

Maureen and Mike

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**Oral History 209**

**Interviewer: Pat O'Connell**

**Interviewee: Larry Nash**

**August 27, 1988**

Pat O'Connell: Now this is August the 24<sup>th</sup> a Wednesday, and I'm at senior citizens in Polson, Montana with Larry Nash. My name is Pat O'Connell. Larry, you came here, how old were you when you came here?

Larry Nash: Eight.

PO: And what year would that have been?

LN: 1908.

PO: And was the town formed at all or not?

LN: The towns were open to sale, the lots were open to sale and we were allowed one business lot and one residential lot at the appraised value. My dad's business lot was in the (inaudible) that later was the café, the Evert Smith Café, that would be, and the residential lot was in the next block where the doughnut shop was.

PO: So your residence would have been?

LN: One block from our business block.

PO: From where that would have been right between the Hubbard Pharmacy and...

LN: No, between the doctor ...

PO: Willis.

LN: Willis's, his...

PO: Office.

LN: His office and the Pondera (Bar & Restaurant). It is now a vacant lot.

PO: And there used to be a doughnut shop there. The very last business in there was a doughnut shop?

LN: Yeah, it was by the barber shop.

PO: But you lived a block to the north of that. I mean your dad's store was a block...

LN: Yeah, his office was one block north of it.

PO: And what sort of business was he in?

LN: He was a lawyer.

PO: Now, can you tell me how come you came to Montana. I know your folks brought you but what brought them? And from where?

LN: My folks, my mother was troubled with asthma in Illinois and I don't know just where she was married either there or Iowa. My mother and father lived in Iowa, my two older brothers were born in Iowa. She was still troubled with asthma. They moved to Los Angeles and in Los Angeles she was still troubled there, and then their house burned so that was a good time to leave they thought. He had a brother who was also a lawyer up in Bellingham, Washington. I think at that time it was Fairview, and he wanted my dad to come up there and practice. Well, my family went up there and my mother still bothered with asthma. Then they heard about the Great

Northern Railroad building through Demersville there, or Kalispell. So in '91 they moved to Kalispell. Then my mother, they always said she was a third lady in Kalispell, not the third woman but the third lady.

That is where I was born in '99. November '99. You want me... and of course we... my two brothers being 14 V2 and 16 years older than I, they graduated from the first four year high school in Kalispell, the (inaudible) County High School. My mother having heard that a poor person could go (inaudible) in college at Stanford, so the two boys went to Palo Alto and thought they were going to Stanford University, but they were advised to go one year to high school there first. Then they both went, they were both there during the earth quake in 1906. My mother and I had been down to visit them and left there for our return just one week before the San Francisco earthquake.

PO: Your mother was lucky and you.

LN: Yes, we were.

PO: But did the boys, did the boys ever say anything about that earthquake?

LN: Yes, they both stayed in the hall there.

PO: At Stanford?

LN: Yes, one was taking electrical engineering and the other one was taking mining engineering, geology. And to help him with expenses he was peddling papers early in the morning and happened to be within falling distance of the stack to the heating plant.

PO: At Stanford?

LN: At Stanford, during the year when the earthquake happened. Another boy being also within falling distance was killed, and he was the only one that was killed, that is on the campus.

(Inaudible) The earthquake tore down the church steeple and the whole museum and the arch to

the quad they called it where the university buildings are. Of course, then the younger of the two came back to Montana and he proved up, he filed on a homestead up near by Libby in Wolf Creek country, and my other brother stayed down there and worked to rebuild the damage to the quake down there.

PO: Did he stay in...

LN: There was no school the rest of that year.

PO: Do you know if he went to San Francisco or he stayed in the Los Angeles area or Santa Barbara or what?

LN: I think he stayed in the Palo Alto area where the university was and then the next year he was married in 1908. Before he graduated twins were born, a boy and a girl. The girl is still living in Missoula

PO: She is?

LN: Yes, she's married to Tom Davis the football, the Montana football great.

PO: Larry, what do you remember about that trip going and coming to California? Do you remember anything about it? It was with your mother.

LN: I was with my mother. Of course in Seattle we were in the street car collision.

PO: You took the Great Northern?

LN: No, we took the Great Northern of course to Seattle...

PO: You were still living in Kalispell at that time?

LN: Still living in Kalispell with my mother.

PO: Did you have to go to Whitefish to catch the train or could you take it from in Kalispell still?

LN: No, it came through Kalispell, the main line. It came through Kalispell. Later it became a side line when they built the road up to Whitefish. And my mother and I of course stayed through the winter in California.

PO: You went from Kalispell out to Seattle on the Great Northern Train. Was that exciting for you?

LN: Not particularly.

PO: And what happened in Seattle?

LN: Well, we were happened to be on a street car that was going down the hill and they lost their brakes. They collided at the foot of the hill with another street car, but no one was severely injured. There was nothing done about it, I don't know of anyone being hurt.

PO: What did you do, did you stay at a hotel in Seattle or did you stay with friends or...

LN: We stayed with friends.

PO: And then you went on down.

LN: Went on downward, down to California.

PO: Took that coast train down to San Francisco.

LN: Yes.

PO: How long did you stay in Palo Alto?

LN: 'til spring.

PO: Oh, you stayed the winter.

LN: Yeah, 'til the week before the earthquake.

PO: Did you have relatives to stay with or stay with your brothers?

LN: No, we stayed in a rooming house there. My brothers were staying in the hall.

PO: You must have had an exciting time as a kid down there...

LN: During that time while we were down there, we went to Los Angeles, to Oceanside, and stopped there on the way back north. We got out of there a week before the earthquake, which we were lucky.

PO: Was there anything particular about the train, the kinds of trains?

LN: No, but we made another trip in 1908 about the same one, we stopped in Spokane and I went to school a week in Spokane and another week out in Horse Falls, visiting my uncle in Horse Falls, my aunt in Spokane, and a friend in Seattle, I went to school there a week.

PO: Did these people have kids or something and you went to school with them or you just...

LN: No, no. Well, my uncle they had children, my aunt had one daughter, but other places I just picked up with some boy and went to school.

We were in Palo Alto quite a while and San Francisco, I mean Los Angeles. While we were in Los Angeles I went downtown and picked on Sunday and picked up (?) three or four (?) and sold them on the way home.

However, on the way down we stopped in Spokane and we got off the train at Hauser, just outside of Spokane in the dark and my uncle, my grandfather, met us and took us to his home in Hauser. The next morning my mother and grandmother were yakking and yakking all the time. I managed to get down to my cousin's in Spokane and I thought maybe I might need a little money to get some candy with. Mother had some change so I just picked up her little purse and put it in my pocket and took off for East Indiana Avenue, where I had been before but I had never been in Hauser. I had no trouble finding it, when I got there my cousin was being bathed and my aunt told me to go out and play until she was through. I remember when I was there before, in town down the streetcar a ways, there was a candy store. I got on the street car and thought I'd go get some candy. Well the candy store happened to be only in the next block and I didn't get off, I went clear downtown.

PO: Poor Larry.

LN: I was seven years old and pretty soon they were hollering, "This car to the fair grounds, everybody go to the fair grounds, only five cents to the fair grounds." So I got on the street car and went to the fairgrounds.

PO: Imagine your mother at home!

LN: My mother, she wired it in the telephone, she wired to Kalispell. I was lost, according to her. So it got almost dark, I tried to get into a ten cents side show with a five dollar bill. I had spent the change. The ticket man had some plain clothes man come out and take me to over to the fair police station.

PO: That would be like a seven year old today coming up with a fifty dollar bill, wouldn't it? It was (inaudible).

LN: Yeah, I think so. Of course they asked me all kinds of questions, how I would have got back to my aunts if they wouldn't have found me. They published an article in *The Spokesman*, of course, that I was found.

PO: That you were on the loose and they'd better watch out!

LN: Yeah, and my aunt had no telephone so they telephoned a friend that lived across the street, they had a telephone They had contacted the police you know, so they called him and they came out to the fairgrounds and they took me to stay with him that night, he and his wife.

PO: Did your mother have anything to say about this?

LN: Well, not particularly. My dad of course arrived in Spokane the next morning or there after.

PO: Oh, he came too. His kid was lost.

LN: Yeah, of course as long as the fair was still on and he was there he might as well go to the fair, so he took me to the fair.

PO: It's a wonder he didn't take you to the woodshed.

LN: Well, I waited for that and I was kinda surprised. While I was sitting in the grandstand a horse on the far side of the track dropped dead, and everybody ran over to the other side of the track. I got up to go over and my dad says, "You better stay here." I hadn't had any paddling yet so I thought I'd better stay. He never did paddle me.

PO: Why today a kid would be no more safe doing that than anything.

LN: Well I don't know if he would or not, it might. He asked me if I was afraid that someone seen me take money out of the purse. I said no, I got someplace where there wasn't anyone to see me when I take any money out. To take me back, they asked me how I got back, I said well, I'll go out the way I came in, wait for car number thirteen that brought me out here. That car may be back in the barn by then you know. Anyway he took me out a different way than I came in. I didn't like that very well. We got home okay.

PO: Larry, here I was starting in about the beginnings of Polson, but we come to that. Now before I started talking to you, you were also telling me an interesting story about your great grandparents going to California and they had a sixteen year old daughter who rode horseback out there. Tell me about that, how that was.

LN: Well she had a sixteen, she was sixteen.

PO: These were your great grandparents?

LN: Yes, my great grandparents. My grandmother was sixteen and she had an older brother that rode a horse also. One time on a trip the Indians wanted to buy her because she was a red head, and her brother he said okay.

PO: He was willing!

LN: He said okay, and they had a hard time stopping them from buying her.

PO: Sounds like an older brother. What year did they go west?

LN: They left Illinois in '47 and they were out to the Snake River when the gold was discovered.

PO: They got news about that?

LN: They got news up there. I guess it was 1848 when they left Illinois, because 1849 gold was discovered. No, I believe it was in 1848 it was discovered.

PO: But they left Illinois before word of its discovery ever came out.

LN: Yes, and they went to San Francisco.

PO: There were two groups on the Snake River and then they parted?

LN: They parted there, yes.

PO: Where had your grandparents been originally going to go?

LN: To the Willamette Valley, in Oregon.

PO: But this group that was traveling, instead when they heard about gold, split and some went to California and some continued to the Willamette?

LN: Yes, some continued there to the Willamette Valley. And there were heirs, or offspring, or some of 'em are still living in the valley or were sometime here in my lifetime. I know that there were some of them there. I never even meet any of them.

PO: And your grandparents went to California?

LN: Yes.

PO: Your grandfather was a harness maker?

LN: Yeah, this was my great grandfather.

PO: Great grandfather.

LN: Yes, my grandfather was later a harness maker too. In Illinois and back in Chicago.

PO: How long did they stay in California?

LN: Just over the winter.

PO: And then how did they return to Illinois?

LN: They took a boat down to the isthmus and rode (?) across the isthmus, and then another boat to New Orleans and up the Mississippi River back to Illinois.

PO: To where they started. I wondered if it took them, it probably took them a year and a half or two years, do you imagine?

LN: Oh, for that whole trip, surely.

PO: And the girl rode horseback, and they were right back where they started from, huh?

LN: Yes, and this girl of course lived to be 82 and she lived with my aunt in Spokane and also with my parents here in Polson.

PO: What was her maiden name?

LN: My mother's maiden name was Ward.

PO: So this was the Ward family. Well, let's get back to Kalispell now. You came out from Illinois?

LN: No, my parents went by way of, I think they were married in Iowa. Then they went to Los Angeles, they were burned out there. He had a brother in Bellingham, Washington, who was also a lawyer, and suggested his brother come up and practice law with him. My mother was still troubled with the asthma there, so when she heard about the Great Northern coming west they moved to Kalispell, (inaudible).

PO: Now you said Demersville, and I am a stranger to this country and I don't know where Demersville is located according to Kalispell.

LN: It's south and east of Kalispell.

PO: Is it a matter of one mile or five miles or ten miles?

LN: Two or three miles.

PO: Two or three miles.

LN: Yes. Of course, when the railroad went through a little north of there, everyone moved up to Kalispell. Jim Hill of course bought that land and sold lots, so Demersville just disappeared except for one or two buildings.

PO: I was up there trying to find Demersville just two weeks ago.

LN: I tried several times, and I've finally decided where it was.

PO: Did you? And you finally decided it was about two or three miles south and east of there.

LN: Do you know where that cemetery at Four Corners?

PO: No, but I can find it.

LN: Do you know where Four Corners is? There's always been a saloon in Four Corners about two miles south of Kalispell, Highway 93, and the Demersville Cemetery was just west of that. Demersville itself was east of it there.

PO: How long did you live then in the Kalispell/Demersville area?

LN: In that area, well I came down here in 1908, and I spent the winter here not going to school because there was no school, and next spring, May and June, I went to an Indian school out about three miles east of Polson.

PO: Now you came from Kalispell to down here because there were going to be lots for sale. Who would buy them?

LN: My father, one business lot and one residential lot at the appraised value.

PO: And this would have been 1908?

LN: 1908.

PO: And did you come down in the spring or the fall?

LN: I came down in October, and my dad came down before that. My mother and I came down in...

PO: Could you tell me how you got from Kalispell down here?

LN: Sure, we took a train at Somers, and a boat from there to Polson, there was no road, no highway, no road and there were no cars either.

PO: And you got on the boat at Somers and you came down the lake, through the narrows, into Polson. Did you land where Koss Landing is now or where the mill used to be or where the ferry used to be?

LN: We lived where the docks are now.

PO: Is that where you got off the boat?

LN: That's where we got off the boat.

PO: And you lived where, what street would that be?

LN: That's on Main Street, between the Pondera and the dentist's office.

PO: Where did you get off the boat do you remember at all?

LN: Yeah, at the docks, there were two or three docks, right where they are now.

PO: Right where they are now.

LN: City docks.

PO: Oh good, so you got off there. Now had you father been down here before you and bought the lots?

LN: Yes.

PO: So you didn't see the sale of the lots or anything?

LN: No.

PO: But that was 1908. You came down in October of that year. Your father already had a lot for a house and a lot for an office.

LN: Yes, and the house was built.

PO: Was it?

LN: He had the house built.

PO: I had heard that so many people lived in tents.

LN: Oh, no doubt. Until they got a house built.

PO: And lots of carpenters came in and building people, and stayed in rooming houses or just any old way, and did a lot of building because there was so much demand for building.

LN: Yes.

PO: And I understand what they call Silkstocking Lane, which was Fifth Avenue East, West?

LN: East. West, west.

PO: West, Fifth Avenue West, that that was loaded with tents, with people, hoping to build a house.

LN: I don't remember that.

PO: Do you know if people settled on a lot? Say you put up a tent before the lots were for sale, on a lot, didn't you have first dibs on that lot for the appraised price?

LN: Probably, yes.

PO: I think so, because I was reading something about somebody that had come in here from Spokane and I think it was the sort of person that was investing, and he was just sort of highballing. He didn't plan to stay but was buying lots.

LN: They were only allowed one lot, business lot and one residential at the appraised value. I don't know if they could buy more lots at a higher price or not.

PO: I read someplace that he bought Mrs. **Renkman's** lot, she hadn't bought it yet and here she was all settled on it.

LN: Mrs. **Renkman's**?

PO: Uh huh, and she raised a fuss about it.

LN: If she's the one that I know she told 'em, got the lot back.

PO: She did, she did. That's what I understand that if you put your tent on a lot.

LN: Of course, her name wasn't Mrs. **Renkman**, the one that made all the fuss, she was Mr. **Renkman's** sister.

PO: Anyway, I read this about **Renkman**, and about this man from Spokane who'd been gambling on some of these lots.

LN: Mr. **Renkman** was himself a nice man and his wife was very nice, very nice lady too.

PO: And he had a sister...

LN: But the sister...

PO: Had a little more, she could tell a person.

LN: She used to have a temper and calling all the names she could think of.

PO: Well, then you came down and there was no school I hear because the (inaudible) hadn't started.

LN: No school. My brother was also here and the one that was an electrical engineer and there were no jobs for him when he graduated Stanford in 1908. So he bought the lot at the power plant where the power company offices are.

PO: That's behind the Security Bank and that would be on Third Avenue East.

LN: South. Third Avenue... East, yeah.

PO: Now where was your father's office? What buildings are there now?

LN: Well, he was in that mixture of things that they sell. The Grill Café was there for many, many years and finally my brother sold it to Evert Smith who had the restaurant there for many years. Next to Coppage (Insurance Company).

PO: That would be about.

LN: Between Coppage and *The Courier*.

PO: Had he built a building yet when you came down?

LN: There was, it was already built. There was just a small office building and then they built on to it. My brother and another man with the lot next to him ran a candy store and had a candy and cigar store, with a couple of pool tables in the back that winter. He used to try to coach me in arithmetic. Next May and June I went to the Indian school out east of town, boarded with the family that lived on Mrs. Poison's allotment. Mrs. Poison lived in a log cabin there and some people that rented her allotment by the name of Wilson. Another boy and I roomed there and went to the Indian school, which the teacher was a white man, Mr. Brown. He had four daughters and a son and later he became an Indian agent for the reservation and his oldest daughter just, she'd been in a nursing home here for about 10 years, she celebrated her 92nd birthday this month. This month or last month I forgotten which.

PO: Are there any other Brown children around there?

LN: No, however her children, her son, this girl's son, is married and has a (inaudible) Connelly, she married a man, a Mr. Connelly, who was also an Indian teacher in another reservation. When they retired they moved on to Finley Point here and soon after he passed away Mrs. Connelly moved into Polson and she is still a patient in the nursing home. Hadn't known any of them for years.

PO: But you say it was about three miles east of town on Mrs. Polson's allotment. And you stayed with Mrs. Polson?

LN: No, I stayed with the Wilsons.

PO: With the Wilsons.

LN: That ranch is, Dixon bought it.

PO: Senator Dixon.

LN: Senator Dixon bought it and now it's McAlpin's Dairy there. I think the land, the allotment, went up to the highway, where the highway is now.

PO: And the school was right in there close.

LN: The school was on the north slope of the hill just east of Mrs. Poison's allotment.

PO: Maybe we could ride out there someday and I could see where these things are. Can we get into the...

LN: Well, you know where the school, where the hill is. The road that goes over the hill, but you can look at the south side of it from the highway and the Indian, it was later an Indian agency, and later burned. So there's nothing to see there now except the bare hill which was owned by Dr. **Till** I believe. I don't know if his land went over that hill though or not.

PO: Did you know Mrs. Polson?

LN: Not particularly, no.

PO: Did you know her daughter?

LN: Yes.

PO: She was married a couple of times, wasn't she?

LN: No, Mrs. Alexander. She was of course half Indian.

PO: I even questioned whether she was half. I was wondering if her mother could have been a half herself.

LN: Well, I don't know about that. A lot of the Indians here were half, at that age when I came here there were a few full bloods.

PO: Mrs. Polson and the daughter and a son and Mr. Polson are buried down in Missoula.

LN: They are?

PO: In the old community cemetery. Its' near the Woodworm's graves and there was a son died about 1892, and I can't figure out what was wrong with him or what happened but he's buried there. Well then this town, Mr. Polson died in 1900.

LN: At that time there were lots of... probably a while before that there were plenty of Indians down in the Bitterroot and so she might have had a son buried down there.

PO: And Polson has also has his name on in Missoula County on the number fourth register of deeds down there and it's together with some.. I think it's on Cedar Creek.. and it's together with somebody by the name of Vanderberg and I forget the other person. Three of them entered the deed and Mr. Polson was the one that came into town and (inaudible). Now they named the town after Mr. Polson. Can you remember what you heard as a kid about the ferry and the town and the (?) stagecoach (run by the Allard family) that came here and things like that? I know you weren't here for it, but you must have heard a lot about it when you were young.

LN: I knew the stagecoaches came in and Holding had his shoe shop.

PO: Who?

LN: Holding, Mr. Holding. And he and his dad or he and his son they had a shoe shop and the ticket office for the stage. Holding lived on Silkstocking Avenue. But there was a ferry that would carry a team of horses across here until 1910. And I couldn't say who operated, I read about who operated but I've forgotten, they built a bridge in 1910, the first bridge.

PO: I imagined you helped them.

LN: . with two approaches. No, but I caught a fish once when I was, before the bridge was completed I caught a fish in the river, from the river.

PO: What I meant about you helping them, it seems like little boys always congregate at places like that where they're doing building and things, and watching sidewalk constructors. But old books tell about there being three people in this area: Mr. Polson one of them, and one the man that had the ferry, and someone else. They decided to name the town Polson, when the post office was here in 1890, but the town didn't start until 1908 did it.

LN: I don't think so because I had to...

PO: You couldn't get ownership of land until then.

LN: No, you couldn't. And there were some people here though before, a few, but when it was opened why of course that would be Brown and McIntyre and Grey built the Grandview Hotel. They all came from Kalispell. Later Brown built the store that was later Ed Funk's Department Store, and McIntyre went into the banking business, and Grey continued with the Grandview Hotel, which had groceries and clothing and the post office and dining room in it. I don't know, they operated I think until they burned down.

PO: And that is where what is now?

LN: That's where the Salish Hotel is.

PO: So it was across the street from the store that.

LN: From Brown's, that would be Brown's store.

PO: Where was the telegraph office? I know there were no telephones, and telegraph would have been very important.

LN: We had telephones about 1911 or '12 I guess. The telephone office, later my dad had an office across the street from the power office.

PO: Where the power office is now?

LN: Yes, across the street where.

PO: The lawyer's office is, the barber shop.

LN: Well, yes. And there's... the dentist had an office, what he was named, it starts with a P... My dentist had an office there later, and my dad had an office there for several years.

PO: Now I'm interesting more in the school. I think this is very interesting, of you leaving home to go two or three miles out in the country and live so that you could go to an Indian school. And Mr. Brown he was no doubt paid by the agent, Indian agent, or the Indian service or something.

LN: Yes, he was.

PO: About how many students were there in that school?

LN: Oh, I'd say about maybe thirty.

PO: And the Wilson's you stayed with would have three or four or five of their own. Were they part Indian?

LN: I don't recall that they had any, because a boy that roomed there and I were the only children.

PO: Who was the boy that roomed there?

LN: I don't remember, no.

PO: And you went there for how long would you say?

LN: I just went two months.

PO: Two months

LN: May and June. Then I went back to Kalispell that fall and went to a (?) Northside School.

PO: Did your mother go with you or did you room up there?

LN: No one ever when to school with me when I went and started school.

PO: Where did you live in Kalispell?

LN: At 420 Second Avenue East. That's where I was born.

PO: Was it your grandparents or rooming house or what?

LN: That was our residence in Kalispell.

PO: You kept a residence in Kalispell even though you had a residence here in Polson?

LN: Yes, for some time.

PO: So you had a home up there and a home down here.  
Larry Nash Interview, OH 209, Archives & Special Collections, Mansfield Library, The University of Montana-Missoula

LN: Yes. However, shortly after I went back there to that place my dad sold it and we roomed in. Well, one year I went to school at the Westside School, and then the next year I went to school a half day at a time before noon at the Methodist Church Annex, sat on chairs not as comfortable as these.

PO: How come there was no school for you?

LN: There was none built! There was a shortage of school.

PO: And everybody moving in.

LN: Yeah, and everybody moving in. And then the other half the year I went to the Northside School. My mother, while I was at school at the Methodist Church and the Northside...

(end of side A)

PO: ..house by the railroad tracks.

LN: My dad of course went down there in Polson and (inaudible) was selling chances through homestead. Chances for a drawing for the homesteads that were available to the whites after the Indians had got their allotments.

PO: I think they were also selling them at the Great Northern Depot in Kalispell or Whitefish and also at the depots at Missoula.

LN: They probably were. Only cost 25 cents to register and get a number. After everyone came in 1910 and got their filing spots they were entitled to; a lot didn't come and a lot that came didn't want to stay so there was still land available in 1911. And that's when my dad filed and my brother also filed on a homestead up on Sunny Slope.

PO: Now let's go back to 1910. You had the drawing at that time?

LN: Had what?

PO: The drawing of these chances.

LN: Before that, yes.

PO: Lottery I think it was, and it was drawn in Spokane?

LN: I don't know.

PO: I believe it was, and that there were three different areas that had drawings and that this area was the last one. There was a little girl from St. Ignatius who drew the lottery tickets out of a drum.

LN: I don't know...

PO: And the first one.

LN: I wasn't there.

PO: I think I read that someplace. Anyway your father had lottery tickets available.

LN: Yes.

PO: Chances or whatever you called it, which is not at all unusual they were selling them all over. They really got the people that came through on trains. Did you know that?

LN: Yes.

PO: Those people got off, buy up a couple chances, and go on.

LN: Some didn't show up, and some who did show up didn't like the looks of it the kind of land that was available.

PO: I think the first one was up around Big Arm, wasn't it?

LN: It could have been.

PO: The first one that took land or one of the high lottery numbers or first choice.

LN: I don't think I ever knew what number one. I heard that Ralph **Tolliver** had number two, but I heard different since then. I always thought he had number two.

PO: Then after they had their choice of those places, other people could get homesteads couldn't they?

LN: Yes.

PO: I imagine your father... and there were probably other lawyers in town too weren't there?

LN: Yes, there were.

PO: Because that would have been a big legal thing to get your land, the title to it and you know register your deed, so they would need quite a few lawyers I think.

LN: Of course they didn't get a deed until they proved up on it. They had to live on it a year and build a fence and a livable house before they could prove up on it. Then they had to pay so much an acre, a small amount. I never knew what the amount was.

PO: Did you ever hear of them paying the scrip from the Civil War?

LN: No, but I have scrip.

PO: From the Civil War?

LN: No, but I have scrip from Chicago, had during the Depression.

PO: Do you?

LN: Yes I do. I don't think I have it with me. I think I have it in my calculator at home. I don't think I have it with me. I wouldn't be carrying it with me because it would deteriorate in here.

PO: That would be the Depression of the 1930s, and they issued scrip in Chicago, the city of Chicago?

LN: Yep, they put a 2 cent stamp on the back of it and every time I spent it I put a two cent stamp on it. After they had 52 stamps they could get a dollar from the printer that printed these stamps which was an organization.

PO: I'll be darned, I never heard of that. But I did hear that they would scrip in the Civil War.

LN: They had two or three different scrips in Chicago during this time.

PO: Well, I heard that homesteading was sometimes paid for with a scrip, and that some man in Ohio cornered the amount of scrip, he was buying it like crazy after the Civil War when there was no use for it or this or that. He got it very cheap and then he sold it to homesteaders and they could use it for a dollar value. Now seemingly he bought it for a dime for dollars worth of scrip, and then sold it for 25 or 35 cents, and then the homesteaders could use whose face value was a dollar to pay for this.

LN: In Chicago we... a lot of merchants took scrip, but required that they also had an equal amount of money to go with it. They would take, for instance the gas station we might take twenty percent in scrip and the other eighty percent they had paid in cash. Because the company, I couldn't buy any gasoline, I had a gas station next to Cub's Park.

Larry Nash Interview, OH 209, Archives & Special Collections, Mansfield Library, The University of Montana-Missoula

PO: Were you in Chicago?

LN: Oh yes, I was there fifteen years.

PO: What years did you go to Chicago?

LN: Well I went there in '23 for the first time.

PO: So you were a green, young kid and you were out to make it and see the world.

LN: I left the university in Missoula and I went up to Glacier Park to wrangle dudes on horseback you know. At the end of the summer I got a ride on a cattle train to Minneapolis and took a bumming trip down to Oklahoma and then back to Chicago.

PO: That's same old kid that got loose in Spokane, isn't it?

LN: The first time I been east of Glacier Park. Three hours after I arrived in Chicago I applied for a job driving a Yellow Cab. A week from the day I landed there I was driving a little... I drove a Yellow Cab for two or three months and then I went to Mexico.

PO: You did, Larry?

LN: Yeah, I went down there. I had a brother down. my geologist brother was in the oil business down there. He was manager of city service oil business and he offered me a job when he heard I was driving a Yellow Cab. So I went down there and stayed three years. That is I had a months vacation each year. I didn't take any vacation the first year. So the next year I took maybe two months vacation and I came up and wrangled dudes in Glacier Park for two months. I met my first wife when I was up there the first year.

PO: So twice you wrangled dudes in Glacier?

LN: In Glacier Park, yeah.

PO: Well what an interesting thing, and then certainly tells any little kids that get loose in Spokane and carry on the way you did and then he goes to Oklahoma bumming and then he goes to Mexico.

LN: Well, this bumming was a variety of ways. I bummed on freight cars, and I bummed on passenger cars, and I bummed on empty oil tankers, a train full of empty oil tankers, from Bartlesville, Oklahoma to Tulsa. That was the roughest ride I ever had. (?) drove past the empty cars, and boy they bounced.

PO: When you said you went east on a cattle car, did you accompany a group of cattle or something?

LN: Yes, it was a cattle train and different owners had car loads. I had the butcher in Havre. First when I got out of there I went down to Great Falls or down to Billings, and then I went back up to Havre.

PO: After you got out of the university?

LN: After I got out of the Glacier Park in the fall. I worked around there for several jobs. Then a butcher gave me a ticket to Chicago with his two car loads of cattle. I only went as far as Minneapolis. I stopped there to visit a couple I knew, and then from there I bummed down to Lincoln, Nebraska and on to Oklahoma and back up. I came back up to Chicago and applied for a job driving a Yellow Cab three hours after I landed there.

PO: Now when you went with this load of cattle, on this cattle train, then you slept and ate in the caboose of the train?

LN: Well no, no we were... the brakemen were the only ones that were in the caboose. We just slept in the car, in a passenger car.

PO: They had a passenger car on there?

LN: Yeah, we didn't have any sleeping quarters that I remember.

PO: But they did have a passenger car?

LN: They had one passenger car.

PO: And did a number of other people...

LN: Oh yes, there were other men that were with other cars. There were maybe 20 cars of cattle and some maybe had three or four cars and some only had one.

PO: And you got a free ticket for every load of cars full of cattle? Were you supposed to do anything for the cattle?

LN: There was nothing really that we could do. They stopped...

PO: For feed and water.

LN: For some feed and water. But they had always someone there to feed and water them.

PO: You didn't have to prod them out of the cars or back in?

LN: No, no, that was done. We just went along with them. One man was going to Detroit to work for the Ford; he heard that Ford was paying five dollars a day for help at that time.

PO: And that was good wages and you wanted it!

LN: It was good wages, but I didn't go to Detroit. He was. He was from Havre and he was going to work for Ford. I was just going.

PO: Just for the fun of it.

LN: Yeah, I was going here and there.

PO: Did you see relatives in Illinois when you were there?

LN: Well, when I got there I went to the YMCA and got a bath and went to the depot and got my suitcase that I shipped along, just express you know. I was getting low on money so I wired my parents—there was no telephones here then, no long distance anyway—and I got a return wire to meet my uncle at the YMCA at four p.m. that day or the next day, I've forgotten which. So the next day a couple, a man and his wife, met me and we visited, and four o'clock came along. I told them I was supposed to meet my uncle here at four o'clock and this man said why I'm your uncle. His name, he had changed his name when he was young, after one marriage he had changed his name to a different name. He had his present wife with him and I had never heard of this name. My mother corresponded with him and corresponded with his son who wasn't living with him, he was a cowboy and was here and there. He was originally Al Ward and one time he was married the first time he changed his name to Addison.

PO: That was probably his wife's maiden name, huh?

LN: No, that was the name of some man in the town that he lived in! No one ever knew why he picked Addison. My mother never told us that he changed his name. In fact he came out here to my, he and his wife Mrs. Addison, came to my parents fiftieth anniversary here as Al Ward. Everyone here met him as Mr. and Mrs. Ward. He was a man, I think during his first marriage he maybe he left home and not show up for a while after a couple children are born, why his wife divorced him, naturally.

PO: I can imagine.

LN: And then he married a young girl, I think she was 16 or 17, who didn't have much schooling. She was making balloon ascensions in these round air balloons and sometimes coming down in a parachute and sometimes take a dog up with her.

PO: I bet this was exciting to you as a kid wasn't it.

LN: One time she landed on a windmill in Midland, Texas. These are at celebrations at...

PO: Celebrations or fairs or carnivals.

LN: Yeah, and my uncle at the time was, he guaranteed to ride two horses standing up. Any two horses that they could put his harness on. He was a harness maker. That was his trade and any two horses that they could put his harness on he would.

PO: (Inaudible) that would be what kind of harness? I mean how was the harness made?

LN: Well, there was a harness so the two horses couldn't separate...

PO: Yeah, that's what I was wondering.

LN: ..yeah, very far. Then they lived in Chicago after they got through traveling and he married her, this girl. And they went to Chicago and settled down as a harness maker.

PO: He became a big boy. In Polson then about 1910 they had the auction of the land, I mean the drawings for the land and people took up land.

LN: Yeah, they came and settled as homesteaders in 1910.

PO: Now this is part of Flathead County at the time, Polson was. It hadn't become Lake (County) yet.

Larry Nash Interview, OH 209, Archives & Special Collections, Mansfield Library, The University of Montana-Missoula

LN: Yes, that's right. It didn't become Lake until '23.

PO: The records are all in.

LN: My wife, Kathleen Dunn, and her parents came here in 1910. He was a carpenter, and a good carpenter, but there was no work, they didn't do any building in the wintertime. So in the wintertime he fished and hunted. Her mother being a practical nurse and a midwife was occupied through the winter nursing and delivering babies. Kathleen's brother, who was here a couple weeks ago, said he had at one time had his mother's two books that she registered all of the babies that she delivered. There were over 800 names in one book and over 800 in the other book. She delivered over 1,600 babies here.

PO: You mean here in Polson?

LN: In Polson.

PO: For heaven's sake. And that was Kathleen Dunn, what was her last name before?

LN: You ask Clarice here who delivered her babies. Mrs. Dunn, half of 'em. Some of 'em someone else delivered. You ask the **Haus** who delivered, well you couldn't ask the **Haus** who had the babies, but all of their babies were born, she delivered all of theirs.

PO: Now she delivered them in their homes?

LN: Yes.

PO: Can you remember when the hospital here started?

LN: Well, Mrs. Dunn started Dunn Hotel which was a hospital too.

PO: And where was that?

LN: That's where the water plant is, across the street from the court house. The first hospital though was on Second Avenue East across from the B & B.

PO: There was sort of an oil station or a couple houses there or something.

LN: I think the next one was next to the B & B.

PO: Where Bishop's Agency was?

LN: Yeah, where Bishop was or visa versa. You know I've forgotten now. My niece Jane was born, out on the homestead, but her younger brother was born in the Bishop Building, and I think the first hospital was across the street from there.

PO: Now where was Mrs. Dunn's? Up here across from the court house, but I can't figure out exactly.

LN: On First Street East, it's a locker plant now.

PO: Oh, the lockers, yeah lockers.

LN: It's a two story building.

PO: It used to be a meat market in there too, didn't it?

LN: Yes, downstairs.

PO: Now there's lockers. Now let's see, there was that...

LN: And then the next hospital after this one on here was the Davidson's home.

PO: Dr. Davidson's home?

LN: Yeah, Mr. Davidson, the banker.

PO: Oh, he was the banker.

LN: Yeah, banker Davidson's home. He sold it and bought a lot of land out east of town which he sold to Dr. Till.

PO: What year did you come back here, Larry, after going around here, there and the other place?

LN: Well I went down... well, I of course was going down to Stanford in 1919. I just went to school two quarters and then I came up there and worked, stayed out here. Then I went down to the University of Montana, went two years down there. I worked here in the summer, but after the second year I went to the Glacier Park.

PO: What were you interested in in college, what was your idea when you started, were you just going to college or did you have an idea?

LN: I thought I'd take up geology. My brother was a geologist, but I really didn't get interested enough in it to continue in four years.

PO: Now, there were three banks in this town in the teens and I know that there was trouble of some kind or another. I understand that one of the families that had a bank lived very, very poorly for a number of years so they could repay their...

LN: Davis.

PO: Davis. So they could repay their.

LN: They paid every cent.

PO: And then what were the other two banks?

LN: That was the Flathead State Bank.

PO: The Davidson's bank?

LN: Yeah, First National was across the street on the west side of the main street, kitty -corner from F. Lee(?) Brown. The Flathead State Bank was just across the street. It was on the block that my dad had the lot in.

PO: Where the travel agency is now?

LN: Yeah, where the travel agency is, yeah. And the other bank, when it started I don't know exactly where it did start, but for a long time it was kitty-corner from the courthouse, where the library building was. I thought it started there, someone told me different.

PO: That would be where they're having the fair now or where they have the farmers market next to that...

LN: No, I don't think they are. That was you know where the post office is.

PO: Uh huh.

LN: Well kitty-corner from that was where the library was and the bank was in there first.

PO: Now who had that bank that was kitty-corner from where the post office was?

LN: Hanson and Johnson.

PO: And now Hanson is up Security Bank at the end of that lot at the other end of that block.

LN: Yeah, he owns the Security and State Bank, yeah.

PO: And then who are the other people that had a bank?

LN: Well, **Stipson** and McIntyre. There were several that started.

PO: And were they the bank across from Davidson's.

LN: On the first, yeah. The First National Bank.

PO: I know people around there talk about the Davidson's what a wonderful job they did, and it must have hurt them terribly to have paid back all that money.

LN: Yes, he had a son that. well he had a cashier that got away with some money and spent some time in Deer Lodge here I believe, when he had the bank. Then his son was a city clerk and like I say he had trouble with him, but he was never prosecuted. He fell off his horse out here and tripped into the lake and drowned.

PO: But there were three banks at one time in the town. When were the drugstores started? Do you remember the drugstores?

LN: Not too well. Man from Kalispell started a drug store where Hubbard's is now.

PO: Hubbard's Pharmacy they call it. It always seems like Hubbard's to me but...

LN: Offhand I've forgotten his name. Steele, Bob Steele. I think some of his family were in the bank in Kalispell, and later I believe there was a bank or a drug store across from Eddie's Drug.

PO: It would have been right by the bank that Stipson(?) and McIntyre.

LN: Yeah, but that was a drug store and it wasn't on the corner it was near there.

PO: Near there. Then let's see. What about the grocery stores? Say before, when you were eight and nine and ten and you went to get the candy?

LN: Well F. Lee. Brown had the first... well of course there was a grocery in the hotel and then F. Lee Brown took his grocery across to his building and they also had clothing and hardware in there. And they, of course Jim McIntyre had a clothing store next to Flathead State Bank, I think Harvard had it before that, Jimmy Harvard. He left that to take the clerk recorder's job so he. I don't know.

PO: Where was the post office when you were a kid? In the old motel or the old.

LN: In the motel.

PO: And your folks would send you up there for the mail.

LN: I guess so.

PO: Then, I'm running out of questions to ask you. I did have a bunch lined up but now I've forgotten them. What work did you do here in town? What work was your work here in town?

LN: My work, well I worked out on the homestead. I went out there on spring 1911.

PO: Your dad had a homestead.

LN: Yeah, he took 120 acres on Sunny Slope. My brother took 40 acres in the gulch that had a spring in it. I went to Kalispell for school in the fall of 1909. Then I didn't come back here until the spring of 1911 and at that time I went to the school where Sox Hirsch(?) lived. You know where Sox Hirsch lived? You know her... what's the man that writes for the Courier?

PO: Hugo Brick.

LN: No, before Hugo Brick.

PO: Can you tell me about where it was located? That was the first school in Polson.

LN: Well you know where Owen Marsh lived?

PO: The name of the house, and I forget where it was?

LN: Well anyway, this building was the closest building to the docks. The fourth and fifth grade students, when I came back here in spring of 1911, came down here for their Easter vacation and stayed. I went out and went to school there. It was the only school for me to go to here. Kathleen was in the fourth grade and I was in the fifth grade. Then in the fall or that summer they built all these country schools, Sunny Slope and Mountain View and one out on the East Highway here. Anyway after I went to school off in Sunny Slope for two or three years I broke my leg, a horse fell on my leg and broke it. I missed the last half of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. When fall came I came to town to school and Mrs. Bickford was our teacher, and Kathleen and I were both in the same grade then.

PO: And what school was that? Where was that school?

LN: That school is where the high school was.

PO: But they call it middle school now.

LN: Yeah, middle school, which later burned. The high school was there.

PO: But that was a grade school first.

LN: That was a grade school first.

PO: You went to school there and you lived about a block, two blocks away from it, two and half blocks away.

LN: And then after we went to high school she, Kathleen, went to Seattle to college and I went to Stanford University and we didn't see each other for sixty-five years.

PO: That's a long time.

LN: Then we were playing bridge here in the center where we are now and her partner said where are you from, and she said Kalispell, I'm a Kalispell girl. She said what's your last name, and she said Bowman. I knew Kathleen had married a Bowman, and I said are you the Bowman that had the photo shop in Kalispell for a long time. She said yes, and I said well you aren't a Kalispell girl, you went to school here in Polson with me. She said who are you? I said well I'm Lawrence Nash, I was (inaudible) Larry. She said well I'll be darned, you sat about three seats from me in the assembly room.

PO: In your school though, when you came back here in 1911 was there just one grade to a room or...

LN: There were two grades in that room.

PO: Was she in that room then?

LN: Well, she was in that room. She was in the fourth grade and I was in the fifth.

PO: Did you graduate from high school here?

LN: Yes, I graduated here too.

PO: So you didn't go to any other school after you were in fourth or fifth grade at the Polson School? Who was principal of the school at the time?

LN: Mr. Skaggers(?) or something like that was the principal when I started. Mr. Pace was the teacher the rest of school.

PO: What was your teacher's name in fourth or fifth, do you remember?

LN: No, I don't remember.

PO: Was it man or woman?

LN: It was a woman. Out at Sunny Slope we had different teachers and Mrs. . . . I should remember one of them but I don't.

PO: Didn't you work for the city here at one time?

LN: Well after I retired from the irrigation service.

PO: Oh you were with the irrigation service?

LN: I was with them 14 years... After I was at the gas station in Chicago the war came on, World War Two, and gas and tires were rationed, and they talked about stopping the baseball games, they didn't, but they talked about it. Part of my income was parking cars for the games, not only baseball but football games, once a week during the season. So I closed the station and went to Beloit and went to work in Fairbank Marsh's machine shops, and worked there during the war. After the war they went on strike and Leif Marsh's bookkeeper was hired up at a milk plant here in town and so he lost his book keeper and he told my brother...

PO: Are you talking about after the First World War or the Second World War?

LN: The Second World War. Verne Nelson was his bookkeeper until he started the locker plant. Then this Norwegian. do you know Mr. Pike?

PO: No.

LN: You don't know Mr. Pike. Mrs. Pike, she was, I've forgotten her name. Anyway he kept books then, until he started this milk plant collecting milk for a dairy in Missoula. My brother living here being a good friend of Leif Marsh they wrote to me. I wasn't doing anything in particular in Beloit while the strike was on. I took a few lessons in bookkeeping at night school. I came out and kept books for 'em, Leif Marsh, in '46. I stayed with him until he sold off to a couple of (inaudible), he sold out to a couple of Minnesota men or Wisconsin men. I didn't like working for them, so I got a job down at St. Ignatius working for the irrigation service. I worked for the irrigation service in 1917 as a ditch rider and timekeeper. In 1920, the summer of 1920, I rode ditch out in Valley View until the fall. Then I went down to help start the building of the Nine Pipe Dam. I didn't like commuting so far, so I came back to the homestead and spent the winter cutting wood and delivering it to Polson. The next fall I went back, I went to the University of Montana.

PO: What year did you parents die? Which died first?

LN: Oh my dad died first. He was... I can't tell you what year.

PO: Was it the '20s or the '30s or the '40s or the '50s?

LN: Well, he died in the '30s, my dad. My mother while I was living in Chicago she came to Chicago, spent two winters with me in Chicago. Jane also stayed with us one winter.

PO: Jane was your sister?

LN: Jane was my niece. Jane Stillings, she was born up on Sunny Slope in 1912. I was 12 years old. My brother, Howard, was 14 and a half years older than I.

PO: Did you mother die in Chicago or did she die.

LN: No she died here, when she was 82 I believe.

PO: So they're both buried here then?

LN: No, they didn't want to be buried up here in this cemetery because there was no grass, there was nothing but gravel there, there was no water up there on the hill where the cemetery is. So they bought two graves from Mrs. Grey out in Conrad Cemetery

PO: In Kalispell?

LN: In Kalispell. My mother had my dad buried there and then she was buried there too.

PO: I have a friend in Helena who will be 105 now the fourth of September. Her husband is buried in Kalispell and I've been wondering if she would or...

LN: She would have been buried probably in the Demersville Cemetery. Oh no, depending on when she died. No, she lived to be a hundred and some you said.

PO: She's 105 now, she's still living!

LN: Well, does she have a grave in Kalispell?

PO: Well that's where her husband is buried and I think probably she'll be buried there. You don't like to ask somebody 105, do you think you'll be buried up there Georgia?

I think we should stop now. I really meant to get all about Polson but your life has been so interesting Mr. Nash.

LN: Well I've got a couple of chores to do at the nursing home.

PO: I'll take you up there.

LN: I have a car.

PO: Oh you do.

LN: I drive.

PO: I know you do but I just thought maybe you were going to let me...

LN: I have to wheel. I don't have to, but I do wheel Clarence around the doctors' offices and the nursing home a half an hour every day.

PO: And that's Clarence, who?

LN: Clarence Owens who is 100.

PO: Just a 100, see my friend Georgia is 105, so she's older than him.

LN: We have... Anyway I also take my wife out of the wheel chair and walk her down the halls every afternoon.

PO: Is it hard for her to walk?

LN: No, no it's good for me to walk. That's one reason... Clarence likes to ride, he likes to be outside and I wheel him for the exercise and he gets the outdoor air.

PO: I know so many people in Missoula walk in the mall to get their walking done, particularly in winter. I've met friends down there that were walking so fast you wouldn't believe around that mall.

LN: Some say you have to walk fast. I don't walk very fast but I push a wheel chair with Clarence in it. Some days I double up, but not at one time but after the two trips around I may later on take two more trips.

PO: I think a mall to walk in is a marvelous thing.

(end of tape)