The following transcript was provided to Archives and Special Collections by the Upper Swan Valley Historical Society with its associated audio recording.
Oral History Number: 422-026
Interviewees: Warner Lundberg and Frank Lundberg
Interviewer: Suzanne Vernon
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Note: Suzanne Vernon interviewed Warner Lundberg in 1999. Warner Lundberg, his wife, Margaret, and younger brother, Frank, all present during this interview.

(Photo discussion. Looking at some of Warner’s photos.)

Warner Lundberg: That’s Pine Ridge School in 1929. That’s the building out there. (Warner set up the old school building on his property.)

Suzanne Vernon: Did you move this building here?

WL: Yes. It was over by our mailbox. You know that old road that takes off there from the mailbox? It was just a little ways in there on the flat.

ML: In that clearing in there.

WL: That was the old highway.

SV: How did you move it over here?

WL: My dad and I tore it down log, by log. The Forest Service condemned it. Was one student there the last time it was used. I think that one student was Joe Wilhelm.

(Looking at 1929 school photo. We have a copy of this photo in our archives, courtesy Gyda Newman.)

SV: So you were only about 10 years old in this picture? Everybody in bib overalls. Even a couple of girls in bibs.

WL: Maloney girls. They always wore bib overalls. Gyda is in there. And Jen’s her brother. We started school in ’29 over at the Roll School. And they were going to abandon that, and built this one over here. My grandfather built it (Pine Ridge School and also Roll School. Fred Roll.)

SV: Did he have any brothers out here.

WL: No. He came right from Sweden.

SV: What was his wife’s name?

Warner Lundberg and Frank Lundberg Interview, OH 422-026, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
WL: Bertha.

SV: So he built the Roll School, too? They must not have had enough kids to keep the Roll School open.

WL: Yes. But it burned in the 1929 fire. So it’s a good thing they had this one. They just finished it.

SV: That is an excellent picture. What were the other ones you were showing me?

WL: Two homesteads.

SV: Is this a copy that you got from your cousin?


Margaret Lundberg: Warner had a couple of uncles who were great photographers. We lost our copy. So we asked Joyce to make us a copy.

SV: When they came out here, Fred Roll and your dad, did they build these places at the same time?

WL: Yes. It was nothing but solid lodgepole.

SV: They had to pull all that lodgepole out of there?

WL: Yes. Pile it up and burn it.

ML: I’ll get her that paper from the historical society that tells about their proving up ...

WL: (Pointing at pictures.) This was Fred’s. And this was my dad’s.

SV: Is this the Heakin (sp?) place that’s up here now?

WL: Yes. And you can see where the fence goes across the field? That was the division between the homesteads.

SV: But Heakin has both places now?

WL: Yes.
SV: Boy that was thick lodgepole even then. There must have been earlier fires that caused that...

WL: But they were big lodgepole. Dad, he built a homemade stump puller. Some of them were so big, the stumps, that he’d take the team and had them hooked to a pole. They wound the ... the team would go round and round to wind the cable up to pull the stump. He said some of them was so big that he’d leave them set overnight, when they had the tension on them. In the morning that stump would be out. But you can imagine all the stumps they had to pull I don’t see how they got anybody to do it. Well, they always said that the government would give 160 acres of land, they’d starve you to death. They’d bet you that they could do that. . . give you the land and starve you to death. An awful lot of them gave up their homesteads.

SV: Where was the picture of the wheat? That wheat got really tall. Good grief, it’s up to the chests of these men!

WL: Dad, over here, he grew a lot of oats. That was a crop that you could get the first year. On this place. See, we moved here in ’28. From the homestead. He took up that homestead in 1914. He and Fred came in together.

SV: Where did your dad move from?

ML: They both came from Sweden.

SV: How did they know to come here?

WL: They opened the land for homesteads. The government hired Bill Deegan to locate the homesteaders. For every one he located, he got fifty dollars. A lot of homesteaders. Here’s one of them. (Shows pictures.) That’s Oscar Southern.

SV: You know I wondered what that guy looked like. Everybody talks about him. Is that one of his cabins that he lived in?

WL: Yes. It looked like a chicken coop.

SV: Kind of airy on the top. He’s got a tobacco can, or lard can there. What’s he hauling?

WL: Just cleaning up, I suppose.

SV: Now he built Haasch’s first cabin. What was the deal with him and Mrs. Strom? (laughs) Okay, I won’t ask. . .

WL: Yeah, they were good friends! (another picture) That’s my grandparents homestead cabin. (Roll)
SV: Those were good sized logs. Eight of them to a side, maybe?

WL: Yeah. It didn’t take them long to throw them up.

SV: Was there any particular notch that they used?

WL: They used a saddle notch.

SV: Who is the lady in the apron?

WL: Grandma Roll.

SV: Did she always wear an apron?

WL: Pretty much. She came from Sweden, too.

SV: Somebody must have told them about this country. . .

WL: Most of those homesteaders worked at the railroad in Missoula. And Deegan did, too.

Frank Lundberg: The other thing is when one person came up here, this area looked a great deal like the area they came from. As a matter of fact, when I was in Sweden, it looked almost identical to this area. Certain areas.

WL: Charlie Anderson lived over here where Mabel lives now. (Pine Ridge Road.) I think he was in here before they opened the homesteading. He took out a mining claim. And that’s how he got his land. He always said I gotta go home to my claim.

SV: What was he trying to mine?

WL: I don’t know. He tried to stop a train one time. He drank quite a bit. His legs were just about like this. Bow-legged. They didn’t heal right.

SV: Well, tell me more about him.

WL: Charlie Anderson? I used to go by his place pretty near every day to school. He’d always have me come in. And he wanted me to eat with him. He’d maybe had a big bull trout or something that he’d cook up. He was a great guy. He trapped. He had a cabin way back here in the Missions. He stayed in that all winter.

FL: He trapped a lot of bear, too.
WL: He hated to trap bear. He quit it he said. It was so cruel to see a bear in a trap. He said he took his bear traps up in the foothills back there of Holland Lake and buried them, because he didn’t want anybody to use them.

FL: Did anyone ever tell you what they call that area up there?

WL: Spook Ridge. It’s so heavily timbered. It was dark in there in the daytime.

FL: They had a lot of yew brush in there.

SV: If Charlie was in the mountains back here all winter, he must have been trapping martin or something.

WL: Yeah, he did. He went clear over into the Bob. They called it South Fork then.

SV: There weren’t too many guys that went up that high.

WL: Not many. There were a couple Finns that used to go up there. Jalmar Laine and Jalmar Wirralla. We trapped martin but we didn’t go in the Bob [Marshall Wilderness].

FL: You went the other way.

SV: What drainages did you guys go in?

WL: We went in the Missions.

FL: Elk Creek, Kraft Creek. Glacier Creek.

WL: In later years, we had a cabin in there. Fred and I. Trapped martin. He was my step-grandpa.

SV: How old were you?

WL: Old enough to wear snowshoes!

SV: Martin trapping, too? What was it like to put in a set?

WL: You’d cut a wedge, and there’d be sloping. Then put the slope against the tree and nail it to the tree. Then stick the spring of the trap over it. I couldn’t torture an animal like that anymore.

SV: Was that when martin were bringing a pretty good price.

WL: Yes, they were. And trapping was a good deal of your income. Dad caught a lot of beaver.
SV: Who did you sell the hides to?

WL: We got a lot of price lists through the mail. But, Silver...

FL: What was the name of the one we got through the mail? We sold a lot through them.

WL: But a lot of the beaver we sold to Silver was his name. A junk dealer in Missoula. I think his
name was Henry Silver. He was kind of a crook, too. If you brought your hides down there, you
might have some accidentally you caught some illegal fur. If you didn’t sell it to him, he’d report
you. If you sold it to him, he’d take them.

FL: They gave us quotas, too?


SV: When you were trapping martin, do you remember seeing wolverine, or lynx?

WL: Uh-huh. And there was even fox.

SV: Were the fox down here more ...?

WL: There were a lot of them in Holland Canyon. I don’t know if there is anymore. Dad caught
some down here, in the lower area. We saw a fox a couple years ago right over here by the
Wye.

SV: Were they real red color?

WL: Yeah. But they were small. They were quite small and they stay that way.

ML: They’d go in the culvert at the end of the road. I think we saw them two or three times,
than didn’t see them again.

SV: That’s interesting that they were up Holland Canyon at one time...

WL: There was a trapper by the name of Charlie Howard. He trapped up that Holland Canyon
clear over into the Bob, and he caught several Fox.

SV: I never finished asking you about Charlie Anderson.

WL: He died up on Beaver Creek. They found his bones up there. They recognized his pack sack.
He’d been laying there about a year. He’d always said they weren’t going to bury him in a
cemetery. He was about 80 or 81. (See also Bob Martin transcript.) He wasn’t trapping then. He
was just hiking. It got hard for him to hike, because his legs were so bent from that accident. He ran right out in front of a train. Up by Drummond. But he was a wonderful guy.

SV: He must have had a lot of company. . . sociable guy?

WL: Very sociable. There weren’t very many people. . .

SV: Did he build a cabin on the homestead?

WL: Oh yeah. He had a cabin, barn. A team of horses.

FL: The cabin burned down, recently. . . in the last 50 (15?) years.

WL: Yeah. The cabin was there after he left.

SV: He probably didn’t cultivate anything, did he?

WL: He cut a little hay on that park, you know, for his horses.

SV: We’re kind of jumping around on the subjects, here. When you went in with Fred, trapping, that one winter, do you remember what kind of pack you had to take?

WL: We had a pack board. My mother would cook up a big elk roast. Then we’d go out in the day from the cabin up there, we’d take chunk of that dried elk roast. And we usually had more than one trapline. Fred would take one trapline and I’d take the other one. Then we’d come back to the cabin. We ate a lot of fish.

SV: Dried fish?

WL: No, that we caught in the lake.

SV: Which lake?

WL: Kraft Lake.

SV: Never been there.

WL: No (laughs). The cabin’s still there. I haven’t seen it for a long time.

FL: I was there about thirty years ago.
WL: Kyle and you and I went in there. (Kyle is Frank’s son.) Mosquitoes were so bad. Early June. It’s still there. Tom Parker, he was going to. . . I told him about it, and he was going to locate it. And he said I won’t tell anybody where it’s at.

SV: Probably not too many people crawl back in there through all that brush. I don’t think there’s any trail into there . . . ?

WL: Not into the cabin, no.

SV: Now who built that cabin?

WL: Fred, and his son, Charlie, and I helped, some on it.

SV: How old was Charlie Roll? (ML: He was 28 years older than you!)

WL: He lived here with us. They had two sons, Charlie and John.

SV: That explains some of my confusion about the Roll names. So they probably trapped up there when you were just little?

WL: Yeah. And my dad and Fred trapped together, back in there.

SV: Did they ever catch wolverine and lynx?

WL: No. We didn’t even try. But their tracks were there. We’d see them once in awhile. They are vicious you know.

SV: The beaver trapping was down here more?

WL: Yeah, there’s no beaver up there. Too high. But dad trapped beaver here, on this place pretty near every year.

SV: That’s what you had to get the permit for?

WL: Yeah. And he even fed the beaver in the wintertime so he’d have beaver to trap! (laugh). He’d haul quaking aspen, into the house, you know, where they had their house and their dam? Pond? He kept them . . . they liked quakies.

SV: Were there beaver on a lot of these potholes?

WL: Not the potholes. It had to be a running stream. So they could dam. They like to dam. In fact they still do down here. Tom Parker helped me take out a dam last fall.
SV: Does it really bring the water up when they do that?

WL: Oh yeah. Then they flood the meadow. They are never satisfied. They’ll come up here in the lake. I don’t know if you ever saw the lake? Well, they’ll come up here in the lake and I’ll say, well, I’ll just leave them there. Because they don’t hurt anything there. And you know, they’ll go down and dam up the outlet so it floods someplace!

(more pictures)

WL: There’s a schoolteacher and my sister, eating lunch over on the old Roll School.

SV: There’s timber downed here. So somebody was peeling logs?

WL: Well, that was part of Fred’s work. Was some of the logs that were taken from the? He cut for the school. He piled them up there and cut them up for wood later on.

SV: I just can’t imagine. . . which school teacher was this?

WL: Florence D’Autremont. No. I’m wrong. That was Ruth Dettweiler.

FL: That’s something that was interesting, too. The philosophy about teachers up here. They had to be single. And they had to be female.

WL: She lived with us on the homestead. We walked to school with her and home. In later years, I saw her . . . an ad in the paper where her brother had died. And it mentioned the sister, Ruth, and I figured it out. So when I went to town we called her. Sure enough, she was about 82 years old then. I showed her that picture. We talked about the old days.

SV: Which sister? Mabel. How much older was Clara?

WL: Two or three years.

SV: Looks like they are wearing wool stockings. Must have been spring?

WL: Probably. Eating their lunch. I couldn’t tell you who took the picture, unless it was my uncle. Lawrence Kramen (sp?). He was from Norway. My mother’s brother. Kvammen. He lived quite awhile with us. Till he got married.

SV: So Joyce has some of his pictures?

FL: Where did Joyce get the pictures?

WL: From her dad. John. John and Lawrence were always together. She’s got quite a few.

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WL: Yes. (more pictures) Now there’s a bunch of homesteaders, all in a row. I think it says on the back.

SV: Yes it does. Clarence Preston. Now he had the place across the road from Bob and Gyda. Then there’s Pete Rude. He made furniture?


SV: Did any of his furniture stay in the valley.

WL: Some of it was up at Underwoods at one time.

FL: How about the Gordon Ranch?

WL: Let’s see. Min had some.

SV: I haven’t seen a picture with all of these people in it. Jack Johnson. Bess and Martin Kettleson. Then, Henry Roxcene?

WL: Roxcene. He had the first sawmill in here. Over towards Glacier Creek, back, way back in the sticks.

[End of Side A]
(discussion about sawmill.)

WL: It was a steam engine operation. He got killed in 1917. He asked dad to come over and he was going to haul a load of lumber from his place to the Gordon Ranch. Fifteen hundred feet of green lumber on a wagon. They had four horses on it. In those days they didn’t have come-alsongs. So they’d wrap a chain around the lumber. Then put a pole in there and twist it, till it got tight, then they’d tie it. This pole, as he was driving out, scraped against a tree and it spooked the horse. They jumped. The wagon went over a stump. And dad jumped off, he was riding in the back. Roxcene lost his reins. The horses kept going. He hit this stump and he bounced off and he went under the front wheel. The front wheel went over him.

SV: Did he have a family here?

FL: Mom was with him when he died.

WL: Dad came running home. He said, Take some water, I think Roxcene is dying. She took some water back there. He was just about gone when she got there.

SV: Boy, that’s hard... Where was he buried?

WL: I don’t know. I remember the... Forkenburg (sp?) was his name. The coroner from Missoula. They came up and got him. I don’t know.

SV: So where was this picture taken.

WL: That was probably taken up by Martin Kettleson’s. That’s where the school is now. The old Dunlap place.

SV: That’s sure a good picture of every one of those guys.

WL: And then this place was an Indian campground when Dad bought it. They’d come over every year. That camp might have been a hundred years old as far as anyone knows. There are the tipi poles. They were here when dad came in. And they had bathhouses. They had a massacre there. Right where the lake is now. In fact the Indians still come up here. And last summer they came again. There’s one old feller in his 90s. He can talk a little English. And he wants to see where this all happened. He says I was here in a way, in 1908. When the battle was. My mother was pregnant with me. And she was in the battle. The game warden killed the Indians. We even got some pictures of that. This stuff all was here when we came. That’s my uncle Lawrence that took most all these pictures.
Also, when we were here, when we came over here. There were stakes driven in the ground with the names of these. I don’t know who kept that up.

SV: Now somewhere I have a picture that Joe Waldbillig gave us. . . and it’s a picture of stakes that have hats sitting on them. The caption says Indian graves . .

WL: I know him. Joe Waldbillig. His father was the one on the Gordon Ranch (during 1908). My dad knew him real well. I got a couple of newspapers with the whole thing in it. You probably heard that this battle was fought over toward the Gordon Ranch? That’s not true. It was right here.

FL: It was where the water was in there. There was a real Indian camp in there. They had bathhouses down there. With the rocks on the side of them.

WL: It was a beautiful spot.

(Interruptions)

WL: There were Indian graves. Before this battle, down there. One was a little child. Then there was another man buried. Even after we moved here, they would come over once or twice a year, across the Missions and ask dad if they could camp down there in the same place.

FL: For a long time we didn’t know how they came over the mountains. I found it . . .

WL: They came over Elk Creek. Dad would say, Sure, go ahead and camp. Mom said, it was kind of weird. They made such weird noises in the evenings. They’re mornings were dead, see. Of course it scared the heck out of us kids.

SV: Do you remember if those graves were marked?

WL: They were when we got here. The game warden was killed there. Payton was his name. This John told me that there was a 14-year old boy that shot the game warden. He wasn’t quite dead yet. One of the women she finished him off. Payton’s son came up here, and I forgot what year it was. He wanted to see where his dad got killed. So dad said, Sure go ahead. That was unnecessary, all that shooting. They weren’t bothering anybody.

SV: You’ve got two accounts here, of this.

WL: John gave me one when he came here two years ago. (John Peter Paul) He’s sure a nice guy. And what they do, he wanted me to go with them. They go down there and pray. They were a little put out, at first. Because of the lake. I said, you’ll just chock it up to progress. In fact, we. . . for a long time. Wanted to save all this stuff. Leave it where it is. Then when the ‘29 fire went through here. The ranger put a big fire camp down where the Indian graves were.

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There was 110 men there. And, they moved us out of here. They wouldn’t let us stay here because they figured everything was going to burn. We lost all of our hay. When the firefighters got here, they used all that stuff for wood. Burned everything up. Who would have thought? Dad wanted to save it.

SV: Did you tell the Indian committee that you had this uncle that had taken a lot of pictures.

WL: Yes. That’s him there. (More pictures.) That’s my dad on the homestead with his team.

SV: That’s a good picture. Milk cow. What kind of milk cows did you have?

WL: That one there was a brindle. Jenny. And here’s a . . . picture of the homestead cabin. And my mother, and my sisters . . . small one. And I think Uncle Lawrence was standing on a haystack when he took that picture.

SV: I should come back and copy some of these for the history group. Then this would be the one up on the hill.

WL: Yeah, that’s our homestead. You can see the fence going this way.

SV: So the Lundberg homestead is where Heakins is now?

WL: Where his buildings are, yeah. The Roll’s buildings burned later. I think they were burned purposely.

(Clara discussion)

ML: Clara’s husband, Doney, wrote a book. It’s about his life. It’s not about here.

WL: Yeah, those homesteads, I used to know them all.

FL: For a long time they didn’t change.

SV: From the teens until the Depression?

FL: Actually through the Depression, till about ‘40. There were no new people coming in here.

SV: Did you know Christie? The Christie family?

WL: I only knew her. Met her one time.

FL: Did you ever get anything on a feller named Broten? (Rolf Broten. See Hollopeter notes transcript.)
WL: We knew Broten’s very well.

FL: His wife was a little bit strange. She was afraid of people. But he was . . .

WL: He was a rough, tough guy.

SV: Didn’t he have a sawmill?

WL: Run by water power.

FL: You were talking about the size of the logs? This whole valley was nothing but that. Lodgepole. It’s unbelievable. . .

SV: The larger lodgepole?

WL: Oh, they burned up a lot of log cabins, I’ll tell ya, when they cleared all this land.

(subject changes)

SV: Somebody told me they remembered seeing bird houses all over the place at your ranch?

WL: Linder made a bunch of bird houses. In fact he gave me some and I put them up here.

ML: ? brother that lives over on Flathead Lake.

SV: But this was years ago. . .

ML: Well, your dad had that martin house up. . .

WL: Oh yeah. He never had a lot of them.

SV: Have you always had swallows in the barn?

FL: Yes. And martin, purple martin.

WL: But they are real scarce this year.

FL: There are some down there now.

WL: But we used to have dozens of them.

ML: Our garage would be full of them.
WL: We’ve got a couple of killdeer. There used to be dozens of those.

ML: It’s different this year. The birds have been very late.

[End of Interview]