a young man and (I guess) it was on Sunday, and I guess he was going to church or going to see his sweetie or going to get married or something, 'cause he was <sup>sure</sup> dressed up slicker than a whistle. And he just dressed, nis shoes shined <sup>fill</sup>, you could see yourself in them. It looked like a livery team, you know, a driving team, - pretty driving team and buggy. And he couldn't get anywhere and we couldn't get anywhere. ~~So finally they had to unhitch his team and he took one horse and Dad the other one and, of course, they were both wading mud and that poor fella with a nice pressed suit on and his shoes shined. (Laughs) And they got each horse down and hitched 'em on to our - in front of our team and they got the four other horses together and then they were pushing and finally got us out of there. And then they hooked us on to the <sup>end of the rope</sup> and <sup>then</sup> hitched his team back up and let him go on back through there again and he could go on through <sup>with</sup> his light buggy. And so <sup>my</sup> Mother <sup>once</sup> had said, they called that the Devil's Dives, they begin to think the devil was going to get us before we got out of there (laughs). But I never did know that man's name <sup>or</sup> where he was going but I felt so awful sorry for him but <sup>I</sup> was awful glad for us to help us out. <sup>while</sup> - we ~~was~~ on the desert first - we went to the - we stopped at a little way station there, way store and inquired of the man how far was it to the next town, just wondered whether to get any - no use to carry <sup>ing</sup> any load any further than you had to ~~go~~. You had quite a load as it was. Then we'd stock up just at the last thing. And they told him, "Well, it was quite a ways," he said, "it <sup>(he'd said?)</sup> about a two days' drive." Dad thought, "What is this?" He said, "Yes, <sup>this is</sup> the edge of the desert." And we didn't know we had any desert to cross. And we weren't prepared for it. So he said, "Are you prepared? Have you got~~



water for it?" Dad said, "No," ~~they~~<sup>any</sup> didn't have ~~it~~. And so the only thing to do - I think, we spent the night there, camped near this station because Dad asked if he had a barrel he would sell us for water or anything.

"No," he says, "I haven't. Everybody that's been going along here has been the same way and I'm all out of ~~ten~~<sup>en</sup> barrels." He said, "Come to think of it, I think I've got a little ten gallon keg out there. That might help, better than nothing." And so they filled that with water for over night to see if they couldn't sort a tighten it together. And so, meanwhile Mother and Dad got the boiler and the tub out, full of dishes and things, and unpacked all those and got wooden boxes from the fella to pack the dishes in. And then they filled the tub and the boiler with water and, of course, that slushed a little bit as they drove along. But - then ~~we~~ filled all ~~we~~<sup>we</sup> could for us for drinking water. We filled up everything that was empty that we could fill, and so anyway we made up our minds that we wouldn't drink any water if we could help it at all. We'd just do without and if we got too thirsty we'd open a can of cherries or something, you know, something that had juice in it and make out with that. And so, well, then they decided - we started out early the next morning, after we got that fixed. And Dad built a little shelf on the back end of the wagon and set that little barrel on. And we got up early and started out over~~ac~~ross the desert. And mother and Dad slept out that night, they did once in awhile at night. ~~They~~ They'd let us kids have the bed, you know, to ourselves and ~~then~~ they'd sleep on the ground. And it was kinda nice in the fresh air, you know. So Dad was - they were sleeping out that night and they said they'd listened and they couldn't - they'd always hobble one of the horses and they couldn't hear his old chains jiggling and jangling and so ~~that~~ - and they'd listen for him quite a bit and they couldn't hear a thing. And they thought it was unusual that they could be that quiet even if they were resting. And so as soon as it began to break daylight so he could see forms and all, Dad was up and gone. He said he had to go look after those... He said ~~could be~~<sup>could be</sup> they'd taken out for, they didn't care for this desert, probably took the road for home. And he was gone - quite awhile and he found the tracks where they had started home, or started back, and he told Mother, he said, "Well, they've gone. They've taken the back track." And he said, "I'll have to go after them." And said, "You'll just have to hold the fort ~~down~~<sup>down</sup> 'til I get back and do the best you can and I'll be back as quick as I can." And it was just about noon when he got back. And he'd, I guess, run half the way ~~as~~<sup>just</sup> fast as he could ~~then~~<sup>and</sup> then he got on ~~his~~<sup>his</sup> horse and

<sup>rode one of them and</sup>  
<sup>^</sup> lead the other one. So that's the time we got left in the desert, out stalled  
 in the desert and no water. When he got back there then he hitched them up  
 and started driving on and <sup>when</sup> evening came, why he started to water the horses  
 and there wasn't a drop of water. That barrel had leaked, it didn't swell  
 enough and nothing in it. So he had to give them water out of the tub and  
 boiler and they were naturally thirsty. So then the - I don't guess we went  
 as far as we could that night. Anyhow he - we started on, anyhow, and got to  
 the edge of the - I don't know which was first and which was last anymore, but  
 we got over ~~across~~ the desert, then to the edge <sup>of</sup> the desert and <sup>we</sup> came to a  
 creek there and you know, those horses wouldn't <sup>no more</sup> go across that bridge  
 than they could fly. They went right down through the creek (laughs). They  
 were thirsty and they went <sup>drinking</sup> water. Well, Dad let them go ahead and have  
 a good drink but they had to whip 'em up <sup>then,</sup> he said. He didn't dare let them  
 have too awfully much of it after that long dry spell, he'd have some sick  
 horses on his hands. So they let 'em have a good drink and <sup>then</sup> went on and we  
 set camp that night. It was getting along late in the afternoon so - and we set  
 camp... ~~we~~ <sup>there was</sup> went up to a place <sup>where there was</sup> a man was thrashing, and he was a farmer there,  
 and they had thrashing crew at their place at that time. And Dad asked him,  
 this man, if he cared if we - if he camped near there or something, <sup>where</sup> there'd  
 be water handy. And he said that was alright, he didn't. He said,  
 "Don't camp out there, drive in the lot here and camp there." And they  
 wanted us to make ourselves at home and <sup>just</sup> make us comfortable. Well,  
 he said we'll drive in - just drive the wagon in <sup>there</sup> and make ourselves at home  
 that way. And turned the horses, and hobbled the horses and turned them loose.  
 End of Side B



N.S.: When we got ready to - when we got up, you know, and got breakfast over <sup>why</sup> ~~and~~ he went to take a look and get the horses rounded up. And the old mule was laying there, foundered, puffed up like a toy balloon! He was just down and couldn't get up. And we thought, "Now what'll we do on top of everything else?" And so he - <sup>the men</sup> helped him and they <sup>kind of</sup> held a court over him, I guess, to decide what to do about him. And Dad thought he was going to die right there or going to have to kill him or something. <sup>of the</sup> One fella said, "The only thing I see that you can do that may help him," <sup>didn't</sup> <sup>whether</sup> ~~and~~ know that would ~~x~~ be a success, but he said he had seen it done. And they decided to stick him, and so they took a knife and stuck him just near the rib, you know, ahead of the hip bone there somewhere and I remember they stuck him to release his gas. He was swelled so, puffed so big. And they left him for awhile and between the men - all got a-hold of him, helped him up. They <sup>had to</sup> put him up on his feet because he couldn't get up.

ROB: They just had to lift him up?

N.S.: Yes. (Laughs) It took the whole crew - the threshing crew - got after him and ~~got~~ got him up on his feet. And then after they got him up there, he could stand. Well, Dad kinda, I don't know, he left him a little while or got him to walk a little bit but anyhow he said, "Now the only thing ~~the~~ you ~~could~~ do, and you're taking a long chance but it's a chance, the only thing you can do is just put him in his harness and get to walking him. And walk that off of him, see, <sup>and</sup> Keep him a'going." And Dad put him in the harness and he didn't look like a very promising prospect but (laughs) poor old fella, you ~~felt~~ ~~sorry~~ sorry for him, him kind of <sup>still</sup> poking along kind of stove up and stiff. He went then. He was, he was <sup>anyhow</sup> all right by night, We made the rest of the trip anyhow. And we came in then to Parma. So Parma...

ROB: What kind of daily routine <sup>be then</sup> ~~have~~ on these trips? - on this trip?

N.S.: Now you mean the eats?

ROB: I mean just getting up and eats and stuff like that.

N.S.: Well, we got started pretty early because we didn't care about being any longer, especially on that desert, than was necessary. We'd get up just about regular - as soon as it was good daylight and get going and breakfast. We'd eat as we went along. We had <sup>all</sup> ~~our~~ ~~stuff~~ - cook stuffs and if we didn't <sup>why</sup> ~~we~~ cook <sup>it</sup> along the road and had dinner there and have

it ready to eat <sup>by the</sup> time we got where we wanted to eat it. And we drove...

ROB: Would your Dad just get up early in the morning and get the horses all hitched up while you were still in bed?

N.S.: Well, he'd get them up and get them watered and they'd <sup>already</sup> graze<sup>d</sup> at night <sup>and</sup> so it would <sup>n'r</sup> take him <sup>but</sup> a few minutes to get them harnessed. We'd just eat while - Mother would fix <sup>a</sup> lunch while he was getting the harnesses on the horses maybe or something. And we carried water there, we'd just wash our hands and go ahead and eat. The pot was already cooked or maybe she'd cooked right on the - she had her skillet and her kettles right in the things. And then some times we'd buy something that was already cooked, you know. We didn't have a bit of trouble there. We'd eat regular meals at regular times. (Laughs) Munched a little bit between if you wanted to.

ROB: Would you travel 'til dark or stop at a likely spot or what?

N.S.: Well, we'd travel <sup>that</sup> about as long as you - unless the horses were unusually tired or something, ~~we~~ might stop a little early but we travelled 'til just about dark - just before dark, you know, dusk. And so to get the horses unhitched and hobbled and then we could have our supper while they grazed around.

ROB: How long did the trip take?

N.S.: I don't remember. It was, well, I don't know whether it was about a week or whether it was a less than a week or what. I don't even remember that.

ROB: Do you think it was that short though?

N.S.: I think it was, because, I never even thought of it much to ask those questions while Dad was still living or Mother either. Now then that they're gone, I wish I knew some of those things. I was just along for the trip, I didn't keep any -

ROB: Did you enjoy the trip pretty much?

N.S.: Oh, wonderful! I wish I could go over it again to see where it was.

ROB: Would you want to go by horse and wagon again you think?

N.S.: Yes. (Laughs) If I didn't have anything urgent to keep me from it, it'd be kind of fun.

ROB: So then you settled in a farm, huh?

N.S.: Well, we drove in Parma - we drove out to, well, in Parma the



railroad ran this way and the town was laid out pretty much at the same angle there. Well, long here, along Main Street, there was a saloon<sup>down</sup> here and that's where Dad stopped and went in there and asked directions or something about work or something. And that man's name was Lang. And he talked to him awhile and he came back out and he had, there's a move there that I don't know, we moved once in Parma but I can't remember how it came or just how long we handled it. I think in the first place we lived across the tracks on this side and Mother, oh, I know there was a lady came through teaching flower making and all the fancy flowers and everything. And we'd gotten acquainted with Mrs. Lang through the menfolks. And Mrs. Lang wanted to take that flower course but she didn't want to take it alone, she was kind of timid. And she told Mother she said, "I'll pay for the courses, both of us, if you'll take it with me, if you'll go with me and take it." So she took a course in flower making there and that's the only thing that I remembered there. Well, no there was kind of a hotel, somebody had a rooming house or a hotel or something there, not far from where we lived on that side of the track. And I just remember they had a big family and one of the older boys was married and because of their names, their name was Cunningham, but there was Molly, Flora, Cora, Laura, Nora, and Dora (laughs).

ROB: Molly kind of sounds out of place in there.

N.S.: She was the daughter-in-law, I think it was. I believe it was: Molly, Flora, Cora, Laura, Nora and Dora. It kind of got a sing-song to it with me. And I <sup>can</sup> remember it. I was always running around saying to myself when I was a kid, the whole spiel! "Molly, Flora, Cora..." till it all ran together. But I don't think that lasted long. I don't know how they came to move, because they lived over across the track and Dad bought this <sup>little</sup> place next door to Lang's. And Lang's had a nice big house and there was a little place there that he bought that was for sale. And they moved over there and that's where we were living when we got that picture. And Albert was the boy. They just had one youngster. He was, I guess, about my age, might have been just a little older than I. Albert Lang...

ROB: I was going to say, you came out to Troy very soon after that.

N.S.: Yeah, yeah. I was promoted to the fourth or fifth grade, or something.

I was promoted – it wasn't quite time for school to be out – when we left there we were going to come on over to Troy. But the teacher promoted me anyway and I said, "No." I was afraid I was going to have to go back or something.

"No, that's fine," they said. "You're ready for it, the other. Ready for the next grade." It was a fine teacher. And we started then. We went on to the – another thing, I skipped was from Laramie to where...

ROB: Rocksford?

N.S. Yes. On the train and we had to go around by Pendleton somewhere <sup>or other</sup> ~~there~~.

We went around someway or another. We went clear around over to Pendleton and then out again and that's the first Indians I saw. And the railroad depot was, oh, there was just a lot of Indians in the depot. And some of them went around with their blankets, you know, holding their blankets around them and feathers and things and I was scared to death of 'em, 'c'ause I'd heard them talking about wars so much, you know, the Indian wars. I heard, oh my granddad and uncles and some of 'em.

ROB: They had still talked about it when you where growing up?

N.S.: Yeah, they were still talking about – telling about something about the clashes, you know, and about the Civil War and all that. And I'd heard so much about war <sup>that</sup> I just thought those Indians could eat us up, I guess. So – and the – Mother and Dad started to go – he left me with, that's, I guess, where we met the – it must have been we were with the Lee's when we went to Rexberg because I think they were with us on that trip. We must have got a hold of them in Laramie. But anyhow we – they put Edna, Edna didn't feel very well, and they put her to sleep on the benches – on the benches – and put our coats down and covered her up a little. Let her rest 'cause she was worn out and then Mother and Dad went down to town, where – that was – how far they had to go anyhow down... We had to wait over to change cars in Pendleton and had to wait there I don't know how long. And they got something to eat and they got some sausage and bread and stuff and come back with it. Something we could lunch on., 'cause there was no other way of getting anything like that. It was going to be a long time before we got <sup>to</sup> where we were going. So that's when they went down, and when they came back, why Edna was wiggling and fretting. Mother went over to look and see and she was literally covered with bed bugs! That depot was just alive with bed bugs. And you'd look, you know, after you got 'em



stirred up, ~~and it was straight up.~~ And, you know, after dark they'd come out. And our clothes that were spread over her were all full of 'em and Mother about had a fit. But that was our experience in Pendleton. But anyhow, skipping that place, after we were coming to Troy from - why we came by train.

ROB: Why did your folks decide to move to Troy?

N.S.: Well, we were headed that way then because of her relatives, Mother's relatives were there. Her aunts, her aunt and uncle and their family, and then cousins. They were all in the sawmill business there. And they started the Dinsmore Mill, you know, <sup>down here</sup> two miles and half this side of Troy, between the highway and they, oh what's that new - Spring Valley.

ROB: Oh.

N.S.: Well, where that barn is you know on the highway?

ROB: Sort of in the flat there?

N.S.: Yeah. In the flat and <sup>the</sup> bridge, you know. Well, that's ~~that~~ was our play ground for school and up the raise and just a little way up the hill from that was the schoolhouse. It's moved away from there. And we lived just a little further down <sup>there</sup> where Harry Glazer lives now. That was my aunt and uncle's place.

ROB: They had a sawmill there?

N.S.: And there was a big sawmill there down on - next to the creek just above there. And I had pictures somewhere of it but I don't know...

ROB: Was this move to Troy more your Mother's idea than, you think, than your Father's??

N.S.: Well, I think they'd had word from them or something that there was a possibility of Dad was a sawmill man too. And he was, in the East, he was - well - always running a sawmill, he was an engineer, he's a sawyer, he was anything that they wanted. He was a sawmill man. So he was coming out and it was his original idea that Uncle Ad, Mr. Dinsmore - did you know Homer Dinsmore? No, I guess you're too young to know him, because he had that first, that garage there, that filling station. And that's the first one that was there. It was what is it - the first gasoline or first some kind of name had it. Anyhow that was the first filling station they had in at that time. He was a one-legged man. He had lost his leg when he was just twenty-one years

old. And, but anyhow...

ROB: His name was Ad?

N.S.: Uncle - his father's name - Homer was the one that had the station, Homer Dinsmore. Adison was his name, we called him Uncle Ad and Aunt Liddy. But then cousin Connelly Smith, he used to be in law school there and then Dad and, his dad, <sup>my grandfather</sup> they was always going to go in the mill business. They had a pretty good crew amongst themselves. Well, it happened on the long run that they kind of got changed things around until Uncle Ad was kinda the boss of it and the rest of them kinda did the other work. So that was - that's where my baby brother was born, 1904...no, yeah, 1904. And I went to school there three years. John Ogden was the teacher. He was a Troy - from Troy. And he, incidentally, later on taught out here at Helmer and his son lives there in Moscow until he died a couple, three years ago - something like that. But his family still lives right there in town - right near the center of town <sup>just</sup> as you come out. Are you acquainted with Moscow much?

ROB: Fairly well, yeah.

N.S.: Well, they live out on, well, now I'm not going to tell you, I guess. But you come on the Troy road out to the dog house there - what is it? Doctors, doctors <sup>Zimer</sup>, <sup>Zimer</sup>, I said I think that was a dog house, where they take the dogs to. Well, they just live up a block north of him and two blocks up that way, then two blocks back toward town. That's where his family lives. I've known them ever since they were just little bits of kids. I knew their dad since he had his first <sup>little</sup> short britches on.

ROB: Was that area a pretty thriving area when you were in there?

N.S.: Well, yes, quite so. Oh, there was other families lived up there. There were the Sawyers, and the Vandevaners and, I don't know - several families. The Nesbitts and the, oh the ones up on the hill, the Martinsons were up, there close.

ROB: Did your folks buy land or rent or what?

N.S.: No, they just had that little house there - was just part of the - I don't know who had that mill before they got it but I guess the house <sup>most have</sup> went with the rest of the business. And I think that probably the folks had written 'em - I



don't know when they were back East, <sup>yet</sup> they might have heard from them that they were out there in the mill business and they thought there was a good chance for them to get a job there or get work, you know, be busy. Or they might somewhere along the line, they heard from 'em, maybe.

ROB: Well, then you went to school for a couple of years there?

N.S.: Three years. And then they moved to homestead, up here.

ROB: Why do you think they decided to move out, to take up a homestead?

N.S.: Well, they kind of thought it would be <sup>kind of</sup> nice to have a 160 acres of their own land and so they just thought they'd take it. They thought it <sup>might</sup> sound like a good idea, they just figured you had to work on it, you know, you had to live there so much time out of the year. I know we went up there, we had to live there each year <sup>anyhow</sup> a little while. And we went up there one time in the wintertime, I don't know what time exactly except it was winter, snowy time. And we went up to stay a week or something like that - so as to hold our rights. And we got to the - well, this long road down here from Helmer - you go to this brown house there at the - oh, its an old - it anyhow, I guess it doesn't matter. But just before you cross the track, you know, coming this way, that big brown house. Well, that - you turn in front of that, turn to your right and go off out that way and <sup>then</sup> you cross the railroad after you get so far down and on down to the forks of the Potlatch and then you swing over to the McGary - it used to be the McGary place. It was kind of a look-out up on the knoll and right a long side the road. There's just cut off bank, then you turn and swing right back, then you started weaving up on up to the Miller Place. And that was, oh, a few miles, and that's where we were going to stay. The Felts had a place - Ed Felts - a homestead there and his uncle and wife lived there with him and Millers were just a fence between 'em - just, oh, as far as from here to the close neighbors here, you know. And there was a fence. But we got there and the snow - it wasn't plowed good, you know, <sup>wasn't</sup> or plowed out to amount to anything. And we stopped there to talk to this woman - and, I think, I don't know who it was took us out but anyhow we got to there and the sled tipped this way and just dumped us over out in the snow. My brother was just a baby...

ROB: You went looking around for the place you wanted?

N.S.: Well, no we stopped there to inquire something or other about it - I don't know whether we'd already made arrangements with Mr. Miller to stay at

his place until we could get a place fixed, you know, to make improvements. And anyhow, I know that the sled upset then. It was - well, we took all of our supplies, you know, with us to last for - while we were going to be up there. There were matches all over the top of the snow and our eats and things that were there. But I remember thinking that those matches, I guess a whole box of matches <sup>were</sup> strung out all over the top of the snow.

ROB: When you finally moved out from Troy to the homestead, what kind of a rig did you use?

N.S.: Well, that was just - that time - was just a short trip, had to go in to kill time, improvement time, or something like that. And then we went back out but then when we decided to live - we had lived there, let's see, the spring of 1905 or something, I don't know. The spring - after school was out we went there the last of May I think it was, the first of May - sometime in May. We lived there all that summer and all that winter and then the next spring would be the one whole year. And I don't know just how the time works out but anyhow, it was in October - it must have been October of the next year, because we missed - yes, we'd missed that whole term of school and then gone on 'til the time - until the next October, we started <sup>to</sup> school, my sister and I. And that was in 1907.

ROB: 1907.

N.S.: 1907 in October, the 31st, <sup>Halloween</sup> believe.

ROB: Back to the homestead. w Your whole family moved out there in the spring or the year?

N.S.: Yeah, they all moved out there and then started to work on it. We plowed out our road and graded...

ROB: Where did you stay when you first...?

N.S.: Well, we - Miller's - you see the road came through this way, and this fence was here and Ed Felts lived here and Millers lived here. And Miller had a saw mill of his own out there. But he had a little house up on the hill. There's a road to here and up on the hill from his place - it was just a raise, it wasn't any hill to amount to anything. That's where they moved to when they first went out to batch 'til they got their house built. And so they let us use that 'til we built ours. We just moved into their little place there.

ROB: Were the Millers and the Felts the only people around there?

N.S.: Well, there's the two Felts' and the Millers, and Ora Hayes and <sup>ten</sup> Hollenbachs



...oh there's quite a group back in there. They weren't real close together - some of them were quite close but the older Felts, Hampton Felts, was their place was on up south of us. And they didn't have any place to go then either. They'd go back and forth to his son's place, this nephew, and they finally decided they'd put up a cabin, you know, up on their place. Well, they had a big house raising <sup>there that day</sup> and all the neighbors gathered in with the lunch and men with their saws and axes and everything, and we went to work that day and put up a cabin for them. And had lunch.

ROB: In one day?

N.S.: Yes. The main parts of it. The men all turned out. Well, there was the Hollenbecks, and McGarys, and Hales, and oh, there's three bachelors - I can't think of their names - and Millers and the two Felts and us and that's all I can think of just know. They had a house raising and that Mrs. Felts had - the first time we went out there she had a baby about a year old or a year and a half, - and she just wanted to be neighborly, was awfully nice to us and all. And she said after we moved out there, we'd go over to her place and she said, "Send over anytime", she said, she had just all kinds of milk to throw away. Any time we wanted skim milk or anything too, why - so and she was making cheese out of it too. So Edna, mother sent Edna over one day, just a little ways over there, to get a pail of milk and while she was over there and this little kid was sitting in his high chair. He was a messy little thing, you know, he always had his hands in everything - smeared all over. So she went in and ate supper with 'em. And Edna wasn't hungry, she didn't want to. But she said, "Do you like smear case?" And Edna didn't know what to say 'cause she said she didn't know what smear case was. She thought that she must mean that the little kid just smeared... (laughs). So then she smeared everything on his clothes... she said she didn't know how to answer. I don't know what answer she gave her because she never heard of smear case. She didn't know what it was.

ROB: Well, what was smear case?

N.S.: That's cottage cheese.

ROB: Ohhh.

N.S.: That's the German name for it - smear case. (laughs)

End of Side C

ROB: How far was it from Miller's place to your place?

NELLIE: Oh, it - to our homestead cabin from their's it was about a mile.

ROB: Was there a trail there, or what?

NWS: We made a trail. We started in, well there was, oh, maybe a quarter of a mile, or not quite that much, from Miller's you kinda went up a slope for about a quarter of a mile. And then we branched off to the right to go to our place and then this went around up to the Hayes homestead and all those. But we branched off to the right then made our wagon road <sup>then</sup> from there over, Dad and I, and Mother and I too sometimes. Sometimes we'd all go. We took the youngster - he was a little tyke - and fixed him a little cart, took a two wheeled cart and then take him in that and join. Anyhow, Edna when she could make it, why was supposed to take care of the baby. And sitting right there where we were, you know. But she had one of the willow or some kind of a stick - these branches were around there - and she had a little hatchet and she was chopping this off and she chopped her finger.

ROB: Edna sounds like she got in a lot of trouble.

NWS: She was taking care of the baby but she - but I guess she didn't loose it. She chopped it pretty badly. And...

ROB: How would you make the road?

NWS: Oh, we had to chop brush and fall trees and grade it.

ROB: How much of that could you help your dad with?

NWS: Oh, mother helped him 'til there came the day when she had to stay home and bake up some bread and cook up some things ahead of time, maybe a good kettle of beans, something that she could keep over a couple of days. So I'd go with him that day. We'd roll the logs with a pry pole. We'd use that as a peavy. And we'd whip saw. We had a big - it's a six foot saw - the two man saw.



ROB: You'd be on one end and your dad would be on the other end?

NWS: Oh, yah. We'd saw the logs to build a bridge with. We had to fix one of those cordoroy bridge . We put the poles and things on the stringer across a little ditch, a little creek we had there. And then that's when I got my foot smashed. It was a neighbor - a friend - from out of town had gotten - had come in there I think to Miller's for a visit or something. And Dad asked him if he could hire his horses for the day to plow with. We were going around the hillside, you know, after we had crossed the bridge, and some on this side of the bridge too. But we were fixing to plow that up there so we could level it down, you know, and make our road because it was on a slant. And he said yes, so - he said take it all and make good use of them. He had those great big logging horses. So Dad took one of the horses and - the bridge wasn't finished yet. We had the stringers in and oh, part of the floor laid, that is - the cordoroy laid. But anyhow, we had to go down through this little creek, just marshy and all, mud and then you'd go up the other side. And so he took one of them on up that way - up onto the other side. And he told me to - said - what he meant - I don't know just how he said it but I misunderstood him, and he said for me to hold that one and I thought he wanted me to follow, you know, and bring him up. So I held him until he got out of the way and then I started with my horse. And I had him close under the bits, you know, under the rein . He was taller than - I didn't hardly come to his back, great big elephant. And when we got down to the - oh, the creek wasn't any wider - it was just marshy and soft from here to his chair there, I guess. But it was a little bit of water running there in that place too. But where the horse stepped that old heavy foot of his, why he would go down deep <sup>through that</sup> marshy place there. And so I started and I had a hold of him up

where I thought I would have good control. Well, he just swung me around there like <sup>I WAS</sup> a whip crack. I'd hold him and then I started to go through then, leading him and then he just started <sup>PLUNGING</sup> and lunging like he would get through in a hurry. And that's when I began swinging around, pret'near off my feet. And he'd swing me over this way and I got my feet crossed someway or another. I'd go that way and then when I'd swing back and in the long run I had ahold this way and he stepped right on my foot there, with his big old hooves, great big thing. And if it hadn't been for the marshy ground just wet and sandy and mud, I'd of crushed every bone in my foot, I guess. But I think it weakened it, stretched some of the ligaments and all. But I don't think it broke anything. But it just buried that thing in soft mud, all the way under the horse there. And it hurt so bad, I was about to cry. And Dad said, "Well, why in the world did you start that big horse through there?" And I said, "Well, you told me to." He said, "No, I told you to hold him for me until I tied that other one and could come back and get it." I was just supposed to hold him until he could come back after him.

ROB: Just the time you needed a little sympathy he wasn't being too understanding, was he?

NWS: No. But he thought that I had - he didn't know that I had misunderstood his instructions. But anyhow I had a pretty sore foot for a week or two. It swelled up some but I guess...

ROB: How long did it take you to fix up that road?

NWS: Oh, I don't know, we worked on it a good portion of the summer and, I guess, we went out there in the spring and we worked a month or two, I guess. I don't know how long it was. Well, anyhow, we got that road fixed over to - it was about three quarters of a mile <sup>of it</sup> that was already made to the other man's homestead. And anyhow, <sup>And there was that other 1/4 of a mile</sup>



we had to get our cabin built then. And we didn't have the log cabin, we had <sup>a</sup> road finished then so we took in a load of lumber. I guess we got it from the mill there, the folks would get it right from around the mill. Brought in a load of lumber, and then we helped build the house. Dad was doing most of the building but I was always - or mother - one of us - always there to "hand me this or give me that. And reach up such and such a kind of <sup>a</sup> stick."

ROB: Why wouldn't...you said these neighbors of yours had a house raising, why couldn't you have had a house raising too?

NWS: Well, they didn't think of it. That was after we had been there, just before we left the homestead that they did that for the Felts'. We had been more or less out there by that time and got to all neighboring more.

ROB: When you were first out there, were you pretty much on you own?

NWS: Well, there were a few that took time <sup>kind of</sup> to get acquainted. They were all good neighbors and everything, an awful <sup>ly</sup> fine bunch of them at that time. I met Ernie while we were on the homestead. He was working out here toward Neva at those mines out there then. You know there's an old stamp mill <sup>or</sup> an old some kind of a mining contraption out there? Well, that's where his mine was. He and his nephew and another uncle, that they had was - they were in cohorts on that, they were working that mine. And <sup>then</sup> they had to go out every so often and work out their dues or whatever it is they call it, so...I was going to say that on Saturday nights after we all got acquainted out there, well we had met the Hollenbecks, were living out there in that part, and they came out <sup>west</sup> first. And they had their homestead which was beyond ours on further east, and we were south. But anyhow, the Hollenbecks had known the Smiths in Missouri and the Hollenbecks came out. Well, they were at our house most of the



time - Mrs. Hollenbeck and the kids. They lived <sup>+</sup> here with us for a while, and I guess then they got things fixed up so they could live on their own place. And anyhow, in the long run, why it got to be quite a bunch and then the Smiths come out <sup>west</sup> Ernie and Henry and, I don't know, there's a lot of them, the relatives of theirs. that went to work up at that mine. The Golden Rod Mine they were then. That's just this side of <sup>all</sup> that other machinery place. They knew Hollenbeck there, so Hollenbeck brought them over. The folks told them to bring 'em on over and get acquainted with us. They brought them over on Saturday when they didn't have to work. They'd bring 'em over there and they'd stay over night, you see, and go back Sunday. It was ever so many miles - twelve miles or something - they had to go there but they were used to batching and homecooking tasted pretty good. And Mother was a good cook. And we had the garden in and we used to have wilted lettuce and we had our own chickens and we had fried chicken and homemade bread and all things like that that they weren't used to. And then we'd have all the butter-milk and butter and sweet milk that they could hold. They'd come over pret'near every Saturday - pret'near every Saturday and spend the weekend. Then there were the Hales in the same bunch. Mr. and Mrs. Hale, they were kind of elderly people, -and maybe you heard of Grandma Hale that died over here at the resthome, the county home, at the age of a hundred?

ROB: Um-hum.

NWS: Well, she was one of them that had been out there. But, I don't know. There would ~~be~~ be a whole bunch of them out there and we'd just have a whale of a time, have fun and all kinds of foolishness. Everybody would sit around and talk about

something funny that had happened, and visit.

ROB: Did you enjoy those times too?

NWS: Yah, yes I did. Well, Mother was kinda particular with us kids about – we didn't

just tear around like tomboys and orangutans, you know. She expected us to act

halfway ladylike – while we were there and going to school and all. So we were

just kinda calm but we got on the homestead, then we just turned loose, kind of,

and we spent the live long time with a saw or an ax or something like that and

just roughing it, you know. And, Mother right in the bunch. And we cut a <sup>lot of</sup> little

tiny, jack pines they used to call them, that were all through there and we just

cut down a whole mess of those and peeled them snow white and then built a

fence all around our yard and we fixed it all up pretty like that. We didn't have

anything else to do and that was something to kill time. We were just out there

by ourselves. Mother – well, most of the time, Edna had to take care of the

baby. She didn't have <sup>so</sup> much else to do. But mother and I would build fence and

cut down the trees and we had a log house that – particular kind of – these–

usually logging people have these funny little square buildings out in the backyard

with a little window in the side. Ours was four posts and they had fixed a fine

seat on it and all, but the four posts with – it was all – how do you say it –

air-conditioned. It had the shakes all over the top of it for a roof and then

gunny sack sides. And it was just breezy as it could be!

ROB: Nobody there by family anyway.

NWS: Had a door and everything. It was all just as fine as you please. But we had

a chicken house, wooden, I mean a log, little log chicken house. And we had a



barn and we could have a cow out there then, you know.

And we ran out of flour and bread one time. For quite a while we hadn't had any bread, and it'd be quite a while before the next supply would come in. You'd make a thorough list of everything that you had to have, and, oh, about maybe once a week or every two weeks or whatever it was, somebody would go out with a wagon and bring in a load of supplies. And each fellow had turned in his slip of what he needed, and they had to keep track of that and bring it in and whenever they got back - they knew just when they were coming back - why, they'd go - each one'd go and get his load that had come in for them, and take it home. And we ran out of bread one time and we didn't have any flour so one night Mother decided, well, she wanted some bread. So she went down to the barn and got some shorts that we fed the cow. It was nice clean shorts and she mixed up bread and we thought that was kinda funny - eat the same as the old cow did. But we ate that and my, it was the best stuff I ever did eat.

ROB: What are shorts?

NWS: Well, that's wheat - kind of. It's a certain grind - its kinda like whole wheat. It's all ground up, you know, kinda like whole wheat, bran and all right it it. And it was sure the best bread. We were kinda sorry, then when they got the good bread, the good wheat back - the good <sup>white</sup> flour. It was just awful <sup>ly</sup> good.

ROB: Did you eat quite a bit of wild game and stuff?

NWS: No, we didn't. Not at that time we didn't. I don't think we ever had any while we were there.

ROB: I thought you said you went shooting sometimes?

NWS: Well, that was after - well this was wild game too. I was thinking you meant deer and elk and things. But we didn't get any deer and elk. I'd got so I had the - it'd be the pheasants and the squirrels, and thing like that, because that's about all we did have. But we had plenty of pheasants and squirrels. And those little pine squirrels, you know, some people don't eat them but they were very good.

ROB: Did you get to be a pretty good shot?

NWS: Yes. I could - I was a good shot. I could - after the boy - the neighbor boy - he was from the Brook's. They lived over west of us, and they had to come up this way to where our road forked and then come over to our place, and, oh, I think it was only about a quarter <sup>of a</sup> mile square across but you had to go down through a canyon to go to his place. And he was going to go out during the summer to take in the harvest. And he brought his gun over and wanted to know if I'd keep it until he got back. And he said, "Now here's some shells <sup>to go with it</sup> and I want you to use them now." I said, "I don't like it - I'm afraid of yours - I'm liable to ruin it." And <sup>He knew I'd been shooting ours, just a single shot .22.</sup> he said, "You can't hurt it." <sup>little</sup> He said, "I want you to use it." He said, "Keep it for me until I get back. I don't want to leave it in the house over there for fear it may not be there when I got back." So I kept it and I got so I could pick 'em off - so quite often I could pick off pheasants on the fly.

ROB: With a twenty-two?

NWS: Un-huh. That twenty-two. And I'd go over after the mail. It got so Mother would let me go over after the mail - over to Millers to get the mail and whoever was out would bring in mail and we could go down and get it. And I'd go after it and then come back with <sup>maybe</sup> a pheasant or two and a squirrel or something.



ROB: It: Do you think your mother liked this time in the woods?

NWS: Yes, I think she did. <sup>I</sup> really believed she liked it. If it hadn't been for school, we'd have probably stayed there longer and filed. But they said, "We better get these dumb bunnies into school. How do you expect <sup>them</sup> to learn anything?"

ROB: You lived a pretty different life, didn't you - as far as things you could do and couldn't do?

NWS: Yes, yes. We used to...we did everything - well, roughing it. It was a man's style, you know, when you do the man's work and other work around. <sup>They</sup> made us a garden, a nice big garden, a beautiful garden. We had chickens, and one old rooster - big old, I think that one was a Rock Island - no- red?

ROB: Rhode Island?

NWS: Rhode Island Red! Great big old thing and he was <sup>the</sup> feist<sup>est</sup> old fella you ever saw.

And he'd get in and pull all the lady friends into the garden with him and scratch around in there and we'd have to - I'd say we didn't have the garden fenced off separate. We'd have to watch and keep him out of it. So then we'd <sup>go</sup> chase him out. Daddy'd go out, chase him out and shoo. But he didn't shoo very good. He just kinda balked and strutted and he didn't go very far. Dad'd pick up a clod and throw at him and that'd make him pretty mad. He would just kinda be resentful of Dad wanting him to be out of there. Finally when Dad would think he had got him far enough then he'd turn to go back in the house. And the fella would jump up on anything he could find - a post or stump or anything - and crow just as loud as he could. He'd make Dad so mad - just as much as to say he'd won the battle.

And we had another Phymouth Rock rooster. <sup>They were just little.</sup> We hatched him from an egg, and he was the gangliest, most ungainly looking thing you ever saw when he was growing up. The rest of 'em all looked like they were real nice chickens, but he was all

legs and homely and he was mean as could be. He'd peek 'em – any of them get a <sup>crumb</sup> or anything he wanted, he'd peek and chase 'em away. So I'd kick at him. I'd make him stay out of the way and let the others have something to eat. And it got so he'd fly at my foot when I'd kick at him. Oh, he got to be half-grown or something and that got to be a game between us. I'd kick at him and get him to fly at me. And <sup>every</sup> time Mother would go outside to – the house sat here and around the back of the house there was growing from the back of the house round to the front, were some trees near the end of the house. And we had a meat cage, had it there and we had gunny sacks all around and we wet those sacks in the shade of the tree. And we could keep meat just as nice as an ice box. And down at the edge of the house we had a big box – a good sized box, with a lid on<sup>†</sup>, and we kept the butter and everything like that, you , wanted to keep nice and cold. We had to put cloths over the butter. Mother would start out here – we had the box nailed up on the back of the house – back there too – that you could keep milk in, with a screen over the front of it. And she'd go around the house, you know, to get the pan of milk for the meal. And she'd go around there and pretty soon I'd hear her yell! That old rooster would fly up at her. She was scared to death of him. He'd fly at her everytime she'd go around the house. And after we moved in town we brought him in here. We brought our chickens in and we lived right over here at this next corner, and he <sup>would</sup> fight with the Hayes' old rooster. He lived down at the other corner on the same block. And Mrs. Hayes came running over one day and said, "Oh, Mr. Wood, don't you wanna come over and chop his head off?" or something like that. "Your chicken's head off, because –" she said, " your old rooster and mine have been a fighting and he about killed him." Or something like it. So they had to put him out of his misery and she was gonna cook him. But



they'd fight!

And then my aunt and uncle came up to visit us one time from Troy and they brought a little pair of Banties up here and that was for Elton, my brother. And he thought those were pretty nice. Well, this old big Plymouth Rock Rooster and that little Banty would fight all the time. And that big old Plymouth Rock licked everything he met up with until he got to that Banty. And that Banty could just - he didn't know - he'd get ready to jump and the Banty would go underneath and hit him from the back end, jump between his legs. He was so quick and so little. And by the time the other one got turned around, he was back someplace else.

ROB: What other things could you do when your Dad was building the house with you - what were the things you could do?

NWS: Well, when we were building the house, we made our own shakes and shingles.

And made shakes for the barn and it was a big barn too. And...

ROB: Would you do that?

NWS: Un-huh. I helped him. Oh, I could split shakes or shingles and he would shave them. They made the <sup>hand</sup> and shaved, you know, the tapered - you know, like the regular factory shingles. I could split shakes all right with the froe, mallott. But - well, that's...oh, I don't know, and then besides, I knew <sup>the name of</sup> all the tools he wanted, you know. And I could go get whatever he wanted and help out with it. Help him take measurements and all like that, as a helper. I liked it though. That was duck soup, I thought.

ROB: Would you have rather stayed out on the homestead or were you glad to come back into town?

NWS: Well, I was glad to come back to school. <sup>I knew</sup> I'd rather go to school, I know that.

But aside from that, it was fun on the homestead too. I was enjoying it, but I

couldn't get any education out there. So, <sup>it WAS a case of</sup> ~~sa~~ move in.

ROB: And when was it that you did move in to Bovill?

NWS: Oh, that we did move in? Oh, that was October the 31st, 1907.

ROB: Bovill was still a young town then?

NWS: Yeh, they were just building a depot at that time. Well, Mr. Parker had a men's

store and I think there was some feller had started a butcher shop here. And

I don't know that there was much of anything, I guess. I don't know whether

somebody had the grocery store, I guess one of them. I don't know if when we

came here <sup>OR NOT</sup> there were none - they came later, some of them. And...

END OF SIDE D

transcribed by Karen Purtee