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First of all, I want to know why you came to Montana.

Came to Montana seeking more farmland for three grown brothers.

Were your brothers older than you or younger?

One brother older than me and the two brothers younger.

When did you come?

In the last of March in 1913; came to Stanford by passenger train. The household furniture, stock and the machinery and everything came by immigrant train and just into Dover, Montana. Unloaded at Dover.

Where's Dover?

Dover is about five miles northwest from Stanford.

Is it still there? Dover?

Nothing is left there. The train still goes through there. The tracks still go through there but there's no town there anymore.

What was there when you came?

There wasn't much of anything there at anytime, just a place where they would stop the freight trains and unload. They had an elevator there and maybe years ago a little store. I can't remember of any store ever being there. There maybe was. Just out in the farming community.

You came to homestead?

No, we didn't homestead. The homesteads were already taken around here when we came here. We just rented a place northwest of Coffee Creek, about four miles I suppose, and then rented some more land around in the neighborhood until we had quite a little farm. I don't remember the number of acres that we farmed but Stir was quite a little.

How old were you then?

I was 21 when we came.

Did your family come alone or were you with another group
of people?

CS The other families came about the same time that we did; there were already several living around Coffee Creek that had come from the same place that we came from in Kansas.

TS Where was that?

CS That was...Murray was one family that...and Orrs; Roy Orr.

TS Where in Kansas did you come from?

CS About 16 miles from the county seat at Kingman, a little town the name of Penallasa. P-e-n-a-l-l-a-s-a. (Laughs.) Still th

TS Did you work with your folks in the farming?

CS Yes, I worked in the field in harvest and thing like that. Even in Kansas I did and I did in Montana too. Shocked grain and helped. When we would use the header to cut wheat, I pitched the grain back in the header, barges we called them; wagons that we trailed them on. They had horses on them; somebody drove the horses underneath the elevator thing that took the wheat up into the (elevator). The header barge was built up higher on the back and lower on the front and the elevator rested on the lower part; threw the grain over into the wagon header barge.

TS So did the header barge come from the field to the elevator or was that just there at the elevator?

CS No, they took it to the stack and stacked it. Pushed it out onto a big stack. Wheat stacks, they called it. We stacked that grain and then in the fall they went around with threshing machines and they had an engine that ran the big belt to the combine part and threshed out the grain into big wagons.

TS The the wagons...?

CS The wagons took it to the town to the elevators.

TS How big was the town then? That was Stanford?

CS Yes. We hauled a lot of grain to Dover and Stanford until they got the railroad through Coffee Creek and elevators and things built there. Then they delivered grain to Coffee Creek.

TS When did you get married?

CS April the 17th. I was married April 17. 1916.
TS So you hadn't been in Montana that long before you met.
CS I knew Russell in Kansas because we lived neighbors to him in Kansas.
TS Oh, I see. Did both the families come out about the same time?
CS No. The Stout family came before the Peters family came. My Dad came out before we moved. We got a south(?) place and then he rented this place from John Gill before we moved out so we had a place to move to. Then we moved out here. We moved on the John Gill place.
TS Did your brothers ever get their land?
CS Then after that, when I was married, we lived at Arrow Creek on the old Mike Hines place.
TS You rented it?
CS We rented that. We moved away from the Gill place and moved over there and farmed all around there.
TS How did you pay your rent? Was that a percentage of your crop or how was that worked out?
CS Yes, we'd give a third of the crop.
TS A third?
CS A third of the crop, I think, was delivered into the elevator. We had to haul it and everything.
TS Was that a standard practice for people that owned land in that area?
CS Yes, most of them farmed big acreages and most of it was done with horses. Later on, when they could afford it, then they had engines; some kind to pull their machinery.
TS Do you remember the drought years? The drought started in 1916?
CS In 1919 we went to Wyoming and worked down there because there were no crops around in the neighborhood, so we went to Wyoming and worked.
TS For how long?
CS It must have been a year.
TS  How did you go?

CS  We went on the train. Russ went down first and then got us a place to live. I think he came back and I went down with him. That was when Lloyd and Leonard were babies. I went and lived down there to do their washing...at the water with sagebrush out in the yard on an old stove. Washed on the washboard. They got the flu so bad. (No doctor) lived down there and then that was the year that the flu was real bad. I wasn't able to work so then my mother came down and stayed with us while we were sick with the flu and then we came back home because we weren't able to work anyway.

TS  Did you stay with your mother when you went back?

CS  Maybe for a short time but I can't remember where. We went back over to Stouts after that.

TS  When you were married, I was wondering what kind of wedding ceremonies there were?

CS  We didn't have a wedding ceremony. We just went to the justice of the peace in Lewistown and were married. Didn't have any wedding. But I guess some of them did have big weddings but we didn't.

TS  What did you do?

CS  We lived down the banks northeast of Coffee Creek the first year and a half after we were married. Our ranch was down there and had a couple of milk cows and made our own garden and...toughed it, I guess you'd say. (Laughter.)

TS  Did you pretty much survive on your own garden?

CS  Yes, we generally had a hog or two that we fed. Once in a while we'd butcher a calf or something and raise our own garden and tried to put up fruit when fruits came on in the fall and lived off what we had.

TS  When did your first children come?

CS  Lloyd and Leonard were born in Stanford while we were living just north of (Coffee Creek) on the south face of the Stout ranch; that's where we were living at the time they were born. I went to Stanford and stayed over there until they were about a month old before I went back home.

TS  How long of a trip was it? Into town and back?
CS: I think by that time I had an old car of some kind. It went about 35 miles an hour.

TS: How long of a trip was it then?

CS: From Coffee Creek to Stanford? About 16, 18 miles. Churned our own butter and had our own cream, milk. How far from Stanford to the mill? Take cream and exchange for flour in the fall. Get enough flour to last us through the winter.

TS: What kind of a home did you live in? Did you build your own house?

CS: No. Never owned a farm (laughter). Always rented. We had five rooms. Outdoor...summer place where we kept our vegetables and fruits. It wasn't too bad. You just got used to living that way.

TS: You weren't the only one that lived that way though, right?

CS: No. Everybody else was living the same way.

TS: What was your social life like?

CS: Well, we didn't have much social life. They would have dances and things quite often at the school houses and things like that that we would go to. Always took the kids along and put them to sleep up in the corner on a pile of coats. Let them sleep; dance, go home at daylight. Somebody played the fiddle or mouth harp or guitar or banjo. Anybody that could play donated their music, and so there was no expense, only heating the building. Everybody took something for lunch and midnight potluck...raised your own chickens and made your own butter and...

TS: Did you go visiting on Sundays? Go to church?

CS: Yes. If there was a church close... when we lived up by Arrow Creek we always went to church up there. They had a little church there at Arrow Creek and we used to go to church there. Sunday school. At Otter Creek too, we went there.

TS: The first impression of Montana in the early 1920's. What was it like then for you?

CS: Mostly I was home taking care of kids, milking cows, feeding calves and hogs. That's about what your life was on a farm. You just did what there was to be done.

TS: So you didn't really notice the difference?

CS: The kids got old enough for school, why then it was
always get up and get around and get the truck started. Take them to school until they were old enough to drive in themselves.

TS Did the kids all have their work to do on the farm too?

CS Yes, everybody had to help herd cows and help in the garden and those kinds of things, and get them taken care of in the fall.

TS What were the winters like?

CS Just like it is now. Sometimes you had an easy winter and sometimes you had bad winters. In bad winters, it was quite a job to get the kids back and forth to school. After they got big enough to drive, we'd stand and watch at the windows to see if they were stuck in a snow drift down the road someplace because most of it, the roads weren't even graded. They were just flat roads and where the snow drifted and they could get stuck pretty easy.

TS How were the winters before the kids came? Before you had a car?

CS We didn't have to get out and get the kids to school in the morning when they didn't have anyplace to go, so you just went when you had to then.

TS What did you do? Stay in the home?

CS You stayed home most of the time. You went out with the team and bobsled if the snow was very bad.

TS Was it hard to feed the cows?

CS Early on it's just chores to do, look after the stock and feed them and what we had, generally had two or three horses around. We farmed with horses. We'd have eight or ten horses to take care of all the time. Get them in and feed them and harness them and go to the field with them. Work in the field, at noon you drove about six of them down the road home for dinner. Back again at one o'clock to go to the field again.

TS How much time did you spend in the fields?

CS We generally tried to be in the field about seven so we'd be at work about 7 o'clock in the morning and we'd take an hour off at noon. We'd get back to the fields and hooked on to the machinery and ready to go, it would be another half hour and then we aimed to work till seven or seven-thirty every night in the summer time.
TS What did you do? What was your part?

CS Well, I made a hand in the field for a good many years. I always had cows to milk and chores to do after you got through in the field, so by the time you got around, it was nine or ten o'clock at night. By that time you were tired enough to sleep till five in the morning.

TS What kind of chores had to be done during the winter?

CS There was always feeding to do if there was very much snow on while you had to feed your stock. If there wasn't much snow on, you let them run and didn't have to feed them so much. Let them run out through the day and then bring them in in the evening and give them a little hay, grain and especially the milk cows. If you had more cream than you used up, you churned butter and took it to town and try to sell it, eggs or anything you else you had, to buy a few extra groceries.

TS Did you make your own clothes?

CS Most of my own sewing; made over lots of things for the kids. You didn't go, you didn't go to town and buy ready made clothes like you do now.

TS What were the stores like?

CS Most of the stores in the smaller places just had general stores. They'd have some dry goods and some groceries and...some fresh meats and cured meats, and materials and dry goods. Mostly things like that because you didn't buy so many ready made items.

TS Being a general store, did you just go in and pick out what you wanted?

CS They generally had a clerk in the stores, one or two clerks, and you'd just go in, ask what you wanted to see, what you'd see on the shelf what you thought you wanted to look at and they'd put it down for you. They were arranged quite a bit like they are now. There wasn't so much packaged stuff. You just bought by the pound.

TS Did you get to go into the city much?

CS Once in a while we'd drive up to Great Falls. Not too often. If we got there twice a year, we were doing pretty good.

TS Now was that different from Lewistown which was a lot closer

CS You went to Lewistown, too, because that was our county seat. Any business you had to go to the courthouse there. You'd
buy what you could afford and what you had money to pay for.

TS  How was that different from Great Falls?

CS  Lewistown was about the same around as a city....town about the same as Great Falls was. It was smaller; there was more business places but it wasn't a long trip, no matter which town you went to. The winter we came here they began to have cars so we didn't drive the team that far too often.

End of Side A

TS  How difficult was it to own a car then?

CS  Cars didn't cost so much then. $350 or something like that, you could buy a pretty good car. You had to crank (to start).

TS  It was still a lot of money though, wasn't it?

CS  Yes, it was hard to own them as it is now, because you didn't have the money, and when you didn't get any price for anything that you had to sell why....you couldn't sell wheat for 26 cents a bushel and buy very much with it.

TS  Is that what wheat was selling for then?

CS  There's one year when we sold wheat for 25 cents a bushel.

TS  Was that a bad year?

CS  We didn't have too much wheat, I guess, any years because we didn't fertilize at that time; they didn't spray or anything like that so they had to contend with weeds, the grasshoppers. Now the soil is so worn out, they have to put down fertilizer all the time. We never used to fertilize any. Of course, we didn't raise as big crops as they do now.

TS  Did you ever do anything else besides farm?

CS  Not until we went in to that little store in Coffee Creek. That was after we went back to Sun River, so that was about 1948. 1943 probably, 1943. We went into that little store. Went into the courthouse in Lewistown (to the) county clerk and we took over that little place that he had. They had some lumber. We never went into more lumber. We just sold out what he had and then we had that little store where we sold patent medicines and toothpaste, hair spray and all that kind of stuff; ice cream and electrical appliances. Then the postmaster was retiring over across the street so he wanted us to take over his place, so we moved over there and took over.

We had the post office in there and then they had a
tornado come through town and it took the roof off and the rain was leaking down through where the mail was, so then we moved the post office across the street to where we were in the first building. Along with the store that we had there, we moved the things that were in the old drug store back over to the other place and that building was moved away then later.

TS How often did you have storms like that? Is that pretty common for a tornado to come through town?

CS No, hardly. There weren't very many tornados around there, but this one just was a strong twisted wind and just kind of took the roof off; some off the school house and some off this old store. Lifted the roof on it and kind of tore it up but the building was old and not worth trying to rebuild. So we just moved out of it and it was torn down later.

TS You said you lived in Sun River?

CS We rented a place over by Benchland and so we went from there up to Fort Shaw and south of Fort Shaw...lived up there two or three years. That was when Lloyd went into the service and then Russell wasn't able to do the farming anymore so we had to leave there then. That's when we went back and went into Floyd Green's place after we left Sun River. It was on their grain farm up on Sun River. We left in 1942 when Lloyd went into the service. It was all under irrigation up there and mostly alfalfa and corn and milk cows.

TS What was it like during the depression?

CS We were living on a farm and it was just about the same as it was any other year. We would get along the best way we could. We didn't have a farm of our own so we'd just try to have enough grain to seed in the fall or in the spring or summer fallow. Just tried to keep it going. A little different from what they farm nowadays.

TS How did your kids help?

CS Oh, they just helped, they didn't do too much of the milking, but helped get in the cows and help feed them and the calves and slop the pigs. I worked in the fields so much of the time that Leta did an awful lot of the work in the house, the cooking, the meals and she started baking bread when she was 12 years old.

TS She never burned the house down?

CS No. (Break in tape).
CS I suppose we'd make three or four trips. There would generally be quite a bunch go up, maybe four or five neighbors and they'd come down with four or five loads at a time.

TS How far did you have to go to get this wood?

CS Oh, that was about 50 miles up there.

TS Where was that at?

CS Up back of Stanford, Running Wolf and Dry Wolf Creek.

TS Would that be considered a social event too? With four or five families getting together to haul the wood?

CS I think they'd just send lunches with them. In the summer we'd go to the mountains like on the 4th of July. A bunch of neighbors would get together and they'd all go potluck and have ball teams; let them play ball and run races. Had to make our own entertainment.

TS What other kind of things did you do for entertainment?

CS Well, that was about it. People would meet lots of times in the evening at different houses and play cards. We never did much of that, but quite a few of them did; the younger ones would go from neighbors to neighbors and play cards until about midnight and then walk home probably a mile and a half.

TS In the dark?

CS Yep, in the dark, follow the road (laughs). And he (Mr. Stout) thought that he could go take a trip on the motorcycle and he wasn't used to riding it much. He ran through the fence with it. He had on an old overcoat and that got caught in the gears of the motorcycle; went out through the fence and tore the fence down. So I think that was about the end of it, taking the motorcycle out, but he used to take Lloyd and Leta when they were little in the sidecar and we'd go places with it Sunday afternoon, all of us. I'd get in the sidecar with the two kids and go down the road.

TS While Russell was driving?

CS Yes, he'd be driving the motorcycle with the sidecar on the side.

TS Where did you get your gasoline?

CS They had gasoline in pumps, which you pumped by hand.
They Didn't have electric pumps then. You pumped them by hand.

TS How did they haul it in?

CS With big tanks and they put it in the underground tanks. They'd have this gasoline pump on the top (of the truck) and it worked by hand instead of squeezing(?). You had a lever by the side to pump it. He pumped it back and forth, pumped it up out of the tank and below into your car.

TS What was the price of gasoline then?

CS I don't know. I have no idea. It wasn't so much; I'd say 25 cents a gallon but I don't know whether that would be right or not. It wasn't very much.

TS That wasn't the biggest expense on a road trip? Like when you went to Great Falls, the big expense wasn't to pay for the gasoline?

CS No, old T Fords didn't take so much gas. You'd get 25, 30, 40 miles on a gallon, (laughs) so it didn't cost us much. We didn't get to Great Falls and places like that very often. We'd go to Lewistown or Stanford or Denton or some of those little towns.

TS When you did go to Great Falls, what were you going there for?

CS Well, mostly just bumming, I guess. See what was going on. I can't remember because we didn't buy too much when we came to Great Falls; maybe go to a show.

TS When you'd make a trip, I assume that you would make a day out of it.

CS Yes, you'd leave early in the morning, get back late at night.

TS Would you go window shopping?

CS Yes, quite a bit, we'd do window shopping. You got there and then you went to a restaurant someplace to eat and then your time was gone before you knew it. You didn't shop unless there was some special thing that you had to get, repairs or so. When they had the whole stores down there, why we'd just order, we didn't come up here to get goods or anything, we'd just order through the wholesale houses. The salesmen came around. We'd just order it through them and then it was brought in by truck or by train.

TS So really you just came up to Great Falls to play?

CS Yes. Used to go to operas once in a while. I did even
before I was married; used to come here once in a while and some of the teachers or somebody who was teaching school down there, we'd come up and stay overnight.

TS For the opera?
CS I was going to the opera, yes.
TS Where was that?
CS Grand Old Opera house that used to be down here.
TS Where was that?
CS I couldn't tell you what street it was on. It was down across from the post office there.
TS It's not there anymore?
CS I think the building is still there. It's used for something else, an old, old building.
TS What was it like going to the opera?
CS Oh, it's just a play, just like they have now. But it is a little different from a stage play, you know. It was different from a movie.
TS Did you get to get all dressed up? (Laughter.)
CS You dressed up in the best you had. We had clothes about like everybody else did, I guess. There wasn't much difference. You just made them yourself. I think most of the time we bought our coats and hats and things like that and everybody wore hats in those days.
TS Did the men wear suits to the opera? Did they go?
CS Well, yes, I think most of the men would dress up. It depends on whether they lived in town or whether they lived in the country. They would come in from the country dress about like country fellows do now, boots and western hats, leather jackets and sheepskin lined coats...lots of them wore fur coats too at that time.
TS What kind of fur coats?
CS I suppose it's made of bear or some kind of hide.
TS They ever have anything...plays or movies or anything like that at Stanford?
CS Yes, they had a place there where there were movies.

TS Do you remember your favorite movie or your favorite actors?

CS No, I don't. I don't remember who was in the movies at that time because we didn't have television or anything. You didn't learn the names like you do now when you see more in television all the time. You just didn't... just once or two times a year maybe you saw a movie.

TS Did you have radio?

CS They all had radios, which kept them going most of the time.

TS Then you must have had a radio a lot longer than that?

CS Yes, we had radios. They were built so high; they were about so wide and about so high.

TS That would be about a foot high, a foot wide?

CS Oh, yes, they were about 18 inches high most of the time, I think, and I'd say a foot wide anyway. They didn't have room like they have now... they were bigger.

TS Was that a major part of the evening activities, just listening to the radio?

CS .......... schools were playing basketball or anything, .......... or home radio.

TS You didn't listen to anything else? What else did you listen to on the radio?

CS They put on programs just like they do now. They would have different ones. You know there'd be three or four or maybe in a family or something and.... they would go and sing for a radio program, play music....

TS When you were in Wyoming, where did you live there?

CS Well, we lived at Lovall and Graybeal, Wyoming, when we went down there and Russell worked on the city drayline.

TS What's that?

CS Well, they would meet the trains and if there was anything for the stores, then they'd load it onto their truck. They were using horses part of the time on a dray wagon, they
called it. Then they would load that part or whatever it was for a certain store or business and they'd haul it to them from the train. that was their dray line. They used to have that in Coffee Creek too.

TS How far would they have to haul it?

CS The train generally went through the town so it would just be from the depot up to where the store or businesses were. They would ship things from Great Falls or from St. Paul, Minneapolis. The dray lines hauled it from the train to the businesses, or you could go and get your own if you didn't want to pay the dray line to haul it....picked it up yourself.

(Break in tape)

CS We were going to come into the fair and we didn't have enough money to go to the fair, so we were going to butcher a calf and sell it (laughs). We got it in here.....you couldn't get anything for it hardly. Then we had to bring our lunch along with us, so we didn't have to go to a restaurant to eat. We go out to the fairgrounds and eat our lunch.

TS What was the bum sheep?

CS Well, the bum sheep was a pig sow that over the years would have twins and they couldn't feed that many so they would take one away...just like the old mother sheep. They called these others bums because they couldn't use them and then we'd go where they were lambing and if they had any bums they wanted to get rid of, then we'd pick up five or six and take them home and have to find milk to feed them.

TS Why would alfalfa (harm the animals)?

CS It does. Cows or sheep, if it's a little bit damp or early morning dew or anything, why then they'll bloat up. They'd just fill up with gas, and we'd go try to catch the lambs and try to give them something to get rid of that bloating. By the time you got to them to go grab them, they'd run.

TS The kids help you with that?

CS Oh yes. The kids would doctor up the lambs.
CS  Well Then, they would just stagger around. Yes, we generally would give them just a little bit of kerosene and some milk which would take down the bloat. They didn't like the kerosene. [Laughter] Can't blame them.

TS  You'd have to force feed them then or--

CS  Yes, usually you had to put it in a bottle or something with some milk, you know, and that's what, that's the way we fed them when they was. We fed them on a bottle. Used a board; make holes in it; stick the bottles in those holes so we could feed five or six at a time because you couldn't do anything with them. They would just knock you down trying to get to the [laughter] to the bottle for their milk, you know, so you'd have to have them back in the fence someplace and then we fixed these boards with the holes in them with....stick the bottles in there.

TS  You said he had plenty of milk. You were telling me about the cows before I turned the recorder off.

CS  [Laughter]. Well yes, we had...lots of pails of milk to carry to the house and ...... separate and everything and then we when we lived out in Sun River, we had a cistern dug right by the side of the house that they use to keep water in when we would lower our cream and milk and things that we want to keep, cause we didn't have refrigeration. We'd lower them pails and things and hang it in the cistern to keep cool...to keep them. Then we'd take about five gallons of cream a day and we'd take it over and set it along the railroad track and the train that went from Great Falls out past Simms and out that way, they would stop and pick it up on the railroad track where we would leave it, to bring it in to town to the creamers.

TS  Then the creamery would send you the money or how did that work?

CS  Creamery, they would send us a check them; but you didn't get rich off of it.

TS  Was that everyday? Five gallons a day?

CS  Yes, five gallons a day. [Laughter]

TS  How much milk can you get, did you have to?

CS  Running around(?) In ... pans of milk, of course, some of the cows wouldn't give a full pail of milk; just some of them would. I don't know, never kept track of them, I just remember
carrying them to the house and then go back and feed the calves and give what was left over to the hogs.

TS When you, after you raised the lambs how much did you get for the lambs?

CS You didn't get very much for them. About five dollars apiece, I think, about for a year or two that was about all we got was five dollars apiece. Five dollars a head for them. It's just... wasn't worth much but it was that much.

TS Did you ever do any spinning?

CS No, never. There were......and things like that, I don't know anything about it. I just seen it done at fairs and things like that but I never tried. Never had anything like that.

TS So you..............never even sold the wool?

CS No, we never had enough. Four or five lambs and......just. Sell them... generally we sold them because we didn't care for the meat so much to eat so we generally just... It was more just to have something to do with the milk, you see, so I didn't just pour it out or have that many hogs or they must have just tried to raise a few of them lambs and the kids could look after those, you know,....feed them. They made a little extra money.

TS What... did the kids make the money or did...

CS Oh... kids always had a little spending money but... not like they do nowadays. Most of it had to go to buy clothes or shoes or socks or something like that.

TS And... I think we're about done....if anybody in the archives need to use this tape for any history project, that would be all right with you, wouldn't it?

CS Yes, I don't care.

CS [Laughter] I don't care who uses it.

TS Okay. [End of tape.]