

THIS is Larry Sprunk and the following is an interview that I had with Mr. Oscar Bode of Larimore, North Dakota. The interview was held in Oscar's home in Larimore, Tuesday, April 13, 1976 and it began at approximately 9:30 in the morning. The completion of the interview is on the succeeding cassette.

OSCAR: You got your machine set up there?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: Well, transportation. It says here by horseback and wagon and team. That's the only transportation we had at that time. Now, in the movement of freight, produce, and people prior to rail transportation was farm wagon and team. That's the only transportation we had. We homesteaded, you see, on the place; That is, my father did. I was just a youngster and I don't know what year dad came up to first open up the homestead. See, I don't know that. When I came into this territory in 1892, is when we came up from LeSueur, Minneasota. Then at that time the only way we had to get around was to walk or go horseback. That's the only way there was to get around.

LARRY: Where were you born?

OSCAR: I was born at LeSueur, Minneasota.

LARRY: But your dad had come up here in the 80's?

OSCAR: He came up ^{in the 80's} ~~in the 80's~~ and homesteaded. He was runnin' a flour mill at LeSueur, Minneasota at the time and when mother seen that they was opening up this territory for homesteading, why, then she pervaded on him to come up and file a claim so he did. Course, I was so young, you see, so I didn't know very much about it. I couldn't give you very much information on that; but, o' course, rule was at that time you had to be on the homestead 6 months out o' the year, see. The other 6 months you could work at any occupation that you could find so you could keep a goin'. My understanding from father and the only thing I knew about is that the government furnished a team, a plow, and if they helped with lumber to build a homestead shack, I don't know. Maybe they did because I don't imagine the people that was movin' on the homestead.... There was no lumber, you know?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: On the place that we got there was no trees and there was no way of gettin' any lumber to build a shack; but take some of those peoples that lived around the river area, why, they took the brush and small trees along the stream and build 'em shacks. They were very inconvenient, but they got along. And, o' course, most of them that homesteaded didn't spend the winter here at all, see, because they didn't have no fuel and anything. There was no way of gettin' any fuel. All the ^{Coal mines was} ~~mines~~ in the western part o' the state and there was no way to get it here so they was really up against it.

LARRY: Where was your dad's homestead located?

OSCAR: 31/2 miles SE of ^{Niagara.} ~~Windsor~~

LARRY: Was your dad Norwegian?

OSCAR: No, he was German.

LARRY: German.

OSCAR: Ya, he came here from Germany. His folks moved out of Germany just before he became of age to go into the military service in Germany, and they didn't want him to go in because you had to serve 6 years, see. So they decided they'd move to America before he was drafted into the Army so that's what they did. As I understand it they came here and moved into Ohio somewhere around the Toledo, Ohio area. That's where my mother was from and that's where dad, I guess, met her and they married. Course, I don't know much about their first marriage experiences, what kind o' work or anything that he done. He was a shoemaker by trade in Germany. Then, o' course, they was living on a ranch, too, you know. He told me a number o' times that he had to walk 18 miles a day back and forth when they was takin' up this shoe business, see, and learning. They only got about 75¢ a day in Germany for labor ^{and} ~~and~~ eat yourself!

LARRY: When were you born?

OSCAR: I was born in 1886. I'm going on my 90th year now. I'll be 90 the 24th of December.

LARRY: So you were about 6 years old when....

OSCAR: When we came here, ya. About 51/2 goin' onto 6. Well, we moved

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here in the spring. I 'spose, I was about 51/2 years old at that time. We moved up here in a boxcar. All our furniture and everything was in a boxcar. They stopped us at ^{Niagara} ~~Niagara~~ there. I remember it was in the spring just about the time the gophers were comin' out from there hidin'. One day us kids went out and we killed 156 gophers by drowning and anyway we could get 'em.

LARRY: Is that right.

OSCAR: You see, there was water at that time. It had thawed and a lot o' puddles around and, of course, the gophers were anxious to get out so we'd get a bucket o' water and pour it down their den. They'd come out and we'd hit 'em with a club. That's the way we got 'em.

LARRY: Were there a lot of them?

OSCAR: Oh, ya, a lot of 'em. In the early days, with our ^{crops} ~~land~~ they were bad on the crops and they'd eat in the crops pretty bad. So then, o' course, we did our best to eradicate 'em. Later on when the Agricultural Department got busy, they furnished us with poisoned oats that we could put at their homes there, you know. We'd give them poisoned oats and that would get rid of a lot of 'em; but, otherwise, we had to trap 'em. Anyway we could get rid of 'em. 'Cause I remember on the land that I got right now left of the home.... I've got 64 acres. We had crops up there and they were eating in on the crops pretty bad. They'd maybe take a 1/4 or a 1/2 a acre; you know. One thing about them was that they seemed to work in crews like, The gophers did. And they wouldn't be all over either, you know, eating. They'd maybe go together and eat in a place. That was unusual. I don't think many people have thought much about that.

LARRY: No.

OSCAR: Course, they was scattered all over. Their homes. But, you know, the animals even.... You take the wolves and the coyotes, and badgers and all that stuff in the early days, and skunks. There wasn't so many of them, but they were scattered all over. Take especially the wolves and coyotes. They was quite numerous and pretty hungry. There was lots o'

rabbits and that's about the only thing that they lived on. At night the wolves would come around homes there. You could hear them ~~howling~~ ^{howling}. One time when I was going to school at ~~Niagara~~ ^{Niagara}, I told my schoolmate that I was coming over to see him at the evening. So I said, "You put a light in the south window." They lived right next to a coulee, see. I said, "You put a light in the window and then the wolves won't bother us." So that's what he did. I walked over that evening. I was never scared o' wolves because they had never bothered us even though they'd been around a lot. Even when I was plowing the land with a team and horses, they'd follow the plow and pick up the mice as we plowed 'em out, see, and I'd throw wrenches at the wolves. They'd run off maybe 100 feet or such a matter and they was right back again as soon as you started plowing. They didn't molest ya.

LARRY: Now these weren't coyotes? These were wolves?

OSCAR: Wolves, yes. Both wolves and coyotes. These wolves they followed me that evening. I went over to see my friend. They were hungry. I never was scared o' wolves that time before. I didn't take no gun along or anything. Not even a club! Because we was never molested, you know, so we didn't fear 'em. ^{But} That evening there was 6 of 'em and I was gettin' about 11/2 ^{miles} from this boy's home when this pack o' wolves come back and got right close to me. They was showin' their teeth and everything and growling. I was afraid they was goin' t' attack me because my boy friend had killed about 1/2 dozen at his home. He was right next to the coulee and, o' course, they made their homes in those coulees, you see. That evening they came right up within 10, 15 feet o' me and I thought a number o' times they was goin' t' attack me and I sure did make time. I tell ya! I was tryin' to get over to that boys's home because I figured if he had a light in the ~~window~~ ^{window} they'd never bother ya after they seen the light and they didn't. When I got up to the edge o' the coulee--it was up on a high rise--and when they seen that light, they didn't bother any more. They didn't follow me, but I was afraid ~~to go down the coulee~~ ^{to go down the coulee}. I had to go down the coulee and up to his place. I was really afraid to go there,

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but I had to take courage. So near as I could find they didn't follow me down ^{through} to that coulee.

LARRY: Did you go back home then that night?

OSCAR: No, I'll tell you what happened. He had killed a wolf and he froze it and stuck it up right near their home where they entered in² the house from the north and, o' course, he didn't tell me anything about that, see. He had it with the mouth open and the teeth just like he was ready to grab you, you know, and after my scare with those wolves followin' me I come up to his place and I never stopped to rap or anything. I rushed right in the door. I guess ~~if~~ I was about fainted. He says, "What's the matter wit' you?" I says, "I don't know. I got scared from the wolves. Then ^{I said} you had this old wolf frozen up here in the front and then I seen that and that give me a scare also." He was right perturbed about me bein' so pale. He said, "You're pale." "Well," I said, "I was scared."

LARRY: Were these pretty good sized wolves?

OSCAR: Oh, ya, they were big. I can remember an incident north of Grand Forks--it was in the newspaper, of course--where a pack o' wolves had attacked a man and his wife and their children. They had gone to town with a sled and a team o' horses to get provisions and fuel. On their way back this pack o' wolves come up back of 'em and attacked 'em and was bothering the horses, see. They were hungry, I suppose, and they was wanting something to eat. So they took the provisions that they had bought and throwed it out ^{piece} by piece to try.... They wanted to get home, you know, but they finally found out they'd throwed out all their provisions. Then the husband says to his wife, "The only way we're goin' to survive is to unhook the horses and let them go." They had a 60 bushel box on a sled and they turned that upside down and got under it with their blankets and stuff. They usually carried plenty o' blankets so they was pretty well protected in the winter, you know. Course, they was warm dressed. So they got under that and stayed under that ^{all night} ~~there~~. It was near freezing. It was awful cold ^{weather} ~~there~~; but they survived and, of course, the next morning they found refuge, you know.

LARRY: Now this was during your time?

OSCAR: Ya.

LARRY: You remember this happening?

OSCAR: Oh, ya, I remember it well. Oh, ya, there was lots o' wolves. We always butchered our own hogs and stuff for meat and at night there'd be wolves around the place all the time howling. Funny thing about a wolf. When you start butcherin', you can be 2, 3 miles from them and they can smell that blood right away. They'll start howling and get together, see, but they won't come up to your place to molest ya unless it's dark. That's when they come up, see. They'd be howling around ⁱⁿ the night. I tell ya ~~so~~. That really goes through your bloodstream when they start howling. That's got an awful effect on a person. It scares a person, you know.

LARRY: Did that bother your mother at all?

OSCAR: Oh, yes, it did. It bothered her because she wasn't used to that kind of living here and we had a good home at ^{Le Sueur} ~~Le Sueur~~, Minneasona goin' to school there, o' course, ^{and} ~~and~~ she came from Toledo, Ohio. That's where her folks lived there. Course, we moved to ^{Le Sueur} ~~Le Sueur~~ and I don't know much about the early life, as I say. Father got to opening up this flour mill and feed mill that he had for the farmers so that's how he made his living there.

LARRY: What was your dad's name?

OSCAR: Reinholt.

LARRY: Reinholt. That's German alright.

OSCAR: R-e-i-n-h-o-l-t. Reinholt.

LARRY: And your mother's name was....

OSCAR: Maria, ya. And her name was Miller. Maria Miller. Then I don't know. It seemed liked mother's folks had moved from Toledo, Ohio to ^{Le Sueur} ~~Le Sueur~~, Minneasona. Whether they done that before father and mother got married I couldn't say.

LARRY: But none of your mother's family was in North Dakota?

OSCAR: No, we had no kinfolks here at that time when they moved up here at all.

LARRY: How many were there in your family?

OSCAR: 12.

LARRY: 12.

OSCAR: There was 10 children and father and mother, ya.

LARRY: Were they all born in Minneasota?

OSCAR: Yes. Well, all except for one boy. One boy was born here. He's 12 years younger than I am. He passed away here about a month ago from a heart attack. ^{He was} ~~was~~ livin' in Chicago.

LARRY: Were times pretty tough those first few years in North Dakota?

OSCAR: Oh, yes, they were. Nobody had no money and you couldn't get no jobs. We herded stock. My boy--well, he's dead now--herded stock with me. We had about 40 head o' stock. They didn't have no pastures, you know, and they was runnin' loose all over the place. Course, when they got used to bein'.... We had corrals to put 'em, but after we'd turn 'em out for the corral they'd run out all over the country. You had sometimes a hard time getting them together because, you know, when they got in heat, you know how they'll do. They'll run all over the country to find a bull so that makes it kind o' difficult, you know. A lot o' people didn't--well, you couldn't keep a bull home. You prett'i'near had to have him in a pen, otherwise, he'd be chasin' all over, too, you know. They have it in mind to find a mate, you know.

LARRY: Did you and your brother have a horse then or did you do it on foot?

OSCAR: Yes, well, most of it was on foot. Most of our travel was on foot, but we had a horse ^{a piece} ~~in~~ in case we needed them because we had to....

Well, to go down to get fuel and the groceries we would go a lot o' times by foot and sometime by horse. We didn't have too many horses, but we started raising horses and started raisin' hogs and cattle and we got a fairly good bunch there before long. But, o' course, one thing, you see, in the early days people didn't have very much money and couldn't get the money. The State Department didn't have the money or if they did have it, they wouldn't let it out anyway, see?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: That was the trouble, I 'spose, because the law department, you know, was just like it is today. Unless you got security or anything, why, it's pretty hard to get any loans. So that's the way things worked out so it made it pretty difficult. But then besides that we were all fairly healthy and dad got 2 of the older girls jobs down at Bachlors Grove--oh--about 15 miles from home. And you know what they get there? Just their room and board and maybe they might get a \$1 or 2 a month. That's all they'd get so it was pretty slow business, you know.

LARRY: Were they working for a farmer?

OSCAR: Yes, they was working for farm people, ya.

LARRY: I had an oldtimer tell me that he thought North Dakota in the early days was good country for cattle and horses and men, but it was hell on women. Would you say that's true?

OSCAR: N-no, I wouldn't say that. I don't see where it was any harder unless it would be their housing conditions. They had shacks, you see, and, o' course, where they was raisin' children and things like that it would be harder for a woman, I suppose, because they'd come from a home maybe in a town and they had better homes and better facilities there and everything. Well, you might know up here that it'd be all outside toilets and at home maybe they'd have a toilet in their home, but here they had little outhouses, you know, maybe 100 feet from the house and they'd have to go out there night or day in the cold weather and sometimes in the blizzards, when the conditions were really tough. But, of course, they made things as sanitary as they could. But I'd say, ~~Oh, yes, it~~ "Yes, it really was more difficult for a woman."

LARRY: Was your dad's house one of these tarpaper shanties or how did he start?

OSCAR: No. Well, I'll tell ya. We still had the one on the homeplace. It was about 16, I'd say, by 24 single one story and it had a little attic in it. The attic was big enough so us kids even had room up there where we slept up there. There wasn't room down below so we had this. We had

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to climb up a ladder to get up in there. We had a little hole up in the north end and we could close that and we'd sleep in there at night. That was right above the kitchen and, of course, we had to conserve heat as much as possible on ^{account} ~~account~~ of fuel shortage. The heat, you know, naturally goes up the ceiling and it kept our attic fairly warm, see. Maybe it was warmer than it was down below.

LARRY: ^{Were you close} ~~enough~~ enough to a river, Oscar, so that your dad could cut wood?

OSCAR: No, the nearest that we could get any wood a' tall would be about 5 miles to the east of us. There was crik kind o' run along there and it had quite a little small timber in it. But I don't know what they did.... As I say though, they wasn't here during the winter, you know, when he was homesteading. But then, o' course, after the railroad came through.... You see, Larimore at one time was a division ~~end~~, end of the division. Arvilla was the end of a division, but they was havin' an awful time for water. The railroad come and they couldn't get enough places where they could get water for their engines so it made it difficult. Of course, when they got their watertanks here, the railroad company found out ^{there} ~~there~~ was a water source up here west of the cemetary about 2 miles where the water was running out o' the ground there. Well, the Great Northern acquired that land some way or another and built a dam there. Then they pumped the water from there up to town here. About 11/2 miles they had to pump that water up here. They had a pump station down there and ^{it'd} ~~it'd~~ pump through ~~pipes~~ pipes up to a watertank here and this is one of their main places to get water for their engines, you know, and also had a coal chute here where they could load coal on. That was thing about the Great Northern. They had a hard time makin' things go because fuel shortage, you know. Then in the wintertime, when they'd get these big 3 day blizzards.... I've seen that a lot o' times when you couldn't hardly get out, you know. I came near gettin' caught in a snowstorm. We had a 3 day blizzard and I went to the barn and milked. We had a wire from the barn to the house. We could put our hand on that.... You couldn't

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see in the storm, you know. Maybe the snow would get all up under your eyes and eyelids and everything and you couldn't see; but if you hung onto the wire, it'd take you to either the barn or the house whichever you wanted to go to. I remember one time when I had brought the milk home, it was stormin' so bad I couldn't find the kitchen, but I happened to stumble over a piece o' rock and I knew where that rock was so I set the lantern--I had the lantern with me--down and the milk. I just crawled on my hands and knees and I found the kitchen, otherwise, I'd o' been in bad shape from the storm and maybe froze to death. I got into the kitchen and they says to me, "Where's the milk pail?" "Well," I says, "the milk pail and the lantern is outside and," I says, "if you want it, you can have it, but I'm not goin' out to get it." Then we formed hands--5 or 6 of us--and we got out there and we found the milk pail and the lantern and brought it in.

LARRY: Brought it in.

OSCAR: That was the nearest I came near to gettin' out in a freeze storm and gettin' froze.

LARRY: Oscar, was there good water on your dad's homestead?

OSCAR: Well, yes, but it was very short. Very short supply. We a lot o' time had a hard time gettin'.... We dug about 20 wells on that place and they would only last maybe a year and then they'd go dry and we'd ^{prevail} ~~prevail~~ have to dig another one. It was an impossibility. I always tried to ~~prevail~~ ^{built} on dad to build dams and dams we was never much on that so I ~~built~~ a dam one time in a pasture south of the house and then I had 4 feet o' water in that pond. Well, then to make things worse the Highway Department--I flooded the highway, you know--wouldn't stand for that. They said, "You'll have to lower that dam." Well, then I built along the fence row and put more mud and stuff in there and dirt and rocks so it wouldn't flood over the road, but still it'd flood over and break someplace. So then they said that I'd have to lower it. So dad says, "You better do it." And so I did. I lowered it down. But us kids really had fun in there. We could swim in there, and I built a boat, and I had a boat on there, and we

had fun that way. We was always short of water. We had to drive our cattle way over about 3 miles from home once a day to water 'em. That's all the water they'd get about once a day. We'd drive 'em over there and get water and then bring 'em back home. So it made difficulty. Then finally we dug a well north o' the barn. It was kind of on a north slant and we got pretty fair water there. That well lasted about 4 or 5 years and then we had a big windstorm come along and blowed down our windmill. We had a pump there, you know, and you could pump by hand or pump by windmill, but the windmill got destroyed by the storm and so we had to finish up by hand. Never did fix it up again, I guess.

LARRY: Did you have to dig these wells by hand?

OSCAR: Yes, they all dug their well. The windmills were about 4' square. We had 1 well right near and east o' the barn. It was 80' deep.

LARRY: Is that right.

OSCAR: And the one east of the house was about 70' deep and they never would hold enough water to do any good.

LARRY: You dug those by hand?

OSCAR: We dug them by hand. All dug by hand. That was some job!

LARRY: I'll bet.

OSCAR: Cartin' all that dirt up and gettin' it away and then you'd have to take wood and make.... What'd you call it?

LARRY: Curbing?

OSCAR: Curbing, ya. You had to use wood curbing and so that was pretty expensive, too, you know. We used lumber as cheap as we could; but it had to be pretty durable, otherwise, it'd cave in on ya, see. We'd put them right close to the dirt and pry 'em up, gird 'em up. We'd put 'em in sections about 8' long and dropped them down in the well and then they could be taken out if you had to; but you couldn't handle too big a curbing, you see, very long of that size about 4' x 4' and that's the way they were built. So they'd rest on one another and the ^{bottom} ~~underside~~ planks would be 4" wide and they'd rest on the 4" planks that

(continued)

they went down on and then they were nailed together--fastened together. Of course, you could take 'em out if you had ~~to~~^{to}, but hardly any of 'em was taken ~~out~~^{out--} I don't think.

LARRY: Well, if a well would go dry, Oscar, would you fill it in then?

OSCAR: Yes, we would have to fill it up. If it wasn't any longer of any use, we'd dig it deeper and if it didn't produce any water, we'd just call it a dry well and we'd fill it up. That's all we could do with it.

LARRY: And you dug about 20 of those.

OSCAR: 20 wells, ya. Finally, my brother that's ^{in the home} down in Northwood--that's Louie. He's 2 years older than I am. And that was after I had left the farm though. He found a spring place in the pasture where he says, "I think there's water there." So he dug down about 15' ~~down~~ and he got all kinds o' water. We never knew it was there, see?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: So then the county had some way of diggin' ditches, you know, dams, for ya and he had them come up there and dig a dam for 'em and he had plenty of water all the time. After that he never had to drive the stock away for givin' 'em water. I guess, the dam is still good there. It's only about 20 rods south and west of the house on the place. He sold his land just now recently at Northwood. Him and his wife are both in the Northwood home ^{and} ~~and~~ her health is very poor and he's gettin' along pretty good; but he's 92, you see, so his health isn't too good anymore either.

LARRY: Oscar, did your dad start with one quarter or did he have a tree claim and a preemption?

OSCAR: One quarter.

LARRY: One quarter.

OSCAR: Ya, I don't know why. He could of taken a tree claim and a.... What do ya call the other?

LARRY: Preemption.

OSCAR: Preemption. He could have got those and I don't know why he never did with the family that we had, you know, and ^{grown-up} ~~grown-up~~ children, but he

only got that one quarter o' land. There was a quarter right east of our house and one southeast that could o' been homesteaded and he never did. Why I never could tell ya. That's somethin' I could never tell ya why. I debated on him a number of times with my older sisters and tried to get them to homestead the land, see?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: They could o' lived at home there. You see, you had to live on your land. You had to sleep on it at least 6 months out o' the year, but you could work out if you wanted to. They didn't have no provisions against that; but when you proved up your land, you had to have 35 acres under cultivation and you had to pay a \$1 an acre for it. See, that was the provision, and you had to have a well, and you had to have a small barn for your horse, ~~and~~ ^{or} cow or whatever you had, and there wasn't very many of 'em that had ~~any~~ ^{nothin'} much.

LARRY: What were the nationalities, Oscar, around ^{Niagara} ~~there~~ there?

OSCAR: Well, north o' ^{Niagara} ~~it~~ it was German. That was all German settlement north o' ^{Niagara} ~~and~~ and then to the northeast around *McCanna* they were all mostly Norwegians and Danes. They'd come in from Denmark and Norway and Sweden and moved in down that section. Then up around Petersburg west o' ^{Niagara} ~~they~~ they were nearly all Norwegians. Well, there was some Danes, but the biggest part of the majority of people were Norwegians. Yes, we was the only German family south of ^{Niagara} ~~the~~. All the rest was Germans and they spoke different language. Dad could manage along with 'em, but not very good. Father and mother spoke German, but us kids didn't. We were brought up in American schools, you know, and spoke English. For themselves they could ^{go ahead and} have a conversation amongst themselves with Germans; but, of course, the 4 oldest children, 2 girls and 2 boys, talked German and they knew it, but us kids didn't. Oh, we got some of it, of course, because ^{the} folks would talk German amongst themselves and naturally you would get on to some of it, you know.

LARRY: Ya. How did those people get along? Did you have good neighbors?

OSCAR: Well, I'll tell ya. Neighbors were a scarcity. The nearest

neighbor that we had when we moved there was 21/2 miles away. Later on there was a neighbor homesteaded east of us and he was about 11/2, but that was our closest⁺ neighbor that we had.

LARRY: The rest of the land wasn't taken up, huh?

OSCAR: No. In prairie. We run our stock out there on the prairie and one thing we was always leary of ^{was} ~~the~~ prairie fires. There was lots of prairie fires in the fall, you know.

LARRY: Can you remember any Oscar? Can you tell me about 'em?

OSCAR: Prairie fires?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: Yes, they was very bad. I'll tell ya. Sometimes in the fall when it was awfully dry, tinder dry, and somebody maybe smokin' a cigarette or something--they rolled their own cigarettes, you know, at that time--and they'd maybe set something afire or lightning might strike it and set a fire. Different causes, you know, of course, so it made it difficult. I remember one fall we had in about 130 acres of crop and we had a prairie fire started there east of our place. It wasn't on our land. It was on land that we had rented and father had it in crop. Well, we had 65 acres of oats that was destroyed there. The whole family got out and fought that fire and we saved the rest of the crop, but the rest you couldn't do anything with. But, I'll tell ya, when a fire like that gets started with grass.... Native grass was about 3' ~~high~~ high and thick, you know. Well, you just--hopeless. There's nothing to fight fire with. What we did was we'd take like a fork or a rake or a club 4 or 5' ~~long~~ long and maybe we'd wrap old clothing around it or something like that and try to wet it if we had water to wet it with and fight it the best we could. If you could fight it along the row where it wasn't too bad so you could stand the heat, you could maybe put it out and somebody follow ya and put out the rest of it. That's about the only way you could do because you couldn't fight a prairie fire. Oh, some of them flames would go 15, 20' ~~high~~ high in that big grass. The time that we had that big

prairie fire I got one of those hard-shelled bugs, those hard-shelled black bugs, in my left ear and I thought I'd go crazy with that. You know, he got in my inner ear and I had an awful time with him. Mother filled my ear with sweet oil and filled my ear with cotton and it was in there about a week before it died, but I suffered a lot. I'm a little bit short of hearing on my left ear. I can hear ^{good} ~~something~~ on the right ear, but I've always been short o' hearing on the left ear on accoun' of that. Ya, I've seen haystacks and stuff like that burn up. ^{You'd} ~~Maybe~~ ~~you~~ get ~~the~~ your hay piled up, you know, and build a--maybe plow around it even. Well, if there was a wind along with the storm with a fire, enough of that stuff would fly through the air and still get in where your hay and stuff was. I remember one time west of our place there was a man there. He had 2 stacks o' hay, maybe 30, 40 tons o' hay, and he plowed around it even to make a plow break, windbreak, and firebreak. ~~an~~ He tried to save that, but a fire came along and it blowed some of that fire right into his haystacks and burned 'em up.

LARRY: Right over the firebreak?

OSCAR: Yes. Oh, you'd have a time, you know, I tell ya. It was pretty hard for farmers to get along. We helped him with hay then for his stock for the rest of the winter. His home was down in Wisconsin or someplace, but he come up there for the summer to put in his crop.

LARRY: Would farmers help each other out?

OSCAR: Oh, yes, they were pretty good most of 'em. They'd cooperate. It wasn't too bad that way. I don't think we could complain too much. Of course, there was some people wouldn't have nothin' to do with anybody else. You find that sometimes; but there were most of 'em in need, you know, and they'd cooperate pretty well. Yes, that wasn't too bad.

LARRY: Had you started school in Minneasota?

OSCAR: Yes, I'd started school down there, but I didn't get very far. I remember when they unhooked the engine from our car there when they hauled us into ^{Niagara} ~~the~~, there was people all.... Well, they was very inquisitive, you know. I don't know how many population ^{Niagara} ~~the~~ had ^{at} ~~that~~ that time, but it

was small. But they'd come down to the car, you know, inquisitive and, of course, us kids we hadn't gone out to the farm yet. We stayed in the car there, I guess, maybe 3, 4 days before they could get us out to the farm. People would come there and inquire. Comin' up in a boxcar, you know, lived right there. Everything we had was right there.

LARRY: Ya. Did you have enough furniture or did your dad make some things?

OSCAR: Well, dad made some chairs or something like that or maybe....

If I can remember right, he even made a bed out of some 8 or 10" ~~boards~~ planks at home. Just hard bottom, you know?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: No spring or anything in it. People can get along with prett'i'near anything, you know?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: Yes, it was quite a deal. Well, let's see, if I can go down here a ways.... Well, we had here.... Let's see. Did we take up ~~Effect of~~ ^{Effect of} ~~roads~~ ^{railroads}? Well, they were very essential I marked here, but they wasn't much help because people didn't have the money. They couldn't travel. That's the reason we had to come up in a boxcar. I don't know what it cost dad to move us up here. I never did find that out. Don't ever remember it anyway.

LARRY: Oscar, I just thought of something I wanted to ask you. What was your mother and dad's reaction to this country? Were they glad they came or did they wish they had stayed in Minneasota?

OSCAR: Well, mother would have liked to have stayed in Minneasota, but she was anxious to get father away from.... He would spend a lot o' money at the bar and she was trying t' get him away from that, see, and that's the reason she prevailed on him to come out here and homestead. Well, that was a help, of course, because there....

SIDE TWO

OSCAR: Quite a rig, ain't it?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: What does a machine like that come at?

LARRY: About \$100.

OSCAR: A fellow was in here the other day. He was working for the Fargo Forum and.... What is that paper in Moorhead? Do you know?

LARRY: Daily News? Moorhead Daily News?

OSCAR: Is it? Anyway, he was asking me about when I went into photography and how I happened to go into it?

LARRY: Tell me that story.

OSCAR: Well, I'll tell ya. Sears & Roebuck gave out coupons in the early days. For every ^{dollar's} ~~one~~ worth that you bought they give you coupons and then if you save them, they'd give you premiums. So I got the neighbors around. I was savin' the coupons. A lot of 'em didn't bother with 'em much, but I did and I ask the neighbors around to save coupons with me. So I got my first camera from Sears & Roebuck. It was a--I didn't even know how to open the thing up. I had it for about a week or ^{two} ~~one~~ before I ever found out how to load the film into it; but, anyway, I finally found out. There was a secret button on it and I just pressed it and it opened up. ^{So} ~~any~~ anyway, I got this first camera. It was worth about--oh--I think, \$25 and it was a film camera and it was postcard size. So then.... I didn't know anything about photography, of course, but they sent instructions with it. I studied it and I learned how to develop the films and everything and I fixed me up a dark room in our basement at home where I could develop films and print ^{'em} ~~to~~ outside. So then I got workin'--oh--it was along in the fall when I got that camera. ~~I got~~ So I went out and I took pictures of--oh--piling operations, ~~and~~ threshing, and so forth. I enjoyed the work and so I kept at it and then, later on, I went to Albert Lee, Minneasota. There was a professional photographer down there and he was good. He was recommended to me. I wrote to Eastman Kodak Company about him and they said that he was a first class photographer so I went down there and I made arrangements with him to take up and learn the trade. Of course, I had no place to sleep or eat so I had to have a little money to go on. Well, the first job I got down there was with a home. I don't remember what I had to pay, but it was quite a bit to me because we didn't

have no money and my folks couldn't help me. So I got a job washin' dishes and--oh--any odd jobs that I could find around; but through the wintertime when things got awfully slack and I was runnin' short o' money even to pay my room and board, ~~there happened~~ ^{there happened} to be a big fire in Albert Lea. So I was over there with my camera and I got some excellent pictures of that fire. Nobody else had gotten any real good ones. I was wondering then just how I was goin' t' get business out of that pictures. I went in the drugstore and they had these Red Diamond dyes, you know? Remember when they used to put them out?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: Well, I didn't know anything much about 'em, but I knew that they were effective so I bought some of that Red Diamond dye. I made these cards in the black and white and run 'em through this Red Diamond dye. I made 'em red. So I had the drugstore there.... There was one drugstore there at Albert Lea and a pretty good friend o' mine. He was a pretty good friend o' mine and I asked 'em if he'd sell 'em. Put 'em in the window and sell ~~'em~~ ^{'em} these ~~pastards~~ ^{pastards} and I made 'em up for him. He sold 'em for 25¢ a ~~piece~~ ^{piece} a card. That was a big price, you know, at that time, but nobody had 'em. So I was pretty lucky out o' that. I sold \$90 worth o' pictures.

LARRY: Oh, is that right.

OSCAR: From that fire and that give me a little boost, you know.

LARRY: What year was this Oscar?

OSCAR: Well, let's see. Seems like it was about 1917 or around about there or maybe it was a little earlier than that. Anyway, I don't remember quite exactly. Anyway, this photographer would go away sometimes. He was a bachlor and he had a ~~niece~~ ^{niece} and a nephew stayin' with him up there in his studio. They had room there and they stayed with him, but he didn't have room for me. Sometimes he'd go away with them and they'd maybe be gone for maybe a month and he'd turn this studio over to me, you know, and I'd take the pictures and I got pretty good at it. But he was a good instructor in photography, but he was no good in retouching. He'd done a

good job o' retouching, but he couldn't tell another guy how t' do it, see. Some people.... You get instructors that way.

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: But I got disgusted with it when I was tryin' to learn to retouch and, o' course, I didn't know how to do it and he couldn't show me how t' do it. One day I was sitting at the retouching stand trying to figure out how I was going to improve and it came to me just like that. Just like a flash and I could see right through it just what was wrong. So I turned to my boss. He was sittin' along side o' me. He was retouching, too, and I says, "I know how to retouch now." I says, "Come on over and I'll show ya." "Yes," he said, "you're right." I says, "Why couldn't you tell me that before?" I says, "I've been sittin' here for weeks practicing on retouching and I never could get nowhere." I'd make proofs of it, show him--it wasn't very good--and he couldn't tell me what t' do. You know, there's instructors like that. They might be good for themselves, but no good for anybody else. But after that.... I had a experience here with a man.... There's a man here in town his name is Warren, Clarence Warren, and he used to work for an old photographer in town. I didn't know the man and, anyway, he thought he was a retoucher so he went t' work for me here. I says, "Clarence," I said, "if you can retouch, that's surprising to me. But I says, "If you can retouch," I says, "I'll give ya a job." So I says, "Come on over and start it and if you make a success of it, I'll give ya reasonable pay." Well, he was here with me 2 or 3 weeks, but that man never could learn to retouch! No! I showed him how t' do it and everything and showed him how his image and everything would come to him in it, but he never was no good at it. That's one thing a retouching job.... A retoucher has got to get that insight before he's goin' to get any good. When you retouch, it seems like the combination of lights as they come into ya and the shadows.... You got t' work with them and blend 'em in, see, and where there's imperfections you got t' fill it in and that's a big part o' retouching.

LARRY: How did you get set up here in Larimore Oscar?

OSCAR: In photography?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: Well, after I got through here at Albert Lea I formed a company after I got onto this postcard deal. There was no postcards^{made} in the country then, see. And I says, to myself, "There's an idea right there where I can develop if I can get help." So I got 6 men in Albert Lea; that is, with myself, 5 men besides me and we formed a company. There was an old deserted place in Albert Lea that hadn't been used for years, a building, and we could get it for little rental, not very much, because it wasn't of no use. So we made a deal and got together and formed a company. I sent these men out 2 by 2 to different towns^{all} along the line, see, makin' pictures. We'd make 15 negatives of a town. We'd cooperate. We'd get one man in each town, see, to do the work and handle the postcards and we wouldn't take an order for less than a 1000 and that cost 'em \$80 a 1000. They could sell 'em out for 10¢ a piece. They'd have to deposit that when we took the pictures and we'd send them the negatives, and they could pick out from the proofs what pictures they would select for their 1000 pictures, and then we'd finish 'em up and send 'em to 'em. That's the way they worked. And I remember one time out o' Albert Lea. I went out on my own. I was called to a place. They was goin' to have a celebration down there in southwestern Minneasota. They were goin' to have a celebration of the 4th o' July and they wanted those 1000 pictures, see. Well, I told the boys I was busy on other projects and I told the boys t' get ^{that bunch o'} pictures out and they got t' drinkin', and they wouldn't get the pictures out. They was gettin' to rich; they was makin' too much money. They had never known, you know, how to get any money before. When I got them onto that deal, I ordered 6 new cameras for us--^{new} cameras--and they didn't have the money and I'd take it out of their labor. So much each week 'til they got it paid for. That's the way we worked it. Well, then they got to rich and they got to drinkin' and they wouldn't look after the ~~business~~ business. So I told 'em, "That was it." And we quit then. So then, o' course, after they quit there I went out

on the road by myself and I worked way up this line as far as Devils Lake and sometimes prett'i'near up to Minot, and I'd take pictures along the line. That's how I got started and then this place didn't have no photographer at that time.

LARRY: Now this would be in the 20's, Oscar, about?

OSCAR: Yes, well, I'd say around '16 somewhere in there because in the 20's I was up in the western part of the state ^{and} up in Idaho. I found that.... Well, I'll tell ya. A lot of these places when you'd go to a town you couldn't maybe get a dealer. They wouldn't want t' take it on, you see, and take the responsibility. We'd be willing to give 'em credit to a certain extent; but we couldn't give 'em too much because we had t' pay cash for our supplies and, of course, we prett'i'near had to have the money as we went. But then this place here.... There was a photographer here that died from the flu. He and his wife died from that flu.

LARRY: In '18?

OSCAR: In '18, ya. And so I got that place. It belonged to a man that run the ice cream ~~parlor~~ ^{parlor.} Him and his wife run a ice cream ~~parlor~~ ^{parlor} there and his name was O'Brien and they lived in the west end o' town ~~parlor~~ ^{here so}. I made a deal with them for their upstairs where that old photographer had been, and I got that. I opened that up and then the war broke out and I had to go into that and so I couldn't do anything 'til I come back; but when I come back, that place was busy with--rented out to somebody else anyway. This place and where *Delbs Fillmann* lives in here next door were empty, hadn't been rented for years. The Boy Scouts had rented 'em out and used 'em for that and Red Cross and so forth; but, otherwise, the buildings was empty and they belonged to a group o' fellas that belonged to the ^{#881 Side 2 Cassette 1} *Aqvalley* Bank.

LARRY: Oh.

OSCAR: Nobody seemed to have charge of 'em, see, but our neighbor next door here was one of the shareholders in this property. So I told him, "If I can't rent a place in Larimore, my wife and I are going to move to another town 'cause I'm goin' to open up a place someplace." So I found

out that this property.... They wanted \$500 down on it, \$5000 for the property, and \$500 down cash. I went into the bank and I tried to get money. I said, "You bankers was goin' to try t' help us out when we got out o' the service," ~~and we couldn't get no money.~~ ^{US service men, but} ~~but~~ we couldn't get no money. Course, you couldn't blame 'em in a way. A serviceman didn't have ^{any} ~~no~~ credit. Where was ^{he} ~~he~~ goin' to get his credit, see? And even though your reputation was good that didn't make any difference t' them. That wasn't goin' to pay your bills.

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: So then I knew a fella up here at ^{Niagara} ~~Winnipeg~~. I graduated ^{Niagara} ~~Winnipeg~~, see, Common School, and then I went to the AC at Fargo and graduated down there. There was a elevator man in ^{Niagara} ~~Winnipeg~~ that was a good friend o' mine and I used to sell 'em some grain off o' the farm. I'd gather grain up in the fall when we was threshin'. You know where they leave the grain ~~how~~ around the setting?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: I'd pick up the grain and I'd clean it and I'd take in t' the elevator and sell it and I got enough that fall to go down to the AC. "Well," dad says, "how can you manage at the AC if you have no money?" "Well, dad," I says, "I've got about a \$100," I says, "saved up." And I says, "I'll get a job of some kind down there." So he agreed to let me go and I went to the AC. I had to pay down \$20 to start with to get books and things and entrance fee, but I got a job workin' in a restaurant as waiter and washin' dishes. I got enough out o' that to tide me along pretty well, but then bills were pickin' up. So I told the registrar, "You'll have to find me a better job or I'll have to quit school because," I says, "I'm runnin' out o' funds." He says, "Have you ever milked school?" I says, "Yes, I've milked cows." "Well," he says, "there's a dairy out in north Fargo. He wants a party to milk cows." He says, "Could you do that?" I says, "How many does a person have t' milk?" "Well," he says, "he's got about 20 cows. You'd have to milk about 10 cows night and morning." "Gosh," I says, "I could never milk 10 cows at a time and," I

says, "I ain't used to that many." Takes a lot o' muscle, you know, t' do that.

LARRY: Ya, ya.

OSCAR: Well, so the registrar says, "I made a deal with him and you go and have a interview with him and maybe you can make some kind of a deal." So the boss.... He was pretty good. He was a young man. and his wife and he didn't have no children. He had a man that ran the milk route and milked the cows and he'd have to help milk, too, see?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: So he says, "I'll give you \$50 a month to milk and then on Saturdays," he says, "you can help on the route and deliver milk and stuff, see, and other chores." So that's how I got through the AC.

LARRY: Milkin' cows, huh?

OSCAR: Milkin' cows, ya. That was a good deal. It took me quite awhile before I could milk 10 cows. That's pretty hard on a person's muscles, you know?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: But I managed it. You know, when a person is young and vigorous, why, you can do a lot o' things you think you can't do.

LARRY: You were tellin' me, Oscar, about how you got set up. You had this friend in the elevator over at ~~the Niagara~~ ^{Niagara}.

OSCAR: Oh, yes, that's right. I told the wife, "Jump in the car." I had a car, cheap car, ~~a Ford~~ ^{a Ford}. I says, "We'll go up and see this ~~man~~ ^{man} at ~~Niagara~~ ^{Niagara}." I says, "He's a good friend o' mine and," I says, "he's got money." And I says, "He has no children. Just him and his wife." His name was Steve Mason. He run the elevator, ~~Independent~~ ^{Independent}. So we went up there and I told Steve what kind o' setup I had here. "But," I says, "I haven't got the money to buy it and," I says, "they won't let me in unless I have the money." "Well," Steve says, "don't be in a hurry." He says, "I want to go down there and inspect that property and if I think that you're makin' a reasonable good investment, I'll let you have the money." He says, "It'll take a few days. I want t' ~~think~~ ^{think} it over, ~~the wife and I,~~ ^{the wife and I,}"

~~He~~ talk it over too." He said, "We'll come down and look it over and," he said, "if we think it's a good investment," he says, "I'll let you have the money." So he come down and he looked it over and he says, "I think it's a good investment." He says, "It's good property." I had this lot and the next lot, too, see. And so he let me have the \$500 as down payment on the place. There was a lot o' cleanin' up there, you know, and fixin' up because it was in bad shape to start with. We didn't have the waterworks. They had to carry water from the city park to wash pictures and things with and for our own use. It hadn't been modernized, you see. See, it was an old deserted bank.

LARRY: Oh, I see.

OSCAR: It was an old deserted bank that went ^{"bump"} ~~down~~ Streeter, ~~and~~ a fella by the name o' Jay B. Streeter and his father-in-law, Sharp ~~and~~ had it together and they went broke. That's the reason that the building had not been used much, see, but it's well constructed. I've been thinkin' quite a bit of tryin' to see it now. The wife has been.... She's got one brother down in Alabama and she wants to go down and see him this summer. He is quite deaf and his health isn't very good. That's her only living relative back there anymore so she wants t^e kind o' go back there and see him this summer. I don't know. Maybe we'll ^{make a deal} ~~go~~ to go down.

LARRY: Oscar, you were tellin' me a little earlier about this celebration down in southern Minneasota. They wanted a 1000 pictures?

OSCAR: Oh, ya. That's right.

LARRY: Can you finish that? Did you take the pictures down there then?—
The postcards? ^{found out that}

OSCAR: Ya, when I ~~was~~ ^{found out that} the boys weren't getting their work ^{out} ~~done~~, They says, "You'd better jump on the train tonight and come in and put that bunch o' pictures out," ^{so} ~~so~~ I did. I went back to the office then and finished up the pictures and delivered them pictures to 'em and they sold prett'i' near that whole bunch out during that celebration day....

LARRY: Oh, is that right.

OSCAR: and they ordered another 1000. so I got them ~~out~~ for 'em.

LARRY: So that was a pretty good idea of ^{yours,} ~~mine~~ the postcards?

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OSCAR: Yes, it was. And the trouble we had.... There was no postcard racks made then, you see....

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: to display 'em in. Do you remember when they made---maybe you don't remember it. Do you remember when they had chalkboxes in the schools?

LARRY: Ya, ya.

OSCAR: Well, you know what they were made like and I'd get those chalkboxes. They were kind of a light material, you see, but good material and I'd make postcard racks to put them in, and it was quite a job to get 'em up and ^{make} ~~make~~ 'em so it would hold 'em. Of course, everything was rustic in those days and people didn't pay no attention. If you had something that done the service, that was what was counted.

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: And then, o' course, we made them up and we sold them, too, and made a little money off o' them so it helped. Then talkin' about commercial photography.... That's what we call commercial photography, see. I'd go from one town to another makin' up any pictures that I could make and take because money was short, you know, and people couldn't spare it. I sometimes maybe ^{have to....} ~~have to....~~ say, if you took a wedding picture, for instance, well, you couldn't charge 'em very much, material was high, and people couldn't afford t' pay for it, but you'd maybe get a order and you'd maybe stretch it out for 6 months before you got your money out o' ^{that} ~~that~~ wedding picture. Yes, I've had occasion like that. We've done a good business here. I happened to see.... In 1959, after I come out o' the service, you know, I....

LARRY: In 1919 you mean?

OSCAR: No, 1959. In 1959, I had cancer. They found out that I had cancer and a bad case o' cancer. I didn't even know it. I was feeling very bad, but I went to the Veteran's Hospital at Fargo and the doctor says, "You got a bad case o' cancer. You'd better arrange to have it taken care of as soon as possible because it develops very fast." So I had my cancer operation so I haven't done no picture work since 1959. I was in

too bad o' shape. I have a *colostomy*, you know, and it's quite a sore t' take care of. I can't eliminate through the back, sewed up there, but I've gotten along. I've been havin' quite a time the last few years.

LARRY: How many years were you a photographer here in Larimore?

OSCAR: W-well, let's see. I had started this place up the spring that World War I broke out; but I didn't go in right away, see. I enlisted, you know, in the Navy. And mother said, "You couldn't pass that examination." I had been layed up, but I did pass it. Well, then I says, "I don't want t' go into the Army." He says, "Why?" I says, "You got no place to sleep and," I says, "I was layed up. I couldn't do anything. They had to even feed me. I ~~couldn't~~ look after myself and," I says, "I'd just be a hindrance to the Army. But," I says, "I'd be willing to go into the Navy. I'd know I'd have a place to sleep every night. The Army man don't. He might be out on the ground someplace." "Well," he said, "if you can pass the examination, we'll turn you over to the Navy." Well, I went over there ^{and took that} and passed that. The Marines were next door and he said, "Maybe you want to take the Marine examination?" I says, "That'd be worse even than the Army." I says, "I'll stick with the Navy." So I enlisted in that for the duration of the war.

LARRY: Had you had the flu before that Oscar? Is that why you'd been sick?

OSCAR: No, I'd been in eastern Oregon harvesting and I got Typhoid Fever and so after I got Typhoid Fever I went back to Hood River. That's where I was workin' before I'd gone to eastern Oregon and I got so bad--I was opening up the studio there too. I had gotten a studio ready on main street to open up at Hood River. I had opened it up for a few days, but I was workin' in the cold water and shouldn't o' done that. Didn't know about it, you know, and I got a *recess*, setback, from that. So I went over in Washington to a sanitarium and spent all the money that I'd earned harvesting. I was gettin' \$15 a day sewin' sacks and I spent all my money at that sanitarium. I didn't even have no money to go home on so I had my friend wire my mother to send me transportation to come home on and she

did. So they put me on some kind of a carrier they made and the train--it wasn't a regular stop at that sanitarium there for the trains. So they carried me down on this stretcher to the train. They put me aboard the train. There was a young couple come for Portland, Oregon that day. They'd just gotten married and they was goin' to New York on their honeymoon trip. When he seen them put me on the train on a stretcher--he was inquiring about me. So I told him what the situation was and I says, "I can't even take care of myself." He says, "I'll look after you like a brother." I said, "Are you going through Larimore with your train?" "Yes," he says, "we go right through Larimore." "Well," I says, "they'll stop there and put me off and my brother will take care of me there," which he did. He met me at the train with a coal wagon, mind ya. Put blankets down in the coal wagon, carried me out o' the train, put me on the wagon, and covered me up with some blankets. Over here where a man used to work in the bank is where my mother lived now and so that's where he took me.

LARRY: And you had your shop here then from 1919 ^{'til} 1959?

OSCAR: Ya.

LARRY: Has it been a good business Oscar?

OSCAR: Yes, it was a good business. Course, I'll tell ya. I was in different things. I was in the junk business, too, ya know, and I bought iron and metals and stuff like that and I traded--mechanic. So I bought and sold used cars. I never bought new ones. I bought ^{second hand} ~~new~~ ones and I'd fix 'em up and sell 'em, ya know. Course, it was kind o' uphill business for us raisin' a family, you know, 3 boys, and, of course, it was kind o' upgrade business, but then we made it. The hardest time, I guess, was in the 1930's because for 10 years there was no crops. At that time, of course, I didn't have the farm, see, and there was nothing to get it out. Only what I could get here and I'd go out and work. I could run a combine. I could go out and run a combine or help somebody put in a crop or do somethin' else and earn a little money on the side and we got along, but we seen the time.... Remember when they had WPA. I tried to get on WPA and just because--the wife and I had the Grand Forks Herald

route. Because we had that, you know, and was gettin' a little money out o' that, hardly a living, they wouldn't let me on that WPA job because we had that mail route. Well, anyway, we didn't know sometimes where the next loaf o' bread was comin' from, but we managed. We got by.

LARRY: Were things pretty tough around Larimore in the 30's?

OSCAR: Very tough. A lot of poor people here and there were a lot o' people moved here and moved away. I'll tell ya what they did. It was like around *Niagara*. up ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~place~~ ~~there~~. Them people there.... Times was so hard they moved to Oregon. There was a man that used to be in Oregon. His name was Heine and he put up that canned food in Oregon in gallon cans and he'd bring it down here in carload lots and sell it to people that he knew, see. Course, he could get plenty o' credit there and he had his own orchard and every-thing. All them people raisin' fruit they was anxious to get rid o' their fruit, you know, because they had no outlet. Just like the farmers here. There was no markets for cattle; they'd have t' ship 'em to St. Paul. Every fall when we got rid of our stock and hogs and stuff, we'd get a Great Northern sidetrack car and we'd load a carload o' hogs or a carload o' cattle, ship 'em t' St. Paul. At that time the man that owned the cattle could ride with 'em, but now you can't. Did you ever know that?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: You got t' pay your fair now.

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: But at that time anybody that was shipping a carload o' hogs or cattle or somethin' like that you could ride in the caboose, wouldn't cost you ~~anything~~ ~~nothing~~ ~~at~~ ~~all~~ ~~now~~. And then when I was on the home place with dad, my help was not very good. When I was going to school at *Niagara*, I took awfully sick one winter. We had a Canadian doctor and another doctor. They looked after me, but they couldn't do much for me. So dad took my mother, my sister, and I to Rochester. I was down to Rochester and dad spent a \$1000 on me down there with the Rochester doctors. They wouldn't tell me; but they told dad that I wouldn't live a year, but they didn't know what t' do for me. So we came back ~~home~~ ~~here~~ here and, o' course, mother

and dad knew about. They told them, but they wouldn't tell me because they thought it would be discouraging to me. Well, anyway, I found out by sitting out ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ the hot sun was improving my health. So I'd sit out in the hot sun as much as I could and then I'd go in and lie down. I wasn't able to do anything. I had an aunt and uncle living out in southern Idaho and when auntie found out that I was in that condition--they had only 40 acres out there near Twin Falls, Idaho at ~~the~~ ^{Grand Forks} ~~the~~ ^{Grand Forks} was the name o' the place. So they said, "If you can get enough money together, so you can come out here. It won't cost 'em anything, only his railroad fare." Well, I saved up my pennies and nickels and dimes 'til fall and I finally got enough money to get a railroad ticket and go out there and see 'em. The falls are nice and warm out there, ya know, and the sunshine and it helped me a lot and I ^{improved.} ~~stayed~~ I stayed there about 4 years and got rid of.... I guess, it was rheumatism or whatever it was happening with me. It was so bad. I couldn't even feed myself! Can you imagine that?

LARRY: Oh.

OSCAR: So a fella gets in pretty bad shape.

LARRY: Oscar, you've had a couple of bad physical ailments, but you're almost 80 years old.

OSCAR: That's right.

LARRY: You really came through it.

OSCAR: Yes, I did. Here just last spring I had gone to a wedding. What happened nobody knows, but that afternoon of the wedding celebration I'd got suddenly sick. My nephew here in town--I went down with him to the wedding. My wife didn't go along. So I wanted him to take me to Grand Forks to the hospital. "No," he said, "you're too sick a man." I'll get the ambulance and take you down." So they got the ambulance and they took me down and I was in Intensive Care down at the hospital in Grand Forks for over 2 weeks and they didn't think I'd live. They had to give me.... Oh, what do they give? That stuff, you know?

LARRY: Ya, I know what you mean.

OSCAR: ^{Anyway,} ~~stayed~~ in the ambulance they carry a tank of it, you know, and,

anyway, they had to stop between here and Grand Forks and give it to me twice and then, I guess, when we got to Grand Forks, the doctors found out I was in bad shape. I don't hardly remember it; but, anyway, they give it to me down there. I was still in such bad condition they hauled me over to the Catholic Hospital one evening and give me it over there. The next morning when I woke up at the hospital, the oxygen tank was sittin' along side o' my bed. I says, "What's the idea of that tank here?" "Well," they said, "we figured you was goin' to pass away last night and so we had the doctor come out and give you some oxygen. That's the reason." Ya, I was in bad shape, I guess. I didn't realize--what happened nobody seemed to know. They claimed that I had pneumonia; but, I think, what really happened I got kind o' a ^{#231} ~~Tomaine~~ ^(?) poisoning at that meal at the wedding. That's what I believe 'cause I got suddenly sick and what would make.... Pneumonia wouldn't make you that sick, would it?

LARRY: No, no, no.

OSCAR: I don't think so. And this doctor that--they took me out to the Catholic Hospital. He charged me \$40 for administering that day and I sent the bill into the Medicare and they would only allow \$12.

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: Just think what he was chargin' over! So I sent in the \$12. He had to be satisfied. Just see how they hold ya up on a deal like that.

LARRY: Ya, ya.

OSCAR: They charged \$40 from Larimore to Grand Forks for the ambulance, \$80 to Fargo; but I don't think they'd allow it.

LARRY: Oscar, you've been in North Dakota around ^{Niagara} ~~Wahkiakum~~ and Larimore. Did you know any of these Blue Bloods that used to have these big farms around here like Streeter or Hershey or Larimores?

OSCAR: Yes, ya, I knew 'em well. Had a lot o' business with 'em.

LARRY: What kind of people were they?

OSCAR: I'll tell ya. They were a bunch o' English people that came from New York. I guess, in New York they were considered pretty well-t'-do; but, ya see, in those years--this settlement was pretty near. They....

Well, o' course, they could only acquire a quarter o' land like anybody else, you know, so they moved to St. Louis. That whole colony that was in New York went to St. Louis, Missouri and they started farming down there with mules. Well, then after this territory had gotten pretty well located for homesteaders they moved up here. I don't know whether--they maybe acquired some land. Anyway, what they did. They'd get these fellas, these homesteaders, t' work for 'em and then they'd try to buy their right t' the land, see. They'd maybe give 'em--they were all poor--75 or a \$100 or a \$150 for their claim to the land. That's the way they got this land. They claimed one time that they had 3500 acres o' land here. Just think of it! And that extended way up t^o the hills. They didn't go any further than the hills. Ain't that funny? They were pretty wise. They stayed in the valley.

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: And they got the valley land and, o' course, that was good land, you know, no rocks, very few rocks, if any. Up in the hills there's all kinds o' rocks; but they stayed down here in the riverbottom here, you might say. It's a lower valley way down as far as Hatten and way down in through there and very good farming land.

LARRY: Is it true that the Larimores brought Negroes up from ^{down in} the South and had them homestead?

OSCAR: Well, I've heard that. There is a possibility that they did. There's a possibility that they did. There was Negroes here when we came here.

LARRY: Oh.

OSCAR: There was an old couple that used to work for the Great Northern. He was a--oh. Well, he was in the Army, you know, in Civil War. He came here, anyway, and he was workin' for the Great Northern just.... Oh, I 'spose, all kinds of jobs, you know, they'd give them. Nothing much, you know.

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: Maybe give 'em \$15 a month or somethin' like that. I remember back

when we folks on the farm.... Dad only give 'em \$15 a month for a hired man.

LARRY: Oh.

OSCAR: \$15 a month and his board. That's all he got.

LARRY: Now this fella you're tellin' me about, Oscar, he was a Negro?

OSCAR: Ya, and he was a good Negro. Him and his.... Well, he lived with a colored lady. They never was married. Can you imagine that? They lived together, but they was the only colored ones in town. Well, a little later on--fire.

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: Fire on 'em. Anyway, they lived there near the railroad. They had what ~~they called~~ the sectionhouse. You know what the sectionhouse is?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: Where the railroad men stayed in. Well, they had a little house and they ~~lived~~ in that. He used to work for the railroad company, different things, and then he'd do all kinds of jobs for people around, and that's the way they got along. He's buried down here at Arvilla. He and this woman both buried down there in the Arvilla Cemetary.

LARRY: How did they get along in the community? Pretty well?

OSCAR: Got along ^{good.} ~~well~~ People liked 'em. Color didn't seem to make any difference much at that time. As long as, they behaved themselves, you know, and acted reasonable, they got along good. We always liked 'em here. They were good people. But someplaces when you get a colored person in.... But we did have one man here his name was Harry. I don't know what his last name was. He was a colored man, but they never cared for him very much. Some way or another he didn't fit in with other people like these other people did. I don't know how that colored man ever happened to come up in this territory, ~~him~~ and that other woman. That's somethin' I don't know about anything or history on them.

LARRY: Oscar, would the Larimore family or the Matthews family or Hersheys or Streeters, these wealthier large landowners, mingle with the rest of the people in the community or would they keep kind o' to themselves?

OSCAR: Pretty much t' themselves; ~~They were~~ clannish. There was a place out here--well--about 4 miles east o' here where there's a natural spring comes out o' the top o' the hill. It's still whistling. They had a big house out there. They had the money, ya know, and they built a big house out there right near where that spring was. These people from New York, course, was well acquainted with them, you know, and they kept in that class, see, in the high-class money class. They'd come out here in the summer and maybe spend a month, ~~enjoy~~ a good time out here, and then go back, you know, and that's the way they.... And they'd go back there, too, you know. They had the money. They could do it. We wasn't gettin' ~~nothin'~~ nothin' for wages or ~~nothin' for wages or~~ much for grain or anything.

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: But they had stock and they had money when they left there. They made things go, you see.

LARRY: Was that the Crystal Springs farm?

OSCAR: Ya, Crystal Springs farm. That's right.

LARRY: That must o' been quite a layout at one time?

OSCAR: Oh, it was. It was a big layout. Did you ever go to Crystal Springs there?

LARRY: No, I didn't.

OSCAR: See, they had a big archway where you went into the place. It was the archway over the highway there--or over the road--running into their place?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: And a big sign there. Crystal Springs or whatever it was there. They didn't want common people running in there, see.

TAPE B

THIS is Larry Sprunk and the following is a continuation of the interview that I had with Mr. Oscar Bode of Larimore, North Dakota. The interview was held in Oscar's home in Larimore, Tuesday, April 13, 1976. This portion of the interview began at approximately 7:00 in the evening. The interview is continued because I had talked to Oscar earlier in the morning at 9:30 and he seemed to have a great more knowledge that I hadn't talked to him about so I came back the evening of Tuesday, April 13, 1976 and started this portion of the interview, as I said, at 7:00 and the remainder of the interview with Oscar is on the succeeding cassette.

OSCAR: Did you have a good afternoon?

LARRY: Ya, it was. Back to.... Well, you were going to tell me this morning, Oscar, about your patents.

OSCAR: Oh, ya.

LARRY: Let's do that before we get back to the other.

OSCAR: Alright. When I was 12 years old.... Well, I'll tell ya how I happened to get this idea. Dad always wanted all the feed that we had fed into the hogs and stock--to keep track off. We ~~weighed it~~ weighed it on an old style.... What they call a ~~Stillards~~ Stillards Scale. You know what a Stillards Scale is?

LARRY: No, I don't.

OSCAR: Well, it's a long beam about 4' ~~long~~ long and you slid the weight down with your hand so it'd balance, see, of the weight that you had holding it.

LARRY: Yes.

OSCAR: So, of course, it was a very complicated business because--well--the weights would fall off into the ground feed. We fed 'em ground feed in them days, see, and the weights would drop off into the ground feed and then then we'd have t' hunt around and try t' get it. I was only 12 years at the time and I had charge of feeding the hogs, see, and milking and so forth. Well, dad always had me in charge of the hogs anyway. So this idea come up to me how to make this scale so I got busy on it. I worked on it for about 2 years. I had a little sister by the name o' Florence and I used to put here in a sack, put her on the scale, and testing it out 'til we got it t' perfection. When I got it to perfection, I sent it into Washington, D.C. and asked 'em for a ~~idea~~ idea on it, whether it was patentable and so forth. It was patentable 'cause there was nothing on the market like it at that time. It was automatic. Well, we was short o' money; we was always poor people. They said, "The patent would cost \$125 to get it patented." I had to send 'em \$75 to search the records to see if they had anything like it. We didn't have the money and I went to the bank of ~~Niagara~~ Niagara and showed 'em my letter from the Patent Office and tried to get them to finance me to get the patent.

LARRY: You were 14?

OSCAR: 12.

LARRY: Oh, 12?

OSCAR: 12 years old, ya. So, of course, money being so short I went t' the bank and they wouldn't help me out even after a good letter from the Patent Office and I couldn't find anybody to back me up to get the money. So then I wrote back to the Patent Office and asked them if they knew of any concern that would back a patentee to get the patent. Well, they referred me to the McBicbe Engineering Company of Minneapolis and that's where I lost a fortune because they wanted another pattern. That is, they wanted me to make a model of it to send them. Well, you know, a kid 12 years old what do they know much?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: So I didn't know anything much about that stuff. I asked father about it and, o' course, he didn't know anything about it either. So then I made up this model and sent it to 'em and they got it patented. See, they stole the patent off'n me. Do ya get the idea?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: And they got the patent and they sold it to the Toledo Scale Company of Toledo, Ohio and they put it out and I got nothing out of it.

LARRY: Is that right?

OSCAR: No, I never got a thing out of it. They just stole it and what made me perturbed was that this Patent Office would refer this company to me when they weren't reliable, see. I thought I could depend on 'em. Get the idea?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: Otherwise I'd never made 'em up another model. If I'd o' been smart enough, ^{which} ~~wasn't~~ a kid isn't in so many ways. If I'd e' waited a couple years 'til I had the money to get the patent myself, I could o' made a fortune out of it because there was no machine made like that in Europe or anything country that this country knew about it and, you see, there was none on the market.

LARRY: Do you have any idea, Oscar, how much they got for it?

OSCAR: No, I'll tell ya what. I wrote to them and they just wouldn't acknowledge my correspondence. I couldn't get nothing back from them--no--so I never did find out. I oft times thought even at my age.... I don't know whether the Toledo Scale Company.... I 'spose, a lot of them fellas are dead from that time--wouldn't know much about it--~~and~~ there still ~~is~~ might be some people living there yet that's in that company that would know about it, see.

LARRY: Did you see any scales that used your idea?

OSCAR: No, no, no, I didn't see any scales at all of that type. I guess, you know, it's a funny thing about a person where they've got an inventive mind how they can make things up, see.

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: But I'll tell ya. Then later on when I was on the farm, I got out a sack holder with a scale bottom. It had a lever on and you could elevate or shorten it for short sacks or long sacks and that was patentable; ~~but~~ ^{but} ~~the~~ money being so short I didn't try to get it patented, but we kept it on the farm even after my boy Billy at Northwood took over the farm because I was out in Idaho. Father wanted me t' come home and run the ranch, but I wouldn't because I wasn't strong ^{enough} ~~enough~~ so he had Louie come back. Louie was farming up at Ray, North Dakota and then dad got him to come back and take care of the farm 'cause father's health was not very good. So then later on I got out a--I guess, I told ya. I got a buckle put out. I got a patent on that.

LARRY: No, you didn't. You didn't tell me about that Oscar. A buckle?

OSCAR: Ya, a hidden buckle. You know what a britchen [?] is on a harness, don't ya?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: The piece that goes around the back end?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: Well, at those days when you was driving horses or mules or what-
ever it might be, there was always a line on the britchen [?] where you could

shorten it or lengthen it, you know, for the size of the animal, but there would nearly always be a piece stand out from that britchen where your line would catch under and then you'd jerk the horse's bit, you see, and that was bad on the animal, see. Get the idea?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: And you'd have to give it a pretty good jerk in order to get out from under that line in order to direct the horses right, see. So I worked on that for--oh--2, 3 years and it was quite an impossible thing to do because.... But what I finally figured out ^{on} ~~it~~ it. I cut a hole in the britchen, slit a hole in the britchen, and there you could lengthen or shorten the buckle. There was line there and then it never caught the line anymore because it was hidden in the britchen. Ya, that brought a \$1000.

LARRY: Oh.

OSCAR: Ya, Sears & Roebuck.

LARRY: Oh.

OSCAR: Ya. And so I sold that t' Sears & Roebuck. And then ^{later on,} when I was out in the ^{west, well,} ~~the~~ I got out a couple of other things that I invented. One was a butter cutter. You remember when they had them little plates that ^{they} ~~used~~ used to save on the table for your butter? Well, I was at ¹³⁰ , Oregon and at that time I was takin' care of a banks furnaces. There were 3 banks at , Oregon that I looked after the heating plants. So I was staying at a place there, a rooming house, and there was another woman there running a ^{little} restaurant, but she had a big business. She had about 60 people to a meal. Well, she had all them butter plates to cut butter for and it was a big chore for her and I knew it. I used to help her cut butter for on the plates. I says, "I'm goin' to get out a patent for ya where you won't have all that work." Do you remember the old chalkboxes that used to be in school?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: Well, I took 2 of them. I got them chalkboxes at the school and I had one that went over the other one, see, and I used piano wire to put in

there with.... You know how musical instruments have these pegs where you fasten wire in?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: Well, see, you can tighten them and they'll stay and piano wire don't rust, see. There's salt.

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: So I used piano wire and tightened in there and I sent that into the Patent Office and they said it was patentable, but I never did patent it. I asked them if there were any other on the market and there was 2. One was selling for about \$75 and the other one about \$100 and so I figured I'd never try t' kick it into the opposition, see, so I never got it out, but I got this one made up for that woman for her and it worked fine. I just put a pound o' butter in there and pulled the one cover over the other and it was all cut in 32 pieces. Just that quick. So it saved her a lot o' work.

LARRY: You could o' sold yours cheaper than \$75?

OSCAR: Yes, I could o' sold mine cheaper. Course, I was short o' money then, too, ya know, and I didn't get it patented. It never was patented. I don't know what the Patent Office does with them old ^{models} ~~models~~ that are sent in that are not patented. Do you?

LARRY: I have no idea Oscar.

OSCAR: Do you suppose that they dispose of 'em eventually?

LARRY: I don't know. I wouldn't think so. I'd think they'd probably hold onto 'em.

OSCAR: See, you have to pay \$5 to search the records each time you send a patent in. Maybe more now. Maybe they've raised the ante. That was what it was then. Oh, I've worked on quite a lot of different things. My latest project was working on a mail|carrier from the post office to the farm and I spent a lot o' time on that, but I never could find the stuff needed to complete it because it involved so much. What I was goin' t' do was have the mail|carrier.... Instead of havin' a mail|carrier, you know, like on the route because it's so expensive the mail would be deposited in

a carriage at the post office and it would have to go out on a line, you see, like a electric line?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: And each place where it'd stop there'd be a piece on the line--each one had to be different. And then when the box would come up there with the mail, it'd hit that certain particular number and it would go off on their line to their farmhouse, see.

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: But there was so much involved in that that I never did complete it. I think, one day that they will get it and it will do away with the mail carriers because that's an awful expensive project, you know. See, they could even hire another person at the post office just to look after that and as they sent the mail out to the farmer.... He'd have the same privilege there. He could put it in the box at his home and send it right back to the post office, see. That's the way it'd be taken care of.

Where I got the idea on that t' start ^{with} ~~with~~ was I used to work in these apartment stores where they send the money up, you know, from one department to another department and they had them little carriers and they worked on that principle. Did you ever see 'em work?

LARRY: Ya, I saw 'em work in a Pennys store in Fargo, I think.

OSCAR: Yes. I believe, I got the idea down in Fargo, ~~Maybe~~ when I was going to the AC at Fargo. But them little dogs I was tellin' you about.

As they hit 'em they'll go upstairs or they'll go downstairs or they'll go anyplace

~~that they want 'em. All they have to do is just press a button~~
it'll follow the
and ~~line to where it's supposed to go. See the idea?~~

LARRY: Ya, ya.

OSCAR: And when it hits that number, it'll drop it or raise it.

LARRY: Another thing I wanted to ask you Oscar. You were telling' me this morning about milking cows while you were going to NDSU. What was the name of the fella that ran the dairy?

OSCAR: It was Darrows, D-a-r-r-o-w, ~~Darrows~~ ^{Dairy} ~~Darrows~~. That was the name of it.

LARRY: And that was in north Fargo, huh?

OSCAR: It was way out now where about the airport is.

LARRY: Oh.

OSCAR: You know about straight west of the Veterans Hospital?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: Right off in there a little bit northwest, I guess. That's where it was. And I'd have t' get up early in the morning and get out there and get them cattle in, milk 'em, and then we'd run the milk through a cream seperator and put it into bottles and get it ready for the man that was goin' t' deliver. I didn't deliver during the week; ~~that~~ that is, when there was school because I didn't have time, but I'd milk and help bottle the milk. ~~and~~ Then the Mrs. and her husband would help cap it and all that, you know, and get it ~~ready~~ ready for the man delivering the milk. That was a good project for me. It was hard work, but I spent a lot o' time on it. Well, I'd get up early in the morning and I'd usually get t' bed kind o' late, too. Course, you know, I had my subjects t' study. Course, we had electric light there and it was handy. If I'd get tired, I'd just quit-- that's all--and go t' bed.

LARRY: What years were this?

OSCAR: 1909 went down there.

LARRY: You go 2 years to NDSU or 1?

OSCAR: I went to the winter course and then they had a summer course.

While I didn't complete the subjects on the winter course I had to go back in the summer and complete on the summer course, see, and that way, why, I finished both the summer and the winter course so that helped me out.

LARRY: Why don't you go on to your notes that you've got on your outline, Oscar, there and we'll work our way through that?

OSCAR: Alright. Let me see. Where did we leave off at?

LARRY: Well, let's see that once.

OSCAR: I guess, that's the one there.

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: What's your middle initial Larry?

by horses and oxen and stuff like that, but there was very few people that used oxen for that. Most of 'em had a horse or 2 and, o' course, they'd use them on the wagon, but there was people that used just the oxen. I'll tell ya another advantage of the oxen. You can turn them out on the grass and they have their own feed 'cause you couldn't do that with a horse. You had to feed him some feed, see, and water him. Of course, the oxen if he had water.... Course, you'd have to furnish water for the ox, too, if he didn't have any. Then he could be turned out on the grass like you can a mule and he'll survive and go right ahead and work, which you couldn't do that with a horse. A horse has got to have more feeding time and every-- thing than it does for a animal like that, see.

LARRY: And grain too.

OSCAR: Ya, and grain, too, see. Well, they very seldom fed oxen any grain. They just turn 'em out and let 'em feed on the grass and hook 'em up and drive 'em. That's the way they handled 'em, see.

LARRY: Did you like working with oxen?

OSCAR: Well, it was amusing. It was amusing because.... Well, I'll tell ya. A horse is more sensitive and obedient to ya and more loving, you know, and then, o' course, it seemed them oxen were too dull. They wouldn't respond like a horse would, you see, to drive them, and I never knew a oxen to be bucky like a horse though. Did you ever see anything like a bucky horse?

LARRY: Ya, I know what ya mean. Ya.

OSCAR: Well, you know, a horse will be so bucky that you hook 'em up and they won't even pull a load. Well, I worked for people that had bucky horses and they couldn't do nothin' with 'em. And one time down here at ~~Rempton~~ ^{Kempton} I went out and helped a fella that was short o' men for threshin' and he gave me the poorest team o' horses that he had on the ranch. And he told me, "Don't put much on the wagon because they won't pull it." Well, he sent me out and he said, "Just fill the rack about top. Don't put it over." He says, "I ^{think} ~~think~~ you might be able t' do it." Well, I'll tell ya. When I got up on the load to get 'em to go, I'd hit 'em with the line

on the back and try t' get 'em to go and they wouldn't do nothin'. Wouldn't even tighten the tug! So I got out and I petted the horse and treated it good. So then I got up on the rack and I says, "Take it away!" And, you know, them horses took it away on a dead run. Run all the way up to the machine with it. And the boss said, "How did you ever git 'em started?" "Well," I says, "I'll tell ya." "I didn't know what t' do and," I says, "I tried to get the horses t' go but," I said, "they wouldn't go and I just loved that horse up. It got that idea out of its head, see, so they went." I never had no more trouble after that. I'd haul as big o' load as the other fellas would. It stumped the boss. It was a good horse too. About a 12, 1400lb. horse, but it had that stubborn idea and he couldn't make it do anything.

LARRY: Just needed a little lovin', huh?

OSCAR: Just needed a little love. I'll tell ya. We had one on the farm one time and it was that way. Well, I was out threshin.... At that time we had a threshing machine of our own and I had a load ~~on~~ ^{on} and I was up on top of a hill pretty much with that load. The machine was about a 1/4 mile or a 1/2 a mile away yet so I tried to get the team to pull that load and it wouldn't do anything. I tried all kinds o' things with that mare. It was a bronco mare and gray. So I'll tell you what I did. I picked up a bunch o' little rocks, you know, like marbles and things like that and I had a string with me, and I put them marbles in the horse's ear and tied the ear shut so they couldn't drop out, see. The horse, you know, when it would shake its head like that, it made it crazy about. Boy, they started off! You know, after you get that idea out of their head you're all right and that'll make 'em go.

LARRY: That was quite an idea Oscar.

OSCAR: Ya, ^{I guess} it was. I didn't know what t' do; but when you're in a case o' the kind, you wonder what you're goin' to do t' get a animal t' mind ya so you have a time.

LARRY: Why don't you let me hold that, Oscar, and that way I'll be able to keep us movin'?

OSCAR: Alright. If you can read it?

LARRY: Oh, ya, I can.

OSCAR: I didn't get it too plain there, but maybe you can understand it.

LARRY: Oh, that's alright. So they would usually plant flax then on breaking?

OSCAR: Ya, usually planted flax on breakin' because.... Course, in those years we didn't have too much moisture and hardly ever got the flax in 'til maybe early July and then you got your dry periods, see. Flax will grow with the least moisture, I beleive, of any of our grain products and we'd get it up as high as 8, 10 bushels to the acre of flax; but, of course, there wasn't much price. I remember one year here on my farm I paid \$6 a bushel for seed flax to the doctor, Dr. Hogan. Do you know him?

LARRY: No.

OSCAR: Well, he's a doctor here; he's been here for many years. It was hard to get seed flax and she had a bunch of it. She owns a farm, see. And she wanted \$6 a bushel for that flax. Well, I got it and I planted in.... I don't know. I think, I had 25 acres that year and I got 6 bushel to the acre. That was considered a good crop that year because it was a pretty dry year. I don't remember anymore what we got for a bushel. Maybe it was--oh--4 or \$5 a bushel for it in the fall. That's about all; but now, I guess, they're gettin.... Well, on the day's report, I think, it was \$6.30 or \$6.40 a bushel now. That's what it's bringin' now.

LARRY: You have kind of a mechanical mind, Oscar, because you were able t' come up with those inventions. I was wondering. How were those first steam engines? How would you evaluate the first steam engines? Were they pretty good power?

OSCAR: Oh, they were excellent power.

LARRY: They were?

OSCAR: ~~Ya, yes, I got to be a steam engineer and a gas engineer and I worked on electricity too. I worked at Hoodriver, Oregon and got my experience. I helped build a line from Hoodriver, Oregon way up to the~~ ^{mountains} ~~70~~ ^{miles} ~~away~~ on them big poles. I forget now just how long

they were; but, I think, they were 30 feet. We'd put the pole in the ground; but we'd have it all ready to put the ~~cross arms~~ ^{Cross arms} on, you know?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: And then we'd have a jerk line from the top of the pole down to the ground and the ground man.... We called him the ground man. He'd hook this line on and we'd--and, of course, he'd pull it up. He'd pull it up to us. We had the bolts and everything.... Well, bolt holes and everything drilled. All we had to do was--he'd send the bolts up too, you know. We'd just put 'em in the hole, put the ~~cross arms~~ ^{Cross arms} on, and put the bolts on and tighten up. Then, o' course, we had to put the insulators on and put the wires on the insulators, you know, and tie them in.

LARRY: What machine did you prefer? What steam engine did you prefer Oscar? A Nicholson Shepard or a Reeves or a....

OSCAR: Well, I'll tell ya. We had one Nicholson Shepard. I showed you a picture of that one. That was a Nicholson Shepard, but we had a Garsscott[?]. Dad bought a Garsscott threshing machine and--well, he'd had a number of different engines. I don't remember the names of 'em maybe now, but we had that Garsscott outfit. It was a 22hp and it had its own traction, you see, and we always had very good luck with that. We had that for a good many years and my oldest brother that passed away got that rig finally, the whole outfit. I don't know. He had it for maybe 5, 6 years and, I think, he traded it in then for a new combine. I think, that's what become of it. I don't remember anymore. I run that engine, too, for him and also for my father.

LARRY: Was there any steam plowing done around here?

OSCAR: Yes, there was. Well, I think, the Young Valley and also the McCanna Farming Company done that and also with gas tractors, but there was steam outfits and they would pull.... Oh, they'd have about 8, 10 plows on 'em. That's about all they could pull because.... You see, you usually plow that ground about 4" deep and it takes a lot o' pressure there to pull them plows. I remember one year I worked out o' Ray, North

Dakota for a man and he wanted me to go over t' Williston. He had a peice o' land over there and he wanted me to go over there and plow up about 30 or 40 acres, break it up, and it was awfully bad terrain. Well, he had a gas engine and we would have to--they were buggers to start. We'd take and wrap about a 100 feet of rope around the flag wheel and then 2 men get on that and get out and pull it in order so that you could pull it over so you could ignite the gas. Sometimes it'd be 1/2 hour before you'd get the thing runnin'. If you got it running, you didn't stop it. You kept it goin' if possible, you know. Yes, well, a steam engine is very good. It's more reliable. I'd rather have a steam engine than I would a gas. And it's quiet. It don't make much noise, see, while a gas engine is putt, putt, putt, all day long.

LARRY: Do you think that steam might be a possible alternative for the future again? Do you think that we'll go back to steam maybe?

OSCAR: I wouldn't be surprised. Wouldn't be a bit surprised because on a gas shortage, you know. See, steam, o' course--at that time we used straw for....

LARRY, OSCAR: firing....

OSCAR: to heat it and then later on we used coal. When we could get coal, we'd carry a tender full o' coal along right with the engine all the time. You know, you had your fuel right there and that was handy. And, o' course, the time may come again if gas gets so short that they can't get it or this diesel oil, they might go back t' steam. Hard t' tell.

LARRY: Oscar, did any of the people who threshed around here have any trouble with the IWW?

OSCAR: Plenty of 'em.

LARRY: Oh?

OSCAR: Yes, there was plenty of 'em. In the early days--these IWW's wanted more money, see. There'd be a bunch of 'em stay around ^{Niagara} ~~the falls~~. That's where we homed there. And they wouldn't go unless they got so much money an hour, see. Well, dad wouldn't hire 'em, o' course, but sometime we'd have t' go in and get a man or 2 because we was short. So maybe keep

'em a few days and let 'em go and pay 'em off, otherwise, they wouldn't work, you know. And one time I was threshing out at Spokane, Washington and the IWW's was awfully bad at Spokane and they had a strong union there. Well, they got so bad they wouldn't let anybody go out on a threshing machine unless they got the wages if they could stop 'em, you know, and they'd go out and set fire to the threshing machines at night. They burned up 11 or 12 threshing machines out there. They also put a whole box o' ~~matches~~ matches, you know, like they come anyplace you buy ~~them~~ 'em, in a bundle. They'd open a bundle enough so they could get a box o' matches in there and then went into the machine and set the machine o' fire. That's the way they worked out there at Spokane and they were bad. I nightwatched on one outfit for a man. I got \$15 a night just watchin', stayin' at the engine so that the IWW's wouldn't come out there and set fire t' the rig. I worked there for him 15 nights one time and there was only one night that I had interference. I had a pretty good watchdog with me and we'd lay in the straw by the engine. We always kept the steam up, see. But we had ^{always} this dog along and, of course, I carried a *gat* with me and a flashlight, a strong flashlight about 3 batteries in it somethin' like that, so then I'd lay in the straw there by the engine. This dog was very good hearing, ya know. He'd hear anybody around and let us know right away. So one night---oh---I guess, about 2:00 in the morning 2 fellas come up and the dog.... I heard him whining and I knew there was somethin' wrong so I got up and I says, "What's doin'?" He run right towards the machine, you know, but he would stay with me and protect me. You get the idea? Well, we went down to the machine and I turned the flashlight on these guys and I says, "What are you fellas doin' here?" "Oh, we're just lookin' around." "Well," I says, "I'll tell ya." I says, "This dog will take your pants right off o' ya." So I says, "You better get out o' here or I'll send him on t' ya." I says, "You ain't goin' to set no machine o' fire here and," I says, "you better clear out o' the country or," I says, "they'll git ya." So they went and they didn't bother anything. The boss says to me the next morning, "I understand you had a little trouble during the night?"

"Yes," I says, "I had a couple come up there, but they didn't bother anything. I got rid of 'em!" So that was the only interference I ever had with any IWW's.

LARRY: You got \$15 a night?

OSCAR: \$15 a night, ya.

LARRY: Is that right. That was pretty good money in those days?

OSCAR: Ya, it was good money; but people wouldn't do it, ya know. They wouldn't take the responsibility. You had to carry a *gat*. You had t' take the chance that you might even get fired on or be in a fight down there at that threshin' outfit because some of them IWW's were pretty tough guys.

LARRY: Now another thing I wanted to ask you about Oscar. Was there any bootlegging done around by Larimore in the early days or in the 20's and 30's?

OSCAR: Plenty of it. Yes, we had 3 or 4 fellas here in the early days. They was makin' moonshine and 1 still was out to the dumpground. They had it east o' the dumpground where he had his still and all and then people would come out to the dumpground, you know, to dump stuff there, why, they'd approach 'em. You see, they was away from the public then and they could easily sell to 'em their liquors and stuff. And then there was ^{one} right at the north end o' town here that had a bootlegging outfit. He had that for--oh--3 or 4 years and there was a couple ~~north-oh-town~~ north-oh--about 3 miles north o' town down near the cemetary. They'd hide around down in there, see, and they could get rid of their booze, you know. Then we had one in this building right next t' us. He was crippled. Well, he was crippled from....

LARRY, OSCAR: birth.

OSCAR: He wasn't able t' work and so he made booze and sold it.

LARRY: Did they ever try to shut these guys down?

OSCAR: These bootleggers?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: Oh, yes, but I'll tell ya. They had families and they were pretty

lenient, you know. They'd maybe quiet 'em down for awhile and say nothin' about it and they'd maybe not sell anything for awhile. People kind o' forget about it, you know, and then they'd start out again. That's the way they done.

LARRY: Did they run any down from Canada in the 20's or 30's?

OSCAR: Well, yes, there was some runners down from there around Winnepeg up around there right next to the border, you know. ~~Oh, yes~~ ^{Yes}, they did that, too, **b**ut I don't know. Oh, they'd maybe arrest 'em and give 'em 30 days in jail somethin' like that and turn 'em loose 'cause they didn't want t' feed 'em and that's the way they'd do. They'd give 'em a light sentence and keep 'em in jail awhile and let 'em go. They didn't bother. I don't know what they give 'em now--the police. Do you?

LARRY: No, I don't. I don't have any idea.

OSCAR: There's still bootleggers around.

LARRY: Oh, ya.

OSCAR: Yes, I think, I could go out in the country here--oh--by the golf course. I know 2 brothers that live down there. They never married, see, but they live down there and they used to make booze out of pie plant. They used pie plant to make booze out of.

LARRY: Oh.

OSCAR: Oh, they had b-big rows o' pie plant 1/4 mile long.

LARRY: What's pie plant?

OSCAR: That's rhubarb.

LARRY: Oh, rhubarb.

OSCAR: Ya.

LARRY: OK.

OSCAR: Ya, and that made good ~~booze~~ ^{booze and} they made it and they raised their own stuff right there, ya know, so they could make it up. People, o' course--a lot of 'em never knew about it. They wouldn't.... I found it out one time. I was selling Maytag washers. I had the agency for that and I sold Maytag washers and I was called out their to demonstrate. While I was demonstrating there they had 5 or 6 different women come up there and

they had their clothes there and they had me demonstrate their clothes, too, for washers. Well, so then the lady of the house liked her booze and she didn't ^{think} ~~think~~ anything about it and she just told the ladies t' help themselves to the booze, see. Nothin' thought about it. Ya. So then I found out that they were makin' it themselves right there. I asked him a number o' times about all this pie plant. They wouldn't hardly ever sell you any. They ^{would maybe} ~~would maybe~~ sell ya a little, but very little. They was usin' it for makin' this booze, see. That's what they was usin' it for and, I think, maybe the boys.... I don't know whether they still make it or not, but the last time I was out there in the summertime they had rows o' pie plant. ^{And they had} ~~And they had~~ a big variety of--oh, it growed great big, you know. And it was good quality. Ya, they made booze out o' that, as well as wheat and barley and other stuff.

LARRY: During the 30's now you and your wife were raising 3 children, right?

OSCAR: That's right.

LARRY: And that's when you had your camera business here.

OSCAR: Yes, we did, ya.

LARRY: Were things pretty rough in those days Oscar?

OSCAR: Yes, I'll tell ya. Money was short and people didn't have very much so that we had to cater different things in order to make a livin'. We had the *mail* route and, o' course, I bought junk metals like copper, brass, and iron, and all that stuff. I used to ship carloads of iron to Duluth or maybe to Minneapolis and sell it by the carload lot. Ya. And, o' course, a lot o' heavywork to it; but, of course, you'd make a little extra money.

LARRY: Did you buy a lot of old steam engines in those days?

OSCAR: Well, yes, I bought 3 or 4 altogether, old ones, you know, and we'd dismember 'em. I remember ^{one} ~~one~~ year I bought ^{one} ~~one~~ up at Inkster north of Inkster and I dismembered it up there and hauled it in and I had a fella help me, of course. I had a big flat truck I could haul the stuff on and we'd haul it in. Load it right on the car. I've had cars of iron of 50 some tons

in a car. That's a big carload o' iron.

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: Ya, well, I'll tell ya. When you're in for like the 30's when they wasn't raisin' no crops, couldn't get anything....

TAPE C

THIS is Larry Sprunk and the following is a completion of the interview that I had with Oscar Bode of Larimore, North Dakota. The interview was held in Larimore Tuesday, April 13, 1976 and this portion of the interview began at 7:00 in the evening. The actual completion of this interview with Oscar is on the flip side of this cassette.

OSCAR: ~~Remembering~~ if we had drought. I remember, I put in on my farm ^{one} year about 10 acres o' corn and I didn't even get a ear o' corn back that we could even eat.

LARRY: What year was that?

OSCAR: Well, I don't recollect now.

LARRY: That was in the 30's though?

OSCAR: It was in the 30's, ya, and crops were poor. I had a little old cheap gas engine at the time ^{when} ~~we~~ I put the crop in and when everything got so bad, I finally had a chance to sell that gas engine for little more than I paid for it, but I sold it and got new machinery. The farmers around didn't have good machinery. I paid him a good price for it, paid him cash, and then they'd come and want t' buy all that machinery. Well, ya know, you can't supply a whole bunch o' farmers with machinery and have it very long because they wear it out for ya. So I had a chance t' sell it and I finally sold it. That way they wasn't molestin' me for borrowing machinery.

LARRY: Where were you farming during the 30's?

OSCAR: Well, right on my own place, my own farm.

LARRY: But you were living here?

OSCAR: ~~Remembering~~ No, yes, we were living here. Ya, we lived in this place because my brother lived on the home place.

LARRY: So you were farming with Louie then?

OSCAR: Well, I wasn't farming with Louie; I was farming on my own.

LARRY: Oh.

OSCAR: See, we each had our 64 acres o' land.

OSCAR: But Louie.... Dad gave him extra land for t' come down. He gave him horses and machinery and everything t' farm the land with, see, because he didn't have no way o' lookin' after it. He wanted somebody that knew farming and dependability, see. Of course, Louie took it over. But I farmed my land there for awhile and, o' course, I finally rented it out to my brother Louie and he farmed it.

LARRY: So you were doing some farming and junk dealing and photography?

OSCAR: Yes, all kinds of things and then I had the agencies too. I had insurance agency. I sold insurance. I bought and sold cars and--oh--I worked as a vulcanizer here. I had a shop just right here a block and there was a vulcanizing shop. He had a big house here about 2 blocks east and him and his wife lived there and I run the vulcanizing shop for him--vulcanized tires. That was the early days. I'll give you an incident on that. This man was--oh--hungry for business, you know, like most of the merchants are and he wasn't gettin' enough business in the shop to suit him, and he went downtown and bought about 3/4 inch carpet tacks and scattered them over a block around his place, see. When the cars would run over them, of course, they'd punch his tire. Well, then we was the only vulcanizing shop in town so they'd bring the tires over to us to vulcanize 'em, fix 'em up, see. I finally found that out ^{one} day. I didn't think that he would do a thing like that, but a fella came in early in the morning after I had opened the shop and he had a flat tire. I says, "You got new tacks in there about 3/4 of an inch long." And I says, "Where did you run your car before you came in here before you got ^a flat?" He said, "Right on this block north of you here." So I didn't say anything about it to him. I had my own mind. I says, "I'm goin' to find out where that's comin' from." So I had a magnet, one of these steel magnets that pick up tacks.

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: We had one in the shop there and so I went out in that street and I found quite a bunch o' tacks in that block north. He didn't scatter them around much, but he was kind o'.... He didn't like it too much, but he wanted the business, ya know. So he'd have a bunch of the tires and, of

course, they'd come in and get 'em fixed up.

LARRY: Were there dirt streets or gravel?

OSCAR: Dirt. Ya, there weren't no gravel streets, but they kept it up in pretty good shape. Wasn't too much rain but, o' course, they got enough rain to raise crops and enough rain for the pastures and so forth so it was alright.

LARRY: Do you remember, Oscar, that the depression was ^{worse} here, the 30's were worse here than they were further east ~~and~~ and south down by Mayville and Portland and Hatten 'cause I talked to people down there last week and they said that there was only ^{one} year that they didn't have a fairly decent crop in the 30's?

OSCAR: Well, yes, I think, it was worse around here. We're in more hilly section. Down there they're more in the flats. Well, up in the hills also there's lots o' rocks in our land, see, while down in this area there's hardly no rock in the land. Oh, you might even run across ^{one} big rock. I've seen that in a field where ^{one} big rock maybe give you trouble. Well, what they done here in that case they'd dig a hole and put the rock in it and cover it up, farm over it. That's the way they done that, but up in the hills, of course, we had to get the rocks off 'cause you can't work in that rocky territory. You'll just ruin your shears ~~and~~ on your plows and stuff.

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: Yes, I think, the depression was worse around here ^{because, well,} ~~and~~ sometimes they wouldn't get enough crop to harvest it and then we had ^{more} ~~and~~ ^{or less} storms. Being it was so dry and hot it was ~~and~~ hail ~~and~~ and encouragement for hail storms, see. I remember, once we had a big crop and we had all our machinery ready to go out on the harvest and got a hail storm that afternoon and we never got a bushel o' grain. So father he worried so much about it and we was afraid he'd take his life. So I told dad, "You get in the buggy with me. We're going up to Petersburg." I said, "They didn't get hailed out up there north of the Great Northern Railroad." They did on the south, but they didn't get hailed out on the north side.

So we had the thresh machine, and I says, "Maybe we can ^{run a} ~~run a~~ threshing machine machine threshing up there and that way, why, we'll make out alright." So we went up there and we got a 28 day run amongst the farmers there north of Petersburg and around the Mission City territory. So when we figured our help and everything that we paid up, father had about \$2200 left after payin' the help. So then we owed Pickert & English. They were a big outfit that had a lumberyard at ^{Niagara} ~~Niagara~~ and also a grocery store and fuel and stuff. We always ^{got} ~~got~~ our stuff there. They'd charge it from spring 'til fall and then in the fall you'd pay your bill and then you was good for another....

OSCAR, LARRY: year. They had fuel. We'd get our fuel there, get our winter supply o' fuel there, and our groceries. Dad would usually get about a ton o' flour in the fall and that would do us all through the winter, you know. Big family of 12. There's a lot of work for mother and sister to make it up, but they did it so that's the way they got along. That's ^{one} ~~one~~ thing during the depression I.... You'll notice in that piece there that--cooperation. There had to be cooperation because people lost everything they had, the banks went closed, they wasn't gettin' no crops, and the merchants was havin' a hard time gettin' goods to let the people have. They had t' let 'em have it on time; they couldn't pay for it. So these outfits in Minneapolis and St. Paul ^{or} ~~or~~ wherever they got their supplies had to have a good credit rating so they couldn't even get that stuff, see, so it made it pretty hard for the merchants, too, you know. So it was quite a deal.

LARRY: Was that \$2200 enough to pay up your bill then?

OSCAR: Yes, it was enough and we had a couple hundred dollars left. So I told dad, "You go in now ^{that you've} ~~that you've~~ you got your money and settle up with your bills." And then I said, "If we haven't got enough we--I think, we had about 56 head o' cattle and we had about 200 head o' horses or, I mean....

~~and I said,~~
LARRY; OSCAR: hogs."

OSCAR: And I said, "If ^{you} ~~you~~ need any more money, you wire that outfit that

we shipped the hogs and cattle to in the fall in Minneapolis and St. Paul and they'll let you have the money and then you can pay 'em back when you ship the cattle." So that's the way we'd work it.

LARRY: There was a big holding pens here in Larimore, wasn't there?

OSCAR: Yes, there was right now where the bean factory ^{is.} ~~is.~~ There was a big stockyards in there. I'll tell ya a little incident that happened. One day a lady come to my place and she said, "Mr. Bode," she said, "there's a man down at the stockyards--it was late in the fall--and he's layin' in there in the stockyard with the cattle." He didn't have no ~~place~~ place to stay, see. "Well," she says, "couldn't you house him down here if you got room? Couldn't you house him?" "Well," I says, "I 'spose so." I didn't even know that there was anything like ^{that} goin' on. So she says, "You better go down to the stockyards and look into it." I went down there and I found the man. He had a bed there amongst the cattle, a straw bed, and he layed there and it didn't bother him any. He had a little money. I don't know where he got it; but then he got it and, anyway, he'd come uptown and get what he wanted t' eat, you know. So I went down and I told him, "If you want a room," I said, "I've got a room upstairs I'll let you have." I don't know. I guess, we rented out rooms for about \$25 a month.

LARRY: Up above here?

OSCAR: Ya, ~~above~~ above the front. So he stayed with us. He was a Indian from Robot. Do you know where Robot is?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: Well, he was from there. Raleigh some of 'em call it, don't it? Anyway, he stayed here for about 7, 8 years.

LARRY: Oh, is that right.

OSCAR: Ya, he was a World War veteran.

LARRY: Oh.

OSCAR: And he was partially disabled and I don't think his mind was just too bright at times, but he was a good man. Oh, he liked his liquor though. He was gettin' pension and the ^{first} ~~time~~ of the month when he always got his pension check, these fellas from up around Rolla and Dunseith they'd

come down here and they always called him uncle. And they said, "We want t' see uncle." Well, they'd go up there and ^{help him} drink up his money and then they'd go. That's the way they did. Well, it was amusing.

LARRY: Do you remember the pop factory they had here bottling pop?

OSCAR: Yes, I worked there. My cousin that had a home in the north end o' town here and he married a girl on the west end o' town and this girl's father was a Civil War ^{veteran} ~~man~~. He married her and he got workin' in this pop factory. It belonged to a man, I think, in Grand Forks. I did know his name, but I don't know now. Sometimes I can think of it and then again I won't; but, anyway, he got workin' in there and he finally bought it. Well, he got tired of the pop factory and he sold the building to the Yomen Lodge. You know the Yomen Lodge? Well, I was secretary-treasurer for the ~~Yomen~~ ^{Yomen} Lodge. The Legion didn't have no home, ya know, they could call their home so Yomen wanted to sell the building. I was commander of the Legion at that time. I says, "If you boys want a home, now you got a chance." I says, "You can pay \$500 down on that building." They wanted \$2000 for it. I says, "You can pay \$500 down on that building and you'll have a home. You can't be throwed out as long as you pay your taxes and stuff." So they bought it and so that's when they got their home.

LARRY: But your cousin ^{ran} ~~the~~ the pop factory for awhile?

OSCAR: Yes, he did.

LARRY: What was his name?

OSCAR: Theodore Strafer.

LARRY: ~~Theodore Strafer~~ Oh.

OSCAR: Theodore Strafer and he had 2 brothers. ^{One} ~~the~~ brother was a insurance agent and the other boy was dry cleaning clothes and stuff and he was right next to us here for ^{one} ~~the~~ year, I remember. Well, he got tired o' that and he went out to California and he got a job in a grocery store out there. He worked there a good many years in a grocery store. He finally passed away ^{and} ~~his~~ his cousin that was an insurance man... He was out there, too, and the last I heard o' him he went to Vancouver, Washington and is buried there. He's an insurance man.

LARRY: Do you remember the cigar factory they had here or the guy that made cigars?

OSCAR: Well, I remember ~~him~~ ^{him,} that is, faintly, you know, but I don't know as I would know his name.

LARRY: Ya. How about the ~~guy~~ ^{furrier} ? There was a guy that made furs.

OSCAR: I knew him well.

LARRY: Who was that?

OSCAR: His name was Arnold. He had a farm out here about--oh--about 11--no--10 miles west and a couple miles south. Had a farm out there ^{and} ~~there~~ there was 2 brothers, 2 Arnold brothers. One was a ^{furrier} ~~farmer~~ and the other was a farmer. Well, they was both farmers for that matter, but this ^{one} ~~man~~ man was from New York and he knew the fur business well. He done a good job and he run a good shop here for quite a number o' years. He run a fur shop and he bought furs and sold them, too. I used to buy and sell furs.

LARRY: Was there a lot o' trapping done around here?

OSCAR: Oh, ya, a lot of it. It was good trapping territory. Always has ^{been} ~~was~~ but it's gettin' pretty scimp now because prices have been high and they've been after 'em hard trappin' 'em down so there ain't so much fur anymore. Oh, we used to get as high as \$30 for a mink pelt and for beaver you'd get about 25 for a beaver pelt and ~~muskrat~~ muskrat and ^{weasel} ~~weasel~~ you'd get about \$1 a pelt for them.

LARRY: There aren't many weasels around ^{anymore} are there?

OSCAR: I hardly ever see 'em and there's very few people know where t' find 'em. One time I came back from the West. I'd been out West for a number o' years and my brother-in-law Crawford.... He's passed away and my sister. And I went out to their place t' visit and we used to drive t' town to get the mail. His brother had a farm where there was 2 lakes. There was a intersection between, a road inbetween. And I says t' him, "Do you think there's any fur around this lake a' tall?" I says, "There should be." "No," he says, "I don't think so." So I says, "I'll tell ya. While you're gone to get the mail I'll stay here at the lake and I'll look around all over the lake and around the hills and see if I can find

30
anything ^{to} ~~the~~ catch." I caught 60 weasel there....

LARRY: Oh, is that right.

OSCAR: on the shore leading t' the north and I found out that if you're goin' to catch weasel, never look for 'em on the south side of a hill. The reason for that is you got t' understand animals and their habitat. They'll house in where the hole won't freeze shut, see. See, on the north side it stays open while on the south side it'll thaw and run into their....

OSCAR, LARRY: hole....

OSCAR: so they're froze up. They can't get out. So, you see, they'll have their home on the north side. That's where you'll find 'em and on a gravel hill. They'll try t' find a gravel hill. One day I took a man along with me. He was interested in trapping while I was here. I says, "You take the north side or the south side of the railroad whichever one you want and," I says, "we'll go from here to ^{Shawnee} ~~the~~." It was about 10 miles to ^{Shawnee} ~~the~~. And I says, "We'll find out what we can find in the way of weasel dams along the railroad." It's a gravel bed, see, and it's a good place for them t' house. Well, we only found 1 or 2 weasel holes on the south side where it was sunny, but on the north side we found 25, 30 of 'em. See, they'd make their holes right in the railroad bed. So, you see, you got t' know where you're goin' to find them animals. Lots o' science in trapping as well as any other thing.

LARRY: In the early days, Oscar, were there any otter or lynx or bobcats or anything like that?

OSCAR: There were a few bobcats in this country, wild cats, bobcats, and lynx, and there was even.... Oh, down here at the river they found a few otter. There's a lot o' otter in Minneasoata around the lakes, but we don't have no otter here. We'll I'll tell ya another thing. A otter lives on mink and other small animals, you see, and we don't have enough of that here, but in Minneasoata around--there's so many lakes in Minneasoata. Minneasoata is a much better trapping territory than this is, you know, for all kinds of animals for that matter. They got the wolf down there and they got the coyote. They got the fox and the bear and the beaver. Well,

practically anything in the trapping line.

LARRY: How about prairie chickens and things like that? Were there wild ducks and wild geese?

OSCAR: Oh, lots of 'em, thousands of 'em. Ya, when we first came here in the wintertime, there was prairie chickens. Mother would throw the crumbs from the table outside and the prairie chickens would come there and get feed prett'i'near every day when the weather was suitable and they got tame, you know. We didn't try t' scare 'em away and then we'd just feed 'em. Throw the crumbs and stuff out there for 'em and they'd come. They liked it. Shows ya how you can invite birds and things to your place.

LARRY: Sure.

OSCAR: We like birds. We got bird feed out here; we feed 'em and water 'em. We enjoy seein' 'em feed. They fight like anything else.

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: Well, that's where they hang around and those big hens.... And they make their nests in that big badger brush because they're pretty well protected from the animals that try t' get 'em, you know. So, o' course, when they've got a nest and the animal comes around and trys t' molest them, they'll fly up and get away so that they don't know where they're at. Course, when the animal that trys t' get 'em is gone, they'll go back t' the ^{nest} ~~brush~~ So they were pretty well protected. Ya, there was a lot of 'em and we enjoyed seein' 'em dance. That's quite fun. They get up early in the morning and they have their dances. That was quite amusing t' watch them, but you'd have to go out on the prairie where they had these dances. They was usually around where they had their nests. That's where they had 'em.

LARRY: I was going to ask you, Oscar, if you could remember during the teens and 20's and 30's a lot of hoboes riding the railroads?

OSCAR: Yes, there was a lot of 'em. They'd go through here and sometime there'd be 20, 30 men on a freight car and, of course, the conductors wouldn't do anything. I'll tell ya. The conductors, you know, they always wanted a little money from these hoboes if they could and they'd ask ^{some of 'em} ~~ask~~

if they thought they could get any money out of 'em. They might get a \$1 or 2 out of 'em. They'd let 'em ride clean t' the West Coast if they wanted to on the train because they didn't bother 'em. I remember, one time when I was puttin' up ice for Peifer.... The man that was workin' with me puttin' up ice--we wanted t' go to the next station where we was goin' to fill 2 icehouses. Well, we didn't have no way o' goin'. Only through a freight. These freights would come through and, you know, them big tanks that they used to send on the railroad? Oh, it takes a whole flatcar and you could get down through the hole on the top. One time at this place where this boy and I wanted t' go this car come in and there was about 30, 40 men in that tank. Can you imagine that?

LARRY: Is that right.

OSCAR: And the conductor says, "Do ya want a ride?" He says, "I'll let ya ride clean t' Seattle--\$2." But you had t' stay in that tank. They'd let ya off. They was wise enough--themguys. Say, if it was a bunch like that, no tellin' how much they'd get from 'em. Even if they only got a \$1 a piece, why, they had pretty good pay and they could divvy up with the engineer and the fireman. They didn't let the bosses in St. Paul know about it.

LARRY: No, no.

OSCAR: That was their own information, see?

LARRY: Was there a jungle here?

OSCAR: Yes, there was a jungle in the east end o' town and one in the west.

LARRY: Is that right.

OSCAR: And I've known 'em t' have as high as 100 men in them jungles and they used to have some pretty hard ^{bad times} ~~with~~ with--the people here. They would.... Well, you know, just like any other bunch o' places they would invade and break in and maybe rob and different things; but, as a whole, we didn't have too much trouble with 'em. I used to go up to the hoboies and visit 'em and we never had no trouble with 'em.

LARRY: Were most of 'em pretty good guys then?

OSCAR: A lot of 'em were good and once in awhile you'd run across some pretty tough characters. Yes, you had to be careful who you associated with because most of 'em would carry a *gat* and you'd do what he'd say or else.

LARRY: Did they do any panhandling around Larimore then? Go around and bum a sandwich here?

OSCAR: Ya. Yes, they done a lot o' that. Some people was scared of 'em and they'd feed 'em while others wouldn't patronize 'em and give 'em anything t' eat, and they'd raise a little trouble sometime. I've seen right here. We used to sometimes. They'd come along. Can we have a sandwich? Well, we'd give 'em a sandwich or maybe a cup o' water or a cup of coffee or something and they'd go maybe right to the next door neighbor and ask the same thing and then if they got a sandwich they'd go down maybe 1/2 block and throw it away. That's the way them guys was. If they wasn't satisfied with what they got, why, they'd throw it away. I've seen that done right here on this block. Yes, that wasn't good. You had to be pretty careful with them people because they might even burn you out, see.

Larimore was burned down 3 times. You never ~~knew~~ that? This was a big city of 3600 people at one time and they didn't have no waterworks here, at ~~all~~ protection for waterworks. They had some cisterns in the park that would hold 1000 or 2 gallons o' water and they'd have to run their pump machine over there t' ^{pump} ~~take~~ it out, but then gettin' it in the tank and haulin' it to where the fire was they couldn't save a ~~building~~ ^{building} so this whole city burned up about 3 times. This park out here was all a solid business section and the next street running west was a business section and ~~this~~ this one over on this street was a business section. All business section at that time, see, and they done a big business, too, because the railroad was doin' a big business here when there was 3600 people here and we had a roundhouse here and shops and watertank and fuel. They got their fuel and water and everything here. They had a couple o'--oh--big hotels down here right next t' the railroad and they would house a 100 men or more down there. Oh, they had a big business, you know.

LARRY: I heard, Oscar, that Jim Hill wanted to buy some more land out by the roundhouse for tanks or switch tracks or switchyard or something and they wanted too much money and he said, "I'll see the grass growing in the streets of Larimore before the railroad." Is that true?

OSCAR: That's true.

LARRY: Tell me about that.

OSCAR: Well, they didn't have enough.... You see, they had a lot of trackage out here by the roundhouse, but they wanted more trackage because they had a lot o' trains, you know, and a lot o' cars. They brought 'em in here for repairing and they didn't have no place t' park 'em. They had their yards. They had about 6 or 8 railroad tracks out there where they'd park 'em; but, you see, anything that had to be overhauled they brought it in there for overhauling. Well, they didn't have room for it all. For a good many years they housed the tracks out here full of cars. Yes, they tried to buy this property from people here and they said they wouldn't sell it and so they said they'd make the grass grow on the streets of Larimore and they moved to Minot.

LARRY: Was it in Minot right away or was it Devils Lake first?

OSCAR: Well, I think, it was both places. They broke it up, I think. They moved part of it t' Devils Lake and part ~~to~~ t' Minot. Ya, 'cause they didn't have the facilities, ya see, and another thing they didn't have the water. See, here they had good water facilities. They could pump the water up from the river down here and they had a big watertank. All these trains could fill up here and go on West. Then later on, they got a watertank at ^{Niagara} ~~Minot~~. See, they got a dam at ^{Niagara} ~~Minot~~ and the Great Northern got a dam there and that's a spring fed dam.

LARRY: Oh.

OSCAR: I came near t' gettin' drowned in that dam one time. I went through the.... Well, they was cuttin' ice and my skate come off--us school kids was down there--and I slid right into that hole. Can you imagine that? My skate come off my left shoe and I couldn't stop so I slid right into that hole. Well, our neighbor man was workin' on the ice

crew and the rest o' the crew had gone and all the kids had skated away from there. You know how they'll go. Well, I tried to follow them and my skate come off and they didn't even know that I went int' the hole. Well, I was lucky. I came right up just in the corner. I could reach my hands out like that and catch the ice just about an inch on my middle finger. So this man was standing--oh--maybe 100ft. ^{away} ~~from the hole~~ and I hollered at him and he come over and he pulled me out. I couldn't o' stayed there very long because it was awfully cold water and freeze up quick in a hurry, you know. Well, I had a sister and brother-in-law living in town and he pulled me out. And I says, "Take me up to my sisters and," I says, "I'll get my brother-in-law's clothes and put on and change." I got a pretty bad cold out of it, but I come through it alright. I never did get my skate though. It's still in the pond as far as I know.

LARRY: Were there gypsies and peddlars travelling around the country in those days too?

OSCAR: A lot of 'em. And Jews!

LARRY: Oh.

OSCAR: There was quite a number o' Jews and they carried a big pack on their back. Honestly, they'd carry a pack that I never could figure out how they done it, **a** big pack, you know. I don't know what it weighed. Prett'i'near 100lbs., I imagine. Both women and men they'd go out from house t' house and carry a bag on their back and they'd stop at your place and want t' sell you something, unpack it all, and they'd sell you what they could and maybe they'd stay overnight. They'd give you something, some of their clothes or something, for staying overnight. We had that happen up at our place a good many times.

LARRY: Oh.

OSCAR: Ya. Yes, there was a lot of peddlars in the early days. and they managed to get around.

LARRY: Were gypsies travelling, too, then?

OSCAR: Ya, not so much ^{though} ~~much~~ but on our farm right east of our place we had 1/4 section o' land that belonged to the man that we bought our

groceries and fuel from and we used to use that piece o' land for cattle range, see. Right from one corner of it to the northwest corner of it, from the southeast corner of it t' the northwest corner, they had roads right straight across that quarter o' land. They had a Indian trail across there. Not'in' unusual to see--oh--maybe a couple hundred Indian troops goin' through. That was not'in' unusual and I had 'em even shoot at me. My brother and I--Louie. You know him?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: Well, we was out herding cattle one day right near our home not very far from home and the grass was tall. I 'spose maybe ^{18"}~~20"~~ tall. And the Indians was way over in the northwest corner of that corner and they shot at us boys. Well, I told Louie, "Drop down in the grass and then they can't see us." So that's what we did t' keep them from shootin' at us. I got ^{one}~~a~~ bullet pretty close to my right ear.

LARRY: Oh.

OSCAR: I don't know. I didn't think at that time.... You know, they was usin' bow and arrows at that time about and there wasn't much rifles, but some of them outfits had rifles and they was pretty good marksman too. I don't know why they would shoot at us kids, but they did. Maybe they tried t' scare us or something, but we weren't molesting ~~them~~ 'em. We never did. If the Indians would come up and want t' get a loaf o' ^{bread}~~meat~~ ^{if}~~we~~ we had it, we'd let 'em have it even if we didn't have any for ourselves rather than have trouble with 'em and they appreciated that; but we had a neighbor east of us just about a mile and she didn't like the attitude of the Indians, and sometimes she'd refuse to give 'em bread and stuff. They was pretty mean t' them. A number o' times they started fires there; but they never did burn 'em ^{out}~~down~~, but you had to be careful. If you treated the Indian right, he didn't bother ya. We never had ^{no}~~any~~ trouble with the Indians. I had Indians here upstairs, housed 'em for many years. And, of course, they'd get drunk and then you'd have maybe a little trouble with 'em that way; but, otherwise, no trouble.

LARRY: When were you born again Oscar? I forgot.

OSCAR: 1886, December 24th.

LARRY: Now you would o' been about 6 or 8 when that Indian shot at you. So that would o' been about 1893?

OSCAR: Oh, I don't really know. Yes, we was herding stock---Louie and I. It was in our teens, ya know, and I don't know just how old we was at that time, but we usually went out and herded the stock together because we usually had about 30 head o' stock. Dad would never have no sheep. He couldn't stand the blatting o' sheep so he never would have no sheep; but we raised hogs and cattle, and horses, colts, and stuff. We raised a lot of cattle and a lot o' horses and we used t' buy horses from Montana. Them fellas that bring down them wild horses and we'd have t' train 'em. Had quite a time breakin' 'em in. You take them wild animals that are used to running out all the time and it ain't so easy t' train them. You've got t' put 'em with a old horse one at a time and train 'em 'til you get 'em broke in, otherwise, you'd have runaways and everything else.

LARRY: Another thing I wanted t' ask you Oscar? Do you remember your mother's home remedies? ^{What} she would use on you kids for head colds or chest colds or fever or ^{whatever.} ~~anything~~?

OSCAR: Well, I'll tell ya. We had goose lard for one thing. I don't know where she got the goose lard; but, I 'spose, she could get it at the drug-store. She had goose lard and she'd rub that on our chest and then put a wool cloth on it to keep your chest warm, break up a cold, and then for minor sores or cuts or somethin' like that, bruises, they had different home remedies. I don't know just what exactly what---turpentine was one thing. I remember that because that was always good for breakin' up disease, see, and it would heal up good and you wouldn't catch other stuff in ~~it~~ ^{it} but for sickness, colds and things, I don't know. Take now for headaches and stuff like that. Us kids if we had trouble that way with headaches, I think, mother would bathe our heads with kind of a cool cloth or else a hot cloth t' have it kind o'--get it over--'cause little kids, ya know, they'd get that stuff or maybe you'd get bruised.

LARRY: Did illnesses go through the horses around here. Did you get

Glanders?

OSCAR: Yes, we had ^{one} winter. We had 26 head o' horses at home and the Glanders broke and we had the horse doctor.... His name was--well, I don't know that I could tell ya right now. He was here in town anyway and we had him come up. Well, we had quite a time with that Glanders. We didn't lose a horse, but we had a awful time gettin' rid o' that. That's an awful disease, ~~that~~ Glanders, and if it goes on very long, why, it'll take ya. It'll take a horse, but it didn't bother too bad so it managed pretty good.

LARRY: Couldn't human beings get that too?

OSCAR: Yes, they did. Yes, they caught that. And then another thing they had with the horses was this, you know, fox^otail? You know what fox-tail is?

LARRY: Ya, ya.

OSCAR: Well, if the horses eat that hay, it gets in their mouth up inou their gums and all around and then they get sick and they can't eat. Well, you've got t'.... We found that out ^{one} year and that was a terrible thing. We had a lot of that hay put up and farmers should never harvest fox^otail in a time where it would get ripe. You see, then is when it would get bad. If you can get it at an early enough stage before the fox^otail gets what'd you call ripe, then it's alright for hay and it won't cause no trouble with the horses; but if you don't, they'll get a sore mouth. We had a bunch of our horses get that one time. We didn't recognize, but they got stinkin' so bad. We couldn't imagine why they was stinkin' so bad so we had the horse doctor come out. And he says, "All your trouble, is," he says, "you're feeding your horses foxtail and they've gotten sore mouths and they can't eat." They won't eat anything then, you see. They lose their apetite and that'll kill 'em and they'll die from starvation. So he come out and then he'd open up their mouth. You know, they got an instrument they put in their mouth, clean their mouth all out, wash it ^{out} and sterilize it, and they're alright. In 3 or 4 days they'll be back on their feet, but don't feed 'em any more o' that. And straw. We used to feed our horses--we had to. We didn't have enough hay and we'd feed 'em

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wheat straw and barley straw and oats straw and all that kind o' stuff,
flax. Flax is good for 'em.

LARRY: Oh?

OSCAR: It's a good feed, but it's not so good on their kidneys feedin' 'em
flax. You can feed 'em a little of it if you want, ^{to} ~~but~~ but not very much
flax straw. It seems to bind 'em up, bind 'em up tight, and they can't git
rid of it, see. There's another thing that bothers them, but I ain't goin'
to ^{say} ~~nothing~~ anything. Well, that's not so good.

LARRY: Well, let's see. Let me look over this Oscar. We should be moving
along here pretty well, I think. Were there surplus commodities in
Larimore, ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ the 30's? Could you go down and get grapefruit?

OSCAR: No, nobody here handled it. I don't know when they really started
handling grapefruits and things like that here. Oh, we could get grapes in
season. They come in a basket, you know, about 12, 14" ~~in~~ long. You
could buy grape in the basket; but, as far as, grapefruit.... Hardly ever
could git any of them. You could get a barrel o' apples.

LARRY: Now is this on surplus commodities or is this just a grocery store?

OSCAR: Just at the grocery store.

LARRY: Well, I was wondering about surplus commodities. Do you remember
that program, Oscar, where needy people could go down to the courthouse and
apply for them?

OSCAR: Yes, they did, ya. The wife and I even tried that. That's
amusing. When that WPA was on, I tried to git on WPA and they wouldn't let
me on because we had the paper, ^{route} ~~route~~ So they promised us on these sur-
plus commodities, coal, flour and sugar, and different things that they
had. We never did get any just because we had the paper route. They
thought we were rich! Ya, and we didn't know where the next loaf o' bread
was coming from sometimes.

LARRY: Ya.

SIDE TWO

LARRY: That's about 3 miles south o' Bismarck out along the Missouri
River in the bottoms there.

OSCAR: In the bottom?

LARRY: Ya.

(this is correct)

OSCAR: Say, you know what there where the fort is in Bismarck?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: I've been up there through that fort. Ya, I've been to Bismarck. I haven't been to Bismarck now for quite a number o' years, but we used to have conventions and different things over there and ~~we~~ go to them. I haven't been in Bismarck now for a long time. I've been all through that fort and different places up along the.... You know where the crick is that leads southwest of the fort, isn't it? Kind of a crick comes down there, ain't there?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: And I remember that and I've been through quite a lot o' places there in Bismarck and around Mandan where they got the.... What do ya call it? Where the oil is?

LARRY: Oh, the refinery, ya?

OSCAR: The refinery there. I've been up around there. I tried to get in there t' see different things, but they never would let ya. A couple o' times I was there and tried t' get in, but they wouldn't let ya in.

LARRY: Tell me a little bit about ^{Niagara} ~~the~~. That's the one thing that we haven't talked about and your family farmed over towards ^{Niagara} ~~the~~. What kind of a town was that?

OSCAR: ^{Niagara} ~~the~~ at one time was a pretty busy city and I don't know just what the population was there when we went to school there, but we walked and also drove to school in the wintertime. We'd keep our team in a barn in ^{the} ~~the~~ city during the day while we was in school and then we'd drive out. So it was a busy city. Well, let me see. There was 2 grocery stores, there was a lumberyard, there was a butcher shop, there was 1 hotel, and a beer parlor or 2, and telephone office and telegraph office with the Great Northern, and a big livery barn. A man drove people anyplace they wanted t' go. They'd hire livery. They had a big watertank there so the trains could stop and get water. They didn't have no coal there though. You had

to get coal here at Larimore, but they could get water at ^{Niagara} ~~Williston~~. Then Devils Lake they had to go from there to... ^{Williston} ~~Williston~~ was their next step where they could get water and fuel. I think, they kind o' figured out about every 75 miles where they could supply their engines with what they needed and then Williston, of course, was a big center for the railroad company, you know, too. They was right along the Missouri.

LARRY: Was ^{Niagara} ~~Williston~~ full of Yankees? Now, ^{Niagara} ~~Williston~~ was named after ^{Niagara} ~~Williston~~, New York, right? Were there a lot of Yankees in ^{Niagara} ~~Williston~~ or was that Norwegian country too.

OSCAR: Well, I'll tell ya. There was such a mixture of Germans and Norwegians and Canadians and Swedes. Quite a bunch o' Swedes had come in there around, too, you know, especially in the fall. They'd come in for the harvest because there was pretty good money and there was labor and all kinds o' people would come in for the harvest. The trains would haul 'em there and dump 'em off and they'd get jobs. Maybe work a few days and jump on a train and go someplace else. That's the way they went. It didn't cost 'em anything for transportation. But I'll tell ya in the early days an experience we had. It was so hard one time t' get fuel and everybody was out of it a lot and they asked the Great Northern t' leave a car o' coal there. They didn't do it and they cut down the telephone poles between ^{Niagara} ~~Williston~~ and Petersburg....

LARRY: Is that right.

~~OSCAR: so they had somethin' t' burn. Well, the railroad company was awful mad about it. What could they do?~~
OSCAR: so they had somethin' t' burn. Well, the railroad company was awful mad about it. What could they do?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: They was warned to leave fuel there and they didn't do it and the people got angry. They had to have somethin' for fuel. They just went and cut down their telephone poles so they'd have it. Well, they could always put up more telephone poles, but that taught 'em a lesson.

LARRY: Was that a bad winter?

OSCAR: Oh, ya, that was a very bad winter, '96 and 7. And that winter

we had 26 ~~thousand~~ o' snow in our yard between the house and barn. We had quite a bunch o' chickens and dad.... Well, it blowed so much and blizzarded so much you had to shovel out every day to get into the chicken house t' get a few eggs. Wasn't gettin' enough eggs t' amount t' anything. I finally told father I says, "I'm goin' to cut a hole in the north side of the chicken house roof so we can let water and feed down there and it won't never--shovel it out anymore." Well, you couldn't do it. No place to throw the snow anymore, see. It got so high you couldn't throw it over. so it was an awful burden.

LARRY: Did that work?

OSCAR: Ya, that worked good. And then there was quite a number o' rabbits at that time and I used to go out and shoot rabbit and dress it and hang it down ^{into} ~~the~~ the hole through the roof and the chickens.... I had t' leave it up--oh--just so the chickens would have to jump after it. They'd get a little exercise that way and they'd get the meat, too, see. It didn't freeze in there; it was warm enough. And we'd let water down for 'em so they had water and feed and meat. They liked the fresh rabbits and blood. and they'd eat on them. Oh, if they got kind o' stale, we'd just jerk it out and put another one in. You'd get a rabbit most any time.

LARRY: Did your family ever eat rabbit?

OSCAR: Oh, ya. Yes, but when they finally found they had a blister.... You know, they used to have a blister on 'em?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: Well, when we found out they had blisters on 'em.... Anytime we'd kill ^{one} ~~it~~ and we'd find out they had a blister, why, we'd throw it out 'cause that was dangerous.

LARRY: How were these wild rabbits? Pretty good eating?

OSCAR: Ya, they were good eatin'. Yes, we eat a lot of 'em. We liked the bunny the best.

LARRY: Cottontail?

OSCAR: Cottontail. They'd stay around the buildings; they wasn't out in the open. They'd stay around the buildings and you'd get a cottontail or

two

and they'd make you a mess. That was pretty good.

LARRY: Well, let's see. I think, we're about done Oscar. Oh, one thing! Was there a Farm Holiday Association in Grand Forks County? You know, the farmers that would group together and go stop foreclosures?

OSCAR: Yes, they would. I remember one time the foreclosure on your taxes, you know? There was a farm out here someplace. I don't know as I could tell you who it was or where now, but I remember this association. They'd get together if there was an auction sale selling this man out, they'd go there and stop the sale. Yes, they did that and, I think, it was a good thing, too, because it stopped that business. They were strong enough so that if ^{they'd go} ~~they'd go~~ out to a auction sale and the auctioneer wouldn't try t' stop the sale they'd ~~try t' get the~~ try t' get the auctioneer not to auction, see. Course, sometime the man that was havin' the auction would even come out with a shotgun to try t' scare the people away that was molesting, but they finally got used to that, too, so they would go out there t' guard it and they would stop it. I never knew anybody ever gettin' killed or hurt, but they treated 'em pretty rough--some of 'em--but they stopped the sales. They wouldn't let 'em sell 'em out.

LARRY: How did people around here feel about Bill Langer?

OSCAR: Well, I'll tell ya. I think, most people liked Bill Langer very well. He was a good politician and a good officer, ^{and} so was Lemke, for that matter. Lemke had, o' course.... Lemke and the ^{man--} ~~man--~~ ^{don't think} ~~man--~~ they were hitching too good sometimes.

LARRY: Lemke and Frazier you mean?

OSCAR: Ya, and also Langer. But, anyway, they was there in the Capitol and they managed to get along, but Bill Langer was the leader really. Course, Lemke, well, I guess, he would get in his way and a lot o' people followed him. Bill Langer had the biggest following. I'm pretty sure o' that.

LARRY: Did you ever hear him speak Oscar?

OSCAR: Yes, I did one time. They had a celebration down here in Arvilla Park. That used to be a public park and I heard 'em talk down there a

good now. He's kind of a diabetic, I guess, and has a little trouble so he's just takin' it easy.

LARRY: Slowed down a little, huh?

OSCAR: Ya.

LARRY: Oscar, when you think back to those times when you were growing up on the farm and things were kind o' tough and through the years when you were raising your own family, do you remember those as the "good old days"?

OSCAR: Well, I'd say yes. We had our ups and downs tryin' t' make a livin'; but, I guess, people did everywhere. It makes no difference where you go you'll have difficulties. I know. I spent 4 years at ~~Portland, Oregon~~^{Hood River}, Oregon and I seen the time there when you couldn't get a job and you didn't know where you was goin' t' get your next meal, but one time I was in a condition like that at ~~Portland, Oregon~~^{Hood River}. ~~Portland, Oregon~~^{Hood River} has a nice climate and everything and it's a big city; but, I'll tell ya, them people at that time I was there weren't very helpful. You know, you hated to go around and beg and when you did, maybe you'd get a meal and maybe you wouldn't. I remember, one time I was broke and I didn't know what t' do, where I was goin' t' get somethin' t' eat. I was takin' pictures locally that time. I knew where there was a new house built over the east end o' town way up on the nice territory. It was, I 'spose, 5 or \$6000 house somethin' like that and so I went up there with my camera. We carried a canvas case with our camera in and plates and things. Well, I rapped at the door and a lady opened it and when she seen I had a carryin' case like that, she slammed the door right away. Well, I stuck my foot in. I had a wide soled shoe and she couldn't quite get the door closed. She opened it and she says, "What'd ya want?" "Well," I says, "lady, I'm broke and," I says, "I'm tryin' t' make a livin'" And I says, "You got a nice new home here and," I says, "I'd like t' make some pictures of your home and I'd like t' get your husband and yourself and your daughter on the picture." I says, "Ask your husband t' come out and we'll talk it over." Well, he was there so he come out and he agreed to it. So I took the picture and I says, "You don't have t' pay nothin' down." I says, "I make 'em and develop the films and

bring ya a print and show ya what, ~~it's~~ ^{it's}. If you want t' order, you can and if you don't want t', you don't have t'. You're under no obligation." So I made it. Well, I got a \$25 order out of that. That put me on my feet again. See, I was busted and no place t' stay, no home or anything, out amongst strangers, so then I worked the whole city and I got something over \$90 out of it takin' pictures. Well, then that also acquainted me with quite a lot of the people and I could get more--you could work more in with 'em. You knew them then. Not like a stranger, you know. So that's the way things would work out. You never can tell just what you're goin' t' get up against.

LARRY: When you were photographing back around Larimore in the 20's and 30's, Oscar, how many cameras did you have? You had the kind that would rotate and....

OSCAR: I had a circuit and I had a 810. Well, I had 2 circuits. I had a 4 x 12 and I had this 810 circuit, a big one, and then I had 6 1/2 x 8 1/2 commercial portrait, that is, a view camera. I could use it for a portrait camera, if I wanted to put a different lens on it. You know, I had different lenses I could use the same as you could on this one. So, of course, we always tried to get equipment. If I'd buy lenses, I'd ^{try t'} buy the best I could possibly afford and that way, why, you could put out good pictures so it made a lot o' difference. Sometime in threshing season when I used to go out and take threshing ~~machine views~~ ^{machine views} and crews, and get the whole crew on, if possible, and you wouldn't sell to everybody, but you'd maybe t' maybe 2/3 of 'em and maybe get 18, \$20 out of a crew--the way you had t' work it. That's just like anything else, just like a store-keeper. He's doin' everything he can t' bring business in. He don't git 'em all. He gets some here and there. That's the way it works.

LARRY: Did you have any competition in the 20's and 30's? Were there other photographers in town?

OSCAR: Once in awhile there'd be a straggler come through. Ya, but he'd only be here for maybe a day or two and he'd get a little business. I never molested 'em; I never tried t' stop 'em. I figured it was poor

business. ~~and~~ He wanted to make a livin' and so did I and I knew what it was for me t' get started so I just let him go ahead.

LARRY: You'd been on the road too?

OSCAR: Yes, so I figured he had the right to make a livin' so as long ²⁵ ~~many~~ he was doin' alright and was honest with his customers, why, I wouldn't bother him. Yes, there's lots o' things in connection with the business line. We had a man in town here. I used to go to the dumpground a lot and people throw an awful lot o' good stuff away. Do you know that?

LARRY: Oh, ya.

OSCAR: And I used to go to the dumpground and pick up a lot o' stuff that I could resell, see. Well, I was out there ^{one} ~~■~~ day. I hauled a bunch o' our junk out and dumped it and then I was pickin' up stuff around there. There's a man here in town. He's got a son here yet and the old lady is dead, o' course. I was havin' trouble with my truck. It'd stop on me and I couldn't git it agoin' so I asked him if he could give me a pull, but he was so independant a man that he just thought because I was out there pickin' up stuff at the dumpground I didn't deserve any help, see. Ya, that's the way he felt. He was a very independant man and he didn't even want t' pull my truck, but his son prevailed on him awhile. He said, "Pull Mr. Bode's truck and git him started." Well, he did. ~~and it's funny.~~ I only went about a 1/4 of a mile and the truck stopped again and he hadn't yet left the dumpground, see. He was still there throwin' stuff out so he went right passed. He wouldn't stop and try t' help me again. See, that's the kind o' people you run against sometimes. He wouldn't ^{stop} ~~^~~ and try and help me. ~~ag~~ I had t' wait 'til somebody else come past and give me a pull again. After I'd get started sometime it would ^{be} ~~^~~ alright. I don't know. It was ~~carburetor~~ ^{carburetor} trouble, I think, possibly. Anyway, if I'd get it goin', I'd maybe run it home alright or wherever I was goin', but I had trouble with it and I finally found out what the trouble was and got that corrected; but, you know, you're always up against something--different things. You never can tell. Ya, that man.... I lot o' times thought about him. Oh, he had a couple o' daughters and he had 2 or 3 sons, but they were always

very independant people. They didn't ~~seem~~ seem t' want t' help people, which a little help like that is always good for ya if they only knew about it, but they weren't that type o' people. That's the kind o' people you run against. ^{You're liable t' run} ~~across~~ across any kind of people in the world and I've been around a lot. I've been in 38 states of the Union so, you see, you learn something.

LARRY: How were these people like the McCannas and the Larimores? Who is the fella that had the farm out at Crystal Springs farm? Stockhouse or....

OSCAR: Stonehouse.

LARRY: Stonehouse? Were those pretty friendly people or did they maintain a distance from the rest of the people?

OSCAR: They were kind o' clannish and they stayed by themselves pretty much. They even had places out there.... If you wanted t' get into that place ~~they had out there~~ about 4 miles east... ~~That~~ That fancy place where there was a spring?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: Them people were all from New York, see, and they were clannish and they stayed with their own groups. Get the idea?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: And, you might say, you was an ^{under dog} ~~underdog~~. Well, if you wanted t' go out there, you prett'i'near have to have permission to go up there and see 'em. They were that important. Yes, I'm tellin' ya.

LARRY: Were you very impressed by that Oscar?

OSCAR: Yes, I was impressed. It hurt me because I never was used to anything like that. If I could help somebody, I always tried t' help 'em. It'd make no difference what difficulty they was in I'd try and help 'em out and I always got along good that way. The Lord blessed me because he'll help those that'll help others, too, you know?

LARRY: Ya.

OSCAR: But there's so many people which are so independant they won't try and help somebody else and they suffer for it. They get in trouble and ^{they don't know how they're goin'} ~~remainin' in there~~ t' get out of it.

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LARRY: Do you think that's one of the reasons why some older folks remember those early days that were kind of tough and you didn't have all the luxuries that we have today.... Do you think that that might be one of the reasons why they remember those as the "good old days" because people were more apt to take care of each other and look after each other?

OSCAR: I think so. Yes, I beleive so. You know, in the early days when we was on the farm and wasn't gettin' much crops and you wasn't gettin' nothin' much for your grain and the winters were tough and we didn't have much housing at that time--we didn't have a big house--just a claim shanty, and we all had to stay there, well, conditions were kind o' ~~rough~~ ^{tough}, but then the family always got along good. There wasn't wrangling and fighting like that because father wouldn't put up with it and mother wouldn't put up with it so we learned to get along and behave ourselves, see, and help people and, I think, that's one reason they called 'em the "good old days" 'cause they helped people. Well, I'll tell ya a little incident that happened. This is not connected with this, but we had a big 3 day blizzard. We had a family living east of us 3/4 of a mile and mother said, "I haven't seen them people since the storm. You boys--Louie and I--better go down there horseback and see if they're alright or maybe they're sick or something." So Louie didn't come along with me that time, but I went down. This woman was from New York, too, and her husband was a Civil War ~~veteran~~ ^{veteran}. Well, I rapped at that door when I come there to her place and I asked her where her husband is. "Well," she said, "he went out t' milk and he hasn't come in." She said, "Maybe you'd better go t' the barn and find out about it." So I went t' the barn and he'd got paralyzed. His lower limbs had got paralyzed and he was milkin' a cow. He'd had a paralytic stroke and couldn't do anything. He was under the cow--~~oor~~ on a stool under the cow like. The cow didn't bother him any, but he spilt the milk. Well, I went back to the house and the old lady had a niece livin' with her and she also had a hired man. The hired man didn't happen to be present there at the time so I told her what happened to her husband. And I says, "You'd better come out and we'll try and get 'em in the house." So we had one of ~~those~~ ^{those}

hand sleighs--most places have it--and we took that hand sleigh along and we got him out of the cow shed and got him onto the sleigh, and hauled him up to the house and onto the bed, and then we called the doctor. Well, o' course, he was paralyzed and couldn't be nothin' done to him, had to look after him like a baby; but, I think, he lived about 6 months after that. He passed away from the paralytic stroke. So, you see, little things like that come up. Well, mother was pretty anxious about him and this old lady was a good old woman and mother used to like her pretty well for a neighbor so she'd come up and see mother and visit here and they'd have chats together. ~~My~~ ^{So} of course, they kind o' looked after one another's families and seen how everything was goin' along.

LARRY: What was the family's name. Do you remember?

OSCAR: Yes, I think, it was Phillips. I think, that lady's name was Phillips. He'd been a Civil War ~~warrior~~ ^{veteran}. Well, I don't know whether he homesteaded that land or not. That's somethin' I forgot about whether it was their homestead or not; but he, of course, had the stroke and they couldn't farm anymore. They had some money and they built a new house in ~~Michigan~~ ^{Niagara}. Then she hired a man and her.... This hired man was always workin' for 'em. He was a great friend of them from New York, too--an old ~~friend~~ friend--so they built this new house in ~~Michigan~~ ^{Niagara} and she stayed there with him and done the minor chores around. They finally.... Well, I believe, the hired man died first and then she went back to New York and, I think, she died back there. I don't know ~~who~~ ^{whose} got their property--afterwards. It's sold, o' course.

LARRY: Oscar, how did you happen to marry a Southern belle?

OSCAR: Well, that was kind o' funny. I'll tell ya. When I was in the Navy, on a Sunday I was pretty lonesome, didn't have no lady friends or anything. I went out.... There was a streetcar line run out in the country where they had kind of--oh, just a little place. So I went out there t' spend the day.

LARRY: Where was this that?

OSCAR: That was at Pennsacola, Florida. I was in the Navy at Pennsacola.

So then I went out to this resort and I got tired of being around there, didn't know anybody or nothin', and so I went back to the streetcar and was sitting in there. Then she and sister come along and the car was about full, no place t' sit down, so I told 'em they could have my ^{seat} ~~seat~~ and I sat on the arm of the chair and got acquainted with 'em, took 'em home. When we got t' the end of the streetcar, I took 'em home. That was the start of it.

LARRY: What was your maiden name?

VELLE: Rigby.

LARRY: Rigby?

OSCAR: ~~Velle Rigby~~ Velle Rigby.

LARRY: Is that Velle?

OSCAR: V-e-l-l-e.

LARRY: So when I called you a Southern belle, it was appropriate.

OSCAR: Ya, that's right. That's right.

LARRY: Have you learned to adjust to North Dakota?

VELLE: Oh, not entirely I don't think. I still don't like the long winters.

OSCAR: She likes the summers here, but she don't care so much for the winters.

LARRY: Well, I hope you're able to make it back this summer.

THE END