

VOICES FROM THE PAST

PEA SEED INDUSTRY

By Fred O. Wilcox

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Tape # 101

Oral interview conducted by Harold Forbush

Transcribed by Louis Clements

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(Oral History of the Upper Snake River Valley.)

Forbush: Seated across from this afternoon here at Rexburg it being the 26th Day of October is a man whom I have known now very briefly. His name is Mr. Wilcox. Now Mr. Wilcox we start out in this interview by asking a couple or three very personal questions such as, would you state your full name and the date and place where you were born and your present residence?

Wilcox: Fred Orson Wilcox. I was born 30th of August, 1898, at 1839 West 107th Street, Chicago, Illinois. I bought my present home in the fall of 1925 and have lived at 226 West Main Street, St. Anthony, Idaho, ever since.

HF: Will you give me a little information about your father, his name and just briefly of his background?

FW: My father was John T. Wilcox. He had followed seed business in Chicago for twenty-two years before coming to St. Anthony on July 1, 1912.

HF: Now, your mother, can you give me her name and a little something about her?

FW: My mother was Irene A. Kimy Wilcox. She was born in the corner of 64th and Wetforth, Chicago. Her father was a lawyer, who in his retired years, lived with them in St. Anthony.

HF: Now were your parents middle class people economically there in Chicago?

FW: I would say very much so.

HF: Now had they been born and reared in America?

FW: Yes, my people trace back to pioneer times on the East Coast. My father was born down near Remington, Illinois, in Jasper County, Indiana.

HF: What were the inducing factors that brought your dad clear out here to Idaho?

FW: Jerome B. Rice put out acreage of peas over on what was known as the Fanny Grover Range. Ollie K. Olsen, at that time, was married to her and represented the Rice firm. My father was out, I learned later, made trips in 1910 and 11 scouting for new territory. The see pea business in Wisconsin had moved from Michigan to Wisconsin and had worn that territory out. It seems that after a few years peas do not produce enough for the amount invested in producing them. Therefore, you move to a new territory.

HF: Now when your father came out then to Idaho, was it a pretty sure thing that this particular area, St. Anthony, was a good place for his propagation of peas?

FW: Well, he came here last, I have learned that he, like other scouts, he scouted the Palouse Country around Moscow. Also went to Puget Sound and the coast along the Puget Sound and up into British Columbia was all looked at. There are canning factories today operating.

HF: Of course, I understand, having gone to school at the University of Idaho, that the Palouse area, those hills Idaho and Washington, were tremendously fertile in the production of seed peas.

FW: I've rode all up and down those hills.

HF: And I suppose, well what would be your comment about that, about the Palouse area as a seed producing area?

FW: I'd say it was one of the biggest.

HF: Well now Fred, I guess they often call you Fritz, don't they?

FW: Yes.

HF: Here in the Upper Snake River Valley in Fremont County, what was there about the soils and the temperatures here that were rather ideal for peas?

Wilcox: They were over here on Egin Bench. Mr. Olsen had brought Jerome B. Rice's seed out from Cambridge, New York, and had put on his wife's farm at Parker.

HF: Now was that called the Fanny...?

FW: Fanny Grover Farm.

HF: And it seemingly was very excellent?

FW: Yes.

HF: After your father, then, had checked around these places out in the northwest, that you mentioned, he decided to come here?

FW: To this area.

HF: Now as you recall from tradition, from what you know about it, was he lined up with what companies? Was it more than once?

FW: Yes. He was what you call a contract seed grower. He represented firms he had done business with when he was traveling on the road for the W. W. Barnard Seed Company. W. W. Barnard Seed and McCulloch Seed Company of Cincinnati and Bartellies of Lawrence, Kansas, F. H. Woodruff of Milford, Connecticut, were some of them father

had contracts with when he came out here. AT that time he contracted Everett B. Clark Seed Company's seed and Northrop King's seed. Later Jim Nimole showed up before the contracting was all done and took over the handling of the Clark business which he handled for several years. Father took in all of Northrop King's sweet and stored it in basement of the Grey Opera House. Phil Middleton came out from Minneapolis with processing machinery and set up there in the basement and processed it and shipped it east. He did that for two or three years. Then they located there in St. Anthony and the Northrop King Seed Company is still there using their facilities as a sales headquarters for this territory.

HF: To understand more adequately the procedure, with your father representing these various companies, would he come out kinda as a field man and go to a farmer and say, now look here, I represent so and so, we'd like to grow some peas on your place?

FW: No, no. Father's contracts were directly to him and the farmer. Then they went from my father to the seed house. Now here is an interesting side light. The old gentleman who was the head of Bartelli Seed Company sends a draft out along the fall of the year for ten thousand dollars. He had torn off a piece of brown paper from the counter and wrote on it, "John, I thought you'd need this." Then signed his name. Guy Bauerman at the First National Bank in St. Anthony threw his hat in the air and said what kind of people are you doing business with?

HF: In other words you are suggesting this is a sample of the implicit trust and confidence this particular company had in your father?

FW: That's right. My father, any loss seed, he was to pay at that price. These contracts in these early days were all written, I think are still written, that the farmer will pay for any loss of seed. But we had a few law suits in this Upper Snake River Valley with farmer jurors and you cannot collect.

HF: Well now, going back to my original question, in affect, your father would got to the farmer and he would make a deal with the farmer in raising some pears. What was the deal, what had to be in that contract?

FW: That they would be taken care of and planted in properly prepared land in a proper like manner, irrigated and harvested by the farmer and thrashed and delivered to the seed house.

HF: Ok, and what would the seed company, or what would your father do as his part of the agreement?

FW: He would pay a certain price per pound according the variety on the clean basis. It was to be as clean as the seed was that he delivered.

HF: Now would your father furnish the seed?

FW: Yes sir. He would furnish the seed that had been furnished to him on his initial contract with the contracting company in the East.

HF: So if there was a crop failure, the farmer would lose his time and effort but he wouldn't lose the cost of the seed?

FW: He would lose the cost of the seed at the price it was contracted to be paid for to him if the contract was carried out. Those contracts, it's impossible to collect that seed.

HF: But the contractor, like your father, he would furnish the seed and if the crop did not mature then that would be his loss, not the farmers loss?

FW: It was supposed to be the farmer loss, originally. Sometimes we have had frosts that have curtailed crops here. That was one of the things against this country here. It is a little bit high and we can get frost before their mature.

HF: About how many acres were planted in the heyday of the industry for peas?

FW: Somewhere from twenty to thirty thousand acres. It varied through the years from the apparent demand that you saw ahead, what the canners were carrying over, was one of the factors that the salesmen judged on to determine how many seeds would be needed for the next year. But for years twenty to twenty-five thousand acres were grown in this Upper Snake River Valley.

HF: Now can you indicated about how it was distributed in the Valley? The acreage?

FW: In what way?

HF: Well, was most of the acreage found in Fremont County or some of it found won here in Madison and Jefferson counties?

FW: Yes, it was scattered from Bingham County up. Wilford Olsen, who ran the Filer Seed Company at Blackfoot for years, was the son of Ollie K. Olsen of St. Anthony.

HF: Now ere there a number of processing plants located up and down the valley?

FW: At one time at the height of competition, when it was keen, Rogers put a house in Ashton. John H. Allen and Everett B. Clark Put house in Teton.

HF: Teton City?

FW: Yes. John H. Allen had a house that was recently torn down over here in Rexburg. I think that Clark's had a house here. All three of those big companies pardon me. Allen's, Clarks, and N. B. Kinney. N. B. Kinney was in St. Anthony too, had houses in Rigby, Idaho Falls had Rogers Brothers headquarters. Later California Pack came in there.

About 1928 the Canner's Seed came to Lewisville and are still there with Dr. Reynard as the head of the firm here.

HF: Now these companies that you mentioned with their facilities, their purpose was complete, the, after the peas had been grown and harvested and delivered to them, their purpose was to clean and sort and classify?

FW: That's right. To put in marketable condition and ready to ship to the customer. One of the advantages in placing this investment in these towns was to attract farmer growers. To contract peas in that locality. The different places, you have a house there you could pretty near climate the other fellow unless the farmer took a notion against something that happened.

HF: Economically during the heyday period for the seed pea industry, it must have been a quite a boon to the area? Can you tell me about how many people were employed in these processing plants or sheds?

FW: We had in our heyday picking room for 48 people when we remodeled the Grey Opera House. We had room for 40 women down in ware house that I kept for years. The Allen Seed Company and after they became the Associated Seed Growers about 1928 or 9, Clark's, Allen's, and Kinney's joined. This was not the only area that you found towns with three warehouses. They had ware houses all over the country like that. Up and down the Salinas Valley one place, I understand, was three. Over in the Puget Sound area they had three. Down in Twin Falls they had a couple. At St. Anthony they used two hundred, just under three hundred women, and run two shifts at times.

HF: those three factories?

FW: The one company, after they had gone together, did this. That would be some six hundred people. Northrop King tired forty. W never run the night shift very often but always ran in that opera house building, forty-eight people. Now those women spent money like water.

HF: What type of wages was paid per hour to these women?

FW: Very low. At one time it was dollar per week. At one time it got up to twelve dollars per week. Then with the introduction of the electric eye along about '35 or '6, no a little later than that, quite a little later than that, the pea picking went out. Labor at that time, you're getting into the war time labor at the end of the Depression. Pea picking just disappeared due to the high cost and the efficiency of machine, the electric eye for one. The Sutton Steel and Steel vibrating deck, gravity mill as they called it. It had been a process they had first used separating gold without water in Mexico. It had developed to a point that hey used it on a peanuts and coffee. Pretty near anything like that, that you could use specific gravity to make it climb to the higher side of a deck with air blowing underneath it and little ridges of metal. It would time that metal as the air blew through it and you could set the deck, it had moveable sets, and it did wonderful work.

HF: And this replaced the need for having so many women...?

FW: It reduced peak picking.

HF: When you say pea picking, this act of sorting?

FW: That was the act of the peas coming down on a little belt and the women picking out anything that should come out.

HF: The black ones and the brown ones?

FW: Yes.

HF: Why don't you just briefly take a patch of peas and just more or less indicate how they were planted, how they watered, cultivated through the season, and how they were harvested? I think for those who might read this tape yours from now; they might be very interested in knowing a little something about the procedure of harvesting a patch of peas.

FW: The ground is plowed in the spring. It was cultivated with harrow until there was nice mulch like a garden, if you could get it that way. Some of the bigger crops came off a land that had been harrowed down ten or twelve times. It had a good farm seed base and was fine, mellow soil. Then they were planted with a grain drill. This grain drill would plant flax, would plant rice, would plant peas, and would plant beans. It was broadcast, what they call broadcast, in six or seven inch rows that the ordinary grain drills of those days hand. There were some grain drills that were more accurate than others. They were still more seeds. Then it was seeded. Some places would go over it with a light roller. Other places when the peas first came up, they'd use a tool like rake about ten feet with fourteen inch, light steel blades. Those would knock any little weeds away from the peas without hurting any peas and irrigation. There are good many people who could talk on that from the different sections. Peas are tricky. You can scald them very easily in flood irrigation. You could get the sub to high in sub-irrigation. Peas in dry farms did very well. But the altitude was usually against dry farm peas. Now when they peas start to turn in between then the farmer, the contract calls for the privilege of the contracting company to go in and select the sports or rouges which are throwbacks from some ancestor not desirable in canning peas. The idea in canning peas is to produce a crop that ripens all at the same time so that they can be cut and put in the can the same day. On garden peas the idea is to get the biggest crop. You want that certain type pea that produces the family type.

HF: Now often, would they go in and pack a lot of these peas for canning purposes?

FW: That was only done by families.

HF: I see, where you are raising for seed the pea would be matured and ripened before it was cut?

FW: Yes, before it was cut.

HF: What method was used?

FW: They used a mowing machine. Later they put pea gogs on these machines that they winnow grain with. They are put in windows and it used to be that they would make them in little shocks. Eventually they would haul them to the thresher. They always put a canvas on a bundle wagon when you're hauling peas.

HF: Cause they would shell out?

FW: Yes, they would shell out. The first thrashers were brought in by M.B. Cokes Company of St. Anthony. They were Owens pea thrashers like they used back around Sturgeon Bay, Dar County, Wisconsin. Later they got to putting on specially pulley. You slow the cylinder down and take out a lot of teeth on the concave so that you don't just crack those peas all up as they go through. Then you drive the cleaning part of the machinery faster to clean the peas. Once in a while you get a thrashing job that is perfect. Then again you'd get bad ones. When the combines came, the companies that produced these early combines that were small combines that they used around the irrigated area, had their own pulley adjustments. We began getting some very fine threshing jobs.

HF: In other words, a very fine job would mean little chaff and other debris left in the bag?

FW: Yes, there would only be the burned pea and stuff that weighed enough that you couldn't blow it out and size enough that you couldn't spin it out and the women had to pick it out. That is the kind of stuff that later on these gravity mills could tell to the fraction on the weight of that stuff better than you could draft a wind.

HF: In the way of poundage or tonnage, do you have any idea just about how big a crop...?

FW: You put out about three bushels seed per acre and get a thirty bushel crop back; you had a ten fold crop. Now in the early days forty and fifty bushel crops were common.

HF: What could a farmer realize in the late teens and twenties on an acre of ground? Suppose that he got thirty bushels production per acre.

FW: Thirty bushels per acre would be say, 1800 pounds. Say he had a five cent pea, for quick figures.

HF: Five cents a pound?

FW: Yes.

HF: So that would be a pretty good cash crop?

FW: It was. It brought a lot of money into this valley.

HF: How many acres per average would the farmer devote to peas, twenty acres, thirty acres, and the average farmer?

FW: It depended upon the size of his farm. We would write pea contracts all the way from five to a hundred acres depending on the size of the farmer holdings.

HF: Now actually in the process you have explained of growing that crop, there didn't have to be a lot of hand work? Not a lot of hoeing?

FW: No, no.

HF: Now beets, of course, required a tremendous amount of hoeing and even potatoes.

FW: Potatoes had not come in yet. They started four or five years later and grew steadily to what it is today.

HF: But the beets require a tremendous amount of hand work, didn't they?

FW: Yes.

HF: Hoeing and weeding and what did they do it?

FW: Thinning.

HF: But with peas it could be pretty much done by the machinery?

FW: Yes.

HF: And then the irrigator had to go out and herd the water down the rows. In the case of sub irrigation it was even simpler. Now, if one were to more or less indicate a cut off date when the farmer pretty well had finished and didn't grow anymore peas, when time would you suggest for here in the Upper Snake River Valley and St. Anthony? When did they cease growing peas?

FW: They weren't growing a lot of peas about 1950, I would suppose. That's roughly. The Associated had grown peas and Northrop King had grown peas. I was trying to think when they quit picking peas at Northrop King. They picked a lot of corn after they quit peas. It was shipped in. I am not going into railroad transit rates. It's a deal how they get so much back after they cleaned the crop. They shipped the corn in from over in southern Idaho.

HF: Now we have been talking about the industry here locally kinda generally without bringing you into it. I would like to involve you in the seed industry, the pea industry. How you would like to explain how you became involved? Were you with your father as a partner? Just kind of relate how you became involved with it and when you came out here and what you did with it?

FW: About 1920/21 there was quite a lull. Companies in the East were no contracting and father didn't have any seed. In the winter of 1922 I was at Ann Arbor, Michigan, and I went to Grand Rapids. I talked to W. R. Roach Canning Company. That's Heart brand. He had a man by the name of Gerber there from Fremont, Michigan. Mr. Gerber and Mr. Roach decided they wanted to send some peas to St. Anthony. I got my father a growing contract. Incidentally baby food along with their canning operations at Fremont, Michigan. Mr. Gerber and Mr. Roach decided they wanted to send some peas to St. Anthony. I got my father a growing contract. Incidentally Mr. Gerber remarked that he had a new grandson and a son, Don, who was trying to develop a baby food along with their canning operational at Fremont, Michigan. The old gentleman didn't seem to think much of it but today's grocery shelves show that Don was right.

HF: In other words, this was in effect, the beginning of Gerber Baby Foods.?

FW: Yes, this was the man, because his grandson needed baby food.

HF: That's interesting, that's really interesting. Now you had actually been involved in the industry before?

FW: Oh, yes. I had worked at every job in the seed house. That year father got in touch with Sloan, Sloan Seed Company of Los Angeles. Sloan was a quite a fellow. He was a plunger. He'd been in several things and he had made a lot of money. Dad tore down our horse barn and corrals and built a seed house. W handled strictly Sloans' seeds on one side and Roach's on the other. That lasted couple of years. Roach always had peas put out in California. All the seed companies experimented with that. They used to go to the Senaloa Valley in Mexico. I knew several fellows who went down there and tried to grow winter peas to increase their poundage. Sloan had a beautiful bust. In the meantime he put out a lot of white field peas for C. B. Pyle of Cincinnati. Pyle came out the same way finally. Sloan's operation, according tour books, my father was just a paid employee, you understand, a paid manager, netted Sloan and when I got back up here and there was an acreage of peas that had been put out. I went out and hunted them up and the contracts. Frank Miller rounded me up in the meantime. He had a tonnage bill and I had a labor bill and we same out with some seed after we settle up with Sloan. That was the beginning of the Wilcox Seed Company as such. Before that it had been John T. Wilcox.

HF: In other words you and your father had more or less formed a working partnership?

FW: That run for two or three years and then Frank Miller wanted to sell out and we bought it.

HF: So Frank Miller was involved in it with you?

FW: Yes, I said he fought Sloan's law suits. He was an attorney.

HF: Now when was this located, the Wilcox Seed Company?

FW: The Wilcox Seed Company at that time was located down there on West 2nd South.

HF: And what is located there now?

FW: Beddes Equipment.

HF: And there they had their sheds and all the processing equipment?

FW: We had our whole warehouse there. That is where father had built up the two buildings, cut the walls in between and had them together.

HF: Is that where the opera...?

FW: No.

HF: Where was the opera house?

FW: In 1930 my father wanted, we had to rent storage from the bonded warehouse in Idaho Falls and it was high priced. Father wants to build something fancy. I told him we needed to go somewhere near the railroad track, go down the line. The argument raged. My wife died in March and in July I discovered he had bought the opera house.

HF: There is St. Anthony, and it wasn't on the railroad tracks?

FW: HE spent forty thousand dollars in the building remodeling. He'd acquired some money and he spent it.

HF: Now is there any significance to that name?

FW: What?

HF: The opera house?

FW: The Gray Open House in St. Anthony was built by a group of citizens. It's still there and Horsley still owns it. Has his plumbing in it. Originally it was an opera house.

HF: Originally it was an opera house where entertainment was conducted in the early days of St. Anthony?

FW: It was finished about the time my father came here in 1912 and those road shows would come up and down the line. The planed here. E. Forest Taylor had a company. Ralph Collinger had a company. In later years, E. Forest Taylor came to town and he had two shows going in the local house. He signed his autographs and all that old business. In that afternoon the first thing I know was a knock on the door. I happened to be home. I looked up and said to my wife that looks like Forest Taylor. He wanted to know where my father was. I knew right where he was and I took him up there. So we went up and the street and he saw a sign. He said I've got to see Wood Parker. I said that's the fourth or fifth man you've asked me about. Were going the wrong direction, the cemetery is the other way.

FW: Then it was a movie house.

HF: Then it became your seed operation?

FW: Yes.

HF: A tremendous amount of revamping and remodeling would have been required for a venture of this nature?

FW: I told you the price.

HF: Forty thousand dollars or such an amount. Now it's an office building. Now, how many years were you involved in the seed industry. That is processing seed peas.

FW: I never counted it, exactly how many campaigns I sewed or tied pea sacks. But I do know that when this spurt of government peas came here along in the forties, I processed a lot of government peas for three years. These fellows grew a lot of peas.

HF: In the area?

FW: Yes, Bott's had a big acreage of peas up there in Clementsville. All these dry farmers had a big acreage.

HF: Now was this due to war time conditions?

FW: It was one of those watt time measures. Ray Payne processed a lot here in Rexburg.

HF: That would be the, oh, what business did he have?

FW: He had a feed and seed business. He had mills that he could clean them with. That involved no hand picking. They were sewed in a white cotton bag, a hundred pounds to the bag.

HF: Well, then you were pretty well finished up with the pea seed industry before 1950?

FW: Oh, yes. I had developed a big grain trade.

HF: Cleaning grain?

FW: Yes, I put in the first processing, treater for smut, seed born diseases. It was mercury cleaner and quite a deal to work on.

HF: Now the farmers would come to your establishment and get their grain...?

FW: They would bring their seed and leave it. I would clean it...

HF: Treat it?

FW: Treat it and pile it up and if my warehouse got full I would have to force out the first of them.

HF: In other words, you got everything all ready for them to go ahead and plant?

FW: Yes. And this was what, in the forties?

HF: Yes. I started that in the thirties and carried it clear through until I sold out. I also sold baby chickens and had a line of feed, Pillsbury Feed.

HF: Now any other kind of seed?

FW: Yes, flax, some of these farmers undertook to grow flax instead of wheat. I cleaned flax. I cleaned the last car load of flax was in this country. At one time I cleaned a car load of mustard that went to the oil pressing plant at Great Falls. I'd gathered up the culls that were left behind and I sized it up and I cleaned this car load out for them. I cleaned, or course, barley and oats. Dewey Rosenloff, who had that place where Tom baker lives, lived over here on College Avenue. Until he went to Arizona. He was quite and a hand to get foundation seed from the university farms and grow certified seed. Carl Blackburn, at that time out of Blackfoot, was the seed inspector. He got so he looked at my work and sized it up and we became great friends. He came in and tagged the seed after it was cleaned. I brokerage a lot of that. Dewey Rosenloff started me on that. He said, you sell my seed and I'll pay you by the hundred for doing it. I did that for lots of farmers. Some fellow would leave a few bags and I would just sell it for him and give him the money. I didn't brokerage that. That was just more business.

HF: Now I understand over the years and more particularly of recent years, the experiment station at Tetonia has raised a lot of that. Dewey Rosenloff started me on that. He said, you sell my seed and I'll pay you by the hundred for doing it. I did that for lots of farmers. Some fellow would leave a few bags and I would just sell it for him and give him the money. I didn't brokerage that. That was just more business.

HF: Now I understand over the years and more particularly of recent years, the experiment station at Tetonia has raised a lot of plots and seed and certified it. Have you been involved any of their cleaning work?

FW: I cleaned for them for quite a while. In 1951 when that new warehouse was built, I was officer; I was Fremont County Weed supervisor.

FW: Hugh McKay was superintendent of the experiment station and we had an office together. We talked over the different size screens for him to order and what I had so no. now along before this, there was man by the name of Irvin Slater, who was county agent in St. Anthony. He introduced the farmers to grow crested wheat. You see the rice of wheat had been down, terribly down. These farmers wear striking around here to grow anything that would improve their land and give them a cash crop. So I got a hundred a fifty dollars worth of screens and went to cleaning grass seed.

HF: And that is what this crested wheat is?

FW: It's a grass, yes. It's supposed to be, it's cracked up to be a better grass than it is. It's wirier. It comes on early in the spring and its early spring pasture. Then it's wirier and sometimes it furnishes some fall pasture. But then the rye grasses, the fescue's, the smooth brome, the mountain brome, all of that followed naturally. I cleaned all of it. I cleaned a lot of certified seeds for the experiment along in those years. Mr. Moss was the superintendent at that time.

HF: Prior to Mr. McKay?

FW: Yes, then Mr. McKay came in there as his assistant and later succeeded him, Mr. Moss. I cleaned a lot of red clover and dyna clover. Not red clover and dyna clover.

HF: Were there other seed processing companies competing during these final years of your operation?

FW: I cleaned for Northrop King and dad bought seed from Northrop King and I cleaned it. Then the next thing they were competing against me.

HF: Now have they continued to do this up until this time?

FW: I don't know what has happened to this sweet clover and, once in a while I see a field of alfalfa going to se. I haven't seen a field of sweet clover being combined for years driving around.

HF: Well now, at the present time, you don't have this seed processing industry in existence hardly at all in the Valley, the Upper Snake River Valley?

FW: Third seed processing has got to, just seems to have died out. But the traveling cleaners, that is cleaner son trailer and trucks, go around to a farmers granary and clean

and the seed and put it in bags or back in the big or something. It is treated and already to go again. At first those cleaners didn't get their set level, there were a lot of things that kept me tin business after they were trying to run around and do that. But they have got better cleaners and they have got better leveling devices and they are doing a good job. Now I am going to bring out one thing. You're hearing a lot about how much pheasant to eat on account of mercury poisoning. All of this seed that was treated nowadays carries a dye but the pheasants and birds don't pay much attention that dye. I don't know how it gets out around but it's a mercury poison. The first thing they told me when they sold me the treater, was up here where you grind feed, up here where you clean up something and not treat it, put it out the front door. Anything that is treated, you put out that other door. Now they made Pillsbury take their cleaning plant out of Frances Siding because of the mercury poison on the grain might contaminate the grain in the bins of their commercial grain. I was very careful from along in the thirties until I sold out about getting any treated grain near any feed grain. I knew the danger but I never realized that it was going to get to the point where we could here about it in game birds. Now where it came from I don't know but I do know that is one of the sources.

HF: Now as we finish got a half a dozen names here that I would like to have you just briefly comment about. Businessmen, men who I understand through you contributed much to the economy, growth, and development of the St. Anthony area. Take the man Hopkins?

FW: Hopkins came from Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, to settle here about the same time as my folks did. Talcot Hopkins of Roger Brother Seed Company was a boy at that time. Mr. Hopkins was very prominent in civic affairs and church affairs as well as in the seed business. He was an asset to the town.

HF: Was he associated with Roger Brothers?

FW: With the organization of the Associated Seed Company the Hopkins' apparently invested their money Roger Brothers. He is quite a man in civic affairs and politics in Idaho Falls today.

HF: Now a fellow by the name of Ives?

FW: Yes.

HF: Now there was a bank associated with the first National by the name of G.E. Bauerman. What do you know about him?

FW: There was at one time two Bauerman's in St. Anthony in the lumber business, Charlie and Guy. They were just about to a finish when I came there in the old saw mill type. Guy Bauerman was the head of the First National Bank. Charlie Bauerman, I believe, had passed on.

HF: But G. E. Bauerman had become rather involved in a tremendous amount of financing in the Upper Snake River Valley?

FW: Yes. He financed pretty all the activities in there. He was the largest banker of three bankers.

HF: Now how about the Wadsworth Lumber?

FW: In later years, Wadsworth had a little saw mill. Guy Bauerman, Jr. walked into my office one day and told me that Bauerman still owned fifteen hundred acres of prime timber. He was associated with the Wadsworth. Form hen on the Wadsworth sawmill expanded. It survived a good burnout which was common with sawmills but he survived it. It is going today strong.

HF: Now did you know the Idaho-Montana Lumber Company came down her from Missoula. One time we lived in the Smead-Simons building when it was operating for Sloan. To know them, I did not. But I did know some of the people who operated the Targhee Tie Company. They cut railroad ties and loaded ties all along every side track from Teton Bain to West Yellowstone. I have seen all of those in loading peas about that date. I have had cars spotted along where they were loading ties.

HF: Those ties were...?

FW: Cut for railroad ties.

HF: Out of the timbers of the Targhee Forest.

FW: Yes, at one time I went up with the Frank Miller to see a client of his at Gill. We walked around that came and there was 250 men at the Gill Sliding camp. Charlie Pond came in here with the Targhee Tie Company bout that time and founded Pond's Lodge later.

HF: Now you mentioned some names here. Frank, in the interview you have mentioned him before as a quite a prominent attorney. What comment do you have?

FW: Yes, at one time he was my partner.

HF: What type of man, very astute, sharp individual?

FW: Yes, a very quick lawyer. Very thorough.

HF: Did you know the Soule boys?

FW: Yes, I was quite a friend of Henry Soule's, Brock Soule's father. Course, Dr. Soule now is my doctor. I think Soule and my dad didn't get along. For some reason I had to inherit that

HF: Well now as we close, you've been out here since 1912 coming out here as a young man. You've seen a tremendous change take place. Prior to, say, more recent years, all of Island Park area was used for a grazing country for cattle and sheep. Is this correct?

FW: Yes, they used to be able to start out at the Enterprise Canal and go east pretty near to the timber. There was very little land taken up east of St. Anthony.

HF: But in more recent years that has been taken over by the tourists?

FW: Well, Island Park has crowded out but there is a quite a lot of grazing that still goes on in those timbers that you don't know anything about. Ball Brothers from over here at Lewisville, I understand, has from Eccles to the Warm River and from the railroad track to the highway for cattle. All back around by Pineview is sheep country and it always has been. One of the first tractors we had, we went over on what is now this Rexburg land out east here...

HF: Then Rexburg Bench?

FW: And plowed for one of the Parkinson's. All that land up around by Clementsville was open. That was taken up later. All that land where Max and Keith Parkinson are today was open when I came here. It was later taken up in 160 acres at a land and part of it was land that was transferred by trade from North Idaho to down here and was state land.

HF: Now the area along the Teton River north of the Teton River, all of that land was pretty much uninhabited?

FW: Yes, Emory Seymour and old man Davis, father of the county commissioner, ran horses up there. Several other people turned their stock up there, principally horses. The cows were taken up into the timber and run up on the range at Conant creek and Bitch Creek.

HF: Now at one time you had properties up there at Conant, didn't you?

FW: Yes, I still own a small dry farm track. My father, at one time, had quite a large ranch on Conant Creek. He had a mile and three quarters of creek bottom and a thousand acres around it.

HF: Were you acquainted with Ralph Litton and his activities as a farmer up in that area?

FW: Ralph Litton were kids that broke sage brush along side of each other and went to the old Lamont store dances. Incidentally Ralph's sister, Ruth, that used to be one of the belles, was back here. I met her at Wayne Butler's funeral the other day.

HF: But you and Ralph have known each other all of these years?

FW: Yes, I knew both Litton boys and the girls and the old folks.

HF: Well now as we conclude the tape, what comment do you have about St. Anthony as a place to live and rear your family? Your wife has been out here with you and you have reared a family. What comments do you have about the community?

FW: I find St. Anthony, outside of the extreme winter weather which you do not like when you get my age, to be a wonderful place. It's close to all the recreational areas which we didn't realize when we were younger. What a wonderful area we have. You went out and chased a few coyotes sometimes. You diversified that from season to season with shooting some sage hens with a twelve bird limit. We had elk season from early fall till the first of the year.