DE This is an interview with Fern Gildersleeve, at her home in Superior, Montana, December 5, 1983. The interviewer is Diane Ehrenberger, for the University of Montana Oral History Society. Why don't we start off with your early childhood before you came to Montana.

FG Okay. I was born in McLean county, Illinois on June the 25th in 1914, on a farm near Bloomington, Illinois. I was born to Andrew and Elizabeth Dodson. I had one sister five years older than I was and things, I guess, went along pretty smooth until my mother passed away in 1917 and left my father with we two girls. He had a very difficult time running the farm and keeping we two girls with house keepers and what not, and we did spend quite a lot of time, in between housekeepers, with our aunt and uncle, they didn't have any children, and they wanted to adopt us, but father said "no way" [laughs]. So things went that way, and about a year after my mother died, my father remarried. Betty was from Kentucky and hadn't had much schooling, and she was very difficult to get along with, so over the years I worked out with my father as much as possible. (laughs) He always enjoyed having
me work with him because I was not afraid of getting greased up and dirty or anything like that and so, of course, after a while, I had to go to school, which I enjoyed. I wish I could have gone much farther. I went through the eighth grade and all my school days drove a horse and buggy to school two miles and a half. We had just a country school with eight grades and about forty students in this school. We had real good discipline and we got our lesson in on time or we stayed in until we did, which I wished they could do nowadays. [laughs] That took care of the schooling pretty well. Then I worked out with my father in the fields in the spring and, husked corn, and all these kind of things until I was 16. Then I came west with my sister and her husband and two children. Went to Washington to visit our grandparents. In the meantime when we where visiting, I met some friends over there that knew the Gildersleeves here and they were building their camp. George's sister needed someone to help her work, so I came back with these friends then. That's when I met the Gildersleeves. Of course being 16, and ambitious, and healthy, and able to learn while they were just building a camp. At that time we had to walk up quite a ways on a trail to get to the cabin above the camp. That's when I met George. He was up above the tunnel up there and he was splitting timbers for the mine and he had his shirt off, [laughs] muscular, you know, and handsome and [laughs] I thought, "Oh boy, he's beautiful!" [laughs]. Anyway that was my first glimpse of him. George's
sister was glad to see me coming because she needed help, and let's see what's comes next? [laughs]

DE When you first came, how long did you plan to stay to work up there?

FG Just a few months. After I was here I enjoyed the country and the people and everything so much that I just decided to stay. Then George and I got together and played cards and got along [laughs] so then I just decided to stay. Then about a year later from the time I went up there, I decided to get married. So then we stayed up there after we were married until January of 1931. About 1932 the snow got so deep we decided to come out because there was nothing we could do but shovel snow when it gets as deep as it does up there. We have an average of eight feet of snow. That is in the winter. So even to shovel out a decent trail was kind of difficult, [laughs] so we just decided to come to town to see if there was any work or anything. We lived with his folks that winter. All of us all together in one house. [laughs] We were really looking forward to spring, and that was the year that I saw my first placer mining. The runoff in the spring was all fascinating, to me anyway, and of course Gloria was born in August, 1932. We kept her up there until, I think it was, Thanksgiving we moved out that fall and she never even had a cold until we brought her to town. We were quite
amazed at all the old bachelors who said "Oh, you can't take that baby up there." And she was only 14 days old when we took her back up to the camp. "You can't take her up there, way up there and no doctor." She got along fine. We did. So then we fixed up one room in the front part of the house where George's mother and uncles lived and we just got along fine in that one room. We could cook for ourselves and live or own lives that way where with other people, in-laws, and kids and everything, it's difficult.

DE  Was that one room down here in town?

FG  Yes, it was here [in Superior]. We had a lot more room up the creek than we ever had here in town.

DE  How many people were up at the mine at one time when you were working there?

FG  Now, lets see... there was George's uncle, two uncles, and a father and then his sister and her husband and a little girl and they had a couple of guys hired...two that helped build the camp, run the sawmill and everything and built it. And so that's about all that was right there. At the time there were some fellows below that at the Superior mines. They used to come up and we'd play cards and we'd have dances at night. George's uncles played the violin and a guitar. To get enough women for the square dancing or anything we had to put aprons on the men (laughs). That was a lot of fun and they didn't mind as long as they could have a little entertainment too. There was, I think three brothers, the
Graham boys, that came up and they held that ground there at where Brookbanks (?) are now for thirty years I guess, or maybe more. We got quite well acquainted with them. Of course there was the LaCasses's too and Sesson's, they were up out of Missoula and we enjoyed visiting back and forth with them and Rett LaCasse was a marvelous person. She would call me up for recipes or "come down, we'll have some popcorn" or something like that you know. She had had polio but she was a marvelous entertainer... played the piano and just, we just loved her. She never married but we'd go berry picking and that sort of thing together too... Rett LaCasse. And of course over the years Gloria started school and I would keep her down in town here and send her to school and weekends I'd take the car and we'd go back up to camp for the weekend cleaning, and bake and cook(laughs) up the things for George and his uncles. His father passed away in 1935 and so then just left him... the two uncles. So I would call up Rett. At that time we had a forest service phone, so I'd call up Rett and ask her if she needed groceries or mail or whatever. Saved them trips to town. We went along like that for... oh, lets see... Gloria started in 1938 to school, and then in 1940 George's niece came, and we sent her through high school here. She was just a darling kid. She was the one that George's sister had when I first came out here. So we got really attached to her.(laughs) So she was having problems in Anaconda, where she was going to school, so then she came and went through high school here and
we enjoyed having her. Everything went along fine. We had extra
youngsters... George's nieces and nephews... through the summer.
We never lacked for a thing to do. There was always entertainment
(laughs) of some kind, or company. In 1943, in June, we had our
second daughter, Susan. Both girls went through grade school and
high school here. Gloria lives here and Susan lives in Helena.
She works in the Medicare Office in Helena, and has for about 15
years now. Her husband works in the cement plant in Montana
City. Gloria had four girls, and they all live here and Susan had
two girls and a boy, our only grandson. The older girl and the
boy are married now and the youngest will be soon. So that's all
of our seven grandchildren(laughs). And we have eight great-grand
children now so we have quite a family when we all get together.
We were all together for Thanksgiving, beside one granddaughter
that's in Arizona wasn't there, so I thought that was pretty
good(laughs). We all went to Helena so we could be together.
DE When you first came to the mine to work what were your
duties supposed to be?
FG Oh, I was supposed to be kind of a flunkie, which is the
second cook, and do the cleaning and all that sort of thing,
which I didn't mind. I was taught to work when I was a kid and so
it didn't bother me at all. We had to carry water to the cabin
above the camp until about February and we had running water
then. All those things were a little difficult, although at home
we had to carry our drinking water. We had a cistern and a pump.
There wasn't anything too different there, I soon did practically
most of it. I enjoyed cooking and baking and it was all
interesting and when you're used to cooking for hungry people
like corn huskers and that sort of thing, why you can do as good
for miners (laughs).
DE And what would a typical day have been like? How early would
you get up?
FG Oh, we got up about 6 o'clock and of course here was
breakfast to get out of the way and we didn't have to pack
lunches up there. They came in for dinner. Then we'd clean the
cabin generally in the afternoons because floors and stuff like
this takes quite a while to dry and by the time we got breakfast
and everything out of the way, we didn't have time to clean
floors and stuff. You have to keep a camp pretty well cleaned up
in case anyone came by, you know, and there was a lot of people
came by. In fact, at first when we went up there was just trails.
We built the road from Minnie Brookbanks up to the mine ourselves
in 1930, we used mostly dynamite for clearing out this road.
There were no dozers and all of those things like they have
nowdays. Then in 1932 the Forest Service came along and hooked
onto our road and they went on over to Freezout Pass and hooked
on down to Trout Creek. Until 1936 everybody used the road that
passed our place, so we had a lot of people stopping in, visiting
and problems. We were always anxious to help if somebody needed a
ride to town. They had old Model T Fords and they worked like a
charm. They followed the ruts and weaved around over the bumps.

DE What did your family think when you told them that you were going to be staying on here?

FG Of course not having a mother, why it was all up to my father. He said, "You know the situation and you got good judgement." And I thought that was a pretty good bit of praise for a 16 year old. (laughs) He said "You do what you think best." And the same way when I wrote him and told him I was going to get married. He said "Well, I hope that George will be good to you. You just use your own judgement. I'd rather that you came home."

But knowing what I had to go back to, there was no way I was going home. I stayed with my sister. She thought I could come over and be with her. That's one reason why dad let me come out here in the first place, so we two girls could be together. But there was no work there, and they had a little one-room house on the creek near one of my aunts, and so I thought there's no future there, so I had better stay right where I am at. I've been very thankful that I have, because we haven't done too bad.

DE How did the depression affect your family or the mining situation around here?

FG It really did affect it, because the price of metal, the bottom dropped out of that and there was no demand for it. We've always just tried to develop it. We've never really shipped much ore from it but the Depression really did hit the development right in the middle. Of course you could sell gold, but at that
price at that time, gold was so low, $20 and ounce. Then in 1934 it raised to $35 an ounce and now look what it is. I wish we had [some gold] (laughs). we had to sell. Like I said, the dollar went as far then as a dollar does now and equally so. The gold mining to me was very fascinating because you could always ship your gold anyway. Our seasons are so short up there, eight weeks at the most. We had to shovel snow to get started and get our pipeline in. That's a lot of hard work. In about eight weeks we'd have to do our placer mining. When we were through with that, then we would go into the hardrock, which paralleled one another and ties right in together. We'd find chunks of lead. In fact, we had one that was 17 pounds and one that was 11 pounds, solid galena that had eroded out of the hardrock vein down into the placer and we washed that out of the gravel. Yes, it's very interesting. In fact you just have to see it now. My windows up at the cabin are just lined with chunks of rock. Nothing from this part of the country. The placer mining was very fascinating to me because it was something different. I've read about it in my geology books but it didn't cover very much in comparison. But the actual thing is, we have shipped barite [barium], which is what you take, it's pulverized liquid. I told a radiologist last summer up at the hospital here, I had to take an upper GI and I said, "Well, if I'd known this I'd a brought my own barium." and he was dumbfounded. He just didn't know what to make of that. He said he'd never met anyone that owned her own barium. (laughs.) So
you meet up with a lot of new experiences.

DE How has the mining changed over the years?

FG Oh, I don't think it really has changed too much. The price of metal is up but getting the capital to get it out is one of the big problems. It's changed in lots of ways because they have so much better machinery to operate with. Of course, we still do most of it by hand, you might say by hand. We have a few more facilities than we had in the 1930's. We've done a lot of work up there but it still isn't on the developing, you know, on the producing mine. What you might say, as far as the hard rock is concerned. So I couldn't say just how it's changed except for the price of metals being up but the way they're fluctuating right now it's hard to get anyone interested, because you don't know what they're going to do.

DE So it's hard to find a buyer or it's hard to find people interested in working?

FG Finances, too, get into it because we'd take out of the placer and put it into hardrock [mining]. That's what we always done, you know. But it takes quite a bit of capital to develop hardrock [mining].

DE When you had your family in school, you said that you stayed
in town more?

FG Yes, my daughters did. When school would start, I'd have to come in and send them to school through the week and George stayed right up there and worked. Of course after Susan got into her sophomore year in high school, I started to work. I would go up the creek on weekends and come back down here and cook at the school, for eleven years. And then, finally in 1969, in the spring I just decided the heck with that, I'm going to stay with George. Well there's just too many things could go wrong and he was up there alone, you know, and course you're worrying about your job. You're worrying about him and you can't do justice to everything, so I said I'm going to be up there because I enjoy it.

DE What was it like to cook for the school during those years?

FG It was interesting. Eleven years... that's a lot of lunches. I did my own buying and planning. Much planning, and that was quite a job not to repeat yourself very often. In fact one of the new nutritionists from Helena looked through the book and he said, "You do pretty good." He said, "Most of them have their spaghetti every Monday," (laughs) but I only repeated about every three weeks that particular meal that the kids didn't go for. I didn't have any trouble with the youngsters at all. I have good luck with kids I might say. I have grown up with kids and have my own
and know what their wants are pretty much and pretty well how to handle them so I don't have any trouble with youngsters. But I enjoyed it. I generally served from 200 to 250 and that's a lot of planning, a lot of baking, and all that sort of thing. Like cooking all by hamburger buns and hot dog buns. One of the teachers came in one morning when I was cutting out all the hot dog buns (laughs). I had taken a sweet potato can and flattened it long-ways at that was my cutter and it worked like a charm. We had quite a few of those makeshift things. When you're back in the mountains you substitute so many things. If you don't have it, you make it one way or the other, that's been an experience itself. We only come to town about once a week or every ten days and if somebody brought up the mail, maybe we'd put off coming to town for another week if that was the main thing that had to come in for. Unload our post office box [which was] overflowing with most of our junk mail we get now, and so that's how I was cooking in school.

DE Do you think that the school is different now than it was then or the kids are?

FG Oh, kids will be kids and if they have a lot of leeway, they're going to take advantage of it. That's the way I feel about it and having two of my own. We've had three others in school here besides our own two at different times. George's
sister had seven kids and this was their home because it was the only one that was actually ever established, and that makes you feel a little bit good too. They're scattered all over but still, when the speak of home, it's here. Of course, she was raised here too and by the way, her picture was in the last "Mineral Independent" in that class picture but they had one thing... Alberton, they said, but it was a Superior group. I was talking to a lady the other day, the printer's wife, and she said next week the lower grade will be in, so George's picture will be in that. I got to cut it out and save it. Anyway, with all her youngsters, why we had them all summer long.

(End of side A)

SIDE B.

FG My first impression of Montana was wonderful; just like a dream. Everything here was so beautiful compared to the flat country where I was raised. Of course you just see corn fields or oat fields or those things and you see for miles, like the sky and the ground just comes together at a point, (laughs). You might say I just loved the mountains. Being a young person I couldn't wait until I got to the top of all of them, and so we did a lot of hiking. When the babies were small, why we'd put them in a pack sack and maybe hike up the Illinois Peak, or
something like that, you know, and you could really see from there. That's beautiful country and of course I got used to all the trails and ridges and those kind of things. It was so
different from Illinois and I just loved it. That's one reason I stayed on I think. Because of the carefree wonderful country.

DE Did you find that the people seemed different to you; the families here than they were in Illinois?

FG Oh, much more friendly [in Montana]. When I first came here, in comparison to the people in Illinois who were farmers, wealthy people, the majority of them, and they were too busy chasing that almighty dollar. That was one of the things, and course now the Gildersleeve's, they're different than a lot of people. They're just as happy if they got a nickel as if they got a dollar. But they're everybody's friends. They're ready to help people. I can see quite a difference in that respect. So that's another thing that impressed me.

DE How do you think the town of Superior has changed? What was it like when you first got here?

FG It has really grown. Now where this house is was Jack Pines and this was the edge of town out this way. We were the last when we started building here, we were the last house out except
Pearl Boyer's house that the Alexanders lived in and they burned it down a couple of years ago. We started this house in 1934, finished it in 1935, and we moved into it in 1936, in January, and was it cold! We got this table and these chairs at a ranch out here towards Dry Creek. We went out there and our old Model T Ford froze up three times before we got out there. Anyway this was beginning and this house certainly looked different then than it does now and we just gradually worked on it. I told George, "I don't think I could live through building another one with all the snow and the saw dust for that many years." [During] our good building weather we were up the mine and then in the wintertime [building] did give him something to do. We did all of this ourselves and that's something too. But at least we are all out of debt; don't have any cloud over our head in that respect, and that was something too, and we had a lot of fun building it and planning it. It isn't like we'd like we would have built it if it had the finances to really build it but at that time we were young, and his father was living with us. His uncle, bachelor uncle Charlie, was also living with us and we had a chance of having a good size family besides. Now even though we're the only ones here, George and I, when the kids come home we have lots of place to put them,(laughs). We have three bedrooms upstairs, and the big room has the one big bed or two big beds in it, so we have lots of space. We've gotten the basement all dug out by hand, so that's something else. I've worked with George
pouring the cement on that just like we did with the sawmill. I often veneered up there at the sawmill and I enjoyed it. I just loved to handle those boards, fresh off the saw. We logged and drove trucks, set chokers up. So it's been a real interesting life and like I said, it was great because I did help my father. I learned to work and to do things that men had to do and, like I said when this "Women's Lib" came out, and they've made such a fuss about it, the women didn't know what they were letting themselves in for, because you got to really put yourself forward to be able to handle a lot of this heavy work, and lot of it is heavy too. But you learn as you live to accept a lot of these things.

DE About how big was Superior? How many people?

FG Oh gracious! I think when I first come here there was maybe at the most 500, if there was that many. Now there is what... about 1800, I believe, in that vicinity? Well just like I said this was the end of town. Look what they've done. I think they started that housing project in 1947. And the Diamond Mill came in 1953, and they added a number of houses and now look, it's way out there,(laughs)! And the same way with the west end, there's an awful lot of additions on there. I think about the ranger station was the edge, and that was up Flat Creek when I first came here. The ranger station was about three of four miles up Flat Creek and now that's the west end of town. I think there's just a lot
of improvement. In fact, I think Superior is a nice little town, and I've enjoyed it and the people have treated me really good. I've never had any problem with any people here that I've known of and I've joined that Rebecca Lodge and I've enjoyed that very much. Gracious, I've been in that fourty years. It's done a lot for me. When a person only goes through the eighth grade, they have to belong to something to give themself a little courage, I think. And that sort of thing does help an awful lot. But when you go through all the offices and speak in front of thirty or fourty people, that way it helps you. And both my daughters were Rebeccas too so that makes it nice; we can go together. Can you think of anything else?

DE What would you say the main occupations of people were when you first came here?

FG You mean the men mostly?

DE Either one.

FG I don't think that has changed too much. There's more activity around here and there's more work. There were a few little sawmills which hired a few, and then people trapped and did whatever there was to be done. Whatever job came up. Some were on the railroad. Both railroads came through here then, so
that hired that many more people. The highway came through over the grade. There was just a trail, you might say, until then. The Yellowstone Trail, they called it. They built the road over the grade after I came here. All those different little jobs popping up here and there. Everybody was looking for work (laughs). There are a few mines. In fact there were a few more mines operating then than there is right now. There were more of "prospects" because until you've shipped ore, it really isn't a mine, so they've told me. There wasn't too much [work] for women; waitresses and a few worked in the court house. I think there were more men by far worked in the court house in those days than there is now. It seems like it's mostly women in there now. I know when they had the first woman assessor, they thought that's not going to do at all because they had to go out and assess property you owned. They didn't think that was a woman's job (laughs). I remember there was quite a little controversy about that. Teachers, I think high school teachers, more men than women but the Grade school, I think, was women teachers and the superintendent, and that was about all we'd see around the grade school until the '50s. Then I know there were more men starting to show up around the school. But there were janitors and the janitor. One janitor did all of it. Of course now they have so many more schools, and it does take more janitors. Now they have janitors and cleaning ladies. I know when I was cooking at school, after the days work you don't feel like scrubbing the
whole dining room and kitchen. We had to, and I didn't get all that much either. I've heard now that the cook gets about twice or maybe twice and a half more than I got, and she's got all kinds of help. And I don't think they are serving anymore. I didn't look at their menus, and it is a little different too, because I made so many of my things that they serve. So it makes a difference too (laughs). But it is a challenge anyway. I enjoyed it.

DE As your children get older, did they help up at the mine too?

FG Oh, yes.

DE What sort of things did you put them to doing when they were children?

FG They piled brush and helped clear off areas for mining, for the placer mining, particularly. They enjoyed it, They didn't mind it a bit, and course they would play like a lot of kids do too. They'd have little forts and little brush houses and all of these things that kids enjoy doing. Gloria wasn't as interested in lot of the things as Susan was, but they both learned to pan. In fact, they could pan, just dip up gravel where I had panned gold over and they would catch gold. All our grandkids loved to pan, so we got about seven or eight gold pans. They
have to have them because people come along, want a pan and we
got to have a pan for everybody. A few years ago we had the YCC
kids [Youth Conservation Corps] come up. Three years I believe we
had them. They would have a day set up and we'd teach them how
to pan, explaining the different ores to them, and they just
really enjoyed it. We have a lot of pictures that explain the
process and also shows them how much snow there is up there. I
know one of the supervisors said, "We've got to get these kids
back down to the station. Their parents are all waiting for them,"
but the kids still didn't want to leave. We trained those...
they're larger than a chipmunk... they are called a Colorado Golden
Ground Squirrel... and we trained those. They're just as cute and
they can be and the kids just love to come up and feed them.
After the first year, I had rounded up all the cookies or
crackers and hot cakes or anything else that they would eat and
so the next year the supervisor said, "You have to take up some
sunflower seeds for their squirrels." So that's what they did and
they just were so busy feeding the squirrels and panning and
checking over the rock and everything that they'd thoroughly
enjoyed it. We enjoyed having them too. They said that was just
as good as any days work because they did learn a lot. One year,
I believe his name is Dave or Jim Hansen... it was on the tip of
my tongue. He taught history at St. Regis. He brought a bus load
of kids, nineteen students, history students of Montana up, and
they put in a day up there and they just thoroughly enjoyed it
too. They said, "That was the best history class they had had."
They sent all kinds of notes and thank you's back to us. To bring
the school bus clear up there with nineteen students, I thought
was quite a feat. High school students, of course.

DE  Can you explain a little bit the process of placer mining?

FG  In our situation, we have a small reservoir we have to shut
off manually and sometimes it takes a half an hour to fill it.
This reservoir holds that water back, in the early spring the snow
is all we get, so we have to use the reservoir to get our
pressure, and it's all gravity. When we open the reservoir, the
water goes down the ditch and into a penstock. In this penstock
you can turn the water on. You can run it through a pipeline, and
the pipeline is hooked on to what you call the hydraulic giant.
That is hooked onto a ball joint where you can swing the pipe in
any direction you want to. Up or down or around, and you undercut
the gravel bank with this pressure through this pipe, and it
tumbles down onto the bedrock, and then through the sluice box.
We generally had our sluice boxes two feet wide when we were
working on the larger scale, generally four to six or maybe ten to
twelve foot boxes and we used for our ripples about 18 sets to
each 12 foot box and they were cut off a log, cross grain and
they were about four inches high. You assembled them by strips...
small strips of wood... and put them cross ways in your box and
that's where your gold settled. Gold, being 19 times heavier than water, it seeks the lowest level, and that's why it'll settle along your bedrock and go into your sluice boxes and settle in between these cracks of blocks. After we get the gravel all well washed down as far as our water will allow us to go for that season then we have to clean what we call a bedrock and that is a tedious tiresome job. Like I tell George quite often, that's the time I want to take a trip and leave it to him because he is so persnickety [sic]. You don't leave any black sand on that good rock. You have to pick it up if there's any cracks or crevasses, of course when you are washing over it, it just seems like if there is a crack or crevasse, the bedrock just kind of opens up and this stuff will all wash in there, being heavy and that is why it does it. Then you have to scrape the bedrock and hoe it and lot of times shoved into wheelbarrow. You don't want your bedrock to get wet, so you are not going to run your hydraulic giant over it any more. You take a wheelbarrow and wheel it right into your sluice boxes. After you got all you can pile there safely, then you turn on your water and wash it through. That way, your gold all gets into your boxes. So we don't leave the boxes without someone pretty well guarding them when our cleanup is in there. We had a picture of a pound of gold in a pan. That's rather pretty (laughs). A lot of people look at the value particularly of gold. To me it's fascinating of how it has been deposited and I have inquired of many geologists, and nobody can tell you
exactly what gold was when it was deposited in the gravel and in the veins, because you wash the gold out of the gravel, or you also can find quartz veins that have gold sticking in them. I've picked up tons of quartz (laughs). I have found some with gold sticking in them but everybody wants a big chunk. Everybody wants nuggets (laughs) and they're a long ways between. A level tablespoon of fine gold will weigh about three ounces and seven grains. That isn't very much. A teaspoon is an ounce or a little better but that's what we used to figure. We used to measure our gold out by tablespoons when we were having a pretty good cleanup. But it's pretty hard to really tell a person unless you've seen some of the equipment. Of course with your hardrock, that's drilling and mucking and all of that sort of thing; blasting and forcing ahead to your drift, and to me that's interesting because I've helped George move the machine and crank the drill ahead and all those kind of things. Our one tunnel up ther is so cold -- 34 degrees. We put a thermometer back in there and when we're drilling often times you'll see frost form around the drilling machine but it's too damp to keep potatos, or meat or anything like that in there. It's wonderful for watermelon or lettuce and celery. Those kind of things you want to keep nice and crisp. It's really good for that. In fact, we took an old hot water tank and cut it in half, and where the water would spray down in one area, we'd put our vegetables in that [tank] before we got our refrigerator. Except it was
quite a ways to go after it (laughs). But we had the one tunnel that's about 500 feet all together and George did a lot of that with just a sledge and a drill and steel. And then blasted and mucked it out with a number two shovel. I think he did about 60 feet of it that way. So that was quite a chore itself.

DE Did you ever worry about accidents with blasting?

FG Not particularly with blasting, but I have worried about cave-ins and that sort of thing. If it's in the ground that you have to timber, a lot of times your timbers can slip. Just like with our earthquake we had a short time ago, we didn't find any problem up there then, but two years ago we had braces on our building to keep the snow from pushing it too much, and we went up in the spring and we must have had an earthquake during the winter, because two of those braces were down... went the same direction. We have a tunnel at the campsite and a drift above and two sets in both of those came down during the winter. I'm sure we must have had a good earthquake up through that part of the country and then maybe we felt some here and maybe not. I don't know. But I can't imagine why they would all go down and go the same direction if there hadn't been an earthquake. George laughed, always said, "You're superstitious." And I said, "I am not." I just figured out what it was there to be seen by anybody but they came down on top of the snow. The braces that hold the
building. You take six or seven feet of snow on top of those buildings and that's a lot of weight. We have to put braces on, because the door between the kitchen and the living room is about forty six inches wide, and I have plumbed that door several times and the top would be out six inches farther than the bottom of the door. That building has taken a lot of push, and yet it's never caved in, and they're over 50 years old now. The sonic booms are a great boon because the snow gets just right when one of those booms, and they're loud! They're really loud up there at 5,500 feet. When one of those come on, and it's just right, the snow slides off the buildings. We don't have to go up and shovel it off anymore which we've had to do (laughs) a number of times. And that's another reason we put the braces up. If it does get rainy and on a lot of snow, it won't crash the building in. Well, there's lots of fun; lots of hardships but it's interesting if your body can take it (laughs). I can't think of any more. I keep a register up there and it's just really fascinating the places that people are from that come up and visit us. A lot of friends, relatives and so forth. If they want to take and show them the country, they can come up our way then down Trout Creek and so almost every year we have over 300 to 400 people stopping up.

(End Of Tape)