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Interviewee: Lucille Wilhelm and Shirley Webb
Interviewer: Suzanne Vernon
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(Miscellaneous discussion. Haying last week and the week before.)

Suzanne Vernon: Do you still have cows?

Lucille Wilhelm: Yeah, I have six. I'm going to get rid of most of them this fall. I didn't have much hay. It was really thin, the hay. We have a big field, but it was just nothing hardly.

SV: Last time I came over here and visited, which was three or four years ago. We talked about a little bit of everything. But we didn't talk about your growing up here.

LW: Joe's been gone four (years).

SV: You were born in 1931? Do I remember that part right?

LW: I was born in Missoula.

Shirley Webb: At Community Hospital.

LW: Dad took Mom to town; and my two older brothers, they hiked out to Pete Rovero's to be sure Dad got through okay. April. So it was muddy, see. They left Russell with a neighbor, Clara Hollopeter. You've probably heard of her. He was four. And then they walked back.

SW: They walked out just to make sure they were on their way?

LW: (laughs) Yeah. Everybody, you walked every place.

SV: Did they have a car?

LW: Yes. I don't know what kind. Probably a real old one.

SW: It took forever to get to town.

LW: And you had certain mud holes you had to get through. Oh boy, it was something. And hills.

SV: Were you living in the little house where Sally is?

LW: Yes. Russell was born in the little log, wood shed, but by the time he was a year old they were in the other house where Sally is. 1927 he was born. Then they got in their house there. It seemed quite big when I was a kid.

SW: Did Gyda tell you about when Russell was born?

LW: She was ten (and living with Haasch's), her and Harold were ten.

SW: She didn't know that Grandma was going to have a baby.

SV: And all of a sudden here was this baby. . .

LW: Yeah. They used to stay with Dad and Mom, her and her brother (Jens). (Gyda didn't stay with them when Lucille was there.) But I've known Gyda always. She was 14 years older than me. She and Harold were already teenagers. But I knew Gyda always, and her brother.

SV: What's the earliest memory you have of that house?

LW: Just being in the house, I remember that real plain. It was log inside. It was finished later on. It was different, the partitions. It had an upstairs, and had a porch on the back. It was different than now. Sally had it all fixed up. Logs were painted, kind of a dark stain. It was probably lodgepole.

SW: Probably right off the place there.

LW: That was solid timber.

SW: Grandpa had to cut it all by hand. We were wondering the other day how they got out all the stumps?

LW: Dynamite. And pulling stumps and stuff with horses in the old days. Dad used to always get a headache from the dynamite when he used it. See, you could use it in those days. Blow out the big stumps.

SV: It was quite an art.

LW: To get the whole stump. I remember he always got a headache.

SV: Did your Mom ever get involved with that stump business?

LW: She worked out always and helped but not with the dynamiting or anything.

SW: She was always working out.

LW: Haying, a big garden. Huge garden. She had to make everything last for winter. Canning.

SW: Tell about when you used to go and pick huckleberries.

LW: We used to go up and camp and pick huckleberries and bring them back and she'd can them for winter.

SW: But the whole family went and it was a major deal.

LW: For the winter, because you didn't have much fruit. That was about it.

SV: When you went (up Elk Creek) did you take horses?

LW: No, we just walked. And later on sometimes we had a horse. Mostly we just hiked up there and stayed.

SV: On the creek?

LW: We had to be close to the creek. In the old days there was no other road to Cold Creek, and up that way. You went through back of my folks'. You didn't drive within two miles. You went through the woods. And there was good huckleberrying on the way up there. We used to stop and pick huckleberries.

SV: Did you like it?

LW: Oh yeah. I always liked being out, camping and stuff.

SV: Did you have a tent?

LW: Yes. I remember one time we were up there we didn't have a tent, we just laid right out.

SW: You said Grandpa cut boughs?

LW: Yeah, but not that time. He used to do that. He could make the bed just so soft. He had a certain way of laying the limbs all. It was really nice. Big, thick... but that was more when we stayed a long time someplace. He used to work for the Forest Service. We went once up to the Powell Ranger Station and we stayed all summer in the tent. He was making the bough beds, I remember.

SV: How old were you then?

LW: I don't remember. I don't think I was in school yet.

SV: That would make an impression, for a youngster to go that far.

LW: I remember him making the beds.

SW: You said you always used to go and cut wood.

LW: Wood cutting that was a big thing. In the fall, you know, get all your wood sawed with the crosscut saws. He'd do that for a long time.

SV: Did he do all the cutting?

LW: We helped with the blocks and things.

SV: You needed firewood forever. . .

LW: And you couldn't turn on electric if you ran out of wood. I was telling Shirley that Joe's folks just brought it in as they needed it. I was just amazed, because they just never worried. They'd just drag a log in and saw it up. We always prepared. Joe always liked to do it that way. I liked to get it in and get it all put away. You probably noticed I have all my wood.

SW: She still cuts all her own wood.

SV: With a chainsaw?

LW: Oh yeah.

SV: I don't know any other women who do that. . . .

LW: Oh yeah, there's other ones.

SW: She does, all the time, goes out there in the wood with her big tractor.

LW: But Joe always, they did it differently. I was just amazed in the way they did it.

SV: It just wasn't the way you were raised.

LW: We always had that big wood cutting deal. Then you didn't go out in the winter and drag in a tree or nothing. Had it all in the wood shed. Three weeks (it took to cut it all). (In the fall.)

SV: What kind of wood did you cut?

LW: Well, you picked out real good in the old days. Mostly tamarack, because you wouldn't even fool with this lodgepole stuff. Even when Joe and I were first married, we'd go up and get big wonderful trees. Why you wouldn't have used this stuff that you get now, that I cut. Wood cutting was those big old tamaracks. Dead tamaracks. Over on the West side, wherever you drove and saw one. At home with a team and horses. Had a wagon or a sled. (Later with trucks).

SW: Did Harold tell you about Grandpa's big teams?

LW: He always had teams. (Walter Haasch). Up until they got a tractor. Mowed the hay and everything, put up the hay with the teams. I think he still had them after Joe and I were married. Babe and Jack, the last ones. Two big blacks. They were no certain kind.

SV: He worked for the Forest Service, and did some freighting?

SW: He had a blacksmith shop. I suppose Harold told you that.

LW: He was a blacksmith. (It's still there, the old blacksmith shop. -- SW) There's an old forge in there. He could make his own stuff out of steel, you know.

SW: He made a lot of stuff.

LW: You had to in those days.

SV: Did you get in on any of that?

LW: Not too much of that. I don't remember doing too much of that. He made all of our furniture, you couldn't buy anything. Couches, table and chairs. Still have one of his beds, log beds.

SV: All out of the rounds?

LW: Yes. The old cars used to have real plush seats. He'd make his couches out of the two, the bottom and the top. Boy, they were nice. We had two of them in our house.

SV: People were ingenious.

LW: They were real nice seats. The car, something would go wrong with them. For a long time there was one setting up there by the old cabin. But I see it's gone.

SV: You remembered playing in the house? What kind of games?

LW: Made up stuff, mostly. Didn't have a lot of stuff. Made up things to do.

SW: You cut out paper dolls . . .

LW: Out of the old catalogues. I forgot about that. Always did that. Put dresses and stuff on them.

SW: I don't think you wasted paper much?

LW: No, we always used it for a list or something.

SV: How about girlfriends to come over and play?

LW: Fern Johnson, Kenny's (Huston) sister. We were always friends. We'd play back and forth. We used to put up hay clear up at Lundberg's. It belonged to somebody else then. And we'd put it in the barn there, and have to go up with the sled in the wintertime and bring a load. Sometimes I'd get off at Fern's. (Lundberg's, where they own the big meadow off Kraft Creek? We put up all that.) We'd leave it in the shed and then go up in the winter in the sled. Sometimes I'd get off there and play with Fern while Dad would get the hay.

SW: You played with boys a lot.

LW: Oh yeah. (Russell). He was four years older. We were together all the time.

SW: I think Mom was a tomboy.

LW: Yeah, kind of. (laughs).

SV: What were your favorite things to do?

LW: I suppose go to the creek swimming. Glacier Creek. Used to ride horses and stuff. But a lot of times we were putting up hay. We helped in the haying.

SV: Still using horses for haying?

LW: Yeah. We used horses. You had a sling underneath and you put your hay in there and then you got down to the barn and pulled it up. Harold probably told you about that.

SW: I can remember when I was a kid, them putting up hay like that, but they had tractors then.

SV: Did they still use the sling?

LW: Then we did but anymore, uh-uh. Where Sally lives? Where the pond is? There was a huge barn there. My dad made there.

SV: Does anybody have any pictures of the barn?

LW: I think I might have one of dad and part of the barn (and horses) but I don't know where it is. But it was a huge barn, with stalls for all the cows that we milked. Sold cream. And then there was a stall with the horses, for the team.

SW: That was kind of interesting about the cream.

LW: The mailman took it to the creamery to Missoula.

SW: She said they put it in the creek to keep it cold. Put the cream cans . . .

LW: You put them in the creek. Yeah, the cream check, everybody says about them, they got a guy through a lot of times. We had to hunt the cows clear up on Elk Creek some nights. They weren't just around the place, you had to go clear up and get them. We had one old cow; if she thought you were finding her, she wouldn't ring her bell. She'd stand still so you couldn't find her. Boy, she was aggravating. Go way up there and get the cows.

SW: I was telling Katrina when we were over on the West side that Dad used to come clear over to Heakins and get the cows, when he was like five and six years old. Had to go clear over there and get the milk cow if she didn't come home.

LW: Yeah, we'd go way up and get them.

SW: They were valuable.

SV: You said "we"?

LW: Mom and I or Russell and I. Sometimes three of us would go. We'd always kind of go together after the cows. Used to go up at night because then you kept them in that night and milked again in the morning. And then turned them out. Up where Gyda's place is, up there, that's where they used to go, way up there at their cabin. There was a lot of trees. Oh there might have been a little more open right where that cabin is. There's a lot of trees through there.

SV: Were you ever afraid?

LW: Gosh, I don't remember too much about it. Once in a while if you heard a strange noise or something. It was usually just a tree squeaking or something. I don't remember; we were never afraid of going up there.

SW: You walked everywhere.

LW: Walked everywhere. Russell and I walked to school always.

SV: You must have worn out a lot of shoes.

LW: Yeah, I suppose. He'd walk ahead, because the snow was so deep in the winter. Nobody plowed. I'd come behind him. One year my dad fixed up a sled and we hooked the horse to it and we drove him, old Buck, we drove him to school and put him in the barn and fed him hay. The old barn was there up until a few years ago. It had fallen down but it was still there. Other kids sometimes rode horses and tied them in the barn.

SV: Was the road in the same place?

LW: No it wasn't. When we were real young it went way back around by where Herb (Styler) lives. And then it went across the creek, where you see that logging? That awful mess? Have you been over there? There was a bridge right there where that awful piles of old wood and stuff? And then Dad and Victor Wise gave them an easement to go along the line, and then that county road. We used to have to pass that, across that, Hill place, where they are logging.

SW: Was the river bridge in the same place?

LW: Yeah. But we went clear around by Herb's when I was real young.

SV: So you had to cross a bridge across Glacier Creek?

LW: Yeah. (Just a little old bridge.) Forrester's were our neighbors. Forresters, and then across from them was Preston's, that Hill place, where they are logging.

SW: You said Mrs. Forrester was real nice. . .

LW: Yeah, both of them. It was all different. There were not many houses back in there then, like where Herb is. But the little old house where Melton's, it was there. Maloney's. Jean Skillicorn. She still is living, but isn't very well. That was her home place.

SV: So, when you went to school in the snow, you were walking but sometimes you had horses?

LW: That one year anyway, we took the horse and hooked him up to a real nice sled we had. Had a cover over it and everything. We drove it to school and just tied him up during the day. He was real nice.

SW: Did you heat rocks and put in?

LW: We did that, even after I was even getting to high school, because you had no heater in the car to warm up. It took all day pretty near to get to Missoula.

SV: When you got to the school house, put your horse in the barn, what do you remember about walking into the school room?

LW: A fire going, we had a stove. The teacher was there, and if they didn't live up here, they had a teacherage. It's the one over at the school there. (Kindergarten building.) The first two years I was there, there was a lady, she always stayed there, because she was from Missoula or someplace. After that, was Florence Holmes and Martha Anderson. They lived up here, so they just drove to school.

SW: What was the teacher's name, the first one you remember?

LW: Mrs. Bowdry.

SV: Who was your favorite teacher?

LW: Mrs. Carney. She was my 8th grade teacher. (She had taught at the Wineglass.) Florence, Joe had her and so did Doris. (SW: Dad had her at Pine Ridge and one time he was the only kid. He was always a favorite of hers. Dad and I went in on a pack trip one time, Dad was working there.)

I had her two years, Mike's mom, you know.

SV: Did you go all your grade school years at the same school?

LW: Yes. I was gone a couple months to Oregon one year, just while my Mom took care of her mom, but we didn't stay only a couple months. Yeah, I went all my years here. Took a lunch, and sometimes we had hot lunches. We took turns. In the wintertime, we'd take a hot lunch, take turns.

SW: You took your turn, too? When it was Florence's turn, she brought beans. It was (Dad's) favorite food, always. Did you put on Christmas plays, too?

LW: Oh yeah, we put on big plays and everything. Practice for a long time. Had our Christmas program. Did a lot of work. Invited the parents. The school picnics.

SV: What was the best part of the Christmas program?

LW: Pulling that taffy and making a big mess. That was something else. Everybody had their hands in it and then they went and got on the dipper . . . it would get sticky—

[End of Tape 1, Side A]

[Tape 1, Side B]

LW: Their boy and I were always in the same grade (Dan Hollopeter). We were always good friends. Russell and I and Dan.

SW: Got in trouble, too?

LW: Uh-huh. Played hookey. Just went down toward Clara and John's. We were supposed to go out and get the mail. Dan and I and this other girls, decided it was such a nice day, we thought we'd scare them a little bit. So we'd leave a sweater here, and . . . Boy we really got in . . . till we got to Clara and John's. Dan and I we really got a good bawling out. The other girl, she did, too. Her folks got mad because we got bawled out. Took her out of school. My dad said, you should get another one when you get home. But that Crosky girl, they got mad because the teacher bawled her out. She said, well, I was just worried about you. Didn't know. Leaving sweaters, here. At least I didn't take off my shoes and socks, because it was kind of cold. I'd have been in worse trouble. Mom had a thing. We had to leave on our shoes and socks for a long time. Dan and May took theirs off. Waded in all the mud holes. But we had fun. We felt kind of bad that we got in trouble. And May, they thought it was fine. May Crosky. They used to live down there where the dentist lives (Smith Creek-Sorensens). She still lives down at Bigfork.

SV: You said there was school picnics?

LW: When school got out. We went down there (to Salmon Prairie) for their picnic. Usually we just stayed there, and went out to the landing field. Had races and things.

SV: So the airstrip was built. . . .

LW: It was there. Not quite as long as it is now. But it was there. They cleared more on the end.

SV: Lots of food.

LW: Everybody was a wonderful cook. I was about in the 8th grade when Mrs. Strom started the store. She started getting gas and a few little things like bread and candy and things. And then she just kept getting more stuff. Swan Centre. Just a little old cabin she had.

SV: I would remember something like that. There wasn't another store.

LW: No, just Seeley Lake, we had. Mrs. Strom started getting a few things and putting on the shelves. She added on to her store. Tauno put in gas.

SW: You never had a candy bar until eighth grade?

LW: Yeah. When she started getting them, once in awhile we'd get one.

SW: And beef, too? You didn't have until when?

LW: I was about 17. We sold our cows if we had any. You couldn't afford to eat them. But we always had pork and chicken. That was always good. Venison. I never got tired of that. Everybody had venison up here. Didn't have any elk, though. They weren't like they are now. Nope. There weren't hardly any elk around. You were lucky, boy, if you ever got an elk. (Fish?) Oh yeah. I was thinking that, if company came, Mom would tell Dad to go get a mess of fish down there in the creek. He'd just be gone a little while. Seemed like there was always people stopping in to eat. And canned venison. Mom canned a lot of venison. We had no way of keeping it.

SV: She must have been a hard worker.

LW: A big garden.

SW: Out in the fields, there was never a weed. As long as she was on that place, up into her 80s . . . she'd just go out and pick weeds and pick rocks.

LW: And washing clothes. Had to wash by hand.

SW: Even when I was a kid, she had chickens. She'd go out and butcher a chicken on Sunday.

LW: Oh yeah. And milk the cows. She had a milk cow up until she was pretty old. Then everybody started wanting not as much milk.

SW: That was before you were born that she went to Clearwater?

LW: Yeah. She milked 15 cows out at what they call the Morris Ranch, at Greenough, for a dollar a day, twice a day. She had the kids. That was before I was born.

SV: Did you have to milk cows?

LW: Oh yeah. I knew how to milk always. And I didn't mind it ever. I used to have a milk cow up until a few years ago. When was it? Ten years ago? Then nobody used hardly any milk. Probably more than ten. Twenty maybe.

SV: Do you miss having a milk cow?

LW: No. You're pretty tied down. Hardly anybody knows how (if you're gone). Jenny milks the goats, so she probably knows how.

SW: I used to know how. Dad he just had a steady stream . . .

LW: You never forget. You're really tied down with a milk cow.

SV: When you were going to school, you said you liked Mrs. Carney.

LW: She was just such a nice person. I had her in the 8th grade. I was the only one. She helped me to go so I could take my 8th grade exams. You had to go to Missoula. (SW: And Mom skipped a grade). Fourth grade. They skipped me the third. I never liked it very well that they did it. You miss something, lots. Mrs. Carney really was nice to get me ready for those exams. She was just a nice teacher. I think everybody liked her.

SV: What was so important about the exams?

LW: Well that was whether you passed or not (whether you'd go on to high school). Schools all over had to go to Central School (where Missoula Children's Theater is now) and take their eighth grade . . . you stayed about three days.

SV: Central School?

LW: Yeah, some kind of a theater there now.

SV: So you passed your exams. How old were you?

LW: 13.

SW: That's the story.

LW: Oh, I don't know (smiles).

SW: It is, Mom.

SV: It's pretty impressive to the rest of us.

LW: Just went to school there. (High school in Missoula, County High School.) It was quite a change. Just the one, except Loyola. Lotta kids. I think there were about 1200 kids.

SV: To go from a one-room school house, you'd been in for 8 years . . .

LW: Yeah, it was really quite a change. But Missoula was so nice in those days. Not scary at all.

SW: You lived by yourself?

LW: Most of the time. I had an apartment. I worked. There was a restaurant. There were two restaurants, they are gone now, and they were owned by the same guy. I worked for him for the first two years I was there. Gene and Pat Graybiel (sp?). They called it the Super Cream. They had one on the north side and one on the south side. 'Cause it was a lot of ice cream they sold and stuff, but they had dinners, too. Waitress. After school and weekends. I stayed there two years. And then my brother (Carl) died, real young. I stayed out a year and stayed with my mom. Then I went back again. I was just kind of staying with a relation of Mrs. Margo Melton; it would be her husband's grandparent. I just stayed there a few days while I was looking for a place, when I went back. I noticed in the *Missoulian* that they wanted a girl to come and help them. She wasn't too well. And work for my board and room. So I answered the ad and they were just wonderful. I stayed till I graduated, with them.

SV: Was that better?

LW: Oh yeah, they were really nice.

SV: Did you ever get lonesome?

LW: Oh yeah. Homesick. They let me come home once a month, which was really nice, these people. (Earlier) if someone happened to be coming up. . . First two years, once in awhile, my brothers would come to town or something, or Dad and Mom. I'd get home once in awhile. There was a stage that you could catch at noon on Saturday that came to where the old Stage Station at Seeley? It came to there and somebody would come down and get me, or I'd get a ride up with somebody. Then going home I'd catch a ride with somebody. A logging truck, or . . . something like that. So, I got home about once a month. Fishers (the ones with room and board) liked to have me help with the kids. They were really nice.

SV: Did that experience change the way you felt about home?

LW: No. I was always glad to get home. Yep.

SW: You said you found friends that kind of had a common interest.

LW: We got together that like were from . . . we'd kind of get together and liked the same things. We always got to go, Friday nights, we went roller skating or to the show. But Saturday night and Sunday, I had to stay with the kids. They had three or four kids. Three and then they had another one. Friday night I could do what I wanted, go to the show or roller skating.

SW: Butch (Harmon), you baby sat Butch?

LW: When I was like a freshman or something like that. I used to babysit Butch and his brothers and sisters. They lived in town. He said he remembers me taking him to the park and stuff.

Playing with them. He's ten years younger than me. There was a bunch of them, five in his family.

SV: Seems like you had to take on a lot of responsibility?

LW: Yeah, you do. I didn't cook too much when I worked at that place. I used to get real anxious to get home. That (homesickness) was probably the worst. (Not scared.) You could walk all over Missoula at night. In fact, one year there, Mom came down for a little while, just to keep me company. We were in a little house where the Eastgate Shopping Center is. We'd walk clear out there after work, and stuff, and never was worried. It was a long ways from up where the Super Cream was. That was about where the Army Navy Store is. That was about where the restaurant . . . by that Chinese, somewheres in there. The Army Navy might be it. But Missoula was real safe.

SV: Different era.

LW: But then the last two years was really nice with them. He had a garage. They were really nice people.

SV: We skipped a little bit. Carl was the brother who died?

LW: Harold probably told you about him. They really don't know what happened to him. In those days, they just didn't seem like they could figure things out too much. Pastor Scheifelbein, his son was like that, too. They don't know exactly. And that's been just a few years ago. Carl had slid off the house. He was working on an old garage thing, and he fell off of that. Whether that had something to do with it or not, I don't know. She (Mom) had a nervous breakdown. Had to go to the hospital and stuff. Russell and I were home with her. Then she got better. Then I went back. But I was with more kids my own age, really, then. I wasn't so young. I really liked it better.

SW: Did Harold tell you about when Russell almost died with a burst appendix?

SV: No.

LW: He was 18. He was up on Beaver Creek with my dad hunting. And he got appendicitis and he had to hike out, and it burst. It took quite awhile to get him into town. I was in Missoula. I was 14. They brought him in and they never thought he'd ever make it, 'cause all that walking with that poison going through him. They got a specialist. It was just touch and go. Just wonderful that he made it. In fact, he didn't want to go into the doctor. When it burst he said he felt a little better. But Dad said, well, we're going in anyway. They got in there that night. Usually it's fatal, that bad. In the old days, you know.

SV: Did Russell go to high school in Missoula?

LW: Well, he went a little while, then he quit. Like Joe, too. Joe went a little while, too. I graduated in '49.

SV: Where were you when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

LW: I was still home in '41. I'd have been 10.

SW: You remembered the end of the war?

LW: Yeah, in high school. (SW: You said everybody was celebrating.) Yeah, and Joe lied about his age and went in the Navy in World War II in the South Pacific. Russell was in Korea.

SV: Did you know Joe in high school?

LW: Yeah, I knew him ever since I was a kid. But we didn't go to the same schools, because he was up here. But I knew him always. He was in the Navy. Then he got out. I was still in high school. He got out in '44. I don't know exact. I was still in high school. Because he was six years older than me. (end of war) Boy that was something.

SV: What kind of effect did the war have on you?

LW: You had a lot of stuff you couldn't get. You just went without it. You didn't mind because it was for a good cause.

SV: Do you remember anything in particular you had to go without?

LW: Sugar was something rationed. You had to can your fruit, Mom did, without sugar, and it wasn't too good. But you got by without. In fact Russell dumped out some a few years ago, that nobody ate. He was opening some jars and stuff. You didn't have much sugar. But that was probably . . . we had our own meat. But I remember the sugar really plain.

SW: You said during the Depression, things up here weren't that much different?

LW: No because you lived off of your place. My mom always used to say we were a lot better off than in the towns. At least we had some food. People were killing themselves and stuff, in town.

SW: You said it was always a treat at Christmas, the aunt in California . . .

LW: She'd always send things. It was really a treat for us. They had a motel and people would leave things behind, you know? And she'd send them to Russell and I for Christmas. Toys and things.

SV: Were they still doing the dances here?

LW: Yeah. You all went. The whole family. Sleep on the bench and stuff. I remember Evelyn's sisters. When she got married, they had a party for her. Rosemary was her name. We went in the sled. Boy it was beautiful out. Crisp and cold. You cut through there by the Guest Ranch. That was all open. I think that house is gone, where they had the part in. Went over there and had a dance. The local guys played. Even went up to Joe's place once in awhile, up to the Big House for a party.

SV: Everybody calls it the Big House?

LW: Yeah, it's so big. (The Bar 33 Ranch house). Went up there for some parties. Dances and things. The Rumble Creek School had dances there.

SV: Did you ever feel like you were isolated?

LW: No we didn't feel like that too much. There was plenty to do always. We were always doing something. Getting together with the kids, playing Monopoly and stuff like that. It didn't seem like you were deprived, ever. Compared to now, it seemed tame, but it was fun.

SV: Well, you've stayed here, all your life, outside of a short trip to high school. What was the best part about staying here.

LW: I guess once you've lived here like that, that long, you just like it probably. All of us live around here close, the family. That's always been good.

SV: What was the worst part?

SW: You'll have to tell her what Roxy Hollopeter said. . . .

LW: Oh yeah. Roxy Hollopeter came up one day, and I said, "Boy we got our road." and he said, "Yeah, you'll be glad one of these days when there's everybody in the world coming in here." He was right. We thought he was an old grouch at the time. We were so glad to have the highway and stuff. But it really was the end of the good times. (laughs)

SV: What changed the most after the road.

LW: Well then everybody was coming in. We just felt like it changed. You didn't know as many. Just different.

SV: Sounds to me like there were a lot of families here when you were growing up?

LW: Oh yeah. Some of them went, come and go. That's the way they did. But there was a lot. And you always were doing something helping each other. My Dad, they'd come and get him and they'd come and help us. If someone was in trouble, Mom would get up in the night and go help them. You know, it was so different. Kind of hard times, but still a good feeling, too. Mr. Forrester broke his leg, and everybody just rallied around. Did his stuff. It was nice. I was talking with Bob Newman the other day, and he said, Dad came up and helped them. But it was nice to have the modern, too. The lights, and everything. In a way, it was nice.

SW: And Dad said, strangers and stuff would just stop in and stay. You'd just stop at somebody's house as you were going through. Dad said Grandpa used to walk to Missoula, and stay at people's houses and stuff along the way.

LW: When he came up to look at the place, he walked in and stayed at different places. (At the state ranch at Potomac.)

[End of Tape 1, Side B]

[Tape 2, Side A]

LW: You were about six when the road came in and power (to Shirley). The winter Shirley was born was terrible.

SW: But you better go in order.

SV: We got to 1949 and you were graduating from high school. Did all of your family go down for graduation.

LW: They all came down for graduation. Then I came home and worked up at the Gordon Ranch, with Gretchen (Stadler). She was the first woman in the South Fork and she was the cook up there. I worked with her helping her. Joe worked with the horses, taking the people riding and stuff. People stayed in the lodge; they'd rent it. That would have been in the summer of '49. (The Wineglass was over on the side.) Then Joe was taking the people riding and everything and in the South Fork, because they came out from Chicago and rented it.

SV: Fishing trips?

LW: Always fishing, I guess it was, with them.

SV: Joe was responsible for the horses.

LW: He took care of the horses.

SW: He started when he was 13. He took a pack string into the Bob. They didn't call it that then. When he was 13, by himself.

LW: He always knew a lot about horses.

SV: Did you always have horses here?

LW: We used to have horses for awhile, when we were first here. When we went to Alaska we got rid of them. We didn't get anymore (1966).

SV: So in 1949 you were at the Gordon Ranch?

LW: Then that fall, I forgot what I was doing. Babysitting and stuff for people. Joe and I were going to get married that fall, and he was in the Bob Marshall and broke his ankle. Compound fracture. A grizzly was around there. He built up a fire and stuff. He was bringing some meat out for a guy. He stepped on some bear grass and he had to ride out. It was really bad, with a compound fracture. Ride sixteen miles. So then he was laid up most of that . . . The dudes didn't know how to get him off or anything.

SW: They stopped at the Roundup Bar and got drunk, while he was waiting . . .

LW: You don't need to put that in.

SV: So you got him out of the South Fork, off horseback.

LW: Then they headed for town.

SW: They (dudes) didn't know how to help him.

LW: His brother came over and got him off the horse. By then his leg was so swollen up. They had to leave him a week before they could operate and set it because it was so swollen. So it took him a long time. They had to put a pin in there and he was all winter laid up. He didn't work that winter.

SV: What would he have done in the winter?

LW: He was going to work at the Mill. His brothers had a sawmill. We got married in April the next spring. 1950.

SV: You didn't want to marry him laid up?

LW: No. (Laughs) He couldn't work very good.

SV: Where were you married at?

LW: In Missoula. Right there by Hellgate. There is a church, the St. Paul's Lutheran. Just had a little wedding in the chapel. Right by the Hellgate. The first block off Stephens, or Brooks. Brooks.

SW: Did you say how much money you had left (after the wedding)?

LW: Three dollars.

SV: After you saved?

LW: No we didn't save, because you didn't have much to save. My little jobs, and things. I was babysitting for some people. We had three dollars left and an old car. But we had our rent paid up for a month. Where, Forrester's? Newman's?

SW: That tiny little cabin across the creek.

SV: To the west across the creek (Glacier Creek)?

LW: 10 by 10. There's a little tiny one, ten by ten, you can notice sometimes when you go over there. We had our rent paid up. It was ten dollars a month. The store, we asked Mrs. Strom if we could charge there while Joe went back to work and she said yeah. By then she was getting pretty good. She kept adding on. That was 1950. Then we were there a month and they had a big party for us in May. The mud was so deep that they had to come up from Swan Lake in a six by six. Marian Seaman can tell you about that. They were all day getting here, in an old six by six and they all came for the party. And had to go, went clear around by Missoula, it was horrible, the road. Then that night we had a big party at the Community Hall. Got a lot of nice stuff. We took it home to the cabin. We just got home and somebody let out a yell, a war whoop. It was Gene Fox. You've probably heard of him. Chivareeing us. Joe said, I'll make some coffee. He put the coffee pot on and lit the stove. It just smoked! Gene had put a gunny sack in the pipe. Everything was a mess. They had stuff scattered all over. It was funny.

SW: Dishrag in the coffee pot.

LW: Yep. Dishrag, and the bed fell down when some of them sat on it. The next morning we looked at all the stuff we had. It was piled all over. We thought, boy, we better move. No place . . . so we moved to that cabin back of Harold and Doris'. That was three rooms. Then we stayed there that winter.

SW: Tell about the bird, raven, flying.

LW: It hit the glass. I was making supper. It scattered glass all over. What a mess. So we stayed there that winter. It used to be three rooms. It was nice.

SW: It was Russell's cabin.

LW: Well, Harold, really. But we always call it Russell's. Russell's place. And then, we stayed there that winter, and I think the next summer. Joe thought maybe we ought to go up to the big house. The home place. His dad was up there, and his brother. So we went up there. Let's see. . . then we got this place, but we didn't move here right away. His brothers had a sawmill here. He put all his money out of the Army in it (who put the money in it?) and then they went bankrupt. So we got this place.

SW: Out of the Navy?

LW: Yeah, out of the Navy.

SV: Who put the money?

LW: Joe, when he got out of the service. That was before we were married. And they went bankrupt. In those days \$10,000 was a lot. We got this place. At the time, we thought, boy, that wasn't too much because it had been logged.

SW: Didn't think it was much of a place. How much did it cost?

LW: Ten thousand.

SW: For 160 acres?

LW: Yeah. A lot of people thought we inherited this. We didn't. We bought it. It was a homestead. (Walker). Dobb and Ting bought it, that was his brothers. So we were up at the big house. I was cooking for him and his dad and his brother. They were logging and sawmilling. That was in '51. Then we came down here in the fall of '51 in October, built our house. Shirley was born in '52. The terrible winter. The snow was so deep. Twenty below for two weeks. Then every time you'd look out it would be snowing, that year she was born. She was a week old. We came home, and Joe's sister came and said her husband was out (Buff Hultman) down at Salmon Prairie, looking for horses, in January. Shirley was only a week old. Joe went along with them (on horseback) they finally found him. They found the horses. He had fallen into the fire and singed his eyeballs, so he couldn't see too good. Buff Hultman, Eunice's husband. So they got him home. Every time I'd look out, there'd be another foot of snow on the car. Boy, it was dreary.

SW: You said, coming home, too, at Clearwater Junction.

LW: Drifts, and oh. . . . It was really a bad winter.

SV: Did you take any pictures?

LW: It was one of the worst. Joe and Dad had a sawmill up where Ed Foss, that used to belong to his (Joe's) brothers. It was so deep, the snow, they had to walk in to get the cat to plow out, and pull the batteries in on a sled to the cat, then plow out. That was a hard winter. So that was a real bad winter. Been here ever since.

SV: It didn't discourage you then?

LW: Nope. We hauled water for eight and a half years.

SW: I remember that.

LW: Drilling our well was about Twelve Hundred Dollars. Boy that was a lot in those days. After eight and a half years, Bob Hudson drilled us a well. 120 feet, seven inches.

SW: I remember that so plain.

LW: We were so tickled to have water. But even today, if I have trouble with the water, it still bothers me. When you don't have it for so many years. Like the pump or something.

SW: You'd go to Grandma's and wash. . .

LW: And I'd wash out the baby clothes just with an old washer. I had an old hand, antique. Didn't take much water.

SW: You'll have to tell her the story about you always did the wash on Mondays. . . .

LW: Joe came home one day and there wasn't a wash. He ran in and said, "Are you all right?" and I said, "Yeah, why?" "You didn't have a wash on the line!"

We used an old gas machine every Monday. I did help my Mom and we heated our water together, you know, on a cook stove. It wouldn't start, or something. He thought I'd died.

SV: Were you working?

LW: Nope. I was just home with Shirley. There was always a lot . . . we hayed and stuff. When Shirley was five my dad died. We had to help my mom . . .

SW: The men were all working and the women did all the haying. She'd take me along and I'd camp out in the shade somewhere. Grandma was usually there, too. Mom and Doris did the haying.

LW: After my dad died we hayed, all summer, so that Mom could have some cows for a little income. She didn't have much.

SW: They went clear to Simmons Meadows down there. Drove clear down there . . .

SV: What did you do when something broke down?

LW: We'd just have to wait until the men, if we couldn't fix it, they'd come home at night. We were just talking about that the other day, the old baler we used to have, and the trouble we used to have. We've hayed every place around here.

SW: Kaser's (meadow) too, I remember that. (Jimmy Joe drives up.)

SV: So we got through the first couple years of marriage, but not to the outfitting. . .

LW: Joe worked for Buff for quite a long time, taking people in the South Fork. He was there quite awhile. In the wintertime he sawed, for Marshall Gray from Seeley Lake, Gray Lumber Company. Where you see the road where the posts are out there by the road? Gray had a big mill in there and a lot of people worked for him. Then, after that, I don't know how far we are up, he sawed in the woods for a long time. He quit working for Buff.

SV: But you went with him into the South Fork?

LW: No, not very much. Mom was here and we had to hay and everything. I went once in awhile and cooked for them. I usually, I had to stay home and help hay and take care of things, when Shirley was little. Once in a great while I'd get to go, but not very much.

SW: I just remember you going some, and I stayed at Matthew, and at Eunice's.

SV: Didn't you go in just for fun?

LW: No, I cooked. We went in the first year we were married, but that's the only time I ever went, till we were old, we hiked in. When we were young, 13 of us got together the first year in Smith Creek and stayed three weeks. Florence Holmes and her boy, Mike. Mike was six years old. And Huletts, and -- just Tom -- Johnny Hulett, I think he was there, too, but I wouldn't swear to it. Pete and Mary Hollopeter, and Mary's sister.

SV: You camped at Smith Creek?

LW: No, we went clear to the river, Little Salmon, camped there, then came out Holland. We were in there three weeks. That's the only time we ever did it for fun, except Joe and I and Sally and Russell hiked in in 1981, from Benchmark, 25 miles.

SW: You said that was really fun.

LW: That was so much fun, the 13 of us.

SV: Had Joe been in that way before?

LW: Yeah, I think he had but it isn't a very good trail. It was a nice trip but the trail isn't very good.

SV: Did he ever say anything about Indian camps?

LW: Not that I know of. He might have told somebody else.

SW: Isn't there a place, that's a drop off and you can see down. . .

LW: Oh, my horse stopped right there and you can see thousands of feet down. It's just real narrow. My horse stopped right there and looked down.

SW: But there's a hole there?

LW: Well, it's off to the side. You can just look clear down. This one, you can just look way down, hundreds of feet and see the tree tops. The horse stopped right there. It's real narrow. Just a little place. They never have fallen or anything but it's really scary. And then on the other side is a horrible trail. Those rocks slide off. The rocks slide off and as you are going along, it's way, way down. Just narrow. You go winding along these switchbacks. Rocks are sliding. They say, what's really scary is in the winter when it's snow covered. You can't hardly see where to go or anything. I don't care for that trail, those two places. Otherwise, it's okay. A lot worse than Holland.

SW: You've had some experiences with horses . . . You got hurt?

LW: Oh yeah, but I was all right.

SV: Did you get to cook?

LW: Cooking mostly in hunting camps. They are kind of fun.

SW: Have you seen the picture of them in *Life* magazine?

SV: That's the one I'm thinking of, because you were in that.

LW: We had those guys in there. That was at Shaw Creek, I think. The hunting camps in a way are easier to cook, because you don't have to get everything together and go again. You got it right there. You have a base camp and you stay right there. It's always hard coming out, because it's so cold folding up the tents and stuff.

SV: What were your favorite things to cook?

LW: Oh, like stews and things like that. We made everything. Steaks. Joe and Harold even made an angel food cake. They put it in the oven and then went fishing and forgot it. When they came back it was just gorgeous.

SW: The fire went out.

LW: It looked like something out of a bakery. They laughed and laughed over that. I made biscuits and cake. The hardest is doing breakfast for a lot, because there are so many different things you got out. You know, like a stew is easy, but when you have all the bacon, eggs and all the different stuff. And keeping it warm. That's kind of hard.

SV: Were the hunters trophy hunters or meat hunters.

LW: Mostly trophy. Goat hunters and stuff.

SV: Elk and goats. There were goats in the picture.

LW: Yeah they were goat hunters. They were real nice guys.

SW: You got all kinds of stuff from them. . .

LW: They were always sending us stuff.

SV: Were they some of Buff's hunters?

LW: Yes. We always just went for him. He had a way with the dudes that they liked him. A gift of gab. He forgot the old guys, the old guys one time at Feline Creek, he forgot their sleeping bags. They were going to be real mad at him. He had that way, when they got in there they were fine. They sat up that night. Buff went back out and got them. They were four old guys from New York, bankers, and they were real agreeable. First they were going to be real mad. They just took it in stride and he went back out and got them.

SV: They didn't know about your dad's trick with the boughs.

LW: There was snow on the trees. I don't think that would have worked too good. Dad could make a bed that was just as soft as a mattress. He put the boughs just a certain way and they just were spongy. Spent a long time cutting them. He was real easy going, my dad. Nothing ever did get him down.

SV: How old was Joe when he first went in?

LW: Thirteen. He led a pack string. (Jimmy Joe went in the first time at age 21)

SW: I got to go in when I was in third grade, with dad and Florence Holmes. Buff had this guest come out from South Bend Indiana. She was really, really rich and she had a daughter my age. So she came (and Sandy Hultman came?). Oh man, talk about fun. It was just heaven.

LW: You were in there about three weeks, weren't you.

SW: I remember all that time, you missed me probably a lot. I came out and saw Mom and I said, "You still have that same old purse?" It seemed like I had been in there for ten years.

LW: And then she cooked in there for Buff when she was in high school. They had these underprivileged kids from back East. Terrible hot. The bears were terrible.

SW: There were fires in there. You couldn't move once you were in there. That's a whole other story. Go on with Mom.

LW: The bears (Jimmy Joe leaves) . . .

SV: Buff had the 33 Bar Ranch?

LW: He had it a long time. When we moved down here in '51. Eunice always wanted to have the old ranch. At least twenty. When did they go to Drummond? 1972? Yep, twenty years. They got married the week before Joe and I. And Eunice always wanted the old ranch. They owned a ranch down at Swan Lake, Buff did. And then they came up here. So they were there twenty years. Joe worked there, I don't know, five years, I guess?

SW: He was there with Grandma and Grandpa. . .

LW: When he was young he packed and everything, for his folks.

SV: So he had a lot of experience.

LW: Famous people used to come.

SW: And they'd come out from town and they'd have big parties, and set up tents. Rich people. It was a huge things.

SV: Late thirties? Early forties?

LW: Thirties. What Joe always said was when there was a Depression, it didn't affect the rich. That's when they took their vacations. So they came out. They all had money. Didn't affect them.

SW: Dad said they used to barbecue a whole beef, and stuff. Put up a big tent. He got to help peel potatoes.

LW: See it never affected those people with all that money. They vacationed while all that was going on. They made quite a good living, his folks.

[End of Tape 2, Side A]

[Tape 2, Side B]

LW: (Discussion about the two families, Wilhelms and Haasch's). We used to not have as much. His dad and mom would get into town more often than we ever did. Once a year my dad went.

SV: They had all the boys.

LW: Four boys and two girls.

SV: Just thinking about what Bob Martin said (cousin to the Wilhelms) there were a lot of people around . . . Babe was just real outgoing (Joe's dad). . .

LW: There was always somebody there.

SV: Did they operate a dude ranch?

LW: I think they did for taking people into the hills. They'd get them from way back east always. Then they'd probably tell another one. Molly, I'll ask her about that (Lucille will see Molly at the Fenby reunion this weekend).

SW: They (Wilhelms) were a big name in the valley. Grandpa owned so much land and everything. He really helped a lot of people. He was good hearted. Helped them out financially and stuff like that. Molly can tell you more.

LW: He had 200 acres on Swan Lake. I wish he'd kept that.

SW: The place where (?) lived.

LW: And up at Holland Lake, at the Packer Camp, 160 up there. Ed Foss's place.

SW: Over on the West side he had a place, too.

SV: The Roll place?

LW: Yeah, Buff got it from somebody. Probably him.

SW: But they didn't make a lot of money off of it, ever.

SV: The whole land appreciation thing hadn't happened yet.

LW: No. And this place, at \$10,000, we didn't think we were getting a very good deal.

SW: They couldn't even get a loan for a house.

LW: In '75, it's the honest truth, we asked the Western Montana Bank to get a loan and have a house up here and the guy laughed. He said that land in the Swan isn't worth nothing. Isn't that something? That's why we got a double wide. You can get a loan on that. They can take it off. But for a house. He laughed. He said that land isn't worth a thing. And that was in '75.

SV: Was Joe working for Rustics then?

LW: He went to work there in '71 and he was there twenty years.

SV: So in between he worked . . . ?

LW: Copenhaver's. Gray's and Copenhaver's. And we went to Alaska in '66 and '67. That's when we got rid of our horses and stuff. Sawed (in Alaska). We went to help Dobb and his wife, move up. And stayed that year. Then we went back.

SW: That's a funny story, too. Donna and Mom cooked it all up! Came home and she said, "Joe, what do you think about going to Alaska?"

LW: He said, Okay, when do we go? But he had kind of a shocked look on his face. He said, "I don't care." He liked it, too.

SW: He loved it up there.

LW: We hated to see her drive up with four little kids in an old car. They were all little. And Shirley and we all went up together. Slept out. Didn't even have a tent then.

SW: It wasn't paved then.

LW: That's probably the best time we ever had.

SV: Was it kind of like a vacation, the trip up there?

LW: Oh yeah. Adventure. Lot of people think driving the Alcan is a big chore, but we enjoyed it, didn't we? Slept out without a tent or anything.

SV: Was there very much traffic?

LW: Not too much. Long ways between places. When we got there we were so dirty, Dobb said he hated to claim us. We were all so dirty from sleeping out in the dust and the dusty road. He said, we looked so terrible. Here was Joe and two women and five kids.

SW: Dad didn't want to go in anyplace with us.

LW: Oh, we looked terrible. Then we got an old house up there and we all moved in together (Haines). They had to fly out to the job.

SW: No electricity. No running water.

LW: Then Tom and Sherry Hulett, they were up there with a trailer. They had four little boys. They came out and said, boy, this is nice out here. I think we'll come out, too. So they brought their trailer out and parked beside us. There was nine of us and six of them.

SW: Dad and Dobb built all the furniture.

LW: An old house we rented real cheap.

SV: What part of Alaska?

LW: Haines. It's just beautiful. Real remote. Only one way out. But beautiful. Right on a canal. The Lynn (Lind?) Canal. We had a good time. The men worked.

SV: Did Joe like sawing?

LW: Oh yeah. He liked it. In '71 he was sawing for Copenhaver. He liked it and everything, but one night Jim Busch came down and I was alone. He said, I've been thinking about something. I wonder if Joe might like to go building houses or something? I said, I don't know. When he gets home...he stayed away during the week. I said maybe when he gets home he might be interested. So Jim came down and they got to talking. They decided they'd do it. So he stayed there twenty years.

SW: It was over by Gloria's now.

LW: That was part of our place, where Gloria is (across from Hungry Bear). He had a shop there. He and Russell (Haasch) were there twenty years. He liked it. It wasn't as hard as sawing. But he had to do a lot more thinking. Figuring out. He was good at that.

SW: He had to do some bossing, too. That wasn't really his thing.

LW: He never really cared about doing that.

SW: But they really liked him.

LW: But he had to figure out the houses and things, quite a bit of stuff. And he was good at that.

SW: He had a mathematical mind. All the Wilhelms did.

SV: Babe, too.

SW: Well, their Mom was smart, too. Teaching and whatnot.

LW: That was the log yard, then. Jim sold it to Bob Ford and Joe just went on. He and Russell and Adolph (Anderson) Evie's husband. He was there eighteen or twenty. Adolph and Russell and Joe. Then Adolph died just when he was about to quit working (accident). The three of them were there at the same time. Forty people were employed at one time there.

SV: Did he ever talk about the log home business being such a popular thing here.

LW: Well, he just could never believe that after Jim started, everybody started. Guys would come and work awhile and then go start up a log home . . . Jim was the first one in Montana, then pretty soon there were 14 up the Bitterroot and down toward Kalispell and up toward . . . Columbia Falls. All over. But I think Jim was the first one. He could see there was going to be a good thing.

SW: He was really well known all over. It was a big thing.

LW: Nice to work for, too.

SV: Did Joe's dad build log homes?

LW: He probably helped people. I never heard dad ever say. He was always with his packing.

SW: I never realized until Mom was telling me today, that Grandpa didn't build the big house.

LW: No, he had somebody working on that. He was packing. Molly would remember who.

SW: I remember Dad talking about putting those logs up on the top.

LW: Oh yeah. He'd be home and stuff. But I mean there was somebody else (who helped build the house).

SV: Have you read Eunice's story?

LW: No.

SV: I'll get that to you.

LW: She'd remember. She was two years older than Joe.

SV: I can see if Babe, if he had a lot of guys around there

LW: He probably helped when he was home.

SW: He was a logger out in Oregon before he came here. He was a real storyteller.

LW: We went over to see Eunice just before she died. We had sort of a feeling maybe we ought to go. We were going to wait until school was out so Shirley could go. Marian, I mentioned it to you, and she said, Let's go. She was still pretty good, mentally, but the cancer was getting her. Got to see Sandy. That's the boy.

SV: Who did Buff sell the ranch to?

LW: I don't know, then Arquette's. Somebody in between there. Lawyers. They sold part of it to Virgil Burns.

SV: When Joe was working on the log homes, did he have any experience doing that before he went to work? Adolph or Russ?

LW: No he didn't. No, they just kind of picked up on it. They were good at that kind of stuff. Russell has always loved carpenter work. He could do the finishing. Joe liked to do the chainsaw. And Adolph.

SW: He probably built stuff around here.

LW: Oh yeah. But never homes. They just kind of picked up on it and learned as they went, too.

SW: He knew how to do the notching.

LW: Oh sure, from the old days. As they went along they got better. But Joe never liked the finishing part, like Russell did. He liked just the big stuff with the chainsaw.

SW: Russell used to make toys and everything.

When we were kids, he was just so patient. Carving out of wood, things like graders, the wheels would turn and everything. Because we didn't have many toys. He was always good at that. Precise.

SW: Even when he was in Missoula, he was still little . . .

LW: He was just a natural carpenter. He just had a knack for that.

SV: And Adolph was the artist!

LW: He was good, too. Helping always.

SV: So how long did Joe keep going back into the South Fork?

LW: He didn't go back in again until we hiked in.

SW: He was there when I was in third grade. He was still working for Buff.

LW: But then he didn't stay much longer after that. He only stayed for Buff four or five years.

SW: Then he went to work for Copenhavers for years.

LW: Larry Copenhaver and his dad. Larry and Lawrence Copenhaver. He was there a long, long time. He was there a long, long time.

SW: He got hurt up in Alaska. So he came home.

LW: So he came home. No, he got hurt the first year and we went back. A tree hit him on the head.

SW: A snag broke, the top came down, and he was way back in there, they'd flown him in.

SV: We talked a little bit about the changes, when you went to Alaska, and came back, were there changes that were evident?

LW: Not from '66 to '67. I don't think it had changed too much.

SW: It didn't immediately change things.

SW: I think a lot of it was people just passing through, after it started to become a route. Before, nobody came through here. They'd go clear around on Highway 93.

LW: Yeah, see Swan Lake, see, we had dirt and mud for years.

SW: Even after the highway, nobody traveled through for years, no trucks or anything like that.

LW: When you hit Swan Lake to Bigfork, was all mud. Really awful in the spring. They didn't get that highway fixed.

SW: Even when I was a kid, we never went to Kalispell, never.

LW: The Swan Lake road was just unbelievable. Winding. Like I said they had to bring a six by six and got stuck.

SW: You forgot to tell her about when you went down to pick raspberries (strawberries?)

LW: When I was like about 14, a girl and I decided . . . We heard they needed strawberry pickers at Bigfork. So we walked down. We stayed there and picked our strawberries, made a little money and walked home.

SV: How long did it take you to walk?

LW: I don't remember. We'd get a ride once in awhile and stuff. I don't remember how long. We got to Swan Lake. Slept out under a tree at Swan Lake.

SV: Didn't your parents worry?

LW: They might have but they didn't say nothing. They said go ahead. I wore out a pair of shoes walking down there. Remember those loafers? You've probably seen them. I wore a hole right through the sole.

SW: You know there at Ferndale? To come back to the lake...

LW: That's where the strawberries were. We had a lot of fun. We stayed there and went up to a lake and went swimming. There was a bunch of guys up there (laughs). Mud Lake or something. Come home again. Think we made five dollars apiece or something.

SV: Do you remember what wages were like when Joe first went to work.

LW: I don't remember. It was like, when Harold worked, for thirty a month earlier. I made eighty a month at the Gordon Ranch, and your room and board. I was trying to think was Joe made. But stuff was cheap. Coffee was a lot cheaper. All the groceries were a lot cheaper. Gas was real cheap. I don't know how much he made an hour.

SW: I think he got paid by the month. Maybe \$150 a month.

SV: The fifties . . .

SW: Later on it seemed like he made \$300.

LW: It seemed like when he worked for Buff he got the \$150. If they made some extra or something at the end of the year he got a little extra. But it wasn't much. And the mill, he and his dad had the sawmill, you could draw out so much. It seemed like he drew about \$150. That was in 1950, 1951 around in there. '52. But things at the store were a lot cheaper, too.

SW: I don't remember you worrying about money, not like people nowadays.

LW: Your taxes weren't near as high or nothing. We never went to town or anything, very much.

SW: When we did go to town, we stayed overnight in those little cabins. It was too far to go to town and back. I can remember when I was little.

LW: We'd take her to the show once in a great while.

SV: What do you think the biggest change is in the community since you were first married?

LW: You don't know near as many people or anything. And so much traffic, that's the thing. That's about the worst, is the traffic. Like you can hardly go to the mailbox to get the mail, and I have to wait and wait and wait to cross the road.

SV: Do you have any advice for people coming in?

LW: No.

SV: What would you tell Jimmy Joe about advice for how to survive here?

LW: I don't know.

SW: Go with the flow.

LW: That's what we had to do.

SW: My grandma, boy she saw a lot of change in her lifetime. She learned.

LW: She adapted good. Probably better than I do.

SW: An amazing person.

LW: Everything changed so much in her life. She lived to be 98. Probably kind of like Evelyn would say, too, the changes. When they first got their house, going way back, they'd only been in it about a year or two, when the fire of '29... over where you live (Kraft Creek). They could see the fire coming. Mom said, just been in their house two years, and somebody came and told them, they'd better go. They got things, I think Harold said, they got in a wheel barrow, cart or something. They went out with a few things. That night it poured.

SW: Grandpa wasn't there.

LW: No, he was working. That night it poured. Mom said ashes were starting to come through the air. And float. They all went down to the ranger station. That's where they were supposed to go, the people that evacuated. That night it poured and saved their house.

But it got close. It burned one up right around the Guest Ranch. Peterson place. But Mom said that was sure awful, after all their work, thought they might not have a house. Couldn't take too much stuff so quick, either. It poured rain.

SV: There are some blessings in the midst of chaos sometimes.

LW: That was an awful fire.

SV: Do you remember any fires here in the '50s and '60s?

LW: Not that got real close. One up here on Buck Creek is pretty big. You can see that big burn.

SW: I don't remember fires in the valley much. Dad used to have to go out where he was working somewhere, Seeley Lake or whatever.

LW: It didn't seem like it was so bad ever. But we used to get a lot more rain. We could sometimes hardly get our hay up in between rains. Look at this, we haven't had a rain for days.

SW: Was it the last year in Alaska that it was so bad?

LW: Yeah, down here it was like this in '67. When we'd call home, Mom would say, "I hate to see another sun come up." She said it was just so hot and dry. And I'd say, up here it's just so beautiful. Raining. There was a fire in Glacier Park when we came down in October or November. November.

SV: I contend that a lot of things have changed but some things are the same.

SW: I like to look at the mountains. I remember since I was a kid, always looking at the mountains. I think everybody who grew up in this valley thinks those mountains are theirs. They haven't changed.

LW: I like the place, going out around on it, our own place. It's always the same pretty much. Forest Service back of us, and Nelson's over there, and I doubt if this guy will do anything.

SW: Up Barber Creek, it's really nice up there.

LW: We drove up there the other day. It was nice. But like, if you go huckleberrying or something and there's just hundreds of people. Gee, we went up a few years ago. Jim Lakes.

They were just camped. And big outfits up there. Wow. Boy that one year they were really good berries. Lots of people.

SV: Change the subject. When did the Lutheran Church start?

LW: 1965 at the Community Hall. Then in 1966 we started the church and finished it in 1967.

SV: That was a change for the community to have a church?

LW: Yes.

[End of Interview]