

Interview with Elsie Berg
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Central Minnesota Historical Oral History Collection
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Interviewed by James Robak

Robak: Today is December 31, 1976. This interview is being conducted by James Robak for the Central Minnesota Historical Center. I am interviewing Mrs. Elsie Berg of Swatara, Minnesota. Her address is just north of Swatara about four miles. Mrs. Berg when were you born?

Berg: I was born in November 14, 1907, it was the first snow storm of the season.

Robak: The first snow storm in the fall, was it a big snow storm?

Berg: Well, I can't remember.

Robak: I was going to say if you remember that you have a good memory!

Berg: Now this is what they told me, my dad wasn't home he went down to Aitkin to get some supplies. They brought them back with a team from Aitkin about thirty miles. They had gone down to get the supplies and there was no one to help my mother except for my oldest sister, she was fifteen. That was quite an ordeal but that was the wilderness way. I was born right in that log cabin past Swatara, that is west of Swatara. Between our homestead and the county line there was just a small piece of land they tell me that's what is called a government lot. It isn't a full forty acres, it's very woodsey.

Robak: How big was the family?

Berg: There were eight of us to start with, but only four of us lived. The others died in infancy, less than a year up to six years they had died.

Robak: What was your father's name?

Berg: George.

Robak: What nationality was your father?

Berg: He always said he was Irish. But I don't know for sure because there is two sides to every family and I don't know what his grandmother on his father's side was. I know his mother's family were from New England and it dates back to the colonial times. I think they were from way back in this country. But my folks came here to get land, free land. They said the United States bet people a hundred and sixty acres that you couldn't live on it seven years without starving to death. Sometimes they came a little bit close to it.

Robak: Your father was a farmer then?

Berg: He wasn't a farmer when he was in Iowa. He also worked for the Santa Fe railroad, he worked in the back shops, and as a mechanic. Then he came out here in the wilderness which was something he never knew before, because he had lived in town all his life. It was quite a big step.

Robak: A big change.

Berg: Yes, he had worked in the lumber camp at various things. He had not been trained to be a sawer or anything like that. So sometimes he worked at getting the hay and feeding the horses. Cleaning out the barn, getting the wood in, and all that. It kept him busy. But it isn't a specialty job like sawing down trees. It isn't a piece work job.

Robak: Did he ever say why he moved up here? Any special reason?

Berg: Well, the thing was it was during tight times. I guess a job ran out of something down there and it was hard to find another. He worked a little while at the plow shop. But the dust was so bad it was getting to his lungs terribly. He was afraid he was going to get tuberculosis his mother had died of tuberculosis so he was afraid of it. He came up here to Deer Creek and they lived there for about a year. But times were tight you couldn't get work and they couldn't save for a farm. They buried a little girl there on the place, there is no marker. It's tough on people. But that was the way it was at that time, a lot of people had bad luck.

Robak: Was there a lot of people in this area at that time in the early 1900s?

Berg: They came in 1902. I was born in 1907. There were a few people around, but a lot of people came and left. They would stay for a little while and then leave.

Robak: Are there any that are still around that were here at that time?

Berg: Well the Olds family moved in later I believe than my folks did. There were some people by the name of Sycraton that lived not far from where we lived. There were some people by the name of Buttricks. I don't know if they came from Illinois or where but they moved out again. I don't know what became of them. Their grandfather was here for awhile I think he's buried here in the Hill Lake Cemetery. Then there were some people down in the woods. The Hakes lived down there. I don't know when they came but they were here when my folks came. They had cattle and a farm. There were others in White Elk, but I can't remember their names. There were some people who lived on McKenney Lake. But he got into this other business, he had a store and then moved on to Swatara. They had a store where you sell timber and buy what not. But they had lived on McKenney Lake for a time.

Robak: Most people had to just live off the land then. What were some of the occupations? Was there anyone who tried farming in this area?

Berg: Well I suppose there were. We would see people have little garden spots. Guldens when they came in were apparently farmers before. They cleared a field and planted grain. They had sandy soil so I don't know how the grain came out. It was heavier soil, I remember when they planted grain on the place. They had barley and oats. I remember the prairie chickens that came after they had the grain. They had lots of prairie chickens at one time and they made quite a racket.

Robak: Nothing like that now!

Berg: No, it's all gone disappeared. There were so many partridges at one time. When I was going to school as a child I'd see the partridges walking along the road. They weren't really scared of us. I remember my day – we were driving an oxen sleigh I believe and somehow he got ahold of a rock and clubbed a rabbit with a rock.

Robak: That's a pretty good shot.

Berg: He used to make tools for himself. He had a little shop there in the forge and he used to make bits for the brace and he had different tools. No one had as many as he had.

Robak: He was fortunate to have them.

Berg: When I first came here they were over by the old field there. Still traces of field over there. They had a well over there. I was afraid something would fall in, it was a dug well. They had a poot cellar over there. I still see the hump. Just traces of what was there before.

Robak: Where did you go to school?

Berg: I went to school at the green school house, we had a select school. I started going to school when I was five and there were a few settlers around then. There were big kids that came to school maybe eighteen, seventeen years old. The Becker boy never went to school until he was seven or eight years old because he stayed with his grandfolks and he didn't like to walk.

Robak: This was in Swatara? No, a mile and a half from our homestead.

Berg: Yes. The other side of Swatara. He didn't care to go to school but when he did go to school he had to walk over two miles. That's quite a ways for a little kid. He developed a sore throat or something. He had to stay home and recover for that, but time had passed to go to school. So he didn't always get there.

Robak: How far did you have to walk?

Berg: We had to walk about a mile and a half through the woods. When I first walked all we had was a surveyors trail just a narrow path. Part way we had a road, I think it was the beginnings of the road from Outing to Swatara. We had to climb over big pin logs. I wasn't very tall so sometimes the kids had to lift me over the logs.

Robak: Is this the same building that they use now in Swatara?

Berg: That's been down and gone for years! There's no sign of it now. It was closed down I think in 1920 or so maybe before that. They were going to have another school and I didn't go to that. I studied at home. The next year I went to Swatara School and I think that was in 1921. So I skipped a year of school.

Robak: When was this building that they use now built?

Berg: It was finished in 1921 if I remember rightly. They said it was going to cost forty thousand but when they finished it was eighty thousand. That is the normal way things work out, still does!

Robak: So there never were very many kids that went to school. Was it just one teacher?

Berg: There was one teacher at our school. They had a man teacher before I went to school for one year. They would have sent me when I was four, but I couldn't sit still and keep my mind on a book. So they kept me home another year and I went to school when I was five.

Robak: What were some of the classes you took?

Berg: We had to take reading, writing, arithmetic, and history, and geography. Before I finished that school we were studying philosophy (psychology study of the human body). They don't seem to teach that now, they teach health instead. I still have the book upstairs.

Robak: That would be interesting.

Berg: It's probably an antique by now. Hanson's wife, Hazle later taught our school for one year. She was fun to have for a teacher, because she would go out at noon and play teeter-totter with us. Our teeter-totter was a stump and a ladder.

Robak: Improvised.

Berg: Yes, we improvised. One day we were talking about pitcher plants and she said, "I've never seen one." There were some in the bog not far from the school. So we walked, just let the school business go for that long, to go out and see what the pitcher plants looked like. It was interesting to her and to us. School was in the wild country at that time. There was a woods nearby and a cart track road just enough for a wagon to pass through. We looked out and thought

we saw a dog that was walking by. We whistled to him and he took off like a shot. It was no dog it was a wolf. There were lots of wolves in that country. They lived back of our house back by the little lake there. They were there every night. In the winter time you could hear them howl. I heard them kill a deer once. I've always remembered that because the group came together and one started howling and then the others. We heard the deer when they got him. After that they were quiet except for one long howl, as if to say "We got him!" I was scared. As a little tot they said don't walk away from the house to far the wolves or the bears might get you and they scared me. When I was about twelve I walked to school once and coming home found a wolf had walked right in my tracks.

Robak: How many years did you go to that school?

Berg: I went from the time I was five until I was thirteen.

Robak: Then did you go to any school after that?

Berg: I went to Swatara school for one year. Until I finished the eighth grade. I tried to go to school in Aitkin when I was almost twenty-one for a few month, but my eyes went bad and I couldn't do it. This country around here has really changed. Where there used to be little farms now they have trees planted. Our place was planted with trees. My sister and I went out to the home place shortly after the funeral here this summer and we were walking through these pines. I said, "Why in the world would they plant jack pines." They weren't all jack pines, I think some are Australian pine, but it looks like jack pine, She wasn't approving a bit. White pine or red pine would be more suitable in this country, because it's normal for the land. The reason my dad picked it out was because it had virgin pine on it. He wanted to save it until he got the equipment. So he gathered the pine up himself and got something out of it. When he was way

someone came in there and cut it all off and got away with it. My mother didn't hear them, because we lived on the back forty. He planned to go to Aitkin and see a lawyer. He was going to put a mortgage on what few cattle he had to hire someone to prosecute whoever had poisoned his cattle. When the cattle died he opened them up and they were full of poisoned corn and they had had no corn. So you know someone did it.

Robak: Was this on your land?

Berg: Yes, on the homestead.

Robak: That was when he was trying to farm?

Berg: Yes.

Robak: Any reason anyone would do that?

Berg: As far as we know it must have been the man that cut the timber and was afraid of being prosecuted and took away the means of getting help. That is what I call a very mean trick!

Robak: Right. Logging has been pretty popular around this area.

Berg: Well at that time logging was the main thing. That's what they did mostly in this country at that time. I remember when the drive went through one time. My mom had one of the early phonographs an Edison with the cylinder records. We took it out on the hill and played it for the driving crew that was down toward the lake. They would holler for us to play more. It was loud enough so they could hear it.

Robak: Were there more people moving in?

Berg: Well south of us were the Old's family. I don't know how many miles that was. It was quite a ways, we didn't have close neighbors. The Guldens lived about two and a half or three miles away. I must have been about seven when I remember them moving.

Robak: How long did you stay at that place?

Berg: Well our family never moved away. We stayed there until my mother died. There were expenses because she had heart trouble and had to have doctors. There were also the funeral expenses. So father sold everything for cash on the place in order to clear up the debts.

Robak: What year did your mother die?

Berg: She died on July 4, 1925. She is buried out on the home place, my brother Len and my sister Clara are also buried out there.

Robak: Your father stayed there for awhile yet?

Berg: No, we left the place. He and I went to Iowa. I have an Aunt Ella Jones there, my mother's sister so we went there to see her. I stayed with her and my father got work for a while in a shop, kind of a second hand store. Actually he made things over. They brought in an old piano and he made it over into a cupboard or cabinet something like that. He could do things like that, he could work with tools. I found out it was a cover for a speak-easy. He didn't know it and when they got picked up he got out of there and left. He went over to Wisconsin and worked with an extra gang. It was sort of a section gang. He worked there for a couple of years. Meanwhile Olive and Jimmy married in 1926 and they were living by Swatara. I think it was in 1927 when he got sick, he had a hernia. It got very bad when he was still working for the railroad company in Wisconsin. So they shipped him all the way from Wisconsin to Brainerd to have medical aid.

We went down to see him. While I was in Iowa I worked for the Sheaffer pen factory. That was a nice place to work. You asked me about the land, the piece of land that Fred had was cut over. I don't know who logged it all, but the loggers took all the good wood. This was back in a cedar swamp. They must have cut in a lot of snow because some of the cedar stumps were this high.

Robak: About three feet off the ground.

Berg: Yes. A few years ago maybe four or five, Fred and I went down there and he took his chain saw and cut the stumps of for kindling.

Robak: When were you married?

Berg: On June 25, 1930.

Robak: When had he bought this land?

Berg: His father bought an eighty here in 1916 I think. That's when Fred came here. He comes from Oklahoma. His family had lived in southern Minnesota for a year and decided to come up and visit his son John. Then they decided to come up here and live. So they came up here and bought this eighty. After his father died in 1919, he sold a bunch of potatoes and bought the other eighty.

Robak: So he had 160 acres?

Berg: Yes. But they are not in the same section. They are from two sections because we are sitting on a line. There were Kellys that lived out there when I was young. Pat Kelly was a logger and he had a little farm. There were the Richards that lived over in that country, but that isn't towards Smoky Hollow.

Robak: Isn't there a Kelly Lake now?

Berg: There probably is, there is a lake not far from their house. The O'Briens I don't know when they came, but they didn't ever go to our school because they had their own school. There were some people by the name of Flemming that lived south of us they were back, I thinking on that logging road going back through the woods there. But I guess there was a trail over the hills. I don't know exactly it's so long ago you forget all the details. I do know that every Fourth of July when I was small about four or five they would have a big picnic. A pot luck and every one would come and bring what they wanted. They had what they called a pavilion and they would have dancing late in the evening. We weren't there at the time we had to go home. That was a Lake Edna later they called it Hidden Lake, I don't know which they call it now. There were camps, lumber camps around Lake Edna at one time.

Robak: I imagine there was a lot of logging camps around here?

Berg: There was one along the river but I don't know where the camp stood. I remember seeing where the dam was, not far from our place. It was logged off like a () this piece was. There was a narrow place I don't know how they got the logs through there, but it wasn't very wide. At this narrow they bagged sand to hold the water back, they had dams all over the country. At one time they didn't let the water out until June. Well by June your hay meadows are coming up pretty green and the water went all over the meadow and got dirt all over it. My dad had to cut it with a scythe. So the next time they wanted to take logs through our place he said, "You pay fifty dollars or you don't go through!" He told mother, "You tell them fifty dollars if you want to go through the place." Fifty dollars was worth a lot more then.

Robak: Yes, it was quite a bit of money then.

Berg: So the guy came through and had a load going down to the landing. Mother said, “You can’t go through unless you pay!” No they weren’t going to pay. They were going to keep on going through. So Mother and Newlose took a two man saw and they went out and they layed down some nice evergreens right across the road so they’d have to pull them out of the way before they could get through. They didn’t come back. They didn’t pay the fifty dollars, but they didn’t come back either.

Robak: That solved the problem.

Berg: A lot of things were solved in strange ways.

Robak: Yes there’s a lot of old stories like that. You and Fred moved on this place in 1930?

Berg: He and his mother lived here for a long time alone. But when I moved in. Grandma died in 1947, she wasn’t in this country when it was new. She was in Oklahoma and it was just as hard to live there as it was here from the sound of things.

Robak: Yes, any country probably was at that time during the depression. Even when times were good they weren’t that good compared to today. Did Fred farm at this time?

Berg: He was farming when I came here. He had about twelve cows and he raised potatoes for cash crop. Then the potato market went to pieces. One year we traded potatoes to get a washing machine. Potatoes were worth 25cents a hundred and we had a lot of potatoes.

Robak: I was figuring in my head that is a lot of hundreds of pounds!

Berg: That’s right. The basement down here is built out of rock. It was built to hold a car load of potatoes. That was the idea he built it for.

Robak: Let's talk about some of the other changes you recall. Were there any Indians in the early 1900s in this area?

Berg: Oh yes. There were Indians around the country when I was about six or seven a group of them came to ask if they could gather rice on our lake. It was a good rice lack so we said, "Go ahead." They came and I watched them. I have a poem about that, but people don't believe it. They said they carried it on their heads. They didn't carry it on their head. They had a band about the head right around this way and everything fastened to it that they were carrying. Everything hung down from that headband I suppose you could call it that. They walked without carrying it in their hands or anything. There was a line of them coming.

Robak: They just had that over their backs then?

Berg: Yes carrying it like that. Like you would carry a sack hanging from you head. They had their blankets. Everything that they were carrying. They got up to the house and it was raining. It was fall and it was raining buckets. Dad say "You can't stay out there and you can't put up any shelter tonight. You come sleep in the house. I suppose they must have slept on the floor. I didn't see what happened because I went to sleep too fast, but we sat up and listened awhile. The old grandma was telling stories in Chippewa to the children and we were listening. We tried to keep our faces straight because we figured we would offend them. They had a boy with them that was deaf. People say deaf and dumb, but this boy he couldn't talk but he sure could yell. He could make sounds all right. I wondered if he ever got any schooling for that because I know there are schools for the deaf in this country. Anyway they stayed there. When they got through ricing they brought us a birch bark basket for my little sister. It was only about this long and there was

a pillow in it, but she was so tiny that she fit. She was a very fine little baby. They brought that to us and a sack of finished rice. It was the first time I ever ate wild rice.

Robak: How did you like it?

Berg: It was good. I like it. Now I've tried it lately and it doesn't seem to taste the same to me. But your taste changes. Anyway they brought a kitty with them and a dog. We didn't see them they were across the meadow they built it up like a wigwam and stayed over there. They set up their equipment to finish the rice. All we found when we went over there later was a hole in the ground and a pestle that they used on the rice I suppose after they parched it. It had a handle on it. That's a long time ago.

Robak: Then they moved on?

Berg: Yes. There must have been Indians there before my folks ever came. When they plowed in the field on the place for the first time and where they first built a little log house with a dirt floor, they would find arrow heads especially down towards the river. So there must have been Indians living there long ago on the lake where the rice and ducks were. I've heard ducks come in and they make such a racket it sounds like wagon wheels on a hard roadway. I have always wondered if they do it with their wings or how they do it. They made an awful racket.

Robak: I don't know either.

Berg: There were clouds of them. You don't see that now, but you saw it then.

Robak: What about the town of Swatar itself?

Berg: Swatar came into being when the railway went through in 1909, because I remember I was just very small. But I remember a few things that happened when I was two. When the train went

through they climbed up on the roof of the chicken coop which wasn't very high. They could look across at the hills and they could see the smoke from the train when it was going through and they could hear the whistle. That was in 1909 as nearly as I can remember. Afterwards the Heaths came and put in a post office and a store. They didn't have much but they did have a little store and they had a post office. The building is pretty well shot now. That is the little building where they had a café there before.

Robak: Yes. It's being torn down now or falling down. Part of it is still standing though.

Berg: That was the first post office, the Trepaniers moved in somewhere around that time too and built their store. I don't know the date, but I know that they moved in. they lived there and some people in Swatara by the name of Pete McGee lived there too. I don't know who all else lived in the hills between Swatara. I know there was a family by the name of Wagmer. I wasn't in Swatara enough to know who all lived around there.

Robak: So the Trepanier store is still in operation today, the general store. As soon as they moved in they must of started in business. So it probably wasn't too much larger than it is today.

Berg: I think it may have been but it wasn't just a store. They had a place where the drummers who came through stayed and different people. They had a hotel part and they served meals. They had rooms and they had a store. Effy had to come in and help him because he said he couldn't figure. So she'd have to come and figure up the order for him. He had kids so I don't know how that woman ever did all she did. She much have had wonderful health to all that she did.

Robak: Was the railroad the Great Northern?

Berg: No, it was the Soo Line.

Robak: Soo Line.

Berg: Yes the Soo Line went through Swatara.

Robak: I understand they had both passengers and of course they traded a lot of logs.

Berg: Yes, I rode on the passenger train when I was five. We went up to Duluth. My sister had eye trouble and she had to go to see a specialist there. She says what happened was that she got dirt in her eyes at school and they got infected. They had just built the school house and they had left a lot of lime around. I wonder if the lime didn't get in her eyes, because it was probably mixed in with the dirt.

Robak: Possible.

Berg: Anyway her eyes were so bad they had to leave her there. We stayed at a hotel, the Lennox Hotel. It seems strange that I would remember looking at the store windows while my sister was being treated. There was a Dove Shoe Store and there were imitation doves going up and down. One exhibit was a doll sitting at an electric sewing machine and the machine was going. It was something very unusual to see that sticks in your mind.

Robak: It was probably new to you.

Berg: Then there was another one, I suppose it was an outfitters store because there was a complete lumber camp with the ax sticking in the stump and the whole works all the buildings, it was very natural. I remember that because it was something that a kid would remember.

Robak: How was the ride to Duluth?

Berg: It was fine. I was on the train and there was a fellow sitting in back of us and a little girl across from us. Well this fellow had some bananas and he offered one to the little girl and she gave him a dirty look and wouldn't take it. So he handed one to me and it happens that I had never tasted one before. I thanked him and ate it. That's the first one I ever ate!

Robak: That trip must have been quite an experience.

Berg: Sure it was.

Robak: A lot of new things and sights.

Berg: The strange part of it was I had either chicken pox or something like that and I was breaking out. But I didn't break out on my face. My arms were breaking out, but I had long sleeves on, it was breaking out all over except for my face. If the authorities had known I had this they would have questioned us, but they didn't know and I went on back home.

Robak: I know from what I've heard and seen that you write some poetry. When did you first start writing poetry?

Berg: I think I was probably about sixteen or seventeen.

Robak: Ever since you have been writing and some of it you had published?

Berg: That's right.

Robak: That's kind of an interesting hobby and keeps you busy.

Berg: If you didn't have a hobby you could get awful lonesome living the way I do here. I have to have hobbies, I have to do something. When I make quilts it isn't because I do a beautiful job, it's the idea of combining colors.

Robak: So you're always doing something.

Berg: I wanted to paint. My niece in California wrote that she took her mother and they went out in the desert and she was showing her how to paint. Now she says, "I think I'll get her some paints and show her how to paint." This younger woman is a teacher and her mother has been a teacher. Now she is going to teach her mother how to paint. This would be something for a hobby too.

Robak: Right. You and Fred lived here and farmed from 1930?

Berg: That's right.

Robak: What crops did you grow?

Berg: Until the potato market had stopped, we had potatoes and grain. We used to sell the grain for seed grain, seed oats in the spring. Sometime we sold twenty bushels at a time. People did plant oats at that time. So we sold it a dollar a bushel which now I don't suppose you could get that price, but that was a good price at that time. The only trouble was once in a while a guy would come and buy a bunch of oats and say, "I'm sorry Fred I haven't got any money." Maybe he never did have any money.

Robak: A risky business.

Berg: That happens to everyone no matter if you are in a store or where, those things happen to you.

Robak: Do you remember any of what we call the natural disasters like fires?

Berg: I remember the 1918 fire. It didn't come near us, but we heard about it. We had a telephone I don't remember what year they put the telephone in but we had one. We could see the light. It was down by Tamarack and they said it went clear to Cloquet and it burnt up everything all the way. It was just a scorcher. I suppose it was dry like this fall.

Robak: They didn't have the equipment to fight fires. This year they have had terrible fires since tis been dry, but they can fight it.

Berg: They still couldn't like the peat fires.

Robak: Yes, that's true. They go all winter long sometimes.

Berg: That's right. In the farmer paper I think it was in '68 they showed pictures of the 1918 fire there were some people who tried to get out with the horses and wagons. There's a picture showing a little charred remains of the horses' bones. It was that bad. It was terrible and I wasn't close enough to see the things that really happened.

Robak: You were one of the lucky ones probably/

Berg: I was, we were lucky. I was real small and I don't remember this at all but there was a fire coming that way and they were afraid that it was going to burn everything up so they took flour. We didn't but a sack of flour at a time. They brought it out from Aitkin and they'd bring maybe a half a ton at a time. So they took what flour they had and the sewing machine and they buried everything that they valued until the fire would go over. I don't know what time of year it was. They figured if it came they would go to the river and drive the cattle in the river too. I don't know if it would have saved them or not. They thought they would try, that was what they had in mind. But the fire veered off.

Robak: Missed you.

Berg: We prayed about it. My mother was a sincere Christian and I'm sure she prayed about the fire. Anyway it rained after that, the wind changed and the rain came.

Robak: That helped.

Berg: It's what spared us.

Robak: What were some of the things in these early days you mentioned going to Aitkin to get the flour and that type of thing. How did you get there?

Berg: My dad or my brother would walk to Aitkin. They said they could make twenty miles in a day.

Robak: It would take about two days then.

Berg: I think it took two days to get there. They would get up early and go down there. They would find someone coming this way with a team or something and they would get the load brought out with the team. I remember my mother going to Outing when I was small. Outing was a small town at that time. Sometimes she ran out of things. She made butter, they had a few cows. They had eggs from a few chickens. She must have taken them along and traded them for groceries. She walked through the woods, it was just a narrow trail. One night coming home I don't know if she got off the trail because it got dark on her or what. Olive told me in a letter that she spent the night in an abandoned cabin. In the morning when it got light she heard the bell of cows and followed them home. She came out by Hakes places and then she knew her way home and made her way home from there. There were a lot of things that weren't so easy.

Robak: Right.

Berg: I remember when my mother and Irene had ordered some stuff brought up. We had a mailman that drove some kind of a horse outfit. They called it the stage. I asked Irene what it was and she said she thought it was a spring wagon. He brought the mail and if you ordered like sugar, they had a hundred pounds of sugar brought out. They met it out by the Pauley ranch that's probably over in the neighborhood of Randles or somewhere over there. They would divide it up in two sacks and put it on their back and carry it all the way home. Fifty pounds apiece walking through the woods. There was a trail, but still that's not easy. People wouldn't do it now days.

Robak: Is there any other events or interesting items that you recall from anytime that would be of interest?

Berg: I remember seeing one drive that went through, but its' been a long time I have some dead heads in the lake near as Clunkers that sit on their heads, dead heads in the lake. We were always catching them we did a lot of fishing. Whenever we ran out of meat in the summer time we just simply fished. We ate fish, partridge, and rabbit. If we were lucky we could eat deer meat if we could get it.

Robak: How did you store the meat?

Berg: We had an animal that accidently bleed to death because they had operated on it. They saved that meat in an odd way. They took it and they cooked it in these big sap kettle like you cook sap in. they cooked it all day. We were at school and when they got it done they took it and put it in syrup pails. They cooked it in water. There was enough fat on the top that it sealed and they kept it in the root cellar where it was cold. It must have been for a year that we had meat out of that. It was good meat too. There was lots of blueberries at the end of the lake. Over the hill

there was a bog and there were a lot of blueberries there. Mother said the year I was born she picked something like 200 quarts of berries. She carried them home with a boat or whatever. They didn't have enough fruit jars so they got gallon jugs, I assume from the camps. They could have been vinegar or whiskey jugs. She cleaned those out and put hot blueberries in there and put corks in and put pine pitch over the top. I remember when I was old enough when she did it one time, I remember eating those blueberries and they had a slight pitchy taste to them. A little bit of pine taste, but they were eatable and they kept. We would be afraid to do it now days. But they did anything then to save the stuff so you would something to eat.

Robak: Very good. If you have nothing else I think this will conclude the interview. Thank you.