

HT: ...few months at coal boy and then in the roundhouse as oil house man and then...

DB: What did the oil house man do?

HT: Distribute the oil that the employees wanted, for the service of the locomotives and cars, and ah...

DB: How did you get the oil around in the round house?

HT: They would come and get their own. They...they'd have to come to the oil house just like a storekeeper.

DB: And how would you give it out to them?

HT: Measure it.

DB: Was it in drums or?

HT: Ah?

DB: Was it in drums?

HT: Yea.

DB: What are some of the other jobs that you did, could you describe them? I didn't get them down fast enough.

XF: What is a hostler?

HT: A hostler is the one that put the engines in and out of the roundhouse. But, the hostler applies to many things. They have hostlers, you take in a parking center, anything. That would be a hostler that takes the cars from the street and parks them, and so on. So, he's kind of a cowboy, I guess. He-he-he-he.

DB: What was the next job that you did?

HT: Fireman.

DB: What does that involve?

HT: Well, some engines had coal and some oil. But ours were mostly all oil. And, ah...it's a busy job. You had to know what you was doing, do everything to correspond with the way the engineer was working the engine.

XM: Did they have firemen on the electric locomotives?

HT: Did they?

XM: Yea.

HT: Yes.

DB: Was that...were the jobs...?

HT: Ah?

DB: Was it much different, to be a fireman on an electric locomotive than on a steam locomotive?

HT: Well, on the electric it didn't amount to as much but that's a busy job. That is for anybody that does his work properly. Lots to look after and...had to be an efficient and to be of any value to the...But like all others there can be some that soldier along, you know.

DB: What was your next job after, the fireman?

HT: Engineer.

DB: And when did you start doing that?
HT: Oh, in the '20s and up 'til...'60s.
DB: Do you remember your retirement date?
HT: Ah?
DB: Do you remember your retirement date?
HT: It was May '63.
DB: What was your favorite job of all of them, working for the railroad?
HT: Well, I imagine engineer, was...
DB: Why is that?
HT: Oh, you had the...it was interesting and...you had to be well posted for your job, and that made it attractive; and lots of responsibility.
DB: On helper service, did you take the train up to the tunnel and then cut out of the train and...
HT: Yes sir. And then cut out there and come back.
DB: Did both passenger and freight trains use helpers?
HT: Ah?
DB: Did the passenger trains use helpers too, or just the freights?
HT: Yea. The passenger had to have helpers too; with the steam engine but not with the motors.
DB: Was that because the electric wasn't powerful enough to pull them up the hills?
HT: The grade was too steep. Ah...coming in there was water grade about .4 of 1% and up, starting out of there was 1 and .7. That was over the mountains, all 1.7%.
DB: What's the highest grade you have around here, on the rail line?
HT: The highest elevation?
DB: No, the grade. What's the steepest grade?
HT: 1.7 was ours. At Butte they had 2.2; and then on Beverly Hill, there they had 2.2, on one side had 1.7, same as we did.
DB: Could you tell me what the passenger train schedule was like and then what the freight train schedule was like, back in the '20s? How many a day, how many passenger trains a day? How about freight trains; how many?
HT: Possibly five each way.
XF: Tell him how everybody came down to look at the trains.
HT: Oh, yea. They'd stop for 10 minutes, you know, to eat. And there's no cars nor any other entertainment so all be down to meet the passenger train. The whole town would be down, evening and at noon.
XF: The social event of the day.
HT: Well lots of times the dignitaries went through.
DB: Can you remember any names?
HT: Truman, went through here. And Harding. Harding stopped here, and ah...he went up to the Forest Service and they packed a horse for 'em. And the train was ready to leave

town and Harding wasn't coming back. He's supposed to be back in about 20 minutes but he stayed up there pretty near an hour. And, he-he-he-, made them wait, and...the ah,..man that packed the horse for Harding is buried up at...a few miles up the river here. He was a packer from Salmon, Idaho, a very clever man with horses. And, so Harding, after he packed the horses why he gave the packer quite a spiel. He said "How long have you worked for us?" and Art told him. And he said, "I can see, I guess...really know what your doing." Oh they had quite a visit about...

DB: So they held the train for him?

HT: Ah?

DB: They held the train for 'em?

HT: Oh, yes. They used two trains when the president goes over the railroad. They have an advanced train and the advance train had left, and the other one was supposed to follow. Instead of that he's up at the ranger station. He, he, he.

XM: What were the different kinds of passenger trains, did they have trains that took care of just mail?

HT: Ah?

XM: What were the different kinds of passenger trains, like did they have an express train?

HT: The NP, the Great Northern, had the mail train always. But we always had the mail car on our trains. And, the trains on the Milwaukee were superior to all other trains in the nation when they was...we had the first steel trains...and ah...it was always the very best. And the equipment that was on our trains is on the Alaska railroad now, and they even use a portion of the coaches for the, for the hotel at Mt. McKinley. In addition to the big hotel they have a bunch of railroad cars and dining cars set out. It's old equipment from the Milwaukee, and ah...Have you seen pictures of the cars at Mt. McKinley? Oh, yes. And the charge is less for sleeping in the Pullmans.

DB: Did you run both passenger and freight trains?

HT: Yes. Mostly freight though.

DB: What would they haul on the freight trains?

HT: Well, that'd be hard to answer. East bound was mostly lumber, and the west...westbound was all the different items manufactured in the East.

XF: Tell 'em about the silk.

HT: Yea. Then we had silk trains, for...up till the...after the Panama Canal was completed...when they got refrigerated boats, we lost the silk trains. But we had the silk trains right up to the '20s. And, ah...they would run faster than the passenger schedule. And, it'd go from Seattle to Patterson, New Jersey, and they would be...oh, a big one would be, probably, nine cars; the average probably'd be about seven. And we had a couple of those a week.

DB: They were refrigerated, you say?

HT: They was well insulated cars, and they possibly was cooled off before they was loaded.

DB: Where was the silk coming from?

HT: Ah?

DB: Where was the silk coming from?

HT: Japan.

DB: Japan?

HT: Oh, yea. Right from the boat, off the train and then after the canal when they had the refrigerated boats; why the railroads lost that.

DB: Where were the logs coming from, around here?

HT: Hm?

DB: Where were the logs coming from around here?

HT: Logs? Well, till later years mostly from the St. Maries branch. Where they had the railroad going up there and then they logged this...

DB: I mean where did you pick up the logs on the cars? Where did you pick them up?

HT: Here at Avery. But that was later.

DB: How about early?

HT: Hah?

DB: How about earlier, where did you pick them up?

HT: They didn't have no lumbering in the early days here, it was all on the St. Maries branch.

XF: What about the Bogil spur?

HT: Yea. Bogil spur up there, where you come over the hill. You come from Wallace?

DB: No. We came from St. Maries.

HT: Well, they had, ah...after 1910 Fire they built a railroad up toward Wallace and they hauled a lot of logs out of there and out of Big Creek. But right here, close to town, there was no logging till later years. What year did it start here?

XF: 44.

HT: 44, Yea.

DB: Did they pick up logs at St. Maries and bring them east?

HT: No, we'd send them to St. Maries and they're sawed down there.

DB: Where was the lumber taken from? Where...did you carry the lumber after they were sawed?

HT: Oh, yea, it goes ah...

DB: Where did that go?

HT: All over the nation.

DB: So did you take the logs to St. Maries and then take the lumber back East?

HT: That's right, that's right.

DB: Were there any place...?

HT: They still do that, they load 35 a day, down there at the west of town, don't they? More than that?

XF: 1,200 a year, anyway.

DB: From here, at Avery? And then take them to? Was there any place where they picked up logs, in between, other than here?

HT: Possibly at Calder, some at Marble Creek...

DB: But do you remember doing that when you were engineer?

HT: No, I worked the other way and we didn't have any logs. All of ours were in Montana, we'd pick some up at Haughen and Henderson for Missoula, so that wouldn't apply here at all.

DB: So you didn't ever pick up any logs to the west?

HT: No, no.

XM: Did you have seasonal traffic, like apples going east in the Fall?

HT: Hah?

XM: Did you have seasonal freight traffic, like apples going east in the Fall, or wheat from the Great Plains?

HT: Say a little louder.

DB: Seasonal traffic. Did you have any seasonal traffic?

XM: Fruit or grain.

HT: Oh yes, we do now. But now, you see, refrigerated stuff. Ah...we used to get the apples in the bulk, and so on, and the potatoes. But now they are most all...ah...made into potato chips and all that kind of stuff and...

DB: How about in the '20s, did you do any of that?

HT: No. No, that hadn't started then.

DB: When did that start, do you remember?

HT: Probably in the '30s, or the '40s.

DB: Did you ever do any logging yourself?

HT: Very little, some though.

DB: What kind of logging did you do, what part of it?

HT: I was a boatman on the river.

DB: What did that involve?

HT: That was the most skilled of all, the swiftwater poler was. You really had to know your stuff, there was very few of them.

DB: What did you do, on the boat?

HT: Push it up the river, up the current. Against the current you couldn't row on that. It's too shallow for a motor, in fact they didn't have motors at that time, that was possible...now a jet would make it all-right.

DB: How far did you take the logs down river; how far...?

HT: We didn't...I never took any logs down river. No.

DB: Where were the places where the logs used to jam up here, on the St. Joe?

HT: That would all be below here, that's 'round Calder...

XF: Marble Creek.

DB: Can you remember some of the bad fires that were around here?

HT: The only one I remember is the 1910. Big one.

DB: What...how did it affect this area?

HT: Well, it burned the whole country from Plummer to St. Regis and 25 miles wide, air line. Wallace and here...

DB: Did it burn down Avery?

HT: No. There was only one house here burned. They backfired and saved the town.

DB: Who started the backfires?

HT: The roundhouse foreman and my uncle, round the hotel. The ranger--he forbid it. Even at gun point he's gonna' get his gun out. The round house foreman, "Well I got a gun, too." He-he-he.

DB: Why did he want to forbid it?

HT: Oh he's just ah...he's an office man, he wasn't a practical man. Very nice fellow though, very good friend of ours.

DB: What was his name, do you remember?

HT: Ralph M. Debitt.

DB: Ralph M. Debitt.

HT: Yea.

DB: So you did get the fire stopped, around here?

HT: It stopped itself.

DB: Did that spread south of here, at all?

HT: Yea. Probably 20 miles.

XF: Tell him about Setzer Creek and, what's his name...Danielson's crew...not Danielson. And the suicide and how you ran out to save the...

HT: Oh the...

XF: How you were the messenger boy.

HT: I was the messenger boy, during the forest fire, the ranger sent me up to get the crew out of Cedar mountain, so I went up and got them.

DB: What kind of crew was it?

HT: A fire crew.

DB: A fire crew?

HT: About 50 men. Engineer Rock ah...Ranger Rock was in charge. Then he had another..he had two camps; he had one on Setzer Creek where the 29 men burned, and my brother was time-keeper there, at that camp. Then another brother was time-keeper of the one on Big Creek, where the 19 men died. Nineteen others.

XF: Harold has been, with...and his brothers were somewhat of heroes because they went in and pulled out these crews. Pretty much saved their lives, really by going into...

HT: Yea. I tried to, I tried to talk the ranger out of going up there, smoke around there, he-he, an' everything else. So I wanted to take another kid with me, and ah...'No." he said, "You kids would get to playing." He said, "I want you to get up there and right back." So, I tried to talk him out of it. He said, "You're the only man I got, Harold." And I was only 13, ha-ha. So, I suppose that blew me up a little bit. So, I started out, and I went to Cedar Mountain, and I was back so quick he hadn't thought I'd gone. But I had the note from the, the assistant

foreman...signed the note, that I brought back. That I had delivered the message to them.

DB: Did they have radios here back in those days?

HT: Oh, no. No telephone, nothing. Nothing. No there's ah...just a ranger. And, they didn't even have lookouts, at that time.

DB: Was there a mail service at that time, 1910?

HT: Hm?

DB: Was there a mail service at that time?

HT: Mail. When the railroad started in we started getting mail. Soon as the railroad...that's 1909.

DB: Was that daily mail?

HT: Oh, yes.

DB: When did people get radios around here?

HT: In the '20s.

DB: About the community. What were the different kinds of jobs that people had other than railroad work and some of the logging work?

HT: At that...in the early days there was just Forest Service and the railroad, and not logging.

DB: Were there any gypo logging companies around here?

HT: Very little, not enough to mention. There was a couple, but the...

DB: When were the...when did the logging companies start working in here?

HT: 44, Sandy said.

DB: Do you remember which companies those were?

HT: It was Winton at that time.

DB: And what part of this country did they timber out?

HT: Cecil Creek.

DB: Where is that in relation to here?

HT: Down a mile-and-a-half, and then it goes to the south.

DB: And then Marble Creek, they get some logs there.

HT: That's down 12 miles and that's south.

DB: When did they start that, Marble Creek?

HT: Earlier than...I'd say early '20s.

XF: 1913.

HT: And it's still going.

DB: Were there any other creeks up here that they logged out, that you could remember?

HT: Big Creek, and Trout Creek. And Slate Creek, they logged that a little bit.

DB: D'you remember what years those were, around?

HT: No.

DB: Was it in the '20s?

XF: It was salvage logging after the 1910 Fire.

DB: Was anybody involved in large scale farming around here, at all?

HT: No.

DB: How about mining, did people do any kind of placer mining around here?

HT: There was some prospecting and...

DB: Do you remember any names or...where they mined?

HT: Well, the mine is up at the Champion Creek and up at Adair, but ah..I don't think I can give you good enough history on them. Sandy's got that all wrote up, and that. He-he.

DB: What were the best jobs to have here in Avery, back in the '20s?

HT: The best jobs?

DB: Yea.

HT: I'd say engineer, was the best job.

DB: How were you paid for that?

HT: Got \$5.20 for 10 hours. And then, then when Woodrow Wilson was president, why, the nation got the eight hour day.

DB: Did the engineers get the eight hour day?

HT: You bet, at the same time. And the...President Wilson and the one that was head of the railroad administration during the first World War--the government took over the railroads, and son-in-law of Wilson's was head of the railroads. His name was MacAdoo--later he was a big shot in the government.

DB: If something broke here on the railroad where would they have it fixed? Like, where...the blacksmith shops were in the roundhouse, you say?

HT: Oh, yes.

DB: Did they fix the boilers and steam fittings?

HT: Yes.

DB: What kind of steam engines did they have on these train here...do you remember any of the names?

HT: The Balys, the Compounds, the MacConnells, and the Pacifics, the Standards, the Mogul.

DB: What used to go wrong with those old engines?

HT: Oh, the boiler and the tires, and the rods and many things, just like you would have on an automobile.

DB: Were the electrified engines similar to the steam engines at all?

HT: No.

DB: What were they like?

HT: Gee, that would be a long story.

DB: Well, did you engineer both the electric and steam?

HT: You bet, and diesel. All of them.

DB: When did the diesel come in?

HT: Well, in the '50s, late '50s. Began to get 'em, still had the motors and that, but then in the '60s why, changed pretty much to diesel.

DB: Which lines did you use the steam and which lines did you use the electric?

HT: East of here was electric for 440 miles, and then steam from here to Othello.

XM: Of the structures remaining down there...the roundhouse is gone, just the floor of the roundhouse is left?

HT: I don't know what's left, I haven't been down there; it's still burning around there.

XM: And then there's a long, long building...

HT: Yea, that's over the pit. That's a...they had that for working motors, and now they use it for the Rotary and the motors to store them in.

XM: And then there's tanks. Like there's a diesel tank on the hillside?

HT: The big one?

XM: Yea.

HT: Yea. That used to be for crude oil for the steam locomotive, and then when they got diesel they changed it to diesel oil and never put much in it. But when the steam engines were running sometimes they'd have it pretty near full.

XF: Tell 'em about the sub-station, too. They might be interested in the sub-station, what that...

DB: What happened at the sub-station?

HT: Well, 110,000 were generated at the plants on the Missouri.

DB: Those are volts?

HT: Yea.

HT: And then it was transmitted, alternating current to the various substations. Then it was machined from alternating to direct current and put out to the trolley at 3,000, because the direct current was more elastic for the motors, and so on, and. So they transformed it, transposed it to direct and...

XF: And that building is still standing there.

HT: The substation done that; it'd come in at 100,000 and it would be transformed to 2,200 and they had a machine--a motor, 2,200, with a long shaft and on each end was two generators that would generate the 3,000 direct current. Each one'd generate 1,500 and then they was in parallel and.. or in series, it would come to 3,000 and that's what they'd put out to the trolley. Then the carrying capacity for direct current isn't as good as alternating, so they had to have substations at intervals like 20, 25 miles. Because, the line loss was too heavy at the lower voltage, you see. And, but now electrification they'd have alternating everywhere and have transformers on the motors. So that's why the diesel is superior to the old motor. But the motors now are alternating and there's no line loss, and they are more efficient and just like the diesel.

DB: What kind of transformer lines did they have, what kind of poles did they have to bring the electricity from the generating stations in Montana?

HT: They distributed to the substations at 100,000 and then put out to the trolley at 3,000.

DB: Were they similar to the electric lines we have now?

HT: Yes. Yea, but the ones for the 3,000 was big cables, so it wouldn't be so much line loss. And, ah, when a motor went pulling, why it would even heat up the feeder. And, you'd see it sag between the poles and you'd know the heat's going through it.

DB: How much line loss would you get, bringing it in from out there?

HT: Well, you're going too deep for me. I could give you all that, but I can't see no sense to it.

DB: When was the station, substation built downtown?

HT: 1916.

DB: What do they use it for now?

HT: Nothing. Trying to sell it, I guess. Aren't they?

HT: _____ thought of buying it for a while for a warehouse.

XF: It's a beautiful building, it has really...

XM: Did you ever do any Winter work, like running a rotary snow plow?

HT: Hah?

DB: Did you ever run a rotary snow plow, in the Winter?

HT: Oh, yes.

DB: What happened then?

HT: He-he-he. What happened?

DB: Yea.

HT: Well, you plow the snow. He-he.

DB: OK, but did you ever get stuck?

HT: Yes sir.

DB: What was that like?

HT: Just wait till you got cleaned out, and be, ah,...sometimes for days, have been stalled for a month. Slides come down and block you in.

XM: What was the longest time the railroad shut down due to snow, or slides, during the Winter?

HT: In 1917, about five weeks, was, I think, the biggest. I was away at that time. I didn't...take that in.

DB: Was there an avalanche?

HT: Many of 'em. It was after the fire, no brush to hold like there is now--there is brush to hold the snow where...shortly after the fire, we had lots of slides. And now the brush holds it all, and you don't have...

DB: Well, at what point did Avery as a community start losing the population that they used to have?

HT: Well, I don't know if they've...

DB: Well you said there used to be 200 people here.

HT: 200? 1,100 at one time.

DB: 1,100? When was that?

HT: First World War. Well, they had more people working, more men working in the roundhouse then there is here now. _____ and then the rip track, had many, and the sections and the helpers and the switch engines, and the...

DB: Why did the people...I mean when did the people start moving away?

HT: Well, it would be hard to tell you. I think it's compensated for the ones that moved away, and ah...our school, at its peak probably had 40 children, and now we have about 26, and ah...the houses are all full with forestry employees, and ah...I think our town is just fine...I don't.

DB: Well, I wasn't making a quality comment, I was just wondering when did the people leave.

HT: Yea, I know what you want, but I can't tell you about that.

(END OF TAPE 14; Side 2)