

ROY MARTIN
Second Interview

Interviewed by:
Sam Schrage

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rural Latah County, Northwest; b. 1908

worker in woods, miner, and construction; hobo

1.8 hours

(Roy Martin is a pseudonym)

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00	23	The station man at Rexford, Montana wouldn't heat the depot for the men on a cold night. In the Rexford Hotel they met a prostitute who gave them two dollars to eat. As soon as they got to Curley Cox's camp the men rebelled over the food and quit. On their way through town some months later all the lumberjacks went to her wedding to a lumberjack. She became respectable; many were good women, who got out of it when they could.

(15 minutes)

with Sam Schragger

July 30, 1976

II. Transcript

This conversation with Roy Martin took place at his home in Latah county on July 30, 1976. Roy Martin is a pseudonym. The interviewer is Sam Schragger.

ROY MARTIN: I take a ^{drink} now and then. I get to feeling too bad, take a drink and you take, you got bottles and bottles of pills here. Some for arthritis, some for heart trouble, some for, I don't know if you know what charley horses are but when you get older, when you do a lot of work, if you do a lot of work, you get cramps in your legs, they call 'em charley horses, that's the old nickname for 'em. I don't know what the new nickname is. Mrs. Swetzer gave me some pills. They were five grain quinine. That will stop charley horses, If you ever get 'em, you remember that.

SAM SCHRAGER: Five grains.

RM: Mrs. Fletcher, she used to be a registered nurse. I think she was. Don't quote me on it. I think she was, but she's pretty good on that. (talks to cat). Deleted from manuscript, conversation about cat.) Now I tell you, I'm living better ^{right} now than I ever have in my life. I never had it so good. I got all I want to eat, I got no money. Because I spend everything ^{that} I get on what I eat. And when I die, I don't know what's gonna happen. But they'll either have to bury me for love, and I don't know who loves me. Or they'll have to bury me for stink. I don't care which. One of those two.

SS: You're not going to have to worry about it.

RM: I paid taxes all my life. I don't have any insurance. I don't have any hospital insurance. No burial insurance. No nothing. I live just the way I live since the day ^{that} I was born. Live rough and tough and hell, used to be you could bury a guy for 20 bucks. Now they made big business out of it. Like they did everything else. When I went to work in the woods, you could mark your name, initial on a log, it cost you about eight cents for a piece of keel, would last you a month or more. Now they want a doolar and twenty nine cents ^{for} the same piece of keel.

SS: Keel?

RM: Keel. You know what keel is? Maybe I got a piece in my pocket. You see how sharp my fingers are? I just about wore it down. Anyway, you mark your log with a keel.

That piece is pretty short, ^{right now} I got a longer chunk. But I ain't had enough money to buy another one. Or never thought to buy. (pause in tape) That's as far as I went. I didn't graduate! I actually didn't graduate out of the third grade grammar school. But I learned a lot on the way. I ^{am} not too good on figgers. I can add quite well. I can write quite well. I can spell about 60-40. That's about all I can spell, 60-40. But 40 per cent will be wrong, sixty per cent will be right! That's as far as I can go. On our language, that's if you don't get too high. If you don't start getting sophisticated words. I can do pretty good.

SS: Why did you only go to the third grade?

RM: Tell you what, boy says to me, friend of mine, lives in Sandpoint, Idaho, he said, "Roy, there's some big fish, Sand Creek. Let's go fishing tonight." No, he said tomorrow night. I said alright, that's a date. Maybe it was the middle of the week, we don't know what day it was. I said, that's a good deal. I'll have my line and hooks and a couple of cans of grasshoppers. We didn't use reels and poles in that time, because we didn't have the money. ^{I mean,} times is tough. A reel is something for sportmen. But we didn't have reels and we used a long ^{willow} pole. Well, long as we wanted, maybe eight foot long. Seven foot, eight foot long. We'd catch Dolly Vardon, eastern brook, lot of eastern brook. Sand Creek was full of eastern brook. Beautiful trout, it wasn't over fished. People from Spokane never came up there. It's too far, the roads were too bad. We fished Sand Creek and then we'd go over to Pack River and ^{Pack River} we'd fish. And sometimes we'd take a horse and buggy. And we'd go to the upper end of Pack River, we'd catch white fish and cutthroat trout. Rainbow trout, eastern brook, all good fishing. No competition a tall. There was plenty of fish. We could go down to lake and catch all the bullheads we wanted at Sandpoint, they had a great big dock, run out of Sandpoint, where a logging company used to drop their logs in. They dropped the logs in and we'd watch, and when there was nobody dropping logs, which was probably hours and hours, and we'd go over there and fish off the dock. We'd catch trout, lake trout, mostly different kinds of trout in the lake. Never catch any white fish then, at that time of the year of course, they were all up the rivers. But we'd catch bullheads,

we'd catch trout. All the trout we wanted.

SS: What about the evening he told you to come fishing with him? Was there something special about that night?

RM: Yes. We was to go and fish for some Dolly Vardon. And I had a woman school teacher, she was a very nice woman. It was a one room schoolhouse at Selly. And he said, bring your fishing gear, you^k fishing line, just had 'em ^{in my pocket,} just line wrapped on a stick. And we'd have a bunch of hooks in our pocket. We'd have two or three cans with us. Probably Prince Albert cans or Velvet cans and we'd fill them with grasshoppers and then we'd all run down to Sand Creek which is about three and a half miles away, ^{four miles.} We run down there after school and we go fishing. After school. And we caught a lot of trout and we'd bring the trout home to our folks. And probably be the only fresh fish that they'd eaten in quite some time. 'Cause you didn't go to the store and buy fish ⁱⁿ them days 'cause there was no store there and the thing was that we had fresh fish. And we enjoyed fishing as kids. And we got Dolly Vardon trout, sometimes we'd catch trout, weigh five or six pounds. Not too often. Maybe about, one of us would always catch a good trout. But most of our trout was 12,14, 15,16 inch trout. Nice looking trout. We'd never keep anything less than about 10 inches.

SS: What has that got to do with you leaving school?

RM: Well, what happened was the next day the teacher got onto me and she told one of the boys to go out and cut a big willow. And I knew what that meant.

SS: What did you do?

RM: We were supposed to stay in that night to make up for the spelling that we lost, we were supposed to write each word five hundred times and that would take quite some time for a boy. And we'd, the heck with that, we walked out. Well the next night, of course, we got a whippin'. With a big willow stick. And I didn't like whippin' very well, so I quit school. And I told the teacher that I didn't like the whippin' and that, you beat me any more with that stick, I'm gonna take that stick and I'm gonna whip her! Well of course, then we called the sheriff from Sandpoint and his name was Kurt Patrick. ^{Very} Nice man, very nice man. He came up and

looked for me, but I knew what had happened. So I just grabbed my cork shoes which I had in my room, and ^{my} lumberjacket. And I left home and I knew where I was going I was gonna go work in the woods. And I went to work in the Humbard lumbercamp. Humbard Lumber Company. And I got a job.

SS: How old were you at that time?

RM: 'Bout fifteen and a half or sixteen. I don't know exactly, but I'd say about 16. I went to work in the Humbard Lumber Company Camp as a swamper. That was about the most manual job that you could get. But Humbard Lumber Company was good. They're a big outfit, I suppose they were probably as big as Potlatch. And quite a few young boys became lumberjacks working for Humbard Lumber Company. And we went, we swamped, some of us drove team, 'cause pretty near everybody in that country, kids and all, they knew how to handle horses. And that's the way it went. Of course, when times were tough, ^{and there were a} lot of lumberjacks, they didn't hire boys to do a man's work. But a lot of times, boys did do a man's work. We done a man's work and we get paid for a man's work. (pause in tape) You see, the people at that time that were performing a service for the country, they weren't all resident population. They were what you call a floating population. They went from here to there ^{from} there to here. At one time, everybody had a home. Maybe some of 'em were from Michigan, some of 'em from Wisconsin, some of 'em from Minnesota and God knows where they were from, but they were mostly Westerners, I would say, that stayed around the woods. There wasn't any bums hung around the woods, they weren't bums. They were lumberjacks, but they might have been lumberjacks in a destitute situation where they had to, but they never called upon the public as much as the bums did. They called upon one another. And ^{they} helped one another. Lumberjacks helped one another. They'd never say, "Are you hungry?" That was never said. They'd say, "Are you eating?" You'd either say yes or no. You say no, they knew you was broke. If they knew you were broke, ^{and they} had any money they'd say, "Here's a dollar. Go eat." Or here's five, or here's two or three or whatever the case may be. You wasn't bummin' 'em.

SS: Did you try to pay them back the same amount later? Or didn't that matter how much

it was.

RM: No. It was never a loan. It was never considered a loan. I'd say to you, "Are you eatin'?" You tell me, you say, "No." I knew you were broke. If you're not eatin' you're hungry. Here's a buck and you'd say thanks and you'd go eat. And maybe you get 50 cents left or 75 cents left. Maybe you buy a room and maybe you don't. Maybe you save it for the next day, or the next day or the next day. For a dollar you could eat for about three days. I mean a meal a day at least.

SS: One thing I was trying to figure is how come you couldn't stay in one place?

RM: The thing was, if there was no work there, who's gonna support ya? How you gonna get by?

SS: These jobs would only last for a little while?

RM: Maybe they was no job. What you do, a lumberjack went from camp to camp. He was either a skinner, which is a teamster, or see they didn't have any trucks, they didn't have any cats. And you was either a tail down man or you were a cross haul man or you're a canthook man or you was a faller or you was a swamper, or if they had chutes where they chuted logs down the hill, you was either tailin' down end to the chute or you was a swamper, up in the woods swamping for horses. To haul logs out, or you was a greaser on the chute. They had greasers, go along with a can of grease, plop, plop, plop, you'd walk up that chute with a can of crude oil. You had cork shoes on which you had to have, cause that chute is slick. Had to be slick. And some places, they use sand to slow 'em down where it was too steep. And where it was too steep after sand, they'd use what they'd call a goose neck. Which was a piece of iron, put in the chute like that and when the logs went down it just rip a piece right out of the log. Mostly what it ripped off was just piece of ^{the} bark. And maybe a little bit of the, well, the bark and part of the sap. That's all.

SS: How was it it set up that a man had to move and keep moving? A fellow couldn't just marry and settle down if he wanted to?

RM: No. Well, I suppose you could settle down. I don't know how you'd do it. There was lot of people that was settled down, there was lot of lumberjacks that was married

that had homes. ^{Saved} up enough money to buy a little property, you was living on a stump ranch. Maybe they met some gal and they married here. And how did they live? Very poor. Well yes, they raised little garden, they had maybe a cow or horse or two. And they got along, some of 'em got along ^{very} good, some of 'em didn't get along so good. That, at that time, what the logging industry was interested in was manpower and as low a price as they could. And the floating manpower, it didn't make any difference. If you were raised in Moscow and you went to Priest River or you went to Sandpoint or you went anywhere else here where they ^{got} logging camps, you stayed in the camp, you get treated the same, you get so much a day, you get so much for board, so much for blankets, 25 cents for hospital. That was it! And if you were lucky and you were a good man, you stayed there 4 or 5 months, you might make four or five hundred dollars. You didn't make very much money. So you had to be pretty careful if, how you spent that money. Now, if you were a married man of course, you had to have a pretty frugal wife too. And you had to have a stump ranch or someplace where you could raise a garden. You could get along real reasonable. Otherwise, you didn't make it. That's all there was to it. And there was a lot of men. And they had nothing to hold 'em back. They had a family somewhere, but everybody's got a family. But, in order to survive for themselves, they forgot their families. Not their wives as a rule, they didn't forget them, but their mothers, fathers, sisters, so forth, they forgot them to get by themselves. They got by. That was the way it was. They didn't ride passenger trains, they rode boxcars. And when they was prosperous and they wanted to get somewhere in a hurry, they had a big check or something, maybe they ride a passenger train. And that was when trains was a hundred per cent transportation, where today a hundred per cent transportation is cars. In this Inland Empire, in this part of the country. You didn't have no cars running around on a big highway. ^I come down through Pullman here and that road the main road wasn't as wide as this county road is here. I worked in Pullman in 1926. Came up here, there was no work in the woods, they wasn't paying anything in the woods. I went ^{UP} here with a friend of mine, we went steeplejacking.

SS: What's that?

RM: Well, you go through town up here the first thing you notice is the university.

Two or three flag poles up there, they got no flag lines in 'em. Like the student union building, two flag poles ~~on~~ it, or did have at that time, I don't know what they got now. Two flag poles up there, just setting up on a two or three story building. No flag lines in 'em, they needed painting. So you go up there and you paint the ball or the eagle, whatever ~~the~~ got on top. Put the flag line in and paint the pole all the way down, you get big sum of about 35 bucks a pole. It's a dangerous occupation. And that was the lumberjack that did that.

SS: What did you think of Pullman, was it an alright place to be at that time?

RM: Just as good as anywhere else. It was a university town. It wasn't one third as big as it is now. They had a park down along the river. I think they called it a tourist park at the time. They didn't charge you anything, they had tables in there. Place you could pitch a tent, we pitched a tent. We did everything. And we had a ^{grinding} outfit and we sharpened knives and scissors and axes and lawnmowers and we'd go through town, we'd make maybe ten dollars ^{15 dollars}. Some days. And then we'd move to another town.

SS: How'd you tote your stuff?

RM: We had a Model T Ford. Little engine on the back, couple of grinding wheels.

SS: That sounds different than hoboing on the rails.

RM: That's what you go through, even if you're a lumberjack. You diversify. If there's nothing here, you do something else. I've shovelled coal. I've shovelled wheat. Everything else. I've pitched bundles. Go to North Dakota, Montana, Canada. Pitched bundles in the summertime 'cause they paid five dollars a day and board. 'Cause they wasn't paying anything in the woods. And finally they got to paying down to what they called, three dollars and ninety cents a day. That's what they paid in the woods. At one time. That was when it was what they call gyppo. That was a gyppo area. And then we quite 'cause we couldn't make any money. The only guys that was making any money, and they wasn't making much that they was breaking they're bodies was the Swedes and Norwegians, that come

from the old country and they was working for scab wages. And they was working themselves to the bone to make twice as much as they were paying by contract. And so finally even ^{they} they had to give up. And then of course, you know what happened afterwards, the depression hit. But we quit the woods and we went to different things. Lumberjack then became a miner and he became everything else. Bad that he had to quit the woods. Because he was raised in the woods, but they had to quit! They had to become bundle pitchers, and they had to become miners and they had to become everything else. Working on the railroad and everything else. Even the railroads didn't pay very much money. But it was better than working in the woods. That was before the depression in '29.

SS: Sounds like the gyppo was the company getting every last bit out of you they could.

RM: Naturally. All it is is human nature is greedy. They're gonna get everything they can. And they got it and ^{then} went broke in '29.

SS: What do you know about the IWW philosophy? I understand that they were saying the working class should control the means of production.

RM: Well, IWW's were alright. They were something like the CIO is today. Or the AFofL. Through a union you get power. And by yourself you ain't got nothin'. And that still holds true today. Now, if you're working out here on a job and it's a scab job, you can say, well, I got to cut your wages. Nothing you can do about it.

(End of side A)

RM: The IWW's was the best thing that ever hit this country. Ward was the first man ever paid five dollars a day for working man. And all the goddamn Jews said, "Oh you're going to ruin the country! You're going to break us all, you're going to ruin the country paying five dollars a day." They didn't. They didn't break the country. They got the 8 hour day 1916, IWW's.

SS: Seems that compared to the unions today, they were after more. They wanted to get it all for the working man.

RM: What they wanted was a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, ^{was the} IWW's. It was no

different. IWW's was not a bit different, they were not as violent, actually as they were made out to be. Not as much as the American Federation of Labor is today, or the AFofL - CIO is today. But at that time, capitalists were so much against them, that they were printing all kinds of junk to break it. They were paying millions of dollars to break the IWW's, because the IWW's was the first union that we had in Idaho, Washington, Montana. The first union that we had. California didn't have any union. They had bundles of stiffies coming up from California with bedrolls on their back and the IWW's was burning 'em! They catch a goddamn bum coming up with a bedroll on his back, "Where you going?" "Well, I'm going up here to Missoula, or I'm going up to Priest River, see if I can get a job." Said, "Well you won't need this bed, let me help you." And they'd take it off. They'd set fire to it. Said, "We don't pack any beds in this country. You won't need it." Just burn it up. He said, a lot of them companies here will furnish decent beds and they'll furnish showers. That's what it amounted to, the IWW's. They made the IWW's look bad, yeah. Communist this, communist that. They didn't even know what communism meant in this country at that time. But I'll tell you what it was: It was propoganda put out by the rich, to exploit the poor. They still do it today, there's no difference. Just like these politicians. They got a big bunch of shit they'll give ya, and when the election is won and they're in, they'll forget all about it. And that's capitalism. Free enterprise, yes, I think free enterprise is good. But I think when capital gets too big, it can be just as bad as any other form of ...

SS: Dictators?

RM: Same thing. Figure ^{it out} _A. Same thing. And Idaho at one time was a very good state, was a very good union state. But I doubt, it's not as good a union state as it used to be. But one thing to say is, the state ^S _A that border is right now, that is 100 per cent union and everything, you can't even get a job as a latrine orderly without belonging to the union. Come to figure out that Idaho, Montana, parts of Montana and Washington started out by the lumberjacks, the IWW's. And they spent millions of dollars to break the IWW's. Millions. California alone

spent millions to break the IWWs.

SS: Did you ever see the little red songbooks the IWWs had?

RM: Yes, I did, sung all the songs and read all the preambles, carried a book, you bet I did!(Sings the songs. See tape for words and music)(Second voice has joined, it is unidentified.)

SS: I know that I heard...

? Oh yeah, you're brother used to be a Wobbly.

RM: You want a song book.

? He'll give you one. You'll have to pay for it.

SS: That's okay.

RM: They used to cost ten cents. They'll probably cost you forty cents now.

SS: Do you remember the song, "Halleluah, I'm a Bum"? I heard about that one.

RM: I don't know too much about that one. I've sang it. A lot of these songs was put on radio or put on TV or put on records, they were all taken from bum songs. Lot of people think that hell, they come about just lately. Hell, they didn't come about lately. IWWs had it in the song books for years.

SS: When did you get the chance to sing that song?

RM: I sung 'em for years!

SS: Did guys sing 'em down in the jungles?

RM: Yeah. Hell, riding boxcars, in the jungles, whenever we felt like singing, lot of families, lot of young guys be singing.(Break in tape) Idaho can be proud that it was instrumental, the people that made the woods great in this country and brought the logs to market and here were, in the early '20's were IWWs. You couldn't go into the big outfit like Potlatch and get a job, you could get a job alright, and go out to the camp, or Humbard Lumber company, or lot o f these other big lumber companies. Big lumber companies! When you go out there, the superintendent would say, "Lad do you belong to the union?" And like me, I'm a kid, I said, "No, I don't even know what a union is." Well, he'd say, "Young man, if you want to work here you got to belong to the union." I said, what's the procedure, what does it cost? Well it cost you five dollars to join and

it cost you 50 cents a month. I said, that's alright. So he said, "They'll be a delegate come over and talk to you tonight at the bunkhouse." And a delegate was the same as a business agent. That's what it was. And he'd talk to you and he'd sign you up. And the money was taken out of your check. And you had your job, you were an IWW then. And you got a card, a red card, you had a number. That's what it was, that's all it amounted to. You join the union. (Break in tape) And have what I got today. And I guess the answer to my prayer. I love it here, I love this country. But I hate ^acity. I hate towns, I hate these little town governments. And all these crooks that you got in town and I ^{Just} [^] ^{about} what I can call your town businessmen are small crooks is what they are. They're living off people. Well, that's right, they got to make a living. That is ~~some~~ thing that they got to do, they got to make a living. But I don't want 'em to retire on their first purchase that they get off of me. Or you. And all these people are trying to retire off the first few customers that they get. Now this country was built on 6 per cent interest. At one time. I would say times have changed. Well, how in the hell did they change? This country became great on six per cent interest for business. It became great, it became one of the most wealthiest countries in the world. And now they're not satisfied with less than 60 to 100 per cent interest and up. And they're still going broke, but they're all driving Cadillacs. And the farmers, they're the most poor mouthed people that you ever looked at. They are! They're all losing money. But every kid's got a Cadillac and every kid's going to college. They're all going to college, educated idiots! That's what they are. That's what I call 'em, educated idiots. If the axe would drop tomorrow and a depression, be thousands of these kids going to college right now, be starving to death. What could they do? None of 'em ever learn anything about manual labor. Producing. Non-producers is what they are. That's what the IWW's advocated. Get rid of the non-producers. The producers is the one that should benefit the profit. Not the non-producers. And we got nine non-producers for every producer. More or less. Don't quote me on that, I haven't made any calculated figgers.

SS: What about back then? Do you think it was in the interest of the wealthy to have

all these men that were floating to come at their beck and call when they offered 'em work, was that the way it was set up? You had to go where the work was, you didn't have any choices?

RM: Absolutely. Great Northern Railroad was built by migratory workers from all over. Bums, they call 'em, hobos. They built the Great Northern Railroad! They tunneled through the mountains, they built the grades and they did the work and Jim Hill himself said, "Don't kick any of 'em off ^{of} my trains." He said, "Yes, the mail train, I don't want no bums riding the mail train. Don't want no bums riding the silk train. But I don't want any bums kicked off of my freight trains!" And I've seen 300 men on one freight train. Riding from here to there, on the Great Northern Railroad. The Milwaukee Railroad did not kick people off of their trains. I don't know who owned the Milwaukee, I heard that Henry Ford owned a big part of it. They weren't kicked off. The Northern Pacific, a great railroad. Nobody was kicked off of the Northern Pacific Railroad. You could ride it from end to end. As long as you stayed on a freight train, in most of these towns, you were not kicked off a train. But, if you got on some of these offshot railroads like the SP and S, the OWR & N, the CB & Q, back east, and a lot of other railroads, the brakeman would come and say, "You got a dollar?" "No, I ain't got a dollar." "Well get off! This is it, you get off!" And...

SS: When the train was running?

RM: Sometimes. Yes. Because they carried brakeclubs, a club about like a pick handle. They carried those pick handles, and what they were carried for was to knock the retainers down on the cars. They had an air retainer on the end of each car. When they were knocked down, they had 15 pounds more pressure per square inch, or something like that. I'm not exactly up on that, but I think it was around 15 per cent more pressure on the brake cylinder, they had a big brake cylinder under each car. Well when the retainers were knocked down, going down a big grade, they had 50 per cent more braking power. And they carried clubs that they could run over the car and they could whack, and they were just little handles, about ^{like} your finger, and they just knocked 'em down.

So, they would run over the cars with these, and they would also use these on the bums, to chase the bums off the cars. Well, they weren't all ...bums, riding on these cars. There were men of misfortune, men that had families, men that had families that were hungry. And they tried to go someplace where they could get a job so ^{that} they could send money to their families. Maybe they were in North Dakota, ^{and they} had a family in Wisconsin that was destitute. If they worked in North Dakota, maybe they could make money in the harvest to send money to their homes in Minnesota or Wisconsin, wherever they lived. They did it all over the country. Vice versa. Wherever labor was required, men showed up. Railroad men were unscrupulous, some of 'em. I've seen some of 'em that became hold up men. Men coming ^{back} from the west would go up into North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana and all that and they'd work in the harvest, and they all coming back with not very much money but at that time it was a lot of money. Three, four, five, six hundred dollars. Two hundred dollars, what not. And they were coming back. Some of 'em were coming back to families, some of 'em didn't have any families. Regardless, railroad men became holdup men. And they would go from car to car, they would hold 'em up and take all their money. And it happened on the Great Northern Railroad, it happened on the Northern Pacific, it happened on all the railroads. We had crooked brakemen. Well, I'm gonna tell you something, all those hold up men were not successful. Some of 'em died. Because the IWW's had what they called a 'flying squad.' And if somebody sent in that a train was being robbed, they would send in to the closest big union hall and tell 'em what was happening. And in minutes they would have a flying squad. And at that time they still had cars. **I wasn't that** young or I wasn't that old, but they had cars. Buicks and maybe Dodges, Fords or whatnot. What they would catch that train and they would grab that train. And they would seek out the hold up men on that train and they would shoot 'em. No such thing as turning 'em in to the law. They were killed! And maybe two hundred and seventy men were taken off of that train. Maybe at the next station and say, "What happened?" Well, "These three guys that got killed (Or whatever) they was hold up men, they held us all up and they took

all our money." "Who killed 'em?" Maybe five or six guys. "We killed 'em." And like in one place in North Dakota, there was 170 men got off a train. Had all been robbed. They didn't all have money, but the ones that had money got robbed. And they said, who killed 'em? Two or three men, I don't know how many, said *yes* we shot 'em. Well, "You shot 'em?" "Yes, we shot 'em." And so then the judge said, I don't remember what time it was, but I remember that I was very young then. Said, "Too bad there ain't more people like you." Turn 'em loose and that was it. And everybody got their money back, more or less, that the guys had took. One guy said, "He took five dollars off of me, took 280 dollars off of me. And union representatives, I mean, they were the flying squad that shot these guys, Got 'em all together and said, now alright, and everybody got robbed, paid 'em off. I didn't get robbed, I was on that train, I didn't get robbed. And my friend, Bill didn't get robbed. Bill Martell, was his name. Big lumberjack. One of the finest lumberjacks I ever met. Bill Martell, you can put that down in your book.

SS: What made him such a good lumberjack?

RM: He was a top loader, everybody wanted top loaders. Bill Martell was one of the best top loaders. Came from Michigan. And Wisconsin. One of the best top loaders this country ever had. Every outfit wanted Bill Martell. Humbard Lumber Company wanted him. Anytime they had a job for top loaders, Humbard Lumber Company wanted him. AC White wanted him. Daddy Beardsmore wanted him. Diamond Match wanted him. Any outfit in Montana wanted him. That includes ACM. The name was Bill Martell.

SS: What kind of guy was he?

RM: French-Canadian. Big man, 275. Good man. Died in Okanogan. With a broken ankle. He's now buried in Okanogan. But he's a real lumberjack. He was in '27, he was 48 years old.

SS: Do you know how it happened?

RM: Yeh. He went to catch a train. In Okanogan, he always had a big packsack with all his clothes on his back. Like all lumberjacks at that time carried pack^ssacks.

And we did. I carried packsack. Everybody carried packsack. All lumberjacks carried packsacks, in them times. He went to catch a train with his packsack, and the train threw him and he broke his neck. And as far as I know, he was one of my best friends, I never went to Okanogan, I'd like to go ^{there} and see if his grave is still there, see where it is. He broke his neck trying to catch this train. And him and I caught thousands of trains. Well, not thousands, but probably...

SS: Seems like it.

RM: Probably five thousand been more like it. But that's the kind of a guy he was. Good guy. Real good people.

SS: When you were catching train like that, it sounds like that was a pretty dangerous moment.

RM: No, it ain't dangerous. I tell you, when you catching a train, what ever direction you're going, you don't try to put your, kind of a stirrup that hangs down on a train and ladders going up. Well they only have that on two sides of the train. One is on the front end, one is on the rear end. On each side. You don't try to put your foot in that stirrup, you're running real hard, you put your knee on it. And I rode more miles on a boxcar than a lot of people have ever rode in a car of a passenger train. I've rode thousands of miles in a boxcar. Then there's difficulties in the wintertime.

(End of side B)

RM: Say that you want to go from here to Missoula. In wintertime. And you look, well everything going back east is loaded. All the cars are loaded so that you don't find any empty to ride east on. Plenty empty going west but you can't find any going east. So you ride refrigerated cars. So in the wintertime you get on a refrigerated car and you start opening hatches ^{on} top of the car. You see a skull and crossbones, you fold it back down, you go to the next car. Because a skull and crossbones you know is charcoal heated. And it'll kill ya.

SS: Who put the skull and crossbones on?

RM: The railroad puts it on. But then finally you get the one that's warm. When

you open that little old hatch, about that big square, you open that and they got nothing on it, you stick you're head down there, you could smell it, it's lit by coal oil. Coal oil heater, that's alright. And then you can ~~crawl~~ down in there and I've rode from here to Havre, Montana when it was seventy below zero at Browning. One time I rode, I was in Browning, was seventy below zero. And a passenger train went by on the side track and just had great big icicles hanging all the way down, ^{icicles} about that big around hanging all the way down. Seventy below zero. We get into Havre, there waan't much warmer. Maybe about 65, but at Browning it was 70 degrees below zero. And, where was we going, I don't know. We was travelling because you had to travel, I had no place to live, I had to go somewhere, I had to bum somebody. I had to live. I was a kid, and them was the times and lumberjacks, was no exception, 'cause I was a lumberjack and there was lumberjacks with me. And we were heading east and we get out of the cold. Maybe we get up into North Dakota or some ^{where} up in there. And then we'd maybe get a job unloading coal or doing something to make a little money and wait til spring. That's how tough times were. Hell, times ain't tough now! I remember when they had four to five feet of snow ^{or better} in Sandpoint, Idaho, and now they're crying 'cause they got two feet. What the hell's the matter with this country? They're crying 'cause they got two or three feet of snow! That ain't nothin'! Hell, that ain't nothing. ^{Hell,} I went from Sandpoint to Cour d'Alene one time, and the snowplow just went through, and there was six feet of snow! On each side of the highway. All the way in and I was about 15 then I guess. We went into Cour d'Alene, Idaho and it was five and six feet of snow on the level! And went into Cour d'Alene, and what did we do when we got ⁱⁿ there? Like a bunch of kids, we went to some old silly dance, which didn't amount to nothin'. And then drove all the way back to Sandpoint. Chugedy chugedy, with chains, you know. In an old car, I don't know, it was about 1925, I guess it was, something like that. 1925, 1924 Chevy. Lucky we made it, we ^{never} got stuck one way or the other. (laughs) And people nowadays are crying about two feet of snow. Two feet of snow ain't nothing unusual in this country.

SS: Did you ever know men to freeze to death? Who were bumming.

RM: Yeah, sure did. Lots of 'em. Fact, I damn near froze to death one time. Yeah. I'll tell you what happens. Somebody gets desperate and passenger train leaves Spokane, Washington. It be going west on the old WR&N or SB&Q or it could be going north, that be on C&R, I mean on the Northern Pacific or be Great Northern. Regardless. You might get on a passenger train, yeah, you might survive it for oh, you might get up around Sandpoint or you might get up even further than that. You might get to Bonners Ferry and if it's real damn cold you could freeze to death on a passenger train.

SS: Where were you riding?

RM: Could be riding on what you call the blinds or you could be riding behind the tender. If you're riding behind the tender, if you got too damn cold, you go up over the top and get down over the coal bin, they was all coal burners then. They wasn't oil burners, they was coal burners. And you could say, "Boy, I'm freezing to death." And then the fireman and the engineer would thaw you out in front of the door. They said, get off at the next stop, which might be another hundred miles. They were generally pretty good guys.

SS: Did you stand there in the door and warm up?

RM: Yeah, they'd even give you coffee. Maybe even give you a sandwich. Because some of the crew members on there were awful good people. Well, that's the way it goes. Now, there's a few of 'em that they found on tanker cars, oil tanker cars. They may be empty, they may be full, I don't know which way they was going. But they was no way to get out of the wind, there was no way to get off of it. And they'd have their arms hooked ^{through} around that railing around tanker cars, and they'd be found froze to death! On the tanker car, and that has been found.

SS: What about the blinds?

RM: Yes, well that's what I was talking about. Lot of times if you're riding the blinds, ^{as a rule} you wouldn't freeze to death, not too many froze to death. But they're, maybe one or two in the winter would be froze to death. Somebody'd get froze to death on the blinds. If they didn't have guts enough to go up

over the engine and get warmed up, that will happen. I rode a trip up to Canada one time. I was in a place called Pitcher Creek. I grabbed a ^a train out of there and I rode it to Calgary. Canada, Alberta. And I only made it about half way. I got so damn cold, I went up over the coal pile and walked down in there and I said, boy, I can't stand it no more, it's just too cold. They said, well come down here kid and get warmed up. And they gave me coffee, I was only a kid, that's all I was, a kid. And they gave me coffee and they said, we can't take you into the station. So he said, when you're warmed up, you're ok now? Yep, okay, we'll slow down just out the edge of town, town was only a small town anyways. Well, Calgary's pretty good sized town, they took me, just before they got to the station they slowed ^{right} down to almost a walk and I stepped off. That's a kind of a guy they were. Then, I'll tell you another thing: You could not ride a train out of Calgary, Canada because the mounted police, or the provincial police, watching the train. And I was on the bum, I was broke, I wanted to go to Hanna, which is a big city, bigger than Calgary, at that time. That's probably bigger yet. Guy says, "You can't ride this train out of here." He said, they watch the train, you can't ride a passenger train out. I said, I'll ride it. So I went down to the round house and I said what train takes number 21 for Hanna? He says, "That'n standing over the pit." And they're all coal burners and they set over the pit. The pit is where they rake their ashes and clinkers out of the engine. It all been coaled up, steamed up, and only had about 25, 30 minutes to go before the engineer come over there and the fireman took that train and hooked on to that big passenger thing and took it to Hanna. That's quite a ways from Calgary to Hanna, I forget how many miles. There's lot of miles. But it wasn't too bad then. So, if you ride the tender they catch you and they ^{pull} you off. Provincial police, mounted police. I go down in the pit. All them engines got big cowcatchers on 'em. Like that. Underneath they got two trucks and on them two trucks, they got two big iron deals that sit up there that hold the trucks. So, you go down in the pit and you just climb up and get on the trucks. Plenty of room. Sit up there just like

a big bird. And so the engineer and the fireman come, and they take the engine over to the station and they hook onto this big train, and pretty soon, (whistle blow) you don't care who sees you. They can't get you out. There's no way you can get out. They cowcatchers' coming down ^{just} like that, to the rail. Can't get out. So then, you know where you want to go, next division point, Hanna. So when you get to Hanna, you just, he disengages the engine and (whistle blow) they go back to the round house, what they do ^{they} pull it over the pit. So when you get over the pit, even though you're young, 18, 17 like I was, 16. Pretty darn stiff and sore from all that ^{bad} ride, because you're looking right into the wind. You get off. Nobody can bother you. As a rule, when you get there, nobody's there. Nobody knows you're there. You just get off ⁱⁿ the pit and walk out.

SS: Are you right behind the cowcatcher when you're riding there?

RM: You're right under the cowcatcher.

SS: When you were on the trains, what would you do to pass the time?

RM: You don't pass the time, you just hang on. And you know you're going to get there. You might think of different things, but you don't have anything to pass ^{your} time. You got all the time you need to hang on. You know where you're going to go and all you got in your mind is you want to get there. Now I rode a top of a mail train one time. From Ray, North Dakota to Spokane. At 1300 miles, check it on your map. I think. I could be wrong. It's around 1300 miles. Ray, North Dakota. We got through harvesting there, it'd been raining for a week, everybody was disgusted, ^{we} all had money. And I bought two hamburger sandwiches, and I put one in one pocket and one in the other, I ^{'m} just a kid, but I'm about 17, I guess, something like that. I was gonna grab the next train. Whole bunch of lumberjacks are there, I know 'em. They're all ^{up} from my part of the country, all from around here.

SS: They were out there?

RM: They were working on the harvest. We was all heading west again, back to the lumbercamps. No, he says, "I don't think you'll ride this train." I looked down and ^{it was} smiled away. I could see a black smoke acoming. Says, "That's the mail

train. I'm gonna ride it. Four coaches, all it had. All mail. I got on the rear coach, just stopped for water is all she stopped for. ^{Ray, North Dakota, she stopped for water.}

The engine filled up with water and she says, toot toot. She was gone. I grabbed the rear end of it, went up the ladder and got sort of a ladder on the end of the coach, it's almost like a passenger train. And I got on top, and before it was going to fast, I went up one coach. Bunch of steam pipes coming out of there and I hung onto one of them steam pipes up on top. Then there was that thing that catches the mail. A big spring runs over on top. I found something to put my foot around there, I hung around this, ^{put} my foot around that, and that thing, I don't think it made less than 90 miles an hour. It was a fast train. One of the fastest on the railroad. ^{Great Northern.} So I rode that thing all over the prairie, from Ray and it didn't stop I think til we got to Glacier National Park. Stopped at Glacier National Park, I don't know what it was for, probably water and probably pick up mail and what not. And all these other towns we went through, ^{they just} kept going ^{right} through, catch them mail bags with the arm at the side. We got to Whitefish, Montana, was a big extra gang on the right hand side. There was a tower up here, was a depot tower where that telegrapher and yardmaster, looking through, out. So I rolled over on this side so they couldn't see me, because the cars are built like that, you know. I rolled over on the side after it stopped so they couldn't see me. There was a man and woman, they come out of this extra gang car, I guess it must have been the cook car, and this woman said, "Look at that man up there!" This guys says, "Shhh, don't say anything. That man is beating his way, don't give him away. Don't say anything." She says alright. Pretty soon, it wasn't there only ^{just} a minute or two, pretty soon the train says toot toot, we're going again. So then...

SS: You were the only one on top there?

RM: I'm on top, that's all. So, I had about 350 bucks in my pocket, but I didn't want to pay my fare. So anyway... (pause in tape) Any snow ^{comes down} or any water or anything, any rain, it can drain down, it's got a drain goes down underneath. Anyway, tell you what happened. Got out of Whitefish, and that train never stopped.

We got to Spokane, Washington, it was a mail train. I got to Spokane, I expected the old train to slow down, it never slowed down, got right to the depot. It's on account of a viaduct where it pulls out. There's a couple of steps that go down off the viaduct, I know where that was. I stepped off that train, a couple of cops hollered, "Stop, stop!" I just went down the stairs and kept going. Once I was on the main street, they couldn't stop me. 'Cause they were railroad police and I was on city property. So, they had a restaurant over there on Trenton Stevens called Welch's. Old lumberjack restaurant, where the lumberjacks used to eat. So I walked into Jack Welch's restaurant and I knew one of the waitresses there, very nice young lady. She says, "Oh boy, where you been?" I said I'm working for the Great Northern up here shovelling coal." I was just black as the ace of spades. Cinders and everything covered me riding on top of this mailtrain. And she said, "There's a washroom in there." I went in there and washed ~~up~~, come back and ordered a good feed, because all hamburgers I had in my pocket, I tried to eat ^{one} of 'em, and no matter how well I had 'em wrapped up in, you know how they wrap hamburgers in foil, in napkins, it was just full of cinders. ^{Couldn't eat it.} Well, I got in there 5:20 in the morning. You can imagine that I left in the afternoon in Ray, North Dakota at 20 minutes to five I was in Jack Welch's restaurant, eating breakfast. And I ^{had about} 350 bucks I had made in the harvest. I'd saved up. Them guys didn't get in for a week later, because they was riding the freight train. But yeah, it took 'em a week to get in riding freight train.

SS: None of 'em tried to get on the train with you?

RM: No.

SS: I wonder what they were thinking?

RM: They all rode freights. Well, you figure out, that old engine was making, I'd say on the prairie there, on the flat country make 90 miles an hour. I don't know what they made in mountain country, 'cause I was hanging on 'cause they was just going around the curves like that.

SS: Did you stay in Spokane for a while ?

RM: Yeah, waited for my friends, a partner here, a partner there that ^{didn't} want to go

with me and I met him. But then we all stayed in Spokane for a couple of days and rested up. Then we looked for jobs. Some of 'em went to the Clearwater. Some of 'em went to Priest River. But they had to get the news. Where the jobs were available. And in Spokane at that time they had what they called, they had sharks, employment sharks. Campbells was one of 'em. I remember Campbell's. They had a lot of employment sharks, and they'd charge so much for a job. Then the company paid 'em so much, you paid 'em so much.

SS: I heard some of that was underhanded.

RM: Oh yeah, it was crooked. A lot of it was crooked. I don't say how much. A lot of it was crooked. They let you work two or three days, they'd fire you and you see, the bosses was getting so much for every man that they hired. And the employment company was getting so much, so they keep hiring and firing. That was a thing that the IWW's tried to get rid of. But IWWs didn't last long enough to get rid of it. They had the same thing in Portland. They had a lot of things like that.

SS: What did that mean? If you said you wanted to get a job and you went to the employment shark, you couldn't really be sure that the job was going to be there when you got there?

RM: Well you get the job alright, maybe work a week. And maybe they'd lay you off and ^{then} they'd fire you and they'd hire somebody else. Well every time they fired you and hired somebody else, the boss was making so much, the employment shark was making so much. You see how crooked everything was? And that was what the lumberjack had to put up with. That's what the IWW's was against. That's where capitalism come in. They were against that. So actually what capitalism is ^{is} a high class bunch of crooks. The same thing as they are today. If you don't believe, ^{it} vote for Nixon. I'm going to get a drink. (pause in tape)

SS: I just care about what the truth was.

RM: I don't know any bad ^{parts} abouts the IWW's, not one! Only thing is that I remember is that the IWW's was a bunch of men trying to get a decent wage, a decent condition to live in. And they were the ones that started the union. And

California was the greatest nation that tried to stop it. They paid millions of dollars to try to put the IWW's out of business. Don't forget it. I don't give a fuck if you're from California. But they did.

SS: One thing I want to ask you about hobo living. What did the guys do for sex? Did they go to the whorehouses?

RM: Sex? Well, I'll tell you what, I'll tell you what lumberjacks did for sex. You could go to Priest River, had whorehouses. They could go to Sandpoint. There was whorehouses. They could go to Libby, Montana, ^{which} had a whorehouse right next to the police station. ~~Yes~~. Right next to the police station was a big whorehouse. About 7 or 8 whores. And you think all whores are not good? I'm gonna tell you something: In Libby, Montana they had a gal that was a whore. When you were broke in the wintertime and you didn't have anything to eat and you came in there and you were a lumberjack, she'd say, just like the lumberjack, "Are you eatin'?" "NO ' ' "Here, here's a dollar. Here's two dollars. You and your partner go down and eat." You know how much the whores were gettin' in them days? Two dollars a trick. That's what they were gettin', two dollars a trick. And, we had a gal there, I can't tell you here name 'cause that would be against the law. But she was a nice woman, a very nice woman. And you know, one time I was in Rexford, Montana, ^{it was} 45 degrees below zero. And we was going up to Curley Cox's camp. About 1925, I guess.

(End of side C)

RM: ^{we were going up to} Curley Cox's camp and it was 45 below zero. Rexford, Montana. And we slept in the depot all night. And you know, the agent in that depot must have been cold blooded. 'Cause he only filled that stove one time with coal. And we stayed in there, we didn't freeze, but we didn't get ^{cold}, I mean, we didn't freeze, but we were cold. And we slept on the benches there in Rexford, Montana. And ...

SS: Did you have a blanket?

RM: No blanket. You know, the lumberjack didn't pack any blankets. That's one thing that the IWW's outlawed, anybody packing blankets because lumber companies had furnished blankets and we didn't want to get all loused up, ^{and} that's one thing that the IWW's insisted on. ^{That} The lumber companies furnished blankets, adequate

food, a place that you could bathe and wash and good beds. And they got it. That was the requisite of 1916 revolution. That was the IWW's. They got it. Alright, but now to go back to Rexford, Montana, the hotel was up on the hill. Two story hotel. And 45 below zero. So we got all bundled up and we went up to the hotel and that was the only real recreational point of Rexford at that time, wasn't very much. ^{They} Had ^a meat market and a butcher shop and a grocery store and a hotel and probably 2 or 3 other bootleg joints. But the hotel was the main thing. It was a hotel that had rooms on both sides, ^{so} you could figure out how wide it was. And it was three stories high, wasn't very big. You figure out, and the bottom floor, they had a restaurant. And a bootleg joint and I don't know what else they had there but I wasn't that much acquainted with it. So we went up there, 45 below zero. And what we wanted to do, we wanted to go up and go to work for this lumber company. Now I don't remember what the name of the lumber company was. But his name was Curley Cox. So that's all we knew, Curley Cox's camp. It was about 6, 7 miles from there. So went up there early in the morning. 'Cause ^{we} was cold. We said, well we go up to the hotel, we'll get something to eat, and we didn't have any money. But we figured we might meet some lumberjacks that we knew, we might get somethin' to eat. So we went ^{out} and nobody on the ground floor was up. We went up the next story, and they had a great, big furnace up there, wood furnace and it was warm and we stood around this wood furnace and finally ¹ a young lady come out. Dressed in a kimono and said, "Boy wasn't this a cold night?" I said, "Well" Bill my friend said, "You should have stayed in the depot last night. That was real cold." And she said, "I wish you would have stayed with me last night and kept me warm." She says, "I was cold." She was a prostitute of course. And a very nice person. She said, like all lumberjacks, "Are you eating?" We said no. Well, "Here's a couple of dollars." Gave us two dollars. Well, at that time for two dollars you could go down and buy a stack of hotcakes, side of sausage and all the coffee you could drink for thirty cents. So we went down and we had a stack of hotcakes and all the sausage we could eat, ^{give us} two bucks. Don't forget it. And all she

was getting was two bucks, for a trick. Her name was Alice White. Nice woman. So Alice White, so anyway, we had our breakfast and everything and we went up to this camp, Curley Cox's camp. And we get up to camp there and was about, I guess there was about a 100 men working there. And it was a horse camp, everything was sleigh haul and everything. They haul the logs down to the river with a sleigh and they dump 'em in the river and then they drive 'em from there on down to the sawmill, I don't know where the sawmill was, to tell you the truth about it. But they had quite a few men working. So we got into the goddamn camp and we got a job. And the first morning we were there, first thing, some big lumberjack jumped on the table and he said, "Clear the table." And he kicked everything off the table. The ^{re WAS} guys kicking, they were kicking egg bowls, these great, big, dish up bowls and throwing 'em back in the kitchen and they were throwing eggs back in there and everything. What they did, they had a bunch of Chinese cooks. Well, ^{half} the eggs were rotten that they were serving there, and the food was rotten and everybody rebelled against it and everybody quit. So Bill and I said there ain't no chance of going to work here, 75 men going down the hill, we just go with 'em. They paid 'em all off and we went with 'em. We get back down to Rexford, and of course we had a few more drinks down there. Well, the thing was, we finally got out of there, we got a freight and we got the hell out of there! I don't know where we went. We went east, northwest, we couldn't go north, we either went east or west. But we went!

SS: Did you ever see that girl again?

RM: Yeah. So 'bout six or seven months went by. And we went, took a trip back up in there. And we got in there and we met this girl. And she was getting married. And she married a lumberjack. And everybody attended. And a lot of 'em had ^{peckered} this gal. But she was a nice gal. And everybody brought presents or paid presents. And hell of a nice time was had by all. And they knew the lumberjack that she married. She married this lumberjack and he had 80 or 90 acres. Down on the flat somewhere. And ^{be} came kind of a stump rancher, you might call it. We was up there a little later on and she had two twin girls. Beautiful. And she became respectable. She married a lumberjack, became respectable. Everybody loved her.

Never forget it.

That was good. Good girl.

SS: These girls, would they give men affection? Besides what they were doing for the money?

RM: Some of 'em didn't. Some of 'em married and some of 'em didn't. A lot of 'em were very nice women. This one became respectable, married this guy and everybody respected her. *Never forget her.* Alice White. *Hell of a nice woman.* Far as I know, I guess they're still up there. Course, they're older than I am now! If they're alive, they're older than I am.

SS: You think most of these girls had to do it for the money?

RM: Yeah. They sure did. There was no doubt about it. They didn't hire 'em for anything else. But when they could get out of it, they got out of it. And they did. And some of 'em didn't. Like Alice White, she got out of it and she married this guy. *Beautiful.* And he was a nice fella. Hey, you better go.

(End of side D)

End of tape