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This transcript represents the nearly verbatim record of an unrehearsed interview. Please bear in mind that you are reading the spoken word rather than the written word.

Oral History 53-01

Interviewer: Robert Castro

Interviewee: Bill McDonald

February 27, 1982

Bill McDonald: Then 100 feet or so that meant that he stopped and turned around and looked back. He stopped and looked back and then he dropped right there. He only lived a half a minute after pulling of the getter but if his tail was facing where the getter had been set, he'd be up there. I've had them go pretty near a quarter of a mile. They just went — they just beat it to beat hell, they never looked back nor stopped or nothing. But when they charged out there and stopped, which a lot of them would do, they'd be maybe 150 feet or something like that you know ...fifty yards or...

Robert Castro: How long did you work as a trapper?

BM: Well for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service I put in almost fifteen years.

RC: Almost fifteen years?

BM: Almost fifteen years with them, yes. But I trapped my first coyote in either 1916 or '17. Now I'm not sure which. It was during World War I days before I went into the Army and I trapped my first coyote in either '16 or '17. Because in the spring of '18 I went into the Army and then I caught my last one about 1975.

RC: 1975?

BM: About 1975 yeah, I caught my last one. You see I had retired and quit the coyote business but then there was something come up here that I went out again away later and this last time I went out, I just went and got six or seven coyotes. I went out and got six or sevens. Well, I was seventy-five years old then. That's about six years ago, yes. And I went out and got six or seven.

RC: That's pretty good. Do you mind if I see if the tape recorder is working?

BM: Yeah.

RC: O.K.

BM: This is working alright?

RC: O.K. Bill, I didn't get your story - all your story in the tape. Could you repeat that story over again? You were talking about bears ... trapping the bears and bringing them to Missoula and you said something about a grizzly bear.

BM: Well, see, the bear was protected. He had to be doing damage in order that I could go out and get him. In other words killing sheep or lambs or once in a while a calf. Or on the east shore here, they'd come down and tear into the fruit trees, the apple trees, you know, whatever it was. Then I was supposed to go get them. But the bear, he was protected and he had to be doing damage like that in order for me to go get him you know. So as I said, you ask me if I ever got a grizzly bear. Well, accidently I got one. This getter, this is up on the Swan River country and this getter was set for coyote, you know, as the getter - what they call the humane coyote getter and it was set for a coyote ... Well, this bear come on, this bear come along, this grizzly. Now he wasn't a big grizzly. I guess he was about a year old or maybe a little older than that. But he come on and pulled the getter like I said. Before you know, he took off, he got scared bad and he too off. But any time that he just, but there's lots of times when he'd be inquisitive and he'd, he didn't know what the hell happened, I guess. So he'd stop and turned around...he wasn't so far gone and wasn't so far away. But this bear - he had the guts and when he pulled it off; this getter was set by a bunch of brush. This brush was maybe ten feet across. So instead of him charging off and running off, he wanted to find out, I guess. But he just walked around the brush and, in fact, down he went. He just walked around the brush. I guess he was on his hind feet probably and he was looking for trouble because he laid there and he didn't go over about fifteen feet or so, from where he pulled the getter. And he laid right there. The getter was pulled. I stood and it was kind of timber not far from Goat Creek. But it was scattering timber and I could see quite a ways, you

know. I looked all around. I couldn't see no bear down. So then about this little bunch of brush is maybe ten or twelve feet across. So I just went around that and made a few steps around and there laid Mr. Bear right there. He only went about fifteen feet or so from where he pulled the getter. So he had to stay around there. It took a half minute or so. So I guess he was trying to figure out what the heck happened. And that's where he laid. That was the grizzly.

RC: What year was this?

BM: Oh well, that would be hard to tell, that would be hard. I trapped for fifteen years for the government, you know, almost fifteen years. And that would be pretty hard for me to tell what year that was.

RC: 1920s? 1930s?

BM: Let's see. . .oh, it could be up around 1940. It would be up in there because it would be past 1940. It would be later than 1940, a little later because in '56 I retired. February 1, 1956. And I worked fifteen years for them or just about - almost fifteen years. So it would have to be about 1942 or somewhere along in there.

RC: A lot of the old-timers around this area refer to you as "Coyote Bill" or "Trapper Bill". How did you acquire that nickname ?

BM: Well, I don't know, I don't know. Of course, like I said, I trapped my first coyote in 1916 or '17. Well from that time until '75 or '76, that's a long time. And, of course, that fifteen years almost that I worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I trapped. I worked for the two counties in Lake and Sanders, you know. So I didn't work as much in Sanders, but I did work some in Sanders County as well as Lake. So I guess that somebody just, well, I've been around for so long trapping coyotes and so on that I guess somebody just called me "Trapper Bill" or something.

RC: Did you acquire that name early in your career or later on?

BM: Later on, yes. No, they didn't at first. That was in the old homestead days, you know.

RC: Can you say something about your family and how you wound up coming to Montana?

BM: Well, of course, I was born in Canada, you know. The province of Quebec, Canada. And there was no coyotes there but the red fox was there and he's well named fox because he's foxy, he's foxy. Well anyway. Alright, before I went out in 1916, I went out to work in the woods in that Canada country. Twenty-six dollars a month and board. But before that when I was about fourteen or fifteen, the red fox is there. My dad had his ranch - 320 acres - and he had timber and creeks on it and the red fox was there. Just like the coyotes in the western country. So, before I was fifteen, I think it was the winter before I started to work out, I got five fox. That's what I started on. I got five of those red fox in that country. Of course, that was right in the winter time and I got about two and a half for a fox pelt. About two dollars and a half but at that time before I went out to earning money myself, two and a half was a lot of money because, I guess, that the first time, before I was earning money, that I ever had two and a half and that was by catching a fox. But I poisoned those fox, you know. That's the way I got the fox. I didn't trap them, I poisoned them.

RC: Where did your family come from? Your Dad, your Mom?

BM My dad and mom were both born right there in the province of Quebec, Canada out of Ottawa. Ottawa, of course, is in Ontario. It's just a short ways. They were born in the province of Quebec both of them. Their parents came from Ireland. See my granddad lived to be ninety-four years of age which I'm working on right now. I'm working on ninety-four but I just got started on it and (laughing) I don't know if I'm going to make it or not. He lived, he's the one that has the record as far as the McDonalds that I know of. He had the record (pause), he lived to be ninety-four. He came from Ireland when he was seventeen so that's a long time ago. And he died, then my dad died in 1927 . My granddad must have died about 1900, somewhere along in there.

RC When were you born? What year?

BM: I was born in 1889. February 11, 1889. I was born in the province of Quebec, Canada. Well, I lived there and in Canada, I worked out two long winters five and a half months each winter, about five and a half months each winter in the woods before I come West. Well, when I come West, I was nineteen years of age. It was 1918 when I come West.

RC: How did you make it here?

BM: Well, I come all the way through, I bought my ticket in the province of Ontario, Canada, Ottawa, Ontario. I bought my ticket right through to Great Falls, Montana. I was with an older brother and he had been up in Alaska for a couple of years. He was about seven years older than I was. He come back just on a visit and was back there for a month or so. So when he was going to leave, I was haying for a fellow by the name of Jack Holmes. He lived about a mile from our place and I never forgot about this. So he come over ... this brother of mine came over. This is on a Saturday evening. It was just about supper time and he was going to leave Monday morning to go west back to Alaska, see. This older brother of mine, he'd been up there a couple of years. Well, so he came over to Jack Holmes. I had no idea of going west. I was working for Jack Holmes haying. So he come over and he said "Well, Bill, what are you thinking?" "I'm leaving Monday morning" and he said that Tom, that's another brother of mine, he was here up on Sun River out of Great Falls working for the Reclamation Service. (Interviewer gets up to close a door because of background noise...a door is loudly shut.)

RC: It's kind of loud.

BM: That was another brother that was the one younger than Pat. But he was about six years older than I was. Tom was already here working above up on Sun River out of Great Falls. Pat says, "Bill, I'm going West, I want to leave Monday morning". This is Saturday evening, right at supper time. And he says "I'm going to leave Monday morning and if you want to go West.." I'd never thought anything about it but he said "If you want to go west, travel with me" and he said "I'm going to Montana". He said this word from Tom from a letter or something. He said if Bill wants to come west, he could get a job here with the Reclamation Service. My brother, Tom was

foreman for them. So I can remember well, this is right at supper time so this Jack Holmes that I was working for, I said to him "Well, I guess I'll go". So Holmes said "When are you going to be leaving Bill?" So he went over to this little kitchen cabinet or whatever it was up on the walls and he reached up there and he got a five dollar bill. Now I'd worked five days for him haying. And he reached up there and got a five dollar bill and he come over and handed it to me. So that Monday morning we pulled out. Yes, and we bought our tickets.

RC: (interrupting) To the train?

BM: When we got to Ottawa, we bought our tickets. It was twenty-eight miles from our place to Ottawa and that was in Ontario. We bought our tickets right straight right all the way through to Great Falls, Montana.

RC: You took a train here to Great Falls?

BM: It was all train in them days. Oh yes, it was train. That was in 1908, July in 1908.

RC: What did you do when you arrived in Great Falls?

BM: Well, we just stayed in Great Falls like I said. I had a brother up Sun River working for the Reclamation Service. This Tom, an older brother, but he was younger than this P.J. So we just, when we got into Great Falls, we took some kind of a stage outfit a little ways out. I think the place was named Vaughn, and that's where we got off. We went on up and we went to work for the reclamation service this next day up on Sun River. So then I worked there that fall for just about three months and we finished up. We finished up late about the first of October, we finished that job. And this older brother of mine, Tom, he had bought a place up here out of Somers. I think it was fifty-six acres that he had bought about two miles out of Somers. So he was going over there to his place when they finished this job up so I went with him. We went over and then that winter I worked out in the woods some. We went to Tom's place there. I worked out in the woods that winter some for Bill Kramer up there by Somers.

RC: Was there a Ben Kramer, too?

BM: Yes, Bill Kramer. Yes, there was two Kramer's. There was Bill, that was Bill that lived there right there close to Somers, Bill Kramer. And...(Pause)

RC: Ben Kramer?

BM: The other one was Ben. That lived here not too far from Poison, Ben. He lived down in here somewhere. . . Ben Kramer, yes.

RC: I heard a lot of stories about this Ben Kramer. What kind of character was he?

BM: Well, I didn't know much about Ben because Bill was the one I worked for. And he lived up there, well, he lived up from where my brother had this 56 acres. Kramer didn't live more than a half mile from there... that Bill Kramer.

RC: Was he anything like his brother - like I heard that Ben was a pretty rough fellow?

BM: Yes, I guess Ben was, oh, as far as I know, he treated me alright. I worked for him that winter quite a bit in the woods there swamping and then the next spring, now he had got to this. Bill Kramer had got out a lot of ties, a load of ties out for him at Somers. That would be in the spring in 1909. That's just before I come down here on the reservation. That's the spring of 1909. These ties he had, I don't know, he had them in the lake. We had to load them out of the lake. They come up on an endless chain out of the water, out of the lake. They had them in a boom in the lake. They'd come right up there one right after another. Bill Kramer was down there Himself with the pike pole pushing them onto this endless chain. That brought them right up on this place where we were loading the boxcars. And we grabbed them ties and loaded them in the boxcars. We were wringing wet from here down, you know, all day cold. (Laugh) Yes, yeah, well, then now that was the spring of 1909. Then June the 13th 1909 I came down here to Poison on the boat, on one of the old boats.

RC: Klondike?

BM: It wasn't the Klondike. One of them, I think it was called the.. it was either the Flyer or the Montana, the boat I came across the lake on here to Polson. Now that is in 1909. That was June 13, 1909. That's when I came down to Polson.

RC: Had you been here before?

BM: No, I'd never been here before but Tom, my brother that had worked for the Reclamation, he was foreman all the way. He had been over on Sun River but he was transferred over here by that time and he was working down here out of St. Ignatius at that time. That was when they first started for the Reclamation Service first.. .put in ditches on this reservations for water for irrigating, you know. So, Tom was located down at the Mission. So, I tolled into Polson here on June 13, 1909. Davey Dowd drove the stage - a four horse stage, there was no bus stages at that time. Davey Dowd, drove the stage from here to Ravalli and I rode with him from here to St. Ignatius. That was June 13, 1909 and the next day I went to work for the Reclamation Service up above St. Ignatius on Mission Creek. We were putting in a head works up there for irrigation ditches for irrigation.

RC: What was your impression of Polson? Do you remember how it was? The bridge wasn't built then. (Pause) Were there Indian teepees around and Indians walking around?

BM: Yes...(big grin) Yes, well, Polson at that time as I remember, of course I wasn't long in Polson, because I came across the lake and eat here at noon, eat lunch down there. I believe that I'm sure that at that time the Lake Hotel had been built at that time. It was here and I think that's where we eat was in the Lake Hotel as I remember.

RC: Did you come down with somebody?

BM: Well, my younger brother came with me across the lake, yes.

RC: What was his name?

the stage and
this hill out

BM: Ed. That was Ed. Yeah, alright, we rode. Davey Dowd was driving the stage and he went up this hill, the very road that goes up this hill out of Polson here today. That was the road we went up. Now we didn't go around where the highway is that you know. There was no highway then. We went up by this hill by the hospital. That road, I can't see much different than it is now and what it was at that time. It's just about the same. But we went up and then we went on down. He changed horses down around Ronan. It guess it was right in Ronan he changed horses. Four horses he used on that stage that he was running. And we went on down, of course we got off in St. Ignatius. And the next day I went to work for the Reclamation Service.

RC: What kind, of ride was it? You got to ride from Poison to the Mission. Was it a rough ride?

BM: Well, (laugh) it was. I guess people - I kind of figured it would be rough at this time because they've been riding on smooth roads but at that time we thought nothing of it because that was what we were used to was wagons and buggies and horses and riding horses and stuff. We didn't have no smooth oil roads at that time.

RC: Did you ride on top of the stage or were you a passenger?

BM: No, I was in the stage. On the top they put.... that's where they....no, on the top as I remember there was a kind of little rack about this high that went around on the top. And they put their suitcases up there because they'd have the stage sometimes be loaded, you know. I don't know how many it held. Maybe four or five passengers. This....four or five and it would be loaded. As it loaded that day, as I remember, but we sat inside in the stage I know. Yes.

RC: So...were there Indian teepees right around Poison at that time ?

BM: Oh yes, there was Indian teepees right here in Polson, sure. Oh yes.

RC: I remember you telling me a story one time when you first came here to Poison. You remembered the Indian women hand rolling their cigarettes. They had Bull Durham tobacco.

BM: Oh yes, they were rolling their own, yes. The Indian women were, sure. That's one of the things I noticed. I guess I had never seen very but darn few Indian women before that I come here to Polson. And ... yes ... they were rolling their own, yes. Yeah, they were rolling their own. (laughs).

RC: What was your impressions of Indians or the Indian women when you first came?

BM: Well, of course they were new to me because where we were raised there was no Indians. Where I was raised there was only four nationalities and there was hardly anybody else. There was no Italians, no Greeks, no Bulgarians or anything like that. There was four nationalities and that was just about all in all that country that went to school where I was raised. There was four. There was the English, the Irish, the Scotch and the French and that's all there was. That's the kind of people there was...went to school at that...where I went to school in them days, it was all small school houses you know. There'd be every three or four miles, there'd be a school house and they didn't go to town to school at all, they were all built in the country. Or maybe a little village, you know. Yes, we had when I first started to go to school, of course, I never had so far to walk. I didn't go to school before I was nine years of age because I had about two and a half miles to walk. But that's where I went about the first season that I went. I was nine years of age and I walked the two and a half miles. We had no school busses in them days and then later on they built a school house, a Catholic school house, just a half mile from where my dad's ranch was and then that's as far as I had to walk a half a mile. Yes, a half a mile to school. But the first year I had to walk about two and a half miles. So the kids didn't start going to school at six or seven years of age at that time cause there was no buses and they had to walk.

RC: What was your impression of the Flathead area? Was it beautiful to you or it didn't mean too much?

BM: Well, it was a lot different from where I come from where I was raised because... and it was a new country and, you see, them days the only people they never got far from home until they got to where they were earning money themselves and then, of course, they went further. But up until they got to earning money themselves... they didn't go far from home. They stayed right at home and, you see, before I earned my own money I never was. . .the furthest I was ever away from before I was sixteen or seventeen years of age and earned my own money was thirty-five miles. That's the furthest I was ever away from home. And that was with my dad going to the city. It's a big thing to go to the city, you know. We had around thirty miles to the city, to Ottawa. And before about one year before I went out to work. So I would be fifteen at that time I made a trip with him to Ottawa. Them days, one thing about the kids, they could snare the snowshoe rabbits, see. And...that country in that kind of country, there was quite a few on my dad's ranch, there was quite a few snowshoe rabbits. So we snared them. And that's the way before we went out to work for ourselves, that's the way we got a little spending money cause the storekeeper, we would take them down to the village storekeeper and he would give us, I think, it was fifteen or twenty cents that he would give us for one of those snowshoe rabbits. And so I used to snare a few of them for a year or two before I went out to work. Oh yes. Well...it's altogether different now. But them days the people were satisfied, of course we were a healthy family. And it goes to show it now because I'm the third one in this family, the third boy to make ninety-three years of age. So we had to be healthy. There's only one in the seven of us, there was five boys and two girls. There was only one that didn't live. ..forty-nine years of age...my youngest sister, she lived to be forty-nine but she got...I forget now what she died of...but outside of that, all the rest of us, at least lived to be up in the seventies and the three of us I'm the third one to make ninety-three. If I have good luck, I may make ninety-four. (laugh). But the way I look at it, it doesn't make much difference about the ninety-four but the only McDonald that I know of, as far back as I know all of them, was my granddad. He did make ninety-four. He got to be ninety-four years of age. But he's the only one.

RC: So you arrived in Mission in about...ok, you said 1909. That's before the reservation was opened up for white settlement.

BM: Well, they just opened it in 1909. I don't know about any, I don't think that they that the homesteaders, I don't think the homestead opened until the spring of 1910. I think it was the spring of 1910 that they really opened it. But there was white settlers there, most were married to the Indian women here was French. They're mostly French. The French and the Indians seemed to get along good and the Frenchmen, the names that are still here right in this county on this reservation...the Allards, the Pablos and all them. Now there was one Scotch outfit, the McDonald's, they were from Scotland. They wasn't from Ireland, them McDonalds but they come here and married with the Indians and there was quite a few of them. And there is yet! There's a lot of them McDonalds here yet that married with the Indians. But outside of that it was Pablos and Allards and Buskies and all them French that married with the Indians. They mixed with the Indians good, the French.

RC: Did you know Charlie Allard?

BM: Yes, I knew Charlie Allard and I knew all them old McDonalds that was breeds (cough). The breed ones I knew quite a few of them. That Archie McDonald was a very good friend of mine and... (long pause).

RC: What kind of fellow was Charlie Allard?

BM: Well, of course, I didn't know him too well, you know. I knew of him but I didn't know him too well...I really don't know much about him. But see...

RC: Did he drive a stage?

BM: Joe Allard...No, their sons...of course I knew Joe Allard. He lived right over north of the Mission by the foot of the mountains. But...I didn't hardly know Charlie Allard. I knew Joe. And then I knew Joe's - one or two of Joe's sons. Sidney was one, Sidney Allard and that was one of Joe's sons. Yes.

RC: Charlie used to drive stage, didn't he?

BM: Yes, I guess he did, I think Allard, yes. The one the stage that I rode on was driven by Davey Down. That I rode down on here June the 13th nineteen-nine.. .down by St. Ignatius. That was Davey Down... drive that stage.

RC: What was the name of the stage company? Do you recall?

BM: Darned if I know. Well, I suppose that...them horses that outfit probably belonged to that Davy Dowd. Now I don't know. But he lived at the Mission, this Davy Dowd. He lived at St. Ignatius. I found that out afterwards when I went down to work down there. St Ignatius that's where he'd lived or did live. But at that time he was driving stage when I rode with him.

RC: So you arrived in Mission. Ok, what did you do then? What kind of work?

BM: Well, I went to work for the Reclamation Service the next morning. Oh no, I got down there at noon. Let's see...damned if I know. I guess I got down there in the afternoon. And then the next morning I went to work for the Reclamation Service. I went right up Mission Creek and went two miles above St. Ignatius and that was the first ditch they put in. The first Reclamation ditch that they put in. Mission B, I believed they called it, if I remember right. And the next day, that would be the 14th of June nineteen-nine I went to work for them, for the Reclamation Service, yes, the next morning. Just right up the...one of the first jobs I had, after I got to work for them was putting in...they run...they were fixing the camp at Dry Creek, that's north of the Mission. And they run a telephone line, it was just with short poles as I remember, these poles they were only about twelve feet high. And that's the first job I had with the Reclamation Service was digging them holes and putting in them poles for that telephone line. And we had to dig them about three foot deep, you know, we had to dig for them poles. And that was hard ground too. And that's the first job I had was for the Reclamation over here. I'd work for them a little on Sun River, you know, before that. But.

RC: How long did you work for the Reclamation here in Mission?

BM: Well...all together... let's see...I must have put in about five years for the Reclamation Service all together ... because I rode ditch for them after I had worked ...we...put in I worked on that dam, that Ninepipe dam, down here you know by Charlo. I worked on that Ninepipe dam on the forms for the concrete there from the start to finish on that dam. And I put in about five years at the Reclamation Service I guess all together. Yes.

RC: So what did you do before you joined the army? Between the time...

BM: Well, I homesteaded...of course I worked for the Reclamation Service after I homesteaded but I homesteaded you see in March 1911. In March 1911, I homesteaded one mile, about a mile southwest of Charlo down there. That's where I homesteaded. That would be in March 1911.

RC: Was the town of Charlo there then?

BM: Oh yes. Yes, the homesteads were pretty well all taken up you know. It seems to me...this fellow relinquished to me, relinquishment they called it, and then I filed on it. As I remembered, this fellow relinquished, he had already filed on that forty acres but he relinquished it to me and then I had to file on the...start all over again you know. He hadn't proved up on it you see.

RC: Who was the fellow? Do you recall his name?

BM: This fellow was...I think his name was Martin, if I remember right, and he was from the coast out here...I don't know...Seattle or Portland, out around there. No, I think it was Seattle, out around Seattle. I believe that's where he come from. So after he'd filed on the homestead and was there a few months or whatever it was, maybe he was there six months. I guess he kind of decided he'd get out so I bought him out. But he didn't...I didn't have to pay him very much, about 300 dollars or something like that I'd paid him.

RC: For how many acres?

BM: Forty acres. Yes, then of course I had to homestead it, you know, cause he hadn't proved up, you see. So I had to go ahead and start in just like he did homesteading. Then I relinquished it. I never proved up on it either. I had two years but you had to, you could prove up in fourteen months at that time, a piece of land on this reservation. But you had to live pretty steady right on the land if you proved up in fourteen months. But then you could take two or three years and you could bit a lot you know apparently. So I relinquished to this fellow by name of Martin. (long pause)

RC: So what did you do after you quit the Reclamation? Did you start trapping afterwards before the First World War?

BM: Well, I lived on my brother's ranch, that was west of Charlo, about five miles west of Charlo.

RC: Which brother was this?

BM: That was Tom. I lived on that ranch...he lived there part of the time. But a lot of the time I lived on the ranch and took care of the ranch and I had a few horses and a few cattle. And for about five years there, I lived on the ranch and I had horses of my own and a wagon. And I bought a brand new wagon and things like that. I used to...I worked some of the horses for the Reclamation Service and then I'd go thrashing in the fall of the year with the horses. The bundled team, you know, hauled bundles. And...yes, I put in about five years there in the ranch. Well, when I went in the Army I was working for the Reclamation Service at the time I went in the Army. That's the spring of 1918. And of course, we had our sale in March we had our sale. Because I knew I was going to go in the Army or have to go. So we had our sale on the ranch there in March and sold all ours, my brother and I. And he had about half the stock and I had the other half. And we sold everything. Then when I was called to go in the Army I was working for the Reclamation Service then. And Dexter, was the...well, he was in charge of that Post A Reclamation Camp there. And I was riding ditch right down by the a_____ when I was called. Well at that time Dexter told me now he said, "If I didn't want to go in the Army, I didn't have to go." because he'd figured that he could put in that he needed me and I was riding ditch and so on

and so on and getting his shoes for going. So he come down and told me that. And he said, "You don't have to go unless you want to." I said, "I'll go, I'll go." So that's when I went. I went in the Army, yes.

RC: What division were you in? In the Army? Do you remember?

BM: I was in company 31. I remember that. I got my discharge papers yet I haven't looked at that for years, you know. I was in company 31 and oh, I think they called it the Depot Brigade or something like that they called it. Yes. yes.

RC: Did you see action?

BM: No. No, I was in six months in the Army. Well, I went in, you see, in July 1918. The first part of July. It was after the fourth. I come out in January 1919, I come out of the Army. I was in just about six months, yes.

RC: So why were you guys called the Depot Brigade?

BM: Well, that's what they called it, damned if I know. That was, well, you were not assigned to any division. Then now, I tell you, one time during this time, I could of went to France one chance, one time. But I'll tell you what they told me...if I went...they told me now there's a chance for you to go to France but you'd be handling horses. They ask me and I suppose they had my reputation that I could handle horses because I'd handled them all my life. And I said, "No, I'm not going to handle horses in France," I said, "I've handled them here. No, I'm a fighting man. If I go to France, I said, "No handling horses". So I didn't go. I could of went to France and handled horses, yes.

RC: So you learned how to box in the army?

BM: Oh, I boxed a little but...

RC: I heard you're pretty good with your fists.

BM: Well in 1912 we were in, we were camped at Post A down here. You see we put in that dam in 1910, 1911 and we were camped, I believe it was 1912. But there was a bunch of engineers and I was working with them. I was driving team for the engineers and it was about five of them. We're surveying all over that country locating corners and locating this piece of land and that. And then all when they were building ditches and all that in 1912, I was batting stakes. Well, I was driving the team. We had an old spring wagon we hauled them out, the engineers you know, with their transit and their level and so on. And I was driving team and batting stakes for them. So I think it was in the fall of 1912. They said, like I say it was about five of them there and it was late in the fall. It was coming on winter and we were surveying so they said, "We should _____, what do you think?" They said, "How about sending away and getting a set of boxing gloves," see. And they said, "Well, well." I think they cost us seven dollars so we each one, I think it was a dollar a piece we put in. And we sent away and got the boxing gloves. Well, (laugh), them fellows...it was comical (laugh). When the gloves come, they had went to college, see those engineers you know, they'd went to college and they boxed a little in college, you know, in college a little. And so of course, they could shake me in the nose and I was pretty awkward, you know, to start with. But anyway, we boxed all winter and by the time spring come, I could hold my own with any of them. Yes, if I do say it myself, oh yes. Well then I had them boxing gloves until they were plum worn out. Well, what happened then, the engineers one of them would be sent away over the eastern part of the state and there'd be another sent someplace else and there'd be another one sent someplace else. So finally I ended up with the boxing gloves and then I had them...

End of side one.

RC: So you were talking about you finally got the boxing gloves and you had them...

BM: Yes, yes I ended up with the boxing gloves and in the meantime I had moved to Charlo. There... well, like I said, I was with my brother for five years on the ranch then I went in the

Army and in '19 when I...in January '19 I got back from the Army from World War I. And then so the spring of '19, I never went back when I come back from the Army, I never went back on the ranch. I mean I moved into town and my brother....

RC: Was it Charlo you moved into?

BM: Into Charlo, yes. And my brother had built...

RC: A dance hall?

BM: A house and was living there. So...he had three lots and I got one lot on the corner and this is 1919 after I'd come back from the Army that spring. I built a dance hall on that corner on that corner lot right next to his house, to my brother's house. And then, that was 1919...I built that dance hall and run it for fifteen years, I had that dance hall and I finally, my brother ... turned me over the house that was alongside of it. And so in 1920 I got married. Yes, in 1920 I got married but I lived there until '34 so it is about fourteen years.

RC: Was this during Prohibition that you had your dance hall?

BM: Was there Prohibition?

RC: During this time?

BM: Yes, it was during that time Prohibition went into effect.

RC: Just after the war?

BM: Prohibition, I believe, went into effect in 1920, I believe it was 1920.

RC: Did that affect your dance hall at all?

BM: No.

RC: No booze?

BM: Well, no. It didn't seem to very much. Maybe it was 1919 that Prohibition went into effect. It was right along in there. But they, at that time, I never done any drinking at all myself. I never with the whole year, I wouldn't take two drinks. But the bottle, the fellows, they used to bring it, someone used to and they'd keep it hid outside you know, they'd have it outside hid. And they'd go out to take a swig and come back in and dance (laugh) yes, oh yes.

RC: Do you have any interesting stories to relate during that about your dance hall?

BM: (Long pause) Well, (laugh) ah, let's see...that was 1919 shortly after I build the dance hall. I had the opening, I believe I had the opening August 5th, 1919. But anyway by that fall or winter there was some of the boys used to get pretty tough you know, from Ronan that Round Butte country, them Rincky brothers, you know and so on. They used to get pretty tough so we had a little trouble off and on in 1919. And then I got married in 1920 and we never had much trouble after that.

RC: Who are these Rincky brothers?

BM: Well, there was three of them that used to come down from Round Butte. They lived up on Round knob. There was one Rincky that lived there and he was a married man, Burley Rincky. He lived south of Charlo and I knew him well; he was fine and dandy. Burley was, him and his wife, I knew both of them and they were fine and dandy but those boys from Round Butte there was three brothers used to come down. And they could get mean at times (laugh). Yeah, at times they'd get kind of mean you know.

RC: Who was the bouncer of your dance hall?

BM: No, I didn't have no bouncer, I was the only bouncer that was there, I was the only one. Yes, I was (laugh), those fellows them three from the Round Butte country. . .well I'll tell you just one little piece I'll just tell you a little bit about the start of this thing. One night it was right at supper time, you see, on the side of this dance hall I had an addition on the side that I could seat seventy-four couples in this addition with the hall about three feet wide in the center and tables at both sides. And there would be four sit at a table, you know. And so these three Rinckys from Round Butte, the three of them come in. One time if was right, we're serving supper and I was busy because I'd go up and down with the hot coffee and all, this and that. So the three of them come in and this door out of the dance hall into the side addition where we're serving. I was right at that door just inside the door in the kitchen in the serving part when the three of them come in. Two of them was in front and one just behind him and they said, one of them said something, "God damn we're going to take you to a cleaning" or something like that. And so I said, "Well, get busy I ain't got much time, get busy." And just at that time they turned, the three of them turned, they saw I meant business so the turned and they went out and I followed them right to the door and the last I give him a kick in the pants. The third one, the last one went out the door outside, I give him a kick in the pants (laugh) yeah and they never bothered me no more. They didn't come back and bother me them Rinckys but they used to act tough but they wasn't tough at all but they used to act tough, you know.

RC: Are they alive do you know?

BM: Darned if I know. I don't know if any of them are alive now. Burly was the one that lived south of Charlo. He was fine and dandy. Well, the others wasn't bad after that.

RC: I heard...I think it was Pete Minsinger and Reuben Olson, you remember Reuben Olson?

BM: Oh, yes.

RC: Well, they were telling me that at your dance hall you were putting up a light and there was these brothers from Round Butte that came in there and were going to cause trouble. (BM laughs) They were going to fight you and there you are putting up a light. You're standing on a

chair. Well, you jumped off the chair and just like that, within a very short time, you beat two of them and the third ran off.

BM: Yeah.

RC: Is that the same story?

BM: Well, I'll tell you where I was putting up the light was out, no I remember that I, oh yeah, I remember now that was out, that was in front of the dance hall. It was just getting...it was in the summertime and you see they had parked their car just across the street. And A.R. Elliot that I worked for, he was a fine fellow. This A.R. Elliot, he was a contractor you know and I worked for him a lot. He was a homesteader there too, but he was a contractor and I worked for him a lot. In fact I worked for him the whole summer we built the courthouse here in Polson in 1935 and I worked for him all for about a year at that time. But anyway I was just a _____ put up this light. You see, I had one of these gas lanterns with mantels on it and I would hang it above the door on the front end of the hall. And this big, wide door was about six feet wide where they come in and out. And I was just putting it up when...and Elliot was there talking to me. It was beginning to get dark, it was in the summertime. And those three Rinckys had parked their car just across the street. So here they come, the three of them. I guess they come down on purpose that they figured I'd be alone at the hall or that they'd catch me early in the evening or something you know. But anyway, here (laugh), here they come. Well two was in front and this one was just behind them about two steps. Elliot was standing right there and I had just put up the lantern, turned around and here are two of them. Here there was the three of them. "I'll goddamn you, we're going to take you to a cleaning," or something like that they said. So I piled up two of them, one right on top of the other and the third one beat it back to the car on the other side of the street (laugh). And Elliot (laugh) I never.. I laughed about that a good many times since. Elliot said, "Well, it didn't take long to take care of that outfit." (Long laugh). Yeah, that's the only time.

RC: Was that the same story as the one you were telling me but a little bit more...

BM: Yes. Yeah, well, it wasn't the same evening. No, that's a different time. But the other time was when I gave one a kick in the rear end and I sent him out the door. And ah...they could...that other time, they come in right at lunchtime. It was midnight you know. Or a little after midnight when we'd have lunch. But this time they come right early. But I don't remember whether that was before or after the other deal happened but that they never bothered me no more anyway after that. (Laugh). Oh yes.

RC: Were people afraid of the Rincky brothers?

BM: Oh no, I don't think so. And I don't know if...I have no idea whatever got them Rincky brothers from Round Butte, whatever got them started. Now this Burley Rincky was a good friend of mine. He was fine and dandy, and he was older. He was a married man, he was older. He lived south of Charlo there. He was a good...he was fine and dandy. But I don't know...I don't know anything about whatever started that they seemed to have it in for me, I guess.

RC: Hmmmm

BM: (Long hearty laugh) Oh man. Well...you see I never done any drinking them days. I didn't take a drink so I know what I was doing all the time but some of them young sports, you know, like them migs, they'd get a couple of drinks and then they thought they were tough. I guess it kind of steamed them up so they thought they were tough. Yes, I guess (laugh)....

RC: So how did you meet your wife?

BM: Well, I'll tell you how I met my wife. She was fifteen year of age at that time and she was down visiting Henry Keller . Now let's see...she was Joe Keller's daughter. He'd be her uncle.

RC: Were they from the reservation?

BM: Yes. On the reservation down here. And so I was over haying for D.R. Bigham. Now I was living on the ranch at that time. That was 1915. No, she was fifteen years of age. No, that was,

damned if I know, by God yes, that must of been 1915 because it was on my brother's ranch and I...it must have been 1915. If it was, she was fifteen years of age. Now this D.R. Bigham lived next to us and then just on the other side of D.R. Bigham, lived Oscar Ingall homesteader, all homesteaders, you know. And after Oscar Ingall, a little bit further over lived Henry Keller. She was a Keller, my wife you know, yeah, Henry would be her uncle. So I was haying for the D.R. Bigham and I was up on the loft and he was pitching up to me and I was putting the hay back in this loft when her and this Frances Ingall, that was Oscar Ingall's daughter, they come tripping by and she was fifteen at that time. And so they come by and that's the first time I saw her. I heard somebody talking down there, I guess, or something to this Bigham. That one that was throwing up the hay to me and so I...at the end of the building...I looked down and here she was, that's when I first saw her. Yes, she was there, her and this Frances Ingall. Yes, that is when I first saw her. Well, you see when I married her , she was twenty so that must have been about five years later.

RC: Were you married for a long time?

BM: Well, I was married the second time, of course, but I was married to her for twenty-two years. Twenty-two and a half years and raised a family and everything. And then I got married again and the next one I was married to for five years.

RC: You've been married twice?

BM: Yes. I was married for twenty-two years to that one and raised a family - three boys and one girl.

RC: Does Roy come from this wife?

BM: Yes. Roy, Bob, then Lenore was the girl. Lenore and then Jack. Yes. There all my kids are all in the state of Washington. Yes, all of them.

RC: What happened to your first wife?

BM: My first wife, as far as I know, she's in Washington right now too. But she's been living right down here in this Lake View apartments or whatever you call them down there. Swell apartments that she's got ... well..(cough).

RC: This is your first wife?

BM: Yeah. Oh yes, the other one, the second one has been dead for a long time.

RC: Oh, ok.

BM: Oh yes.

RC: So your first wife is the one that...Mrs. Gurly is her name?

BM: Yes, Mrs. Gurly, yes, that's right, Mrs. Gurly. Lucinda. Lou, I always called her, Lou but Lucinda was her name, you know. She was twenty years of age when I married her and then we were married for about twenty-two and a half years. We lived together for about twenty-two and a half years, I mean, and then I was single for a few years and then I married this other one...

RC: What was your second wife's name?

BM: Her first name was Gertrude.

RC: Did you have any kids from her?

BM: No. She was a widow when I married her and she they both were pretty good women, they was pretty good.

RC: Someone told me that you were a ladies man.

BM: (Hearty laugh) Well, I don't know, I wouldn't..! got along alright with the women, sure. Well, I'll tell you one thing about it, I always treated them right. Whether I married them or not I treated them right. I didn't pull anything over on them, you know.

RC: Did you know Black Mary Tarr?

BM: Oh, hell yes. Oh yes. Oh yeah.

RC: What kind of gal was she?

BM: Well, she was a kind of a stylish old girl. She used to dress up pretty good and she was in the parades here in the early days here at Polson. She used to ride her black horse, fancy black horse. And they called her "Black Diamond," you know. She used to ride the (unintelligible background voice) yeah, they called her "Black Diamond."

RC: Black Diamond Tarr?

BM: Yeah and she used to ride this...her black horse here in the parade, Mary Tarr. Then she married John Tarr, of course, that wasn't her first man. That's her second man that she married. I don't know who in the heck she was married to the first time.

RC: Was she a pretty woman?

BM: No, no, I wouldn't say that she was very pretty. No.

RC: She had a lot of money though?

BM: Well, she had some yes. Oh, she was married to the first one -- now he had money when he married her no doubt. He had the first pool halls here as I remember that was in Polson. Maybe it was the first pool hall. I know he had a pool hall. That was way before she married John Tarr.

John Tarr lived out here in Valley View, you know. Then his wife died, I guess, and he and Mary Tarr married him. Married John, yes.

RC: Let's talk about some of your trapping that you used to do. You mentioned that you used to have to bring your pelts into Missoula. You said that you brought bears into Missoula.

BM: Well, like I said, I caught my first coyote in either 1916 or '17. We were on the ranch at that time, my brother and I. And my brother, the first one I caught, oh, we had an old horse that was...his teeth were wore out and he couldn't, he wouldn't be able to winter unless you ground feed for him and all this and that. So I took him up on the side hill (**unintelligible**) at my brother's place at that time. We had half a section there. And I shot the horse and I set this trap and got my first coyote. I didn't know anything about trapping coyotes, you know. So I set this trap. I knew that they, when they start eating on the critter, they generally start right at the hind end to eat on. So I tied this trap, this old number three trap that I had, to this horse's tail. Now I tied it up close to the horse and with haywire around it. I tied it and twisted the wire and I thought I had it pretty well fastened. So the first coyote I caught alright, that trap was sitting there and that horse wasn't touched, until it snowed. And it snowed about four inches of fresh snow and then the trap was covered and the coyote come up and that's where they started eating on the horse. So he went up there and started eating and he got in the trap. Well, he tore most -- almost all the hair out of that tail. And he got that trap completely off the horse. Got away with the trap. So I could look up from down by the barn, it was about two hundred yards up on the side of this ridge where I had the trap set and I could look up there and there was no sign of any coyotes. So this time I walked up. Well in the meantime after the coyotes, it had snowed a little more. It was about six inches of snow, I guess. It had snowed a little more. And he got that trap loose. He got it off the horse's tail. He pulled out most of the hair out of the horse's tail and he got the trap loose and he was gone with the trap. That's the first one. So I followed that coyote. He went away around and up on top of the ridge and up on the neighbor's place. And then he cut down and he come back into our place and he went through our north line fence he come through that back onto the place and then he started right up. On the side of this ridge was a lot of rocks and trees. So it was about noon time by that time. God, I had made two and a half miles by that time following him. And so I went in to eat. Well, when I went in to eat, I told my brother, Tom,

that I'd followed him through that fence and that he come through our north line fence and that he turned up the ridge right on our place again. He said, "Well, I'll go out and I'll give him a round," he said. So I said, "Wait a minute." We both had rifles; I had a 32 Special Winchester at that time. So I said, "Wait a minute. I'll go with you." And we went. This coyote went up that side hill until he got into where there were some of these scattered fir trees. The limbs come way down close to the ground. He went right under; we were tracking him in the snow about six inches. And he went under this tree and he was in there hid. It was in daytime but he was hid. And when ...so we tracked him up and when we got close to this tree, we heard him rattling the trap or moved or something. So here we was about eight feet apart, each with our rifle, you know. And then one of us, we were trying to look under where the limbs come right down close to the ground; we were trying to look under to spot him. So one of us, I guess, saw something grey which was the coyote alright. So he just banged, he just let go. Well, we killed the coyote and dragged him out. Yes, that was the first coyote. That was the first coyote, the first one that ever got into a trap and that's what he did. He made that circle that he made, must have made two miles at least. Maybe more than that.

RC: So you started trapping afterwards?

BM: Oh yes, well that was the first coyote. Then from then on, I think it was two and a half I got for that hide if I remember right. I sent it away some place and I think it was two and a half. But then after that I started working on coyotes a little bit but I poisoned most of them. And then...

RC: What did you use to poison them?

BM: I used strychnine (sic) the crystal strychnine. That's the best poison for the coyote. That's a fast - it's a fast killer, the crystal. The got the powder strychnine and the crystal but the crystal is dynamite. It's fast. So I poisoned and I used to trap a few but I poisoned more, I guess, and anyway before I went to work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I had taken about three hundred coyotes myself. I'd poisoned most of them. And then about that time, outcome the what they call the humane coyote getter. So they furnished them to me. And they used them on the coyotes. Yes, but in my time of trapping, I know that I took just about forty-eight bear. Now that

was for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. They had to be going damage. Forty-eight bear, three hundred bobcats and over 2,000 coyotes while I worked. I worked about almost fifteen year for them.

RC: When did you start working for them?

BM: It was about 1934. Yes.

RC: How did you get the job?

BM: Well we had a fellow that was with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. His name was Edward E. Beebe and his dad was Chauncey Beebe. His dad was Chauncey and he worked for the Reclamation for the government as predatory animal hunter on bear and mountain lion and all that kind of stuff for years off and on. So Ed Beebe got on as he was the head boss here over about, I think it was thirteen counties, Missoula, Flathead and the_____and Lake and Sanders Counties. I think it was thirteen counties. So Ed, well the man that they had trapping here for the government at that time, he wasn't much of a trapper. Really he wasn't very good and he did catch a few coyotes but he didn't catch very many. So I was catching a lot of coyotes. I was on my own but I would go out and work for these sheep men and catch coyotes and, like I said, I caught them before I ever went to work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife, I caught at least three hundred coyotes and...

RC: This on the reservation?

BM: This is on the reservation here in Lake County and_____County. I worked for on that trapping business for these, I worked for Dan Poison, Howard and I. They were big sheep men. At that time there were more sheep in Lake County, a lot more than there is now. They've went to cattle. Dan Poison, Howard and I, Nick Lassgo...oh, that fellow that lived over in Irvine Flats. They were all sheep men. But I'd worked for five or six of them and some of them paid me a bounty. This Poison Sheep Company, what the heck was that fellow's name now? They called it the Poison Sheep Company. I trapped for him a lot and he used to pay me a bounty, a dollar a

coyote. He'd pay me a dollar a coyote. And some of the others did; not all of them but some of them did. I'd work for all them fellows so the man that they had on here as a government trapper, he was only getting — that was some kind of a part time deal. I don't know what he was getting; he was getting less than a hundred dollars a month. I think it was ninety some dollars a month. He'd catch coyote once in a while but he wasn't very much good at it. Anyway, these ranchers that I'd worked for all these big sheep men about six or seven of them and caught coyotes for all of them and they said, "Put on Bill McDonald." I never knew but I didn't ask for the job nor nothing but they said, "My God, Bill McDonald traps for us fellows. I pay him about eight dollars," and so on and so on. And they said, "Put on McDonald's head." So this Beebe come to me, Edward K. Beebe and he said, "Mac, we got a job for you if you want to go to work," Well, I said, "What does it pay?" I was trapping coyotes right then. No! Right then, when he come, I was watchman on the dam down here. Yes, I was watchman on the dam. That was in about '35.

RC: Was this in Nine Pipes?

BM: Yes, no this dam right down this, the Kerr Dam, right down here below Polson. I was watchman, that during World War II, see. It was about 1944. Somewhere along in there. And so Beebe, he comes to me and he said, "Now we can put you on the...some of these sheep men tell me that you can catch coyotes and so on and on and they said you can get a job now." So I said, "Well, Ed, what is the pay?" "Well," he said, "they pay around a hundred dollars a month." I said, "Well, I won't go to work for less than a hundred and twenty-five. I won't." "Oh? We'll see about that," he said. "I think we can fix that up." So they did and I went to work on \$125. And that was right in the winter. Well, I started catching coyotes right away and I put in almost fifteen years with them. You see, every coyote I got a picture that I can show you of one month's catch you know. Every coyote they sent you a bunch of tags and on that tag was this coyote that you got—the date and male or female, and how he was taken whether he was trapped, poisoned or shot or how, you know. That went on the nose and you tied that right on the nose. That tag went on the nose, now this picture that I got with thirty one or two coyotes for that month, I got them on top of my garage right here in Polson. I had that picture taken and it shows the tag on, right on every one of them. Yes.

RC: Once you became a government trapper, where did you do most of your trapping? Was it just Lake and Sanders County?

BM: Well, first it was Lake County and it was for the sheep men that's who I was trapping for. But I trapped for anybody that was having trouble. It didn't make any difference to me, any of them that was having trouble, I'd go out but it was Lake County to start with. But then they got across the line over into Sanders County over around Hot Springs, you know, and through that country and that Howard and I Range was in Sanders County. That was the Howard and I Range at that time. I trapped all that country. I trapped a lot in Sanders County as well as Lake. But I had orders to go ahead and wherever I could and get them.

RC: Did you ever see any mountain lion or trap any mountain lion?

BM: No, I never saw any mountain lion and I never set a trap for a mountain lion but I followed one over here on the east shore. I followed one on a fresh track but, God Almighty, that son of a gun he kept going higher on the mountain all the time. I followed him, I guess, I must of followed him for two and a half miles up there. He was working south but he was going higher on the mountain all the time. So I quit him and come on home. That's the only one mountain lion in my territory here that ever showed and he signed, except that one... But there was one mountain lion hit that country up at the head of the Big Draw, not far from the Dan Poison Ranch north there. It was one mountain lion track that I saw there and that's the only one I saw. He was going in a straight line and he passed within two hundred yards of where I had part of a horse out or some kind of bait and he never batted an eye. He just made a straight line and he was heading for that Hubbard Dam country up here. That's where he was heading for apparently. But I followed him quite a ways and I quit his track.

RC: How many black bears did you get?

BM: About, well, I only killed that one grizzly so they were all blacks, I got forty-eight bear. Yes, I had about six of them into Missoula alive. They were for experimental purposes. These fellows came from Denver. You see, they started putting out this ten-eighty bait. Alright...the

ten-eighty bait we had to put it so far back after the bear went in or after we thought he'd went in. And we had to get it picked up before he come out in the spring because the bear would eat that ten-eighty bait if there was any part left and it would kill the bear. So what they wanted to find out about the bear and about the ten-eighty bait was could they make it strong enough to kill the coyote but weak enough so that it wouldn't kill the bear. So they experimented, but I don't know what they did find out. But that's why they caught the live bear; they wanted these live bear brought in so they's experiment with the live bear and see how strong they could make it and feed 'em a little you know and find out if they could make it strong enough to kill the coyote but weak enough that it wouldn't kill the bear. So that's what they were experimenting with. That's where I brought in these live bear into Missoula. Yes, but I'll tell you about this one (cough) bear. I guess it was the big one that weighed 450 pounds. It was a good size one, I know. Alright they brought him in for experimental purposes. They had them in the jail in Missoula. I was down there, you know, at the time and brought these bear in and they'd have one on the bear in the cell. They'd have sawdust on the floor and they'd feed them and they'd have a dish fern to put water in for them to drink and everything. So they were experimenting with these bears, like I said, to see if they could make the bait strong enough to kill the coyote but not kill the bear. So this big one, I brought him in and he was a mean one, this big one, he weighed... I got him out of Missoula at Nine Mile up around Nine Mile what they call the Nine Mile there. And he was a mean one, he was...most of the bear kind of cowered down like this, you see. Up in the front end of this thing, I had a door fixed so that when the bear went in and pulled on this bait, the door went down behind him and he couldn't get out.

But up at the front end, I had fixed like this so I could look in and see what my bear was like without opening the door. I wanted to look in and see what I had. So I had it like this. And (laugh) when I had this big one in, I went round to the front end and I got down like this looking in through these like this here, you know, and he was squatted back in this thing and he jumped up there and he made a pass like that and boy, I'll tell you, I felt the wind of his mitt when he passed just about this far from my nose. Oh, Jeez, he'd just about...oh, he was a mean son of a gun. So, alright! These fellows come and they were going to experiment with this bear so I told them, I told them now, I talked to them about the different bear and I showed them this one and I said, "Look, this fellow is murder. This is a mean son of a gun." So I'll tell you what happened. That was on a Saturday evening, those fellows come from Denver to experiment with these bear.

And so when I come back Monday morning, I come back to Missoula, Monday morning, this Mr. Bear was deader than a mackerel. Well, I said," Well, what happened? What happened to this bear?" So then I found out what happened. They was so damned scared of that bear, they just gave him an overdose, a big dose and knocked and killed him deader than hell. Sure. "Well," they said, "We'd feed him some ten-eighty and just in a short time .he just dropped over, down he went and he was dead." they said. Yeah. (Laugh) They put him out of business. (Laugh) but I warned them about that bear. Oh man!

RC: Did you see many grizzlies in the wild here on the reservation?

BM: No, I never saw any. The only grizzly that I can remember of ever seeing was that one up on the Swan. That Swan River country the one I killed. That one that pulled off the getter. Yes, he pulled the getter and he didn't last long. He just, it wasn't far, just around a bunch of brush and there he laid.

RC: Did you encounter any wolves? Was there any wolves...

BM: No. I never, no I only saw one wolf track in all the time that I know was a wolf track, I saw one. That was up at the head of the Big Draw country up here. That was a wolf. Yes, the snow was on the ground, you know. Yes, and that wolf, he was traveling in a straight line. He wasn't monkeying around abouts like the coyote does you know. He was going the straight line as far as I tracked him, and I tracked him quite a ways. He was heading for that, what you call it country up here, the Hubbard Dam country. Yes, he was heading straight for that just like that straight. Oh yes.

RC: What have you been doing since you retired from trapping?

BM Well...the only time I did some work for the boys over in the state of Washington. Sure. After I retired from trapping, I done some fencing for them, quite a little fencing. And a little painting. But of late years, I haven't done anything. I take care of this patio here (St. Joseph

Convalescent). I keep that clean all the time. Today I even picked up few leaves off of it. Yeah, I keep, I take care of that patio here but I haven't done anything for quite a while.

RC: You don't look ninety-four years old. Is that how old you are or ninety-three?

BM: I'm ninety-three.

RC: You sure don't look your age. When I first met you, I thought you were in your late 60s. That was about five or six years ago.

BM: Yeah. No, I'm ninety-three. This making ninety-four business, there's only one of this clan, I call 'em the clan, you know. Those McDonalds, there is only one of them that made ninety-four and that was my granddad. Now he made ninety-four. He was ninety-four but he's the only one. See I'd two older brothers and they'd aged, two of them made ninety-three. They were healthy and strong. And ...well the last one P.J. he would of undoubtedly made it but he met with an accident. He slipped and he was right in this building here. Went in the bathroom and he slipped and fell. Now he was getting around just about as good as I am and as far as I know he had got his crutches, that's one of them right there (points to his cane). I got his two crutches or his two walking sticks.

RC: Cane?

BM: Yeah. And now he was ninety-three and nine months. But he went into the bathroom and slipped and fell and broke some bone in his hips. So they picked him up and the ambulance from Kalispell come down and got him and took him to the hospital in Kalispell. And (cough) about the third day he was dead. He didn't last long. But he broke some bone in his hip, you know, broke something in his hip. Yeah, he was ninety-three. He was ninety-three and nine months. So he would of if he didn't meet with an accident like that, he would of made it to ninety-four.

RC: How many more months is it going to be before you reach your ninety-fourth birthday?

BM: Oh, I'm just started on the ninety-four.

RC: Oh.

BM: Yeah, I just got started. See my birthday is February 11th, you know.

RC: Before you know it you'll be ninety-four.

BM: Yeah. Well, you see, I got pretty near a year to go. So I've only got on it from the 11th on. What is this, about the 26th?

RC: Ah..yes, this is February 27th.

BM: Yes, ten and seven is seventeen. I only got about seventeen days in on the ninety-fourth. Well, I'm going to be very careful about slipping and falling. I still, I don't live in here in this building. I live out in the apartments out here and that will be the only chance. Sometimes it gets a little icy out there in the winter. And if a fellow would happen to fall, it would be just too bad on that hard (cough). Yeah, it'd be bad. But I'm very careful about that and try to not slip. Yeah, I've worked for the small wages I'm telling you about for a long time. One dollar a day and board. Oh yes, worked in the woods. But I don't know, they didn't have the things they got now. No, these fancy cars and all that stuff, they didn't have nothing like that. But they made a living and I don't know, it seems to me like the people were just as much, were well satisfied as they are now. You never heard them kicking or growling about wages being small.