



WASHINGTON STATE ORAL/AURAL HISTORY PROGRAM
WASHINGTON STATE ARCHIVES,

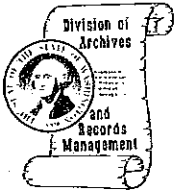
ACCESSION NO. WCT 75-6mc	TAPE NO.
INTERVIEWEE'S NAME "WED" CHARLES E. DAVIS	

RELEASE

I, the undersigned, hereby consent to the tape recording of conversations given in connection with the Washington State Oral/Aural History Program on MAY 13, 1975 and to the divulging of said tape recordings and/or transcripts made therefrom.

INTERVIEWER MICHAEL A. RYNSTRAND	DATE 5/13/75
COMMUNITY ADVISOR Don Eklund	DATE 5/20/75
PROGRAM COORDINATOR Timothy Fedin	DATE 6/5/75

Charles E. Davis
SIGNATURE (INTERVIEWEE)



WASHINGTON STATE ORAL/AURAL HISTORY PROGRAM
WASHINGTON STATE ARCHIVES,

ACCESSION NO.	TAPE NO.
INTERVIEWEE'S NAME	

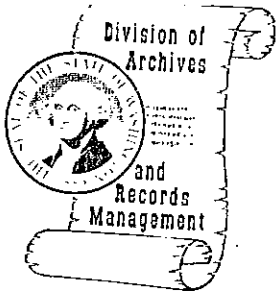
RELEASE

I, the undersigned, hereby consent to the ~~tape recording of conversations~~ *photography* given in connection with the Washington State Oral/Aural History Program on 8/12/75 and to the divulging of said tape recordings and/or transcripts made therefrom.

INTERVIEWER	DATE
COMMUNITY ADVISOR	DATE
PROGRAM COORDINATOR	DATE

M. K. Kerschich 8/12/75
Jimmy Fredrick 9/24/75

Neil Davis
SIGNATURE (INTERVIEWEE)



TAPE ARCHIVE SHEET

INTERVIEWEE'S NAME Charles E. Davis "Ned" BIRTH DATE 1881

HOME ADDRESS _____

INTERVIEWER Michael A. Runestrand

INTERVIEW TITLE EARLY SHINGLE MILLS AND THE INTERNATIONAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD

INTERVIEW DATE May 13, 1975 TIME _____

INTERVIEW SUMMARY Childhood and School experiences; Father's involvement in the Civil War;

Work experiences in shingle mills; International Workers of the World, work

condition improved, workers attitudes towards; Accidents and workman's compensation;

Klu Klux Klan in Whatcom County; Pacific American Fisheries; Depression;

W.P.A.; Memories

RESTRICTIONS None

PROPER NAMES OR COLLOQUIAL EXPRESSIONS USED Harvard; Spanish-American War; Wilson Business

College; Valley Shingle Mill; Puget Sound Sawmill & Shingle Co.; Loggie's Mill;

Centralia Massacre; Depression; Klu Klux Klan; Earle's Mill

INTERVIEW AND RECORDING QUALITY _____

DOCUMENTATION _____

Mr. Charles E. "Ned" Davis

May 13, 1975

"EARLY SHINGLE MILLS AND THE I. W. W."

Interviewed by: Michael A. Runstrand

Washington State Oral/Aural History Program
Washington State Archives, Olympia, WASHINGTON

Accession No. WCT 75-6mr, . Tape No. 7, Tape Sides, 1&2, No. of Pgs: 32

Mr. Charles E. "Ned" Davis.
May 13, 1975

Accession No. WCT 75-6mr, Tape No. 1, Tape Side No. 1

Mr. Runestrand: This is an interview with Ned Davis. Charles E. Davis, is his given name. The date of the interview is, May 13, 1975. The interviewer's name is, Michael Runestrand: The tape number on this particular interview series is WTC 75-7mr. This is a tape original.

Mr. Runestrand: We're here today with Mr. Ned Davis. Ned...is that your full name, Ned Davis?

Mr. Davis: Charles E. Davis is my right name.

Mr. Runestrand: Charles E. Davis.

Mr. Davis: Charles E. Davis.

Mr. Runestrand: How'd you get the nickname, "Ned"?

Mr. Davis: My father...from my father. They called him Ned because that comes from, Edward.

Mr. Runestrand: I see, I see. What year were you born?

Mr. Davis: I was born in 1881.

Mr. Runestrand: What was your birth date?

Mr. Davis: The 1st of August.

Mr. Runestrand: August 1, 1881. You were born, where? Back east, someplace?

Mr. Davis: St. Paul.

Mr. Runestrand: St. Paul, Minnesota?

Mr. Davis: St. Paul, Minnesota.

Mr. Runestrand: What did your folks do?

Mr. Davis: My father was a surveyor.

Mr. Runestrand: Surveyor? Who did he work for back east?

Mr. Davis: He worked...he was a county surveyor for the state of Minnesota. That was in '84.

Mr. Runestrand: Now, you were tellin' me your dad went to school at Harvard. Isn't that right?

Mr. Davis: He went to...he graduated from Harvard. About the time the war started.

Mr. Runestrand: And, he joined the civil....

Mr. Davis: He joined the 1st Minnesota, Company "E".

Mr. Runestrand: The 1st Minnesota, Company "E", did he...do you remember him talking about the Civil War?

Mr. Davis: I don't remember anything. Only what my mother told me.

Mr. Runestrand: I see.

Mr. Davis: He said it was harder gettin' on the battleship...on the battlefield than it was gettin' off of it, because if anybody had a grudge against anybody, they took it, then.

Mr. Runestrand: They just bought...they bought a bullet.

Mr. Davis: Yeah.

Mr. Runestrand: I'll be a son-of-a-gun. Your dad was in the Army, then?

Mr. Davis: Yes, he was in the Army for four years in the Civil War.

Mr. Runestrand: When did he finally pass away?

Mr. Davis: He passed away in '85. March the eleventh.

Mr. Runestrand: Just when you were a kid?

Mr. Davis: In '85, I was four years and a half, old.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. Well, did you and your mom....did you have brothers and sisters when you came out here?

Mr. Davis: I had no brothers and no sisters, and my mother was a pensioner. She got eight dollars a month...eight dollars....a twenty dollars a month from the government. He left her that pension.

Mr. Runestrand: I see. And, then she...you and your mom moved out to Whatcom County?

Mr. Davis: Out to...out here to Bellingham.

Mr. Runestrand: And, what year...?

Mr. Davis: To Fairhaven.

Mr. Runestrand: What year did you move out here?

Mr. Davis: 1890.

Mr. Runestrand: 1890. And, you were about nine years old then?

Mr. Davis: I was nine years and a half old when we came out here.

Mr. Runestrand: Then you got the last part of your schooling in this town?

Mr. Davis: Well, I went to school here.

Mr. Runestrand: What schools did you go to?

Mr. Davis: I went to the Fairhaven and the 14th Street School, the Larrabee School, and then I was...twelve...I went to the Wilson Business College.

Mr. Runestrand: Wilson Business College.

Mr. Davis: Yeah.

Mr. Runestrand: Was that in Fairhaven also?

Mr. Davis: That was...that was the North side.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. And, why did you want to take up business?

Mr. Davis: I was well...I was...I wanted to be a bookkeeper, like that.

Mr. Runestrand: I see. Well, you were tellin' me that when you were about eighteen years old, you...the Spanish-American War had started and you wanted to join up?

Mr. Davis: Yes sir.

Mr. Runestrand: Had you finished your schooling by that time?

Mr. Davis: I was...I only went to the ...well, the ninth grade.

Mr. Runestrand: Uh huh. And, you went into the business college?

Mr. Davis: I went...no, I went to the shingle mill. I went to the shingle mill and I worked there for, oh, two or three years. Then, I went to business college. My mother wanted me to go to business college. And, after I finished ...I only....we had to have twelve sets of bookkeeping books before we could

get our diploma, and I had ten of 'em already finished. I only had two more to go.

Mr. Runestrand: But, you never finished 'em?

Mr. Davis: Well, I went to Wilson and he told me....the president of the business college...says, "I'm going to get you a job." And, he says, "And then you can finish your other bookkeeping, your other books on the....at home."

Mr. Runestrand: I see.

Mr. Davis: And, like that...now, how can...like that. Well, I went to....he give me....he got me a job at the Empire Meat Market and Foscett's Implement Store. It was a half day at each. There was just a small amount of books that had to be kept at the Empire, and then the afternoon when I finished the rest of the day, I'd go over to the clerk and would do what little bookkeeping at Foscett's, see. Well, anyway, I was given twenty dollars a month.

Mr. Runestrand: That wasn't bad.

Mr. Davis: I went down...well, I went down the street and I told Bob Kimble, the feller I used to work with, I used to be foreman of the mill. Well, he says, "Come out and work for me nights and I'll guarantee eighty dollars a month. Well, I had no use for the bookkeepin' books then when I could get that.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah.

Mr. Davis: So, I went home and I told my mother. Oh, she raised thunder about it. She said, "You go back to the...go and get that education, that's what I want you to get." "Well," I said, "Ma, I want to make a few dollars to help get along." So, I went to work nights, and I woulda worked one month, nights and I got tired of it. I got sick of it too, more I worked nights. So, I quit. And, I was gettin' my clothes on to go to town to go to the....cleaned up the yard on a tuesday, a monday, and I was goin' along on tuesday to go to business college, when a...when a knock come at the door and Bob Kimble come down and says, "Hey Ned, we ain't got no packer today. The packer didn't show up."

"Well,," I says.... He says, "Will you come out and work today?" I says, "Sure, but ma will raise thunder." She says, "You go on back to business college." But, I didn't, I says, "I'll go and work today, see how it comes out, and I says, "Say, why can't you give me this day job? It's a good job, I can get forty thousand a day." I says, "And, it's a good job." "Well, if I did give it to you, you wouldn't only stay about a month and then you'd quit." I says, "If you'll give me that job, I'll stay a year." I stayed with him nine years.

Mr. Runestrand: I'll be a son-of-a-gun. Well, now when...had you already tried to get in on the...tried to join up for the Spanish-American War? Before you took this job?

Mr. Davis: Yes, I went down to see 'em at the recruiting office, but I was too young.

Mr. Runestrand: They had one right in town here?

Mr. Davis: It was on the Bellingham North side. I don't know who the hell the guys was that run it, but like that. But, they was...they...I was too young to go.

Mr. Runestrand: Uh huh. What do you remember about the Spanish-American War? Anything? Was there much news that came into Bellingham about it?

Mr. Davis: Well, only that...all I know is, that a lot of my friends, a lot of the shingle weavers joined up in the Span...in the war. Kester Kaylor was one....I don't remember what the other boys names was.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. A lot of 'em come back home?

Mr. Davis: They did. Not that a lot of 'em didn't come back.

Mr. Runestrand: Killed? Or just found other places to stay?

Mr. Davis: Well, there was a lot of 'em ...some of 'em got killed there. And, that...the dysentery was awful. It was awful. Kester Kaylor had it. He was years gettin' over it.

Mr. Runestrand: Is that right? From the...from the hot climate down there? Well, a...when you were workin' in the mill, you said you were a shingle weaver, now, a shingle weaver is what? A person that packs shingles...weaves 'em into a package?

Mr. Davis: Connected with the mills. Makes no difference if you're a bolt cutter or what it was.. You was considered a shingle weaver.

Mr. Runestrand: I see.

Mr. Davis: They didn't call 'em shingle weavers, they called 'em bolt cutters.

Mr. Runestrand: Bolt cutters.

Mr. Davis: Swampers. And, like anything connected with makin' shingles, was known as a shingle weaver.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. What....now, this fellow you were workin' for? He had his mill right down here on the southside, then?

Mr. Davis: No, it's right up here at the Lake Padden. Where the golf course is now.

Mr. Runestrand: Lake Padden. What was the name of the mill? Do you remember?

Mr. Davis: The Valley Shingle Mill.

Mr. Runestrand: Valley Shingle Mill. A....where did they get their cedar from?

Mr. Davis: From around here. From right around here...clear down all around. From here to Lake Whatcom.

Mr. Runestrand: A....so, you started as a packer?

Mr. Davis: I started as a punk.

Mr. Runestrand: A punk, huh?

Mr. Davis: Oh yes. I had to help the cut off man, I had to split bands, and nail bands, and I packed the overs. That's where I learned to pack.

Mr. Runestrand: Now, what are...when you say packed the overs, what are overs?

Mr. Davis: Well, the overs was the shingles that the packer couldn't handle.

Mr. Runestrand: Because they were too large, or...?

Mr. Davis: No, it was because they...he packed what he could and now what was left to pack...I had to do it. I got as high as fifteen a day.

Mr. Runestrand: Fifteen thousand?

Mr. Davis: Fifteen thousand, a day.

Mr. Runestrand: Boy...

Mr. Davis: Oh, that don't amount to anything. That's only sixty bunches.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. How many guys would be workin' in the mill?

Mr. Davis: Well, oh, there was the cut off man, swampers, one or two swampers or three swampers.

Mr. Runestrand: Are swampers fellas that would pull it out of the water and bring it in to the mill?

Mr. Davis: They...they...they built the skid roads, made the skid roads and helped load the bolts on to the sleds. They generally worked in the mills. That was their job. Then, they had a fireman....he run the engine too. Then, they had a cut off man.

Mr. Runestrand: Now, he'd shape up the bolts?

Mr. Davis: Yeah. He'd cut the bolts. He'd cut the....he'd cut the blocks. And, a filer, and we got fireman, and then they had a roustabout there to clean up the splits and like that, knot holes from the knot sawyers, or the clippermen, whichever they had.

Mr. Runestrand: Now, a clipperman, he is a....

Mr. Davis: He's the same as a knot sawyer. Only, he works different on the clipper saw.

Mr. Runestrand: I see.

Mr. Davis: You see, the uprights have a clipper, a clipper saw. They...the sawyer and the clipper runs the machine. There's no other....nobody else. That's why it makes it cheap. You see, with the others, you have to have knot sawyers, or clippermen, you see.

Mr. Runestrand: I see. Clean up the bad pieces of timber and stuff?

Mr. Davis: No, to clip the shingles. Your shingles had to be squared. Where's my shingle weaver paper? There's the shingles. See 'em? Piled up there on the trucks.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah.

Mr. Davis: That's....they're supposed to go to the dry kilns.

Mr. Runestrand: Did...when you first started in the shingle mills, did they use a dry kiln on all the shingles?

Mr. Davis: They do, what?

Mr. Runestrand: Did they use a dry kiln?

Mr. Davis: Sure, they had to.

Mr. Runestrand: They had to.

Mr. Davis: Get your underweight. They get the underweight. They were allowed so many pounds on a boxcar. And, then if you go over....underweight of that you got to pay for it. They didn't have to pay...I don't quite understand what that was.. But, that's the way it was.

Mr. Runestrand: Um, the mill that you worked, Valley Mill.....

Mr. Davis: Huh?

Mr. Runestrand: The Valley Mill that you worked at?

Mr. Davis: That's the one I worked at the longest.

Mr. Runestrand: You worked there nine years?

Mr. Davis: And, I worked there about twelve or fourteen years, off and on. I used to...when they'd shut down, and like, I'd have to build a skid road, or like that, I went down to Earl's mill.

Mr. Runestrand: Earl's Mill?

Mr. Davis: Earl's mill or Loggies, or wherever I could get a job.

Mr. Runestrand: Were these down along the bay?

Mr. Davis: That was on down on the waterfront. That was...Earl's mill was the Puget Sound Sawmill and Shingle Company.

Mr. Runestrand: I see. When you first started....just as a punk, what were you makin' a day?

Mr. Davis: I think, about two dollars.

Mr. Runestrand: Two dollars a day.

Mr. Davis: Yeah, and then I got paid extra for the packin'.

Mr. Runestrand: Uh huh. Did you get paid for the amount of things you packed?

Mr. Davis: No, that's...they was seven cents a thousand, seven and a half cents a thousand.

Mr. Runestrand: Seven and a half cents a thousand.

Mr. Davis: You'd pack a hundred thousand, you made seven dollars and a half; you pack two hundred thousand, you made, fourteen dollars, fifteen dollars a day.

Mr. Runestrand: What was the most you ever packed?

Mr. Davis: Fifty thousand.

Mr. Runestrand: Fifty thousand. So, you made about three and a half dollars that day.

Mr. Davis: Yeah, about three and a half.

Mr. Runestrand: How many hours would you have to work?

Mr. Davis: Ten.

Mr. Runestrand: Ten hours a day.

Mr. Davis: And, sometimes the work....they'd have to work twelve.

Mr. Runestrand: What time would you show up for work?

Mr. Davis: Well, we....I had to board at the....I worked at the Valley Mill, we started at seven o'clock. Ten minutes to seven in the mornin' and worked til six o'clock at night. And, then we had to work two hours after supper. And, get through at half past nine...get through at nine o'clock, if I was lucky enough to get off then. Maybe, I'd have to stay a half an hour and pack up what shingles was there, cause I had to have fifty thousand a day. It's pretty hard to cut fifty thousand on an upright when I based the take.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah, well, if the mill was over here, where did you live, in town?

Mr. Davis: I lived where I do now. I had to walk to 35th street.

Mr. Runestrand: Well, that wasn't too far.

Mr. Davis: It was about a mile.

Mr. Runestrand: Did...did they have a railroad comin' into the mill?

Mr. Davis: No, ya....no, we had to haul the shingles down to the valley here, where the roundhouse was. They'd pack a....part a car, a boxcar there, and they'd have a certain time to fill it. They had to have teamsters to haul the shingles.

Mr. Runestrand: I see. Well, was there much problem with the hours? Were people....that was just the average working day, I mean?

Mr. Davis: That was just the average....worked twelve hours a day.

Mr. Runestrand: In all the mills, all the shingle mills in this area?

Mr. Davis: No, no, some of 'em worked....had night shifts. Some of 'em worked ten hours and then they'd work nights. We had a night shift on, once.

MR. Runestrand: For shingle mills in those days, they had to be near water, isn't that right?

Mr. Davis: No. They could be anywhere.

Mr. Runestrand: Anyplace.

Mr. Davis: Anyplace. Way out here to Prairie , near Sedro Woolley, they had a shingle mill.

Mr. Runestrand: They'd truck in the logs, then?

Mr. Davis: They'd haul their....haul their shingles in to the town with the... well, on shingle racks.

Mr. Runestrand: Shingle rack?

Mr. Davis: Shingle rack.

Mr. Runestrand: What is that?

Mr. Davis: Well, that a....it's just like a hayrack, only they haul shingles.

Mr. Runestrand: I see. Um, I notice you've lost a couple of fingers when you were sawin'?

Mr. Davis: I got that sweepin' there at Loggie's in '24. I wanted to brush the dust...sawdust off of the bench. It was just about ten minutes to twelve. I went to clean the....clean the table and my glove caught in the saw and just yanked that right in and chopped 'em off.

Mr. Runestrand: Was there compensation at that time? For loss?

Mr. Davis: No, the company had to have us insured, but I didn't get anything.

But, we....wait a minute....they had a....

you got so much for each finger or so much for the cut. I got two hundred and fifty dollars for that.

Mr. Runestrand: For losin' your index finger and part of your little finger?

Mr. Davis: Yeah.

Mr. Runestrand: That....that compensation problem. You belonged then....by, '24, there was a....-a shingle weavers union?

Mr. Davis: Yeah, there used to be a shingle weaver's union, but, I never belonged to it because I was workin' with this....at the Valley mill.

Mr. Runestrand: That was non-union, huh?

Mr. Davis: That was non-union.

Mr. Runestrand: Did you ever have strikes there?

Mr. Davis: No, but we always went out if there was a strike.

Mr. Runestrand: You honored other people's pickets?

Mr. Davis: Well, sure, sure we did. Sure we did. Well, we never joined the union til '35, then we went on a strike for four hours, or six hours.

Mr. Runestrand: Just six hours, huh?

Mr. Davis: Six hours. We got six hours.

Mr. Runestrand: They couldn't....they couldn't handle the mill bein' shut down that long?

Mr. Davis: Well, they had a...the reason we got it...the reason we got out four hours, they didn't have the...they couldn't have those men replaced. When

we got out six hours, they couldn't replace the men. They had to hire...they had to hire the shingle weavers.

Mr. Runestrand: You were taling, Ned, about when you first started in cuttin shingles and stuff, and the big rush they had ruing the California earthquake down there.

Mr. Davis: Yeah, that was a....that was a time.

Mr. Runestrand: Did....cause...I understand that in the northwest was the only place they really had good shingles. We had the best cedar.

Mr. Davis: That...they had....they had the best shingles here.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah, was.... how big a push was it? I mean, did it just happen in one day that you got swamped with orders?

Mr. Davis: Oh no, oh no. At different times...different times, depends upon the market. If the market wasn't good, they couldn't make a profit, they'd shut down.

Mr. Runestrand: So, that you didn't work all year long. It wasn't a steady job?

Mr. Davis: Oh no, it was impossible to get full time. I was the only one, really, with the Valley Mill, had a contract with the Akron Lumber Company in Kansas City, Missouri. They had to furnish so many shingles a day, you see. You had to work one....in the wintertime. We went when the saws would...the snow and ice...have to use water on the saws. And, it would freeze on the saws, and make bum shingles. We had an awful time. But, they'd have to keep a runnin' in order to make that quota.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. How...about what year was this? Do you remember? Where you had...where you got steady work, even through the winter?

Mr. Davis: That was a....that was around in 1908, '09, '10.

Mr. Runestrand: Were you...did you have much connection with the management? I mean, were they explaining these things to you as you went along? Why they had to work, that they had a contract with somebody back East?

Mr. Davis: Oh no, they'd tell you you had to work and that's all there was to

it. It was the same way in the woods, either roll up or roll out! They'd either can ya if you didn't work or they'd get somebody else in your place. Ya had to work. They'd force you to work.

Mr. Runestrand: But, the wages weren't that bad, though. Were'nt you satisfied with what you were gettin' paid?

Mr. Davis: No, no, the wages was fine. The wages was fine. We had no trouble.

Mr. Runestrand: Except...you were tellin' me that story about, once in a while, when you'd a...when you and your....you and the other punk were down there and you'd be...it'd be goin' too fast and you'd give the saw a kick every now and then when you'd get ticked off at the mill or sumpin'. (Chuckles) When you were workin' in these different mill around town. By the way, let me ask you, how many mills did you work in this area?

Mr. Davis: I worked in Loggie's.

Mr. Runestrand: Loggie's Mill?

Mr. Davis: Loggie's Mill, and the Puget Sound Sawmill and Shingle Company, and I worked at....I worked at...down in ... one winter, the winter the big mill burned down, I was workin' at Stanwood. Milltown, in Milltown.

Mr. Runestrand: When you said the winter the big mill burned down, was...what mill burned down in town here then?

Mr. Davis: That was the Puget Sound Sawmill and Shingle Company.

Mr. Runestrand: Do you remember the year?

Mr. Davis: 1909, I think.

Mr. Runestrand: 1909. Did it put a lot of fellas out of work?

Mr. Davis: Oh, it put out about two hundred and fifty men.

Mr. Runestrand: Wow, that's quite a lot.

Mr. Davis: I was workin' in Stanwood then. I was workin' for the...what the hell was the name of that outfit? The Kent Shingle Company, I worked for them then, two haul machines. I was knot sawin' after both of them haul machines.

Mr. Runestrand: Now, when you say, knot sawin', I'm not sure what you mean, they cut the shingles and some shingles would have knots in them?

Mr. Davis: Why sure, there were....they're always the defects in shingles.

Mr. Runestrand: And, then you'd have to just saw around them?

Mr. Davis: The knot sawyers would take them defect out. That's why they called 'em hoodlums when they were throwed out by the packer, and the packer wouldn't pack 'em. There were defects in 'em. He'd throw 'em out, and they called them hoodlums.

Mr. Runestrand: Hoodlums. (Chuckles)

Mr. Davis: They'd take 'em up and resaw 'em over again, join 'em over again... like that. And, then they got the inspection. They should of had that years ago. They shoulda had inspectors. Because they was putting a lot of shingles in that they shouldn't put in. But, these....nowadays, they're all inspected.

Mr. Runestrand: I see. Did you...when you were working in the mills, what type of fellas were workin' in there? Were they mostly white fellas?

Mr. Davis: Sure, they were white fellas. They wouldn't allow a Chinaman in one of them mills. But, in British Columbia, they did.

Mr. Runestrand: I see. They allowed those fellas. What about Indians? Did they have any Indians workin' in there?

Mr. Davis: Yes, we had Dagoes and everything else workin' in there. Everybody that could get a job, even a negro.

Mr. Runestrand: Negroes could work in there?

Mr. Davis: We used to have a negro block planer. They called him and I, brothers. (Laughter) You can take a look, there they are.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. Well, I noticed that these fellows were all mostly white, but, when you started out, I wasn't sure, you know, if they had a lot of....I figured they had a lot of different types workin'.

Mr. Davis: Yeah, they had a lot of break 'em in. A lot of them boys was down there in Tacoma at the St. Paul....St. Paul and Tacoma mills there. They

had a lot of guys that were the strike breakers. They'd send 'em from one place to another when a mill cut wages.

Mr. Runestrand: I see.

Mr. Davis: We...we went out on a strike here because they were workin'....oh, let me see,...how the hell did that happen? Well, they was payin' the knot sawyers three and a half a day; and us clippermen was gettin' three and a quarter. We didn't say that was right, so we went out on a strike for three and a half. By george, we stuck out and they finally had....but, they brought up a bunch from Tacoma of strike breakers. A fella name of Donahue brought 'em up.

Mr. Runestrand: Donahue?

Mr. Davis: Yeah, his...that was the foreman...that was the guy's name that brought 'em up. But, anyway, things turned out that Donahue got us the....got the three and a half wages for us fellas and then we went back to work in the mill.

Mr. Runestrand: I see. These....about what year was that, Ned?

Mr. Davis: That was around 1911, '12.

Mr. Runestrand: Did....did you notice when you were workin' in the mills the... a group called the I. W. W.? Bobbies?

Mr. Davis: Yes, well, most of all of us packed an I. W. W. card.

Mr. Runestrand: You packed a red card?

Mr. Davis: Yes. Sure, by god, it was for labor....for the benefit of labor. But, when we didn't like the tactics....some of the fellas didn't like the tactics that they had. By god, when the company would come out and the agitator, the company back east went to work and wanted to get a harvest crew.

Mr. Runestrand: A what?

Mr. Davis: A harvest crew.

Mr. Runestrand: What's that?

Mr. Davis: Gettin' ready to harvest, for the grain and like that. He got 'em all hired...all I was supposed to hire, I. W. W.'s. Well, anyway, to make a long story short, the first thing they did, they kicked because they didn't have chicken more often. So, this old fella said, "Well, we'll give you the chicken." So, they got their chicken. And, then they wanted four bits more on the day. Well, he give 'em that. And, then they thought they'd get another four bits, but, he told....he said, "No," He says, "I ain't gonna pay any more. I'm payin' ya the wages ya asked, and that's enough." So, anyway, it come the time to thrash; they took every bit of bolt and every piece of thing that could jar loose from that big thrashers and like that, and threw 'em away. And, the crew in the mornin' that was supposed to thrash, they was a walked down the road. He lost his crop and everything. He had a hell of a time. Do you....do you think we wanted to bribe an outfit like that? Of course not! We didn't...we throwed 'em up. The railroad men was the same way. They all packed an I. W. W. card. But, orders come that the tramps says, "Well, my card is just as good as yours." Well, then they throwed up their I. W. W. cards. They couldn't ...they couldn't go...forfeit their job just for the dum dummies. So, there was lots of things like that, and then the operators would hire men to go to work in the mills and start trouble. Down here to Everett, they started drivin' drift bolts into the logs. Send 'em up to the sawmill to saw logs, the saws hadda hit them, we were liable to get killed, you see...

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah, cause the saw blade would break, or somethin', wouldn't it?

Mr. Davis: Why sure, it would of destroyed everything. There's a book wrote about that too. The Centralia Massacre...Massacre, there's a book wrote about that.

Mr. Runestrand: Did you a....do you remember that massacre? That little event down south?

Mr. Davis: Yes.

Mr. Runestrand: Where they shot up a bunch of fellas?

Mr. Davis: Yes, and they....down at Los Angeles, they'd take the I. W. W.'s and put 'em in jail and turn the hose on 'em.

Mr. Runestrand: Is that right? But, they were....as long as they didn't do too much sabotaging, they were pretty well accepted around here because of their demands?

Mr. Davis: Well, up in the woods, they had to accept 'em. Cause they couldn't get the loggers. Them guys was good loggers. They were good men. The one company up there at Port Angeles, they thought they had a bunch of scabs, you see, but by george, when they come to a showdown, they were all I. W. W.'s. And, they were good workers too. When they....when the guys.....when they won that strike; you oughta see the conditions in the bunkhouses, like that. By god, the men put in good grub....well, put in good grub and baths, in the morning, baths for 'em so they wouldn't have to sleep in the same stuff, the same clothes nights. By george, they cleaned 'em up. Made 'em fit for a human bein' to live. They were treated worse than dogs.

Mr. Charles E. "Ned" Davis
May 13, 1975

Accession No. WTC 75-04mr, Tape No. 1, Tape Side No. 2

Mr. Davis: It was the I. W. W.'s that made the....cleaned up the camps. Man didn't have to pack his bedroll. I know we had a man up there at the mill. We called him, "Gunny Sack Bill." Poor fellow didn't have any blankets to sleep in. He had to use gunny sacks.

Mr. Runestrand: He just get gunny sacks to keep him warm?

Mr. Davis: Life in the bunkhouse....it had a big airtight heater in the middle of the bunkhouse and they guys comin' in wet from workin', come in wet, you see, and soaked to the hide. Them that got in first, got their wet clothes off. They'd pack 'em ...hang 'em around the stove and the guys sleepin' there had all that stinkin' stench. They'd...the Wobblies got rid of that stuff. And, they done....they done a good thing.

Mr. Runestrand: Around these shingle mills, did they...not everyone lived as close as you did, like the Valley Mill?

Mr. Davis: No, they had to board.

Mr. Runestrand: They had a boarding house right there?

Mr. Davis: They had their boarding house right at the mill, and they had to make a bunkhouse for them. They had hot water and everything else from the kilns, you see. They had hot water from them so they lived decent. And, down to Earl's mill there, they cut wages one time at ten percent. But, when they come to the shingle mill, they didn't cut 'em. They was organized, you see. But, the poor sawmill worker wasn't organized. The I. W. W.'s used to....they used to come around and do...give speeches during the day at noon and like that. Tryin' to wake 'em up, but it was pretty hard to do it.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. People were afraid of losin' their jobs or getting canned?

Mr. Davis: Well, not only that, but they'd blacklist ya.

Mr. Runestrand: I see. So, you couldn't work at other mills?

Mr. Davis: I was workin' for the Mackville Fuel Company. They had...and I signed a syndicalism petition so that, why, they could arrest ya for any little thing, do you see? It wasn't right. I signed that petition to have the law changed. The minute they found it out, Norman, the superintendent, come and arrested Mackville, says, "You got to discharge Davis, he signed that syndicalism petition." He says, "I don't care what he signed. He's workin' for me and he's a good worker." But, if I'd a been....if I'd a worked in the mill, I'd a got canned.

Mr. Runestrand: Is that right?

Mr. Davis: A number of boys got canned....just because they signed it. And, that's against the law.

Mr. Runestrand: But, there's nothin' you could have done.

Mr. Davis: There was nothing' they could do about it.

Mr. Runestrand: Nope. Say, speakin' about, you know, the I. W. W., do you remember much activity in this town with the KLU KLUX KLAN?

Mr. Davis: Oh, they had the KLU KLUX KLAN, but I went to a demonstration one time, up to Lynden. They were quite strong. And, that feller, that speaker, my god, he had nerve to speak. There must have been about thirty thousand people up there.

Mr. Runestrand: That's awful big, thirty thousand people.

Mr. Davis: In the neighborhood of that. Well, maybe not quite that many, but in the neighborhood of it. He says, "I was told that I was gonna get shot tonight, but," he says, "if anybody is gonna shoot me, shoot me before I speak, because," he says, "it takes an effort to speak." And, quiet, that place was just as quiet, you'd a heard a pin drop. But, he says, "Now ain't they smart enough people in this country to make our laws without bein' bossed by a Dago, over in Rome?"

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. Did people go for it?

Mr. Davis: Why they...they...I dunno how it comes out, but they...quite a few joined the Klan. A lot of my friends joined the Klan. But, that's mob rule, brother, that ain't...that ain't the American way of doin' business.

Mr. Runestrand: Nope.

Mr. Davis: They still got the Klan now, but what does it amount to? You can't ...you can't run a country with mob rule. You got to use a little common sense and a little judgement.

Mr. Runestrand: That's right.

Mr. Davis: Now, we've got our unions and we can go for negotiations. Everything is fine and dandy. If the laws ain't made to fit ya, you got the vote. Let 'em change it.

Mr. Runestrand: Well, Ned, when we're talkin' about mills in town and different groups, they had a lot of mills in this area didn't they, shingle mills?

Mr. Davis: They had quite a few. Shingle mills all through the country. All through the country.

Mr. Runestrand: In Whatcom County, where were...where were the mills around here?

Mr. Davis: They were all around here. Goshen and different places, Blaine. Different places, up here at Acme.

Mr. Runestrand: Acme had some mills.

Mr. Davis: Yes sir, they had good mills. They had shingle mills there. All the way along the line you'll see shingle mills. Like a friend of mine says, "Whenever I see a cedar tree and a schoolhouse, I want to start a shingle mill."
(Laughter)

Mr. Runestrand: Um a....talkin' about the mills and stuff, a did the....did the mill workers get any certain holidays off like the fourth of July?

Mr. Davis: We got....that's the only holidays we ever knew...the fourth of July and Christmas.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. They always gave those two holidays off?

Mr. Davis: Yeah, that was the....that was the holidays.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. Would....I heard loggers and shingle weavers didn't get along too well?

Mr. Davis: Oh, the loggers got along fine with the shingle weavers.

Mr. Runestrand: Is that right?

Mr. Davis: Sure they did. Only the loggers didn't like the tactics of the shingle mill....shingle weavers because they wasn't organized and the shingle weavers was. That was the only difference.

Mr. Runestrand: Were these shingle weavers a pretty rough and tough group of guys?

Mr. Davis: No, they were.....they was branded that way, but they were a darn good bunch of fellas.

Mr. Runestrand: Were you...you worked for a lot of people in the mills. When you started workin' the saws, you had to graduate to working....

Mr. Davis: Sure, you had to work up. You had to work up.

Mr. Runestrand: You started as a punk, just a....

Mr. Davis: You started as a punk, and you finished up as a sawyer.

Mr. Runestrand: Uh huh. How did your a....you moved up then...from a little bit of money a day, up the three fifty? Did you get...?

Mr. Davis: Well, it depended on your skill. If you was skillful, you were all right. It depends upon your skill. That's what I told Axel Olson, at the plywood, when I worked in the plywood. See, I worked in the plywood for ten or twelve years. That's ...I, for a shingle weaver and I quit shingle weavin'. I told him, I says, "If you want to get good workers, you hire shingle weavers. Because," I said, "if they don't cut the mustard, they don't get no job." You had to be a good worker in order to get a....some of the fellas could pack as high as ten thousand an hour.

Mr. Runestrand: Ten thousand an hour.

Mr. Davis: Ten thousand an hour.

Mr. Runestrand: Boy, oh boy.

Mr. Davis: Why there was a friend of mine, Curly....Curly Richards, it was nothin' for him to pack eight thousand an hour.

Mr. Runestrand: Man, that's quick. But, you have to be in a large mill to pack that much, don't you?

Mr. Davis: Why sure.....that, at Loggie's.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. Now, you were telling me, they called Loggie's the old man's mill?

Mr. Davis: That's why. Because he wouldn't hire anybody but elderly men. It was all light work. It was a straight cedar mill.

Mr. Runestrand: Straight cedar?

Mr. Davis: Straight cedar.

Mr. Runestrand: Well, what....weren't all shingles made out of cedar though?

Mr. Davis:Shingles were always made out of cedar.

Mr. Runestrand: But, Loggie got the best cedar.

Mr. Davis: No, he got the poorest.

Mr. Runestrand: The poorest cedar.

Mr. Davis: And, then...and then, he'd cut lumber out of that, and the shingle weavers got the best. He was known to make...make as high as eighty thousand culls, a day.

Mr. Runestrand: Boy.

Mr. Davis: That was the cheapest shingles there is. I packed forty thousand shingles how culls a day.

Mr. Runestrand: Well, did they serve ya lunch at the mills?

Mr. Davis: No sir, we got to rustle your own grub. They didn't give ya paid holidays or anything else. You was just an animal, that what you was.

Mr. Runestrand: Um. Well, when you were....when you were a sawyer, how much would you have to produce? How much would you have to cut?

Mr. Davis: Well, as much as we could cut on a haulin' machine. We'd tried to average fifty thousand. It would depend upon the timber.

Mr. Runestrand: On the...it was a haul machine?

Mr. Davis: Yeah; that's with a haul machine.

Mr. Runestrand: Now, is that an upright saw?

Mr. Davis: No. That's a flat saw.

Mr. Runestrand: Flat saw.

Mr. Davis: Well, that's an upright saw, only it's a...the funny thing of that is, it was Jerry Hall, back in Michigan; and, he went crazy, and everybody worked on that machine has gone crazy. There was somethin' wrong with 'em. They lost their marbles some way. (Laughter) Because of the...well, it come back with a spring board. Ya had to have a spring board.

Mr. Runestrand: To stand up to saw?

Mr. Davis: No. Spring board up on a pole up above the machine that brought the....carriage back. It was run by a rack bar.... a rack bar pinion.

Mr. Runestrand: I see.

Mr. Davis: And, then they had another one down below pulling it...pulling it back. Another....another spring board down below, spring pole.

Mr. Runestrand: Did they have...did...with that much equipment, they'd have to have a lot of mechanics around wouldn't they? Or did everyone...?

Mr. Davis: No, they just had one man. He'd patch it up with bale wire, and pieces of harness (Laughter) Anything....anything.....anything to....but, they ...they used to have a lot of hard trouble with the rack bars. You see, they had a...they'd go ahead with a pinion on the rack bar and that would push the machine ahead. Then, they'd release the rack bar, release the pinion and the springboards...springboards would pull the machine back. And, you could shorten or lengthen the shrup...that was what they had over the uprights. It...an upright takes just as much swipe with the carriage to cut a four inch shingle as it did a twenty four inch.

Mr. Runestrand: I see. So, you could go a lot quicker with that machine then?

Mr. Davis: Oh, my god, we could...cut 'em down there...you bet your life, we could. But, they...the Hall machine couldn't take over a fourteen inch block. But, the uprights could take a twenty one or twenty two inch block.

Mr. Runestrand: Well, you only wanted shingles fourteen inches, isn't that right?

Mr. Davis: That's right. That's all they care for.

Mr. Runestrand: Who decided that, the builders?

Mr. Davis: No, the association.

Mr. Runestrand: The shingle weavers association?

Mr. Davis: Well, no, the company association.

Mr. Runestrand: I see.

Mr. Davis: You see, the companies have associations.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. Well, when did you finally finish up in the shingle mills?

Mr. Davis: I finished up with the sawin'.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah, I mean, but what year? Did you finally quit the shingle Mill?

Mr. Davis: Oh, I don't know just exactly, son. I can't tell ya. It was when the plywood started. I killed myself on that plywood. I made six hundred and some odd dollars in twenty two days in the plywood.

Mr. Runestrand: Wow.

Mr. Davis: God, I was workin' day and night. And, gettin' double time for all the hours I put in. It just broke me down, that was all. I didn't have brains enough to quit. I was makin' too much money. I got the....I got the slip to show....I had to pay eleven dollars social security, and I got....I don't know how much money for....but, I got that back from the....oh, what the hell do they call it.....the government sends ya....sends you a check back?

Mr. Runestrand: A....rebate?

Mr. Davis: No.

Mr. Runestrand: Income tax back?

Mr. Davis: Income tax. That's it, the income tax. I don't know how much money I got out of that, but, I got a big check out of that.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. Well, you...were you married when you were workin' in the mills?

Mr. Davis: Yes, I've been married ever since 1908. I've been married for sixty six years.

Mr. Runestrand: What did your....did your...when you were workin' in the mills and you lost your fingers and stuff, what did your wife say?

Mr. Davis: Well, she didn't have to...she couldn't say anything. She had brothers that were shingle weavers. Brothers that...she had one brother that was a speedball. God, he could cut shingles, believe me. He was always workin' But, he'd work just so long, and then he'd take a rest. He didn't keep at it steady. Why, I went...one summer, I was out to Port...he lived at Port Angeles. He had a ranch, twenty acre ranch out there. Forty acre ranch in Port Angeles. But, he never had it cleared. And, my wife and I was pickin' white strawberries, and she says to me, "You'd better go and get another pan, Ned," she says, "We've got more strawberries than we got containers to hold." So, I ran...went to the shack and just as I went there, a fella come along from some of the mills. He says to my father-in-law, he says, "Where's Erv?" "Oh," he says, "He's around here somewhere. Do you want him?" And, just then, Erv stuck his head out of the shack door, says, "What do you want?" He says, "So and so wants you to come and saw for him, says he'll give you fifteen dollars a day and your room and board, if you'll come up there." "Wait a minute," says Erv. So, I went.. by that time, I got into the shack. I went and got my pan, and like that. He had a lumber pencil and he was figurin' on the table there, on an old envelope. Finally, he beat me about three steps to the door. "Tell 'em to go to hell, I've earned nine hundred and ninety six dollars already this summer and I'll be damned if I'm gonna pay income tax." And, he wouldn't work.

Mr. Runestrand: Oh, son-of-a-gun.

Mr. Davis: And, there you are. There's the difference.

Mr. Runestrand: Well, when you were workin' you were makin' good enough wages, this...the prices of shoes and stuff weren't that much at this time?

Mr. Davis: No, hell, you could buy a good pair of shoes, a hammered shoe, with five dollars. But, you didn't have to buy one only once every three or four years. Get terraweed suit of clothes for thirty five dollars. Oh, things was cheap.

Mr. Runestrand: With the population...were there many fellows unemployed in town? That's in the early 1900's?

Mr. Davis: Oh, they used to...there's always a certain amount that don't work. But, as a rule, a person wanted to work, you could work every day in the year. Some of the fellows worked on the first of the year claimin' they would work all year around. Then, you could work at different jobs too. When I was workin' at the Valley Mill, we shut down to build a skid road. If we shut down for anything or the mill broke down or the price of shingles wasn't right, I could get a job anywhere. I went to work in the sawmill, and I went to work in the machine shop, humpin' around the machine shop. And, in the canneries. One year I went, 1907, I worked at Welshes' cannery. I was inspector there.

Mr. Runestrand: Inspecting...what were they canning? Salmon?

Mr. Davis: Yeah, the salmon. Used hand packers.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum, did that job pay good? Canning the salmon around this area?

Mr. Davis: They paid ya the goin' wages.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah.

Mr. Davis: But, the plywood was the best payin' place I've ever worked in.

Mr. Runestrand: What was that? Puget Sound?

Mr. Davis: No, that was Georgia Pacific. They went out of business. Georgia-

Pacific's got a plant down in Astoria, Oregon. Or down in Oregon. Mt. Baker Plywood, I dunno whether it's one of them or not. But, that's a co-op. One co-op. But, there's where you'll make your money. That overtime. And, that was steady work. They treated you fine. The Welshes'....the Olsons were mighty fine people to work for.

Mr. Runestrand: Those were the plywood fellas? Well, when you...when you got over here as a kid, and you started in the shingle mills, why did you choose shingle weaving?

Mr. Davis: Oh, it was the only thing handy that I could handle.

Mr. Runestrand: Because it was an easy job, just packin' that?

Mr. Davis: I had a chance to go to work in the bank, but, hell, they didn't pay you only about ten dollars a month and who the hell could live on that. Of course, ten dollars in them days was as good as fifty dollars now. That was where the money was.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah.

Mr. Davis: No, I tell you, I had a good job at the P. A. F., and that's the time they was ready to shut down. They laid off fifty machinists one Saturday night. And, the next week, they was just cleaning up. Well, anyway, Joe Reddick, he was one of...he was the helper and he worked seven...he worked seven...six years for the company, and he was gonna lay him off and I only worked three months. Well, that didn't set well with me, cause I thought well, by god, if I go to work for them and I work two or three years, I think I got a steady job, he'll lay me off. I'll beat him to it. Cause, I could get another job. So, anyway, I told Heath, he was the master mechanic, and he was a good one too. I told Heath, I says, "You'll have to get another man." I says, "in my place by Monday mornin'." "Why, what's the matter? Don't you like your job?" "The job's fine and dandy, but," I says, "I've got another job in sight." I didn't tell him why I was goin' to quit. "Well," he says, "You....you better stay on,"

he says, "cause we'll have everything fine and dandy. There'll be just you and me and the machinists that work here." "Well," I says, "That's all right, but," I says, "I'll get another job so I'll leave ya saturday night." Well, this was friday night. Well, you had to go to the office in order to get their day's pay for the day I quit. So, Judge Yale was the cashier there and I told him that I was gonna quit. "Well, what are you gonna quit for, Ned?" I says, "Well," I says, "He's gonna keep...ready to can...to keep me and lay of Joe Reddick." "And," I says, "He's worked for him for six years, and by god, he ain't gonna treat me like that." "Get out!" he says, "You're the only one he ever did speak a good work for." He says, "You go back monday morning and take your...keep your job." He says, "You got a good job." I said, "No, Judge, I'm not gonna do it. I'll quit." So, I quit and I've cussed myself ever since then, because fortune only comes once in a lifetime. Reddick, he...two weeks after they cleaned things up, Reddick got canned and it was two weeks after that, his wife got a divorce from him. I just cut my throat because Fred Heath was port captain. He hired all the men on the boats, you see, and he was a good mechanic, he was....he was the...he was Deming's right hand man. I'd just...I could have stayed there and had a good job for as long as I wanted to stay.

Mr. Runestrand: And, it was easy...it was a better job than workin' in the shingle mills, not as apt to hurt yourself?

Mr. Davis: Oh god, it was a....it was elevated...you was elevated there.

Mr. Runestrand: This was....about what year was this, Ned?

Mr. Davis: That was...oh, that was about two or three....about ten or twelve years ago.

Mr. Runestrand: Ten or twelve years ago, huh? Yeah, P. A. F. closed down in the sixties.

Mr. Davis: They're down. They're down.

Mr. Runestrand: But, a...no.....so, a....well, during the wintertime, would the shingle mills work during winter? You mentioned that they...once in awhile they would with this a.....

Mr. Davis: Well, the big mills did, but, the small mills didn't. They was... the crew wouldn't stay, they wouldn't fix the...although if the winter died down, I worked at Milltown. We worked in the mill....it depends upon .. it depends upon your timber. Your timber...you got a contract and you've got several lengths at a time, if the things didn't come out right, you got a chance to shut down and prolong it, why, that was fine. But, if you had a certain amount of timber to get out, you had to get it out regardless of what the....what conditions was.

Mr. Runestrand: Did they have heat in the buildings during the winter?

Mr. Davis: Huh?

Mr. Runestrand: Did they have heat in the buildings for the workers?

Mr. Davis: Oh, christ, no!

Mr. Runestrand: You just worked in the cold?

Mr. Davis: Yeah, just worked in the cold. I was sleepin' in a bunkhouse where you could look through the cracks and see the moon a shinin', and there was snow on the ground.

Mr. Runestrand: Boy!

Mr. Davis: Aw, they don't make those....the shingle weavers were better though compared, than the logger's were.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. Well, do you remember when they started agitating for unions in the shingle mills?

Mr. Davis: Oh, they....oh, they always had a union.

Mr. Runestrand: Ever since you went in, they had a union?

Mr. Davis: Ever thing...ever since...but, when I worked in the mill, I didn't have to join the union. Nowadays, it's different. But, when they went out on

a strike, we went out on a strike.

Mr. Runestrand: But, when you shifted around to other mills, you had a union card?

Mr. Davis: Well, I didn't have a union card, I had an I. W. W. card.

Mr. Runestrand: And, that was just as good?

Mr. Davis: That was just as good as anything.

Mr. Runestrand: I see. I see.

Mr. Davis: Oh, that I. W. W., had one of the best unions that was goin'. If there wasn't....for that, I tell ya, if it wasn't for the damn workers that was in it, when a man is tryin' to do the square thing, by god, you should help him along, not deteriorate him. That man lost his whole crop of wheat.

Mr. Runestrand: Were there a lot of home guards that brought their families right into the mills?

Mr. Davis: Down...down here to Everett, Everett was a homeguard. God, the shingle weavers had it in for that Everett outfit.

Mr. Runestrand: How come?

Mr. Davis: Well, because they....them guys down there would hire scabs and everything else, you see. A union man couldn't get a job in there. I wish Hugh would come down and talk with you. He worked down in Everett for twenty years.

Mr. Runestrand: Well, Ned, what a....what changes did you see in the area around here from....you started livin' here, since you were nine years old, you've seen a lot of the changes in this area?..

Mr. Davis: Oh sure, there's lots of changes. Lots of changes. But, I dunno, sometimes it went from better to worse.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. How was the depression for you? Was that really tough to get a job during the depression in this area?

Mr. Davis: No, the depression was no work at all; only W. P. A.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. Did you work W. P. A.?

Mr. Davis: I worked W. P. A., but, I did get a job at the cannery in '37.

And, I worked in the cannery for Welsh. He had a foreman...I don't ...I forget...Compton, was his name. And, I worked there off and on; of course, we didn't get steady time, we'd....on how the fish come, you see.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. Was that in town ehre?

Mr. Davis: Yes. There....maybe, you'd get two or three hours of work, maybe you'd get four or five, or half a day or sumpin' like that. But,...it was steady work...but, it was every day, a little. But, it amounted to somethin'. Well, anyway, what was I gonna say? Oh, in '37. When the cannery shut down in the fall, I had money enough to run me a couple of months. Well, along about November, I had to go on W. P. A., and I went over to "I" street to get a job on W. P. A., and because I didn't work in '07, why, they....they passes a law that you couldn't work on W. P. A., I felt pretty blue; so, I went up-town and a friend of mine told me, "Why, Ned," he says, "You write to Swalenback."

Mr. Runestrand: Swalenback?

Mr. Davis: Swalenback, was our senator. He says, "You ought to write to him and tell him your conditions, he'll do sumpin' for you." So, I did. By god, I got a letter back in about a week, says, "You go to "I" street, and demand a job, and if they don't give it to you, you write back to me." So, I went to "I" street and, Mrs. .. Miss.....her father got to be chief of police... what the hell was his name?.....Nick Rust. He was a shingle weaver too. He lost pretty near all his fingers. But, I told her, I says, "I want to get a job on W. P. A." And, she took my name and all like that, and she says, "I'll have to refer you to...to the Fairhaven Hotel...to Graham, and he'll appoint you....he'll tell you where to go." So, I went over to the Fairhaven Hotel, and it was here on the southside. That was before they tore it down. Well, anyway, to make a long story short, when I went in there, I went to the office, I went to the window, and this girl come to the window, and I told her, I says,

"I've come to apply for a job on that....on W. P. A." She says, "You can't get a job of work here." She says, "We don't hire nobody." I says, "That's damn funny," I says, "take a look at this;" and, I showed her Swalenback's letter. "Oh, you're the one that caused all the trouble." "Well," I says, "I'll cause a damn sight bigger trouble if I don't get a job." I got the job, I could got wood, I could got anything. They asked me if I wanted any groceries? "No, I don't want any groceries. I want to work and earn what I get."

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. Well, that was pretty good. And, you'd had a job up til about '37, and then you had to go on W. P. A. What did you end up doing on W. P. A.?

Mr. Davis: I....I worked at Lake Padden. I worked for the water company.

Mr. Runestrand: What, building the reservoir area and stuff?

Mr. Davis: No, no, I just cleaned up around the Lake and made things presentable.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. What did you think of that program? Were you pleased with it? Some people don't like Roosevelt for doin' that.

Mr. Davis: It was better than nothing, brother. It was a life saver to some people. I heard one woman over at Lake Whatcom tell my councilman, a Harshman, says, "When's your husband goin' to work in the mill?" "I hope he don't never go to work in the mill. We're gettin' more now on the W. P. A., than we ever got in the mill." "I hope he stays there." So, that was the general.... they treated ya fine and dandy. They were treated fine and dandy. All you had to do was to work for what you wanted.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. Well, Ned, I want to thank you for talkin' with me.