

Maureen and Mike

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**Oral History Number: 260-001**

**Interviewee: Jean Elizabeth Dammrose Reynolds Fotland**

**Interviewer: Winnifred West**

**Date of Interview: February 18, 1991**

**Project: Winnifred West Oral History Collection**

Winnifred West: ...Winnifred West. The date is February 18, 1991, and I'm interviewing Jean Elizabeth Dammrose Reynolds Fotland. Who were your parents?

Jean Fotland: My mother's name was Veva Starcher Dammrose. My father was Fredrick Ernest...I made a mistake there. Ernest Fredrick Dammrose.

WW: Where were they from?

JF: My dad was born in Germany.

WW: Do you know where in Germany?

JF: I think it was up in the northwestern corner, as I recall. He was four years old when they came to America: his mother and father, his older brother, my dad, and on the way over another brother was born. Mother was born in Kansas, where I don't remember. My mother's family moved to Idaho. Dad's family, when they came over, they went to Minnesota. There was a German settlement in Minnesota, and that's where Dad was raised until he...I don't know how old he was when they came to the same area in Idaho that my mother was.

WW: What about your parents' education?

JF: I don't know what year it was that my dad was taken out of school to help in the family work. Dad didn't even finish the eighth grade. Mother completed the eighth grade and got her certificate—teacher's certificate.

WW: Did she teach school?

JF: She got married instead.

WW: How large were their families?

JF: Let's see. Mother had...I think there was six in her family.

WW: Six children?

JF: Four boys and two girls. I think there were six in Dad's family—five boys and one girl.

WW: All right. You said that they both moved to Idaho. They were both in Idaho, and that's where they met?

JF: Yes. It was in Lewiston, Craigmont, Culdesac, Reubens area—in through there.

WW: What do you know about their courtship?

JF: I don't know too much about this. Dad was ten years older. Mother never talked about it. She used to mention things like coming to take her to dances. Of course, they went in a wagon. But that's all I can remember her saying about this.

I remember now. There were only five in my dad's family. Four boys and one girl.

WW: When and where did your mom and dad get married?

JF: I think it was in Reubens, Idaho. I'm not positive. As I think about it again, there were six in the family. Sorry about that.

WW: What was the date they got married? Do you remember?

JF: No, I don't remember that either.

WW: What did your dad do for a living?

JF: Mostly they were farmers, but he worked different places. When they were younger, before they were married, he worked in...there were lumber mills around in that area. The small type lumbers mills that you have seen pictures of. They were just out in the open. They didn't have the buildings that they have now. That and farming is all I can remember hearing Dad talk about.

WW: Did they own their own farm? Or did they rent?

JF: My grandfather owned his own places, and the boys worked on them. That's why they were taken out of school to help work on these farms. It was an old, German belief.

WW: Did your mother work outside the home?

JF: My mother worked outside the home. That's how she made her living. As I gather, she must have started pretty young. She used to work summers. Telling about working for other women. I guess, in those days, the women would really make them work. It wasn't like it is now. There wasn't as much kindness as there is now.

WW: After your mom and dad were married, did your mother still work?

JF: No. She never worked out again after that.

WW: Do you know anything about their decision to move to Montana and homestead?

JF: Yes I do. The family farm...the two older boys were...I don't know whether they were to have it or what happened. I guess it got...wasn't too pleasant, so Dad and Mom decided then to move to Montana. This was after my older sister, Dorothy Dammrose Lander Hubber, was born. They moved to Montana in 1910. Dorothy was still quite small. In fact, I don't know. She couldn't have been more than two or three when they moved to Montana.

WW: Do you know what year she was born in?

JF: She's only 83 now.

WW: 1908?

JF: She was two years old then when they moved here. I can remember. It must have been quite a chore. Rent these railroad cars to put your belongings and what machinery Dad did have and come out. They settled out northeast of Great Falls.

WW: Was this their first choice of land in Montana?

JF: That I don't know. Evidently it was because I never heard anything to the contrary. I remember Mother telling about how...it must have been a shock. They came to a country that had...the only trees there were up in the mountains or along the river or creek beds. Coming from that Culdesac-Reubens-Cragimont-Lewiston area where...it's pretty in that area. There are trees right up to the barns, right out in the fields. They have the wheat fields right out in this area. I remember Mother mentioning how the wind would blow and then tumbleweeds were rolling. Of course, in those days, there were no fences; there was nothing to stop them.

I can remember her mentioning, she looked out the window one night and she saw this huge thing coming towards the house. Dad was gone at the time and she and my Uncle Robert, Dad's younger brother, were there alone. Mother said she was scared to death. All of sudden it hit the house. What it was—it was just a big tumbleweed.

Dad would get his horse and team...his horse and wagon rather and would make trips to Fort Benton for supplies. He'd go one day and come back the next. It was 20 miles. They built...had two rooms downstairs and two rooms upstairs. This was the home that I was brought to after I was born. By that time, they had added some to it. Then, they finished adding more on to it later and it was a fairly nice home. This was the home, in fact, that I brought my family all home too. It was the same house.

WW: What time of the year did they get to the homestead?

JF: It must have been, as I gather it, early in the fall.

WW: Did they have the home completed by the time cold weather...?

JF: Yes. They had it enough where they were...they lived in a neighbor's shack. I think, maybe even in those days, it was known as kind of a shack. For a while to have a little protection from the weather while they built this place. However, in those days, people would come in from other...the neighbors would come in and help. Get you started. Get things going for you.

WW: How close was their nearest neighbor?

JF: I would gather maybe a mile, two miles. Not any further than that. Of course, I imagine, the roads nowadays would make it longer because you would follow the roads. Then they would just go over and over—just straight. There were no fences to stop them from just getting in their wagons and going.

WW: You remember the neighbor's name?

JF: There were people by the name of Fish, Melsky (?), the Shirlenes, the Kelsos. Later there were Finskeys and the Sterns. St. Peters.

(Break in audio)

The Browls (?), the Lynches, Ketzenburgers. There were more I know. I can't think of their names.

WW: How many people were in your family entirely?

JF: You mean my mother and father and the girls?

WW: Yes.

JF: There were just the three girls. The little boy that was born in Idaho died. Two hours old.

WW: What did they name him?

JF: I don't remember.

WW: Then you had another sister. Was she older or younger?

JF: I had a sister, Dorothy, and my sister, Eleanor Dammrose Bissell. Then myself.

WW: There were three girls.

JF: Three girls. Dorothy was born in Idaho, Eleanor was born in Fort Benton, and I was born in Great Falls.

WW: Were all three of you born in hospitals?

JF: I know Eleanor and I were. I imagine Mother maybe just had a midwife when Dorothy was born. I'm not sure of this.

WW: Was having a midwife common?

JF: I think, from what my mother said, that this was mostly the way that ladies had their babies.

WW: When you were born and when Eleanor was born, did the women go to the hospitals then or was it common yet to have midwives?

JF: I never heard Mother mention otherwise. I think it was common then to go to the hospital. Those days though, however, the doctor would come all that way to our home. I can remember the doctor having been there two or three times when there were emergencies. He'd come clear out from Fort Benton. I do not remember how in the world we ever got a hold of him. We did have telephone. The only crank kind of telephone. It really worked.

WW: When did the telephones come to the country?

JF: I cannot remember ever not having one.

WW: Did you have electricity?

JF: Not until after I had left home and was married. Now, other people had the battery-operated kind earlier, but power by lights were...some people had those. It was rather popular. But mostly it was the gas lamps and the oil—kerosene—lamps that had to have the chimneys cleaned every morning because they'd always get smoked up at night.

WW: What were carbide lights?

JF: I don't even know really what it is. It was run into your home through a pipe, and they were fastened to the walls and you would light them. They even had carbide burners that you could cook on, like the old-fashioned electric hot-plates.

WW: What are your very first recollections of the homestead?

JF: For some reason, I remember the winters more than I do any other time. I must have been small because Dorothy was still home, and she was in college when I was eight years old. I remember the winters and the way we used to have to take baths. What we would do, we would heat the water on the cook stove. Our heater at that time was right in the middle of...our living room was 24 by 14 and right in the middle of that was the heater. We would put towels—or blankets—on the back of chairs around this heater to hold the heat there. Then we would bring the water out from the kitchen and put it in a big tub. That was how we would take our baths. That's one of my earlier recollections.

It seemed like we had a lot more snow than we have now because Dad would shovel paths to all of the buildings that he had to do the chores in. I can remember those paths. It seemed like we were going in between two walls. For me, I was tiny then. I can remember how much fun it was to run down to the barn and the chicken house. I remember how warm the barn always seemed because the animals were in there. In those days, Dad had horses and cows. He farmed with the horses and he took very good care of his animals. They were protected. They were taken care of. He had a feed room where he'd ground his own feed for them. He bought bran. In those days, the bran that they would get was clean. It was clean enough that we could use it in the baking. We used to go down and get some of this bran, and we'd make cookies. I remember the cookies were made with raisins in them and how good they were.

They really were what you might call the good old days because there was so many things that really were good. We made our own entertainment. We played a lot of table games. We would have gatherings, usually on Sunday evenings, and we would just play games like drop the handkerchief, gossip, musical chairs, fruit basket upset. Grown-ups and all would play which would be so great if we could get the kids interested now, in this day and age, to do the same type thing. In the winters, we had a sled. We'd get in the sled...warm up bricks, get in the sled, and away we'd go. Dad would put straw in there and Mother would get blankets, wrap up these bricks, put them in the wagon, and away we'd go to the neighbors. I never could remember a time when Dad didn't have a car, but I doubt seriously we'd have made some of these places with a car. So that's why we had the sled and it was more fun anyway.

WW: When you went to the neighbor's home, did you stay?

JF: Well I can remember that we'd stay. We'd stay until later in the evening, like ten o'clock or something like that. They'd always serve lunches. We'd always have a good time, maybe even play games.

WW: Did you ever stay all night?

JF: I can never remember staying all night, no.

WW: Did you have neighbors come to your place and stay the whole night?

JF: The only time I remember neighbors staying all night at our house was once after my husband and I were married and were on the place.

WW: Let's go back again. You mentioned taking a bath. How often did you bathe?

JF: Ha! I think about this now, and I wonder how in the world we endured each other more than ourselves. Once a week is all. This would be on Saturday night. I think about it now; it must have been rather repulsive by the end of the week because in the winter time we'd have on our long underwear. Over that we'd have supporters that Mother had made us of elastic. Then you could buy the supporters and put on the end of it. We'd put the supporters on over the underwear. Then we'd put the long stockings on that came maybe halfway up the calves of our legs. Then we'd put on bloomers. A lot of these bloomers were made out of flour sacks. Mother would bleach these with lye to get them white. A lot of times, the print wouldn't come out. Every now and then, for some odd reason, the name of the brand would be right across the backside, and we'd all laugh about that. For dress, we had bloomers made out of sateen. I did not like those bloomers because they stuck to your underwear. When you'd stoop over, they wouldn't slide. They'd stick. Over these we had slips and over the slip...it wasn't the slips like you have now. They were slips that were homemade. They had the broad shoulders, and they had a bodice. They came down and the bottom part was gathered around the waist. Over this you wore your, whatever, your dress or your outside clothes.

I can remember being too warm an awful lot of the time when I was inside. Except in the winter when we would go to school. We had to walk to the corner to school. It was half a mile for me, and your overshoes in those days were not high enough to keep the snow from getting above your overshoes. Then your stockings and your underwear would collect snow. By the time you got there, you had quite a collection of snow. Then when you'd go in, even though you'd brush some of this off before you went in, your legs would be wet up to about your knees. By the time you got dried out it was about recess time. Of course, we were kids. We had to go out in that snow and play. Come back in, we'd be wet again. Maybe wetter than when we got to school. By noon you'd be dried out again. You really would be wet then when you came in because by this time you'd rolled and tumbled and turned summersaults and done everything you could think of to get snow on you. You'd really be wet. By the time you'd be just about dried out, it would be time to recess. Then at four o'clock, school let out, and we'd be dried again but wet when we got home. It's a wonder we weren't sick all the time.

WW: What was the name of the school you went to?

JF: The name of the school was named after my mother because she was the one that really got the school started. She wanted a school out there. She really took things at hand and worked with some of the neighbors. But it was Mother who pushed this. It was named Dammrose School.

WW: Then she raised the money for the school?

JF: She helped, yes. She was the instigator. They donated the acre of land off of one of their fields for the school to be put up. It was just a big one-room school that had the teacher...each two-room teachers built right in with the school. When it first started, it had chemical toilets inside. The toilets were in the cloakrooms for the boys and the girls, which, really, I just thought was really neat because the kids never had to go outside to go to the bathroom. Then there was a nice big entryway where they kept the water bucket and things. It really was a pretty nice school for those times. We had the cistern. There was a cistern. They built a cistern for water for the school and the teacher.

WW: How did your mother go about raising money for the school?

JF: I don't remember as I ever heard her say that. I do remember that she mentioned that she had some opposition. Why I don't know because how the children they expected to educated the children out there...because even though we were only ten miles from Highwood that would have been a chore to have moved into that.

WW: Was Highwood your closest town?

JF: Highwood was the closest town.

WW: You mentioned the cistern. How did they get water to the cistern?

JF: They hauled it. I don't know whether they hauled it from the same place that Dad always got his water, but three miles kind of southwest of us was what they called Lander Crossing. People, that's some other neighbors, their name was Lander. There was a spring down there. It ran all year long. It was wonderful water. They'd go down and had old hand pumps. They'd drop the hose down in that and then they'd pump it by hand until they got these...Can you imagine pumping 1,500 or 1,000 gallons of water that way? But that was how they would do it. They'd get these full. Some of the cisterns only had one, maybe. Some of the tanks may not have been more than 500. They'd haul one and two tanks of water just before school would open and fill the cistern. I suppose they had to fill it once or twice during the year.

WW: How did they haul these tanks?

JF: With horses. It was on wagons and horses. Every fall, it was the neighborhood job to go in the last part of August. Men and women all went in and they'd clean up the school. If it needed to be painted, men would paint, and women scrubbed. There was no curtains, of course, on the windows, just blinds. They'd get the teacherage and everything all cleaned up ready to start school again.

WW: How important was education?

JF: I think education, even then—you're making me feel very ancient—but even then and in those days, the standards...education was important. It was very important. After they graduated from the eighth grade there, they had to either go to Highwood...At that time Highwood only had two years of high school. Fort Benton had...that was the county seat, which the one where Dad used to go when they first moved out there for his supplies. It had a four year school. Belt was just a little further than Fort Benton, had a four year school. Belt offered teachers training course. Aunt Dorothy finished her last two years, I think it was, at Belt. She took this course, but then she decided she'd rather go on to school and really get her formal training than to stop and teach for a while first. However, we did have teachers out at the school—the Dammrose School. This is what they had done. They had accepted this course. As I recall, to me they seemed like pretty good teachers because they're some of the ones I remember and remember learning from. They were better than some of the ones that had supposedly gone on and gotten formal training. This would be an individual thing though. It would depend upon the person though—how interested they were in helping the children learn.

WW: What year was the Dammrose School built?

JF: Oh my. I don't remember that. I think that's where we all started school, so it had to have been started before Dorothy was ready to go to school. Let's see...they came in 1910. Probably maybe in 1914 or something like that. Maybe a little earlier. Because Mother by that time was interested in getting Dorothy in school. So it would be in that period sometime. The school was used for more than just school. It was a center of all of the social functions of the community. There'd be box socials, dances, Valentine's parties, masquerades, church services, and probably other things that I can't remember right now. But I do remember, these things to me just seemed so wonderful, so great. I can remember back far enough, I was small enough that I had to be one of the ones put to bed on some coats or blankets underneath the seats while the grown-ups went on about having fun.

WW: How late did the parties last there?

JF: Oh my goodness. Way past midnight.

WW: Were they always on a weekend?

JF: Usually on a weekend, yes. The Valentine's party or the Christmas parties would be just whenever that particular day was or during the week then. I remember, one time, Mother telling me about the women got a group together—this included the men too—and they put on a play. I remember hearing the women in the neighborhood talk about it. I guess they just did great with it. Of course, Mother had an important part. Dad was supposed to be watching me. He became so interested in the play that he forgot he was supposed to be watching me, and I went flying up to the stage in the middle of all the crucial moments of the play and went,

“Mommy, Mommy, Mommy!” For a minute I disrupted the whole thing until Dad realized he was supposed to be taking care of me.

WW: How did your mother respond?

JF: Well, probably after they got home. I think it was a point in the...everyone in the neighborhood remembered it and laughed about it. It really probably added to the source of amusement for that evening.

WW: How many children attended the school?

JF: Oh dear. I would say all the way from ten to twenty. I know there would be just about every grade. As the years passed, as the rule is, somebody gets these things in their heads that they got to make things easier or change it or something. They decided they were going to have just every other grade. If they had three children in the second grade and here came a first grader, this made it very, very difficult. Or if you had the fifth grade that year and there wasn't enough sixth graders, you either went back into the fifth grade, which happened to me, or you went to the seventh grade. It really was an unfair thing to some of the children, especially those that were coming into school and had to be put into the second grade. Or if, like myself, when I was supposed to have been in the sixth grade and was held back in the fifth. Because it makes for a boring year and you really lose out. Where this idea came up I will never know. Who started this, whether it was to help the teachers or not. I don't know if the teachers had complained that it was too much work or why they did this.

WW: When did they get a school bus route out there?

JF: The school bus route didn't start until after my husband and I were there with our children. It was in the '50s sometime.

WW: Then how did the children get to the Dammrose school?

JF: By the time they got the school bus route the Dammrose school was closed.

WW: But earlier, before they started bussing, how did they get...?

JF: They walked, or rode horses. Or in the winter, some of the families...men would bring their children. Maybe they'd have a sled or something and then they'd bring them if the roads got bad enough. The children were too small, and they'd take them. But I nearly, very seldom got a ride. I nearly always had to walk. Down on the Lander Crossing, the Lander children, they walked and they had to walk three miles. I can remember them coming up there through that snow. That was a long ways to have to get up and walk to school.

WW: How cold did it get?

JF: Ha! It got cold in those days. It got down to 30, 40 below.

WW: And they still held school?

JF: They still held school.

WW: Did the wind blow a lot?

JF: In the wintertime, the wind wasn't bad out there. It seemed to me like the sun would shine an awful lot in the wintertime. I don't remember the wind blowing. Only when there was a blizzard. If there was going to be a blizzard and we found out about it, the parents would come to school for us and pick us up. I can remember one especially bad time. We got a bad storm, and it came up. I remember my dad came over and he picked up the Lander children and myself. The Lander boy was worried because it was a bad storm. He worried that his folks would worry, and he went on home. I know how my folks were worried about him. I don't know whether Dad went down there or what to find out if Billy got home safely, but the girls stayed all night with us. Of course, the next day everything was all right, but I do remember that the Landers came after the girls the next day because it was just too bad yet to go back to school. But very seldom did we close because of the weather. I forgot to mention that in the early days, maybe when the school first opened, that the teachers did board with my folks. I know they were boarding there when I was born and shortly after was when they started using the teacherage.

WW: What year were you born?

JF: 1919.

WW: What year was your sister Eleanor born?

JF: Well, she was six years older. So that'd be '13. 1913. Evidently, Dorothy was born in 1908.

WW: Tell us a little bit about your food preservation. How did your mother preserve food?

JF: It was all canned. For the winter, there was no freezers or anything like that. In our later years, or as I was growing up, I know Dad fixed a place in the barn for ice. We didn't cut our own ice, but we could bring it out from Great Falls and Fort Benton. We'd go down and get it in the truck and he kept it in hay. He would put a layer of ice, then a lot of hay, then more ice and more hay like that.

WW: Was it dry ice?

JF: No, just ice. I think they cut it right out of the river there in Fort Benton and that's what they did in Great Falls, too. We had an old metal icebox. It was a large one, and it really kept the food well. Kept it cool. In our cistern, Mother had nails that she would hang buckets of things down in there to keep them cool.

WW: Did you cure anything?

JF: I think that Dad did raise some pigs. I can't remember too many pigs. I'm sure they did. Mother didn't like to use the lard in her baking of things. I'm sure she used it in other things, but she liked the butter. Then when shortening...the hard white type shortening came. I know she liked that better than she did to use the lard to bake, but I'm sure she must have used the lard for other things.

WW: What about drying food? Did she dry food at all?

JF: No. Yes! She did dry some corn and, I think, some beans.

WW: In the summertime, then, what you did use was the ice?

JF: To keep our food cool, yes.

WW: How late in the summer did this last?

JF: Well as long as you want it too. We also used it to make ice cream.

WW: If they cut it out of the river, it was in the wintertime then.

JF: It was in the wintertime that they cut it out. They had icehouses, what they called icehouses, in Great Falls and Fort Benton. We'd go to the icehouses to get the ice.

WW: You could do this year-round then?

JF: Yes. As long as the ice lasted in the summertime.

WW: If you ran out of ice, then how did you preserve your food?

JF: We had a root cellar that we kept the things cool in. That would even keep things fairly cool in the summer, but the problem there was our root cellar did not have any cement in it. Little lizards liked to get down in there because they could keep cool too so we didn't use it for anything but just the canned food. Or we had potatoes and onions and apples down there.

WW: What kinds of lizards were they?

JF: They were the little long green ones. They were, maybe eight, ten inches long. We used to get the great big frogs. Every now and then a big frog would get down in there.

WW: Did you make your own clothing?

JF: Mother made most of our clothing, yes. There were some boughten things occasionally. Of course, the coats were boughten. Occasionally just for a really nice dress, Mother would buy herself one or my older sisters. But mostly, as I remember, most of my clothes Mother made them. She could take a yard of goods and just do wonders with it. Our flour sacks at that time were printed so we wore sunflower sack dresses when I was little.

WW: What other kind of material?

JF: Well she'd buy in the store. She made herself a black—in fact I still have it—a black velvet dress that she made, that she had sheared herself. At that time it was just beautiful. It was a beautiful dress.

WW: Did you have a lot of cotton material?

JF: Cotton and this velvet I remember. There were pieces of silk and things if they wanted to make something special. I mean, it was the nice type silk then. You don't even see that kind anymore.

WW: Was this hand-sewn? Did you have a sewing machine?

JF: Mother had a sewing machine. When she was growing up, she said she made her clothes by hand. If you can imagine in the '80s making things by hand—all the skirts and things they had—this must have been a chore. Some of the pictures of some of the clothes that she had, she had made them. I saw the dress that she had worn when she was married. She still had it. I think that one of the girls, one of my sisters, still has that dress. To think that somebody made that by hand, you can't hardly believe it. The work that was done on it. My mother also quilted. She'd make quilts. That was one of her long suits, was to piece quilts and make them. My grandmother did the same. She had given one to each of my older sisters, but I was unlucky. I didn't get one of her quilts. It was quilted; it wasn't tied. They weren't tied. This was Mother's thing. She liked to quilt. I remember she raised sheep one year, or Dad did. When the sheep were sheared, Mother kept the wool. She cleaned it, she carted it, and then she made...she quilted it. She didn't tie it. It's more like a comforter than a quilt but it's tied. Now I have that one. Everything in it, everything about that, was done almost by hand. The material that was on the outside was dyed grain and feed and flower sacks. So it really is a down-to-earth type comforter.

WW: When you say carted it, what do you mean?

JF: Our box of wood, not too heavy, that are about maybe five by seven inches in size. They have a handle and it's like a dog brush. These bristles are kind of like a dog brush, only they are stiffer. They don't bend like that. You'd put the wool on one and go through it with the other one. It's sort of combing the wool so that it'll get all the knots and things out. When the wool gets smooth, then you can use this for quilting.

WW: Must have been a hard job.

JF: I don't think it was hard for Mother because I think she enjoyed doing it so much and she really wanted to do it. When she got it all together in the frames, then the neighbor ladies all came in and helped her quilt it. This was after I had gotten...I think this was maybe even after my older sister was married. Now when Dorothy married—my older sister married—she married the man that lived...one of the men that lived on the creek below us, the Lander Crossing. She married Walter Lander. This was after I was married, so I was ten, eleven, twelve, in there someplace when Mother did this.

WW: You mean after your sister was married?

JF: Yes. That Mother fixed all of this because I remember Dorothy wasn't there, living there, when that happened.

WW: You mention that occasionally you had some boughten clothes. Did you go to town to buy these or were they mail order?

JF: Some were ordered, but mostly we bought them in Great Falls. Great Falls really was our headquarters for shopping. Mother started raising chickens, and when Dad saw she was doing so well with the chickens they became his chickens. We went in at least every two weeks with these eggs, into Great Falls. They were the big cases of eggs that held, I think, eighteen dozen on each side of the crates. Either 16 or 18 dozen on each side of the crate. We'd have two or three of those every two weeks. Of course, they had to be in the backseat because the car that we had at that time did not have a trunk as the trunks are now. They were little, tiny trunks that maybe you could fit two smaller suitcases in there tight. We would ride to town with our feet up on those egg cases, come back home with our feet up on the egg cases, but the egg cases would be full of groceries coming home.

WW: Sounded like a fun trip.

JF: Not for me because I wiggled and I couldn't sit still. Everybody was yelling, "Sit still Betty Jean!" When I was small, they called me Betty Jean. I realized as I got older why I was wiggling so much. It was hurting me to sit, and I got carsick. I didn't realize until I got older what was wrong. Maybe if I sat still, I wouldn't have gotten car sick.

WW: When you went to Great Falls, what did you do in town?

JF: We spent the entire day. We'd go in early in the morning and Dad would always have some business. This was where he did a lot of his business pertaining to the ranch. Mother, of course, would have her grocery shopping to do and always there would be other things to do. Or if we had to go to the doctor, in later years, this is where we went to the doctor. We would do those type things. They had what they called the Club Cafeteria, and we nearly always ate at the Club Cafeteria. Quite often we would stay and go to a show or a movie after the shopping was all done.

[End of Side A]

[Side B]

JF: Dad would have to drive home after dark. Once in a while, when we were in the show, enjoying ourselves immensely, it would start to rain. On most of that 32 miles was nothing but gumbo when it was wet. It was quite a trial then for Dad to drive home. On occasion, we'd go into the ditch and there we'd be and there would sit until the next morning. All in that car, trying to sleep. Of course, if you had egg cases and things in there it wasn't too pleasant a night. By morning, it would be dry enough that we could get out and go on home. This didn't happen too often.

WW: Tell us about the mail delivery out there. Did that come every day?

JF: I don't know how or when this got started and I don't know how they delivered it when the folks first came, but I remember, growing, up the mail came every day. Even when I was little, I can remember the mail coming every day. The mail carrier that I really remember that started when I was just small was Jess McDonald. He came out from Highwood and made the route. In bad weather, he would come horseback. When the weather got too bad and he had to come horseback, occasionally, he'd stop at one of the neighbors, stay all night, and then go on the next day. So that way we only got mail every two days. But can you imagine that poor man, taking two days to go back, staying all night, getting up and doing it again? Jess stayed out there for I don't know how many years, delivering the mail. Once a year, they'd have a mail count. This was to keep our mail route. If the mail count got down under a certain number or point, however they counted it, we would have lost our route or maybe cut it down to once or twice a week. So the neighbors, every day, would sit down and write cards to everyone in the neighborhood. It was the only time in the year that our neighbors wrote to each other. The carrier and the postmaster in Highwood really were amused about how we kept our route going.

WW: Well let me ask you about your sleeping arrangements at home. How many bedrooms did you have?

JF: We had three bedrooms. Dad and Mom slept in the one downstairs, Eleanor had one by herself upstairs, and I slept with Dorothy in a bedroom upstairs.

WW: Was this typical of all the families? Did they always have this many bedrooms?

JF: Not all of them. There were families that had several children. They had to share a bed and bedrooms, I'm sure. But the majority of them all had their own bedrooms. There were quite some nice homes. Even in the earlier days, there were some really nice homes out there.

WW: What did you do in the summer time on the ranch?

JF: We had gardens. These gardens were always below the reservoir, which provided some water for the gardens. I can remember having to work in the gardens. I didn't really like it, but I still worked in the gardens. We took piano lessons. We'd go into Highwood and Mrs. John Peterson—her husband had an elevator there—was the music teacher. We took lessons from her. We also, once in a while, while we were going to Great Falls would take them from a Miss Bell. Now, Miss Bell's father used to have a chain of dime stores called—I think it was called Bell's Dime Stores—in Great Falls. We had our practicing to do.

Of course, there was the housework that had to be done. I can't remember too much about the canning of the garden things, but I do remember the canning of the fruit that Mother bought. She canned chickens. She always raised fryers, and we would can chickens. The folks ate pork, of course. I can remember frying the sausage and then canning it. She would also can meat. That was the way that they had to preserve meat. Early in the season there would be the fieldwork. Dorothy seemed to get in on that. I know we have pictures. I have pictures of all of this. Have pictures of Dorothy driving the team. I had forgotten how many horses were there—whether there was four, eight, or what it was. Which I can remember Dorothy with all these horses. To me I'd think, "Oh my goodness. To be able to do that!" Then there was the picking of the rocks. The wagon being pulled by horses. How I hated to pick rocks! Then that seemed to end and after both the other girls were gone, I inherited the job of pulling thistles. That was the worst job. It was while pulling thistles that I saw my first rattlesnake. By myself.

WW: What did you do?

JF: I just let out a yell and got away from it. It was going in the other direction as fast as I was going away from it. It was just about as frightened of me as I was of it.

WW: Did you see a lot of rattlesnakes out there?

JF: Yes, we did, but only saw one diamondback. There were diamondbacks out there. Mother and Eleanor and I, the middle sister, walked over to the school—the corner where the mailboxes were—one day. We could have driven, but we decided to walk one afternoon. To pick up the mail. While we were there, we decided we'd walk around the school, just walk around the school grounds a little while. As we went by the end of the porch, we heard this buzz. Of course, we knew right away what it was. Mother got down and looked and here was a diamondback. Mother was a brave lady. She worked until she got that diamondback out from underneath that porch and killed it. It was a big one. I think the diamondback would have had free play if it had been myself because I would have gone the other direction.

WW: How did she get it out from under the porch?

JF: She got a big long pole—a large pole—and pulled it out. They fight. It was fighting. When we looked at it, it was ready to strike then. They aren't like the prairie rattlers. They don't run. They will stay there and fight. They're on the fight the minute they see you, whether you're

bothering them or not. It was a big one. I don't remember the number of rattlers, but it was a large snake. We'd find them in the yard, out in the granary, down by the reservoirs. Mother was of the theory...she always said, if you found one, there'd be another one. I don't know how true this is, but if Mother would kill one snake, she'd keep going back and back out into the area where she killed that snake. Invariably, Mother would kill two snakes in a day. By going back and watching, she'd get the second snake. Of course, there was bull snakes, too. They're not dangerous, but the rattlers, we were afraid of them.

WW: Let's go back to the garden a little bit. You said it was by the reservoir. How did you get the water from the reservoir to the garden?

JF: I don't know whether we carried it in bucket or how. I don't remember that. I really don't. Whether Dad had a system fixed up where Mother could just irrigate or what. There was water on the place, but it was alkaline so we couldn't use it. I don't think you could have even used it in a garden. The reservoirs were from rain, and it was down in the draw. We had three reservoirs. This was naturally for the animals, the stock—when Dad had the stock—so he didn't have to haul quite so much water. Because if the reservoirs dried up then he would have to haul water for the stock. I just don't remember how we got the water into the gardens. Of course, there would be enough seepage that it would help a little bit because the garden was right up next to the base of the reservoir.

WW: What all did you raise in the garden?

JF: The main things I can remember were peas and beans, and that's about all I can remember. I know she must have raised potatoes and things like this. I remember onions because, one year, we had grasshoppers so bad. That was the year we had the garden up by the house. They ate everything they could get first, then they ate the onion stalks, and then they were so bad they ate the onions right out of the ground. Just went down in and ate them.

WW: Did you have grasshoppers very often?

JF: Seems like we had them quite a bit. Yes. When I was a kid, I can remember one time my aunt called my mother and said, "Veva, what in the world is that dark cloud? Are you going to have a bad storm or what's happening?" Mother went out and looked. We all went out and looked. Here was, in the east, coming our way, this huge black cloud. I don't remember how long it took the cloud to get to our place. The grasshoppers would descend on you. Where ever there was a tree, a green thing growing, they would descend on it. We had a shelter built on the west of us. By evening, it was gone. I can remember, one time, they were so bad that Mother couldn't hang her clothes out because of the grasshoppers. Because they would eat holes in it just to get the moisture. One time, the men came in for dinner and went back out, and they had eaten holes in the pitchforks they were using and in their leather jackets they had been wearing. People don't seem to want to believe this, but it did happen.

WW: Did grasshoppers run with the dry weather cycle?

JF: It seemed like that. They came when the weather was dry. That's why I always hate to see dryness come, for fear of...

WW: Did the weather run in cycles? Like every year there was a dry spell or anything like this?

JF: Yes, I think it did. I can remember, as a kid, you don't worry about it. But I can remember talking about how dry it was. We weren't going to have any good crops. I can remember times when it would start raining. Seemed like this would always happen in June. It would rain all the month of June. I mean all the month of June. I can remember a time when it rained 21 days straight. When it did that, our three reservoirs were one great, big, long reservoir. This was sad because it did damage when it rained this much. It was a bad as a snowstorm. In fact, worse because if the snow was there you could shovel through it, but you couldn't get through that mud.

While we were talking about the drought, I should have mentioned the dust storms we used to have. This is awful. Something that I've had people look at me and just kind of...not exactly snickered but sort of sneered because I know they didn't believe me when I told them. You could see this in the distance as it was coming. It would just be a thick cloud of dust. When these would come, I've known them to last as much as four days or better. Just the wind, the wind just blowing constantly—and hard. All these plowed fields that were around us made for good dust. They would, like I said, last for four days or better.

When they finally ended, the folks would start in the cleanup. Mother would get the broom, and Dad would get the scoop shovel. They'd start in the window sills, which by that time had a thick, thick coat of dust on them. Then they would start sweeping the dust up off the floor. I can imagine how terrible the furniture must have been. We would try to cover whatever we could—furniture, beds—to keep the dust out. At night, when we would go to bed, we would try and crawl under and still leave the outer covering on it to keep the dust out of our faces, our eyes, mouths, and out of our bedding. When Mother would cook, she would have to cook everything with a lid on it. As we would dish it up, we would go to the stove, and we'd dish it up quickly and put the lid right back on it. Even then, as you were eating, you'd be eating grit. You could feel it in your mouth.

They weren't pleasant at all, these dust storms, but in the later years we were out there, I don't remember quite so many of those. Of course, after that period of these terrible dust storms in the '30s, the houses...they put windows on that were tighter. Put storm windows on that helped. In the days that I was growing up, we just had that one glass. They weren't all that tight and the dirt would just sift right in around them. The dirt would pile up next to the buildings. Drift just like snow. You would have to come in and shovel all of that out. Those were not part of the good old days. They were there, but they weren't the good part. You have to take the bitter with the sweet.

WW: How often did this happen?

JF: It could happen every year if we had dry years. It would happen...always like in February or March is when this would take place.

WW: Let's back up a little bit again. You mentioned the harvest. Can you explain the harvest? What did they do?

JF: First they would use the binders. They would cut the grain and then bind it.

WW: How did they cut the grain?

JF: With binders.

WW: What is a binder? Can you explain how it operated?

JF: It had a cutting sickle in front and as the grain would fall down all in the same direction on a...

WW: Like a canvas?

JF: A canvas and a platform. The canvass would take it back to where the twine went around it and made a bundle. These bundles would fall out. Then the men would come on behind these bundles and make shocks out of them. Shocks, they stand them up like three or four in a shock. If you've seen pictures of this in fields. There were great places to play in these shocks. Like my older sister said one time...we were looking at a picture of these shocks, these bundles of wheat standing up, leaning against each other. This was to dry the wheat, by the way, before it was thrashed. It was a great place to play, and she said, "You know, aren't we lucky that we never ran into a rattlesnake out there when we were playing in those shocks." And we were.

WW: That'd be a great place for shade for them, wouldn't it?

JF: Good shade for them. After these dried, then the thresher. Everybody didn't own a threshing machine. These were just owned by certain people. All the wheat farmers around would come at a certain time. They would pull into this field. Men would come in with their wagons and they'd throw all these shocks, or bundles of wheat, into the wagons and take them to the threshing machine. This was pitched into a big tank that went down through the machine and separated the wheat from the straw. The wheat would go out a big funnel shoot type thing and the straw would go out the back end of the threshing machine. Some people burnt their straw, some of them used it. Of course, the wheat would either be hauled to granaries and stored or hauled into Highwood to sell.

WW: Did you have many granaries on your place?

JF: At that time, I think, Dad just had the one. Then later years, he made one down in the barn. Made a big granary down in there.

WW: How were these bundles tied? With what kind of material?

JF: It was binder twine.

WW: Did everyone own a threshing machine?

JF: No.

WW: Okay, you said that. What about the binders?

JF: Everyone had their own binder.

WW: At harvest time, did every farmer do this individually? Did they help each other? How were the working arrangements?

JF: I think that some of the farmers would go around because I can remember pictures that we have. We would look at the pictures and Mother would say, "Oh, that must be so-and-so from..." It would be a neighboring farmer that would come, but mostly there were hired men. A lot of times, these men that they would hire would come back year after year. Then some of them would stay all year long. You'd just keep them. Maybe one, but not more than one.

WW: These hired men, then, did they stay right in the family house?

JF: We had a bunkhouse. The bunkhouse stood up on the hill, when I was a child, back with the granary. In later years, after the shelterbelt got bigger, they moved it down in there so it would make it cooler for the men.

WW: Tell me what a shelterbelt is.

JF: It's trees—boxelders, caraganas. That's what ours always were—boxelders and caraganas.

WW: What was the purpose of it?

JF: Keep the wind down from the house.

WW: How big a shelterbelt did you have?

JF: It wasn't as large as it should have been. It was just one section of land there that just had trees. I really don't know how big it was.

WW: Did everybody have a shelterbelt?

JF: The majority of the people had some trees around their house.

WW: What about church? Where did you go to church?

JF: We went into Highwood for church. Every now and then, there'd be a traveling minister that'd come around, and he would hold some meetings. Have a series of meetings, maybe at the school or people's homes. But mostly we went into Highwood.

WW: Did you go every week?

JF: Quite often. Not only did we go in in the morning, we also had the evening services we'd go back to.

WW: In other words, you'd go twice a day.

JF: Twice a day.

WW: And how far was it to Highwood?

JF: About ten miles. That would be 40 miles to church on a Sunday. Quite often.

WW: What church did you go to?

JF: At that time, it was the Methodist.

WW: How many churches were in Highwood?

JF: I think maybe the Methodist and the Catholic were the only two there.

WW: How long had they been in Highwood?

JF: I don't remember them ever not being there. I could remember the good times we had there. Their socials in the basement. They would have their bazaars, which to me were fun because they did such fun things. I couldn't really say why I thought the bazaars were so much fun. They had drawings and what they called fish ponds. You'd pay so much, and they'd put a package on the end of a hook for you. Of course, there was the food. I don't remember any games, but I just remember that I really thoroughly enjoyed the bazaars that they had. Why, I do not know. Then there was their Christmas times, their Christmas programs. It always

seemed to me that that tree that they would have at their Christmas church programs were just...there was no other tree like it. It was always a big tree and it always had—must have been candles—because as far back as I'm remembering right now, there were no lights because I remember the gas lamps that they had to hang from the ceiling in the church. All the singing and everything. To me, it was just very, very special.

Christmas was special, all around, even at home. Mother made Christmas special. I know Dad always bought a galvanized bucket of—I supposed it was—a five pound bucket full of candy. I can remember those chocolate creams that were in those buckets of candy. They were so good. This was every year that Dad would always buy this bucket of candy. Our tree sat in the corner of the living room which was directly from the kitchen door. It would usually go clear to the ceiling and we'd have it decorated. Of course, there were the little candles that were in the little snap hooks that you had to press on the end to open up. Then you would snap this on to the tree. They would be lit just in the evenings for a while. Very carefully, would they be lit. They would burn just so long and then we'd put them out. We never let them get too short for fear they'd get down next to the boughs and set fire. At our home, we never had any problems, but occasionally we'd hear of someone who would have a fire because they had forgotten to watch the candles.

WW: What did you have for your Christmas meal?

JF: We'd had the traditional things for Christmas. The same things they do right now. The same type things. The tradition has just sort of stayed with me. Like a salad made with lemon Jell-O with grated carrot and pineapple in it, the candied apples, turkey and dressing, cranberries, sweet potatoes, gravy. Just about like it is now. The pumpkin pies, of course. Mother always made a special cake. It was just a yellow cake and it had a pineapple and nut filling. I forgot now what kind of frosting she put on that. It seemed like our family didn't carry that through. I don't know if we didn't like it or we just...think people begin to think about all the food and how we were just simply overeating.

WW: How was this meal cooked? What kind of stove was it cooked on?

JF: The early years, it was cooked on the coal and wood. In the later years, Mother got an oil range, but that oil range was not bought until I think after I left home. I think she still had the coal and wood.

WW: If you had a wood stove, where did you get your wood from?

JF: The wood was used with just what we could find. It was used just more or less to start the fire more than anything. It was mostly coal, really. We had a Monarch range, I can remember to start with. It was just an old cast iron Monarch range, but it was a nice one. It had the reservoir at the end. I can remember right across the end of the stove, and also in the front, the name Monarch was written, or imprinted, on it. The outside, of course, of these stoves got very hot.

By this time that we had this stove, we were taking our baths in the kitchen. I was little; I wasn't in school yet I don't think. I was taking my bath at the end of the stove one time. I got up out of the tub, and I stooped over. When I stooped over, I was too close to the stove so my backside hit the end of the stove. I had the imprint, part of Monarch, written across my little seat. I can remember how I did scream. How that did hurt. My uncle, my mother's oldest brother, was staying with us that year. I can remember how he teased me about my bee sting. That was a pretty bad bee sting because it stayed with me for a while.

WW: Where did you get your coal from?

JF: We hauled it from Highwood. Some of it came from Belt. However, they didn't like the Belt, Montana, coal because it was called...it was slack. It wasn't good coal.

WW: It wasn't high-grade?

JF: It wasn't high-grade coal. It didn't burn well.

WW: How often did you have to go to town after coal?

JF: I think Dad probably got the supply in the fall before the weather got too bad. We had a room outside of our house, outside of the kitchen door. We had what we called the shed. The front, big room in the shed was where Mother did her laundry. It's where she cooked and we fed the men in the summer a lot. In the back room was the coal shed. In the spring, this would all be cleaned out. This coal shed would be completely cleaned out, scrubbed down, and there would be a bed set up out there.

WW: And who slept there?

JF: Different ones. Sometimes it would be a hired man. Quite often we girls would sleep out there. I know, when I was living still at home, that was where I did a lot of my sleeping in the summer. But boy, that room was scrubbed down. The walls were scrubbed down. Everything was scrubbed down and the floor was just, really scrubbed to where it was clean.

WW: Tell us about the laundry. How was the laundry done?

JF: My first recollection of laundry was what you call a plunger—stopper-type thing. It was cone shaped, and inside of this cone shape was another cone. This was plunged up and down on the clothes to get it clean. Then Mother got a...

WW: Was this by hand?

JF: By hand. In tubs. Of course, the clothes had to be rung out. Then Mother got a big wooden washing machine. I don't remember the name of it, but it had a straight up and down handle

that you push back and forth that ran down, pulling on a wheel, that made a dash on the inside work. We took turns. The women took turns. Mother, Dorothy, Eleanor, and myself pulling this thing back and forth to get the clothes clean. This had a ringer on it and it could be put in each of the rinse tubs and everything. From there, Mother went into an electric motor-type washer. When it was new, it was fine, but as it grew older it would get to where the motor was temperamental and Mother would have to get Dad to start it. If he happened to be gone and it stopped, well then, she'd stop. The washing would be over until he got back.

WW: How did you heat the water for all this?

JF: On the cook stove.

WW: How many gallons of water did it take?

JF: I don't remember. Usually we had a big boiler, a big tub, and that pretty much did it. In the summertime, Mother heated all the water out on a kerosene stove. A three-burner kerosene stove was out in the shed. It had an oven. She could bake out there and everything. Keep all the heat there. I can remember one summer...Well, this didn't happen just this one summer. It happened every now and then. In the summertime, it would get quite warm. It would get up to 96 or something like that and that's warm. The house would be warm, and we'd be too warm. So what we'd do, we'd go out in the shed in this tub of water. We'd put our suits on, and we'd go out in the tub, get in the tub, and get wet. Then we'd come back in and sit on a towel and cool off. One summer, my mother was in this suit. Of course, she didn't want anybody to see her, to know what she was doing, and she thought it was Dad at the door. She went prancing to the door, only like my mother could do if you knew her. She opened the door and said hello, and here it was the neighbor man.

WW: What did she do?

JF: (laughs) She just folded up and started laughing and said, "I'm so sorry! I thought it was Ernest!" But it was funny. This is one of the fun things I'm remembering.

WW: Let's talk about your mother cooking for the threshing crew. You said that you can remember up to 18 men in the threshing crew? She cooked for them on this coal stove?

JF: I don't remember if she cooked on the coal stove or whether we had the shed and all the equipment out in the...I can remember when she did cook for the men out in the shed, we had the refrigerator. The ice box was out there and everything so it made it really nice for inside. I just can't remember. I can remember one time I had to do the dishes. I thought this was terrible. Dishes for 18 people! I was doing them inside so maybe that particular time that I remember she was cooking inside. We did have to cook inside. It was not cool in there.

WW: What did you eat for breakfast when you had the threshing crew?

JF: I don't remember. I really cannot remember. That was long enough ago that I don't remember what we ate.

WW: Was cooking an all-day ordeal?

JF: The mornings were pretty busy, but Mother was a good enough organizer that I can remember that, after lunch, after we ate our big dinner that Mother always had a nap. So it must not have been too bad. Your meal was over with by 1:00 because we ate at 12:00. By 1:00 we were back in, and Mother could have been in bed because we girls always did the cleaning up. So she could have had her rest and back to work in time to get the evening meal. I don't remember then whether we took them lunches in the afternoon or not. I know in the later years it got to be occasionally we'd take them something to drink, some cookies or something in the middle of the afternoon.

WW: What time did the day start during threshing season?

JF: Four o'clock.

WW: What time did it end?

JF: Dark.

WW: When there was sun down?

JF: Whenever it got dark and they couldn't see anymore, which was worse on the women than it was on the men because they'd be through eating and out and gone to bed by the time...the women were still working in the kitchen.

WW: Did they have alarm clocks? How did they...?

JF: We had alarm clocks.

WW: Do you remember what they looked like?

JF: They were the old bell-type. Things with little bells on top.

WW: Well, let's kind of picture a typical winter evening with you and your family at home. What did you do in the evenings?

JF: Mother got the *Idaho Farmer* was one of the things I remember. There was always a story in that that came and she'd always read that to all of us. She did read to...just read stories to us at times and other times we would play table games. Bunko was one of our favorites. We just

loved to play it. Only my dad was...he was good at things like that, and he used to get quite upset with us because we didn't play just as good as he thought we should. There was Parcheesi. That was another favorite. Then there was Rummy. Dominoes of course. That was another one that we played. Then there was music. As I mentioned, there was the piano lessons and the practicing. A lot of singing. The family would just sing. I was still small when radios came out. Dad had his radio, and there would be the programs that not only he would like to listen to, but all of us would listen to.

WW: What were some of those programs?

JF: One of them was *The Lone Ranger*. That was my dad's favorite. Boy, he would get his work done so he could be in in time in the evening to watch, listen to *The Lone Ranger*. Then there was Bob and Betty. They came on during the day. Then there were just other little things: musical programs, *The Old Time Gospel Hour*. Not only was there a little sermon in it and lots of singing, but it was just kind of like a down home-type talking thing. They would be visiting on this *Old Time Gospel Hour*. I know that somewhere in my music I think I have a book that Mother got, that she sent for, from this *Old Time Gospel Hour*. It was a good old-fashioned hymn type. This is the type things. We'd sing these hymns.

Or maybe there was some sewing to do or some mending that Mother would sit down and do. I know my mother and my older sister especially did crocheting. I think Eleanor, my middle sister, learned to crochet too, but then here came myself. They tried. Then they'd try again to teach me how to crochet. I finally learned to embroider. I did finally learn how to darn socks. But I never did care for it too much. Crocheting wasn't my thing. I could be perfectly calm and they would try to teach me, and I would be ready to tie knots when they got through so they finally gave up. There was no use trying to teach me how to crochet because I just didn't like it. I never learned to crochet.

WW: Was your dad gone in the winter very often at nights?

JF: The only time I can remember my dad being gone at all at nights, or at any time to be gone, was one winter when we had moved into Highwood. We must not have had any livestock or someone was out there taking care of it. I don't remember. We used to have an older man that lived with us. We called him Uncle Bells (?). He might have been out there taking care of stock and things, but Dad had rheumatoid arthritis very bad. We were living in Highwood that winter and it was a bad winter. I remember how cold it was and how cold the whole house seemed at times. I don't know where Dad was going for these treatments. It was somewhere here in Montana. He was taking these treatments and what the treatments were I don't remember either. He'd be gone for a while and then he'd come home. I can remember how anxious we were to have Dad come home because he'd always bring us something. He'd be home a while and then he'd have to leave again. I can remember how terrible to see him leave...that he had to leave and go back again. Whatever the treatments were, that seemed to kind of take care of it. He never had arthritis so bad after that. His hands were crippled but part of that was from

driving team. He drove team so much when he was young that his hands were almost in the shape of what you would do when you hold all the reins in your hand. It would kind of grow into that. His hands were pretty crippled.

WW: How old were you when you spent the winter in Highwood?

JF: I wasn't going to school yet. That's all I can remember. I still wasn't in school.

WW: Did your two sisters go to school in Highwood that year?

JF: Yes, they were going to school in Highwood that year.

WW: Were they still having school in the Dammrose School then?

JF: I think they probably were because there were other children their ages that didn't move into...I really don't know why we moved into town unless it was because of Dad. He didn't want us all on the ranch without him being there and he moved us into town just so it would be easier for Mother. More than likely Uncle Bells (?) was out on the ranch taking care of the things. After I got to be a little older, Dorothy was through with her two years of normal training. She accepted a school out of Highwood. I went to school to her. I stayed with her out there. Some of the people I remember out there were the Nottinghams and the Webbers. The children went to this school. It was fun. It was fun staying with Dorothy because she was a fun sister to be with and she was a very good teacher.

It was kind of a bad winter and I remember I got homesick. Dad said he'd come after me and for me to start walking. It was a beautiful day and, unless a storm had come up, there was no way I could have gotten lost because I knew the direction and I knew where I was going. As I started out towards where he was going to meet me...we were going to just keep coming until we met each other was what it was. I ran into a field of cow, and it scared me. So here I was perched on top of a post waiting for Dad. He always laughed about me perching up on that post out in the middle of all these cattle in the snowy field waiting for him to come and pick me up. I think I stayed home. I missed about two weeks of school until the weather got better, until I got over being homesick for Mom and Dad and I went back out to stay with Dorothy. Mostly that year was a fun year because those kids were so proud to have Dorothy there and it was just a fun year. The next year, Dorothy accepted a position in Highwood. It was the fourth grade.

My two years going to school, to my sister Dorothy, were two of the best school years I had because Dorothy was an excellent teacher. She was a good teacher. She did nice things for the kids. She was just good. She was a little bit strict on me because I was the sister. Naturally, you know how families and other people are about having a relative be your teacher. But it was just a fun year.

One thing that I remember about those years was how the women got together in the spring. It would be like the last of April, the first of May, and they'd be talking about, "I've got radishes in my garden. We had radishes for dinner today. We've got green onions and our lettuce is about ready to eat." Now, we can't even plant our gardens at that time of the year. We had winters when we were supposed to have winters, and we had spring when we were supposed to have spring. All in all, my years out there, as I remember them, were fairly happy. I did an awful lot of playing alone when we were out on the ranch because there was nobody my age. We girls were all so far apart. Dorothy, my oldest sister, was 11 and a half years older than I. But mostly it was nice. The earlier years.

[End of Interview]