WALLACE TERRY
October 20, 2004
Interviewed by Ron Brand
Transcribed by Paula Helten (04/27/2012)

I: --on October 20th, 2004. I am speaking with Wallace Terry. Uh, we're gonna start with how he ended up being raised in the area, and then coming over to Elgin—live in Elgin. Uh, so why don't you start back when you were born in Enterprise, I think—

WT: Yeah.

I: Wallace. Okay. Just tell us about that.

WT: [chuckles].

I: You don't remember much.

WT: Um, not—not from when I was born. It was—I was born in Enterprise. My folks lived up on Alder Slope. North and—or south of—of Enterprise, five miles. I grew up and lived there 'til the Army got me in—in '42. We cut logs for different people. That was—East Oregon Mill was the famous mill way back in the '20's. And uh, as I grew up all that abandoned and the Depression hit and all that, and later, small gyppos took over the loggin'.

I: What are gyppos?

WT: Gyppos, that's—

I: I've heard the term.

WT: Well, that's a word that's you take a job for so much money and—and then try to make a livin' on it—

I: [chuckles].

WT: with that amount. And you hire other people and so you're—you're in business as a gyppo. [chuckles].

I: Was that uh, this came out of a Depression?

WT: Was what?

I: Did that time come out of the Depression?

WT: Uh, yeah. In the Depression in uh—in the, well, I guess the worst of the Depression was about ’32, I think.

I: In this area?

WT: Yeah. 1930—’29, I guess is when the stark—uh, the stock market crash hit. When uh-- I guess, when Hoover was president.

I: Mm-hm, you were eight then. You were eight years old then.

WT: Yeah, would have been, yeah.

I: So, when did you start logging yourself?

WT: Oh, as a gyppo, or just—my dad and brother and I cut logs for—well, my first log cuttin’ was in 1937 when we went to Pondosa and—and worked to cut logs for just a short time there. And my dad and Bob Victor, was his name, worked with him. And then when school was out, my brother and I got to go with him. Then we camped over at Pondosa in the woods there on Goose Creek. And that didn’t last very long. They—they had to cut down their log cuttin’ crews. So I got to work about three weeks was my first experience in cuttin’ logs away from home. Otherwise I had to go back and cut wood by myself on Alder Slope for my school money that fall. I was fifteen.

I: Okay, and then how old were you when you went into the military, twenty-one?

WT: Twenty.

I: Twenty?

WT: Yeah. By that time—that was in ’42. It was late comin’ spring always in Wallowa County, and so we went to uh, Prineville and found a job there. And uh, I got to work there just three weeks. And I was the only one out of Wallowa County twenty years old put in the draft, and uh, the rest of ‘em

were over thirty-five. And I was the only one twenty years old that went to Spokane for the induction. That was—of course, left the county, and that was the reason I was picked, I guess.

I: It could have been.

WT: Yeah.

I: But then, after the—after you finished the military in 1945—

WT: Yeah.

I: I think you mentioned you hadn't been injured or anything.

WT: No.

I: But what—you came back and lived where, then?

WT: I—I lived in Wallowa County.

I: In Wallowa County?

WT: Yeah.

I: How soon did you come over to Elgin, Union County?

WT: Well, probably less than a year, really, 'cause we—we uh, did a little—a little bit of loggin' on Swamp Creeks. And by the time I come back, my brother had bought into a small loggin' outfit, and uh, that was on Crow Creek. And uh, I had saved some money in the Army, and so I bought half of his loggin' outfit for fifteen hundred dollars.

I: Hm. [chuckles].

WT: And that amounted to an old, B40 Caterpillar, and a couple of old trucks. And so then we were the Terry Brothers.

I: This was your brother, Clifford?

WT: Yeah.

I: Okay.

WT: And then that must have been in probably the spring of ’46. Then we got a job for Hanford Reed here, and we moved out here. And we were on the Minam for several years.

I: You mined on the upper Minam above the junction—

WT: Huh?

I: below the junction?

WT: The junction?

I: The junction with the Wallowa River.

WT: Oh. It was way up from there, yeah.

I: Okay.

WT: Yeah. It—you went in from the top of Minam Hill down into the river there. And then you’d see Minam, and you’d go on the highway down below, you know where you—

I: Mm-hm.

WT: the boat time there was. Well, we were up the river from that.

I: Where was the mill?

WT: Well, here in Elgin.

I: Here in Elgin?

WT: Yeah.

I: Was there a mill near the junction of the two rivers?

WT: Oh, years back, yeah.

I: What—do you remember what that was called?

WT: You know I—in my time Myron Fleecer had a mill there, but before that, there was a mill there, uh, when they would go up to Minam and stockpile the logs until the high water hit the morning of a spring. And then they would float down to that mill. And that's a big water spout hit one time, and-- and uh, it washed their decks out and flooded the river with it. And it broke the dam there at Minam. And some of those logs are picked up in Lewiston, and that was around—I did tell 'em, and it was about 1922. And that broke the-- that mill operation there in Minam. But that was before my time.

I: Okay, was there a road coming through there about the same place the road is now?

WT: Yeah.

I: Between the counties?

WT: Yeah, I uh—I uh, remember the Minam Hill, and that was the old teamster days. Uh, quoted by the red cut of history is covered in—in other books here besides this one, but it was-- that was quite a hill when I was a kid. I was about seven years old when my dad and brother and I come out here to Imbler and got a—a five sacks of apples. We went out from Enterprise from Alder Slope there to El—uh, to Imbler and back in one day. I bragged it back to the school kids for years, and that was about '29—1929. We got five sacks of apples. I told the kids that the world was as big the other way as it is that way, boy, she's one big outfit. [chuckles].

I: [laughs].

WT: That was quite a hill in 1929. It was quite a struggle for the Model T's to make it up there.

I: How did the logging operation work, the one that you worked at, uh, on the Minam? How did that operation work? What did you do?

WT: Well—

I: What did other people do to bring logs in?

WT: Well, we had—we had a D7 Cat, and we had an old stiff-boom jam—jammer that we logged—loaded the logs with. And uh, my brother worked on that side with the Cat, and I worked on a horse side. I had a—I had two teams. And uh, we logged the steep ground. And when we had open ground, some of that that faces the Minam, uh we would—it was brows of timber up each draw and so on. We would, uh, skid 'em out to a rollin' place. And then we'd roller 'em, level off, down off the hillside and just turn 'em loose, and let 'em go; pick 'em up down—the Cat would pick 'em up down lower.

I: How much damage did that do to the, uh—?

WT: Not much.

I: Was there much vegetation on the hillside?

WT: No, that's why we'd—we'd pick up—we'd pick an open hillside so we wouldn't have to skid all that distance and then back and forth, you know. We'd pick out a rollin' place and turn 'em loose up there and let 'em get down to the bottom their selves. Some of it was—they'd get out of line and it'd bust into a tree or something and fall it, you know, and it'd go bigger logs. But you don't see that anymore. [chuckles]. Now, it's all line machine and everything now, you know.

I: Who owned the uh—the land there?

WT: Uh—well, uh, the guy that bought it—you know I think Hanford Reed owned the-- he must have owned the land and the timber. But I'm not positive of that. I know later on a guy by the name of Swede Anderson bought it as a cattle ranch, and we still logged some on that. But it may have been ownership of various other people too because there was several of the Crater Flat lumbers out there that had pasture they had combined with their, uh cattle operation out then. They'd kind of run their stock together. Uh, so I'm not positive who owned the ground actually. We were loggin' for Reed.

I: Did the Forest Service own any of that land?

WT: At times at some blocks-- the blocks, there were, yeah. Uh, they owned some—if you top out the Minam, go up in there, what they call Foundation Springs, I know there was some private ground in there. And originally, it

was the old, uh—uh, Fleecer homesteads back there on that flat. And that was the grand-- grandfather, I guess of Myron Fleecer that had the store and everything there at Minam.

I: Oh, Okay. So, this is back in the—in the '30's, or '40's rather.

WT: Well, yeah. That store was there ever since I can remember. It was there when we come out here and got those apples that time and that was '29.

I: Oh, in 1929. Owned by Fleecer—

WT: Yeah.

I: do you think? Okay.

WT: Fleecer—Myron Fleecer was his name, but he was the son of Ernest Fleecer.

I: Okay. How did your logs—you were logging for Hanford Reed—

WT: Yeah.

I: right? How did you get your logs to Hanford Reed in Elgin, to the mill in Elgin?

WT: We—we had our own trucks.

I: You had your own trucks?

WT: Yeah.

I: Where did you load the trucks up?

WT: Well, all over the country. We had our old stiff-boom jammer, and we'd just move it to where the logs were. And that was a—that was a windless powered—the stiff-boom jammer and _____, and it had a brow log. And the course of back in there and the brow log to protect the trucks as you'd pull 'em up there, you know where you'd pull 'em-- pull 'em up and—and slide 'em up over the cheese blocks of the—of the truck and load 'em that way.

I: You had to pull the trucks up?

WT: No, the logs—

I: Or the logs—

WT: up on the truck.

I: just the logs up?

WT: Yeah.

I: Okay. And the—the truck had a winch?

WT: No, the winch was on the stiff-boom jammer.

I: Okay.

WT: Yeah, and then when they'd get it in there, why, they'd just had the same arrangement. That's a pond with the booms out of over the—kind of out over the water. You'd just hook your cr—crop slides on the bunks underneath and—and drop your cheese blocks and just roll the log into the pond then.

I: Okay. And then where was Hanford Reed located in—in Elgin?

WT: Right where the high school is.

I: Right where the high school is now?

WT: Mm-hm.

I: Which is like, 15th and a couple blocks south of Division.

WT: Oh yeah, its south of Division, clear over against the bank there.

I: Okay.

WT: And you know what? What happened along there for several years, I don't know. Uh, as I understand it, a guy by the name of Spoole bought the—bought it and then it burned down. And Jack Eckstine had a mill right over here beyond—beyond 10th there. And I know when Spoole burned down,

Jack run a—a double-shift on his mill cuttin' for himself and for—for Spoole's logs. But a lot of that history is a blank to me 'cause I, uh—I—I just can't put it all together.

I: This other mill was around 10th and Palmer Junction—Palmer Junction Road, in that area of Elgin?

WT: Yeah. Just—just as you leave town—uh, leave Divis—uh, Hartford is this street here.

I: Mm-hm.

WT: When that ends right up there, that mill is right in there where it's just a housing complex now. But I don't know how that all was put together.

I: Did they build the mill when you were here?

WT: No, I—I just can't—see, we—we quit Reed, and we went on—on uh, Lookingglass for uh, Phil Rile Mill which was J. Herbert Bates. And uh, I can't put that together. I don't know how that worked.

I: So, why did you quit working for Hanford Bates?

WT: I guess, 'cause we were in a better job. [chuckles].

I: Hm. And um, was Hanford Bates still operating then?

WT: Oh, no.

I: They finally burned, didn't it?

WT: Uh, Bates—Bates never did burn.

I: Okay.

WT: This mill here was built by Bates that had the big mill in Wallowa, and we were doin' great. We'd a private road haul and all that stuff. And at that—to start with, we'd—my brother contract with Bates, and we—we'd uh, haul into the railroad and reload the logs and send it on the rail to Wallowa. And then a year or two later, then they built a new mill there at Lookingglass.

Well, on the Grande Ronde beyond Lookingglass Creek. And some guys got the big idea that they should have some more money in Wallowa, and so they called a big meeting and my brother was there. I wasn't. But, ole J. Herbert was a rich man and a fair man, I think. We had a good job. He says, "The—the price of lumber and so on doesn't justify a raise, and if you—if you strike, I'll shut her down." And the guys at Wallowa, right today there's brothers that don't speak to brothers over that, and it killed the town. And that's exactly what happened.

I: They did vote to go on strike?

WT: And that—that mill was just brand new, and it was doing great. And uh, they—they build here at the Grande Ronde mill, and then they shipped the lumber by rail to Wallowa for planin' and all that. But that was the end of it. They—it's—it's just bare ground now.

I: How many people did they have working for them?

WT: Oh, boy. Well, I think, in countin' everybody, the loggers and the truckers and the mill, at least forty, I believe.

I: Okay. Now this is the operation up on the Grande Ronde—

WT: Yeah.

I: by Lookingglass?

WT: But it also took the Wallowa mill out too. See, it was all owned by the same man, J.—

I: So—

WT: Herbert Bates.

I: they both closed down at the same time?

WT: Uh, yeah. It was all—it was all union controlled in Wallowa, and of course, when that—when they struck in Wallowa, why that took the Lookingglass mill out too, of course. And Wallowa's never been the same, and it never will be again. It was a good town before. In fact my—my first wife

graduated from high school there in ’40, and I graduated from Enterprise in ’40. And there was—oh, it was certainly a competitive town. In fact, their basketball team beat the socks off our—off of us all the time.

I: So, after the union vote, you were out of a job—

WT: Yeah.

I: then?

WT: Yeah.

I: What did you do then?

WT: Well, my broth—I went to Colorado with Eckstine. He was the one who had the mill over here, and I can’t—I can’t put all together what happened to this mill. But he got an idea of building a mill in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, and a bunch of us moved back there with him. We la—but we lasted about a year. Everybody went broke.

I: This was about when? This was after 1960 that you left the area?

WT: Yeah. It was—I believe it was 1960.

I: How many mills were operating in—in the Elgin area or north on Palmer Junction? How many mills were operating at that time?

WT: Uh, I can’t remember. They had a big planer here. And I don’t remember whether Spoole rebuilt or what. I—I just worked at this one here.

I: Do you know who operated that planer in 1960?

WT: I think, Moore, I believe was his name. But somebody else has got to tell you the details of that, ‘cause I—my brother-in-law, I mentioned him last time. He’s still clear of mind. He don’t get around the house very good, but him and his wife have been here all the time. And his wife was my sister-in-law—is my sister-in-law. I married her younger sister. She passed away three years ago.

I: Uh, Okay, about—do you know how many other loggers moved out of the area around that time? I know Bob Dyer moved in the early 1960's.

WT: Yeah.

I: And I've heard of others. Do you know of other particular people who moved out of the area?

WT: Well, there was one by the name of Paul Dougherty's that was a pretty efficient operator. But I—I don't remember who he logged for. And uh, Bill Dougherty wasn't any relation to him, but has the same name. He was a big logger, and he still lives just out of Wallowa. He's uh, been retired for years. But I can't think where—maybe his logs went into Wallowa before that all shut down. In fact, the Wallowa mill was—it was takin' logs from every place. They even built a mill in Troy.

I: Way up north.

WT: Hm?

I: Way up north.

WT: No, uh, not Troy, Montana. Troy, Oregon.

I: Troy, Oregon, yeah.

WT: Yeah.

I: North—Yorth County. [confusing – should be Wallowa County].

WT: Yeah, it was—it was on the Grande Ronde over there where, oh—well, I don't know. Do you know where Troy, Oregon was—is?

I: Mm-hm, yeah.

WT: Well, it wasn't Bates that built that mill. It was somebody else. But then that—that lasted a very short time, and then a lot of those logs come into Wallowa after that mill shut down. But there was—they logged off of Eden Bench and Bartlett and all those top country there. And we logged for the mill here clear back to Hoodoo—back to, uh Tom—not Thomason Meadow,

but. In fact, my next—I don't know if you're interested or not, but my next door neighbor here, he was back there to Hoodoo with us. He took both my brother, and he's got a tremendous memory.

I: What's his name? Okay. Where is Hoodoo?

WT: Hoodoo is high, uh—well, it's north—way, way, north, clear over the bridge to the Grande Ronde. And uh, it's—I don't know if you know that country, but it's up on the hill above Troy and at Thomason Meadows and the big, flat, country up there. You've got Troy and Bartlett. These are tops—Bartlett, uh—we were at Long Meadows. All that's top country before it drops into any of those canyons.

I: That's part of the Wenaha-Tucannon now?

WT: It's what?

I: There's—there's a Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness up there. That's in that territory?

WT: I don't know that name.

I: Okay, that was later on then. That's a national forest. Okay now, uh, the Weaver brothers had a mill you mentioned before. Where was that?

WT: It's right where the fish hatchery is now on the Lookingglass. Do you know where that is?

I: Mm-hm, um—

WT: That was there before. That's—they put a little mill in there, and they sawed for Bates. And they—they just hauled 'em down to where the Bates Mill was and reloaded it onto that railroad. But they—they just sub—brought lumber in and sent it to Bates. And they took it to Wallowa and planed it and put that out.

I: It was just a rough-cut mill?

WT: Yeah. Small mill but we logged for them too. We furnished their logs.

I: How long did they last?

WT: Just a couple of years. Uh—uh—uh, the main—main brother, I can't come up with his first name. The second brother was a sawyer, and uh, it was a circle mill. For some reason, he reached down to get, uh, the slab that was hung up there somehow, and something happened and cut his right hand off. Wilbur was his name.

I: Mm. Were injuries like that common in a mill?

WT: It seemed like it. It seemed like always was getting' hurt, but that's with a—they just took a second. But they didn't—I don't—I don't think they were there over two years.

I: Okay, and then the Ecks—Jack Eckstine had the mill in Elgin by 10th and Hartford. And was that mill still there when you left?

WT: You know I just—that's who we went to Colorado with was Jack Eckstine.

I: Okay.

WT: He's the one that had that mill. But I can't remember why that went down. And I know why we went to Colorado, but that was the biggest mistake of my life. We all went broke. And Jack still lives right up here, but I wouldn't suggest you got to him because I don't—I don't think he's capable of a conversation, and he can't hear. I've—I—I've gone up to see him a time or two, but I haven't for over a year. I can't—I can't hear him, and he can't hear me, so. But that was a mistake for everybody that went back there. We all went broke.

I: Okay, the Hanford Reed Mill, I think you mentioned before was later sold to Spoo—Spoole?

WT: I think that's right. But I guess we logged in the Hanford alright off the Minam, but then we—we've quit Hanford. My did—brother did. Then we went to Lookingglass. And what happened from then on here in Elgin, I don't know.

I: Um, did you move up—when you were working at Lookingglass, you moved and lived up there?

WT: I—I did. I bached there, yeah.

I: Okay, but you weren't married then?

WT: Uh, no, not right then.

I: Okay. Was that pretty common for guys to bach' it?

WT: Well, yeah. But uh, I was—I was in between marriages about then, I think. I married a gal from Wallowa, and she come down to Louisiana and we got married. And I went overseas. She had a baby about eighteen months after I got over there, and I got remar—minded about that.

I: [chuckles]. The timing wasn't quite right. Okay, then—then you—you did mention that the Spoole Mill later burned, the one where the high school is now.

WT: I think that's right.

I: But you weren't here then?

WT: I—I just—I just don't know, how that all put together. And I don't know about Jack's mill over here 'cause that was going good then. So, after Spoole burned down he doubled his shifts, and I can't remember enough to talk about it. I just can't, but there's people around here that can.

I: Okay. Now the Kennedy brothers had a mill—

WT: Yeah.

I: too. Where was that?

WT: Right where that Food's—

I: Food—

WT: uh, grocery store is.

I: Food Town?

WT: Yeah.

I: Okay, when did that start?

WT: Oh, I don't know. It was way back there.

I: Was that before you came to Elgin?

WT: No, it was goin' while I was here.

I: Okay, it started before.

WT: I think so. And Lefty was the head man on that. Lefty was—there was several brothers. And Bob Dyer's wife was one of the daughters of the Kennedy's. So, he—he is one to talk to.

I: Okay.

WT: Do you know Bob?

I: Yes, I do.

WT: He's good. He can—see, he ended up in Colorado too. He got sour apples just like I did, but I think he was a little bit later. But Bob, uh, he's a lot clearer minded than I am and a heck of a good guy. I like the world of him, and his wife is a wonderful person. Janice is her name. She was a Kennedy. And I understand she's not too well either, but she's still a real cheerful person. I guess she's got cancer.

I: Well, they—they moved back here, the Dyers, in the '60's. And I—he told me once he bought a house, the same house he's in now which I think is on thirty—it's just down the street on 13th.

WT: Yeah, it is right on 13th down there.

I: But you left and didn't come back for a long time. You and some others when—?

WT: Well, let's see, when—when I—my brother didn't go to Colorado. He went to Montana. Well, when Jack blew up then—we all blew up then—

Steamboat—I called my brother which was in Montana. He moved his outfit and logged with somebody over there that I never was there. And I asked him if he needed any help, and he said, "Yeah, I need a Cat driver." Well, that's why I'm moved to Montana was to work for my brother. And uh, my wife started a little upholstery shop. She was a worker. She could do anything. And that's where we got started in the cushion business. In—we—we moved to Thompson Falls, and then a year or so later, we moved to the valley, Montana. We bought a—bought an old mill, burned down mill site there. And anyway, this is a gettin' from off the subject though.

I: Okay, we're—yeah, we're out of the local area.

WT: Yeah.

I: Uh, there was also a Moore planer here in Elgin?

WT: Yeah.

I: Where was that, and who started it?

WT: Right across from the—I understand it was right across from the rodeo grounds, but somebody else's got to tell you about that. I know he was a well thought of businessman. And uh, I didn't know him. I never worked for him. I don't know why he had it there. But I know he was a real well thought of man in this town.

I: Do you remember his first name?

WT: No. I never knew him.

I: Was the planer built when you were here, before or after?

WT: Oh, I think it was before.

I: Before?

WT: But I just wasn't associated with any of that stuff, and I didn't know him or—or why he was there. Maybe he planed the lumber for other mills or something, but all this is just guess with that. I'd just as soon not mix you up because I can't give you any solid answers.

I: Okay. What would it take for someone to set up a mill? Uh, you mentioned before that you bought into your brother's mill for fifteen hundred dollars on one occasion.

WT: No, not my brother's mill.

I: Oh, your brother's logging operation?

WT: Yeah. But that, uh—he was—he kind of took over a—a little gyppo outfit that—just a shoestring outfit, you know. Uh, when I had come back from the Army, I had fifteen hundred dollars in the bank, and I bought half his outfit. So, it turned into Terry Brother's right quick. [chuckles].

I: What—what—what was part—what was the uh, operation, the machinery--?

WT: Yeah, I had one old, B40 Cat and uh, two teams, and a stiff-boom jammer, and that was about it.

I: That was it?

WT: Yeah.

I: Okay. So, that was worth around three thousand dollars?

WT: Yeah.

I: Including the horses?

WT: Yeah.

I: Did you own any trucks—

WT: Uh—

I: to move the logs?

WT: Yeah, there was a—I think he had two—two single drive, old, trucks. They would haul in the children's experts here. Yeah, it was uh, not a very big operation, I tell ya.

I: Now, it sounds like different mills would take different amount of investment. A rough-cut mill would be probably the smallest, and then there'd be larger mills, the planer mills and Reed. Is that correct?

WT: I think that's true.

I: So, what kind of a—what kind of financing would the mill owners have—have to have?

WT: Oh, like that Lookingglass Mill that Bates put in down there, I'll be there's half a million dollars there. He had the planer and everything. And he had a band head rig. It was a big operation.

I: Did you ever work in one of the mills?

WT: No.

I: Or did you work as a logger?

WT: I was just a logger, yeah.

I: Okay.

WT: Yeah, I never did work in a mill.

I: Would the gyppo, uh, logging operations generally have trucks and people working for them—

WT: Yeah.

I: to do all the work needed—

WT: Yeah.

I: to get their—their timber to—

WT: Yeah.

I: some kind of mill?

WT: Yeah, you'd—you had your own log cutters and—and like I say on the Minam, I—we had two teams. And I—I drove one of 'em along with the seven. He had a—we had a 7-Cat. But the steep—there are real steep grounds on some of 'em like that was a horse loggin' job which now they do 'em with line machines. Which is neither here nor there but the horses ain't anymore.

I: How long did they last—

WT: Oh—

I: as part of logging operations?

WT: Forever up—up 'til the '40's. You know they had-- well, when I was fifteen years old, I—I got to work over at Pondosa for three weeks, and they had the horses then. They had about nine teams, beautiful horses. No, it was the big thing. And that was the start of the Cat logger. But at that time they would just—the Cat's stayed on the trails, and the horses brought 'em to the trails, uh, back then. But later on, they equipped the Cat's with blades and—and changed the whole picture, you know. They built roads instead of skid trails, and it was a transition of different operations.

I: Who were mechanized?

WT: Yeah. And then come the high-lead loggers, and now they—

I: When did you finally, uh, move back into Elgin? Before the '60's, did you move back into the city, or did you just keep on living out at one of your jobs?

WT: Well, I guess I was on the Minam, and we used to have—we had a cookhouse and bunkhouse up there on—god, I can't think of the name of it, but it don't matter yet. But we were back there in that loggin' camp for a couple of years. Then we moved everything right down on the river and had a—there we had a cookhouse and stuff. And this had all been pre-'45 anyway.

I: Did you ever move back in the city and have a married life?

WT: Uh, yeah when—in fact, when we—when we moved here back to Hoodoo, my wife was—I'd got married by then, and we had a house down here in town. And she was the cook up there in that campground at a—I mean, at a Long Meadows. I don't know if that means anything to you. It's the country up aboard—above Troy.

I: Mm-hm.

WT: And we—that's when we were loggin' heavy into the Lookingglass Mill. We set up a—my dad, in fact, built the—the cookhouse and everything, and my wife did the cookin'.

I: So, you lived up there with her?

WT: Yeah.

I: Um, what about other loggers? Did they—did some of them have a wife in Elgin, where they were married and had a home in Elgin and then went out to their jobs, or—?

WT: No.

I: Did they follow the job like you did?

WT: When we was back to Hoodoo, I think my wife and her aunt was the only women there in that camp. And uh, several of the guys, some of them partnered up and—and uh, they slept in tents and so on. But most of them did eat at the cookhouse. But I don't—I don't think there was any other women in that—in that uh, area. That was at Long Meadows. And Jim—Jim was in that Long Camp. He was the one with the log cutter. And he partnered up with somebody there, and I think they slept in a tent. And—and some of 'em bached. Cooked their own—their own—instead of eating at the cookhouse, they had their own camp.

I: So, did any of them have uh, wives that were back in Elgin or—?

WT: Oh, yeah. In fact, I think Jim's—I think Jim's wife lived in Union at the time. That's a Joyce that lives right here. But Jim's—I think he would enlighten you a lot.

I: Did women um—I think you managed Pauline Terry?

WT: That's my sister-in-law.

I: Okay, now she uh—who did she work for?

WT: She was my brother's wife, and she was a—she was the part's gal.

I: What did she do?

WT: Run to the part's house, Pendleton and La Grande, and it seemed like they would have her on the road all the time.

I: So she drove around—

WT: Oh, yeah.

I: by horseback?

WT: Oh, no.

I: Or by car?

WT: By car.

I: And getting parts to keep the logging operations—

WT: Yeah

I: going?

WT: Yeah, 'cause she did a lot of driving.

I: Was that common that a woman would do a job like that?

WT: Not really. I—I think she was—she loved to drive, but she understood the part's business too. She was sharp, and she drove like the wind, boy. [chuckles].

I: [chuckles].

WT: And she's still a good driver. And she's at least three years older than I am. But she's—she's been up some now. I was over here just the other day. But she still drives. She's got a daughter in Pendleton, and she's here. She's got a daughter in Plains, Montana yet.

I: Um, can you tell me about Kenny Hook?

WT: Yeah, now he was the sawyer at the Bates Mill on the river there at Lookingglass—not Lookingglass, but the main mill. He lives right down here by the school.

I: Okay, was does a sawyer do?

WT: Well, he's the one that runs the head rig. The one on tracks that hauls the logs and shoves it—controls it to saw the boards.

I: Controls it when they first go into the—

WT: Yeah.

I: to the cutting blade?

WT: The head—head rig is the one that carries the logs, and he's the one under it that controls it—that uh, adjusts it. And they even got the, what they call a nigger that uh—it's an air- driven log turner. You know there used to be two guys ride the carriage that did all that, but then later on, they—they did it mechanic like—mechanically. And uh—and the sawyer did it all by just levers. You know the—he'd call it the nigger. It was electronic—I mean an air-driven lever. You'd just pull the dogs loose that—the dogs is the one that holds the log in place against the carriage wall. And you unhook them and then they hits it with the nigger and turns it half over or a quarter over or whatever. It got so that the sawyer did all that by himself. It used to be that two guys ridin' the carriage did all that, but then later on—that was a pretty modern mill down here at Lookingglass. And he was—he was the head sawyer.

I: So, that's a pretty skilled job?

WT: Oh, yeah. Yeah, you've got to know your lumber, what to cut out of what, you know and what species. You know you don't—don't come—you don't

cut dimension lumber out of pine. You cut that out of fir and tamarack and white fir.

I: What kind of different products were being turned out at these mills?

WT: Well, these mills, there wasn't any paper part of it. It was just dimension lumber. And they shipped it out elsewhere at _____. A lot at that time there was _____ boards and two by twelve's and one by six's and so on. It just—the old time regular buildin' stuff, and now it's so modern I don't even understand it.

I: But unfinished—unfinished two by four's and one by six's?

WT: Well yeah, for the head rep for the main mill, yeah. Then, when it's finished, why, that goes to the planer which is a different operation. You know to plane it smooth and grade it and probably split it and so on. If it don't fit and all that stuff, you know.

I: So, how many different skilled jobs would there be at a—at one of these mills? We've got a sawyer.

WT: Well, your planer man was certainly skilled. He'd take those—you see there is no head rig. Uh, to start off with they'd just cut slabs, get 'em squared up, and then they'd flit 'em oh—flip 'em over and square 'em up again. And pretty soon you'd end up with a square camp. Then, whatever you're supposed to cut out of that then they'd rip it up there. But then all that, some would have bark on the edges and so on, and so that then would go through an edger to square up whatever would make. And then later on it would go through the planer. But, unless was there—

Transcribed by Ryan Shearer
Transcription revised by Paula Helten (05/07/2012)

I: --Terry on October 20th, 2004. We were talking about different jobs involved in a timber mill in the area back when Wallace was working. Okay, were there anything other than those two kind of jobs that were skilled, the sawyer and the planer?

WT: Well, that was the two main jobs, but there's a lot of segments of the same jobs. Like when the—when the lumber come off of the head rig, it went on

a conveyor and it was sorted by the guys on the green chain of what it was, whether it was dimensions or—or just jacket boards or. So, if you worked on the green chain then you had to—see, there's several people on the green chain that picked—like one would pull all the two by four's and put 'em on the—a pallet. And the four quarter stuff on another and so on. So, there's several people on the green chain that sorted that lumber. And then uh, once those—those fellas were piled up to a certain size then they—they had to be moved to another place for—for storage, or for gettin' ready to put it through a planer to finish the products. Well, they put it on the tracks to Wallowa where they would run it through the dryers and several processes of it all.

I: So would people who work at these mills earn a fairly good living?

WT: Oh yeah, for—for their time. There's some of it, the—what they call a gyppo they do it by the thousand and enter it just by the hour. And depends on their arrangement, but if they were gyppoing, they—they worked harder and made more money.

I: But they're just working and turning in board feet. As much as they turn in—

WT: Yeah.

I: they get paid for?

WT: Yeah. Now, like the sawyer, your head man that sawed, I said he worked by the hour, but he was paid probably the top wages of the mill when he was the sawyer. But he was the one that—literally the most important job, really. Knowin' what to cut out of a log dependin' on what it was and how it was, and then knowin' what it would make, you know, out of that lumber.

I: Okay. How is this information gathered? These were fairly skilled workers. How did they get the training or education in order to do these jobs?

WT: Like on the green chain that was just like a hard—just hard manual labor. And you learned right quick to put the two by fours in this way and the two by six in this and so on. But to be a sawyer, you've got to know a lot more about it. On what a log will cut out, the species, and what they really want out of a pine log. And what they want out of a larch and—or a tamarack, which is western talk for a tamarack is a larch, or the other way around.

I: So, a lot of the—the skills and information, just you had to work in—in logging—

WT: Yeah.

I: to pick them up?

WT: Well, at the mill anyway. The loggin' is—that's a different ball game, too. But uh, you had to be—well, when you're loggin', you—you pretty well take everything. For instance like, uh, there's a lot of white fir in this country, and you didn't take any white fir those days. And now they have realized that's what you see most of is white fir on these trucks. They've learned. When we was loggin' for Reed he always would have us cut two loads—two truckloads of white fir to cover his lumber piles. They—that's when they hand stack 'em and air dried 'em. The reason for that was white fir didn't warp, and white fir wasn't worth anything. So, we'd always get—Reed always have us cut two loads of white fir to cover his lumber pile through the fall. And now it's one of the most popular thing in the world because it don't warp! And that's what most of this plywood, a lot of this plywood's made out of. They've realized that white fir is a great product! And it was just waste for years. You just throwed it out of the way and let it lay! Times have changed for sure!

I: So, Okay. There's other kinds of fir they cut.

WT: Oh yeah, red fir.

I: Red fir?

WT: Yeah. Red fir, and that's mainly what grows here. 'Course you got different kinds of pine too, lodge pole and yellow and bull, uh—

I: Ponderosa.

WT: Yeah. Well, that's the name for all of it—

I: Okay.

WT: is Ponderosa, but.

I: Okay. Now, you really learned logging from your family. Growing up your dad logged—

WT: Well, my dad was-- he never did have an outfit, but he was a log cutter and a—and a outstandin' saw filer. Everybody in that slope up there probably saws the sharpest, hand saws and cross-cuts and everything. He was well-known for his saw sharpening ability.

I: Okay, thank you Wallace.
[audio clicks - 7 second delay]

October 27, 2004

I: This is October 27th. This is Ron Brand speaking with Wallace Terry. Wallace, we were talking about mills last week, and I noticed from an old paper—an old Elgin Recorder from 1945, that there was a Pondosa Pine Lumber Plant in town. You don't—from what you say you don't know too much about that.

WT: No, I don't. No, 'cause I was logging—we were logging in here from the Minam to Reed that had the mill. Heard about the planers and Moore's operation and so on—I do remember one thing. I think he gave the stampede ground. When they started to build that, I think he give 'em the property, but I'm not positive of that.

I: The Pondosa?

WT: No, the—the Moore.

I: Moore?

WT: Yeah.

I: Oh, that was W. E. Moore.

WT: Maybe.

I: Okay.

WT: I'm—I'm just kinda guessin'. I'm not positive of that. But see, even my—my sister-in-law was a part of the Stampeders. Had a horse club and she was in that for years and so on.

I: Did you have anything to do with the Stampeders?

WT: No, I didn't. No, I went to the rodeos a time or two, but that was all.

I: They started in the '40's, didn't they?

WT: I think, probably, mm-hm.

I: Okay. What was it like living in a logging camp? You said—you said you spend most of your time living in a logging camp rather than in Elgin. What was it like? What was life like there in a logging camp?

WT: Well, it was—used—right back to Old Mother Nature itself. We were—we were—when we was on the Minam to start with, we had a—we'd built a log barn for the horses. I had two teams. And then our cookhouse was a trailer house that we moved in there. And then we—my dad built a bunkhouse for the men to sleep in. We had, oh, six, seven, eight men. And my sister-in-law had to start with was a cook for that. And uh, 'course she's right on the head of—I forgot what creek. But we had runnin' water right in the creek there that was good that we could cook with and wash our faces and so on, you know. And we had a—I think later we did make a shower room. But all that didn't last but probably two years up there, and then we move—moved back—back down on the river. And we had a—oh, my brother and his wife had a—a trailer house over across the river. And we had—our camp was kinda divided. The river divided us. And we had a light plant on our cook house side, and then a bunkhouse and had a cook. And—and she cook for, oh, at times six men. And other times they would just—some of the men would move their families out there and stay in the tent when the school was out, you know.

I: How many of the men actually lived in town or had their families in town?

WT: Oh, that's give and take, you know? Several—they uh—some of 'em would drive and some of 'em would camp out there. But the people that camped there and family people, why they'd just be in tents in the summer, and then they'd move back to town for school which is, oh, four or five of 'em

sometimes. It was pretty lean pickin's those days, you know. Wages were, oh, tops of about two and a half an hour. That don't sound like much money nowadays, but it built-- it bought a lot more than it does now, you know. But I—like when the _____ fewer horses, I—I don't remember what they'd charge us.

I: So how many different kinds of things—like the Rasmussen's had a blacksmiths shop in Elgin—

WT: Yeah.

I: how many things did you handle out at the camps, horseshoeing—

WT: Oh.

I: fixing equipment, stuff like that? Did you have a forge there to where—?

WT: No. No, we didn't in camp. No, anything that—that particular, we'd just bring it in, like sharpenin' our tongs and, oh, PV barbs and so on. They would do it in here—the Rasmussen's would sharpen those 'cause they had forges and—and understood tempered metal, you know. You don't do it right, you either get it too hard and it breaks, or it's too soft and it bends. So you gotta know what you're doing, you know and we didn't.

I: Okay. Was this fairly typical that a—a basically, a tent camp with some buildings would be set up for logging operations?

WT: Oh in those days, yeah. There was a lot of camps out. And—well, transportation just wasn't that easy those days, you know. You'd go out there and spend a week and then come home for the weekend was typical of.

I: How did you get out there by horseback or car?

WT: Oh, we had a car.

I: You had a car?

WT: Uh, an old pickup, yeah. And of course we had our trucks which were alright in those days, you know when—and there would be wives of some of

the drivers and so on that would ride in and get groceries. They'd used the trucks as transportation too, you know in—in amongst the crew.

I: Then was it pretty common for the women and—to help out like that, to do those kind of jobs?

WT: Oh, yeah. Yeah, they'd be—

I: While the men were off logging?

WT: Yeah. Yeah, they would—one—one man we had, his wife was the cook out there and he drove truck. And so even he would—he would pitch in to gettin' groceries and so on, too. You know she'd send in an order of groceries, then he would bring 'em back on the truck to save the trip in.

I: Were you married at this time?

WT: Uh, I got married—I think the most of that I wasn't married. And later, this gal here, I—I uh—I ma—married her along in that time someplace because I know we drove—we rode horses up to the—to the—the horse ranch there at the Minam. We each rode a horse up there and back. And we'd come back in the night, and it was just pitch dark, but the horses could—they knew the trail. And we were right up above the river, you know. And a lot of those places could be pretty spooky if they couldn't have seen, you know, but they were sure-footed. We just let 'em have their reins to pick their own way. They brought us out of there.

I: Okay. You went in there with your wife. Was that around the time you did some work out at Red's Horse Ranch?

WT: Yeah, that—that was the only reason we was up there. My uh—my brother—my older brother was the one that did the work up there. I drove the—well we had a Cat and a _____. Now what the main purpose of that trip up there was, their runway was too short for the modern airplanes at that time. 'Course, at this time, why this-- you couldn't even land. Well, you could—those bush pilots could, probably. But that was the reason for the Cat and the _____. He extended the—their runway about two hundred feet. Give 'em a chance to land in there.

I: Do you know how old the old run—the original runway was?

WT: No.

I: How—how big it was?

WT: No, I don't know how long it was. No.

I: Do you know what kinds of planes they flew in there?

WT: No, I don't even know that. I know I rode with him. ‘Cause it—the—the job lasted longer than he expected. And we had seventeen barrels of diesel in there, but on the way up we lost two barrels of it. The jostlin' around over the rocks and so on goin' up the river, poked a hole in two of the barrels, so we lost about a hundred gallon of fuel. Well, then when we got near the end, why, then I got a plane out of La Grande. And we hauled—we could haul about thirty-five gallon, I believe, it was of fuel. And him and I—because I had to go with him to show him how to get in there—so we made two trips by flyin' the fuel in there. That got pretty expensive, but it did finish the job.

I: Okay. About how long did you stay with this—with the job, a couple months?

WT: Oh, no. It wasn't that-- that were three weeks or a month—

I: Three weeks.

WT: at the most.

I: Okay. What was Red's Horse Ranch like at that time?

WT: Well, it was comfortable. And he—I don't know. Did you know much about Red?

I: No.

WT: He—

I: I know a little bit, not very much.

WT: He was a retired fireman out of Portland. And he bought that thing as just an outing for the guys he knew ‘cause it was a good huntin' camp and so on.

Red Higgins was his name, big, red-headed, guy. But he was one that developed that into more of a resort than it was previous.

I: Did he live there?

WT: Well uh, only in the—during the recreation season. He wasn't there in the winter time. But it was a huntin' camp as well as a fishin' camp.

I: Now, you said—I think you said before he bought it from someone else?

WT: Yeah, and I could—yeah. But I don't know who. We weren't the first Cat in there either. Ours was bigger and more modern, but the guy that first went up that river with a Cat—with an old Caterpillar 30—with a wagonload of lumber that he—he built a bridge across the Little Minam which is still there, I imagine. See, the—the Minam River divided. The Little Minam come in from the—from the east kinda, and they couldn't cross it very good. And years before we did this, why, he went up there, with an old 30 Cat and a wagonload of lumber and built that bridge up there. And it was still there when we were there. But it crossed the Little Minam, not the main one.

I: Okay, so Red bought this. You—do you know what other improvements that Red made ‘cause it's got to be a pretty well-known—

WT: Uh—

I: spot?

WT: No, I was never there after that—after that. And our job was uh—was uh, buildin' the airport, and I know that made it possible for other planes to come in, bigger planes that they had those days. And I know it’s—it's been an active thing, but I never knew anything about it. And I never was back there, so I don't know what happened since '45.

I: Okay. Were you a hunter yourself?

WT: Huh?

I: Were you a hunter yourself?

WT: No.

I: You didn’t do hunting?

WT: No, I’m not. I killed game, but I wasn't a hunter. No, I—I just—I never went out huntin' as a camp for anything. I'd just hunt from our logging camp wherever, but I never did hunt much. I remember gettin' a big elk out here on, uh, oh, Palmer Valley. Up on the mountains up from Palm—Palmer Valley, I got a boy elk up there one time. Got another one out in the Hoodoo country once, but I never was—I was always too lazy to put out the effort, to tell you the truth.

I: How did things get taken care of? People at Red's—there were buildings that people slept in?

WT: Oh, yeah. I—I think he built that up into quite a resort. And he was a retired fireman out of Portland, so he had a lot of, I'd say city folks that like that kind of thing, to get away from it all, you know. And I think that's where his business mainly was, was caterin' to the city people out of Portland that he knew.

I: Okay. So, this wasn't as rough as a lumber camp?

WT: Oh, no, no. It was pretty—probably like—like not a modern house here, but a lot of log buildings. And he had fenced-in pastures with horses that they rode. And—and it was quite an outing for people that had never experienced it.

I: Okay, back to the—the lumber camp experience. How did they take care of things like cooking, they might build a cookhouse?

WT: In the—in the logging camps?

I: In the logging—

WT: Yeah.

I: camps you were in.

WT: We did. We had—we had a cookhouse and—

I: How about bathrooms?

WT: Just outside-- just outside privies, yeah.

I: Or the outhouses they called—?

WT: Yeah.

I: Yeah?

WT: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, there was no baths for several days unless you heated up your water on the stove and took a sponge bath, you know. But, generally it was everybody would come home over weekend, you know had their home family, home.

I: Okay. Did you stay up there over the weekends?

WT: Oh, yeah. Well, give and take, yeah, sometimes no. Most of the time not, because I was—I was married to this gal, and she had a ranch out north of Enterprise. So, I had jobs waitin' for me every weekend out there, so.

I: Mm, okay. The Rasmussen Blacksmith Shop in Elgin, you mentioned you brought horses in. How did you get your horses into town? How did that whole operation work for you?

WT: I had ‘em—I had ‘em—we hauled 'em. I had a—that was a crazy sight. I had a one-ton Jimmy stake rack. And I'd put them two big horses on that and they was way above the cab. And I’d haul 'em in there.

I: [chuckles].

WT: But there was horses goin' down the road, there was way above the rack, and I don't know why I didn't end up wreckin' or killing some horses, but I never did. But they were used to travelin'. But you didn't sway too much on the highway or whatever, you know. You’d—so they'd lose their balance, you know. They'd—they’d stay right there. And I had to haul 'em clear up the ranch at the times we wouldn’t use 'em. We didn't have the greatest outfit, I'll tell you.

I: This was a gyppo outfit?

WT: Yeah, that's what we were, logging gyppos.

I: Do you remember when that name came in?

WT: No.

I: Was that here before you were?

WT: Yeah, that was. Yeah, my dad was a log cutter, and I heard that gyppo name ever since I was born, so I wouldn't know.

I: So, now the Rasmussen's, what do you know about their business here in Elgin?

WT: Well, I know they were prominent, but they were Danes from Denmark. They talk English good, but they also talk broken. But they were well thought of, and I think their heirs are still around here, probably.

I: Okay. And where was their shop?

WT: Right across from—you know where the Standard Station is on the corner?

I: Mm-hm.

WT: It was just you might say to the end of that. That station wasn't there at that time. But it was almost across from that new city [phone rings] police building. [phone rings].
[audio clicks - no delay]
I'm glad you shut that off, 'cause you didn't need to hear that because I gossip. [chuckles].

I: Okay, this was Albert and Nels Rasmussen?

WT: Yeah.

I: Had their two names?

WT: Yeah, Nels was the older one, smaller man. And what was the other one?

I: Albert.

WT: Albert, yeah. He was a real stocky, muscled, guy. We had one horse that didn't like to be shoed, but he had a way with horses. You take a sixteen hundred pound logging horse that's kind of ornery, you got to know how to handle 'em.

I: What kind of horses were these?

WT: They were Percheron.

I: Percheron?

WT: Yeah.

I: A pretty big animal.

WT: Yeah, they were—they were full brothers, that team was. And one weighed fifteen ninety, and the other one, sixteen ten. They were full brothers, perfect match. Golly, they were beautiful horses, black, blazed face. I got some pictures someplace. I guess I have.

I: These were your horses when you—?

WT: Yeah. Yeah, at that time, we had two teams and one Cat. We had a D7 Cat.

I: Okay. Was this a pretty normal size operation—

WT: No.

I: for a gyppo outfit, or was it small or—?

WT: It was small. But I guess at that time, everybody was small though. Yeah, that was before the line machines and—and your—all the stuff they do nowadays that I don't even how to work. You know the trimmers, automatic pullers, and the trimmers and all that. I'm—I'm way back behind all that now. But it's the very thing that broke my brother. He was older than I was, but he had to have all that equipment. And now it's—he's gone and they're piled up out there in the junk pile. But equipment broke him. He just had to have the best and most. I didn't live like that. I wanted to pay for what I got.

I: Was it—was it hard to, like in—increase the size of your operation doing what your—you and your brother did? You said your brother chose to get more equipment.

WT: Yeah, and after so long there was no end to his desires. He had to have the biggest and the best all the time. And I finally said, "Forget it." So I went my own way.

I: How did he finance these? What was the means of someone financing an operation—

WT: The banks—

I: like this?

WT: just loved him.

I: The banks loved him, okay.

WT: ‘Cause he paid ‘em more interest than anybody in the world.

I: [chuckles].
[END OF SIDE 1 - 12 second delay]

WT: So, if you're gonna be the biggest fish in the pool, why, you gotta be fed like it. But that's where we was different. He had to have the biggest and the best, and he was always payin’ for it. I wanted a piece of equipment and pay for it and get it and think about another one if I had to have it. So, we’d—we just parted. That's all.

I: Okay. Were there many people like your brother who managed to make a go of that?

WT: Oh, yeah.

I: I mean there were different loggers around the area.

WT: Yeah.

I: You certainly weren't alone.

WT: Yeah, the same—you got a variety of whatever. Some made it and some didn't, you know. But it was just a matter of management. There was a guy by the name of Paul Dougherty who was highball, and he made it until he got too big and then the—the booze got him. And then his management went to hell, and so did his outfit. But at one time he was—he was a real operator. I don't know just typical human beings. Everybody go a different direction, you know. And who's right, I don't know. But I was—and I was married at last to the right woman too, 'cause she thought just like I did, and that's why we loved each other and got places. And we had some pretty big things go on in our lives—not logging. She was a—well, that's clear off the subject, but.

I: Okay. We don't have to go into just personal things. What other businesses like the—like the Rasmussen's black ship—Blacksmith shop, what other businesses here serviced the loggers?

WT: Well, my brother built a shop where the new blacksmith—where the new hardware store is here in town. He built that shop. And that was his—his repair shop here. And he had a guy that was a good mechanic and run it, and he eventually bought it from Clifford. And then Clifford built another shop out to the ranch there. But uh, Horace Van Dusen was his name, and he was a—he was a good operator. I think he did well.

I: Was this the shop that later became Short's?

WT: Yeah, yeah.

I: Just off of Highway 82?

WT: Yeah. Right—just right at the end of town there.

I: Okay.

WT: Yeah, it's a block building. And they—Short had it, and then he sold it. And they put a hardware store in there, and it's a real nice place now.

I: Okay. What did your brother have done there? Did he repair his own equipment?

WT: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, and then—and he finally sold it to Forest, and then he—he did mechanical work for other people then.

I: Okay. Were there other businesses like that that started to serve, you know mechanical needs or horses or—?

WT: You know right here in town I—I don't think I can tell you. 'Cause you see, I had a forty-three year gap there that I wasn't here, and a lot of stuff went on that—that I didn't even know about.

I: Between 1960 and 2003?

WT: Yeah.

I: Okay. Back during the time you do know about, there weren't any other—weren't too many other places like that in town, then?

WT: No. I can't—I remember the blacksmith shop real well, and—and the—this one guy that had a—that service station that's shut—that's shut down right now. Just beyond the Standard Station and be—before you get to O & N, there's an old station right there. Now he was—he was quite a mechanic. Had a small place, but he was a good man. He did quite a bit of repair work. You know I can't even tell you his name. But he had it going pretty good for awhile. But I can't think of any other big shops.

I: What did uh—what did men do for socialization when they came into town during this time?

WT: Had three bars along that main street that—

I: [chuckles].

WT: raised all kinds of hell.

I: Do you remember their names?

WT: Oh, I remember some. [chuckles]. This uh, Paul Daugherty was a loggin' gyppo that he liked to get his snoot wet, and he got pretty tough. I was down at the bar one night, and he was a showin' off at. I did a little drinkin', but not—not ever very much. And he was a shadow boxin' around me and

tellin' me how tough he was, and pretty soon I just grabbed him and set him up on the bar. And that embarrassed the hell out of him. [laughs]. I remember that little ordeal. And they sure give him the raspberry.

I: Did Elgin have a reputation then—

WT: Oh—

I: for being a tough town?

WT: Oh, they—I guess so. There was some guys in it that thought they were tough. I—I never was bothered too much, but I just pulled a few little capers like that, and I didn't get a kick out of thumpin' on anybody really. You know and I didn't pick a fight or nothin'. There was a few guys that in every place, and when they get a little booze under your belt, why, you get twice as tough, you know. But it don't work that way. [chuckles].

I: Okay. What was the effect in Elgin of servicemen coming back? You were—you came to Elgin in '45. Do you know much of that history, servicemen coming back from the service?

WT: At that time it was Enterprise. See, we didn't move out here 'till '45, and I got back in ’40—well, I guess I got back in—yeah, I got back in '45—November '45. Then we moved out to Elgin, I guess the next year. But then that's when we was on the Minam.

I: Okay. So you—were you didn't see much of that servicemen coming back from the war?

WT: Well, I don't—see, we were on the Alder Slope up there, and uh I—I knew quite a lot of people that were in the service, but I guess I kinda went and come back alone on the train. You know it—there was other—there was about thirty-five of us that had to go to examination in Spokane before they drafted me. But then in about '42, there was no jobs opened up yet here in this country. My brother and I went to—oh god, I can't think of—over in central Oregon lookin' for log-cutting jobs. And we found it over there. And because I left the county, I was the first one twenty years old that was drafted. The rest of 'em were thirty-five or over. And I was the only one in that draft that—that was twenty years old.

I: Okay. Back in the—you left here in 1960. What was the economic situation here then, in Elgin?

WT: It was goin' downhill. The main thing that affected the whole country was when Bates went down in Wallowa. They had the big mill in Wallowa, and then they—he built—J. Herbert built the big mill down here at Lookingglass. And things were going great. We had our own private road and—and ten foot bunks and all this. There's—there's one of my—there's the biggest load I ever put on my truck—thirteen thousand, four hundred and six—six hundred and forty feet, ten foot bunks. Well anyway, J. Herbert was the one that built the new mill down here at Lookingglass—at the Grande Ronde. And he built a brand new mill and it run less than two years. And see, they—bunch of idiots there in Wallowa decided that they'd strike J. Herbert if he didn't pay more money. And everybody was doin' good. And he—my brother was up to the meeting. And he said, "The—the price of lumber and so on doesn't justify a raise, and if you strike, I'll shut it down." That's exactly what happened. That—that brand new mill run less than two years right down here at Lookingglass and 'course we lost our job. And we had—we had things really goin' good. It was private roads see, ten foot bunks. There was no tax, no road tax, no license, no nothin'. We hauled out of the Hoodoo country, and hauled, oh, anywhere from ten thousand to fourteen thousand board feet a load, doin' great. Then when those idiots struck, why, it just closed everything down.

I: And the whole—the whole area really suffered from that?

WT: Oh yeah, yeah. Yeah, there's—there's brothers that hate brothers yet right there in the town of Wallowa. You know they—certain bunch of rabble-rousers gonna push somebody around, you know, and it didn't—didn't work. So that's when—when we went elsewhere tryin' to make a livin'. I went to Colorado, Clifford went to Montana; bad news. But it—their country never will recover over that. I won't, anyway. And a lot of people around me is the same way.

I: Okay. Were there other people in—in Elgin that probably left at the same time because of the cutback and the timber money?

WT: Oh, I'm sure. I'm sure.

I: Do you know any specific stories?

WT: Well that's still here, I—I'm not sure I can name anybody. Hazelwood's, they're gone. I learned both of them are dead now, in fact. Are you acquainted here in Elgin very much?

I: A little bit. Not a whole lot.

WT: Well, this George Crouser that was my driver, and he—he's the father of the guy that's got them _____ down here.

I: Bob?

WT: Yeah, this is his dad.

I: Oh, Okay.

WT: I gave him this—I gave him a picture like this, and he's got it on display down there. I gave it to my stepson that's over in Asotin, and he took it to the truckin' outfit. And boy they grabbed it, and it's on display over in Lewiston. [laughs]. That's quite a thing. That's—that's a lot of wood on one truck.

I: Okay. Now, do you know anything about—well, you didn't come into town very much for entertainment or anything while you were logging. Did other loggers come into Elgin for entertainment?

WT: Oh, just drunken bums on the road down there—

I: Just drunk—

WT: is all I remember. [laughs]. There never was any big entertainment here. The theater's always been there, but how active it's ever been, I couldn't even tell you.

I: Okay, how 'bout the Grange—the Grange Hall?

WT: Now I think that's pretty active, and always have been, I think 'cause this—

I: The Rockwall Grange?

WT: Yeah. That—and I think it still holds up. I think that's pretty active. I think there's a lot of good folks there. And they have, oh, like fiddler contest. And that's one thing I could mention that my former wife got so sick we went out to a fiddler entertainment one night. And I will always remember that. And there was some people playin' fiddles there that I knew from way back. So I think that's one thing that stays pretty active.

I: Was that pretty active when you in the '50's and—?

WT: I didn't even know about it.

I: You didn't even know about it then?

WT: You see, I wasn't—this is just the stoppin' place, you know. I was out in the brush one—one place or another, and heck of a lot I didn't know about. So, I didn't—I didn't enter the booze sect—circuit much or anything. And I never did get drunk. Just it wasn't my bag.

I: What do you know about the railroads being used in log—in logging operations—

WT: Yeah, before—

I: here?

WT: you see, it was real active when—be—my brother got the job from Bates, which the mill was at Wallowa. And before they built this mill, we logged into the tracks there at Lookingglass and shipped the logs by rail to Wallowa, and there was so much timber back in the Lookingglass country and the Hoodoo country and so on that he eventually decided to put the mill in down—a mill in down here. But—

I: In Lookingglass?

WT: Yeah. Well, it—yeah, it's on the Grande Ronde, but the—it's just beyond the Lookingglass Creek there. But that went on for—we probably logged for Bates, oh, at least two years before the mill was put in there. And it was reloaded and shipped by rail up to Wallowa 'cause he had a big holding out in Lookingglass—or, in Hoodoo country back there, of—of timber.

I: Do you know—did he put the railroad in?

WT: Oh, no. Oh, no.

I: No, that was there before?

WT: Oh, yeah. Yeah, the railroad was—it was put in, oh, way back about 1907. That was put in the Wallowa County in about 1907. We went on that. My kids gathered around and—and bought my ticket, and we all went on that cruise here awhile back. And my—my son—one of my sons, is a glass blower in Enterprise. Started to get off the subject, but—

I: Okay. I—I want to get back 'cause we don't have too much more tape.

WT: Yeah.

I: The—the railroads, were there spurs built by different operations—

WT: Yeah.

I: around Union County particularly?

WT: Well, I know the one at Lookingglass, and I'm sure there's one at Rondell which is a conversion of the Wallowa and the—and the Grande Ronde. I think there's a spur—I'm sure there's a spur there.

I: Were most of these spurs built for logging purposes?

WT: No. Other than that one main one, and maybe the one at Rondell, they would of made the rest of 'em are for cattle.

I: For cattle?

WT: Yeah.

I: Okay.

WT: You see they shipped almost for forty—fifty years they shipped all the cattle by rail to Portland. In fact, I rode the freighters there. They—they would assign you a car as they'd ship—you know, there'd be fifty cars maybe of

cattle or hogs or both. And they had—the railroad was responsible for the welfare of those animals 'til they got there. So they would assign some young guy like me and my friend a certain car, so when they stop, we—you had to go check your animals out to see if any of them were down or anything. So they made it to market to Portland without problems. And that was a big thing back when I was a kid—was the railroad. They was a stop—shoot along everybody's farm that shipped either cattle or hogs out of the Wallowa County on that rail.

I: Oh, okay. So along the rail they would just stop at a ranch and collect animals.

WT: They would—they wouldn't do it on the main line, but they would be—you might call it engine jockey that would gather up stuff during the week until the main line come in. And they—they would have loading places like at, uh, Evans. That's near Lostine and—and Wallowa and Enterprise and Joseph. Or certain other big stock centers, they would bring 'em into those chutes and they'd load those cars up ready.

I: But they do this as it goes up north of Minam?

WT: Yeah.

I: Yeah. Up Rondell, there's a—

WT: Yeah.

I: through-line there.

WT: Yeah. Well, it follows the river. See, the river—it follows the river clear up into Joseph.

I: Okay. Do you know who was running the railroad then?

WT: U.P., uh—U.P. is all I know.

I: Okay. Okay, can you-- I can't think of anything else. Do you know any of—did you know anybody that worked on the railroad at that time from around here?

WT: I—I had a brother-in-law that worked on the railroad in La Grande for all of his life, but—but not on the branch. And I don't think I can tell you anybody.

I: Okay. Thank you, Wallace.
[END OF TAPE]

March 16, 2005

I: --Ron Brand speaking with Wallace Terry on March 16th, 2004—2005! And we're gonna go over the history of logging, as far as Wallace knows, in Union County. Wallace, you—before you described yourself as a horse logger; one of the old-time logging in this area, can you tell me about how that worked?

WT: Well, 'course the horse loggin' along with the Cat loggin'—why, we did the horse loggin on the steeper ground where we had skid trails. We'd swap out and, uh—and skid the logs to the skid trails. Then we'd-- it was a long haul on steep ground. We'd, uh—we had, uh—uh, trail dogs that we would hook the logs together so we could drive—drive 'em in each end of the logs and continue on back. We could—we could bring five or six logs down the steep country with the trail dogs instead of just one log.

I: A trail dog is—?

WT: That's a—that's—was—a trail dog is a—a chain—few lengths of chains. And then they got the—a dog on each end that you pound in the tail end of one log and the front end of the other one, and they would—

I: Okay, so they'd be—they'd be strung in a row?

WT: Yeah. Yeah, they'd be—you'd bring down four or five logs at a time instead of just one, you see with the—with the trail dogs. That was in the steep ground, you know. 'Course, it wasn't a matter of power. It was position, and you had to keep from—you had to protect your team from real steep ground from the logs runnin' on you, you know. You had to be prepared for that.

I: Were you ever involved in incidents where people were hurt doing this kind of logging?

WT: We never—we never did hurt a person, but no doubt there was happened. You know, and that was—that was in the days when the timber was even then was not thick enough for high-lead loggin' or anything. We would just kind of pickin' up the—the bunches of timber that was left because it was too thin for the high-lead loggers. So, we'd—actually, we picked up the remnants of the originals left because there wasn't enough growth of timber to justify the big rigs to—

I: So, the bigger timber had already been taken out?

WT: Yeah.

I: Did—did you—did your group take that out, or was that someone else?

WT: Well, both, really. But in the—in my time when they—that was in the bigger bunches of timber was taken out with—with railroad. And you would skid the—the logs to the rail, and then load that on the railroad cars. That was in the better ground, but the canyon loggin' like we did over on the Minam was—it wasn't thick enough timber for a—for the big production. So, it was just horse logged into the bottom, and then loaded on trucks and hauled out of there. There wasn't any railroads in that country.

I: Okay. There were railroads up in some of the country around here though.

WT: Oh, yeah. Yeah, out in the Grossman country, even on the Lookingglass, even at Palmer Valley out here. That was way back. Palmers were—was in Wallowa, and then it eventually was bought out by Bowman-Hicks. And—and that actually is Palmer Valley out here, those logs went to Wallowa way back early days.

I: Okay. It wasn't part of Wallowa County, though.

WT: No, it was—

I: The logs that were went to the—to the Wallowa Mill?

WT: That was in the Wallowa Mill, yeah, in—in Wallowa County. And this was Union County out here on the Lookingglass.

I: Okay. How many men would be involved in a job at any one time, if for pulling out the smaller logs?

WT: Oh, just—just about three men. Your log cutter and a—and a—in the brush of country sort, generally the team here had a—a swamper they called him, you know. He would swamp out the trails for the horses to get in to get the logs. And then the—the teamster with his team, he would trail dog 'em together. Or if it was bigger stuff, why, swamp it out and pull 'em out to the main skid trail. And then he'd dog 'em together and then go down to the landing with 'em and get four or five logs at a time that way.

I: And these would be pulled with what, choke chains? At least one would be attached to the horses—

WT: Well—

I: horses rigged by—with choke chains?

WT: Well, normally we'd just use tongs. The—you know what tongs are?

I: Uh-huh.

WT: Yeah, that's—you see, it—it'd take a lot of time to put a chain around a log, you know. You could—you had to dig under the log to get it on. But when you had just a—a pair of tongs, well, you just grip on the sides you know and pull 'em out.

I: Oh, okay. And by pullin' on the tong it forces it closed?

WT: Oh, yeah, yeah.

I: Okay. How long did—do they still use those that you know of?

WT: Not—no. Not—it's completely changed over the years. Everything's highly—or you know even—choppers. The—even get in the bad canyons and use helicopters in places that would be too steep for anything except the helicopters, you know.

I: Okay, but you would work some fairly steep valleys—

WT: Oh, yeah.

I: up in Palmer Junction. Palmer Junction is—

WT: Well, we was out here on the Minam. That's where we were. But we were—later—but of course that was lot better ground except in the canyons out towards Troy out this way. But that ground was—could be mostly logged with Cat's then. And that was probably—when the Cat's come in it was probably more or less the elimination of the horse loggin', really. Except in certain canyons that it was kind of sparsely groves of timber where you could get 'em with a team, and it wouldn't—wouldn't pay to build a road in to get 'em out with the Cat's.

I: And the steep areas weren't—the Cat's couldn't get into the steep areas, is that right?

WT: Well, not—not the real steep, no. No, it was—you had to build a road to 'em with the Cat's if you—and then lot of places there wasn't enough timber to justify it. So that's where the horse logger picked up the tailings of it all.

I: Now, you owned—you worked with your own company at one time, didn't you?

WT: Yeah. My brother and I were partners, and I run the team and he run the Cat's.

I: This was horse logging you did?

WT: Yeah.

I: Is it the same distinction where you went into steeper areas or more sparse—

WT: Oh, yeah.

I: With the—with the horse teams?

WT: With the horses, yeah, 'cause it just didn't justify buildin' roads and so on to get what timber was there. So that's when the horse logger come in. It gets the job done without building roads and so on, you know. And a lot of it was too steep for Cat's even.

I: How long would you—you'd go out with a team of maybe two, three guys?

WT: Well, just one.

I: Just one?

WT: Just—I was a teamster, and my helper was the swamper and that was it. And a lot of times we'd just bunch for the—on a sparse timber, we would more or less just group for the Cat logger. And it had every kind of a combination, you know. There was ground that the Cat's couldn't get on. That's where the horse logger come in. He would roll them chances some. If there was a draw full of timber and then an open hillside, you'd skid out to the—out to the bare ground, and then you'd turn 'em loose and roll—let 'em roll.

I: Oh, okay.

WT: Oh, they'd just—they'd really put on a show sometimes. Big ole, like a thirty inch log and so on, turn it loose down there, and it'd get to turnin' end over end and run into other trees and smash 'em down.

I: [chuckles].

WT: It was quite a show sometimes.

I: How much timber would you wreck?

WT: Oh, very little, really. But the small groves, you know, you didn't pay any attention to it those days. You hated that 'cause you had to swamp out so the team could get in, you know, if it wasn't big enough to commercial timber, why, it was just in your way, you know.

I: Now, whose land was this you were working?

WT: It was—a lot of it was private owned.

I: Okay.

WT: It would be actually like on the Minam, that was owned by a—a cattleman for the range that—but in the—in—in the draws where the timber crew—

'course that was no good for pasture. And so then that's where the logger come in to get it cleared out to where it would raise some grass.

I: Okay. Were—was any of the land owned by National Forest Service or State Forest—

WT: Well—

I: or big companies like Boise or Weyerhaeuser?

WT: Well, I suppose every combination could be mentioned. You know we logged on—part of that Minam was owned by cattlemen. They wanted the timber out of it, and of course the—the mills wanted the timber. But it would actually help the cattlemen by gettin' into those dense draws and so on and get it opened up so that grass could grow. So, in the meantime you harvest some timber for—for doin' that.

I: So they would gain both in pasture and financially—

WT: Yeah.

I: from—from the price of the logs?

WT: Yeah.

I: Did you generally do clear-cutting—

WT: No.

I: way back, or how did—who selected the logs to cut?

WT: Just if they're big enough to go, why cut 'em down. Actually, they—there was—you—you did it—you did it—you logged by the scale. You know board feet scale where you didn't—you didn't monkey with the little stuff that they got nowadays. You know, there was—you know you—well, like a sixteen inch log diameter had a hundred and sixty board feet in it, uh six—sixteen feet long. Well, in those days you—you didn't want to mess around with—with a hundred and sixty board feet. You'd rather get a thirty-two inch bud-cut log that's got a thousand and thirty feet in it. One that's thirty-six inches in diameter, see. So, we—you'd just—you took the best, just like

they still do I suppose. But the clear-cuts of course, they take a lot of awful little stuff now, and they utilize it, you know. Probably some of the decks over here at the mill, you just can't believe that they can get anything out of those little things, but they do. You know, and they—which is good that they can use it. That—a lot of that stuff we'd just run over with Cat's to get the bigger stuff in those days.

I: What did you do with the—the others, like smaller trees that had been knocked over and all the slash? What did you do with that?

WT: Just left 'em.

I: Left 'em in place? You didn't make slash piles.

WT: Nah. You didn't those days.

I: So you went in, you took the best logs, the biggest logs. Did you hunt for different kinds of—different kinds of trees?

WT: Well, yeah. You—in those days, why pine was the premium. And white fir, which they really like now, you just run over white fir or around it. Just leave the white fir alone. They wouldn't—the only time that we ever harvested white fir was when they air dried the big lumber piles. You know they—they—they'd pile lumber sixteen-foot square and up probably twenty feet high, and they air dried it. There was no such thing as the—you know, the kiln dried and so on. You'd just make those big lumber piles and air dried 'em. And the re—the only thing they used white fir for was to cover the lumber piles because it was the only species that didn't warp. They finally learned that white fir doesn't warp. And now, you see more white fir than you see anything else.

I: For the same—partially for the same reason.

WT: Well, white fir had a lot of qualities. It didn't warp. Tamarack or pine or anything, it would dry it would just be like a corkscrew, some of it, you know. But white fir never was. That's why they liked it to cover the lumber piles. But that's all they use if for. Now, they—it—they use more white fir than anything else. They finally learned that—well, it—it was a product that was just left, and now they utilize it.

I: Did—when did you first start logging like this, about when? Do you remember the year?

WT: When I first started cuttin' logs with my dad?

I: Mm-hm.

WT: Fifteen years old. That was in '30—'21—'31— about '36—1936.

I: Okay. What kind of equipment did you use, all the different kinds? Since you were a—a horse logger, what kind of equipment did you need to get your horses out, to bring the logs in?

WT: Just a chain and—'course, your double crease and your harness. But the equipment used for loggin' was either tongs or chain. They was all—

I: And those dog tails.

WT: Hm?

I: Those dog tails?

WT: Well, yeah. Those, uh—uh, trail dogs.

I: Trail dogs.

WT: Yeah. But that was—that was only used on the steep ground where you can pull several logs because you're goin' downhill, you know. So you can bunch 'em up and take a pretty good drag with just one team, you know. But on good ground, well, you'd just—you'd just pull one log of course to the landing or the rail siding or whatever.

I: Now would you go out and just stay out on a job until you finished?

WT: Oh, yeah. Yeah, we stayed in tent—tents.

I: What kind of equipment did you have for cooking, doing, taking care of everything—

WT: Oh, gosh—

I: like that?

WT: Just, uh-- just camp stoves. You know that flat top, that's where you did your cookin'. Just those—oh, what'd they call 'em? Sin—you just call 'em camp—camp stoves now, but that's all we had those days. It wasn't anything heavy. But you didn't want anything heavy, you know. You wouldn't pack a thing like that around for your camps.

I: Were these like, cast iron?

WT: No. No, they were just sheet metal.

I: Sheet metal, okay.

WT: Yeah. And they'd burn out pretty often, you know.

I: Did you have any help from people's wives bringing things out for them or stuff like that?

WT: Oh, you had every combination in the world, you know. But we—my dad and brother, we just camped out. We used our own cooks, and my dad was the saw filer. And we didn't take much equipment those days. Then you—I think the—if it—if you can imagine the price, we got seventy-five cents a thousand for cuttin' logs.

I: For a thousand board feet, you got—you got seventy-five cents? Mean that—that the logging company who did it—?

WT: Yeah, that—that was our price for cuttin' logs.

I: And if you had three men doing that, you'd get twenty-five cents each?

WT: [laughs]. Yeah. But of course, our overalls cost you seventy-nine cents too, you know.

I: Okay.

WT: So it all—

I: A different standard.

WT: relative, I guess.

I: Yeah. Could a logger live fairly decently at that time?

WT: Oh, yeah. Yeah, it was just like farmin'. Everything was cheap, and—but it—nothing cost you much, you know. You know you'd buy a new cross-cut saw like that—that up there on the wall for eight, nine dollars.

I: Okay. Now, you were using cross-cut saws—

WT: Oh—

I: to—

WT: yeah.

I: fell the trees?

WT: Oh, yeah. And cut 'em up.

I: And is that about the size?

WT: Yeah.

I: That's what, about five feet?

WT: No, six.

I: Six feet.

WT: It's either six or six and a half. Normally, unless you got into big timber where you—they were mostly always six foot. And dad was—my dad was a saw filer, and a good one.

I: So you had to sharpen your own equipment?

WT: Oh, yeah. Yeah, you did it by hand.

I: On the job?

WT: Oh, yeah. Yeah, Dad would file the saws while us kids got supper.

I: How many—how many—uh, how many good size, say thirty-six inch logs, could you cut with a saw like that before you had to sharpen it again?

WT: Well, you—you filed a saw every night, and you took care of it during the day.

I: Okay.

WT: But of course they would—they'd be dull. 'Course you kept it out of the rocks and so on, you know. But of course it would—the points would dull over the day's cut, so you'd—well, you filed the saw every night.

I: Okay. Did you ever use chainsaws in your—?

WT: Oh yeah, later years, yeah.

I: About when—do you remember about when that started?

WT: Uh, I remember in 1945 we got a twelve-horse Disston. Boy, it would even—you wouldn't even pack one of them now. I think that thing—that Disston weighed seventy-nine pounds on the business end of it. Of course it was a two-man saw then.

I: A two-man power saw?

WT: Yeah. But they were big. You had three different choices as competition changed, you know. But their—the twelve-horse Disston, the eight-horse McCulley [McCulloch?] or—no, not McCulley. Five-horse McCulley, that was a new modern one, and then there was that, uh—uh, opposed-cylinder Titan. Yeah, the Disston and the Titans were the first big saws, power saws to come out. And then the—later the Maul come out. And about had a runaway with that because it was so much lighter, but they were—everything had their own problems. 'Course Mauls were real good, but once you stopped 'em, they wouldn't start. They—they—something about 'em—once that—if you ever shut 'em all off, you couldn't get it started for a half hour. But all that changed of course, over the years.

I: But some of these were two-piston engines?

WT: Yeah.

I: Opposed—

WT: Yeah.

I: pistons?

WT: Yeah, that Disston—that twelve-horse Disston was two-cylinders opposed. And it weighed eighty-nine pounds, just the business end of it.

I: So you needed two people?

WT: Oh, yeah.

I: Do you remember the first saw you used that could be handled by one person?

WT: Yeah, there was—there's some people when the Maul's come out—there's—one man could handle that.

I: About how much did they weigh?

WT: I think seventy-something pounds. And they had a removable stinger that had a sprocket out there to start with on the end of the bar. 'Course later they'd—it—they call it the beavertail. It just went around the bar. Well, like they do today. You know, they—there's no handle or anything on the bars any more, and it just runs around. They developed their chain where they would stay in the groove, you know without the opposite—the other handle to keep it. There was no sprocket on the end anymore. It just run around the bar.

I: The slot in the bar?

WT: Yeah.

I: Okay. Did some of these have a handle out of the end of the bar?

WT: Oh, yeah. Yeah, because that's what they call it a two-man, you know. The guy that had the handle bar and the controls with the engine and all, and then

the guy on the other end had the stinger end of it. He, uh—he carried the—the head guy caught—carried the big one. But the one on the stinger end, it wasn't near so heavy. But he's the one that had to go around and swap out the extra round side of the tree, so he could get it done on the guy with the motor. Why, he—he had the good place to stand, you see.

I: Now did you have to sharpen the saw blades—

WT: Oh, yeah.

I: on these too—

WT: Oh, yeah.

I: then? And you did that the same way? They had to be sharpened daily?

WT: Yeah.

I: If you're working?

WT: Yeah. Yeah. It's like the cross-cuts, you sharpened them every night. And—and if you had some kind of trouble, you know let it—if the stinger end dropped in the dirt, lost his footin' or something, why, you did some sharpenin' right in the middle of the day. 'Cause it got down on the rock before it stopped, you know. That don't make 'em cut very good.

I: I know. I've done it.

WT: [laughs].

I: What I did though, I had nails or wire—

WT: Oh, yeah.

I: embedded in the wood.

WT: Yeah.

I: Was that fairly common where you'd hit obstructions in the wood in trees?

WT: Well, that did happen some, even bullets once in awhile, but rarely. You know it was something to talk about if you run into a bullet.

I: So, to uh—would you ever have a rifle or do some hunting when you were out on one of these jobs?

WT: Did—?

I: Would you ever do any hunting—

WT: Oh!

I: when you were out on these jobs?

WT: You bet. You had your own cut meat. That was part of your groceries.

I: That was your groceries?

WT: Yeah, part of that was your meat side of your groceries. That saved on the food bill.

I: Now, how would—would you—if you were up in high country, would you have to haul—?

[END OF SIDE 1 – no delay]

WT: Uh, but of course, I—I never did work for the big outfits, you know, that had the railroads and so on, before the trucks and so on. That was before my time.

I: Now, were the—were the railroads owned by the logging companies?

WT: Yeah, yeah.

I: And these were like small railroad lines that they put in and—?

WT: Yeah. That was before the trucks, you know—and the—the logging trucks. It was railroad. It just—it would—the logs were skidded to the railroads. And then the rail—railroad people would load and haul 'em out on the rail. But—well, out here at Palmers, they had several branch railroads, you know. And there was a crew either pickin' up or—or makin' a new railroad right of

way for more rail, you know different parts. Out in that Enterprise country, they—they had rails down—down every ridge that went down towards the Grand Ronde. And had a railroad at the bottom of it and everything was skidded to that. The old East Oregon there and Enterprise—we grew up on the slope out north of Enterprise, and we could always tell they had three trains. And we could tell one was the—called a Shay, and one was a Three-spot. And I can't think of the other one now. It don't matter. But those—that logged for the East Oregon, a big old mill up there was at Enterprise for, oh, it shut down long before I was even in high school. My grandfather worked there in that mill around 1922. It was all done by hand them days.

I: Was it pretty common for a family, father, son, grandfather, to all do this kind of work?

WT: Yeah.

I: So it was kind of passed down through families?

WT: Oh, yeah. Yeah, it was—all the wages in the woods would beat any farm labor and so on. It was all horse and buggy days, those days, you know. But the log—I think there was more money in loggin' than there was farmin'. It's the way it was, I think those days. That's where the payroll was was in the woods.

I: Was it very common for people to be injured or killed in logging then?

WT: Oh, I don't remember any—any more than today, you know. I just—I never was around anybody that ever got killed or anything. But I—I don't remember that part of it you know when I was a kid.

I: So people were pretty careful?

WT: Oh, yeah. I think so. But I just—I never—thinking about that, I had a man killed right out here on the Lookingglass on my crew. And the log was—had already loaded the log, and this guy was real good worker. And he throws a wrapper over there and then went around to pull it down. He pulled a brow log off on him. Killed him. Young guy. That was really tough to take. Had a wife and little baby. Just one second in the wrong place and died right there.

I: Hm, do you remember the family name?

WT: At this moment I can't.

I: What happened to his family, do you know that?

WT: Huh?

I: What happened with his family?

WT: You know I don't even know that. I don't know where—where they ever ended up. God, I can't think of his name.

I: Was he from a logging family like other people, or some others?

WT: I don't—I don't really know. He was just a young guy, married and had a baby. A real good worker, but he was green to the woods. And he pulled that—that—that _____ chain he through over. When he pulled on it, it wasn't settin' there good enough, and he pulled that log off the top load there onto him, yeah. Just takes a split second and life is all over with. He was a good guy too. I never did quite get over that.

I: The, uh—back at this time there were a number of—of mills around where you could take your logs. You took yours over to Wallowa?

WT: No, we—we logged for Reed right here.

I: Oh, here in Elgin?

WT: On the Minam, yeah. Yeah, we was—we worked for Reed for several years. But that—the railroads—there never was any railroads on the Minam. Or I mean that is the Upper Minam. Now, _____ all truck.

I: Now early on when you first started, were you using—were there trucks around here to haul the logs out finally?

WT: Well, we had our own. We had one truck. And then we hired some. I know George Crouser had his own truck there for awhile. May even know his son that has the insurance business down here.

I: Bob Crouser? Yeah.

WT: Yeah, that was his dad. He had his own truck that he hauled on the Minam, and we had one truck. I—to start with, that's—that's all the trucks we had was just the two, I think.

I: Now you use a term before, gyppo?

WT: Yeah.

I: That was the—kind of like what your company was?

WT: Yeah, gyppo. That's—I guess the word means piecework.

I: Piecework, okay.

WT: Yeah, if you get paid by the piece, not the hour. I think is what gyppo means. I don't know where it come from.

I: Well, that's—your—that was the way you did it—

WT: Yeah.

I: though. You just got paid by—

WT: Yeah, you cut—you cut—like the faller, they cut by the thousand. Not by the hour. So you got—they got paid by how much they did. It was a fair—fairer way to do it too, rather than hourly wage.

I: And then the company, or your company when you had your own, you got paid by the mill per board foot.

WT: Yeah. We got so much for delivered logs. It was their timber, but we got paid so much a thousand delivered in the mill.

I: Now if you worked for a private land owner, how would that arrangement be set up? How would—?

WT: Well, if—if we got—and we did some of that too when we'd be shut down in the spring on the Minam, why, we'd take some timber off of private ground.

Like farmers that have a batch of timber wanted to sell it, well, we'd log for them, or else pay 'em for their logs and get what we could out of it. But this was just kind of a spring breakup thing when the main company was down.

I: What parts of the year would you log and when couldn't you log?

WT: You—you couldn't log in the spring breakup when the moisture, the frost was going out of the roads and so on, why, it would hold up the loggin' trucks, you know. You had to—you just had to go down like in, oh, what? February, March, April, maybe and everything's just mud, you know.

I: So, uh, like a dry spring would be good. You could get started—

WT: Yeah.

I: early.

WT: Yeah.

I: Could you log in the winter time?

WT: Oh, yeah. Yeah, that—that—a lot of that good points for loggin' in the winter time. For instance, you had snow on the ground, those logs pulled easier, you know. And when—when the roads were froze, they hauled a lot easier rather than the mud, you know. But when spring brack—spring break come along, why, then that'd put everything down in the woods. You know you couldn't—you had to haul on the frost, or you couldn't haul. You'd just mire down, you know.

I: When—now you also did some Cat logging with your brother.

WT: Oh, yeah.

I: You had a Cat as well.

WT: Yeah.

I: How many different Cat's did you have with your company?

WT: Well, for years we just had the one 7—the old 3T7. But, that's all we had on the Minam there for, well, it always seems like several years, was just an old 3T7. And we did outside dirt work in the spring breakup when we couldn't log. In fact, one—one year we went clear up the Minam and extended the airstrip up at Red's Horse Ranch, and there is some pictures of that.

I: Mm-hm. Yeah, I have your pictures here today.

WT: Yeah. So, just like—just like every spring, you know the roads go out. In fact, that's why they stockpile so much in the mills right now you know, is to cover 'em over the spring break up period 'cause all the roads get muddy and frost us out. And this year we didn't have any frost, you know. This—this has been an outstanding year for that, but what'll happen without any moisture and so on. I hope we have some timber left, you know. Hope the fire don't get 'em.

I: Were there fire problems like that when you had a really dry winter?

WT: You know, I—I don't ever remember a winter like this.

I: Really?

WT: No.

I: How often did you run into fire problems?

WT: Oh, every—every fall. Every—seemed like every huntin' season. I don't know whether to blame the hunters or the time of year or what. But seems like that's when—when we was loggin' way out on the Hoodoo would—that—the lightning set that whole country afire. Like sixty-five fires in our area. Some of ‘em we got out right away and some of ‘em we never did get out.

I: So would you get involved with the firefighting—

WT: Oh, yeah.

I: too?

WT: Oh, yeah. You—you felt responsible for two ways, you know. It's, uh—you're—you're there, so you're the one that's got to get to that fire if you possibly can, you know 'cause you're already there in the area. And it's also burnin' up what you're makin' a living with.

I: They didn't do any kind of salvage logging for fires then, did they? Or—?

WT: No. I—I don't think we ever did salvage log a burn. I don't remember.

I: Back to the—the Cat logging, what kind of equipment and skills did you need to—to do that kind of logging?

WT: Well, first of all you needed a winch on the back of your Cat, you know. So you could reach back wherever and pull your logs in. And of course, your—your Cat can't go every place, so that's where the horses come in, in those days, you know. But we didn't ever—sometimes we'd bunch for the Cat with the horses, you know. And like a—a steep, rugged, ridge, why they'd haul the timber. And the horse logger would bunch 'em for the Cat so he could just come up the trail and hook onto a whole bunch of 'em and take 'em back, you know. Oh, teamsters would bunch 'em for the Cat's off of the steeper ground and brushier places and so on. So you kind of worked a combination of delivery there, you know.

I: Okay. How would—how would you attach the logs to the Cat? Were they in choke chains or—?

WT: Yeah, we used a choker.

I: Chokers.

WT: There was belt chokers, yeah.

I: How 'bout keeping the Cat—did you have to have a mechanic with you or somebody with some good mechanical knowledge to keep the Cat going?

WT: Oh, you serviced your own rigs, but of course you were doing a pretty rough job. And when you broke down, why you—if it was track troubles or something like that, well you could generally figure it out yourself. If you broke a link in a track and so on and motor troubles and so on, you generally had to bring a mechanic in. But we never had much of that. You

overhauled in the spring when it was down, and they were pretty dependable, really.

I: Did any other company make Cat's other than Caterpillar?

WT: Oh yeah, International.

I: International?

WT: Yeah. I had a—I had an old 18, and then I had two 9's. I had a—I had a D9 International with a crop—grapple.

I: What's a grapple?

WT: A forklift. A forklift with—

I: Oh, to grab—?

WT: a grapple over it. I loaded logs with that. And uh—and I had two of 'em. And sometimes your logs were big well we used 'em both to get the—get the big log on the truck. We'd get on each end of it. That was—those 9's were pretty good little Cat's. I had an old 18 that was wore out. It was good on the trails and so on. My brother was a Cat logger and a Caterpillar logger, and I was an International tractor. But they all break down. But one way or another, we was doin' pretty good 'til that—that strike hit Wallowa you know and then shut us down every place.

I: When that mill shut down.

WT: Hm?

I: That mill shut down entirely.

WT: Oh yeah, when you know these—that union struck in Wallowa. And that's—we just had those—well, you've got the pictures I guess, of the Lookingglass Mill.

I: Mm-hm.

WT: You see they built that brand new, and they had worlds of timber back there. And before that, they were log—we logged down to the—we hauled down to the track, and they'd ship—loaded 'em on the cars and shipped to Wallowa. Then eventually Bates built that brand new mill in Lookingglass. Everything was goin' great 'til the rabble-rousers at Wallowa decided that they would press J. Herbert into more money. And everybody was doin' great. He said, "If you strike, I'll shut 'er down." And that's what he did.

I: Now there was a mill in Elgin at that time?

WT: Oh, yeah.

I: Did they pick up some of the slack taking logs in, or what happened with them?

WT: You know truthfully, I don't know 'cause I left.

I: Oh, you left the area, okay. How many other mills were there around the time that Bates quit?

WT: You know, I don't really know. I know Eckstine had a—a good mill right over here where it's nothing but a—a built up area over here right now. And Spoole had the old—right in there I went to Colorado with Eckstine. And my brother went to Montana with—with his outfit. And I just kinda lost out here at Elgin. I don't know what all happened. But I—

I: Okay. Was there a—a mill at Minam—

WT: Yeah.

I: at the juncture when you—when you were working?

WT: Uh, one, uh—yeah, I never did log for 'em.

I: You didn't log for 'em?

WT: No.

I: Was it a good size mill?

WT: No, not—not as today's goes. There was—there was a—I think it was just a circle mill. I don't think it was even a band saw mill. Myron Fleecer had that. And there was a mill before that that I didn't know anything about. That's uh—

I: At the same place?

WT: Yeah. And that was a pretty big mill, I guess, but it was before my time. And when they—see, they'd go up the Minam, and they'd—they'd kodak with the logs during the winter time. And then when the high water come, they would float the Minam down to Minam—the logs down to Minam. And I think it was like 1922. This is all just history story 'cause I wasn't around. Uh, broke the—the—whatever you call it—the chain—the chains that holds the deck. When the high water hit and all those logs come down, it broke—broke the—the chain. And they lost their logs and even picked up some of 'em in Lewiston. That—they tell me that was like in 1922. And then later Fleecer built a mill, a smaller deal. And he had a mill there for several years, Myron Fleecer.

I: Where did—the logs that ruined the mill, uh, where did they come from?

WT: Out of the Minam.

I: In the Minam River?

WT: That's way back before they even Cat days. It was all horse loggin'. And they—they'd deck them along the river and waited for the high water in the spring to float them down the Minam. Well, this one year something happened and broke the boom and lost all their logs and broke the company and.

I: And they went downriver and ruined the mill?

WT: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, they—they lost their winter's supply of logs. And I—I don't know the details because it was before my time, you know. I was born—born in '21. But they say that was in either '20 or '22. I've forgotten when that happened. I've heard a lot of stories of it and knew some guys that worked at it.

I: Was anybody hurt?

WT: I don't remember.

I: Okay. Okay, now when you did Cat logging, was this mostly the men up in the mountains again, or did women come up and help and do things?

WT: No, there wasn't any women, only in camp. You know, we had a cookhouse at one time back on the—back on the Minam there. Oh, and we had a bunkhouse and had a barn for our teams.

I: Was this at the horse ranch?

WT: No.

I: Oh, you had another—

WT: This—

I: another—

WT: was just up on—you go right up that canyon right at Minam, U.S. State Road, well back in up there it flattens out, and we had a cookhouse on the—I can't tell you the name of that creek.

I: So, were you married at this time?

WT: Uh, no. I wasn't. I got out of the Army, and we—we busted up while we was—while I was in the Army. This was in—I got out in '45, and then I was single for awhile.

I: What did—what did men do if they were working like that if they were married? Did they—

WT: Well, they just—

I: see their wives between jobs?

WT: Yeah, just—they'd go home over a weekend. And of course when we had the cookhouse, why, there was a couple of guy's wives did the cookin'. And so we had kind of a boardin' house there for ones that didn't want to bach' it out. So they'd eat at the cookhouse. But there was other guys that just

camped and bached rather than eat at the cookhouse. You had every kind of a combination, you know.

I: How'd you spend—did you have any leisure time when you just didn't have things to do? Or were you workin' most of the time?

WT: Oh, when you was out there, you was workin'. You know, we'd go out—like I married a gal that had a ranch out on the—in the lead country, why, I'd go home for a weekend. But there for a while, I first—when I first got out of the Army, I didn't. I lost the first wife when I—while I was in the Army, but—so, I'd—wouldn't—didn't have anybody there for awhile. But there was guy's wives that'd move out there and had a cookhouse. And whoever wanted to bach' there, some of them did, and some of them did their own bachin', you know.

[END OF TAPE]