

Oral History - Benny and Alan Eos

July 24, 2002

Okay, today is July 24th, 2002, and this is Bob Hult and I'm with Benny and Alan Eos and we're at the Eos Mill, about 10 miles or so south of Bailey, Colorado. And we're going to be talking about their experiences here at the Mill over their lifetime.



So Alan, can you start off by just telling me what is your birth date and where were you born?

Alan I was born in Denver and July 17, 1933 and grew up here at the saw mill and went to school here seven years and then when 7th grade, went to school in Buffalo and drove there in a '29 Model A every day.

Your parents drove you?

Alan No, we drove.

Oh, you drove! Now this isn't elementary school...

Alan No, it was the...

Ben 7th grade.

So you were driving when you were in 7th grade. Okay.

Alan Eleven miles every day to school and then we went to high school in Arvada.

All the way to Arvada?

Alan Yeah, we build a cabin down there and mom stayed down there with us during the week when we went to school and then we were back up weekends.

There was no high school here up in Park County?

Alan There was in Park County but this is in Jefferson County and you had to pay tuition to get to Park County.

Oh, okay!

Alan See, it works now...

Yeah, there's reciprocal agreements now.

Alan Yeah.

Interesting. So you went all the way into Arvada for high school.

Alan So, Mom and Dad wanted us to have a college education, but we never did make it to college (laughter).

Alan We've been saw-milling ever since.

So you've been here pretty much your whole life working at the mill.

Alan Whole life. Well, we worked here - - well, when I graduated from high school in 1952, then I was running the saw mill every day and then in 1954, we moved and the saw mill just dissolved. Part to above Cheesman Dam on Molly Gulch and we sawed a million and a half, two million over there and hauled most of the lumber to the Blue River Tunnel at Grant.

Okay.

Ben For cribbing.

Alan For cribbing.

Right.

Alan And the new moved the mill to Kenosha Pass and we cut a million and a half, two million off of Twin Cones...

Oh gosh.

Alan From 1958 to 1965. Then we moved the saw mill to above Jefferson on Michigan Creek and we cut a ten million foot sale on Michigan Creek and then we cut another ten million feet between Como, Fairplay and 39 Mountain on down by Guffy... and then we moved the mill back home in 1975.

My gosh. So you moved that mill quite a few times.

Alan But the planer was always here, but our dad run the planer.

Now what was your father's name?

Alan Eric.

Eric. Okay, and he started the mill?

Alan He started the mill and in probably in... oh, I don't know, probably in the really early part of the '30s because he built the log house that we moved into in 1935.

Okay.

Alan But then he was - -he sawed and made lettuce crates as one of the big things that he was into making and hauled them to get Denver and he cut ties for the narrow gauge railroad that went through Bailey.

Okay, so before the railroad got going through.

Alan Yeah, while it was still going through because it went out in '37.

Right. So those were replacement ties then?

Alan Replacement ties, yeah, so...

Interesting.

Alan But then they used to raise - - when they first moved up here, they raised lettuce and potatoes and sold - - and see, lettuce and potatoes don't hardly grow up here anymore.

I was going to say, lettuce – here! That's very surprising.

Alan Yeah, that's where he got into making lettuce crates.

Right. Before we get too far - - Benny, Benny you are Alan's younger brother.

Ben Right.

Okay. Let me get your birth date also.

Ben I was born March 6, 1966.

Sixty-six? (laughter).

Ben Yeah, 1936.

It's just years.

Ben Just get my dates right!

So you grew up here on the farm - - on the mill yourself also.

Ben Yeah, it was also a farm as well as a saw mill.

It was.

Ben Yeah.

Now did your father buy this in the early 30's?

Ben He bought it in the early '20s, wasn't it?

Alan About 1924, or somewhere along in there.

Okay, was he from Colorado?

Alan No, he was from southern Sweden.

Really!

Alan He came here in - - he came to Philadelphia from Sweden in about 1910. He was born in 1897.

Okay.

Alan And then he worked at a Ford factory in Moline and a couples company, a rubber - - they made rubber products and then he got - -well, he was - - mom was born in Illinois but moved to northern Minnesota when they were really little but then moved back to Illinois and that's where Daddy met Mom was in Moline, Illinois. They were married in 1920.

Okay, and they - - what made them come out here?

Alan Here for his health.

Ah, okay and what year was that, you think that was in the early 20's?

Alan That'd be in the early 20's because I had a brother that was born in 1923...

Ben Yeah.

Alan But never lived, only a day or two and...

And that was back in Illinois, or here?

Alan No, that was in Denver.

So he was born in Denver. So they moved to Denver.

Alan So they were in Denver in 1923 and then worked on Lookout Mountain for a number of years...

Ben He helped build the Lariat Trail going up.

Alan Widen it out for a car from a horse drawn road, you know and...

Lariat Trail. Where is that today?

Alan That's from ...

Ben Lookout Mountain.

Oh, okay. Oh really. That's what that is.

Alan You know, from Golden to Lookout Mountain.

Right.

Alan Yeah, he worked on it. They lived in Arvada, bought a house - were buying a house in Arvada and he was working for Denver Gardener and he broke his back, something fell on him, and he broke his back and then they lost their place in Arvada and moved to Lookout Mountain and then moved - - then bought this place somewhere in there, I don't know what ...

Ben They lived in a tent for two or three years.

Alan Two or three years.

Ben That's all they had.

So this would have been the late - - middle to the late 20's then?

Alan So, must have been something like that. I don't know exactly some dates in there. Never did find out.

Right.

Alan But then they knew the Soderstrom's and they knew the Holbergs, and see, the Holbergs and Soderstroms, they're...

Ben Related.

Alan Related.

Okay, because of their Scandinavian background?

Ben Very well could be.

Alan Yeah, I suppose, but then Daddy and Carl Holberg done a bunch of work inventing stuff back in the 20's.

Ben Yeah.

Alan But some of that family was in Moline too and see, they come out here.

Ben Yeah.

Alan So I don't know exactly how all this ... Mom and Dad never told too much about the olden days, you know.

Yeah, interesting. I know I have the same concerns about my grand-parents and the things that they did .Interesting. Now they were living in the Golden area, or Lookout Mountain.

Alan Lookout Mountain then and then they moved up to here.

Now did they buy this outright or how...

Alan Yeah, they bought this place then in the middle 20's

Okay.

Alan And they paid \$10 an acre and there's 80 acres here!

Wow, that's amazing. Now what was his intent, was it to open up a farm here?

Ben Oh, I'd - - just get out of the city.

Well I can appreciate that! (laughter)

Now if he had no background in farming and you said he'd never lived in a rural area – like this must have been really rural back in that period –

Ben Yeah, it was.

I wonder what the intent was. Was it to farm or you'd mentioned, he raised lettuce and potatoes at one point?

Alan Well, that was just enough to make enough money to get going, but I don't really know what he ...

Ben They never did say why they come up here.

That's quite a challenge. It strikes me as having done a lot of these. The people just made decisions and just did it. They didn't' plan a lot. They just made decisions and made it work. They just made it work.

Ben Yeah, yeah.

Whatever it took. You know, this sounds like it could be that could be kind of similar. So they bought this place in the late 20's probably and came up here. Did they build a house or was there a house...

Alan Yeah, they build a house. No, there wasn't - - there was an old barn is all there was and then they - - well, they built the bunkhouse first, I suppose.

Ben Yeah.

Alan And the fruit cellar.

That's the building you pass as you come up the road where it's on the right-hand side?

Ben Yeah, off the rock.

Yeah, where the rough rock foundations.

Alan Foundation was and then they built - - then the next cabin there , the one next to it there, and that was built for a chicken house but then that's where they lived, in it, until the log was built and then we built - - we moved into there in 1935.

Now do you remember that?

Alan Yeah, I remember moving in there.

So you actually remember that, that's the year...

Ben I wasn't born until '36.

That's right. So you probably wouldn't remember that! (laughter) But you remember back that far.

Alan 'Cause Mom - -I remember Mom's dad was here helping build the house and well...

Ben Ron, her brother, come helped, too. Uncle Fred.

Alan Yeah, Fred, Uncle Fred, came and helped and so... but I don't know long it took them to build the house but anyway,...

It's interesting again you know, with no particular background in that, they just went and built a house!

Alan Yeah, right, you know, but he must have had something in mind 'cause he was doing this inventing stuff and then course evidently, the lettuce crates and the garden they growed. See, they growed enough garden that the only thing you went to Denver to buy groceries was for sugar and flour and you know,

Ben That's about it.

Maybe some lard, or ... did they raise up there?

Alan We raised cows and we butchered...

Ben Pigs.

Alan We butchered three pigs. They'd go buy the spring, early spring, they'd buy three little weanlings and then they'd butchered one at Thanksgiving and the other two around the first of the year. And then we had butchered a calf or you know, or a steer or something for meat and then of course, the garden, that was all the vegetables and the cellar, that took care of all. Then all the - - everything had to be canned that would spoil.

Sure.

Alan Meat was ...

Ben Canned.

Alan Canned and the pork was Morton sugar-cure hams and stuff like that put in crocks.

So it was your mother, the two of you and that's it. You had just two...

Alan And a sister between us.

Ben A sister.

Oh, you had a sister. Okay. And she was in between you two of your ages?

Alan Yeah, uh-huh.

So you born all three pretty close together.

Ben Yeah.

Okay.

Alan She lives in Arvada.

Oh, okay.

Alan Or was married and lived in Arvada and then ... course this place is proper - - the house and the property is hers.

Oh really?

Alan Mom left that to her, so...

Okay. Now are you - - you actually have your own places. You're in Shawnee (speaking to Alan Eos).

Alan Yeah.

And you're at Friendship Ranch (speaking to Ben Eos).

Ben Right.

Is there water - -is there running water on the property or do you have a well?

Alan Yeah, there's running water and then the spring - - the water for the house comes about a thousand feet from the house.

Really!

Ben It's right back up (gesturing).

Okay. So it's a spring?

Alan Spring.

Ben Spring.

It's always been good?

Be Oh yeah.

Alan Always been good.

That's nice.

Alan Yeah, it runs - - it don't have too much pressure in the house, but you always got water.

Yeah, well that's really important.

Alan So, you don't need no electricity.

Interesting! Now in winter, what happens? Do you have to - - is the spring always flowing in winter, too?

Ben Oh yeah.

So it - - so you just go out and get the water.

Ben It's piped.

Oh, you pipe it into the house, okay.

Alan Yeah, they...

Ben The first pipeline they dug in by hand, a thousand feet, seven foot deep.

It was rocky stuff. Seven foot deep? Well, yeah you want to stay below the frost, so, yeah.

Alan Well, they dug - - no, the first they put it in and it was only around four feet ...

Ben The first, yeah.

Alan And then they had to re - - it froze and then they had to re-dig it and go down deeper.

That must have been much colder winters in that period.

Ben Oh, yeah.

Alan January's and February's there's a lot a days at 25 below zero. A lot of nights 25 below zero.

I wonder why it's changed so much the past few years it seems.

Alan It barely gets to zero anymore.

Yeah, absolutely. I think the coldest we got last year is like about ten, maybe twelve below and that was for one or two days.

Ben Yeah.

And very little snow.

Alan Right.

Did you get snowed in here?

Alan Oh yeah, you know.

Ben Yeah, there'd be...

Alan There'd be a month at a time you don't - - you didn't go to - - if you went to Bailey, you went on horseback.

***Now what was in Bailey this period of time, in the say, mid to late 30's?
Was there much up Bailey at that point?***

Alan Well, there was ...

Not that there's a lot there today, but...

Alan There was two hotels.

Ben Course the train stopped there.

Right.

Alan The train stopped there.

Ben There was a store that's there now.

Where was the train station located?

Alan Oh, I don't remember. Since the highway come in.

Ben Well, it was the hotel, the store and the hotel and then the train station.

Alan Yeah.

The store was the grocery store that's there now?

Ben Yeah.

Alan It's there now. It's the only thing that's really...

Ben That's the only thing that's ...

Alan That's still there, ain't it?

Ben Yeah.

Alan There was a big hotel behind the store and then there was a big hotel ...

Ben Right in front of the store.

Alan Right in front of the store, between the Knotty Pine, where the Chinese restaurant is.

Ben Right, somewhere in there. Yeah, there was a big hotel there.

Alan But it burned down. They both burned down but I don't remember what year; in the 40's I guess.

I was told there was a hotel up on the hill where that log company is, that builds log cabins?

Ben Right. Big one.

Big one. In fact, I've seen a picture of it. It had a big white veranda, it was a beautiful hotel. That burned.

Alan But then there was a hotel right there on the - - in the - - right down in the main street of Bailey.

Ben Yeah, right where the restaurant is there.

Where Crow's Foot is now?

Ben No, the Chinese restaurant.

Chinese restaurant, okay. So that building – what's there now is completely different from what was there then.

Ben Right, right.

Alan And the bulk station, that had to be there - - was that there when the railroad was there?

Ben Yeah. 'cause when I worked down there, we took out the - - one of the original tanks, that horizontal tank and it was mainly for kerosene I guess, 'cause everybody up here, you had had kerosene lanterns.

Right.

Ben And the railroad went right by it.

It's on the route that 285 is on now?

Be Yeah. Just about - - because the road went right in front of the store.

Oh, so there was a road and then there was the railroad.

Ben Yeah.

So they were two - - they weren't sitting on top of each other.

Ben Right.

Okay. So the main road went right in front of the grocery store.

Ben Yeah, and then the depot was - - I've seen a picture of this. I don't remember it. But I've seen a picture somewhere and the depot was about where the fire house that burned down here.

Alan By the river.

Ben By the river. Between the tracks and the river.

Okay.

Be There was a long building there. I don't know...if it was in that movie that McGraw made of the railroad; I think that's where I'm remembering it.

Okay, that was what, '37 that the railroad went out?

Ben Yeah.

Okay, I guess that goes back, probably just before the turn of the century, or when it was installed; when the railroad came through? 'Cause it went to Como if I remember correctly.

Alan Yeah, it went to Como in 1860 something.

Oh, it's that far back.

Ben Yeah.

Wow, that had been there a long time then.

Alan Yeah, I think that's what I read on the sign up there on Boreas Pass or something or up at Como. 18...

Did you ever go shopping in Bailey or did you always go to Denver to get what you needed?

Alan Well, you'd get groceries at the store, some groceries in Bailey, but then you'd - - when you go to Denver, you buy flour in one hundred pound sacks, and

Ben Well, and then the barrel - - but I can remember Daddy rolling a barrel of flour out of the store there in Bailey on that old truck. What, a hundred pound barrel? The old wooden barrel?

Alan Wooden barrels.

Really!

Alan Well, like a fifty-gallon barrel.

Ben I can remember him rolling that out. I wasn't very big.

Yeah, but you know, being here where you're located...

Ben I don't know if it was into a wagon or into the old truck.

Hmm. So you'd buy flour in barrels.

Be Barrels, yeah. In fact, I think there one of them barrels in the attic up there.

So, what did you do for fun? I mean, again, now lets say, in starting in the 40's or something. Now you're at that point in time, you're about what? Anywhere from ten to fifteen years old, somewhere around in there.

Ben Like for entertainment?

Yeah. What did you do for fun?

Ben We worked!

I see! (laughter). Well, there's an awful lot to be done up here.

Alan Skidded logs.

Ben Skidded logs with the horse.

So you started working right away with your father as soon as you could?

Ben Oh yeah.

Alan Oh yeah.

Ben I don't know, I can remember helping him turn logs when can hook candle was taller than I was.

Okay!

Alan Moving, stacking lumber and ...

Ben Stacking lumber, we used to stack lumber and we done all the plowing and the planting...oats for hay and...

Alan We used to raise enough hay here to feed three milk cows and a couple of extra cows and a team of horse and a riding horse.

Okay. So you had quite a bit then. And you also had a vegetable garden then for yourselves?

Ben You bet.

Alan Yeah, vegetable garden, yeah, we raised it. It was probably about like, an acre.

Yeah, okay. And you had enough moisture to do that!

Ben Yeah.

Now could you take spring water and use it for that purpose?

Ben Well, there was a creek running down there.

Alan We irrigated.

Ben Made ditches and irrigated and we spent a lot of time in the summer weeding the garden on your hands and knees.

It would be the two of you and your sister?

Ben Right.

My wife does that. My wife comes from a truck farm family and she - - that's what she did all summer, is basically weed. That's what you ended up doing.

Alan And then in the winter, you cut firewood.

When did you get electricity up here?

Ben About '50.

Alan Sometime in the early '50s, '52 or ... I don't know. We had a ...

Ben We had a light (inaudible) for a ...

Alan 32-volt generator.

32-volt.

Alan You had sixteen two-volt batteries.

Ben With batteries.

Okay, so you were charging the batteries primarily?

Alan Yeah, you could run the generator one day a week or so many hours a week.

Right, okay, and then the rest of the time you were basically running off the batteries.

Alan Batteries, yeah.

So it was all DC.

Alan Yeah.

Interesting.

Ben You did your homework by the fireplace.

Yeah! And the kerosene lantern!

Ben Yeah.

Now did your equipment run off of a like a diesel or something?

Alan Diesel, yeah.

Ben Diesel. He didn't get the first diesel though until most of it was run with gas engines ...

Alan Up until the middle 40's.

I'm told that gas was very difficult to get during the war.

Alan Oh yeah but you - - but if you had a business, you could get all the fuel you needed.

Now you were very young during the Depression, from '29 to probably the beginning of World War II. Do you remember much of that period and did it affect your father's farm here?

Alan Well, I don't know, they...

Ben They just made do! (laughter).

You're pretty isolated out here; you're largely self-sufficient, so it was nothing like living in the city.

Ben Yeah, and ...

Alan The only time you went to Denver with the family was Christmas and Thanksgiving and ...

Ben That's about it.

SE About it, really.

Now did you have family in Denver?

Alan Yeah, there's relations in Denver.

So you did. So there's a family get-together kind of thing.

Ben Yeah.

That would be a pretty good trip from here down into Denver.

Alan Back in the '30's it was and into the 40's, yeah, it was an all-day's drive.

Yeah, I'm sure.

Alan And then during World War II, then they - - Daddy and Mom run the mill and sawed all day and then they'd deliver these Government orders at night you know. First, then he had three or four heart attacks in the 40's and they found him twice along the road passed out beside of Morrison one time and up on them short corners and they took him – somebody took him to the hospital and then some other place he had another heart attack. But he kept on going.

I guess! And he lived to 96? I mean 1996?

Ben No, he was 96.

He was 96 years old! That's right, it was 1993 is when he passed away.

Alan Passed away.

Ben Mom and Dad was married 73 years.

That's amazing. Now he started the mill in the early '30's. Do you have any idea what got him going; what made him decide to start a mill here?

Alan To build a house.

That's a good reason.

Alan He had lumber.

That's the amazing thing about people. They just: "Okay, I build a house. Now what do I need? I need lumber. So I go start a mill. Okay."

Ben He built the first mill in a machine shop and brought pieces up. He built the first mill himself.

So he just created it. You mentioned he did a lot of inventing; was this part of the kind of things he was doing?

Alan Yeah, but he was a machinist when he worked in the Ford factory, he was a machinist and tool maker. Tool and die maker.

Oh okay, right.

Alan I got a couple of things he give me... some special stuff to put on the cap of a connecting rod on a Model T to make it oil better 'cause the rods were dip system in the Model T's. It didn't have an oil pump and then there was something else he give me for a Model T that made them run better and then they invented some - - him and Carl Holberg invented an oil clutch back in the 20's that he had wore out three cars with this one clutch.

Take the clutch out of the car and put it in another one?

Alan Another one, yeah.

It probably worked really well.

Alan Well, let's see. The first saw mill he pulled with a 1926 Chrysler car engine.

So it was portable.

Alan Well, just the engine.

Okay, I see, okay.

Alan Yeah, you took - - cut the frame off behind the transmission and... and of course, his first truck was another old Chrysler ...

Ben Touring car.

Alan Touring car and they put a fifth wheel in the back and made a semi-trailer out of it (laughter).

So the mill was built or initiated, you mentioned, he basically created himself.

Alan Yes.

RH He invented the equipment and had it machined in Denver because of his machinist background and he brought it up here and made the lumber for the house and then he started selling it? Starting to mill as a commercial operation?

Alan Yeah, selling it and then of course then he was - - he made the lettuce crates because he was raising lettuce and then the neighbors would want some lumber and started cutting there and cut a few railroad ties and let's see...during World War II then he had government orders that he had to do.

For... what were they...

Alan Crating material to ship tanks and whatever overseas to the wars and then he ... well, he was building - - pre-built cabins back in them days, too. He built the walls and the roof in sections and then he would deliver them to the people's property and they would already have their foundation and the sub-floor down and then a small house they could put the walls and the roof on in one day or maybe two days at the most and then the people that were buying the house could then could finish them themselves.

So this was like pre-fabricated housing.

Alan Yeah.

And he built it right here!

Alan He built it right here at the mill and they started that in ... well, he to start that in the late 40s after World War II.

Ben Yeah.

Alan And then continued doing that clear up until...

Ben Well, my house was built in 1960 and it was the las - - one of the last ones that he built.

So your father actually milled the wood and built the house for you... in Shawnee.

Ben Yeah, my house was built here and then erected...

I'll be darned! So he actually built in sections. He could build a wall section?

Ben Yeah.

And a roof section and ...

Alan In sections.

And just bolt together then?

Alan He bolted or just nailed it - nailed them in.

Ben The wall sections were actually tongue and grooved where they slid together.

Really!

Ben Just the way it was built.

Nice.

Alan But he sent houses, got several houses out in Nebraska and there's some of them up at Lanniger's Lake and there's some... well, all over.

Ben Yeah, some of the first cabins up there Langer's Lake he built.

And he built them here?

Alan Build them here.

Now they would ship them thon a truck bed?

Ben Yeah.

Alan So when they had - - the sections couldn't be any longer than most of the time, not any longer than 16 feet and then you just put them together and the roof sections would be 8 feet wide and whatever length it took to make the pitch of the roof.

Ben Right.

Alan So then he'd you know, deliver them to the site and then the neighbor's would come together and set it up. He had picked up windows in Denver and built the sections - - built the openings to fit these certain windows..

So he'd deliver the windows separately then?

Alan The windows and the doors and the roofing came with the kit.

Now interior walls, were they done afterward then, after the...

Alan Then the people that bought the house would put them in afterwards.

Ben He would supply the lumber if they wanted like knotty pine or such.

So a lot of these are obviously still around then.

Ben Oh, yeah.

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So you'd build these - - all would be pre-fabricated here and put on a truck bed and then taken out to the site where the foundation was already in place.

Alan In place, yeah.

And probably take no time at all to put it together.

Alan Put it together, yeah. So, he retired doing that and then with what I got old enough to start sawing, then we bought these big you know, million, two million, feet bunches of timber so you had to pretty well stay busy sawing in order to get that cut up.

Well, in the 30's, were there - - I mean, would you buy lumber - - is it board feet when you say million feet. This is board feet?

Alan Yeah.

This is how it's measured?

Ben Uh-huh.

Would you buy leases to - - off of people's property to lumber a particular tract of land? Is that how it worked?

Alan Well, I suppose you could, but it was all Forest Service.

Ben Off the Forest Service.

Alan Locally here.

Okay, so you would bid on...

Alan Well, I don't think - - back in the 30's and the 40's, I don't think you bid on timber. I think you just went out and they would...

Ben They'd mark the trees and you'd cut them.

Alan You'd cut them.

Really!

Alan You know, they'd take a little section of ground here and there and they'd just mark it and you just paid them for the trees and go to cuttin'. And then I think...

Ben That's the way they thinned the forest.

So it wasn't a clear-cut type of situation.

Ben No.

They would mark trees?

Ben Yeah.

Alan Yeah, they marked - - the Forest Service marked the trees that you cut.

Ben And there's areas around here that I can remember that we cut over at least five times.

Really.

Alan 'Cause you would cut the trees that weren't healthy, and then when they grow another ten years, you go back and cut it again. But back in the 30's, we skidded the logs with a horse.

Ben All the cutting was done with a cross-cut saw...

Alan By hand

Ben An axe...

Is that a one-man person, or ...

Alan One man, Oly Olsen cut - - that's all he done for Daddy was cut trees.

Oly Olsen. There's a Scandinavian name if I ever heard one. He was a neighbor here?

Alan Why, he came him from Sweden! I think he did.

He lived up here?

Alan He lived in a cabin right here. He was a single fellow.

Ben He used to cut with a two-man.

Alan Yeah.

Ben When we was that big. (gesturing).

So you drop a tree with a saw, one or two men, and then you'd have to limit with an axe, okay, and now the top x number of feet probably isn't of any real value, is it?

Alan No, you left in the wood and then you cut the size of logs you wanted out of the tree and then you cut them in eight-foot pieces or twelve-foot, whatever you were going to cut out of them - saw out of them - and then pulled them to the - - where you could get to them and load them on a truck and you loaded them on the truck up a plank by hand and a cat-hook.

So you had like a winch that would pull a log up?

Ben No...

Alan No,...

Ben You just rolled them by hand.

Alan Rolled them.

These are eight-foot logs; how big in diameter?

Alan Oh, we've rolled them on as big as them barrels, fifty-gallon barrels.

That would weigh a lot!

Alan And then when you sawed them in the saw mill, you'd turn them. You cut one side, and rolled them by hand.

Just used one of these turn-hook things?

Alan Yeah, cat-hook.

Ben You ever see a cat-hook?

I'm thinking it's a pole with a half-moon hook on the end.

Ben Well, watch this (gesturing). This is a big one.

Yeah. That's exactly what I pictured it.

Ben This is a big one.

That looks like a very old one, too. So that would just rotate a log then.

Alan Yeah.

Now in the place you cut it, you would use a horse to drag it to the truck?

Alan Where you could get the truck into it, you know.

Okay, the horse could go almost anywhere.

Alan Anywhere, yeah. Then you rolled them up on the truck and - - but back in them days, you didn't put more than a dozen logs on, you know.

I guess! Now you were doing this in summer and winter both.

Ben Right.

Alan Yeah, year-round, yeah. We never, never - - though there's days we didn't work but now the last ten years, I don't think we've missed a day because we don't have winter anymore.

Yeah, it seems like it. How far were some of these cutting areas away from here?

Alan Oh, not more than ...

Ben About three miles.

Alan Three miles, five miles.

Here, your location is great, you're surrounded.

Alan Back in them days, we logged in the 40's over on the Berger property between here and Bailey.

That's private land?

Ben Yeah.

Alan That was private.

Okay, so you'd also get private land.

Alan That was the only I think we ever cut.

Ben I think so.

The rest of it was all Forest Service.

Alan All Forest Service around, yeah.

How did they ever determine what fee would be - - is it per tree or per track of ground?

Alan Thousands. Back in them days, I remember paying \$3 a thousand.

Thousand board feet?

Alan Board feet.

So you'd have to look at a tree and estimate what the board footage is?

Alan Forest Service had a way to estimate that.

Ben A scale stick, a type of scale stick.

Alan After the tree was cut down then you had to scale, a stick that had numbers on it that told how many feet was in that log.

Oh, okay. A lot of work.

Ben Yeah, you scaled it all when it was - - after you cut it.

Alan Cut it, back in the olden days. Now, not anymore you don't.

Ben No, not now.

Is there a Forest Service rep that would be out there with you or would he be here, or how would he ever - - where would you actually do this measurement?

Alan When you pile the logs up – when you skidded the logs – before you hauled them out of the woods, then the Forest Service would check them.

Okay, so they'd have a representative come and do the estimates?

Ben Mm-hmm, the estimates.

Alan But they estimated the trees standing before you cut them.

Okay, that worked out then.

Alan Yeah.

So you want to be on good friendly terms with that guy.

Alan Yeah. (laughter) But anyway, yeah, they still estimate even this burned timber that we bought here, it's already been - - we know how much we're buying when we buy it before we cut it.

So when you're logging in the late 30's, early 40's, that was going to railroad ties; it was going to cribbing; what else - log cabins?

Alan Log cabins and mining. We supplied some mines above Alma and ...

Ben Well, and then the tunnel.

Alan And then the tunnel...

Ben The Blue River Tunnel.

How about the Roberts Tunnel?

Ben Roberts Tunnel.

Alan Yeah, Roberts Tunnel.

That's the same thing.

Ben Yes.

Alan So we got over a million board feet went in there anyway, we cut for that.

That's amazing.

Alan Over a million. 'Cause all the railroad ties and then there was supposed to be a mill on the other side in Montezuma that was supposed to supply the other side, but sometimes they didn't get enough and then we would run behind on this side.

How would you get jobs. Did you - - people just knew that you were in the business and that they would come to you and say, "I need x number of feet?"

Alan Right, 'Cause we never advertised; we still don't advertise.

Well, you've been here so long, people know that you're here and if they need timbers like this, this is the place to come. Are there other mills that are operating in the area?

Alan No...down by Woodland Park, Pine Junction, Johnny Gossage has a little mill, but he don't cut very much. Dick Welch in Fairplay has a little one-man mill and that's about all there's left anymore. In Evergreen, there's a - - up Bear Creek there's a little mill.

Oh, really.

Ben But this is the only planing mill.

Okay, so you do more than just saw. You do the planing, forming, shaping logs and I noticed you have - - this makes the interlocking logs apparently. (gesturing).

Alan And knotty pine and siding and...

So you do siding, too then?

Alan Log siding.

You had married - what years? What year was it?

Alan 1960.

So you'd been living here, working in the mill all this time and you got married here. You got married. Did you live on the property at that time or did you move to some other location at that same time or how did you do that?

Alan No, I bought property at Singleton.

Where's that?

Alan Where the Silver Tip Lodge is.

Oh okay. That's called Singleton?

Ben Singleton.

Alan That's called Singleton.

I never heard that term before.

Ben Well, that's what – it's on the map as Singleton.

Is it really?

Alan Yeah, that's the railroad days.

Okay, so you bought some property there.

Alan Bought some property there and then he bought property up...

Ben In Friendship.

Alan Friendship in 1960.

Where did you meet your brides?

Ben Square-dancing.

Alan Square-dancing.

Really. (laughter). In Denver or out here or where?

Alan At the Lone Pine Ballroom in Little Deer Creek.

The Lone Pine Ballroom.

Alan Of course it's not even there anymore.

Ben Phillipsburg.

Alan In Phillipsburg.

But then you continued to work here during that period.

Ben Yeah.

Did you - - and during the War, you were saying, you were making crates for shipment for these were government contracts?

Alan Yeah, but mainly we just hauled the lumber to Denver.

Yeah, you didn't actually make the crates. You mentioned though, that your father actually made lettuce crates by himself?

Alan Lettuce crates.

Ben Yeah, that's where he...

That's where ?pin? stock, isn't it?

Alan Right, yeah.

So he was able to make that right here and was it for his own operation exclusively or did he sell the crates in Denver?

Alan Sold the crates in Denver.

Okay, so the other farmer would be able to ... (inaudible). That's amazing you could grow lettuce up here. I just can't imagine growing lettuce at this elevation.

Alan Well, Fitzsimmons Burland Ranchettes. Perry Fitzsimmons owns Burland Ranchettes and back in the early days, that was what they made their money off of, was raising potatoes and lettuce.

And the soil was good enough for the potatoes? Because I would think the ...

Ben That was great potatoes! They sold a lot of potatoes.

Do you think there's less moisture now and that's why you can't grow things like that? It certainly isn't because of a longer season. It's warmer now than it was then.

Ben Yeah.

Alan So, I don't know.

Ben I would say it would be the moisture, something in the sandy soil up there.

Alan I was talking to somebody here not too long ago said they remember - - but there ain't too many people that remember back then anymore, back in the early...

Ben Well, even the 50's.

Alan Well, they didn't raise any in the 50's I don't think. When did Burland - - when was ...

Ben Burland Ranchettes started in...

Alan I don't remember.

I know Deer Creek Valley goes back to the 60's, late 60's. That's when (inaudible).

Ben This is early 60's 'cause it was about the time we got married that they started subdividing Burland Ranchettes.

Alan And then Jess Fitzsimmons from Shawnee...he was a - - you've probably got some literature on Jess Fitzsimmons, don't you?

I don't myself, but you know, there's a gal out of Alma who is basically managing this project and she's the one that has the list of who we're trying to interview. So I'll have to ask her about Jess Fitzsimmons. I'll have to ask her and see if that's one of the individuals on the list.

Alan Course now he's - he passed away in... late - - no, it's probably in the 70's, huh?

Ben Yeah, early 70's.

Alan But he used to be a ranger – Forest Service.

Oh, okay, so he was familiar with then area then.

Alan In this country and then ...they used to - - back in the early days, they run a lot of cattle in this country all over the forest, you know.

What is the connection with Carl Soderstrom and your father. Where did they first meet, do you recall?

Alan Through the Holbergs.

And the Holbergs are...

Alan The Holbergs was ...

Ben Cousins to the ...Soderstoms.

Alan Is that the way it is?

Ben Yeah...

Alan Well yeah, Carl Soderstom, his dad and the Holbergs dad was brothers.

Okay.

Alan No, it was ...

Ben Had to be a sister in there somewhere.

Alan Has to be a sister or something, huh?

Ben Yeah.

Alan Didn't Carl say?

You know, I'd have to look back on the tape. Unfortunately I don't even have a copy of the tape. I turn that to the County and I'd have to go all back

and listen to the original. But I remember him saying that he grew up on a southeastern Colorado sod farm basically.

Alan Yeah.

And then he came up here I guess with his father, actually his family came up here and then he started working at the mill here.

Ben Our dad helped them move up here.

Yeah. There was a close relationship there.

Alan When I was a baby, he was saying I was a baby or - - and Daddy took the old truck and went out there and moved them up here.

Well, he showed me the cabin that they lived in and it's still there. It's in - - it's getting pretty rough condition, but it's still there. Beautiful meadow that it sits in.

Ben Yeah, it is.

Just a gorgeous location.

Alan Then there used to be the Bancrofts and then the Mendenhall's and then the - - there's some of the people at Wellington Lake; the Paynes and course, there's some of them relations that the gal that was out here when I was gone,

Ben Yeah, she's a Banc...

Alan And ... but Mom and Dad talked about riding horseback or in the buggy and going for parties over by Wellington Lake to them people in the wintertime and in the summertime and playing cards and stuff when we were little or babies anyway.

What does happen to be interesting up here? I mean, especially if you're very young, you're really - - you didn't have friends that were closer, right?

Alan No...

And there was nobody within walking distance, so it was basically your family.

Ben Yeah, right.

That was it. And you had - - wood heat and kerosene lighting and long winters that were very cold. That would be different!

Ben Yeah, it was.

Alan We didn't know no different.

Exactly. You know, people did what they needed to do and I'm sure fifty years from now, people will say, "How could possibly survive with what you have?"

Alan Oh, it was easy!

Ben Yeah.

Yeah, I guess in a lot of ways it was. Did you ever have any injuries or did you ever have any real concerns about health up here?

Alan No, we didn't catch nothing 'cause you didn't see anybody that had anything.

That's true. Nobody would infect you.

Ben Yeah.

'Cause you're probably pretty much by yourself up here. The only time you had outside was when you were shopping or selling some of the wood.

Ben And if we cut ourself, we'd just wash it out with diesel fuel and go o.

I remember my grandmother using kerosene.

Ben Yeah, well, same thing.

Same thing, exactly.

Ben If you got a sore throat, you gargled with kerosene.

Alan With kerosene.

Oh really? You gargle with it?

Alan Or take a teaspoon of sugar, drip some kerosene on it...

Ben And chew on it.

Alan And chew on it.

And that would work.

Alan That was for sore throat.

Okay (laughter) Did it work?

Ben Yeah, it worked; we're still living!

Apparently! (laughter) Are there any other home remedies you used that you recall that you used? (Pause) What were your favorite foods up here? You grew here in summer...

Ben Yeah.

Did you actually butcher the cattle?

Alan Yeah.

So you had beef, you had pork...

Ben Deer.

Alan Deer.

So you'd go hunting for local deer? Okay, so you had plenty up here.

Ben And all this - - all the meat was canned.

Really! You'd can the meat, you wouldn't smoke it?

Ben No, canned it. Yeah, deer canned, was real good.

Alan I guess you got to know the right recipe, but ...

I'm sure. I never heard of canning meat. So you'd cook it first?

Ben Cook it and then put it in a jar and seal it and ...

Okay and then keep it in that stone cellar?

Ben Either that or in - - we had like a fruit cellar in the basement.

(Inaudible)

Alan Then in the summer we had ice boxes, an ice box in the house.

Okay, where did the ice come from in the summer?

Alan Ice came from Fitzsimmons Lake in Shawnee in January.

Would they ship all summer then?

Alan We had an ice house like in February or first of march before it melt – ice started melting. Daddy'd get a couple truckloads of ice and we would pack it in sawdust and that would last all summer.

You'd store it up here?

Ben Yeah.

So you had your own little ice house here.

Alan Yeah.

And it would stay all summer.

Alan Oh yeah. Stay all summer 'til winter.

Packed in sawdust. 'Cause I also heard they'd pack it in straw sometimes, too.

Ben Sawdust really would keep it.

Would you buy it in Bailey, or actually - - where would they store it in Bailey or where would they store it?

Ben We'd just get it off the lake.

You got it right as it was being cut.

Ben Cut, yeah.

And they would take it up by train in the Denver and store in Denver for ...

Alan That's what all them lakes were.

Right. They were dammed up at the south fork of the North Platte River and it would just divert into those ponds and freeze up and they would saw it up. I think there's still actually some sleds that are still left there adjacent to that area. So that's what they would do. They'd get it in spring and you'd store it here and stay all...

Alan Sometimes we'd go to Wellington Lake and cut it ourself.

Really. So you'd have just a saw and you go out on the lake and start sawing.

Ben We had a regular ice saw.

Alan Cut it by hand.

Ben Take a horse and a - - to pull it up on the truck.

How big a block were these?

Alan Oh, two, three hundred pounds...blocks.

A lot of work. Everything was so much more of a challenge than it is today.

Alan Then you had to figure out how much you needed for the summer.

So the ice house was partially underground.

Alan Oh, sort of like.

Ben Sort of like, yeah.

Somebody told me the Platte Canyon Church was originally a barn that was used for storing ice. Do you recall anything like that?

Ben It was a barn, I know that.

Alan I know that, but...

Ben I don't remember about the ice but it could have.

Alan Because it was the post - - the old post - - between that and Moore Lumber in there, that used to be a lake.

Oh really.

Ben Yeah. That was a - - well, the ice ...

Alan The ice ...

Oh, that was an ice pond?

Alan yeah, ice pond there.

Between Moore Lumber and where?

Alan And the church.

Oh, that whole strip in there.

Ben Yeah. Well actually, the dam went across - - well, just about by Moore Lumber and the new Post Office, wasn't it?

Alan Yeah.

That makes sense 'cause it's parallel to the creek, so all you had to do is divert the creek into it and it'd form up a nice little pond.

Ben Then there was one ...

Alan Then there was – there two lakes. There's one lake below Shawnee but then there was two more below that. Cross from the school where the new football field is.

Right.

Ben Yeah, that was ice.

You can see some of the areas that are dammed up yet that - - in fact, I think there is a sled that's out there yet that was probably used for harvesting ice. ...What do you consider the most difficult thing you had to face out here?

Alan Oh, I don't know!

Ever give that any thought as to what you considered to be the most difficult part of living out here?

Ben I don't know, we always had our own food.

Alan Getting to Denver, I guess.

Did you ever get lonely up here?

Alan No, there was too many things to do!

Ben We was always busy.

Always busy.

Ben Lot of times, the only times us kids got to go to school was when we went down to get clothes for school for the year. I remember that and if you got a pair of shoes, that had to last you until next year.

Oh, I'm sure. And you probably went through shoes out here if you're doing this kind of work, you'd probably go through some shoes.

Ben So, you had to get them big enough and then of course, there's nothing insulated.

Alan didn't have insulated shoes then.

Ben I can remember Mom pulling an old pair of wool socks on the outside of your boot to keep your feet warm from freezing in the winter.

Well, yeah it had insulated at that point in time.

Alan Yeah.

I remember talking to Barbara Tripp and she said that they went through shoes a lot because the granite, you know, in that area is pretty tough on shoes and they did a lot of hiking so yeah, that was a toughy. So in particular, everything worked out pretty well being up here. It really - - you probably have a lot of time to think about it, what you'd like to have!

Ben Right, uh-huh.

Alan When we went to school here, why then we only went six months.

Oh, just six months.

Alan Yeah, we went to school right here.

At the house?

Ben Yeah.

Alan In what - -

Ben What used to be a chicken house.

Alan Yeah.

You're mother home-school you then?

Alan No, we had a teacher come in.

Really! So like come in each day?

Alan No, lived right here. We had a place for her to stay and ...

Oh really! So this was in the 30s again.

Ben Well, the late 40's.

So you had a teacher for the three of you.

Alan The first teacher we had, had two kids of her own, so then there was five of us and then when Bill Gunther bought the ?Feazler? place or which is Caldwell's now, then ...

Ben They had two boys.

Alan So then there was ... the most there ever was though going to school here would be seven.

Ben Yeah.

And that was in the chicken coop.

Alan Yeah, it was in the chicken coop.

Well, that's kind of neat, having a teacher right here!

Ben Yeah.

That was her full-time job as a - - it was a lady that came in and lived here...

Alan Lived here, a single lady, yeah.

And was just here for six months and then she goes someplace else?

Ben Yeah.

Alan Where ever her home was, I guess. I don't know! I don't remember where she was from or - - must have been - - had to be from Jefferson county I imagine.

And she was paid by the county and so she just lived her. Basically she got room and board here and that was it.

Ben Yeah.

And for six months. So she was like part of the family for that period of time.

Alan That's right. Then the 7th grade, then we drove to Buffalo and then 8th grade, then we built the cabin in Arvada and stayed down there.

That was a regular school, a public school?

Ben Yeah, a high school, yeah.

Alan Arvada High School.

Ben It was credited, there was a high school there where Id-Ra-Ha-Je that was the Platte Canyon School, but it wasn't credited then and if we was going to go on schooling more, like college, why then we had to go to a credited school.

That's interesting. Id-Ra-Ha-Je when it was first created or that's what the high school was before Id-Ra-Ha-Je took over, was not even an accredited school.

Ben No.

Because I was told that Id-Ra-Ha-Je was put in basically because of Roberts Tunnel workers. Is that true? Because there were a lot of workers coming specifically into the county to work on a tunnel and so as a result of that, they needed to increase the school facilities and that's when they took over.

Alan That's when they built the school at Shawnee.

Oh, that's the Shawnee location. That's what took over for the for Id-Ra-Ha-Je.

Alan Yeah.

Ok, that makes sense.

Alan But I don't think that was Id-Ra-Ha-Je then.

No, no they bought it after it had been turned out of - - it stopped being a high school.

Ben Yeah.

Your father wanted you to go to college?

Alan Yeah.

What made you not go? Why didn't you go?

Alan Well, there was plenty of work right here (laughter).

Ben And I don't think any of us really like school that well.

Okay, there's the real reason. What years were you in high school?

Alan High school would be from '48 to '52.

So that was the Korean War period. So you came out in the low '50s; came out of high school in the early 1950's.

Alan Yeah, I graduated in 1952.

Ben And I graduated in '54.

And you came back here and...

Ben Yeah, worked ever since.

Been working here at the mill. Do you regret anything about having done that?

Ben Not really.

Obviously, you've done well, you've got quite a business going, and you've done what you wanted. It's very impressive, actually.

Alan Just now, if that fire hadn't of burned the saw mill down...

Ben We could have retired.

Alan We could have retired.

Yeah, isn't that funny how things like that come up. Were there fires in the 30's and 40's that you recall?

Ben Yeah.

Alan Oh yeah, every summer.

Ben But they would be just small.

Nothing like what we've been having recently.

Ben Because everything wasn't' as dry as what it's been.

So that's the primary reason we're getting these big fires now.

Ben Yeah.

And then you mentioned too, that they used to have these thinning programs where they would thin - - you know, you'd be logging, but you'd be thinning the woods and that would eliminate a lot of the fuel that's now causing these fires to be so intense.

Ben Yeah.

Alan Course see, this country was all pretty well burned off in the late 1800's.

Just natural fires?

Alan Natural fires you know, and then see, then a lot of the timber that's we cut in the 40's and 50's had fire scars on them from the fire in around 1900.

Right at the turn of the century.

Alan A lot of the country burned off between Mt. Evans and Pikes Peak around 1900, I don't know exactly when it was.

Most of these trees then that just recently burned, they were less than a hundred years old.

Alan Yeah, all the smaller stuff, eight, ten inch stuff, that would be stuff that's grewed up since then.

So a big one like here (gesturing)...

Alan The big one here, the fire didn't kill it, see.

So that pre-dates the turn of the century probably.

Alan Yeah, so that tree there is 300 years old.

Really! Wow.

Alan Probably, three hundred years ago.

And it got torched in this last fire?

Alan Yeah.

What is your plan now? Are you going to work or a few more years or...

Alan Yeah, probably another, let's see... I'm 75 anyway.

You have to enjoy this work! You have to.

Alan Everyday is something different.

Sure, that's true and you have to get a lot of satisfaction out of creating something out of logs.

Alan And building this machinery and keeping it going and ...

Well, that's the other thing, you had to be very creative to be out here and doing this. So in a sense you're carrying on your father's tradition of doing whatever you need to do.

Ben He makes all the knives and stuff for different patterns.

You just make them yourself.

Ben Yeah.

Do you have your own machine shop then, or you have your own (inaudible) machine?

Alan That grinder there (gesturing) and the cut-off thing and the drill press.

Well, you'll do with what you've got to do.

Alan And then if we do any milling work well, I've got a couple of lathes.

Right. And repair parts. I would imagine you need to turn some parts occasionally.

Alan 'Cause we make parts out of old parts. For most thing, sometimes you don't - you have to buy new stuff.

I imagine it must be fun trying to find replacement parts for some of this equipment.

Alan Well, like this planer and all, there's parts.

You can still the thing?

Alan Oh, any parts you want for that. It's three days away is all.

And this is a 1940's?

Alan It's 1949.

1949 mill. The planer.

Alan Yeah, Yates American A20. Now the one that the motor that I had, that was a seven-head Watkins motor. I don't know what year it was; it was probably made in the late '70's, but it was all electric. It had seven electric motors on each; a seven-head electric and then electric motor on the feed, but it was real easy to set up and change from you know, to go from you know, log siding to knotty pine paneling in fifteen minutes.

End of tape/