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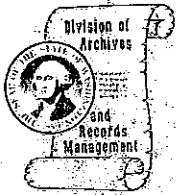
ACCESSION NO. WCT75-84nr	TAPE NO.
INTERVIEWEE'S NAME ROY E. HAMLIN	

RELEASE

I, the undersigned, hereby consent to the tape recording of conversations given in connection with the Washington State Oral/Aural History Program on OCTOBER 14, 1975 and to the divulging of said tape recordings and/or transcripts made therefrom.

INTERVIEWER MICHAEL A. RUNESTRAND	DATE 10/14/75
COMMUNITY ADVISOR DON O. EKLUND	DATE
PROGRAM COORDINATOR JIMATHY FREDERICK	DATE 2/22/77

Roy E. Hamlin
SIGNATURE (INTERVIEWEE)



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INTERVIEWEE'S NAME ROY HAMLIN	

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I, the undersigned, hereby consent to the ~~tape recording~~ ^{PHOTOGRAPHING} of conversations given in connection with the Washington State Oral/Aural History Program on OCTOBER 21, 1975 and to the divulging of said ~~tape recordings~~ ^{PHOTOS} and/or transcripts made therefrom.

INTERVIEWER	DATE
COMMUNITY ADVISOR	DATE
PROGRAM COORDINATOR	DATE

Mark Lovchick 10/21/75
Janet Fretwell 10/25/75

x *Roy Hamlin*

SIGNATURE (INTERVIEWEE)



TAPE ARCHIVE SHEET

INTERVIEWEE'S NAME Roy Hamlin BIRTH DATE 1901

HOME ADDRESS _____

INTERVIEWER Michael A. Runestrand

INTERVIEW TITLE EARLY LOGGING IN WHATCOM COUNTY AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE TRUCK LOGGING INDUSTRY

INTERVIEW DATE October 14, 1975 TIME _____

INTERVIEW SUMMARY Family background; History of the Northeast county; Accidents in the woods;

Early truck logging, problems and areas; Changes in truck logging the past 30

years; Nooksack Indians in south Deming area; Memories

RESTRICTIONS None

PROPER NAMES OR COLLOQUIAL EXPRESSIONS USED Loyal Legion of Lumbermen and Loggers; Volstead

Act; Charlie Wilson; Blue Mountain; McCoy and Logie's camp; Swen Larson;

B & N Railroad; Spruce Division of U.S. Army; International Workers of the World;

Brooks Lumber; U.S. Itarco; World War I

INTERVIEW AND RECORDING QUALITY _____

DOCUMENTATION Photographs

Mr. Roy Hamlin

October 14, 1975

"EARLY LOGGING IN WHATCOM COUNTY AND THE BEGINNING
OF THE TRUCK LOGGING INDUSTRY"

Interviewed by: Michael A. Runstrand

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

Accession No. WCT 75-8mr, . Tape No. 1, Tape Side Nos.: 1&2, No of Pgs: 28

Mr. Roy Hamlin
October 14, 1975

Accession No. WCT 75-8mr, . Tape No. 1, Tape Side No. 1

Mr. Michael Runestrand: Well, we're here today with Mr. Roy Hamlin; and Roy, when were you born?

Mr. Roy Hamlin: I was born in Arkansas in 1901.

Mr. Runestrand: What was the date of your birth?

Mr. Hamlin: February 5.

Mr. Runestrand: Arkansas, what part of Arkansas?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, I think it was on the southern part of it near the Missouri line.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. You're...

Mr. Hamlin: I've never been back there.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. You came out when you were, what? Three months old, did you say?

Mr. Hamlin: Three months old, yeah.

Mr. Runestrand: The...what did your...what did your dad do?

Mr. Hamlin: He worked in sawmills back in Arkansas and then when we come out here he started working...cutting shingle bolts up at Lake Whatcom ...for the shingle mills on Lake Whatcom.

Mr. Runestrand: Huh. Did you live in town when you first came to this area?

Mr. Hamlin: I think we must have lived in town here someplace for awhile, not too long though, probably.

Mr. Runestrand: You moved out in the county then?

Mr. Hamlin: Out to Deming.

Mr. Runestrand: I see. That's where you were raised?

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah, I was...I first...we lived several places around out in the county...wherever he happened to have work, why, he would find some kind of an old house to move into. And when there was no cars, you had to either

batch or live near your job.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah.

Mr. Hamlin: And that's the way we'd do, he'd try to move. And especially, it was easier after he got horses. After a few years he accumulated a team and then he took out shingle bolts or logged with it. Then we would just move like a bunch of gypsies if he could find some old house to move into. I remember one place was even a log cabin...two places were log cabins. They've since burned down.

Mr. Runestrand: Around the Deming....?

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah. Deming area...up to Bell Creek...as far as Kendell, and up to Acme and Van Zandt.

Mr. Runestrand: Down into Clipper and that area?

Mr. Hamlin: And Welcome, yes, we lived at Welcome.

Mr. Runestrand: What was...waht was that area like in the early 1900's?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, there was lots of work. There was a shingle mill or a saw mill about every two mills...two and a half miles apart all along the railroad.

Mr. Runestrand: Now before...how did the railroad run? Right through the valley down into Sedro Woolley now?

Mr. Hamlin: Yes, just as it is right now.

Mr. Runestrand: Same line?

Mr. Hamlin: Same line....Sumas to Sedro Woolley.

Mr. Runestrand: They had a lot of spurs running off then I imagine then to different mills?

Mr. Hamlin: Just short sidings...not any length, just enough to park the cars to load the shingles or load the lumber.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. About every two and a half miles?

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah. You could just...all the way along...there was a shingle mill or a saw mill. Big sawmill at Van Zandt, big one up towards...they called it Standard, where you go across the crossing going into Acme. Shingle mills

in Acme, on up towards Saxon. The same way going towards Sumas. There were shingle mills, saw mills all along the line.

Mr. Runestrand: I'll be darned. You're...well, the hauling of shingle bolts, they've got a few ponds and a few creeks around there...I imagine they used some floating method?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, they had a little pond at each mill as a rule, to hold a few cords of bolts. And they...then to go back in the hills up the creeks, they would put in a flume...a shoot that would...out of boards mostly and water, and they would flume them bolts...shingle bolts down out of the hills as much as two and a half miles.

Mr. Runestrand: Two and a half miles, is that right?

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah. They'd have a lot of that, yeah.

Mr. Runestrand: Did you ever see one of these flumes bein' built?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, I've walked up and down them, and I've even ridden the shingle bolts. We used to as kids, if we could on them we'd grab a slab and ride down the ...after they were abandoned, of course. They...expecially, one over by Van Zandt, across the river from Van Zandt, there was one went up in the hills and I can remember as kids we would ride the bolts down that. There was another one at Acme, come down off of the hill. There was one at Coal Creek where the saw mill was, in there that the Gilfellens had.

Mr. Runestrand: Gilfellen? Was....?

Mr. Hamlin: Gilfellens had a saw mill there, or shingle mill rather, and their flume came from way up in the hills.

Mr. Runestrand: What type of a grade are you talkin' about now with these flumes? Were they rather steep in some areas, or was it a gentle....?

Mr. Hamlin: As gentle as they could get them so that the bolts would mostly float on water...they used water as a rule. But there was some short ones that were steep. I remember one at...before you get to Coal Creek, a place they called Hungry Gulch. There was a little shingle mill there, and that

only had a shoot of about six hundred feet long out of fir poles. And it was steep enough the bolts would just go skootin'. And I recall when I first went to work there. My dad was foreman and I was about nineteen years old, I guess, and we took a nice round shingle bolt, a green one, and peeled the bark off and put it on that shoot, and it went like a bullet down there...went clear across the pond and hit the cookhouse. (Chuckles)

Mr. Runestrand: How...on these flumes, Roy, how deep are we talking? Like if you were to stand in the base of the flume, how deep would it be?

Mr. Hamlin: Oh, not over sixteen or eighteen inches on each side.

Mr. Runestrand: Okay then.

Mr. Hamlin: They were just about probably twenty...two feet wide in the bottom or less.

Mr. Runestrand: Twenty two inches, you mean?

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah. Twenty two inches or two feet wide in the bottom, and then just a side that sloped up...either straight up or mostly of 'em had a slant to the side so that they could take and put a bigger shingle bolt in.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. The bolts normally were what..only about sixteen....?

Mr. Hamlin: No, fifty four inches, I think.

Mr. Runestrand: Fifty four inches across?

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah, long.

Mr. Runestrand: Long, and how much of wide? About sixteen?

Mr. Hamlin: Oh, they...they were probably three feet around...two to three feet around.

Mr. Runestrand: I see.

Mr. Hamlin: They figured about...anywhere from eighteen to twenty two pieces made a cord stack...so they would be, oh, up to eighteen inches across.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah.

Mr. Hamlin: Generally they were not a round log, they were pie shaped. Cut like a pie cut.

Mr. Runestrand: Huh. Well, you went to school in the Deming area, is that right? Off and on?

Mr. Hamlin: Off and on, yes. I started to school in...where the Welcome Grange Hall sits. There was a schoolhouse there in the early days, in about 19...oh, '06 or '07; that was the first school I ever attended.

Mr. Runestrand: Was...was there quite a large population of students in these different schools?

Mr. Hamlin: Oh no, maybe only twenty five...thirty kids.

Mr. Runestrand: How did...most of 'em would get there either by horse or walk?

Mr. Hamlin: Walk, yeah. Very few of 'em ever...they was close enough..within walking..two or two and a half miles walking distance there was a school.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. You were telling me the other day that you got started in the woods because of the flu epidemics.

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah, there was plenty of work and it was an easy way to make some spending money. I was still going to school during those flue vacations.

Mr. Runestrand: Well, who would decide to let...well, like how many kids would have to be out before they'd shut down the schools?

Mr. Hamlin: Oh, I sup...the school officials...I don't know whether they had a county health department then or not, or whether it was just up to the school principal. But I think they was probably the health board at that time, of some sort.

Mr. Runestrand: And they just shut it down because people had the flu?

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah, for a couple or three weeks so...get enough kids...would get well enough to...and to keep it from spreading to...til they would get back in school again.

Mr. Runestrand: Many of your childhood friends die from many of these diseases?

Mr. Hamlin: Ehhh....?

Mr. Runestrand: Influenza or...?

Mr. Hamlin: I just can't recall that any of 'em died from the flu at that time.

There may have been some around the county that died...older folks especially, but I don't think any of the kids themselves died.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. Well, I've heard about the fear that some of these influenza attacks, and also polio later in the '30's, you know, during the summertime.

Mr. Hamlin: There was quite a few kids around the country had that polio. But...

Mr. Runestrand: Well, talkin' about you movin' around, you know, the family movin' around like that, did your mom get along pretty well just travelin' around. Havin' to shift from house to house?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, we would generally stay a year, maybe two years in a place. Maybe...generally around a year. I think we averaged nineteen moves in nineteen years...or twenty years. (Chuckles) Around the different places.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. The...the first logging camp you worked in...what was the name of it?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, I think it must have been Hoff and Pinkey's camp. There.. there was...during that flue period there was a little camp along the...what was then the new railroad, the B and N, that went up through Deming...or the Milwaukee, form Goshen to Welcom.. That was a new road then and there was some timber along that road and there would just be a small gypo outfit. I've forgotten the name of 'em.

Mr. Runestrand: What was that name you gave? The Hoff and Pinkey?

Mr. Hamlin: The Hoff and Pinkey, was the first logging camp I think, I worked in as a logging camp.

Mr. Runestrand: When you...well, this was about what...1918 then? Something like that?

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah, or '19, along in there.

Mr. Runestrand: Were you staying with the folks at that time? Or were you boarding at the camp?

Mr. Hamlin: They had a log...camp, yes, I stayed in camp then. You had to carry your own blankets for bedroll, and you could board in the camp. I think the board cost us.. you just paid for your meals actually, they didn't charge for the bunkhouse part. But, I think we paid four and a half or five dollars a week for board.

Mr. Runestrand: Would...did you consider that good at the time?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, it was...yeah, it was okay. We didn't make much money. I think the wages were three and a half or four dollars a day.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah.

Mr. Hamlin: Some were less, although the boys on the rigging, the donkeys, I think, got four dollars...maybe three sixty. The ones on the railroad...these were all railroad camps, they didn't pay that much there. I think they only paid about three dollars a day to work on the railroad, and some odd jobs.

Mr. Runestrand: Um, what was your first job? Were you whistle punk or were you,,?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, either whistle punk or a chokerman, I can't remember which. Probably settin' chokers first, then, I graduated to a whistle punk, and then from then on I done a little bit of all sorts of work in the camp...rigging... some high rigging, more falling than bucking...hand falling and bucking.

Mr. Runestrand: How...how were the camps logging at the time? Was it high lead by '19, or was it still low lead loggin'?

Mr. Hamlin: Most of 'em by 1920 were high lead, yes. They...I think the ground lead had all disappeared by that time.

Mr. Runestrand: I was wondering maybe on some of these small outfits that could do it cheaper, or, might have stayed with the low lead, but...?

Mr. Hamlin: I saw...saw ground lead logging in 1908, there was quite a little bit of it going on yet, and 1910, around there.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. What type of...what type of timber were you goin' for in 1918...1919? The war was just ending...?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, they were just the choicest...anything that had a stain or rot in it was left lying in the woods. They just didn't take it. Hemlock they didn't bother with at all because it was only worth a couple of bucks a thousand. It wasn't worth taking.

Mr. Runestrand: So you went for cedar, spruce, douglas fir, things like that?

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah. There wasn't too much spruce in this country, just an odd tree here and there. But the douglas fir and the cedar was what they wanted.

Mr. Runestrand: Did you see many...you were up in the woods at that time, I don't know if you've heard of it, the Spruce Division? They were...Loyal Legion of Lumbermen and Loggers during the war....?

Mr. Hamlin: Yes, I recall that very well.

Mr. Runestrand: Did you see or...many of these camps working?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, there was only one in this area that I recall. There was a bunch of soldiers stayed there...right there by what was then we called, the U. S. That's where the river bridge is South of Deming?

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah.

Mr. Hamlin: Right across the Nooksack. There was a big shingle mill there. And there was the McDonald Logging Camp, and they had some old chain drive solid tire trucks, and there was some soldiers stationed at that camp. But there was no Spruce, it was all Fir that they were logging.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah.

Mr. Hamlin: But they were logging. The Spruce Division was really out on the peninsula, where they logged spruce.

Mr. Runestrand: I see. I heard they were loggin' primarily for the airplanes?

Mr. Hamlin: That's right...of the spruce and to build those fighter planes. They were bi-planes in them days.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah.

Mr. Hamlin: And they used spruce for struts and framework. It's strong and light. And they had that Spruce Division over on the peninsula. They even

built a special railroad from Port Angeles out to Forks to haul them logs. in.

Mr. Runestrand: Did you travel much when you were loggin', Roy?

Mr. Hamlin: No, no, just around...

Mr. Runestrand: Just around the county?

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah. Stayed right there...worked for three or four different camps is all.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. What was the best camp you worked for when you were loggin'?

Mr. Hamlin: Oh, I don't know that there was any best. They were all the same, about. Very little difference in working conditions that I could see.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. Were there...were there many fellas that you worked with that belonged to the I. W. W.?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, I don't think so in this area. I don't think it ever got strong at all, or even...maybe...very few if any of 'em belonged to that union.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. Were any of the camps that you belonged to unionized?

Mr. Hamlin: Yes, later on when...in 19...around..1950, the camp...well, I can't recall whether it was the men in the camp or the boommen pulled a strike and shut the camp down for, oh, two months, I think. And I was working at Galbraiths at Saxon at that time, and that camp was down for a couple of months til they got the strike settled.

Mr. Runestrand: But, in the '20's and '30's, there were no strikes in the woods?

Mr. Hamlin: No, there was no early day strikes to....in the woods.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah.

Mr. Hamlin: Some....occasionally a mill may...on the waterfront may have had strikes, but none in the woods.

Mr. Runestrand: When you...we were talking about working the woods and bringing the wood out, you mentioned that most of it was railroad hauled. With the river right next...the Nooksack River next to these camps...did they float much of the timber down the Nooksack at all?

Mr. Hamlin: None that I knew of. They used to use the river for shingle bolts in the early days...especially...well, pretty near all of 'em did, I think. They put a shear boom across the river and they put...dumped the logs in up the river, I believe, and especially this U. S. Mill, big mill. It was a six machine mill, pretty good sized. They were South of Deming, and there was a slough that took off up above the river about...up above the bridge about two miles, and they had a shear boom there which would steer these logs into this slough. And bring them down to the mill, and they had a dam in it and it...to hold them logs. I've seen probably several thousand shingle bolts in that slough. It would be backed up there for half a mile.

Mr. Runestrand: That's quite a bit.

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah, there was a lot of 'em. We used to run...go down as kids and run on them shingle bolts. If you didn't stay on one...you could run 'em before they'd sink you could run across the slough almost. But most of 'em wouldn't hold you up or they'd roll. But we used to make a quick dash across there on one and then the other. (Chuckles)

Mr. Runestrand: Well, you...you finished in the woods when? In 19...late '20's sometime, you finished logging in the woods?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, after my dad got killed, I got a service station for a couple of years, and I didn't work in the woods. Then, I closed the service station and went back and worked in the woods for three or four years.

Mr. Runestrand: Your dad got killed by an old widowmaker?

Mr. Hamlin: Yes, it was a snag fell on him.

Mr. Runestrand: Did you see many of that...I mean, I've heard stories of that thing occurring all over the woods. Did you see many injuries when you worked in the woods?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, only one other man that I recall got killed. About the.. when I was working at Chinns...a rigging slinger got...there was a wrong signal went in to the donkey through signal punk, and the rigging started up when it

wasn't supposed to and the man was in the way of the log as it moved and got squeezed and killed. And wait a minute, there was one other man I saw got killed. When I worked at McCoy and Logies, one of the first...that was one of my earlier camps I worked in. They was high leading and they had pulled the top out of a tree.

Mr. Runestrand: Out of the spar tree?

Mr. Hamlin: Out of the spar tree, yes. The tree broke and the rigging all came down around, and the loading donkey sat right under it at that time. It was just right near it, and the bull block came down out of the top of the tree and hit the loading engineer and took the top of his head off.

Mr. Runestrand: Oh boy!

Mr. Hamlin: And I saw him there in the camp after they brought him down... that evening.

Mr. Runestrand: Uhm.... Did they stop logging when an accident like that would happen or just put him off to the side and just....?

Mr. Hamlin: Oh, they just kept on working. They didn't even shut the camp down. They'd haul him out and keep on working. And then there was...I saw one other fella that got killed. I was partners in a little gypo logging camp over by...by Wildwood, at Lake Whatcom in 1930....1938. And a fellow that was working for us got killed. He either got killed or had a heart attack, we never could quite make up our mind.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. The....did the camps have any compensation for...?

Mr. Hamlin: yeah, there was workman's compensation, just like there is now.

Mr. Runestrand: Okay. I wondered if the widow would get anything or not.

Mr. Hamlin: Oh yes, when my dad got killed in 1923, there was three minors... two minor kids, under eighteen, and I think my mother got thirty five dollars a month for herself and, oh, fifteen or twenty dollars a month for each one of the children til they were eighteen.

Mr. Runestrand: Did...did this last the rest of her life.....?

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah, it lasted the rest of her life until she was...eighty six, I think, when she died. Eighty nine? Well anyway, she drew that for years. And they increased it. When she died, I think she was getting as much as a hundred and twenty five.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. The...aftereffect of the injuries in the woods...say, gettin' your hand when you're slingin' the choker, and they'd pull the chain and you'd get your hand caught or something....maybe you'd lose a hand. Was there compensation for that too?

Mr. Hamlin: Oh yeah, yeah. I think maybe as much as a thousand dollars for the loss of a hand....maybe it was more, I can't recall....never had anything to do with that. But...

Mr. Runestrand: Were the camps around here concerned for the safety of their men? The camps you worked?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, they pretty much had to look out for themselves. They didn't have any...I think there was a safety inspector...the state had a safety inspector come around all right and inspect the camps and made them put on... like an extra strap on the bull block in case the original one that you were pulling broke, and it would slide down the guyline. And there were a few thingsthey had guards on the donkey, but still fellows got hurt. My son-in-law's dad got his leg broke on the donkey, when the crank went around and hit him. I've heard of...I knew of a fellow that had his arm go through the gears, and some got caught with the lines, and they were just all...not too much, I mean of carelessness, but just come along in the line of their work. In the woods everything is over your head...all the trees are up in the air...when they come down you can very well be under a limb or under a tree. And the lines are all up in the air, and when they come down you can get caught with them. I had a big skyline come down one time that almost took the bill of my cap off and it zipped by my nose and hit the ground beside me. (Chuckles)

Mr. Runestrand: Did that make you stop and think for a minute?

Mr. Hamlin: I had two or three near...one time the fallers fell a tree and it knocked a bunch of limbs down. They fell it in my direction, and there was limbs hailin' down all around, but luckily, I wasn't hit.

Mr. Runestrand: When you were logging in this area up around Deming and Acme and up and down the river and different areas, did you ever find or see much evidence of the old Nooksack tribe? Old long...some of their old longhouses or burying places, or Indian people living around there themselves?

Mr. Hamlin: No. I knew some of the older Indians all right. They were getting away up in years when I was...at least seventy years ago. And they were old then. So they would go back as much as a hundred, a hundred and thirty or forty years since they were born. But the only settlement there was that Nooksack tribe at...they had their allotments along the river...a hundred and sixty acres. And there was a little concentration right there around that shingle mill there South of Deming on the Nooksack. They used to run nets in the river, and the game warden was after 'em in them days just about like they have been here lately. The county game warden was trying to stop them from using nets in the river back when I was...I remember I was about...probably twelve years old when we were walking to school. Of course we could see the Indians fishing in the river with nets, and the game warden would come along and ask me if I saw them Indians fishing in the river. Sure, I saw 'em fishing in the river. And I...then he subpoenaed me for a witness and took them to court.

Mr. Runestrand: Is that right. Do you have to go to court?

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah, I had to come to Bellingham to court when I was about twelve years old as a witness for the county. And I can't recall if they ever fined the Indian. It wouldn't do any good to fine 'em. They didn't have anything, and they were using and eating all the fish they ever caught. Occasionally, they would sell one for fifty cents or seventy five cents, and they'd get a

little cash. But for the most part, they smoked them and used them.

Mr. Runestrand: Well, it wasn't that tough for anyone to get a fish out of the Nooksack was it?

Mr. Hamlin: No, not them days. There was salmon in the river out there if a white man was hungry enough he'd just go down to the river and gaff one.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. Did you...was there much problem between the...the white people out in the Northeast county area and the Indians? Did they get along fine?

Mr. Hamlin: Oh yeah, they were...there was no problem whatever. They...the Indians used to get drunk once in awhile and they'd whoop and hollar around, but they didn't....

Mr. Runestrand: I imagine the white man did that too?

Mr. Hamlin: Oh yeah, it was wide open...the saloons...there was two saloons in Deming up to about 1918, I presume when the Volstead Act went in. And the Indians...if they could get a little money by...they could buy liquor like anybody else....at that time.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. You got married in what? '23, Roy?

Mr. Hamlin: 1923, yes.

Mr. Runestrand: Where was Mrs. Hamlin staying at that time? When you were...?

Mr. Hamlin: Living at home.

Mr. Runestrand: Living with the family while you were....?

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah.

Mr. Runestrand: While you were loggin'?

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah.

Mr. Runestrand: Would have to batch at most of these camps?

Mr. Hamlin: No, they had cookhouses.

Mr. Runestrand: Okay.

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah. Yeah, there was a cookhouse in most all the camps.

Mr. Runestrand: She never followed you around to the camps?

Mr. Hamlin: Oh no.

Mr. Runestrand: You weren't what they called one of those home guards?

Mr. Hamlin: No...she...the only time that...well, she was along for a couple of different times when I was working in the camp...a week at a time.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. When did you...well, you moved out of the Deming area and moved into Bellingham, isn't that right? When you built this house?

Mr. Hamlin: No, we rented for one year or two years?

Mrs. Hamlin: Two and a half years.

Mr. Hamlin: Two and a half years before we built this house.

Mr. Runestrand: Well, when you...when you moved into town and started in the gasoline business...that was what? About '20...'29, did you say? '25?

Mrs. Hamlin: Tire business.

Mr. Runestrand: Why did you choose gas station?

Mr. Hamlin: Just to get away from the woods.

Mr. Runestrand: You were just tired of working in the woods?

Mr. Hamlin: Workin' in the woods, yeah. I wanted to get into something better.

Mr. Runestrand: Well, during the '20's, was gas hard to get?

Mr. Hamlin: No.

Mr. Runestrand: Was a station hard to purchase or set up?

Mr. Hamlin: You could go to any of the oil companies and then they'd help you get started in a station..advance the equipment and pay for it by gallon and...

Mr. Runestrand: What were you...what were you sellin' gas for in the mid to late '20's?

Mr. Hamlin: I think it was twenty three cents a gallon, but I've....

Mr. Runestrand: And they didn't have ethel, it was just plain old regular?

Mr. Hamlin: Just regular gas is all there was...one grade of gas is all there was. Wait a minute! No, they did have ethel at that time too.

Mr. Runestrand: Did they?

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah. In 1929 when I had the gas station..in '28, there was ethel, yes.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. What type of..well, you must have made enough to get by. But, it was tough times in '29 and '30...?

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah, it was just about all we did was to make enough to get by, that was all.

Mr. Runestrand: What was mainly your business in the gas? Was it private use or selling to truckers or...?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, there wasn't too many truckers, mostly for cars, yes.

Mr. Runestrand: Well, when did you finally leave the gas station business?

Mr. Hamlin: 1930, Ellen?

Mrs. Hamlin: Um hum.

Mr. Hamlin: About 1930. I was only in it a couple of years.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum.

Mr. Hamlin: Then I went back and worked in the woods again then for awhile... for a couple of years.

Mr. Runestrand: When did you start truckin' Roy?

Mrs. Hamlin: '33.

Mr. Runestrand: 1933?

Mr. Hamlin: I think, 1933 was when I hauled first long log. But I had logged some cottonwood and alder and had a model 'T' truck that I hauled 'em out to the railroad with before that. And sometime after 1933....between '30 and '33, I done a little trucking...hauled pulpwood and shingle bolts, poles.

Mr. Runestrand: Was it because of the depression you went into a sideline of trucking? Or was it...what....was it just another way to make some money?

Mr. Hamlin: Just another way to try to make some money, that's all. I graduated from having a truck and doing my own logging...hauled my own logs.

Mr. Runestrand: How did you get your first truck? Did you buy...I mean, have to repair it? Or did you buy it brand new?

Mr. Hamlin: Oh no, it was a used truck. I don't even remember who I bought it from now.

Mrs. Hamlin: Jim Yelton.

Mr. Hamlin: Well, that....not the first one. You know Mid and I had that model 'T'. I don't know where we bought it now...around town here someplace. It was probably ...only cost us three hundred dollars. And...

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. You were telling...was this the one that you had when you were workin' out at Lake Samish with? The problem with the brakes?

Mr. Hamlin: No, that was....that was the second truck I had, I think.

Mr. Roy Hamlin
October 14, 1975

Accession No. WTC 75-21mr, Tape No. 1, Tape Side No. 2

Mr. Runestrand: Okay, when changed the sides of this tape, I was asking you about when you were logging out around Lake Samish, and you had a truck without brakes? Or you just...you must have had brakes because comin' down off the hill.....

Mr. Hamlin: I was just using the...we didn't go up in the hills there then... that was just right off the county road. The trailer I had without brakes was in 1934 and '35.....over at Van Zandt when I logged for Charlie Wilson.

Mr. Runestrand: That's when you got brakes?

Mr. Hamlin: That's when I put brakes on the trailer....went ...bought Ford parts from Diehl Motor and put them on the trailer. The axle had no brakes on it when I....

Mr. Runestrand: Well, how would you brake comin' off the hill then? Or comin' off the loggin' area?

Mr. Hamlin: Before I got brakes on the trailer I used this steel shoe underneath the trailer wheel and let it ride the shoe which was chained to the frame of the truck, and let the wheel ride that shoe down the hill.

Mr. Runestrand: (Chuckles) Did it serve a pretty good...I mean, it must have worked.

Mr. Hamlin: Yes. Sometimes you'd even have...you could step on the gas a little bit where it wasn't too steep.

Mr. Runestrand: Was the shoe only as wide as the wheel?

Mr. Hamlin: Yes. It was dual tires on that trailer and it was about eighteen or twenty inches wide and about three feet long.

Mr. Runestrand: And you only put one on....

Mr. Hamlin: One...one...one per side on, yes. One wheel.

Mr. Runestrand: How would lift that thing up after you got through with it?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, it probably weighed seventy or eighty pounds and you could lift it up and load it on the truck and haul it back up the hill.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. Who were you selling the wood to when you first started?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, I didn't sell any then...of them logs. The first...all the logs I ever sold was alder and cottonwood...some of the cottonwood was hauled here to Bellingham and it was loaded on freighters and went to Japan. The alders logs I loaded on cars that...over there South of Deming and...what they called Casey, was the name of the spur. For the railroad...called it Casey. And those went to Tacoma for furniture logs.

Mr. Runestrand: Hummm.

Mr. Hamlin: To a furniture factory.

Mr. Runestrand: What was the length you could first....1934...what was the length of logs you could be carrying on your rig?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, after I got a trailer, we hauled 'em up as long as forty feet.

Mr. Runestrand: Okay. But on your small one...your model 'T'.....?

Mr. Hamlin: Oh, that was just eight foot logs....no trailer.

Mr. Runestrand: I see. Then, primarily, you contracted out or worked for...?

Mr. Hamlin: Worked by the thousand or by the day....mostly by the thousand.

Mr. Runestrand: Thousand board feet?

Mr. Hamlin: Yes.

Mr. Runestrand: Well, when you first...when you first contracted out and you were workin' by the thousand, what type of wages were you gettin' for haulin' sumpin' like that?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, it wasn't very much. I think maybe around five dollars a thousand...four dollars a thousand...from out around Van Zandt.

Mr. Runestrand: Five dollars a thousand?

Mr. Hamlin: Or four...I just can't remember. I know that we didn't gross

very much. Maybe more...anywhere from forty to sixty dollars a day for the use of the truck and driving.

Mr. Runestrand: Is that...was that just barely enough to squeek by at that time? Or was that pretty good? It doesn't sound bad.

Mr. Hamlin: We got by a lot better then, than when I was hauling shingle bolts and pulpwood with the smaller truck. But it was still nothing very big, because we had lots of tire trouble in them days...tires were fairly expensive.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. When I was talking with you before, I asked you about the rates, and you said that you also got changes...I don't know if it still is in the trucking industry...but on a different road you'd get a different rate?

Mr. Hamlin: Still the same, yeah.

Mr. Runestrand: And...like for a rough road or for pullin' a rough hill, you'd get like twenty cents a mile rather than ten cents a mile for....

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah, that's right.

Mr. Runestrand: Did the companies vary on that type of deal? Could they vary? And you'd just say, "I'm sorry, I...you've gotta give me more money to pull this road or" What?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, lots of itmes it was hard to collect the full rates. They either used the scale rule and cut down on the load or...or...it..but as a rule, we didn't have too much trouble. After the...after the state sent their man up and he run the road and set the rate, why, there wasn't too big a problem. Although there was some chiseling by different truckers too, for that matter.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. Which were some of the camps that you'd haul for? This....

Mr. Hamlin: Well, I've hauled for Swen Larson and I've hauled for Galbraith and there was an Everett outfit up by Welcomlet's see, they called it...

...do you remember the name of that camp Ellen? Brooks Lumber...was that...? And I hauled for Usitalo which is now Washington Loggers in the early days when he come here.

Mrs. Hamlin: Corning.

Mr. Hamlin: And Corning. And I...and Berg. I hauled just about for every one of 'em over the years.

Mrs. Hamlin: Roy...Blue Mountain.

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah, and Blue Mountain, not so much though.

Mr. Runestrand: The...these different camps...the wood you would haul...now was this primarily for timber, for pulp, for building? What was the wood going for most of these places?

Mr. Hamlin: It was dumped into the salt water.

Mr. Runestrand: Okay. So you would bring it into town then?

Mr. Hamlin: And it would go to various mills around...

Mr. Runestrand: I see.

Mr. Hamlin: And the...some might have been pulled to Everett. A lot of it was cut locally.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. Well, I was wondering because when we talked before, we were talking about railroads being close by, and now we're talking about the trucking coming in.

Mr. Hamlin: Well, the railroads dumped it primarily. The railroads...where the private railroads would just bring it down to the mail road which would be the Milwaukee at Welcome. There was at least three railroads...private railroads come to Welcome or near there and left their logs. And then the Milwaukee would sent their log train out and pick up, and they'd come in with as many as seventy..eighty cars everyday from up in that area....from Welcome area. Hoff and Pinkey would put out up to ten...twelve cars...loads a day. Bufflin would put out maybe fifteen...twenty loads. McCoy and Logie...and later got to be...they sold out to...I've forgot the name...they were the big-

ger camp...they run as much as three sides. They would put out maybe fifty cars a day.

Mr. Runestrand: When you say three side...now, that's three different spar poles workin' on...?

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah, where they would load out cars at three different places.

Mr. Runestrand: When did...when did trucking really start to take hold in this area, Roy?

Mr. Hamlin: Oh, in...around 1935...'36, it begin to pick up a little bit. They began to build truck roads rather than railroads.

Mr. Runestrand: Is it because that it was just too costly to run a railroad or they could get more work done by usin' the trucks or...?

Mr. Hamlin: It...the logs were beginning to be further up in the hills and it was cheaper to build a truck road, which you could build away steeper. Railroads are built on a generally about a three or four percent grade, and it took miles of railroad to gain any elevation.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah.

Mr. Hamlin: And where a truck they could just build a road maybe as high... as steep as twenty percent...and you could get up and down it.

Mr. Runestrand: Was...did you notice by the '30's...into the '40's a substantial change in the size of the timber you were haulin' out of this area?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, there was still a few big logs. Some of the places were.. some timber was left low down, but for the most part the logs began to be smaller as you went up the mountains and gained elevation.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. How many, oh, by 1940...by the beginning of the war.. how many loads a day could you bring into Bellingham?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, two or three is all.

Mr. Runestrand: Okay. And that's from the Welcome area?

Mr. Hamlin: Welcome or over by Acme. Trucks weren't very fast. The roads weren't very good.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. Where would you bring 'em into town? Down here where the ice place...ice company....?

Mr. Hamlin: No. Where they were...where the freeze plant is now...on that fill...that was just twenty two acres of sand at that time.

Mr. Runestrand: And you'd...how would you dump 'em in the water? Did they have...you just...they'd have a picker out there?

Mr. Hamlin: No, there was nothing like that there. They had a couple of wedge shaped blocks about eight feet long and they were probably twelve or fourteen inches thick. On the thick end and we used to just take off our chains and trip the cheese blocks and if they didn't all go off, why, we would run up on them blocks and that would tip the truck so they would roll off.

Mr. Runestrand: What the heck is a cheese block?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, now everybody uses high stakes on the end of their...well the cheese block was a piece of iron shaped like a cut of cheese and with a chain that went across the other side, and that was what brought your log on... it was just...they were only about ten inches high, and there was one on each end of the bunk and you tripped it from the opposite side. The chain went across and had what they called a fid hook that you could knock it off with a hammer.

Mr. Runestrand: I see. And that would....?

Mr. Hamlin: That would let that block run and then the log would roll off.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. Was...?

Mr. Hamlin: And every truck carried a log jack...they call 'em Jillcrist.. it was a high jack about two feet long and had a hook, and if you couldn't.. if the log didn't roll off you might have to set the jack on it and give it a roll with that jack.

Mr. Runestrand: A Jill crist?

Mr. Hamlin: Jillcrist was the name of the jack...that's the guy that invented it.

Mr. Runestrand: I see.

Mr. Hamlin: They were made down in Aberdeen, see.

Mr. Runestrand: What were the safety regulations put out, say, in the '30's and '40's, by either the state patrol or the highway department for truck safety?

Mr. Hamlin: We had to use two chains. Now they got it up to three. And we had to use a flag on the tailend, and we had to have a signal arm on the cab of the truck for making turns.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. You didn't...there weren't too many weigh stations in the late '30's and early '40's were there?

Mr. Hamlin: No. Not in the early days, just when they first started weighing us they put the weights and measures laws in...the weight laws, why, they used those jump up scales.

Mr. Runestrand: Would you explain what...you told me the other day, but...?

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah, they were like a overgrown bathroom scale, and you'd run... mostly two axle trucks...and you'd run one axle at a time on to them scales. And they were accurate enough to get you a ticket. (Chuckles) A lot of 'em did get tickets. I recall I got one one time, but...

Mr. Runestrand: Did that come out of your pocket?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, sure.

Mr. Runestrand: Because...well, I mean as a log hauler you controlled how much they put on your truck?

Mr. Hamlin: That's right. I could tell them how little or how much to put on my truck.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. Was it...I mean if you wanted to try dodgin' the scales... you'd get more money for haulin' more board feet?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, that's right. The more you hauled the more money you made, yes, and if you could get by the scales or get in with a big load without a ticket, why, you were that much ahead.

Mr. Runestrand: (Chuckles) The...the changes in the hauling business, I ima-

gine is pretty much the machinery used, huh?

Mr. Hamlin: The type of trucks and the size of the truck. There was no big trucks in the early days. Well, they were big...almost off the road trucks with solid tires, chain drive, four cylinder engines, slow. And they were built heavy. And the six wheelers didn't begin to show up til about 1926 or so..the first ones begin to show up around here. KW started building, and Morland started to building. And then in the early '40's they used to build some attachments for Fords and Chevrolets...made six wheelers of 'em..single axle. They strengthened up the frame and put a extra gear box in 'em and an extra rear end in 'em and made six wheelers out of 'em. They called 'em Gricos.

Mr. Runestrand: Gricos?

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah, that was the brand of the attachment. And they done very well, but they didn't have much power...they were slow.

Mr. Runestrand: Who gave you the first chance to drive one of these six wheelers? Did you just go out and buy one?

-Mr. Hamlin: Yeah, that's right. Yeah, you just buy your own and start drivin'.

Mr. Runestrand: There were no special licenses?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, after 1934, you had to get a permit from the state.

Mr. Runestrand: Special trucker's license?

Mr. Hamlin: Special trucker's...for log hauling, and it was all...everything was controlled by the...what did they call theirself? Commerce...ICC...No, ICC, that's federal...

Mr. Runestrand: But sort of like a state commerce commission?

Mr. Hamlin: State, yeah, state commerce commission is what it was.

Mr. Runestrand: I know, but I can't think of the little tag they put on it, but I know...

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah, a little tag...you had a number. I had a low number. I had one of the lowest numbers in the county. I had eight hundred and thirty four, which was my IC...or my CC number. And we had to pay for them and they

sent out tariffs, and I had a common carrier tariff and that included shingle bolts, poles, logs, and lumber. I couldn't haul a load from Bellingham to Seattle.

Mr. Runestrand: Why?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, my tariff didn't call for it. You had to get...

Mr. Runestrand: Oh, I see. To haul a further distance you had to pay more money?

Mr. Hamlin: Yeah. You had to get it under a different set of rules. You had to..

Mrs. Hamlin: You only had Whatcom and Skagit.

Mr. Hamlin: I had two counties. I could only haul...wait a minute...I had King...Snohomish and King....I had four counties.

Mr. Runestrand: So you could have hauled?

Mr. Hamlin: And I could only work in them four counties.

Mr. Runestrand: I see. But you could have hauled from Bellingham to Seattle but no further than that?

Mr. Hamlin: That's all.....that's right.

Mr. Runestrand: Okay. The...well, you retired what? In '62?

Mr. Hamlin: I think it was 1963 I retired. I was sixty two years old in 1963.

Mr. Runestrand: You trucked then for just about thirty years?

Mr. Hamlin: Off and on for thirty years. Yeah.

Mr. Runestrand: How many trucks did you go thorough?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, let me see. One, two, three, four, five...five or six anyway. And I had one that I bought...I had two trucks at one time...I bought and later sold it.

Mr. Runestrand: Um hum. The...the companies that you've worked for...did you.. did you ever get any type of rebate or anything for having better equipment to haul their goods?

Mr. Hamlin: Oh no. You just took your chances with the rest of the boys.

Mr. Runestrand: What was the best time out of the years you hauled lumber to haul? Was it during the World War...World War II? For the price of wood and...?

Mrs. Hamlin: He didn't haul lumber.

Mr. Runestrand: I mean wood?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, there was quite a lot of work then. I was working up on Cub Creek here out on Lake Whatcom. And I had a pretty good job there for a lot of the time. But I was in a one truck camp, and that's always the best job...if you get in a one or two trucks in the whole outfit, because you get to haul all the logs they produce. You're first every morning. Otherwise we used to take turns, and when there was seven...eight trucks on the job, why, if you were last out you would have to go to work til maybe ten or eleven o'clock in the morning and that would cut your day down. Until you got worked up to be first or second out, you didn't get your three trips or two trips if everything went good.

Mr. Runestrand: Yeah. Earlier we were talking about the problem with tires. Was it tough during the war period to get tires?

Mr. Hamlin: It was...yes, it got tough. It was even tough to get a retread.

Mr. Runestrand: Well, what did you do? I mean your livelihood depended on your tires...?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, we had a priority. Log truckers had a priority rating, and we could get them where some other people couldn't probably.

Mr. Runestrand: What about the rationing of gas? Was that a problem to you?

Mr. Hamlin: No. Well, no, because we had priorities again. We got ticketscoupons.

Mr. Runestrand: Did you ever see much blackmarketing going on among, say, some truckers? Say, your camp was real close into town and you were hauling to town, and some guys were way up in the hills. Now, he'd need more gas than you would, but if you changed jobs you'd need more gas. How did they determine how many stamps to give you in a month?

Mr. Hamlin: Well, they had...they had the rationing board at the court house, and you just had to explain the situation.

Mr. Runestrand: I see.

Mr. Hamlin: There was no problem really.

Mr. Runestrand: Well....

Mr. Hamlin: It wasn't too hard to get. Some people may have had trouble, but I never did, and I don't think most other people did. It just..the fact is I saw one of the rationing board members over East of the mountains hunting deer when gas was supposed to be tough to get. (Chuckles)

Mr. Runestrand: Well, would you...would you suggest now...of course you've been out of hauling for now about ten years or so, would you still say that it's a good job to work at?

Mr. Hamlin: Yes. Some of the boys are doing very well at it even today. They're making money. The biggest trouble nowadays, under conditions, is getting a job. But the boys that are getting logs to haul are doing all right...making money. Where I used to make fifty or sixty dollars a day...they're running as high as three hundred now....gross that is.

Mr. Runestrand: They sort of got to with the price of the trucks they're buyin'.

Mr. Hamlin: Well, they...yes, the trucks cost 'em at least fifty thousand dollars nowadays.. My first six wheel truck cost me fifty eight hundred dollars. And now a truck and a trailer is running over fifty thousand dollars.

Mr. Runestrand: Well, that's a....

Mr. Hamlin: But they're higher powered...capable of earning more money, faster.

Mr. Runestrand: Well, I want to thank you, Roy, for giving me the information about loggin' and log haulin' in this area. I appreciate it.