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Interviewee: Alfred L. Suneson
Interviewer: Whitney Gaskill
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Whitney Gaskill: This is Whitney Gaskill interviewing Al Suneson about the North Hills and what his family history is up there.

Alfred Suneson: Whitney, I am the son of Coyt Suneson, the only child of Jonas or John, as he was sometimes called, Suneson and his wife Selma. John Suneson and Selma were married and were not the homesteaders of the property that is immediately north of the Randolph ranch, but my grandfather and grandmother were the first persons after the homesteader to settle and use that ranch, which they did for many years. My grandparents, the Suneson grandparents, were both Swedish of origin, both from the old country. They landed in New York and they were not married. They did not meet until they came to the United States.

There were actually three children born of Jonas and Selma. The first child that Selma carried, she got bucked off a horse when she was well pregnant and lost the baby. At that time, they were not on the homestead, or on the place next to Randolphs. I don't have an exact year that Jonas and Selma took over. That would be in property records available in Missoula County. I don't have that information. The ranch was a section in size, 640 acres. There are some hills, ridge hill to the east that drops over down into the Rattlesnake. That is the east edge of the property up on the ridge line. Then it comes down into the Missoula valley on the west.

My grandfather Jonas or John was very strong man in terms of physical stature. He was about 5'10 or 11 in height. He was very muscular, barrel chest, just the elements one would need to do the farming. One needs to go back and look at early Montana, not just the Randolph, Suneson north cove or whatever you call it, area but all of Montana. Those were days when there was very little mechanization in terms of modern machinery as we know it today. We need to couch everything in mostly the human muscle or animal business for talking about power.

Everything that was done was by draft horses. There was, incidentally on the Suneson ranch that we're talking about, or farm, there never was, when my family, my heirs owned that, there never was any electricity. There never was any telephone. There was, however, running water, which came down from a spring into the house. The house was built in 1913, well constructed two-story house. It had a porch, kitchen, I was in the house. Incidentally when I was a young person and I was born in 1931 in Lincoln, Nebraska, my father Coyt the only child of Jonas and Selma that lived, my father was a graduate of Montana State College in those days, in Bozeman.

He went on to get a master's degree in agronomy and he was a plant reader for the state's department of agriculture. Following his graduation from his graduate degree in Manhattan,

Kansas. Coyt was born—that's my father—was born in 1903. There was another daughter born, but she died in childbirth.

WG: Would you let me stop you for a second?

[Break in audio]

WG: Go ahead.

AS: I had mentioned Jonas being very strong, physically strong. My grandmother Selma died in 1931 about six months after I was born. My father came out for his mother's funeral. I cannot remember anything at six months of age about the ranch. As I will relate, I have two personal remembrances, when my father brought his family, my siblings and my mother out to the ranch.

That was in 1937 and also in 1940. There was, yes I think in those years in Montana, Jonas owning the ranch before the turn of the century up until he sold it in 1945, I do not know the crops that were grown. I was on the property so infrequently and as a child, I have not great recollections, but I do recall, my father each time taking us down to meet the Randolph family. My father was, as I've told Whitney, the interviewer, that Mrs. Randolph was to my father considered almost like a second mother, a very fine lady and warm supportive person of my father.

The Randolphs had three sons. The youngest of those is named Bill, was named Bill. I have met Bill when I returned to this area, the state of Montana in 1987 with my mother. She and I went down to visit Bill Randolph on the Randolph property. He was still alive and he told me a few things about my father and my grandfather. My father always wanted a dog, but my grandfather did not want any dogs on the property at that time.

It's interesting that as I grew up, we always had a dog because my father was not allowed to have a dog when he was a child. I think that advocated the fact that dogs were not allowed came probably out of the fact that animals, like a dog is not a productive animal generally. He's not like a horse or a cow or a pig that you can slaughter or something like that. A dog is something that eats food. My grandfather was a very thrifty person.

I can remember when he visited me when I was a child in California, where my father was a plant reader then still with the United States Department of Agriculture. He was on the campus at University of California Davis. During the winter times, this would be in the late Thirties, early Forties, my grandfather would sometimes get on the train and come down with a big steamer trunk and spend several months with us in Davis.

I can remember that, speaking of thrift, that coming from the old country, generating your own wealth, nothing was really wasted and I can remember that if we had nails that we were, he

and I as a child and we'd build something, if a nail was bent, we'd straighten it rather than buy another one. Today we just throw those things away. We think nothing about carpenters bug, tossing out a bent nail. My grandfather was a nail straightener. He was a generous man. I think he was a very successful farmer. They bought an automobile that my father told me about.

It was a Willy's Overland, about the same time that the home was built in 1913 on the property. Later on, when I visited with my father, he brought us to the homestead in 1940 my father then was driving a Model A, a 1930 Model A. About my father and his relationship with the three boys who were children of the Randolph family, they all walked to school in Missoula. I do not know the name of the grade school that they walked to. It may have been the Emerson School, but I'm not clear or certain about that. It's about three and a half or maybe even as much as four miles from the Randolph property, which is just down, less than a quarter mile from the Suneson house.

My father would walk down from his house, pick up the Randolph boys and they would all three walk in to school in Missoula. There were no school busses. They did not go on horse. They walked. I would hope that maybe someone in the Parks Department in the city of Missoula would look for that trail that the boys built and my father spoke about that he walked so many years on. That's the way they walked to town, all of them. The trail begins right outside the Randolph home. I think I saw the beginning of that trail just south of the westerly building that Bill used to live in when he was there in 1987. I mentioned there was no electricity or phone on the Suneson ranch.

My father grew up with illumination being just kerosene lamps as what it was much of rural Montana when there was no electricity. It seems hard for my own career was in utilities, electric utilities and gas utilities. It's hard to comprehend how one can live without those commodities today. My grandparents and my father survived and prospered on that ranch. There was a vein of coal that runs up through the area of the Suneson ranch and on beyond. Perhaps even some on the Randolph ranch, I'm not clear.

One of the things my grandfather gave me was a small miner's pick when I was quite young. He and my father used to go down occasionally. It was low quality coal, meaning it didn't have high BTU content or much heat content. They mined under a bluff on the trail that led down to the Randolph ranch. They would go in there and dig some coal once in a while. My grandfather allowed Indians who came down from I presume Polson to camp on his property. They camped, as I was told, just west or to the valley of the barn. The present day barn at the Suneson, the old Suneson ranch, the barn I understand has been moved slightly. The house has never been moved.

The barn has been moved slightly. Indians, according to my father came there regularly and were welcomed in their teepees. My father even told me that he was pretty sure that one occasion one of the Indian people, Native Americans apparently died. My father believes he was buried there somewhere in that vicinity toward the valley from the ranch. There was no

grave marking, no marking ever. Farm work as I mentioned earlier was quite difficult for settlers in Montana, those that came on the high line, those here in the Missoula valley, your draft animals being your only source of power pulling a mow board plough perhaps pulling a harrow, whatever they used.

My father was not a strong or I'd say basically as healthy as his father. My father had rheumatic fever as a child, which is a heart disease and left him not crippled by any means, but he didn't have the vigor and vitality that his father had. So when my father Coyt, Coyt Alfred actually, my name is Alfred so his middle name is my first name.

My father not being a strong person and he didn't really like animals or working with animals so even though the farm was there, it could have been his, he chose to go for an academic career in Bozeman and use his head, if you will, and his great mind. I might just pause there and say that my father was as a plant reader in the area of wheat, barley, and oats for the USDA, he was quite productive in his research and development of new grains. When he retired and returned to Montana to live out his retirement years, the university at Bozeman granted him an honorary doctor of, doctor's degree...

WG: Doctorate?

AS: Doctorate, yes, which he was extremely proud of and held the honor deeply and with great appreciation. During my father's growing up years, there were winter storms that came into the Missoula valley. When he and the Randolph boys were in school as with other children if they lived some distance from the school or the town, most they had a relative or a friend or if there was a blizzard that came in while they were there and again, there was no radios, no way of telling, no weather service.

So if the weather just suddenly materializes and you're caught in a big storm in town, my father stayed with relatives. After the storm was over, he would walk home. He might stay one night, possibly as much as two. My grandparents knew that if my father didn't come home after school and there was a storm, they knew where he was. They thought, they had to believe, they had to have faith. This is a pretty tough life, but then my father would go home.

On one occasion, my father told me that he had stayed over night in Missoula with relatives and he thought the storm was over and he began to walk home. In those days there was a clay pit where they made, mined the clay for bricks. There was a brick yard. Then they fired the bricks and they made the bricks down there. So their pathway for my father and the Randolph boys back up the ranches was through this brick yard. There was a man that my father referred to as a child.

He said, "We called him the crazy man." He lived down there in some kind of a cottage. He was a loner. My father knew he was there, but didn't know much about him. I think the boys were fearful of him, certainly my father was not totally comfortable because he told me, "We called

him the crazy man.” However, my father was walking home the morning after the storm, this big blizzard. The blizzard had not abated and it was still blowing and cold. My father sensed that his feet were freezing. So he stopped and knocked at the house of the crazy man.

The man came out and rubbed my father’s feet, took off his shoes and rubbed his feet so that he did not have frostbite on his feet. He was obviously not a crazy man. He was a thoughtful person. I have no name for that man. On the ranch where my father lived, they lived in the house of course. The barn was probably at least 150, 200 feet away. I’m not really clear.

As I have mentioned, I believe the barn has been relocated. The barn was to the north of the house. My father said that the blizzards at the ranch and in this valley were so terrible that one could not see the barn from the house. The only way that you could find your way in a whiteout was to follow a rope line. So they strung a rope from the house out to the barn to go out and feed the animals in these times. Sometimes these blizzards would last three days.

I’ve been in Montana, it’s now 19, no excuse me it’s now 2007. I’ve been here exactly 20 years this month. I have yet to see storms of the magnitude that my father described so vividly that were so ferocious. So growing up in those years was not an easy time for either my father or the Randolphins. My Grandfather and Grandmother Jonas, or John and Selma, were Swedish American Lutherans. I believe there is no longer that particular church in Missoula, but there was.

My father said he grew up regularly attending that church. In fact my father had, in those years they- attendance was very important. Several of the churches, main line churches used to reward their children that came to Sunday school for perfect attendance. They would award them a pin. Then each pin you could hang a bar under that pin for each year of perfect attendance you had after that. Given that the ranch is almost four miles and my father would often walk, maybe the family would go in a buggy sometimes. Nevertheless, my father had a perfect attendance as a child of attendance at this Swedish American Lutheran church. It was either seven or eight years. When I think of my own children who we took to church regularly with us, our attendance was not perfect.

It was good, but never to the degree that my father had earned all of those credits. The Sunday school children loved Selma, my grandmother, apparently so much and in her older age, they took up a collection and I think it was about \$15 dollars, my father told me. They bought her a chair, a wooden chair. This was her special chair that was in the church and where she could sit. It was their way of saying, “Thanks,” for her devotion. My grandfather Jonas had a way, he was strong, I mentioned. He was a good basic farmer.

He apparently knew animals to the extent that many of the neighbors brought sick, or animals that weren’t feeling so well down to Jonas and I cannot tell you how Jonas was able to cure them, but evidently he had some knowledge of patent medicines or what have you that he could use on animals. So he cared for other people’s animals too. Now today, most of us have

all our teeth. We go to dentists twice a year and get them filled if there's cavities, what have you. Back at the turn of the century in the late 1800s, dentists were not, I think on a regular fare for most people. So if their teeth, a dentist would pull, but there was not a good way to get it filled or filled very well. So somewhere in the later years of his life, Jonas or John Suneson had all his teeth pulled.

So when he came to visit us in California, he had a set of upper and lower false teeth, a full set of false teeth. He would put those teeth in a glass of water every night and soak them, keep them fresh I guess. So you have to say the pioneer people in the early days, they didn't have all the things that we have, certainly medical care, dental care. One time my grandfather told me that traveling practitioner of the arts came and said, "Hey I'm a doctor." In those days, even doctors were people pretending to be doctors selling services weren't licensed.

He said he could take out my grandfather's tonsils. So he started to put something down his throat and then they must have had some shears or something, or a knife or something to go get those tonsils. He apparently got scared and my grandfather started to bleed, which is what happens when you take out tonsils. In a hospital situation, it's no problem. When you're on a ranch and somebody's there trying to take your tonsils out, and he's not skilled, he stopped the procedure. So my grandfather never got his tonsils out. I think it's interesting he died with his tonsils. Jonas I mentioned, some of their regularity of attendance at the Swedish Lutheran church, the sermons were preached, I was told, in Swedish.

So my father, although he was born in Missoula on the ranch, had no language training in Swedish except that what Swedish he did learn from attending the Swedish Lutheran church. English was spoken at Selma and Jonas' home. So my father grew up speaking only English. It's interesting that my grandfather Jonas, coming from Sweden, not having much of an education, spoke Swedish and English, but he could only write- he could write better in Swedish than he could in English. There was a tradition between Jonas, my grandfather and Coyt, my father. Again, we were living in California since I moved there when I was five. That's where my father was on the faculty at the- associated with the university there at Davis. Every Sunday, my father would take- in those days it was a penny postcard.

One cent penny post card and then later it went to two cents, three cents. Take a postcard, he would write in English the events of the week about his family and he would mail it to Jonas in Missoula, Montana. Every Sunday, Jonas would take a postcard and he would write in Swedish the events that happened on the ranch. He'd send that down to his son Coyt. When that would come, we could not read it, we children because we didn't know any Swedish at all. My father having learned a reasonable amount of Swedish, was not really proficient in speaking the language, but he could read it.

So he would tell us what my grandfather was doing. They exchanged Jonas writing in Swedish, my father writing in English. Each one could read the opposite's when it was received and understand what went on. There were Sunday school picnics that I've seen pictures of. These

would obviously be people from the Swedish American Lutheran church, were invited out to the Suneson ranch. There might have been, in some cases, 80 people coming out there for a picnic. There were all these ladies dressed in their white outfits, their white outfits and men and so forth. So there was a social event there.

There was always, I'm sure welcome. My father, although he did not stay on the ranch, he told me that it was very lonely for particularly women on Montana ranches including his mother. You maybe got to town- there were women who would get to town maybe once a week or once a month. I don't know what frequency. In those early days it was buggies, later on by automobile. There wasn't a social network for women. The Sunesons, the Randolphs were the neighbors and there was a strong bond between them. My father did tell me it was particularly lonesome for women who are more social in their needs, I think, than men. Men worked but women need dialogue with one another.

I met the Randolph family, all of them that were- Bill was still home in the Thirties and Forties. The oldest two Randolph children went on. One went on to be a vice president of a large Montana bakery. The other one, the second son, I believe the oldest, went on and was a plumber and did extremely well financially building, helping build a naval base, I think, and do the plumbing on that as a civilian contractor during World War II. Bill was the only one of the Randolph boys that remained on the ranch. He was the last surviving heir. When my father brought us out to see his parents, the later years- Selma died in 1931. When we came in '37 and when we came as a family also in 1940, we went down and always met the Randolphs, Mr. and Mrs. Randolph and Bill.

I can remember going into their ranch. They did not have what I would call a door. They had a piece of canvas hung in a door frame. This canvas was pulled back and you went inside. There may have been other doors in the house, but I remember this one place that was not a wooden door. It was just a canvas. In there, one of the things I remember seeing was a Civil War rifle with a bayonet on it. I was about nine years old probably in 1940. I always thought, "Wow that would be a nice thing to have," for just a historic memory. I do not know personally much of the Randolphs except what my father told me and that they settled there and they apparently were in another part of the west and they were cattle farmers, ranchers, not farmers, ranchers.

The freeze of 1888 destroyed all or most of their wealth that was on foot or on hoof as you say. It froze out as they would say. That was a terrible freeze. It's in all the history books. I think they picked up what they had left and came further west into Montana and settled there in what they call the Moon Randolph Ranch. My grandfather was a great, was a great storyteller. He really was. As a young man, he would come down and tell us children about lots of things in his life. It's hard to remember all the things he told us, but I remember being fascinated by his dialogue. My father did say that, "Yes, Jonas was a good storyteller." He came over from Sweden. This was one thing he did tell us that I can remember now. He came over on a boat with his older brother, one of his older brothers. Jonas was one of four boys in the family. There were some girls too.

Ultimately all the family, the father, mother, all Jonas' parents and family came over. Jonas was telling me that he remembered seeing sea serpents in the water. I believed him. I don't really think in all honesty that there were sea serpents. I've never known of any or heard of any. As a young boy, it was certainly a marvelous story to hear. Jonas was an honest man and an honest farmer. I think he must have had respect within the community. I know that he sold some raspberries and probably eggs and possibly rhubarb and conceivably some fruit from the family orchard. He sold those to perhaps grocers in Montana, trading- bartering for flour and other farm necessities. When the Suneson ranch was- well when Jonas died, and my father being the only heir, my father did not choose to do the farming. He had another professional career. So the ranch was sold to Kramer family...

WG: The Kramens.

AS: I think they paid for this full section of land 640 acres, I think they paid about \$5,000 for the house, the land. So in terms of value, as particularly Missoula has grown, real estate prices have increased. We can all say, "Yes we should all have kept that." That's not the way life works. So the money- the ranch was sold and after 1945, other people were in possession of the ranch. I only returned one time. That was about 1990 when some of my- my own siblings were out in the, they live in the east, the Midwest and they wanted to see the old ranch. So we called up the Spurlock family I believe it was.

Then the heirs of the Kramer ranch and we were invited to come down and so we sat and visited about the ranch a little bit. We spent about an hour and it was very pleasant with the people that now have possession of the property. I think that pretty concludes what I have. Perhaps, what Whitney, who is the interviewer here who asked me come down and do this oral history, if she has any questions or wants me to explain anything that I might have said that she has notes on. I would be glad to answer those.

WG: Those are really great stories. I guess I just wanted to go back and ask you if you could elaborate on some of the things that you mentioned. One question I had was how, you mentioned that your parents or your grandparents Jonas and his wife Selma came from Sweden and landed in New York City. I was wondering how they moved from New York out to Montana, if that was their goal to become landowners, if you knew anything more about that part of the story.

AS: Yes I know something. Records are not perfect. My understanding is that Jonas came out and worked on the ranch railroad as it was being, well it was built. They went back to Sioux City, Iowa where some of the obvious other brothers and perhaps his parents at that time were living. So he had come west, but returned to Sioux City, Iowa. That's where he met Selma. They were married and I don't have a year on that. My brother has the wedding certificate down in Arizona. I don't have that date. So then they came west and bought the ranch. Apparently Jonas had made enough money on the railroad working and whatever he did to buy the ranch from

the homesteader. Then they began farming and building up equity to build the house and raise a family and do the things that farmers did.

WG: And so do you believe that was his ultimate goal was to become a landowner in the United States? Was it just something that happened?

AS: I think that was probably the goal. Jonas' father, would be my great-grandfather, I understood was a cobbler in Sweden, making shoes. Again, that's stuff- old country stuff. We just go to the store and buy a pair of shoes. Times in the, well in what we would call post-Civil War years, when Jonas was born in 1865 and came over in, I believe, about when he was 12 years old. So that would be in 1877. Those times in Europe were not good. There were a lot of immigrants not only from Scandinavia and all the countries in Europe. They landed here and yes, they wanted to do something in America. They wanted to make a living. I don't think Jonas grew up in his 12 years in Sweden knew much maybe about farming, I'm not sure.

Those days, I guess you learned from your neighbor and you raised the chickens and ate the eggs and cleaned the chickens. Take the feathers off and eat them. If you had a cow, you got milk. So I think that was the goal. Jonas did well. I think he was more prosperous than maybe some of the other people in that vicinity. That's not a brag, but I think, in my view, it's the truth. If you look at the Suneson home and you look at the Randolph home, there was a difference between them. So I think Jonas was probably a successful farmer, hard worker. My father was not, did not choose to follow that career.

WG: You mentioned that they had running water in their home that came from a spring that ran. Did it run by the house and then they diverted the water? How did that work?

AS: When I was on the ranch, I think it was 1940, '37 I'm only six years old. I don't remember a lot. I do remember walking up to that ridge line that I mentioned. At the top of the ridge line, there were some pools of water. I recall three in my own memory. These were self feeding springs, open springs of water. They would replenish themselves because they- water came out of the ground. My father and grandfather apparently dug a trench and buried a pipe.

They tapped into the bottom of this saucer up there, the spring. They laid the pipe and brought it down. As water falls, you've got hydraulic pressure, so you have pressure in the house. I have no idea how far that is. You have to bury pipe in Montana at least five feet deep to get below frost-line. My father said that they didn't bury it deep enough the first time. The pipe froze. The ground froze. The pipe froze. The pipe split. So they had to dig it again. When I was on the old homestead visiting the Spurlock family when we were invited there, I called and we were invited there.

I noticed that they had water coming from a spring that was out just east to the barn. I have no recollection as a child that there was any spring there at that time at that location. I thought it came from the ridge line and was piped down. The Spurlocks had a- I saw running water coming

out and they had some sort of a collecting pond or vessel in which they got it and piped it into the house. So they had plumbing, they had a toilet. Water in the sink, they had a wood stove. They had one of those old- I can't remember what the name is of those old wood stoves.

There was a Hoosier in that house that was my grandmother's. A Hoosier is a kitchen cupboard. It has a place where you keep flour and sugar and this name 'Hoosier' is one that's all over. You go to an antique store and ask for a Hoosier, or a picture of it, and it's what the wives prepared their flour and meals on for the most part.

WG: Remarkable.

AS: The Spurlocks showed me the original Hoosier that was part of Jonas and Selma's ranch. It was sold with the house. Inside the Hoosier...When we got there, just a few weeks before they had had this piece of kitchen furniture refinished in town here in Missoula by a furniture rehabilitation person. They had it back on the ranch and they opened up the door and inside there was some kind of a little, we would call it maybe plastic. Anyway, this plastic has some hour hands on a clock and on this piece of plastic was written "flour, sugar" and it's where the women of the day would write down what they wanted or needed for the kitchen.

So you'd move one hand over to "need eggs" or something like that and flour. On this piece of plastic when my father was 12 or 13 years old, he wrote the date, which was January 3rd and the year, which might have been 19- okay he was born in '03 so it might have been 1913 or 1915. He wrote Coyt is- ten or 12 years old, that piece of furniture is probably in the Spurlock possession still out there on the ranch and there's the note written on there in my father's handwriting that he was 12 years old. Don't ask me why he did that. It was there and the Spurlocks showed it to us. It was not changed by the refinisher. It was still there.

WG: I wanted to ask you about the trail your father mentioned to you about how he got to school. He said that he and the Randolph boy has built it. Was that simply by trampling down an area or did they actually dig out a little trail for themselves?

AS: Yes I understand they did, Whitney. They put stones on the corners. They built up corners and kicked the stones out of their way so they had a worn trail and so several could walk abreast on this trail. My guess, as you and I've seen personally and many people have gone out and they've looked at the Oregon Trail where the settlers came in 1850, '49 or '50 and you can still see the wagon ruts in places where the Oregon Trail was. They remain today. I would think that those boys walking for ten or more years into Missoula that there would be evidence somewhere of that trail.

I really believe you could find it. I might just say one other thing. My father and the boys walked to school. My father told me that from the grade school, he was the only one in his grade school that went on to, I believe in those ages it was called Missoula County High School. I think

that's what the school was called. So he was the only one that went to high school and may have been one of the very few from his high school class that later went on to college.

Education, most people grew up on the ranch, kids worked hard. They had big families and so you had a lot of people to do the farm work. Education was, for many people in those days, not a priority. My father saw it as a way to escape the ranch or the farm and get a better life for himself. He was not- he just didn't want to be a ranch owner.

WG: And the other thing I was going to ask you about that your father probably knew quite a bit about what was the mine on the Randolph place. They actually mined for coal and made a profit off of it for a while with professional miners. It sounds like your father had a little pickaxe and sometimes the boys would go in there and get it themselves. Did he describe any more of how they worked on the mine at all?

AS: No I knew they used the coal that they got for home heat. This is how you- you had to heat your homes with something. I was not aware that the Randolphs might have had a coal mine on there. On the Suneson property, at that time, there was a vein of coal that my father pointed to me and said, "This was ours. We got coal out of here." Usually coal runs in a vein. So if the Randolphs found coal and they used theirs, so did the Sunesons. I think I was told one time by somebody that there was coal in that valley. There's other places where that vein of coal is and it could be mined.

WG: They would just go out and get it themselves?

AS: Yes. I mentioned a bluff that the dirt overhang on the bluff- dirt is on top of the coal vein. So you don't want to dig enough coal out so that the dirt is going to fall on you and kill you. I remember the coal being maybe ten or 12 feet below the surface of the ground. I don't know if it was just naturally exposed because of erosion. So you could see this vein of coal. Yes that's how you kept warm.

WG: Interesting. I guess the last thing I just was wondering about, you mentioned about what a wonderful storyteller your grandfather was. I was wondering if he said that the sea serpent was a story that you could remember, if there were any others you could remember to pass on, anything about his life or his time at the ranch that you remember him talking about frequently or a story that stuck with you?

AS: There was an occasion that- this is not from Jonas. This is from my father. When my father was a young man there was a full eclipse of the sun one day. He said that on the ranch the, I guess it would be the moon covering the sun so you cannot see the sun. This would be in the Twenties, World War I time. I can't remember the exact year. It was probably pre-World War I.

Anyway the area went dark and the chickens went to bed on the ranch. The sun came out an hour later or so when the eclipse ended and the chickens came out and did the cock-a-doodle-

doo and all this. They cluck, cluck, clucked again. That was just a story from my father. No, Whitney, I'm sorry I don't have any other recollections of my grandfather. It was great storytelling, but I am now 76 years old. So you see it's been a long time.

WG: Well that's great. If there's anything else you'd like to add. If there's anything else, then I think we can wrap it up.

AS: I think what the city of Missoula did was a very forthright thing in preserving history because the Randolph family never seemed to discard any tool or wagon or what have you. I've seen those things there myself. I think it's a wonderful way to look at early farming life, turn of the century in Montana. If it was at the Randolphs, that same type of thing was where my father and grandfather grew up on their ranch. It's a pleasure. I hope that I've been able to contribute something useful to the history of the area.

WG: Definitely.

[End of Interview]