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Oral History Number: 047-008, 009
Interviewee: Daniel Longpre
Interviewers: Ethel MacDonald and Nancy Cranston
Date of Interview: February 25, 1976
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Daniel Longpre: My brother and I was (unintelligible) some old sawdust. I says, "I don't (unintelligible)." We kinda forgotten. Finally one of us thought of, "I wonder if the old (unintelligible)," that's to your right going up there by the place. Up the gulch, down along Rock Creek.

Unidentified Speakers: (unintelligible)

DL: That was my headwater, Rock Creek. I had first right on that water. Anyway, they had an old sawmill up there, and when we...I can just remember it, I might a been two or three years old, and my Dad owned that place then but we lived where Bob Touchette lives in the Frenchtown Valley there. That was our home. We were born there. Of course I'd go with them up there, you know, to be with them. I was...Oh boy, I'd be sitting under his arm in the buggy and oh, it was a rocky road! When we went by there, why, I remember the sawmill there.

We went, and sure, the sawdust was there. You know we dug in that, and that has to be—that sawdust pile—close to 80 years old. We dug in there, and when we got down to the bottom, there was pieces of logs that long (indicates with hands) and sawed stumps in there. Like they butt-cutted a log before they put it through the mill. It was just as sound as the day it went there, and that sawdust was just like it was come out of the mill down there.

Ethel MacDonald: Now where exactly are you talking about the sawdust?

DL: You know where they cleared all that flat where you was talking about.

EM: On Bladholms, yes.

DL: Yes, to your right, see that little house on the hill up there? That's the old Plouf house. Just below his house on Rock Creek...You know, you cross Rock Creek, you make that bend, and you cross a little creek down there where they're clearing. That runs against my land that used to be (unintelligible) just up that little creek about a quarter of a mile to your right. That sawdust pile, I remember it, because I used to trap coyotes when I was a kid because I always wanted to be a trapper and I was for many years. I'd set my traps in the sawdust, cover them all good. Coyotes are shrewd. How things like that preserve, you wonder, in the bottom. It wasn't rotten at all. We wanted good rotten stuff.

EM: We've got so many things to ask you that I know I'm going to get off, but one thing, since

you mentioned the trapping, what do you know about much trapping in the whole area that you recall, people who did trapping?

DL: Oh, I trapped coyotes and then I hunted coyotes. See, they weren't worth much, four or five dollars, but that was a lot of money in them days. It came by hard, so I'd have traps on the creek for mink. Then when it came lawful to trap beavers, we'd get permits and we'd go catch beavers. Then I had a place up the Fish Creek country, a hunting lodge; at the forks of Fish Creek. That's the old Williams and Young ranch I'd bought. From there I'd trapped up on the Idaho-Montana divide for marten in winter. I'd go there in November, and I'd come back about...Oh, I'd get home for Christmas because about the latter part of November the marten were running, you know, mating, and they're down under the snow in the alders and then you didn't want to catch them anyway. So then I'd trapped on maybe a week and got a bunch of foxes. Women had ordered them, beautiful foxes up there. At that time they wore those neck scarfs out of fox. I got some red fox there...You know, a nice big steer was only worth about four and a half cents a pound so that wasn't much money. I got as high as 90, 95 dollars for them foxes. There were people that had money that ordered them. So you know, that was quite a find.

EM: Did you have areas on trapping? I noticed in the history of the Albert brothers, that it seems they had...one of them had from Missoula to Frenchtown and the other from Frenchtown to Alberton. As if you had areas and nobody else came into that area.

DL: Well, I'll tell you, those Alberts...The one that lived down below Alberton, they all came and moved by the rivers. They came from that kind of environment. They came from the state—the New Brunswick or the state of Maine. They were trappers there, and fish they'd spear...they'd make the spears. Where they used to call the Poitras place just out of...well now, Diton Little (?) owns it...No I guess he doesn't. Them people kept it. Johnsons had it you know. Do you remember that? Well, it's about two miles the other side of Frenchtown.

EM: East?

DL: West of Frenchtown. The old Poitras place. He lived way down in the bottom. Now where their house was, the river has taken that all out. It kept spreading high water. He trapped bear in there, and then in the fall they would go and they'd go up over the hill at Lolo and they'd go...They call that the Clearwater [River]. Everything over in Idaho was the Clearwater, now it's the Selway, the Clearwater, the Lochsa. They were in the Lochsa drainage, and they had a cabin there as you go over the Lookout Pass going down on the other side toward the Lochsa...Powell ranger station?

I worked there one year for the Forest Service. Not the whole year, just construction. I came and built bridges and towers and lookouts.

Well, anyway they had a long cabin there, right where Crooked Fork comes in with Garcia (?) and then that is the formation of the Lochsa River. Up above the White Sand comes in, and it makes quite a stream right there at the ranger station. (unintelligible)?

EM: No.

DL: (unintelligible) Well anyway, they'd go there, and they had old Alec that lived down below Alberton. He would stay in the mountains, and he got the martens and the fisher and the weasels. Old Bill, that was here on the old Poitras place, he trapped the rivers: beaver, minks and so on. In them years they would leave in the fall in September and they would come out of there about June, but the bear hide was worth money them days so they would stay in there and get bear. They got 25, 30, 40 dollars which was lots of money in those days because...I remember, we lived where Bob Touchette lives, and that's only two houses over you see. This old fella, he'd always taken a liking to me, and he'd always show me his pelts. When I heard that old Bill was home, I'd go and they had a big house, a large attic, and all their pelts was hung in there on a wire from up above—one on top of the other. They laid flat this way, you see (indicates with hands). They would have been a fortune today. They might have made enough for a grub stake, that's all they was worth in them days, except for bear. I remember those things was always moving, and I was kind of scared. I was little, you know. Those hides were rolling on that wet wire—big, long string. There was marten. They were piled one right on top of another, and it's be that high (indicates with hands). But I don't know how many.

EM: Thank you.

DL: It was really something- when I look back, and that's what he lived for. When they didn't have enough traps, he made deadfalls. It was cruel, but it broke the bear's back right away—great big logs. I remember, I'd be with him when he built that, and he'd tell me "Don't touch it." I didn't close to that one. (unintelligible) then logs on top of it. Then they built kind of a...long kind of a log so they wouldn't get close to the bait. Then they had a trigger in the back so when they pulled on the trigger, it would release that log. They were in there, you know, end that would get them on the back. Then they had steel traps too. That's what they used. I'll never forget how they could throw a spear and catch a fish. They made the jaws of their spear...It was made in this fashion (draws diagram) like that. Then it came around this way, two like that you see. They must of been pretty good blacksmiths because they made it out of steel that they make bear trap springs with. There's a long pole here, and there was a spike in the pole here (shows diagram). They would throw that and the jaws would open end, and that spike would go into the big fish and then it couldn't come out. A fish would go by and they would just throw it. They'd never miss them, and I couldn't get over that. They did it since they were that high. It was the darndest thing. They'd load that boat with fish, and in front they'd cut pitch off a pitch stumps, pine stumps, to light. They'd do that at night, you know, spearing. Fish comes to the light. They had a great big basket hanging out made out of wire, and they throw that pitch in there and there would be black smoke but it illuminated underneath. They'd see the fish come toward the light, and they'd get them as they came. (unintelligible)

EM: Would they sell the fish?

DL: No, they'd salt them. They lived on that. That was (unintelligible).

EM: About what year are you talking about?

DL: Well, that has to be about...I was born in '97—1897. I was about two, three years old. About 1800, but they did that years before because they had children that were, oh, 15, 20 years older than I was. (unintelligible) That would have to be in the '70s and '80s.

They were quite the people. You know the diet that they brought. They put in three or four big pigs—I mean large ones. The minute they got home...They just fed those pigs until they was that fat and that thick (indicates with hands) and they weighed 500 or 600 pounds. So about in July, they would be so fat, they butchered them, and they made salt pork. That was their diet. They brought hundreds of pounds of that in there with them so that with...I forget, they must have had potatoes. That I don't know, but this here...They had their lard and of course their flour. They might have had some dried prunes or dried peaches. That's what you had in those days. They'd pack back in there. They would only be home three or four months of the year. The boys did the farming. The old fellas, they were trappers.

EM: When you mention the dried fruit, do you recall seeing the fruit dried in the process?

Dan; No, we bought it already dried. No, it came in big boxes, I never knew of a can when I was a little kid. But of course my mother was a real French chef. Her mother was. Two girls, mother, Sarah was her name. My Aunt Mary Downing. But you know, we grew, and I remember that there would be a 55-gallon whiskey barrels—is what they used and cleaned them out—completely full of sauerkraut. I tell you, you didn't move one of those once you got it pressed in there. You'd put a whole garden in one barrel. So they'd set that barrel right where it wasn't going to be moved because you couldn't move it. They had those crocks...Mother had one I'd say 20, 25 gallons of mincemeat like. We never eat anymore like that.

EM: That was in a crock too?

DL: In a crock too. Then she's have her crock of tomatoes, probably a crock that big and that high (indicates with hands), what they call piccalilli. They'd have a smaller crock of mustard pickles. Then lots of canned meat. When you killed, there was no refrigeration in them days, so they'd can it. They'd take the meat, and they'd roast it and put it all in half gallon jars because there was quite a bunch of wolves in the family. (laughs) Half gallon jars, you know, you don't see them very much anymore. They'd Put roast meat in them and process them. They'd fill some with steak and put them away, and some with just boiled meat. Then I remember my mother, people would come here, and it would be 20, 30 minutes before noon—a whole bunch that was working in the field—she says, "Well, the men will be coming. We're going to eat pretty quick." There wasn't a thing at all. Well, she'd open that there, and there was the most delicious meat there ever was. She was one of the world's finest bakers. Then a Dutch oven full of beans and stuff like that. So we had the healthy food, lots of it. When you think of that and you tell some people that, they just wonder. They don't know how good it was, until they eat some you buy

today then they remember.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Tape 1, Side B]

EM: Neither of you mentioned the other and I noticed they must be brothers, and they'd both followed the father to Colorado. So I wonder if you could connect up those families for me and how they came to be here.

DL: My father, not Pete Longpre that was their folks. That's why my dad moved up. The two families lived about 300 feet apart. You know where the ranger station is and where my big white house there in the bottom, which the old house burnt and I replaced it with that one. That was Absalom, our family. Pete lived just across. The two families lived right close together. But my father came with his dad from Leadville, Colorado. They come from Canada to find work. I think about '79, my dad...He was only 14 years old when he come and started working with his dad on wheelbarrows, wheeling...So that's my (unintelligible). Then he came from there...He had been asked to come by his uncle, Jerome Longpre, that was his dad's brother, which his dad's name was Malguaia (?)—French Malguaia. Jerome was the one that brought Father [Pierre-Jean] De Smet, drove the oxen that brought them to the Bitterroot Valley.

EM: Now this is Jerome Longpre?

DL: Jerome Longpre. That would be my grand-uncle, Dad's uncle. In French we called him *mon oncle Jerome*.

EM: Your father's uncles it the one who talked him into coming here?

DL: That talked who?

EM: That talked your father into coming here?

DL: Yes, and he was going to start him up in cattle and horses and everything. Well, he had an aunt, Mrs. Scheffer—that would be Tom Scheffer's grandmother.

EM: This is your father's aunt?

DL: It would be, yes. Pete Sheffer married Aunt Alice. Now Dad's mother and old Ralph Scheffer, that's Tom's dad—he died here a few years ago—they were first cousins. Their mothers were...

EM: Sisters?

DL: Sisters, and Juan (unintelligible), she was sister also. She lived in Butte, and when the mine struck there...He run a big liver barn. He had many horses, and he done all the freighting of the ore and everything for the DCM. So my dad landed there, and he worked there a little. Then he came down and worked at Scheffers, and it so happened he didn't go to the Bitterroot. My Aunt Alice was afraid he'd married Indians up there or something. Which old Jerome did, he married a full blooded Indian. We have cousins yet: Lompray, Lumpy, Longpierre—

EM: How do you say it?

DL: Longpree. L-o-n-g-p-r-e.

EM: There are people in Nine Mile who say Lompree. I thought—

DL: (unintelligible) In French it's Lon-pree. Lon.

EM: That's where they're getting that Longpre because that's—

DL: Well, the Indians have everything...They were all related. I used to go up there, and they'd be some good riders there and some of them would... I'd go with Edgar Scheffer, a cousin of mine, sometimes. Come out there and I'd be talking, and someone would say "Look, there's one of your cousins." Just blacker than Toby. They'd look at me, and you know I looked like a Scandinavian. It made quite a contrast. But anyway, we're blonde because we came...my folks come from Normandy, France. The village of Longpre is named after my people there, and it's on the banks of the Somme River and it's still there.

Now old Hugo Aronson [John Hugo Aronson], the old governor we had here, his wife was from there. When she became ill here with cancer, she wanted to go back there to die and he went back there with her. She's buried there. She was Clemenceau (?), the French Premiere's' chief secretary, that he married. One of the brilliant women in the world. He told me she was the smartest woman in the world. "She made my money" he said.

EM: Back on that Nine Mile and the Scheffers...Now your grandmother being Sarah Ledoux, right?

DL: Yes

EM: Do you have much history on the Ledoux side?

DL: I have it all wrote down, yes. It would take quite a while. Yes, you know where Jim Richardson lives? That was my grandpa's place, and they run a road in there during the mines of the Coeur d'Alene, Cedar Creek and where the miners would stop and sleep and go in there. They run that, and then he also...back in the house up there he had some limekiln—that's limestone. He manufactured the first lime for the old First National Bank and Montana Merc [Montana Mercantile] and all that. He manufactured the lime and brought it in.

EM: And this is Damien Ledoux?

DL: Damien Ledoux. At that time, he went by name of "Old Tin Cup Joe."

EM: Now do you know that that is the same "Tin Cup Joe" as the one who was involved in the

trial? Because there is another mention of this.

DL: I'll tell you how I know. There's a fellow here that don't know what he's talking about. You know old Judge Woody was the judge. He was our best grandpa's friend. Him and Alice Woody was my mother's chum. They used to come and spend days with us up the Nine Mile, old Judge Woody. Before he died, I was just a little fellow then. But Alice came. Oh, while we were growing up, she'd come and spend a week. She used to talk...I remember the old man talking about that. He defended my grandpa, and he'd always call my grandpa Joe.

We lived...My dad got that place from an old Charley Eaton. One of the early pioneers—that was Charley Eaton. Charley Eaton and my grandpa was like that too (indicates with fingers). But we built him a house, a little cabin, that's still there at Bob Touchettes. Old Eaton always told us about that trial. He was there, too. But Albert Bartoll (?) here got that screwed up, says it's somebody else, but we know because it's the old timers that knew. But my grandpa would never admit that he was Tin Cup Joe. At one time I remember, there was somebody noticed in the paper or something, they wanted to know the whereabouts of one Tin Cup Joe because he had a pension coming from being a freighter in the Indian Wars. He was a freighter; that's what he did. But he would never admit it. The old fellers here, "You tell your grandpa to come get his pension. But he wouldn't never admit it. He was too proud, The reason he wouldn't admit it—before he went home and got his old girlfriend in Canada, Mary, he had two old squaws, and he had so much pride that that would have come out, you see. Once after that he went and got my Grandma Ledoux. It was Damien Ledoux, his right name, but he went by the name of Tin Cup Joe.

EM: So at the time of that trial, he had Indian women—wives—is that what you are talking about?

DL: Oh yes, yes.

EM: So that's why he wouldn't admit it?

DL: He wouldn't admit it, because it was (unintelligible), you know, he was proud. But he had...he didn't have one, he had two! Garcia (?), I remember him. He had one on each side.

EM: Well, but then what when they got tired of their Indian wives? Or did they marry them, or did they call them wives?

DL: No, Grandpa never married them, no. As far as I know—

EM: And so then what did they just boot them out?

DL: —but Old Garcia did. Finally, they went back, one to the Nez Perce, and one to the Shoshone. She was a Shoshone yes.

EM: They just kind of sent them back to their tribes?

DL: Yes, he had no children by them. He sent away back east—Hartenheim (?)—(unintelligible) Andrew Garcia. He used to tell me all about it before he ever wrote the book when he was writing it. We packed together. I learned to pack from him. He was a packer, I'll tell you. Yes, so that's when my grandpa was Ledoux. That is what they wanted to do, and if I get that together...I will try to get it together good, and they wanted to know about the Six Mile. Nobody knew who lived on...They knew about the Nine Mile pretty good, and they'd gotten that up there from Mrs. Mulkye (?) or something. So I told them on this article is the one that Hartley wanted me to put on a tape. Would be the Six Mile, from my grandpa's place down there on up—clear up the Six Mile—who lived there, see, on the Six Mile drainage. I'm willing to do that someday.

(telephone rings)

EM: Do you know when Damien Ledoux was called Tin Cup Joe? If he was ever farther up the valley? There was a notation in a journal by Wilcox coming through 1870, no, 1860, and he mentions Tin Cup Joe along with Louis Brown and these others.

DL: Yes.

EM: Was that Damien Ledoux?

DL: That's Damien Ledoux. That was Damien Ledoux. That was Tin Cup Joe.

EM: Well, was he doing something on up the valley or—

DL: That's before he married?

EM: I'm not sure.

DL: Well, first place he had, was up Butler Creek, you know.

EM: Up Nine Mile?

DL: No, no, oh no, Butler Creek—right from the airport up here—way up that creek. Then the last one to own that place in the side hill up there—it had a big rock cellar on it—old Walter Pope, the judge—judge in California. He died here two, three years ago. Do you remember him, Judge Pope? He was our lawyer. He was with Pope, Smith, and Smith here in Missoula...and Boone. He lived up there and just across the ridge from O'Keefe Canyon, where Barnum O'Keefe [Baron O'Keefe] lived, you see. So the way—

EM: That's where Damien Ledoux was?

DL: Damien Ledoux was up Butler Creek. He turned his horses loose in the in the grass and they

went over the hill. That was on old O'Keefe's place, and he shot one of my grandpa's horses. The horse was hard to get them days. Finally he came to town, and he said he was looking for a horse, and old Judge Woody knew him and said, "Hello there, Joe." He says "How they going?"

"Well," he says, "I ain't going very good. I only got one horse now." He says, "They strayed and they went over the hill there at Barnum O'Keefe, and he shot one of them."

He says, "He shot one of your horses?"

Grandpa says, "Yes."

He says, "Well, you know, I'm a lawyer, Joe. We'll prosecute them," and then he laughs.

My grandpa says, "What do you mean prosecute?"—he didn't know what that meant—"What do you mean prosecute?"

"Well," he says, "We'll sue him and make him pay for that horse. Oh yes!" he says, "We'll do that. The beginning of the law is in here now." So they held that trial in the saloon here. When they decided against old Barnum O'Keefe, he jumped on the bar and he hit the judge and he wanted to lick the whole house. He was ready to kill them all.

EM: Now, did you hear that story from your grandparents long ago?

DL: From Judge Woody and from Alice—my mother's age, Alice Woody. She's died here only a few years ago. Great friend of ours. Old Judge he would come to see my grandpa every month. They were real friends, you know. They would drive in a buggy, and they'd drive down there and come and spend the night and visit.

EM: Then when did Damien Ledoux come to this country?

DL: Well, he came in '49 [1849]. He crossed the plains in '49, and then he went to the Oregon and came here on the Oregon Trail. He went clear on through to Jim Bridger, Fort Bridger. He freighted for him for 15, 20 years. He was with Jim Bridger when Jim Bridger discovered...working for him when Jim Bridger discovered Salt Lake, Yellowstone Park, and all those things. He discovered them. Then he helped them pilot the Mormons into Salt Lake Valley. Then my grandpa freighted loads of stuff to them in there to get them started, you know, for old Jim Bridger. He had a trading post. They were died-in-the-wool friends! He said that was the greatest man that ever lived, my grandpa said. He says there wasn't a grizzly bear wasn't any more...He was a fierce man.

EM: Was your grandfather full of stories?

DL: No, not to tell stories, but he would tell you that he had the memory. He left home at 12 and one time, there was a teacher that stayed with us—taught school. We went to school there at

Nine Mile there. Miss Blaire (?)—she started writing his life biography. About the time she just got well started...He'd sit in his rocking chair and she'd ask him, and he'd tell her the dates. He'd been in every state in the union.

EM: Do you have any idea what ever happened to that?

DL: She just had a little wrote, and then he would not stay. On them days you know, the houses wasn't modern. You just went outside, and he was about 90 and he had to sleep upstairs with the boys. They had a big room up there, four beds in there you know. He'd have to get up, at night, and he'd feel the door you know just like—

[End of Tape 1, Side B]

[Tape 2, Side A]

EM: There was another thing. When Art Donlan gave his speech, he said that you had said about...had told about the Indians' behavior. Now is that from your grandfather? Did your grandfather tell about how the Indians would come into the Nine Mile one year?

DL: Yes, oh, yes, I remember when they did that.

EM: Oh, you remember the Indians?

DL: Oh, I remember that. I was just a little kid. When my dad first came, he went to Scheffer, Uncle Zep (?), it was Tom Scheffer's great grandfather. I remember him when he died, the old fellow, because there was a Schaeffer boy and I was little fellows, and he kept us in his bunkhouse with him all the time. I was only two, three years old, and I remember when he died. You know, they didn't embalm him and then they covered him on a cot. Oh, we felt terrible because he was so good to us, and he was a great friend of Dad's. Dad went to work for him once, and in the fall, he noticed an awful smoke up the Nine Mile, black smoke. He says, "My god, the country's burning up,"

"No," he says, "The Indians will be coming through." That's where he found out that when they left in the fall they fired the whole country, burned all the old grass. That's why the timber was so beautiful. (unintelligible) We used to be able to drive the wagon, and there were 40, 45 of those big pines to the acre. And then—

EM: How far up the Nine Mile would they go?

DL: They went to about where the Thisted Ranch was. But they generally camped about, oh...Stony Creek, now, that used to be Four Mile Creek and Butler Creek up there. That's about where their encampments were, and then they'd huckleberry and everything in the fall. Then sure enough, the next day the whole tribe was moving back, and they'd come to Frenchtown, take Mill Creek, and go over the hill at Mill Creek. That was a shortcut to the reservations. Know where Mill Creek is?

EM: Yes, they went over the Mill Creek (unintelligible).

DL: Well, there was a trail—

EM: I wondered which way they came from the reservations, and that was the way. It was from—

DL: From Arlee and they crossed over Mill Creek

EM: Then they came out the Mill Creek drainage there; they didn't go over there.

DL: No, when they came to Frenchtown, they came down right by the graveyard up there now, down the creek and then up the Nine Mile. They'd go by our place and when they'd go up there—

EM: How many?

DL: Oh, gee whiz, there would be quite a procession of them. I'll tell you, there were a lot of them. I'd say a couple of hundred, three hundred

EM: They would come through the Six Mile valley and right on—

DL: They'd go right on to the Six Mile valley. They'd come from Frenchtown and on up the Nine Mile. One of their old encampments is where this cleared land is on the place you're living, telling about [Bladholm's]. Had a little old house on top there. They used to plow up there, and Edgar Scheffer had a cigar box or two completely full of the most beautiful arrowheads, because that coal field up there is all flint rock—different colors. Flint rock—like you used to make fires with, and that's what they liked. Edgar had a walking plow, and he'd just pick them. I know Anna must know, she must have them (unintelligible).

EM: Richardson's have a lot of arrowheads also.

DL: Richardsons?

EM: Yes.

DL: Well, that's where they come from. See this was (unintelligible). Then when they went up, they'd stop in Frenchtown. There were about four saloons. Those darn French would sell those Indians the whiskey, and they were drunk by the time they went by our place, singing and running races. But the squaws was all coming behind, and they had all the guns. They'd taken all the guns away from them. But they'd want to trade horses with you and everything—crazy, you know. Of course, they were up there, and they had nothing to drink up there. On their way home I suppose, maybe they liquored up again to go up the canyon to go home. I don't know.

EM: Did they go up there just to get a stock of berries and everything because it was such good berry country?

DL: Some of them and their meat.

EM: Hunting too?

DL: Yes, there was lots of game when they were there. They didn't destroy the game. They just used what they needed. Dad says there was a deer everyplace you looked. Fish—they made a trap. They'd go up the creek for the fish, and everything under two pounds went through. They had a big basket under there, and the others would swim around and help themselves to the fish

they wanted to eat—the large ones. I remember my dad saying that he used to go there to check on his cattle, and they'd say, "Do you want some fish to bring to the squaw?"—you know, always the squaw. (laughs)

So dad would say, "Yes, I'll take a mess"

So they'd go, "Take what you want. We're leaving tomorrow, take what you need now". So he would.

EM: Did you ever see these traps yourself?

DL: No, no I was too small. But I know how they were made. I never seen them at work, is that what you mean?

EM: Yes.

DL: But I've seen them on the Flathead and stuff out and dry where they hadn't put them in yet. I know how they're made. They're made out of those little red willows like you have in Frenchtown. They go in one place, but they can't come out. They leave the spaces, certain spaces. Then they take their traps out, lifted it, emptied it, turned the fish loose. But my dad only wanted ten or twelve. Then they'd take...Three, four powerful bucks, and they'd take that trap and they'd go put in under the brush. Well then, the next year they went up to Lolo and did the same thing. Then the following year they went up Fish Creek and did the same thing. Then the next year they went back up the Nine Mile so they burned every place, it was always clean grass.

EM: But they burnt more just the grass areas rather than timber, is that right?

DL: Oh, it didn't hurt the timber. All the bottoms of the big pine trees was all black, charred, but they were fast fires, just the old grass and pine grass, you see. So, if the tree was dead, of course they died. Then it would burn, and that's where we got up there we could cut a stump of them old try trees and get those fine pitch posts that last forever.

But it was clean. There was no disease because the disease breeds in those little bushes. Currants, wild currants bushes, well, there was none of that. That was clean. That timber was so healthy. It went as high as...I know there was some sections of the Nine Mile that logged 17 million feet.

EM: Your father wasn't involved in logging, was he?

DL: Nope

EM: Just farming.

DL: Just farming: cattle, horse. He loved horses. Raised mules.

EM: I was going to ask you about the sawmill on Six Mile Creek. You know Six Mile now and where the Heares (?) residence is?

DL: Yes.

EM: Is it in that field?

DL: Right there at Heares was the old Cormier place. I have that all wrote about the Cormier family and everything on up there which if you (unintelligible) I'd look it up and send it to you.

EM: We'd like to have whatever you can give us. We're planning to publish our book in June.

DL: When are you going to have another meeting with Art Donlan then?

EM: Today. We see him all the time. Let me just switch this off.

[Break in audio]

EM: You have that written down already?

DL: I have it written down, and as I remember it the old timers, in my time, who lived up there—originals—the (unintelligible), the Cormiers and the old Glaude (?) place, the Plouf (?) ranch up on the hill. But over that hill then that drains into the Nine Mile. I see you know that.

EM: Yes.

Going back a ways, do you know much about the Dufrense family?

DL: Yes.

EM: What can you tell me about them, or—

DL: They lived right up there in that old Plouf house. It's right up on the hill across from that clearing there. That house must still be there, isn't it? That side of the field up there?

EM: I don't know which one you're talking about. Now, you're not talking about on up from the Ranger station behind where Morres (?) are now and past where—

DL: Right where Dufrense ended. You went there from the Plouf Ranch. He was leasing that from my Uncle Pete Scheffer, and he went up and stayed up there just a mile up from the ranger station

EM: Right, that little valley. There are still old buildings in there.

DL: Then they sold that.

Unidentified Speaker: (unintelligible)

EM: Were you talking another cabin, though, across from where he's done so much clearing? It would be by Stony Creek and those.

DL: No, no. Rock Creek. Just over the hill there from Six Mile, there's a meadow up there on the hill. Well, right towards the creek there, there was some houses up there. That's where Dufrense lived for many years. That was the old Plouf house. Then Dufrense lived there...It was owned by an old fellow, Trahon (?), and then he gave himself to Pete Scheffer until he died, the place, just to keep.

EM: I see. What place exactly did this Trahon have?

DL: That place up there that we're talking about where Plouf was and he originally had it. He homesteaded it, I think, must have, old Solomon Trahon. Solomon.

EM: I think I can get a description of that, a legal description of what he had. We've got some homestead findings from the newspaper in the 1870s and 1880s.

You went to the Nine Mile School then?

DL: Yes.

EM: Do you want to ask him more about that, Nancy?

Nancy Cranston: Well, yes. (unintelligible) This is all good. Oh, it's just really yummy.

Could you tell me a little about the building, and do you know what happened to it?

DL: Do you know where the old Nine Mile School is (unintelligible)?

NC: No. The Nine Mile—

DL: Just a mile down from the remount [Nine Mile Remount Station] towards Nine Mile.

NC: Oh, yes.

DL: The one before that is a little teacherage that they fixed up to live in, just about 50 feet from it there. That used to sit—that little building...There's an old barn that's left torn down there now—the roof is down. Well, it was just across the road from that, the point of that hill coming down, and that building was built out of planks. You could see the air through them, and we

went to school and we'd all have to sit around the stove. The seats were benches made, 10-inch boards, and that's what you sat on. You sat this way and that way before the night was over. After I went out of there, after I went through the 8th grade, went to high school, I went up to the Bitterroot to high school. I didn't like Missoula so I went up to Stevensville. I guess because my Aunt Mary had married Downing (?), and they lived up there on a farm. I wanted to be on a farm and go to school with the kids—I think that was why. So anyway, they started in and had a fellow by the name of Elliot that came and contracted and made that school. So I never went to that school. I was before that, the rest of my brothers and sisters were, no, my two older sisters are older than I. They didn't go there either.

NC: Then the first Nine Mile school, then, you remember? Do you know who constructed that? Was that—?

DL: As you go down past Slemmons (?), at the lower end of Slemmons, on the bank...That's in the logging days, there was a board schoolhouse there. Clay Reeves went there, and there's...I remember her name. I knew her after they taught school there, but she had married. I forget her maiden name. She married Harry Brown. Lucinda Brown taught school there. Clay went to school there.

Years after that, you know where Bob Kries (?) lives up in the Nine Mile? You go up a hill round like that? Right on top of that hill, when we moved up the Nine Mile, the school was there. We went up there in 1910. They no longer use that. They had moved down where I was telling you, where I went. But there was a little log school there, and all the Reeves kids went there, and my Uncle Pete Longpre and Loretta, that's Anna's mother—

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Tape 2, Side B]

DL: So then after that, of course, my Uncle Pete Longpre kept old Frank Tremblay (?). Built him a house and paid him so much a day (unintelligible) a month and fed him and kept him and everything. He was all by himself, an old bachelor. Then that, naturally, became Pete Longpre's place. My uncle's place. Then he sold that ranch to a fellow by the name of Bert Allen (?) in 1920, I think, or '21. Then Allen sold to Jack Ray, Anna's uncle. Then Jack Ray sold it to the government—the remount.

NC: I want to go back on some other people now, too. Did you ever hear your grandfather talk about Baptiste Ducharme?

DL: From Flathead.

NC: Well, he was one of Frenchtown's first settlers, and he did die in Frenchtown in about 1900—1890, 1900 around there. He was an old...He came in the 1850s or 1860s and he was old when he came. By old I mean—

DL: Well, I remember Dad—that's before my time—talking about Baptiste Ducharme.

NC: Right. You do remember him talking about—

DL: Oh, yes.

NC: What did he have to say about him?

DL: Well, I forget now about that. Then, of course the Demers—that was Frenchtown. They sold to old Marion. Old Joe Marrion bought them out, then Demers moved up and built Demersville. Mercantile hot from Kalispell.

NC: As far as you know, did your father ever say anything about Ducharme having any descendants? Did he have an Indian wife and any descendants or anything?

DL: Yes. The Ducharmes and then there was relatives. I'll tell you where there land was on the Flathead. You know when you turn from Polson Road going to the east shore.

NC: Yes.

DL: Well, you get down before you turn around the lake there, to your right, "The finest land," Dad said, "that lies under the sun is there," and where the Ducharmes are and their breeds.

NC: But you don't know for sure that they're Baptiste Ducharmes.

DL: I'm sure they are. I'm sure they are because one of them they called him back east. I knew

them. I went up and lived there out of Polson (unintelligible) Ducharmes.

NC: Because he died in Frenchtown alone, and his biographies don't say anything about any descendants.

DL: Ducharme's?

NC: Yes.

DL: Well, that was a relative then. I say the one in Frenchtown my dad talked about Ducharmes. He wouldn't know, naturally, he wouldn't.

I'll tell you another one I know a lot about in Frenchtown is Pete Peysong.

NC: Yes, we're trying to see him.

DL: He's even two years older than I am.

NC: Is that right?

DL: (unintelligible)

Unidentified Speaker: Pete isn't there?

NC: We just couldn't get ahold of him the other day, but we're still trying.

Do you recall anything in particular, any experiences connected with any World War One or any experience in particular that would be a good story? That's kind of a broad question. You've told us so many stories and things already.

DL: Well, I enlisted in the World War, but I never got across. Never got to go across. At the ACM there...The ACM [Anaconda Copper Mining Company] was up the Nine Mile at that time, and a lot of the crews went up there.

NC: Who was telling us...oh, yes about soldiers? (unintelligible) was saying that there were soldiers there at the Nine Mile...not at Nine Mile but actually at Six Mile, and they're guarding the railroad. Do you know anything about that? The bridge.

DL: Yes, they did that. They did that. They had guards guarding the bridges, I remember that. World War One, yes, right along the trestle, maybe that (unintelligible) too.

EM: Another thing I'm curious about, probably it's in a book somewhere, but Art mentioned Squaw Peak and the fact that the trappers used to guide by it maybe way back before there were white settlers here.

DL: They used to what?

EM: Guide by Squaw Peak. You know, because you can see it from a long ways away. I'm wondering when that was named or anything like that. Do you know? Or was it named from the other side by the Indians? Do you have any idea?

DL: I don't know, but the first time at Squaw Peak...When I was a kid, do you know what they called it? Squaw Tit. (laughs)

EM: Oh, did they? I think they still do on the reservation. Yes, because we had some friends—and

DL: But that's what they called it. You know, I remember when that was white in August, year round.

EM: Yes, it stays white a lot, though, or for a long time.

NC: (unintelligible)

EM: Yes. We do have to meet somebody, but do you have anything about St. John's Day, any particular remembrances about any particular St. John's Day?

DL: Yes, I have remembrances about that, when I was a little fella. But you know, most of the remembrances I have...In them days, it was always in June. At one time, a farmer in Frenchtown would have bet his farm that it would rain every day in June, and nobody ever lost either. It'd rain a little bit maybe but sometimes all of June, and the mosquitos was a holy fright. I remember the women had white socks, and they were just red. Oh, they'd eat you up. Then the horse races in the mud. I'll never forget, too, go to church on Sunday, old buggies was coming from all over. Those Frenchmens would get in there and get crocked, and they'd unhook their horses and start betting. They'd run races from your place there—Bedard's place—clear through town. There used to be a lake there where Ockert (?) lives, there that used to be a pond. The flour mill was just across the road, a big mill there so that was power to run that flour mill, you see. They'd run, them Frenchmen, they'd come in a running and then they'd start arguing and then they'd run the race all over. They damn near run them horses to death. I remember—Pete could tell you the same—we got a kick out of it. We'd just sit there and watch them.

EM: There was another thing. Do you recall a Mardi Gras celebration separate from June, from St. John's Day?

DL: No, I don't remember that.

EM: How about New Year's celebrations?

DL: Oh, there was a big dance there. There used to be a convent and at the top of the convent was an immense thing. I've seen that so you'd thought the wall...There were so many people that you wondered how it held.

EM: Was there anything particularly French or French-Canadian about the New Year's celebrations? I mean traditions?

DL: Well, yes, the cooking it. It was all French, they'd all bring food there and everything, you know, and it was...St. John, that is a benefit, and they were real feeds that people came there. I remember when there was a special train from Butte would come—

NC: Now, what special foods do you remember they used to have?

DL: Oh, roast pork and chicken and everything. You never saw such food in your life. You'd say "the works." The women came and waited on the tables. They worked hard.

EM: Was there much singing or just dancing? Was there much music-making by the people who were there?

DL: No, there was just an orchestra there. Then there'd be foot races, ball games, horse races, three-legged races, and even race on your hands. People was just...Well, you couldn't imagine so many people. I remember they had a big, regular circus tent they'd put there and sell stuff. And the dust, oh, nothing was paved. The mud, my goodness.

EM: Well, I'm going to have to stop this—

[End of interview]