Patricia O'Connell: — name is Eva Cross.

Eva Cross: Eva Cross, yes.

PO: This is November 6, and we're at the Ronan nursing home.

EC: Well, it's the St. Luke. St. Luke Nursing Home, and it's in Ronan. See, the Ronan nursing home was down here.

PO: Then I'm Pat O'Connell, you're Eva Cross, and we're going to talk about Red Lodge.

EC: Oh, yes.

PO: You were born in Red Lodge.

EC: I was born in Red Lodge.

PO: When were you born there?

EC: I was born in 1897. In December. December 28. [laughs]

PO: A Christmas baby. [laughs] How come your folks were living in Red Lodge?

EC: My dad went there first in about '83, and he was with a herd of cattle that they took from Missouri, clear through to Bozeman.

PO: From Missouri to Bozeman?

EC: Yes, to a rancher in Bozeman. I can't remember that man's name, but he was a cattle man up there. He wanted these cattle, and so my dad was with this outfit that herded those cattle and took them clear through from Missouri up to Bozeman. When they were coming across the... well, let's see. They come through Idaho there somehow or other. They took some over to... yeah, but this was a little later that they took some over into Oregon. Fact is, they took the first ones to Oregon. They took them to Oregon, and then the next ones they took to Montana. That's how that was. It was in '83 that they took them through to Montana.

PO: Was your father married then?

Eva Cross Interview, OH 299-001, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
EC: No, he was just a cowpuncher. [laughs] No, he was a young man. I imagine he was around 20, 22 years old, around in there.

PO: It was probably a big experience for him.

EC: Well, you see, he was really kind of orphaned, and his mother died when he was ten years old. Her name was Eva Lafayette (?). Some of her ancestors were those Layayettes that discovered the Pacific Ocean—that kind of a thing. Then my mother, now, she had relatives there.

PO: First tell me what your father's first name was.

EC: His name was John.

PO: John Cross.

EC: Yes, John T. Webber. They all called him Jack. Everybody called him Jack, and he was really quite a character.

PO: Was he a big guy or a little guy?

EC: He was medium.

PO: Because you're quite small, really.

EC: Yes. Well, my mother wasn't very large.

PO: Did she come from Missouri?

EC: My mother come from Michigan. She was born in New York state, in upstate New York. The town that she was born in up there in New York is gone. That little town just faded out, and another one down [unintelligible], I think that was the name of that one. They become a really big place like Billings is now at that time. Then, you see the little town like Fox there was in Red Lodge, down below Red Lodge, you see that faded out because it was just a little place. Those small places faded out, and the larger ones could supply. That was when transportation came in and was easier. It was just horses then. You just stayed put in your little locality.

PO: So your mother went to Michigan, then, after New York?

EC: Yes, she was.

PO: What was her maiden name?
EC: My mother's maiden name?

PO: Yes.

EC: My mother's maiden name Kaple—K-A-P-L-E.

PO: What was her first name, do you remember?

EC: Her name was really Mary Ett, but they called her Molly. Everybody called her Molly.

PO: Then she went to Michigan.

EC: Yes.

PO: How did she and your father meet?

EC: He went with this one load of cattle to St. Louis, and they were the kind that you butcher out. They went to the...what do you call those?

PO: Slaughterhouse.

EC: Slaughterhouse, yes, there. He took them there, but he had corresponded with my mom before that. There was an old guy, he was ornery bugger—he was a mountain man. Well, what he did, he advertised in a matrimonial magazine, and then my mother just as a—

PO: Sort of a game.

EC: Yes, she and another girl they would just take out this matrimonial magazine, and they thought, well they'd just send a little picture and send it out because the West, then, was a mysterious place. They sent this old mountain man these pictures. Well, he had quite a number of them, So he told to my daddy, he said, “Well, Jack,” he said, “pick one out and write to her.” He picked out my mom and he wrote to her, and then she answered it. They wrote back and forth, and I did have those letters.

PO: Oh, you did?

EC: I had those letters, but then my house burned and I lost a lot of stuff.

PO: Wouldn't that have been fun?

EC: It was terrible. But she had those letters, and they were just a kick to read, really. He had all this fine language that he used, and then she was a Baptist lady. She was pretty persnickety. There was a big difference there.
PO: But he went to St. Louis with the cattle.

EC: Yes. He went to St. Louis with the cattle.

PO: And he’d been corresponding with her.

EC: Yes, and then he went up to see her up there in Michigan, and he was there just three days and they got married.

PO: [laughs] But they’d been writing back and forth.

EC: They’d been writing back and forth, and my mom told me, she said, “My gosh, I was so disgusted. My brother...” he [interviewee’s uncle] just adored my dad. He just had my dad out around the town, and they were having the best time in the world. There was my mom who would like to be courted a little bit and learn to know him a little bit. Anyhow, time coming, he had to get back, and had by that time, he had an ice business.

PO: What was he doing? An ice?

EC: Yes, ice.

PO: In St. Louis?

EC: No, that was in Red Lodge.

PO: Oh, he’d already gone to Red Lodge?

EC: Oh, yes, he’d already settled.

PO: Before they were married?

EC: He had settled in Red Lodge ’83.

PO: Well, tell me, what town in Michigan did your mother live in?

EC: She lived in Benton Harbor at that time. Benton Harbor, Michigan.

PO: Your dad, when he came in ’83, settled in Red Lodge?

EC: He come to Red Lodge in ’83. Then he homesteaded that place. He homesteaded really in ’87.
PO: He had an ice business?

EC: He had ice business.

PO: Where’d he cut the ice?

EC: Well, we had beaver ponds there, and the lower beaver pond was in really a nice pond. So he cut his ice on that, and he built a great big icehouse. I did have the picture of that ice house. I don’t know if I got it in here or not. Anyhow, I had a picture of that big icehouse. He had around about 11 tiers of ice in that icehouse, and each tier was about this thick.

PO: Eva, I want to interrupt you here. I don’t think a lot of young people know what an old icehouse was. How you took care of the ice, and how they cut it and that sort of thing. I think that’d be interesting to hear about. I know something about it, but then, I’m older, too. [laughs]

EC: The younger people don’t. I know, they don’t even know what ice is hardly.

[Audio becomes distorted and cuts out]

I guess it is kind of funny.

PO: It was a big building. What was it built of?

EC: It was built of logs. Everything was built of logs. A little later, they had a lumber yard come in, but you see, everything in his time was logs.

PO: And there were a lot of trees around Red Lodge.

EC: There what?

PO: There were a lot of trees around Red Lodge, so they weren’t short of logs.

EC: There was very few trees around Red Lodge. There was almost no trees. The trees were down along the creek, but the rest of it was kind of prairie like. It was actually there at start of the prairie. Is what it was. We had the hills and everything that went into the mountains, but from those hills then started the prairie.

PO: What was the name of the river that went down through the prairie or the creek?

EC: Well, I tell you the Clark’s Fork River run into the Missouri, and the Missouri into the Pacific...into the Mississippi. But Rock Creek run into the Clark’s Fork River. They were on Rock Creek.
PO: Where was your folks’ place? Was it south or east or north or west of Red Lodge?

EC: I’ll tell you what, it was it was south and east of Billings about 60 miles. Southeast of Billings. Right next to the mountains, right next to the Beartooth Mountains.

PO: Well, the town of Red Lodge was there when your folks were married, wasn’t it?

EC: There wasn’t much there when my dad went through. When he first went through, there was just nothing there, and that was in ’83. Well, then in ’85 they discovered the coal, and then Red Lodge begin to build in ’85.

PO: But your dad first saw it in 1883.

EC: That’s when he [was] first there, and there was nothing there but the prairie.

PO: He came there at that time. It was after he was there they discovered coal.

EC: They discovered the coal before he went there. That’s why he went there. Because you see they had the coal mine going, and he liked the country there. Then he homesteaded there. That’s how come that he went because he just plain old liked the place. He’d been so many other places just with this cattle herding stuff between Missouri and there, and he thought that that was the nicest place there was. It was a pretty country. I had a beautiful home there, and dang I hated to leave that.

PO: Tell me where was your dad’s home from Red Lodge?

EC: He lived in the St. Joe [Joseph], Missouri.

PO: No, I mean from Red Lodge. Where were you? East or west or north or south of Red Lodge?

EC: My home there?

PO: Your dad’s home, his homestead.

EC: My dad’s home was just a little bit south of Red Lodge. Just about a mile south of Red Lodge.

PO: Does the highway go through it now, do you know?

EC: Yes. That highway that goes over the mountain there. The Beartooth Highway, that’s right. Beartooth Highway goes right through the middle of our place, right in front of my house.

PO: When you were married then, you lived close to your folks, didn’t you?
EC: Oh, yes, I did.

PO: A mile from them or half a mile?

EC: Yes, right there in the home, I lived there. We fixed up the little bunk house for us. They had a bunkhouse for hired men and stuff, and my husband was pretty good at fixing things up. He was a carpenter and he was a painter and decorator. He was good at it. He fixed it up, we had a cute little house there. Then the little house burned, and then we went to Davenport, Iowa, there. From there, I don't know, we just never were too well situated until we bought chinchillas, and then we went back to Red Lodge with these chinchillas because it was a good place to raise—

PO: What year was that?

EC: —animals like that. Let's see, when did we buy those chinchillas? It was in...oh my god, Pat...

PO: In the 1930s or the 1920s?

EC: Let's see, no. I'd say it was '44. I think it was '44 that we got those chinchillas.

PO: It doesn't matter too much. I'm more interested in those early days of your folks coming here. Your dad had this ice house. Let's hear more about the ice house. It was built of logs.

EC: Then when we got married, then my husband took over the ice because my dad had lumbago pretty bad, and he just could not cut that work. So my husband took it over, and we run the ice business.

PO: Now, when you have these chunks of ice, and they're cut in cubes, aren't they?

EC: Yeah.

PO: They're about a foot high?

EC: Yes, the chunks of ice were about...they were than a foot high. About 18 inches. They were about 18 inches, and then they were about this deep and about this long. They were almost square but not quite.

PO: Then you put sawdust between the layers, didn't you?

EC: Yeah. We had a chute that runs from the ice pond—the pond up there—down to the icehouse and that was...oh my goodness sakes, that was about 150 or 200 feet down there to the ice. Then we took horses out there. When the ice was thick enough, he'd take a horse out
there and with a scraper, he’d scrape the snow all off and then the ice would freeze deeper.
Then when he got his ice froze real deep which was around in February, then he’d go up there
with a...Well, he’d go out with a marker, and the marker was sharp. He made it himself, and it
was just a sharp piece of metal on the end of a stick. He’d mark it through there, just a marker.
Then he’d go through with a...he had a little—

PO: Did your dad make this cutter, or did your husband make it?

EC: What?

PO: Did your dad make the cutter, or did your husband make the cutter?

EC: My dad made the cutter. No, my husband didn’t. I wasn’t even born then. Yes, when he first
went there. Anyhow, he made the cutter, and that marked the ice. Then he would go through,
and he made a little runway through the ice, about so deep, and he’d chunk chink it.

PO: About three inches deep.

EC: Yes. He’d chink it with broken ice. Then he had kind of a bar, and the bar had an edge it
about this wide.

PO: About six inches.

EC: About that deep that he would smack back with. Then the cakes would fall apart when you
smack it like that.

PO: So if he got about five or six inches deep at the top, then he could smack that crack and

EC: That’s right. He’d smack that crack, and he’d have measured in squares right on the whole
pond. Then he’d go through, and he just started troughs down through. He’d just chink these
places with little chunks of ice. It was an awful job. Then he’d just go through and he’d smack it
like that, and the cakes would break off. Of course, the cakes would float in the water. Then
he’d float them down to this chute. He’d hook a horse in the runway there along the chute, and
he had this rope around the case of ice. The men in front of him, he had to fix...The rope went
up into the icehouse, and then the old horse would pull it like this from the icehouse and it’d
pull it right up into the icehouse. He had icemen to help him there, and they’d go in and they’d
pack it in the icehouse in these cakes and pack sawdust in between each cake and in between
the cakes then. Then he’d have around nine layers of those cakes in that icehouse, and then it’d
keep all summer long. The sawdust would be about this deep all the way around the outside of
the...between the icehouse and the house

PO: About a foot between the ice and the sides of the icehouse.
EC: It kept that ice really cold.

PO: Then he went around with a wagon, or did he have a man go around with a wagon and carry it into places?

EC: No, he had an ice wagon, and there's a picture in here just like his old ice wagon. That's just like my dad's old ice wagon. Then he'd load the ice in here. Of course, he sat up here, and then he had a canvas cover that he'd put over his ice and his ice wagon. He'd start at the end right here, and he'd go into town and they'd have ice right back here and then here and here. When he'd come home, his ice would be all gone.

PO: This book says M.W. Potter, A.L. Babcock Hardware Company, Full sale on retail, Red Lodge, Montana. Manufactures all kinds tin, copper, sheet ironware. Then on from this you've got H.G. Lyon is a confectioner and fruit dealer, and he has a line of cigars and tobacco.

EC: [laughs] That was very necessary.

PO: Then there was Rydberg. He was a leading jeweler, and he had clocks and watches. Nothing but first-class work. It doesn't say a bit about his having a funeral parlor, but most furniture stores had funeral parlors in those days.

EC: No, they didn't have a funeral parlor. They had...I don't know, but I don't know when the funeral parlor started there.

PO: Well, here it says, “Furniture: S.D. Metier.” W.D. MacDonald Harness and Saddlery. “The I.X.L. Stock of Clothing is the cheapest in town. Prices are right.” Then we have Mills and Company, general merchandise: wholesale and retail. You have the Carbon County Bank, and the men in that bank were J.M. Fox—

EC: I never knew Fox.

PO: —Henry Elling (?), who was a banker at Virginia City, B.F. White (?), who was president of the First National Bank in Dillon, A.K. Yerkies (?) who was with the Bozeman Chronicle, D.J. O'Shea (?) who was secretary of the Town and Electric Company, and George Dilworth.

EC: That O'Shea, later, he had a bank of his own there.

PO: Did he?

EC: Yes. That O'Shea did. That's where my dad liked to do his banking was with O'Shea.
PO: It says B.E. Veil (?). It also says the correspondence were Hanover National Bank, New York, and First National Bank, Chicago, Illinois, and First National Bank, St. Paul, Minnesota. The bank was located in the corner of the Hotel Spofford block in Red Lodge, Montana. Then it talks about the Mills and Company, general merchandise. This is the midwinter issue of the Red Lodge Picket. Now, did your father have something to do with this Picket?

EC: No, he took the Picket. He always subscribed to the papers. But you see, his first paper was The New Ideas.

PO: So he had a newspaper?

EC: He had the first newspaper there. He had the first newspaper. At first, he had the first chow house there, he called it...what does he call it?

PO: Boarding house?

EC: No, it wasn’t a boarding house, it was just a place to eat. Oh my gosh, what did he call it? It wasn’t a chow house. Oh fiddlesticks.

PO: [laughs] Are you getting forgetful of words? I’m so forgetful of words myself. Well, it doesn’t matter.

EC: Anyhow, he had the first one there, and then after that, then he got this ranch up there. He did all these things up there at the ranch.

PO: What was the ranch, then? What did he do at the ranch?

EC: Well, he went up there because he could have the ice business. He started that, actually...he hadn’t been in Red Lodge too long when he started the ice business. In ’95, he married my mother, but he went there in ’83. He was there a long time before he—

PO: So he must have been about 35 years old when he got married.

EC: He was. He was 35, and my mom was 25. That’s what they were. He was ten years older than Mom.

PO: You were their first baby?

EC: I was their first baby, born in ’97. [laughs] Oh, boy, he was proud of me. He did think I was the best kid in the world. They had a piece of my hair that...You see, Mom was redheaded and my dad had black hair, but by gosh, my hair when I was a little kid was just gold colored. It actually was gold colored. I used to have a piece it, but that burned when the house did. Anyhow, everybody in town thought that I was the prettiest baby that they ever saw. My dad,
he was so proud of me—man, he was—and my mom was, too. Then two years later my sister was born. Two years after that another sister was born. Then there was four years, and then another sister was born, and that ended.

PO: So they had five girls or four girls?

EC: They had four girls. I had three sisters.

PO: He had quite a family to support, but it wasn't really awfully large for those times, was it?

EC: No, it wasn't. No, it was just medium, mediocre family.

PO: Where did you go to school? Where did you start school?

EC: When I first started school, they hired the teacher that just come up and taught us. We had that teacher for the first year, and then the next year, they converted the bunkhouse into a schoolhouse. We had nine pupils in that.

PO: Who were they?

EC: There was three of us went to school at that little schoolhouse, and then there was nine pupils. The other six, they were ranchers up around us there. There was, I think, two boys and three girls, I think there were. We went to school there in just one year. Then—

PO: Do you remember the names of any of those kids? They were ranchers' kids, not coal miners' kids.

EC: One of them was Anna Tomaski (?). I remember her.

PO: Tomaski?

EC: Anna Tomaski. Then there was the Paulsell (?) kids. There was two Paulsell boys. Dear me, what are those girls' names?

PO: What was Tomaski's name?

EC: Annie. Annie Tomaski. My gosh, Annie Tomaski, when we were in the third grade, she got up to recite she lost her pair of pants—her little pants. That was the funniest thing. Poor Annie.

PO: It wasn't funny to her.

EC: Not one bit. Poor Annie, she stepped out of them and hurried and wadded them up and stuck them in her desk. Those pants, I'll never forget that.
PO: You feel so sorry for that happening to a kid.

EC: Yeah poor Annie Tomaksi.

PO: Who was the teacher, do you remember her name?

EC: The first teacher we had was Emma Normeyer (?). Her name was Emma Bell, was our first teacher, Emma Bell. Then when I went to Red Lodge, I was in the third grade when I went to the Red Lodge schools. Then that teacher’s name was Tuborg (?). Lydia Tuborg.

PO: Was it quite a large school, or were there just one room or two rooms or what?

EC: No, it was about two rooms. Then we were divided in the room.

PO: Four grades in one room?

EC: Yes, and it was just a little schoolhouse right across from the depot. That little wooden schoolhouse was still there the last time I was in Red Lodge.

[Break in audio]

EC: When we first went to school, we had school in the little old...When Emma taught us, she just come to our house and stayed, and then she taught us when we were just in the first and second grades. In the—

PO: Wait a minute, now that was Emma who? Emma Normeyer?

EC: Her name was Emma Bell then. Emma Bell.

PO: Okay, and then she married a Normeyer?

EC: Then she married a Normeyer.

PO: Then you went third grade into Red Lodge.

EC: When I was in third grade, then I sent at Red Lodge, yes. I had the first and second grades at home. In the third grade, I had Lydia Tuborg. She was a nice teacher. Let’s see then, up at the house, when I went to school up there in my house, those boys that were there, they were the Paulsell kids. They were the only boys, those Paulsell kids. The other girls, they lived up on the
creek above us. One of them was that Tomaski and the other...I can’t remember the other girls’ names. There was three of those little girls. Mills was their name. Their name was Mills. There was three of those little girls.

PO: You had playmates, didn’t you?

EC: My only playmates, to begin with, just my sisters because there was nobody else there.

PO: You were Eva, the first one. Eva Webber. The second one was who?

EC: Irene.

PO: Irene Webber. What was her name eventually?

EC: Pardon?

PO: What was her married name?

EC: Her name was...let’s see. Irene married Clyde Campbell (?).

PO: Clyde Campbell, was he from Red Lodge?

EC: No, he wasn’t. He was from Tennessee.

PO: What about the next sister, the third girl?

EC: The next sister, she become an R.N. Her name was Alice. We called her Bill.

PO: You called her Bill. Because your dad needed a boy at that point.

EC: That’s right. That’s what it was.

PO: And she married? Who’d she marry?

EC: She married a fellow by the name of Johnson.

PO: Was he from Red Lodge?

EC: No, he was from Los Angeles. She went to L.A. When I was first married, I had Jack, but Jack was a tiny baby. I had him ten months after I was married. Well, then, about a year after Jack was born, my folks went to California and left me with...we had the ranch and the greenhouse and the ice business. We worked like fury. Anyhow, the—
PO: Did the three sisters live with you or what?

EC: No, they went with my folks.

PO: Who was the fourth sister?

EC: My fourth sister, her name was Laura, and she lives in Polson here.

PO: Laura Webber...what’s her last name?

EC: Her last name now is...oh my god. [pauses]

PO: I can’t remember names worth a darn. I was trying to think—

EC: I have a terrible time with it.

PO: —Teddy Kaparish (?) in Butte, and I couldn’t think of his name at all. Well, it doesn’t matter about Laura’s last name. Did she marry a Red Lodge person, or was he from away?

EC: Her name was Weaver.

PO: Did she marry a local Red Lodge man?

EC: Yes, and his father was an old-timer there, too. He was a good friend of my dad’s.

PO: That’s Laura Weaver?

EC: Yeah, Laura Weaver, she’s my sister.

PO: They were old-timers there, too?

EC: Yes.

PO: What was her husband’s first name?

EC: They called him Chubby. His name was Leland. They called him Chub.

PO: When had the Weavers come there? About the time your dad did?

EC: Oh, yes they come there about the same time that my dad did. That is, old John did, and he had a livery stable—that old John Weaver. He was a jolly old guy, and he had an office right in the front of his livery stable. I tell you, all the old codgers would collect in that office, and I tell you what they didn’t all talk about. Honest, it was the town gossip was in there, and they knew
everything that went on in town. Whether it was good or bad, they knew it. My dad of course, he was in that livery stable, but then when he’d go to town, he’d put our horses in the livery stable and especially in the winter.

PO: Just like you put them in a parking garage now with cars.

EC: Yes, that’s right, same thing. Same thing. When he was through with all his shopping in town...we used to do that, too, when I was a kid growing up. I used to drive my horses in there, too and put them in the livery stable. Old Weaver had it then, and he was awful good to us kids. He’d see to it that they were well hooked up to the wagon or the buggy, whichever we had, or the sleigh—sometimes the old bobsled in the wintertime. It was handy for us to have somebody like that. He was only a half a block from the main street. We’d go over on the main stem and do our shopping and stuff or else up in Old Town, the first...

PO: Red Lodge. The first beginning of it?

EC: The first ones in Red Lodge. They called it Old Town. In Old Town, they had a grocery store, and in the grocery store, they sold shoes and mining supplies and stuff like that as well as groceries. That little store lasted until...well the old guy, his name was...oh that had that store. [pauses] Dang it, I can’t think of it. I knew him so doggone well. But he was an Italian boy. He was an Italian fellow.

PO: Was old town below Red Lodge on the creek or above Red Lodge?

EC: The creek kind of surrounded Red Lodge in a way because there was the main fork coming down from the canyon on the...that main canyon, where it goes to the park [Yellowstone Park?], and then the west fork that goes up there to the...Well, it’s connected now up above with—

PO: Sunlight Basin.

EC: Then it went up. They had a dude ranch up there on the west fork there, too, and that was to hold Senia, Camp Senia was up there. They had quite a little place up there, but you couldn’t get up there only with horses.

PO: Who had that dude ranch?

EC: Some people by the name of Croomquist had it. C-R-O-O-M-Q-U-I-S-T. Croomquist had that one. They had quite a nice place up there, but you had to go up there on horseback or else with a wagon. They was just wagon trails, all it was. You had to cross the creek, no bridge or anything, drove it right into the water across the creek, and—

PO: About what year did they have that dude ranch?

Eva Cross Interview, OH 299-001, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
EC: You mean Croomquists? Let’s see. That was when I was—

PO: First married or later?

EC: No, my goodness, they had that before that because when I was a kid—I was around about 12 or 13—my dad took the three of us up there. We went across the creek with the team. We had a tent and food stuff—everything to eat. We had our bedding and everything. He just left us there and let us have a camping trip. There was bear up there, and there was everything up there. I had the six-shooter with me, my dad’s little six-shooter, and I’ve got that six-shooter in my house now. That old six-shooter. He had that on the roundup—and old six-shooter. Then he had a gun that was a buffalo gun, and it was that old Liver-Eating Johnson that used to be in Red Lodge there.

PO: Who?

EC: They called him Liver-Eating Johnson. Well, he had the story that he used Indian liver. He was a nice fellow. I knew him, too. Old Liver-Eating Johnson. His real name, I think, was John Johnson, but everybody knew him by Liver-Eating. There was very few people that knew his real name, because he was a fugitive from justice and he didn’t want anybody to know his name, so he just went by old Liver-Eating Johnson. Anyhow, he was quite character. He had a little lime kiln, not a lot.

PO: A lime kiln?

EC: Yes, he had a lime kiln, but he was the main fork. My dad always bought his lime from old Liver-Eating.

PO: What did your dad use lime for?

EC: We used it really as you do cement now. It didn’t hold as well as cement. That’s the reason they traded it and later once cement came into being, and they used cement. When my dad was building and we had all log buildings, [clears throat] he had to use a—

Darn my throat. [clears throat]

PO: Did he take and put lime between the logs or something? Use it as putty or something?

EC: Yeah. He mixed his lime with a fine sand. Fine sand and water and lime. I used to help him mix it. I had a little hoe that I could hoe it with and mix it, and he’d me help him mix it because he had to keep it mixed while he was using it.

PO: So it wouldn’t set up.
EC: That's right, so it wouldn’t set up. Then he’d have me mix it while he used it. When he used it, it [unintelligible]. Then he just had to hurry it. That's how they built the houses in those days.

PO: That's what Liver-Eating Johnson had?

EC: He sure is.

PO: Where was he located, right in Red Lodge?

EC: No, he was located up the creek. He was located up on the main fork of Rock Creek. He had a cabin up there. He was just a fugitive from justice, so he didn’t want anybody to know who he was. Later on, I was only about 12 years old when my dad told me what his real name was. He said, “It doesn't make any difference now,” he said, “because the old guy is gone.” Old Liver-Eating died in the old soldier’s home in Sawtelle.

PO: Where is Sawtelle?

EC: In Sawtelle, California. He died in the old soldier’s home. He was an old Civil War veteran. That was a long time ago.

PO: I wonder what he was a fugitive from justice for.

EC: He killed a guy. Yeah, he killed a guy, but he said that he needed killing. He said he was no damn good. [laughs]

PO: Well, as you've gone through life, you've met a few people that were no damn good.

EC: I know it, and that’s the way they got rid of them when they were no good then. Yeah, he just plain old shot him.

PO: What year were you married, Eva?

EC: I was married in 1919.

PO: So you were married right during the flu epidemic.

EC: I sure was all right.

PO: Where was your husband from? Was he a local boy from Red Lodge?

EC: No, he was from Cameron, Missouri.
PO: How’d you meet him?

EC: He was actually working for an oil company, and I had an uncle that lived in a place called Dry Creek. It was about 14 miles from Red Lodge, that Dry Creek was. This uncle liked me real well. I had a little horse, and I rode that little horse over to Bearcreek, but he always liked for me to come over.

PO: Was that Bearcreek or Dry Creek?

EC: It was...Let’s see now, this was Dry Creek. This was Dry Creek. Bearcreek was another place.

PO: Who was this uncle? Was he your dad’s brother or your mother’s brother or what?

EC: Who?

PO: This uncle, how was he—

EC: He was my mother’s brother. My father, he had two brothers, my dad did. His mother died when he was ten years old, and his father put them in a...Well, they were in kind of a convent-like place. He was cruelly treated. My dad knew this one fellow’s name, and they called him Johnny Behind-The-Rocks (?) is what they called him.

PO: [laughs] That’s descriptive.

EC: Isn’t it ever? But that’s what they called him. Well, old Johnny Behind-The-Rocks was sorry for my dad, and so he told my dad he said, “I’ll tell you what you do. You get your two little brothers, and you meet me right there at this fence.” You see, they were fenced in. “You meet me at this fence,” and he said, “I’ll be on the other side of the fence, and you kids crawl over that fence and I’ll pick you up and I’ll take you with me.” The one little brother, he gave him to a druggist there in St. Joe, and he gave the other little brother to...let’s see, there was a druggist and a dentist, I believe. He gave those two little brothers to him, then he went with this other guy into center of Kansas.

PO: Center? Is that the name—

EC: Center part of Kansas, and that was...let’s see... [pauses] I looked that place up, too. It seemed to me it was Linus (?). Linus, Kansas.

PO: Well, it doesn’t matter too much, but your mother’s brother came to Montana?

EC: My mother went to Montana went after they were married.

PO: Then this uncle that you said lived at Dry Creek, he—
EC: After my mother was in Red Lodge there for about two years, she wanted her folks to come out, and at that time, they lived in Benton Harbor, Michigan. Oh, I had the letter that she wrote to them, too, and told them what a nice place it was and everything. So then they moved out there. Grandma...her mother and her dad and this uncle and her sister, Nell, was her name.

PO: She had a sister Nell.

EC: Nell was my mother’s sister’s name.

PO: What was her married name? Did she ever marry?

EC: She married old Ed Van Dyke. He was that dang mountain man I was telling you about. He was a terror, but he was my dad’s friend. My dad kind of liked old Ed Van Dyke. He dang near choked him to death, too, one time because they got in an argument down in a saloon—he and my dad did. My dad, he’d been a wrestler, and so he got old Van Dyke down on the floor in this saloon and he was choking him. Then the saloon keeper, he said, “Jack, you better let him up because,” he said, “you don’t want to have to die for the old S.O.B.”

PO: [laughs] That’s a good way of putting it.

EC: Yes. So my dad let him up, all right, but old Van Dyke, he [unintelligible] shy on him. Then old Van Dyke did keep coming to see my dad. Then my mother’s sister, when she come back out there, she met old Van Dyke and be darned if she didn’t marry him. He was just as ornery as could be. They had two little girls, and then they had a ranch up there in Wyoming there on Crandall Creek. In order to get up there, they went over the mountain there where the highway goes now, but they had to make it with horses.

PO: That would have been in the Sunlight Basin, I bet.

EC: It was the Sunlight Basin, that’s where it was. They had a ranch up there. My grandmother loved it up there.

PO: I hope nobody ever discovers the Sunlight Basin. It’s so beautiful.

EC: I know, and it is pretty as it can be up in there. You know those homes all the way through, they were very pretty arranged.

PO: Can you tell me about the railroad?

EC: The railroad?

PO: Yes, into the Red Lodge. Did that come during your lifetime or during your folks’ lifetime?
EC: Let's see now, that was...That railroad went into there. When the coal mines went in—

PO: Well, tell me more about the coal mines, too. You didn't have too much to do with those, did you?

EC: Of course, we bought coal. We burned coal. As far as that's concerned, why, we never worked in the coal mines. My husband, now, worked in the coal mines over in Bearcreek after we were married. He worked over there in the wintertime, and in the summertime, they closed because at that time they had electricity all through those cities, towns, and everything and so they didn't burn as much coal as they used electricity. They would close the mines in the in the summertime, but they opened them up in the winter.

PO: I know Red Lodge was supposed to be a coal city.

EC: It was.

PO: Based on coal a lot.

EC: It was. That's what built Red Lodge. They had two coal mines there—the east coal mine and the west coal mine. The east and the west. The one coal mine, that they trestle and everything went down into the hill—the east hill on the east side and the west hill on the west side. They went way deep down in there.

PO: Who owned those mines, or who do you connect with those mines?

EC: Northern Pacific owned the mines, really, and that was the railroad company.

PO: I think they owned mines down at Colstrip, Montana, Northern Pacific.

EC: I think they did. Yes, they owned just about all the mines around there because they had the railroads to haul the coal.

PO: And they burned a lot of coal too, themselves.

EC: Oh boy, they sure did. It was either wood or coal is what you had to burn.

PO: You don't remember the railroad coming in, though?

EC: No, it was there when I was born.

PO: And the mines were there when you were born?
EC: Yeah.

PO: Do you know anything about their being discovered or anything like that? Did anybody ever talk to you about it?

EC: I don't know how they really were discovered.

PO: A lot of different nationalities came in there with the mines, didn't they?

EC: Oh my goodness, they just...We had about seven different nationalities easy.

PO: Did you? What nationalities? You had Italians, I know.

EC: Well, let's see. The nationalities we had?

PO: Yes.

EC: When we had that Festival of the Nations, we have that there now. It's still going after about 50 years, and that is worth anybody's while.

PO: I think I was at the Festival of Nations in about 1936.

EC: '36? No, they didn't have the—

PO: Didn't they?

EC: They didn't have it then. They had them in...When were those festivals?

PO: I remember a street dance in Red Lodge.

EC: Yes, they had a street dance.

PO: I think that was about '36 or '37 or something in there. I also remember Natali's Café in Red Lodge.

EC: Oh yes, Natali's Café. That was there for years and years. It's an old- that old Natalie, his name was Pious Meyer (?), I think was the name of the guy that owned that—Natali's. Natali's weren't as old as the Red Lodge Café, it was older than Natali's.

PO: Who owned the Red Lodge Café?

EC: The Red Lodge Café. Oh, dear me... [pauses]
PO: But that was there longer than Natali’s was.

EC: Yeah. My dad was there before Natali’s. He had the first cafe there. He called it the Short Order House, that’s what he called it—a short order house. He was the first one.

PO: Did he put you kids to work in it or your mother?

EC: No, neither one of us. The Short Order House...then another cafe went in there. Fact is, he didn’t really care for the cafe business.

PO: But in connection with the ice business, I imagine he came sort of into the cafe business.

EC: Yes. He liked the ice business better. He had that ice business when he married my mom. He’d had that, oh my goodness, I think he started that in about ’87, ’86 or ’87 that ice business. About ’87. He and Mom were married in ’95. I was born in ’97.

PO: So your father was an established businessman in the town of Red Lodge when he and your mother were married.

EC: He sure was. He was well established. He helped establish about everything there. He was well-liked there, fortunately. I don’t know he had definite ideas from right from wrong. In those days, why there weren’t too many attorneys and they ended it in different ways. [laughs] They had an interesting life. They really did. My folks had a very interesting life.

PO: Do you remember the businesses that were in Red Lodge when you started school, which would have been about 1905, I think.

EC: Let’s see then. When I started school?

PO: Yes. I imagine about 1905. There must have been a grocery store.

EC: 1905. Yes, I was about 7 years old then. I didn’t go to school in town, then, until I was 11 years old. They had the new town then. Due to the railroad, the railroad only come so far, and that’s what changed the main street in Red Lodge. The first Main Street was up where Regis Grocery Store is.

PO: What grocery store?

EC: Up on Old Town.

PO: What was the name of the grocery store?
EC: Regis. Joe Regis (?) had that store. He had the last one there. Joe Regis was still there when I moved up here. But poor old Joe's dead now. He was an old guy.

PO: The reason that they had the new part of Red Lodge was because of the railroad couldn't go any further than it did.

EC: That's right. The railroad only come up so far. Of course, then Red Lodge began to build down closer to the railroad. They had three banks there. They had the Meyer and Chapman (?) Bank, and they had the...let's see the Meyer and Chapman—

[Break in audio]

EC: —I.J. Fox. I didn’t know any I. J. Fox, but I did know this Wilyrd George. He was a furrier too. Wilyrd George come to see me. I never knew this I.J. Fox, but anyhow they declared that these little animals had to give their lives to get their fur coats. They said they were just tired of seeing these old dowagers wearing their little animals for coats, and they said, “We're going to never make anymore.” All the rest of the furs went along with them, and they declared they'd never make any more, too.

PO: Who was this Fox? Who was Mr. Fox?

EC: Fox, I.J. Fox. He was a furrier in New York. He had an office in Paris, he had one in London, he had one in New York, he had one in Chicago, and one in L.A. Had five offices. I.J. Fox. I don't suppose he's ever alive now.

PO: But he was the one that bought your chinchillas.

EC: He was a furrier, but he didn't buy our chinchillas. We sold our chinchillas more to Wilyrd George. Wilyrd George. We sold just breeding stock. We never killed—

PO: Who was Wilyrd George? Who was Wilyrd George?

EC: He was another furrier, but he was a Cherokee Indian, too. He was really a nice guy.

PO: His name was what? George?


PO: Would he come up here to get them or what?

EC: Yeah, he come to my house there that was in Red Lodge. He sat there in my old chair by the bed and we talked and we talked and we talked, but he had heart trouble. Coming over the mountain—that 18,000 feet up there—he suffered from that. He was just all in, and I felt so

Eva Cross Interview, OH 299-001, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
sorry for him. So he sat in my chair out there in the chinchilla house, and I went in my folks’ house there. I got some hot milk for him and just had him be quiet for a while. Then he settled down. Then I took him around to show him my little animals. I had one mama having babies at the time. She was just as cute as she could be, honest to gosh. It was so cute. I said, “These are the mamas and daddies. This is a mama and this is a daddy.” This little mama, she’d have her babies and then she’d put them in her little arms like this. Then she walked over to the door of the cage, and she’d want me to look at them. Of course, I’d look at them and I’d tell her how nice they were, and I’d pet her, and I’d praise her babies. She just loved that. She’d squeak and holler, and then she go back and get another baby. She had about three of them.

PO: You say about this long, so I guess they were about—

EC: Just about that long, they were.

PO: —ten inches long. And about that high, which would be about seven or eight inches high.

EC: No, they wouldn’t be that high. They would be about six inches high.

PO: How much did they weigh, do you have any idea?

EC: Oh my goodness, they didn't weigh much. Their fur was about this deep. They were just an awful lot of fur—heavy fur.

PO: You bought one pair of them. Then you came up to Red Lodge from California or Florida.

EC: We lived in California for a while, but we went back to Red Lodge. These were little animals just really...Just look at how that fur is. See, it's just as thick as it can be. It's about this long and soft. It's the softest fur in the world.

PO: You just want to put it up against your cheek.

EC: Luxurious. They're just gorgeous little animals, and they're so wonderful to take care of. This little bugger, she got out one time. She was always out of the cage. I just let her run. But this time, by gosh, she was sitting on the door there went into the chinchilla's house. She was sitting on the outside of there, waiting for me to come. I looked at her and I said, "Well, pity sake, what in the world are you doing out there?" There she was, but she had gone through. I had a roll of wire right up above the aisle there between the pens. I had this roll of wire up there. Then I had the ventilator up. Well, she had got up on that wire and then out through the ventilator, and then out on the roof. She had to jump off the roof to get on the ground, but there she was. How'd she find her way to the door? She'd never been outside, but she found her way to the door, and there she sat there, waiting for me. Oh god, they were cute.

PO: You were in California when you started that business.
EC: Yeah, we were living in California. This, oh, can’t recall his name. Oh, dear me. When I want to think of him, you know...I told you what his name was.

PO: George or Wilyrd.

EC: There’s Wilyd George, but I—

PO: I.J. Fox.

EC: I.J. Fox was a furrier. The man that brought them into the United States...Oh, what was his name? Darn it. Now, I can’t think of it. That makes me so mad.

PO: You were in that business for 11 years.

EC: Eleven years, yes. But then, the fact is, I was running into anemia, and I could hardly go. I was just pooped, and so I just had to quit. There was a man over in Washington state that wanted our animals so bad. Well, he had a beautiful place for them, so I let him take them—all of them. I had about close to a million dollars worth of them. But he did, he took them, and then we went to Florida. When we were down in Florida, we got the news that his place had burned, and the whole works were gone. We had no contract, we had no nothing, but he had insurance on his—and all of them really—for 22,000 [dollars] so he gave us 11,000 of it. With that 11,000 then we were in Florida there, and we put in orange groves and things like that. We had a good thing going there, too. He’d had an office down there. His name was Chambers, he and his wife, Flora Chambers, and they were so nice. They kind of liked me very much, which was nice. I was to go to fights with him and everything else, around to places with him. Then my folks were kind of hard up and everything, so we went down there, and we went back home. We sold out down there in Florida.

This Mr. Chambers- what was his first name? His name was Lloyd. Lloyd Chambers (?). He had heart trouble, and he had cancer. He developed this darn cancer, and he didn’t have too long to live. The doctor told him, he said, "Well, you’ve got one long trip, now, that you can make." But he said, "And then you’ll have to just kind of stay home." So he said, "Where would you like to go?"

He said, "Well, I’d like to go to Montana and see Eva." So by gosh, they did. They bought a travel trailer, and it was nicely equipped and everything. His son-in-law drove it, and the three of them—he and his wife, Flora, and then the son-in-law. They came up to my place in Red Lodge there. They were delighted with my house up there. I had that log house. It was nice. They had a wonderful time there. They just enjoyed it. Oh I just hated to see them leave, but of course, they had to go back and he didn’t live too long.

PO: When you left Red Lodge, you were about 20 or 21 or 22, weren’t you? You were married.
EC: I was married, and then I went to Davenport, Iowa.

PO: Oh, to Davenport and took that chiropractic course.

EC: Yes, and went to the chiropractic school there. I was 25 there.

PO: Then you went to California?

EC: Well, we went to Kent, Washington. To Kent, Washington. That was a lumbering town, and they had their own dockers and everything there—the mill did—so there was little use for us to stay there. Then my sister had married a man in Detroit, Michigan, there. Gosh, after she married him, she discovered that he was a gangster, and he was a murderer. Yes, he lived by the gun. He carried a gun right in the front of his shirt, here, so she was scared to death. She called my folks, and I was there then with these chinchillas. She said that she just had to come home, but she said she’d have to bring him with her. Then she brought him with her. I played up to him, and I played like I just liked him a lot. His name was Charlie McGovern (?). He really believed everything I told him, and he believed everything. He really liked me. Then one day I said to him, I said, "Charlie,"—my sister was working, she was an R.N. and she was working at the hospital there, so I said to her, I said—"well, my sister Bill’s got a good job," and I said, "Why don’t you just go," I said, "You know you don’t belong in a place like this. You’ve got a lot of intelligence and you’ve got a lot of...you’re a nice-looking guy. You know the ropes back in Detroit and Chicago." I said, "Why don’t you just go back there and get yourself a good job, and then send for my sister? Let her work here and earn some money."

PO: That was Bill?

EC: That was Bill. Anyhow, he believed every dang thing I told him. So he left, and he went back to Detroit. Then, of course, I told Bill, I said, well...I took her to an attorney, and he had written her these letters and they were terribly threatening. I never did see those letters and I didn’t want to see them, but she took them to the attorney. The attorney, he told her, well he said, "There’s only one thing you can do, and that’s divorce him and then leave." So that’s what she did.

PO: Where did she go to?

EC: She went back to Santa Rosa, California, and she got her old job back in the hospital there and there she worked.

PO: Eva, let’s sort of do this chronological for a while. You went to Davenport, Iowa, first. Then you went to Kent, Washington after Davenport.
EC: Let’s see now. I have to think about that a minute. [pauses] Gee, you know, it’s been so long ago. I went to Kent, Washington, because my uncle and my aunt were there and they wanted me to come to Kent so bad, so I went to Kent. We had a nice place there. We had a place out in the country just about a mile from where my uncle lived.

PO: Was this your mother’s brother or your father’s sister?

EC: It was my mother's brother. My father was an orphan. His mother died when he was ten years old, and he had two little brothers younger than he was, so they put them in an institution there. They were terribly treated. They were just cruelly treated. They had this wire fence all around the place like this my dad said. So he said that he had a friend and his name was...oh dear god, now I can’t think of name. Anyhow, this friend told him, he said, "Well, you meet me outside there." He said, "You can just climb over the fence with your two little brothers, help him over the fence, and I’ll be on the other side of the fence." He said, "I’ll just whisk you away." So that is exactly what they did. He took the two little brothers, and he gave the one little brother to a lawyer there and the other one to a druggist, and they had—

PO: What town was that in?

EC: They were in St. Joe, Missouri.

PO: That would have been about 1870 something, wouldn’t it?

EC: Let’s see, my dad, he was born in...he was born in ’65, my mother was born in ’75. He was born in ’65, and he was at that time...Oh gosh, he was only 10 years old, so that would be about 1875, yes.

PO: So you were in in Davenport, and you took that chiropractic course. Then you had an aunt and uncle in Kent, Washington, so you went out there.

EC: Yeah. Went out there to Kent, Washington. They had all their own doctors and everything there, but really and truly, it wasn’t a good place. We weren’t built for that anyhow. We were built for outdoors, and my husband was built for outdoors. He didn’t like being too set up, but anyhow—

PO: Tell me, where did you go from Kent, Washington? How long did you stay in Kent, about a year?

EC: Let’s see now. We were there for about... [pauses] We went there in ’25. We were there for about six years, I guess, something like that.

PO: How long had you been in Davenport taking that—

Eva Cross Interview, OH 299-001, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
EC: Well, we were in Davenport for two years. We were there two years.

PO: Then after Kent, Washington.

EC: Then in Kent, Washington, then we went...that's when we went back home. We went back home because this fellow that my sister had married, he was a dangerous man. My dad was so scared of him that he wanted us to come back.

PO: Would that have been about 1930? Or '31?

EC: No, that was 19...let's see now, '25, '30. It was right around about 1930, yes.

PO: Then what did you do while you were home that time? What did your husband and you do? That wasn't the chinchillas, then.

EC: No. Then we went over to Bearcreek, and we went into the mines that were there. He worked in the mines in Bearcreek for quite a few years. How long did he work there? We enjoyed that. I enjoyed that so much, living in Bearcreek because there were the most congenial lot of people, lot of Scots there. Those Scotchmen were... [laughs] I enjoyed them. Then the mines closed. REA came in—Rural Electric came in—and they had all this electricity. My folks put in electric everything—they had irons, they had stoves, they had the whole works. Everybody did. Anyhow, the old cook stove sat out on the porch, and everybody had electricity, so that ended the coal mines. Boy, they just couldn't sell any coal, so they just closed the mines up. All the ones in Bearcreek and the two in Red Lodge—every one of them just shut their doors.

PO: The ones in Red Lodge, too? Do you have any idea about what year that was?

EC: That they closed the mines?

PO: Yes.

EC: Let's see then. That was... [long pause] I believe we were out in Oregon there. [pauses] Oh gosh—

PO: What’d your husband do in the mines?

EC: He was track layer. He was track layer. They were really deep down in there, and they had these little pull cars. The miners filled them full of coal, and then he was track layer down there, and they had to keep changing the tracks all the time. He was track layer. My uncle was a track layer, too.

PO: Do you have any idea when they closed?
EC: Closed the mines? [pauses] Well, we left there...where did we go? When we were there, Jack was in the third grade. He was a kid about...he was eight and 10 years old. When he was ten years old, we went to California.

PO: What year was Jack born?

EC: He was born in 1920. It was about 1930. What did we really do after that?

PO: What’d you do in California?

EC: He went back to the old trade—painting and paper hanging. He had all the work that he could possibly do. We were in Hollywood, and those Hollywood people had a lot of money. He did a wonderful lot of work down there. He had a partner that come down and worked. He and this fellow worked together, and he was a good workman, too. The two of them, they paired off. They had a lot of work they could do. Plenty of it. We were there for a number of years, and then where did we go? Well, my folks were wanting us to come back home. I was over at my sister’s...I sold my house. Oh, the war came along. So I went over to...we went to...

PO: You went to California in about 1920, you think? In 1930.

EC: About 1930.

PO: Were you there ten years?

EC: Yes. While we were down there, I worked at Douglas Aircraft, and he worked in the shipyards. Then he was tired of working in the shipyards, and they were putting in a distillery in Red Lodge—that was it—and making whiskey there. They wanted him to come back home and go into that, so by darn, he went on up there. We went into it, and I stayed down in California until I sold my place and everything. Then I went on up there to work in the distillery. Then I told him that that would never, never work because those big outfits, your brewing outfits, and Minneapolis, they wouldn’t listen to it, so sure enough that happened to him.

PO: They make whiskey or gin—

EC: So he had to quit that. Then we went back down to California.

PO: How long were you in Red Lodge that time?

EC: Let’s see then. Then we got those chinchillas in ‘40...We were in California quite a while. We bought a place there in Santa Rosa.

PO: You were in Santa Rosa and Hollywood?
EC: Santa Rosa, California. We had a nice place there, too, and he was working...Then he went to work down in San Diego, when the war was coming along. He went down to San Diego, and he went into the shipyards down there.

PO: Was that before or after he went in the distillery business?

EC: Well, that was after.

PO: Was Santa Rosa before or after the distillery?

EC: Yes.

PO: Did you go to Santa Rosa before or after?

EC: That was before. The distillery.

EC: It was before when we lived in Santa Rosa. Santa Rosa though, I wanted to stay there because my own son was doing real well there. He was doing well in school, and he had joined the Mickey Mouse Orchestra. He played the cello. They had the Mickey Mouse Orchestra and they played at the theater every Saturday afternoon. He was doing real well there, but then...

PO: That was in Santa Rosa?

EC: That was in Santa Rosa, and that was a nice place to live. It was really a beautiful town and it wasn't too terribly far from the beach. I liked that there. What happened to us that we had to leave? We sold out in Santa Rosa, and we went back to Red Lodge. Oh, that's when we got the chinchillas. After we sold our house, it was pretty cold weather, so my sister wanted me to come over to where she lived. She lived in [pauses] Crescent City. She lived over at Crescent City, and she wanted us to come over and stay with her for a while. So she was working for another aircraft down there, and they made those little [unintelligible]. She was working there, so we went over there. I took care of her house and everything. Of course, I sold everything that I had. We sold everything except a davenport and a chair that matched, and they were pretty good-sized pieces of furniture. So we just moved them over to my sister's house. My brother-in-law was Scotch. Scotch as the heather.

PO: Which brother was that?

EC: That was Irene's brother [husband?]. His name was Campbell. He was related to that Glenn Campbell. Anyhow, his name was Campbell, Clyde. Clyde come in, he looked around, he said, “I always knew we were under furnished.” [laughs] It was loaded with stuff, so we left after but I...
had a good time there. Clyde always liked me, and I sure liked him. Then we both sold out, and then we went back to Red Lodge.

PO: They sold out, too?

EC: Yes, we sold out down there in California.

PO: Where did you meet the man that got you started with the chinchillas? With the pair of chinchillas?

EC: That was at the time that we were...yeah. That was at the time that we sold out in California, and we were staying at my sister’s house. My husband came in, and he said, “Guess what?” He said, “We’re going in the chinchilla business.”

And I said, “Well, what are they.” I didn’t know even what they were.

PO: Was this in Crescent City or Santa Rosa or where?

EC: She was in Crescent City. He was located in Crescent City—this fellow that had the chinchillas. Anyhow, Jim told me...Well, we had sold the place, so we had the money. The chinchillas was 800 [dollars] a pair. He got four pairs of them. We went home then and started building this chinchilla house, putting that up. [pauses] I had another place that we had bought, and I had to sell there. That was in Glendale.

PO: When were you in Glendale?

EC: Let’s see, now, Jack went to Glendale College, and I was in Whittier. Oh, I know, we went over to Whittier. My husband, wasn’t going to send Jack to college. He said he wasn’t going to spend his money sending him to college. I said, “Okay.” I told Jack, I said, “Okay. I’ll see what I can do.” I called my folks, and I also confided in the meat man that I bought my meat from there at the...everything was outdoors there, and he had his market there. So I confided in him quite a bit. I told him I was just kind of discouraged. I said, “My son wants to go to college,” but I said, “my husband don’t want to send him.”

Anyhow, this meat man met this other guy. So the guy come to see me, and he said to me, he said, “I understand,” he said, “that you’d like to have something to do.”

I said, “Well, I would.”

He said, “Well, I got something for you.” So he told me that he’d stayed there for a long time, telling me all about this. He said, “I want to set up an ice cream parlor someplace in this area, but,” he said, “I don’t know the area very well.” He said, this meat man, his name was Whiting (?), I think.
PO: What town did the meat man live in?

EC: That was that Santa Rosa. Santa Rosa. I had some friends over in Whittier that I knew real well. They were really nice people, and so I called them. I told Frank, I said, “I’ve got a chance to put in an ice cream parlor but I don’t know where to do it.”

He said, “We need one here. There’s nothing like that at all around here.” He said, “I’ve got a place for you.” His uncle owned this place, it was on [unintelligible] Avenue, right downtown and where the kids went back and forth and back and forth to school. It was a perfect setup for an ice cream parlor.

I told this fellow about that then, and he said, “We’ll fix it all up.” So they went down there, and they went in and they decorated the place. They cleaned it all up spick and span, and they had the equipment. They put it all in for me. The whole thing, 1,500 dollars.

I told my dad about it and he said, “Shoot,” he said, “I got 1,500 dollars.” My dad had it pretty well off. So he sent me the 1,500 dollars. I bought the equipment, they put it in there, and I went in. The opening morning, why, the whole town was tickled to death to have me in there because they was nothing like that there. All the merchants there sent flowers, and when I went down there to...my husband went down to open it up. He called up, and he said, “My god,” he said, “Come down. It looks like a flower shop here.” So I went down and it was flowers everywhere. Everybody had sent us a bouquet. Then I had all these thank-you cards to write to these various merchants around. We were set up, but we had a boomer business and—

PO: I’m going to stop you right now.

EC: What?

PO: You finish up about the ice cream place, and then we’ll go and eat.

EC: What time is it? Oh, it’s 12.

PO: Yeahs. How long were you in that ice cream business?

EC: I was there until the war started, and after the war started...What was that? When did that war start?

PO: 1941.

EC: Well that was it. When that war started, why, the government put up rationing on meat and on sugar and on butter. Well, butter comes from the cream, you see. So that put me out of business because there’s where my business was built on: cream and sugar and stuff, yes. I had
a boomer of a business, oh my goodness. I cleared the [unintelligible], and I’d make about $200 a day there. Heavens, yeah. Well, they just flooded my place. I had a counter there, I don't know how many that could sit at the counter. They'd line up in the counter, and they'd line in front of the counter there. So I had to hire help. I hired this cute darn red-headed boy. He was an Irish kid, and his name was Hugh Miller... no, Bill Miller (?) was his name. Well, that darn Bill Miller, he would go down there, and he’d open up for me. Then I’d go down. I’d get my housework done, and my husband was working then down there in the shipyards in San Diego. So he’d only be home weekends. I needed help, so I had to hire this Bill Miller. He was just the best kid...he was just excellent. He told me, he said, “I have a hard time,” he said, “to go home”—because his folks lived way over in another area there, a long, long ways—“I have to take a bus over there.” And he said, “I have a hard time, but could I stay at your house?”

I said, “Well, Bill, you sure can,” because I had a maid’s quarter in my house, and there was a bathroom, there was a nice bedroom and a little living room. Perfect, you know. So Bill come over and he took a look at it, and he was thrilled to pieces.

He told his mom, he said, “I’m just going to go over and live with Eva.” She was glad to have him go.

PO: What was the name of that ice cream place?

EC: We called it The Frosty Malt. The Frosty Malt, and everybody called it Eva’s Frosty. That’s what they called it, was Eva’s Frosty. I hired this Bill Miller, then I had two girls that helped me. One was Beverly Hofstedder (?) and the other was Beverly Williams (?) was her name. Anyhow, those two girls, but this young kid Bill Miller he was really my...I depended on that kid for everything.

PO: You made your ice cream.

EC: We made it all.

PO: You had machines to do it with?

EC: We had a machine. We sold soft ice cream because it just poured out like this. Then you poured it into these big cans like this, containers, and set it over into the freezers. We had a freezer that kept it frozen all the time, and then we had a dispensing freezer where you had it soft enough that you could dip it and serve it.

PO: Did you have just one kind of ice cream or several kinds?

EC: I had vanilla all the time and then I had chocolate three days of the week and then I had peppermint. I had peppermint just one day week, but then I had the chocolate three days a
week, and I had the vanilla all the time. They got so that they knew the weeks that they’d like to come, and they’d come and get what they wanted on the right days. [laughs]

PO: You liked that business.

EC: Oh, lord, I loved it. I had a good time there. I don’t know, I used to love to listen to Nelson Eddy. You remember him. Well, I had a radio in the place, and then I had a jukebox. I’ll just tell you this little incident, but I had this one day. I had this Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald on at noon-time and this one lady from Long Beach would come in and she’d eat at my place—lunch.

PO: Eva, I’m going to stop you now because we have to go to lunch.

EC: Okay.

[End of Interview]