

Ernest Moore

1 hour 14 minutes, 1-22-87, Cougar Mountain Oral History 1

0:00:56

INTERVIEWER: When you started working in the mine, was that the hat you wore? Is it a carbide light?

ERNEST MOORE: This is a hat, but the lights now they use is electric battery.

INTERVIEWER: Right, but when you started in '36 was that a—

ERNEST MOORE: Battery. No I used a battery.

INTERVIEWER: Battery—

ERNEST MOORE: But I use this car battery on account my grandfather used it when my dad when he was working in the mine.

0:01:16

INTERVIEWER: Well, would you start out by telling us the story that you wrote in the book about your grandfather and how he came out to Washington and your family story?

ERNEST MOORE: Okay. My grandfather was born in 18 and 46 in **Marin(?) County Tennessee** 01:30, a slave. He had a brother that he knew of but not the rest of his family. And so as he grew up, big enough, in them days, you got about five years old, they'd give you a hole to go out in the cotton field and go to work. But as time went by, he got to be what say a teenager and the **Civil War** 02:01 started and he was called to go into the Army. And after the war was over he came back home and after the slaves was free, they started sharecropping. And they share cropped for a couple of years until a man came down from the **Memphis Tennessee Coal**

Company 02:28. The only time the blacks would get a job in the mines was when they'd be on strike. And this would be in the year around 18 and 69, 18 and 70. The first blacks that would go to the mines were the ones that was jail and different place. The company didn't have to pay them towards wages. At that time salary's was only about a dollar a day, work from sun up to sun down. But, as time went on they went from one state to another, where they get better conditions, better pay.

And so he went on over to **Coal Creek, Tennessee** 03:16, close to the **Cumberland Mountains** 03:20, where my grandfather met my grandmother at that time and they got married. They had three children, three girls and one boy. One of them was my mother. And so, they went from **Coal Creek, Tennessee** 03:40 to **Knoxville, Tennessee** 03:42 which is right across from **Paducah, Kentucky** 03:45. And they worked in different mines. And until about 1900, no, I'll go back. They came up until **Illinois** 04:01, and my sister, my mother was getting up of age and she met my dad and they got married. But my grandfather and my grandmother came out west the first time in 18 and 91 to **Buckston (?) "Ioway"** 04:22. It'd always been to be a strike, but at the time, I tell a story there was a man came down the railroad track, it was in the month of May, wearing no overcoat. He was passing out leaflets, saying "Go West." That the mines out there was just some of the slope (?). And we need miners to go to work. He didn't tell them there was a strike. So, he had tickets of pass in his pockets that he would give you if you was willing to come west.

So, at that time he wanted four or five hundred men. So, he went from **"Ioway,"** 05:09 **Illinois** 05:10, **Missouri** 05:11, **Kentucky**

05:11, **Alabama** 05:12, **North, South Carolina** 05:14, **Virginia**, 05:14 **Ohio**, **05:15** all through them Southern states. Telling these men to come west. Well, one of the white foremans that had worked for the **Oregon Improvement Company** 05:31 had worked with some of these men, so that's why they came west so easy with him. But they told them; I don't like to say they told a lie, I said he just didn't tell the truth about the miner's (?) strike. So they passed out thirty-thirty rifles and muzzleloaders and shotguns and things like that for protection. They were worried they might see some Indians or buffalo on the way.

And so they left **Buckston**, "**Ioway**" 06:02 and came west on the train. In the fine print of the contract was, you worked three years or pay forty-five dollars for passage for going west. But they had never worked in a coal mine which is a difference between on a pitch and level scene (?). For instance, back east **Pennsylvania** 06:28 and them places, Anthracite mines were on a level. Out here's on a pitch. Might be ten, twenty, thirty degree pitch. Well, the blacks had never worked on a pitch before, so they was awfully easy to get injured.

So, anyway, they came out on the train. And one of these spokesmen was on the train was **James E. Jefferson** 06:57. And he would, they had Pendleton detectives on the train. And so they came west and so many, I tell a story that the womens cried on the train until they got to **Spokane** 07:09, until they got out of the snow. Then when they got to **Roslyn** 07:22, that's where the cut (?) had come there during 1888, and **James E. Jefferson** 07:26 got off the train. And they come on down from **Roslyn** 07:32. I say **Kenasket**, (?) 07:34 some of the reports this one said, say **Palmer**

07:35 because **Palmer** 07:36 is only about a mile from **Kenasket** (?) 07:39. Which **Palmer** 7:40 is still in existence and **Kenasket** (?) 07:42 isn't.

So the train had stopped there and on a Sunday morning, I said May the 12th or the 16th, and they had breakfast. I tell a story what they had hot biscuits and sour belly and molasses, bacon and coffee and things like that. And after they had breakfast the headman said, that they would take the women on to **Seattle** 08:09, and the men would walk to **Franklin** 08:09 which would be about five miles. So they lined them up two by two. And these men always carried musical instruments; they had banjos, guitars, ukuleles, things like that, harps. And they started walking, which the **Green River's** 08:28 right along there. And they'd look down the bank of the **Green River** 8:34 two or three hundred feet down the embankment. And as they came along the road, the bush moved, and they shot in the bush and it was a squirrel. And so they walked on, which like I said it was five miles. If you was up in **Franklin** 08:52, I could show you where they come out at and the fruit of the heel and they rested.

And some of them tell the story, that they said they were marching through **Georgia** 08:57. But I tell a story they were going through. So they started up this hill and on the second bend, there was a bunch of houses and the women were saying to the blacks for them to go home. They called them "niggers" at that time. And a little girl was looking out the window. But they walked on up to the top of the hill and some men was leaning on banisters. Which, they'd been alerted already, that they were coming from **Franklin** 09:31. It was always I said, stupid to tell somebody about it.

So, they came on, walk past the schoolhouse on down to the store, that's where they had the supplies at, blankets and sheets. And they gave them the houses that they had to dig in (?) And so later that evening, the train came in with the women folk. And so they had a hallelujah time that night. And they started building the houses the next day. They were renting a two-bedroom house for five dollars a month and three bedrooms for ten dollars.

And, so they laid around there for two three weeks before they went to work in the mines. There was a barbwire fence they had to divide off the strikers from the scabs. And the schoolhouse was in where the blacks was at. So the whites couldn't go to school on account of they had to come in through the barbed wire fence. So the story goes that the white kids had a long summer vacation.

So later on, they went to work in the mines.

Along coalmines there's always somebody hang to around trying to get the jobs back, just like now. Only different jobs, instead of going and looking for another job, they figure the man they worked for owes him a living. The man don't owe him nothing. You get paid on payday, you don't have to go back. To make a long story short, they went to work in the mines and some of them got injured. And I tell a story, there was a doctor come from **Virginia** 11:17 named **Dr. J.J. Mason** 11:17. He arrived in **Franklin** 11:21 off a steamer from **Seattle** 11:27, coming up the Coast. And came to **Franklin** 11:29 in 19 and 7 and stayed there for about four years.

They used to have picnics every year up there for the coal miners from **Roslyn** 11:38 and **Ravensdale** 11:39 and **New Castle** 11:40 in the summer, in the month of August. And this doctor, you could

see him. He like horses, you could see him riding through the woods on his gray stallion.

And so they went on to work in the mines. And after a period of a few years, well, there was an explosion in the mines in 18 and 94 which were thirty-seven of them killed. Well, I don't tell it in the book but it has been said that somebody set it off on purpose, which we do know people will do things like that. So anyway, it was twenty-six whites were killed and eleven blacks. And I have a picture of the K.P Hall, which is called the **Knights of Columbus** 12:40, where they laid out the bodies. And the blacks laid off in another hall that they had up in **Franklin** 12:47. And so in three or four days, a band came up from **Black Diamond** 12:51 and played for the funeral and they buried them.

So, I'm ahead of my story on the strike deal, that after they went to work at the mine, the whites couldn't go to work. **Black Diamond's** 13:07 was just four miles from **Franklin** 13:07 and so the **Black Diamond** 13:13 miners would come up there and sympathize with the **Franklin** 13:18 miners. And to make a long story short, they started fighting, arguing one night, so they called the National Guard in from **Olympia** 13:29. So they come up there and stayed ten or fifteen days and they went back. And the last time, about a month later, the company was going to take a hundred black miners to **New Castle** 13:45. It was on a Sunday. Well **Franklin** 13:50 was only a one way in one, one way out, the way you come in, the way you go out is on the train. The train always backs in. This particular Sunday morning, well, I didn't say this, but the white miners had a union that they called the **Knights of Labor** 14:11 that they worked by. So, I told the story, that

there's only three ways of getting out of **Franklin** 14:15 by walking or riding. I said, north, south and east. Well, the strikers had waylaid these roads that Sunday morning, they say they was going to massacre the ones that were left in **Franklin**. 14:32. But every time they do something, you do wrong, you don't win. To make a long story short, they went on to **New Castle** 14:41 and unloaded that carload of men. They had a little trouble over there, but not too much. You always had to fight. There was always some fighting going on.

So, to make a long story short they come back that evening and when they come through **Black Diamond** 14:54 they go about a mile and a half up the track, and the engine cut loose, to turn around the back end of **Franklin** 14:04. And that's when these strikers shot at the train. Shot a guard on the train. And that's when the riots started. They backed the train into **Franklin** 15:15 and they alerted the colored miners that was there, and they came down and said it was about a thousand shots, shot down in that little town. 'Cause see **Franklin** 15:26 is up on a hill. And the tracks are way down at the bottom. Some of them left **Franklin** 15:33 walking on water. Nobody likes to be shot at, you know. But anyway, they called out the militia out again, and they came to **Franklin** 15:45, wondering what had happened, what had started it and this, that, and the other. There's always two sides to the story. There's only one right way. They said, "We know what it is. You got these guns." So, they would take all them guns away. So they picked up all them rifles. And afterwards it was peaceful to work in the mines.

16:04 And I tell a story in the mines that one Italian or Finnish or Polish would go to work in the morning and by 10 o'clock, he'd be as black as the black miners would be from the coal dust. So they eating in the mines, from one another's buckets, and they come on top that evening, after he washed his hands and face, he'd see where he was white and the other was still colored. And he'd say, "Well, John, I'll see you in the morning." And he'd go where he lived at, and the colored man go where he lived at. And they got along good afterwards.

16:50 So, to make the story short, they had two saloons up there on the weekends, well, the miners would go to the saloons and dig more coal in the saloons than they did in the mines. And they had some fights and things like that. And on up through the years, which in 1913, there was a fire in **Franklin** 17:15, and they think somebody set it off. It burnt part of the town down, the store and quite a few houses. When they rebuild we moved to **New Castle** 17:28. Stay over there about a year, two years, then we came back to **Franklin**. 17:36

0:17:40

INTERVIEWER: After when the strike was settled, after the fence came down, how did the whites and blacks get along?

ERNEST MOORE: Good! Got along good. Got along good. I got along with them, I mean to say, in my generation coming up, the only thing was my oldest brother couldn't go to school cause they didn't have no high school in **Franklin** 17:56. It was just a grade school. So we was the only coloreds to go to high school and my daddy wouldn't let him go by himself. It's always been you could be, I had a white friend over in **Franklin** 18:07, he's dead now, but we used to go all over up in the country. But when we get in

the big crowds, he might shy off on the other side, see. You let him alone. My daddy wouldn't put him in that predicament. My dad didn't let him go to high school.

0:18:29

INTERVIEWER: Were there different neighborhoods? Were the towns segregated, the black neighborhood, the white neighborhood?

ERNEST MOORE: Yes. Yes, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Didn't have too much fighting?

ERNEST MOORE: No, no, we didn't have too much fighting.

0:18:42

INTERVIEWER: Tell me what it was like when you were a kid. What did you guys do fun? How was it to be a kid in a coal camp?

ERNEST MOORE: Well, the only games we played was for instance, we'd go out in the woods and swing in the trees. And then we'd go down to the flats and play ball, things like that. And with being colored, you always had to fight. And I tell the story; my feet are too big to run so I had to fight. So, I got along pretty good. Even if you live in **Black Diamond** 19:19 today, why, they'd tell you I didn't do bad.

0:19:25

INTERVIEWER: Were there big sort of community celebration days like the Fourth of July—

ERNEST MOORE: Like I said, yeah! I'm telling you about the blacks had, like now, in **Roslyn** 19:36, if you'd go over there, there'd be a colored picnic, I don't know what day it could be in August, but they'd celebrate that day for **Freedom Day** 19:45, see. See, the blacks came to **Roslyn** 19:49 in 1888, before **Washington**

19:52, became a state, it was a territory. And they have fights over there too.

0:20:10 [Break in tape]

0:20:11 **ERNEST MOORE:** I was a baby when I moved there. They had a theater in **New Castle** 20:12. I couldn't go to the show, **Charlie Chaplin** 20:17 would be on the show. I was too young to go, they wouldn't let me go. You know it was a silent screen.

0:20:27 **INTERVIEWER:** Sure, sure. You remember those old days, huh?

ERNEST MOORE: Sure, sure.

INTERVIEWER: How do you know these stories?

ERNEST MOORE: I remember them and then my mother had told me some of them, years ago. I remember them. Dad told me, my grandfather told me. Lot more I can say way back, how the black miners worked in the mines. I'm talking about out here in the **Northwest** 20:58. But in the South where the blacks, they had a harder time working in the mines there, than they did here.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

ERNEST MOORE: Well, there was more trouble, more trouble, more trouble.

0:21:13 **INTERVIEWER:** You remember your grandfather?

ERNEST MOORE: He's bigger than me. Strong. Father on both sides are strong people.

INTERVIEWER: What do you remember him telling you?

ERNEST MOORE: Why, he told me how it was when he was small coming up, how he had to work, do this and do that.

0:21:43

INTERVIEWER: Did he, I was curious because the book is very well written, very nicely. You really sort of bring people into that world. Did he walk, how did they get from Tennessee up into Iowa?

ERNEST MOORE: Well, in them days, I can't recall the name of the train, but they had trains back in them days. But they had to go way around, bout way to go. Now, they came out here from **Ohio**, 22:05 but I can't recall what train they came on. You see, they had a meeting place, the blacks went to **Briarwood, Illinois** 22:18, that's where they came from, the first load. And the blacks came from **St. Paul, Minnesota**, 22:31 see, two different places. Meet at one point, bring them in.

0:22:36

INTERVIEWER: You tell a story in your book where your grandfather was with another family in a wagon and slept in a cave?

ERNEST MOORE: Oh yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Where was that?

ERNEST MOORE: Well, I think it was on the way to where [inaudible] they was going to come west. They had a horse and a mule or something and they were bringing them there.

INTERVIEWER: Is that coming to **St. Paul**?

ERNEST MOORE: Yeah. Uh-huh.

INTERVIEWER: Is that where they left from to get to **Washington**?

ERNEST MOORE: Yes. See, there should be a record, but it seems like it's sealed up, the train that brought them here to the

West Coast 23:23, can't seem to find no research on that. I tell, look up the book, there **Jess Willard** (?) 23:30 he was the owner of the railroad back in 18 and 88. But he don't mention about the blacks coming in.

0:23:42

INTERVIEWER: And did your grandfather pay for his ticket?

ERNEST MOORE: Yeah! Yeah, see, at sometime they had contracts in the mining. Dig coal, the more coal you dug, the more pay you got. If you're not a good worker, you wouldn't starve but you wouldn't get much. But if you're a good worker. See, the difference here, back East, you shovel it all back East, see? But, here, that coal comes down this way [inaudible] comes by, goes down in a chute, see? And you dig it out and lift that pitch [inaudible]. But back East it goes straight in at that door and goes in there for miles. Then it goes to the right and go to the left. And back East. Then maybe out here they have slope we're on another level.

0:24:41

INTERVIEWER: So they actually, did they stay for three years with that coal company?

ERNEST MOORE: Oh, they stayed, at that time, they went back East. People get tired of one place and they first come and they got tired and went back. See my grandfather and grandmother, come here and then went back to "**Ioway**" 24:58 and then went back to **Tennessee** 25:03. And that's where my mother met my father at, see. And then they come back again, up through **Missouri** 25:13 and **Illinois** 25:14. And then they come on out this way. And my brother was born in **Buckston, "Ioway"** 25:23. And they came here in nineteen-five, he was born in nineteen-four.

0:25:32

INTERVIEWER: And you were born back in **Franklin**.

ERNEST MOORE: **Franklin** 25:36 See, I had a sister, three, one sister passed as a infant, she's buried up there in **Franklin** 25:48. She would be next to me, my older brother.

0:26:01

INTERVIEWER: When did you go to work in the mines?

ERNEST MOORE: Like I said, I went to work in '36. See, I'll tell you, if you'd like to hear my story, I came to **Seattle** 26:08 in '28, [inaudible] talking about 60 years, well I missed it just one year of coming to live in **Seattle** 26:15. But I used to only thirty-four miles from there to here, see. So I came to **Seattle** 26:21 to live in '28 and my brother and I came together. We got a place to stay at the **Woodson Apartments** 26:32 over there on 1826 24th Avenue. They were two dollars, two and a half a week. And the first job he got two dollars a day washing, parking cars and I got a job shining shoes, a dollar a day. And he stayed on that job for about maybe six months when he saw an ad in the paper what he wanted, a janitor down a Five and Ten Cents Store down there on Third Avenue. And he applied for the job and got that job. They paid eighteen dollars a week. So I moved from a dollar a day in about three days to another boot black stand for a dollar and a half a day. I worked from eight o'clock in the morning until six o'clock every night. Seven days a week. I don't know how I made it, but I did it. I did that for about two years, two and a half. Then a job come up at **Frederick and Nelson's** 27:28, that was about 19 and 30. I was by **Frederick and Nelson's** 27:34 every day. That was fifty some years ago.

0:27:40

INTERVIEWER: Those were the **Depression** years, it was the **Depression**.

ERNEST MOORE: Yeah, '29, the stock market crashed. I was on **Pike Street 27:47** And right down below, I was on Seventh, between Sixth and Seventh, and on Westlake there, there used to be a bank triangle there, **Westlake Bank 27:59** and that's where they closed the doors and people was in line trying to get their money, but the bank. But people jumping out of windows. Then they started building **Hooverville 28:10**, south of Spokane Street.

INTERVIEWER: What was that?

ERNEST MOORE: A town! Didn't have no lumber (!)! People put you out of their houses, you couldn't pay no rent, get out! Get out there, sleeping all around these railroad things. But at that time, they put you out those houses; you couldn't pay, lost homes. So they started building down there on the waterfront, south of Spokane Street cardboard houses, cardboard. Had about a hundred houses. Had a little mayor in the town. **Hooverville 28:48**. You don't remember Hoover, but he made me eat potato flour, you don't eat potato flour, used to eat that hard tack, that was during **World War I 29:00**. That hard tack.

0:29:06

INTERVIEWER: How did you get into the mines? When did you leave Seattle?

ERNEST MOORE: My brother passed away in '33 and I felt kind of homesick, so I went back, **Franklin 29:18**. And that was in, during the **Depression 29:21** years. And, I worked from one job to the other, two dollars, three dollars a day. And I even, well I can go on record, it's been on record, I don't know if I want to tell it. [Laughs].

SECOND INTERVIEWER: Tell it.

ERNEST MOORE: No, no, no. Well, my friends up there that I went to school with, we cut wood together. The man opened up, well, they got lease from the lumberman that owns all that land up there. Cut pulpwood, a dollar sixty-three cents a cord. And that's where we worked during the summer. The year '36 come by, well, I'll tell one experience, in '35 when we wasn't doing anything, just hanging around in a way, I would go over to **Eddie Sammy** 30:24, which his sister's still up there. Him and I used to go all around different places. I had, at that time I used to drink, I went with him up to **Carbonado** 30:34. We went into a tavern. I asked for a glass of beer, he asked for a glass of beer. And when I got through with that glass of beer, I took that glass of beer and bust it, boop! And this friend of mine he's an Austrian, he didn't like it, see, he tell me today about that, how that man did that, see.

Anyway, to get back to '35, we went to **Black Diamond** 31:03 from **Franklin** 31:04 on Sunday, Mother's Day. The **Black Diamond** 31:08 miners were playing the baseball team, I forget what team it was. And after the game they'd celebrate, so they'd have beer and wine. So after the game, we had a beer and a wine. And late that evening, about seven o'clock, summertime, May, we came up to the gorge, we'd go get a few more, I guess. And the manager of the gorge truck away told us that there was an accident, driving, for us to go back and write down and report it. So we went back to **Black Diamond** 31:42 to report it to the constable down there. We come on back and I went on home.

The next morning, being Monday morning, 'bout five o'clock in the morning, the "sireen" blows. [Imitates siren] And I said, "What's the siren doing blowing?" I wouldn't even turn over

[laughs]. It finally blowed again, I went out there, they tell, "I want you to go down to the river. You know about the river." I say, "Okay" and so I put on some overalls and down to the gorge, they had part of the family there and they had the rabbi. One of the pair of boots I was carrying had a fifth of Jack Daniels, or something. I said, "What you doing with this?" He say, "You might be on a bank or something [inaudible]."

So, they wanted to find out if they could go down the river how far. I said, "You can't go too far, cliffs, hundred, hundred and fifty feet high." Coal down below, twenty, thirty feet deep. So, we went as far as we could, then we came back. And then we went, we went down to the **Cannon Mine** 32:45. That's the last mine was in **Franklin** 32:51 'til they open up them small mines. And we made a decision go to **Enunclaw** 32:55 to buy a hundred and fifty feet hog wire and we got old irons from the mines there and put for anchors, got the rope and tied it on there and put it across the river. And these Jewish, I don't recall the name, one of Sammy's father's furniture store owners, and the other would shake him and turn him. There was [inaudible] 17th and Yesler Way, by Langston Hughes, that used to be the Jewish Synagogue, years ago. We couldn't find them so they paid us fifty cents an hour just, we would sit down there and play cards, look out at the water for a while. And about two days, a miner from **Ravensdale** 33:43, see I think I was [inaudible], and he came over to **Franklin** 33:47 and went down the river and looking at the river, looks like them sand stones just go straight down, see, but they go way under, might go thirty feet under that, the river been there for years, see? So, he sort of cast down there, and he went down there and when he come

back, he pulled up a leg. Pulled off and next thing, he went there and he got and he put on in there. [Inaudible] by being wealthy, that year, county commissioner was name **Stevenson** 34:17, had a coroner named **Millistaff** 34:20(?) here in Seattle 34:22. They were flying over the river, and we had a game warden with us, and so when he got up to it the game warden shook his white handkerchief at it. He turned around and went back, brought the coroner wagon there. Picked him up, but the other one we didn't find him for about thirty days. So we made a little money like that, see.

When I went to work in the mines, I never had worked in the mines. But my father had worked in there. I tell a story, my dad worked thirty-five years, my grandfather worked fifty years in the mines. My grandfather done got his [inaudible] broke. My father got his leg broke in the **Franklin Mine** 35:10. So, I went to work and it's all water level. Got boots top of the hill. Oh, It's about, they say three blocks form where the store would be in **Franklin**, 35:20 they went straight in. And after we got in there, about oh, hundred, a hundred and fifty feet, we got a couple of mules. I worked with a mule, called me a muleskinner. I was scared of the mule, never did [laughs], never could drive the mule, never could. He would run away from me sometimes.

0:35:43

INTERVIEWER: So you mined in those days? Tell me how you mined in those days.

ERNEST MOORE: That pick comes from **Black Diamond** 35:49 mine, that pick. Well, gangway set in like that door going in there, or wall, going in the gangway, we made it about, the vein of coal, maybe six feet, the vein of coal, six feet. It's on an angle, there's

six feet coal, see? Sit there, you sit there, drilling there, shoot that face out, see? And you try to get to the top, and the sides, that's where you put your timber. Once you get room, you start put that timber up. This side for the timber, and you put a collar across there, see? Then you work in, that way, you get a couple of feet, you use a lagging (?), like a two by six. But the lagging (?) is undressed, you know, we call it a lagging (?) And, you drive it in there, every six inches you drive, drive ahead, for protection, you see? That's the way they drive a mine, work a mine. Sideways, see, that would be eight by twelve, or say, down there, that rock. They done sheet all that rock. That wouldn't be coal, down there, see. But about six feet, it would be coal. That would be rock, and they sheet it because they wanted straight gangways, see. And so that's the way they go in, they go in for maybe five hundred feet. Go in five hundred feet and then the fire boss says, the big boss says, "Well we set up and shoot." Well the lift might be three hundred four hundred feet to the surface. So you work up there and they try to get a fan to push that air in there. That's the only air you get from pushing from the outside. In the olden days they didn't have that, see. In later days you got a fan. So maybe in about a month, you push that sheet through to the surface. And then air come down through and circulate.

Then the other mines are still going ahead, going that a way, just go ahead. Then when you get in there, say a thousand feet, you want to go down, to the next level. I'll show you a picture; I've got a picture in that book. I wanted to tell the story about that's where the mine' shad that explosion. And it shows the sixth level down there. That's where the men was at. And the man that went in to

volunteer, his name was **George Smaller** 38:19. They asked for a volunteer at the explosion. He said, "I'll go." So, he went down there. One man was alive, but he was never no more good, you know, out. And so, that's the way that is.

And so, coal mining, if you don't know nothing about coal, mining, that's it. Wake up, go to the mine, come home, go to the mine.

There's a dance hall up there, like them **KP Hall** 38:52, dance Hall, dance. Friday night, Saturday night, Trains go in and out twice a day. In the later years, they come to **Seattle** 39:02 and do their shopping. Come in the morning train, go back on the evening train.

0:39:11

INTERVIEWER: In the early days, they had a company store?

ERNEST MOORE: Yeah! You buy everything from the store.

INTERVIEWER: They charge you more?

ERNEST MOORE: Oh yeah, you gotta make it, you gotta make it. They had what they call coupons. If you work, if you ain't work, you don't get no coupons. They saw how much time you got in there

INTERVIEWER: What are these coupons?

ERNEST MOORE: Money! Just like, it was money, instead of cash money; they'd give you a coupon, five-dollar boot, ten-dollar boot. People weren't making much money like they doing now. [Inaudible] water, come down, flooded the mine. There was two men working in there with me. And they run far as they could. One got killed and the other just got trapped up in the corner, up to

here. The state law is, to work that mine, you gotta get him out or you gotta close that lovin' mine. So they started working to get him out. But the only thing they had to pull him out with, had to use a mule. The electric motor couldn't go because there wasn't no juice, see. So they used a mule. So they worked that mule around the clock, twenty-four hours a day. And somebody reported it to the humane society, that they working that mule too hard. So they find out what day he was coming and gave that mule some baking soda, and bloated him up, (laughs) So when they come, they look, and say, "He all right." But they finally got the man out, though. He lived, he lived to work again in that mine. [Inaudible]

0:41:03

INTERVIEWER: So tell me again what you were saying about the history of the union. In the early days, they were were what, **Knights**—?

ERNEST MOORE: Well, the beginning of the mine, like I say, the whites had a union called the **Knights of Labor** 41:17, just like the **Ku Klux Klan** 41:17. No blacks would get in it. I mention just a little bit about the **Ku Klux Klan** 41:42, the reason I don't mention it too much, I'm known in **Black Diamond** 41:28, see that's my home, so I don't want to interested too much about, because it's been forty seven years since I lived up there, see. A lot of youngsters, a lot of **Ku Klux Klan** 41:40 moved up that a way, see. When I go up there, they don't want to [inaudible] they say, "What are you doing up here?" Well, to make a long story short, the Polish people from **Poland** 41:52, they always believed in unions, they dream and sleep unions. They tried to run the company. Well, the company let them run for a while, as long as he's producing that coal. But when it comes kind of a slack time,

then the company tell him, well, say now, "We're going to have to cut down on your salary. Because we can't pay you, we not selling any coal." Then they want to go on strike. Well, I tell the story this. Anything, you don't have to be a coal miner, if I'm hungry and there's a job over there, and a man going to pay me a salary as the last man, I'm going to work. I might have to fight to get to work, or fight to get home, but I'm still going to work, the man pay me when I get enough time in. 'Cause he can protect me, in the olden days, they used pick handles, see. They used pick handles. Chains. Sometimes they might have a gun, but if they had a gun, they might report it, you know.

And, so the blacks from the beginning are working in the United States, not **Franklin** 43:11, down in **Alabama** 43:12, **Kentucky** 43:14, my dad worked down in there. **Harlan County, Kentucky** 43:18 had the biggest strike in history down there. Shoot 'em ups down there, over striking in the mines. They kill you for going to work. Yeah, many men been killed, striking. There was a man in **Franklin** 43:34 called **James Johnson** 43:38. After this last strike in '21, he wouldn't walk down the railroad tracks, he goes through the edge of the woods. Said he didn't want the people that, the strikers to know it. But the boss comes, says, "No, no." Said, "They might kill you up there. Just come on down here if you want to work." So he had to go down there.

0:44:04

INTERVIEWER: So when did the **United Mine Workers**

ERNEST MOORE: I say, they, formed a union, the blacks and the whites, in about 19 and 7, they first started. Then they come on up to 19 and 11 the **United Mine Workers** 44:20. That's when the black and the whites worked in the mines. See, history of the coal

miners, my dad told me, when in the South, some mines, the blacks didn't work in the mines, because the whites say they wouldn't work with them. So in some parts of the South, some of the mines, half of it was black, half of it was white. That's the way it was. Some mines they would say, 'If you can't read, run anyway.' They didn't want you around there. That's the way it was in the South.

But, it was nothing like that out here, which they've got some history out there in the library that I read. When the blacks come to Roslyn 45:13, they say they was the lowest scums of the Earth that came. Well, I'm here to tell them, look at me, see if I'm the scum. I had to go through what they would have went through if they had been black. Understand what I mean? For instance, now, on these jobs, the minimum wage is 3 dollars and 35 cents an hour.

[inaudible] Well, now they have a lot of these foreigners in their country, they're taking their jobs, see. Some of the young blacks, they don't want to work for that. They figure they should get more. Well, these other people taking the jobs. So, it's what you call **"open shop"** 46:07. Under the Republican administration, they don't believe in unions, see. No, no. Open shop. You come into work today, you went home at night, the next day you might not have a job. In the olden days, the unions are good, but I'll say the Business Agent asks too much.

0:46:33

INTERVIEWER: Why?

ERNEST MOORE: Well, instead of asking for the salary, they could ask for better conditions in the mines. See, they have what they call, now I myself could file for social security on **scillicolosis** (?) 46:49, by working in the mines, like that dust and asbestos. The

dust you get in the coalmine, you eat a lot of dust, lots of dust. That dust won't go through your system some of it stay in there.

0:47:09 **INTERVIEWER:** Black lung.

ERNEST MOORE: Yeah. Well, some of it call it **black lung** 47:13, some of them call it **scillicolosis** (?) 47:14. For a while they wouldn't pay it, but they're appealing it now and I may be filing.

0:47:19 **INTERVIEWER:** There was a big strike in 1920, '21, that was when the [inaudible] came for good, or what happened then?

ERNEST MOORE: That's when well, we said, the oil industry was just coming in, oil industry. And the companies couldn't pay the wage that they union wanted to earn. So. They closed down. The strikers moved on out, but up in **Black Diamond** 47:55 there was a man on about ten acres of land named **Morgan** 48:00. And he let the strikers build about a hundred houses out there. Now they call it **Morganville** 48:08. That's where the strikers moved to, but still, in six months after the strike was still getting over with, his stomach was getting hungry. He went to the boss and say, "John, is my job still there?" He say, "Yeah, come on back." And his stomach say, "Well, I got to go back." So, next morning pull down the [inaudible] so his friends won't see [laughs]. He go on back to the mines. And his friends call a few days, say "You scab, scab, scab." Then they'd pass it off. Pretty soon, all of them are back in the mines. It's a losing battle.

0:48:58 **INTERVIEWER:** That was in the days of **John L. Lewis**?

ERNEST MOORE: Yeah. You like in the olden days, my dad used to work piecework, like I say he was a good worker. They owe him money now, for piecework. He dig so much coal, him and

my grandfather, they would knock off about one or two o'clock in the afternoon, work on cars [inaudible]. Rest of them still up there digging. [Inaudible]. And they would take too many cars out, they wouldn't take them all out, you take them out, you get fired. Sometimes he'd steal some of them cars. What I mean "steal," he'd take them and put them on somebody else's [inaudible], see. That's why I say they owe him money.

0:49:43

INTERVIEWER: Tell me, what was it like for your mom and the women that lived in the coal community?

ERNEST MOORE: It was all right. For instance, my mother and dad didn't work out, see. 'Cause see, there was four of us and [pause] they'd just take care of the house.

0:50:09

INTERVIEWER: What did they have to do? It's so different from today.

ERNEST MOORE: Well, for instance, wash tub, one of them old tin tubs, wash boards, the water would be in the house but the toilet's outside, little cubby deal out there. You might have linoleum on the kitchen floor and then you have coal heater, coal wood stove, see. So that's the way it goes.

0:50:52

INTERVIEWER: Were your houses painted?

ERNEST MOORE: They were painted, I'd say painted gray on account of you paint them white but the coal dust would make them gray. So if you see any pictures they look gray. The coal dust settles.

INTERVIEWER: Describe it some more. Were there curtains on the windows?

ERNEST MOORE: Oh yeah! People fix up their home. I have a kerosene lantern, I have two or three of them somewhere, they using them over there, you know, you know, kerosene lamps.

INTERVIEWER: And a garden?

ERNEST MOORE: Oh yes! And my grandmother, she used to have a cow. And she had a horse, I forget the name, I can't recall the name now, but, she used to call him something, pony. And then they moved from **Franklin** 51:47 up here by **Skyway** 51:51, I call it **Camel Hills** (?) 51:55 and they worked in **New Castle** 51:57 come back through Renton 51:59, go on up through **Kenneydale** 52:00, you know, four or five miles that's all it is. You didn't mind it in them days [inaudible] so they moved from **Franklin** 52:12 when I was born to I say **Skyway** 52:17 and she did janitorial work for the school for about twenty years. And they moved from the **Camel Hills** (?) 52:27 school, which is up on the hill, down to **Duwamish** 52:32, down where would be the **Duwamish River** 52:34, that's before the **Interurban** 52:39 was built. They bought a lot. The **Interurban** 52:40 wanted to go through there; they buy them out, 'cause they wanted to go straight through there. They bought them out and they moved over here about three blocks. And built another house.

0:52:54

INTERVIEWER: What about if one of you kids got sick?

ERNEST MOORE: Well, like I say, this **Dr. Mason** 53:00, I brag on him, see. We had another doctor up there, I can't recall his name of hand now, so we had another doctor up there. Well, I was young, I had diphtheria one time. And then the small pox went through the school. They had home made remedies in them days, you know.

0:53:26

INTERVIEWER: Were these doctors company doctors?

ERNEST MOORE: Yeah. They paid it off at two dollars a month, off of your check. Each miner paid two dollars a month for the family. Then they pay that doctor. So I tell a story, **Dr. J.J. Mason** 53:41 got his start in **Franklin** 53:44 and went to **Seattle** 53:47 about 1912 or '13 and got to be coroner, got to be Superintendent of the **King County Hospital** 53:49. **King County Hospital** 53:59 at that time was out in **Georgetown** 54:01, out on Carson Street. I had my tonsils taken out long about 1920. And after he come to **Seattle** 54:16 and was in the doctor's practice he made money 'cause he got payment, built him a hospital on Terry and Spring which now, the entrance is on 9th Avenue, see. They've taken the whole two blocks. And, my dad got his legs broke in 19 and 20 so he went to the **Providence Hospital** 54:47. There was another doctor with **Mason** 54:52, named **Lyle Buckner** (?) 54:54 they was coming up in doctors.

0:54:59

INTERVIEWER: What about the churches in these coal towns? Were there churches, too?

ERNEST MOORE: Yes we had a church there in the olden days, but as the people left the coalmines, the colored families left, well, they didn't pay preacher to stay there, so he left too. But he would come up on weekends, come up Saturday night and stay to Sunday night, go back then.

0:55:55
churches?

INTERVIEWER: But there were white churches and black

ERNEST MOORE: Yeah, there were white and black churches.

00:55:31

INTERVIEWER: How did the mine start to go down? How did you get out of it?

ERNEST MOORE: Well, oil took over, oil. See, **Pacific Coast Coal Company** 55:43 was a big company, shipping magnate, and when they converted over from coal, you got oil wells, and much cleaner to use oil than coal. Every ton of coal you use, you got about five or six hundred pounds of ashes to take out, see? So people like to use oil [inaudible] see? Oil's a little bit higher, so that makes man working in the coalmine can't work. So anytime in the summer, the mines not working very much now, 'cause people don't need. But up there, **Morris Brothers** 56:27 got a mine, open mine and he sells it to the **University of Washington** 56:34, down there **Chehalis** 56:36, where they got a steam plant. They could use the coal, there, see? Make steam into electricity, see. So he got a contract with them. So he make that.

0:56:50

INTERVIEWER: well, how long did you stay a miner?

ERNEST MOORE: I stayed about a year, I stayed about a year, but I should be around there, see, like I say, I skipped part of the story, but before my daddy got his leg broke, my brother used to go down in the mines on weekends. He wasn't going to school or nothing. And he'd go fishing, the river was right at the mines. And my dad was a fireman in the boilers. And when he didn't have nothing to do with the boiler, he'd go out there and switch them coal cars, the empty cars around. So on weekends, the mine wouldn't be working, see. There'd be maybe one or two around there, but other one might be down in the mines or somewhere, you wouldn't see them. [Inaudible] come up and go home. And he was switching these cars around and the motors, oh, about six or

eight feet long, about three feet wide, with a motor on it. And you got one foot up, one foot standing up there, grab the electricity, [inaudible] I was telling a friend the other day, they had them lines (?) in for the chuck these, stop, get out there and chuck these wheels see, car wouldn't move right way. While doing these maneuvers, this line (?) jumped down there and caught his legs and smashed it. And he reached down there, and when looked up there he sees blood. There's nothing he could do but hit up on that wire, up there. And my brother woke up and come out. And then he went up, he had to go about a mile to where the phone's at. They come down there and released him brought him up about a mile, put him on a hand cart and took him to **Black Diamond 58:51**, which is three miles down the track, gave him first aid and then took him onto **Seattle 58:57** to **Providence Hospital 59:01**. Stayed there about six months [inaudible]. And **Dr. Mason 59:06** was his doctor. And they had a consultation one day about him, **Dr. Mason 59:10** said, "I've got ten days to cut it off or save it." He swears, he said, "Hell, I've got ten days to save your legs." **Dr. Mason 59:24** was a short man, from the [inaudible]. His son is famous out there **University Hospital 59:30**, up there at **Harborview 59:30** and his grandson is up at the **Group Health Hospital 59:36**.

0:59:37

INTERVIEWER: And he saved the legs?

ERNEST MOORE: Yeah! And then my dad went over, he told my dad, "You know, Hal (?) I've got my own hospital, now. How'd you like to come over and stay with me?" He said, "Okay" so they moved him over there. But he wasn't as big as he is now, see. He has the hospital now, taking up two blocks. It's a medical center now. My grandmother should be on that, 'cause 1914, I

interviewed a lady in [inaudible] came from **Cherokee, Oklahoma**
1:00:11 and she met my grandmother in 1914, **Kenneydale**
1:00:16, that lady now ninety-seventy years old, lives out in
Renton 1:00:22.

1:00:23 **INTERVIEWER:** I was going to ask you if there are any other
old timers around that we should talk to?

ERNEST MOORE: Well, she, the only thing about her, she
didn't work in no mines, she and her family worked in the steel
mills here in **Seattle** 1:00:36. She moved from, see, my brother,
was going with her daughter years ago, that's how I know them so
well. Her husband worked in the steel mills.

1:00:51 **INTERVIEWER:** Is there anybody left from the old coal miners?

ERNEST MOORE: Well, there's, I tell you where, you get up
around **New Castle** 1:00:59, they should have told you about a
couple named Jones 1:01:01, I think the name is **Jones** 1:01:03. He
could have told you something about **New Castle** 1:01:07, 'cause
he's from **New Castle** 1:01:09.

1:01:12 **INTERVIEWER:** Where does he live now?

ERNEST MOORE: I don't know if he lives out from
Kenneydale 1:01:13 or not. See, I don't get out that way too
much, now. But I never did write too much about it, but the only
way you, if you looking for history, you going to have to go to the
Renton Historical Society 1:01:35. You know where that at?

INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh.

ERNEST MOORE: They have a little bit of history of the blacks
of **New Castle** 1:01:46.

INTERVIEWER: They've got some pictures. Do you a woman by the name of **Astrid Lundberg** (?)?

ERNEST MOORE: Yeah. You interview her?

INTERVIEWER: No, no, I just heard her name and I wondered if you knew what she was talking about.

ERNEST MOORE: She wrote a book, but, see, this was supposed to be my story, but anyway, I don't say nothing about whose story it is. I was here when she was in Texas, so I would know more about it than she did, see. But you can go to the **University of Washington** 1:02:19 and then go up to **Black Diamond** 1:02:21 and everything [inaudible] you can write, and you hear me talk and you copy that. For instance, in this chapter I've got there where that lady was up in **Franklin** 1:02:31 a week ago Tuesday, I do a lot of talking to those Junior, Community College and she got a lot of it mixed up, what I told her. She didn't know [inaudible]. There's one man buried in that cemetery name of **Henry Edwards** 1:02:58. He's one of the first fifty came from **Higginsville**(?), **Missouri** 1:03:03 and he died about 1924. He buried there in that **Franklin** 1:03:11 cemetery. I used to call him [inaudible] he weighed about three fifty, four hundred, strong. So he worked in **Franklin** 1:03:22, he worked on the pump. So I don't know nobody else that can help you with. They have copied a lot of stuff. **Astrid Lundberg** (?) 1:03:40 and another guy named **Ralph Hayes** 1:03:41, now, why don't you go over to **Roslyn** 1:03:46.

1:03:48

INTERVIEWER: We're going to.

ERNEST MOORE: You been to **Roslyn**?

INTERVIEWER: We haven't been there, but we'd like to.

ERNEST MOORE: You saw **Ethel Cragin** (?) 1:03:57.

INTERVIEWER: Who's she?

ERNEST MOORE: Why, she's a pioneer in **Roslyn** 1:04:03. She could tell you the history of **Roslyn** 1:04:10.

INTERVIEWER: Not too many old timers left, huh?

ERNEST MOORE: I didn't write too much about **Roslyn** 1:04:17 on account I'd let that be her story, you know. She was born in 1906. She had a daughter, her and I were going to get together on my book, but she passed away. [Inaudible]

1:04:29

INTERVIEWER: I'm sorry I didn't get a chance to meet your [inaudible]-

ERNEST MOORE: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

INTERVIEWER: She was quite a character.

ERNEST MOORE: Well, I didn't tell all about her because like I say, I had to cut it short. See, she come through from **Tennessee** 1:04:50, her husband passed away and she had two boys and they died. And she didn't like coalmines anyway and she had always heard of **Canada, Canada** 1:04:59. Since slavery, see. In slavery times they say, "Go to **Canada** 1:05:07 you be free." Always, they hear that. So when she come on out to **Seattle** 1:05:10, come up to **Franklin** 1:05:10. she stayed there about ten days and say, "I'm going to **Canada**.1:05:16" She went on up to **Vancouver** 1:05:17 and got her a job and met one of them Englishmen up there and they got married and lived happily ever after. He was a gold prospector and a plumber and everything. She used to take in laundry, well, I guess you'd say sporting elements. In the olden

days, they the only ones that had money, you know. And they'd pay you good money. So she did that twenty or thirty years. And I remember I put in the book, **Queen Elizabeth** 1:06:01, after she got a hundred years old, gave her a plaque, being the oldest subject.

1:06:08

INTERVIEWER: Did you see her from time to time over the years?

ERNEST MOORE: Oh, yes. We brought her down here sometimes, and I'd ask her what she wants and she'd say, "Any cigars?" And some kind of whiskey she wanted and I'd have to get that.

INTERVIEWER: Tough old gal, huh?

ERNEST MOORE: Oh yeah. I've got a picture of her maybe I didn't bring it out where she's chewing that cigar.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, I saw that. So does anyone else want to ask a question?

1:06:47

SECOND INTERVIEWER: Tell us about this photograph from New Castle [hands him a photograph].

ERNEST MOORE: You mean working on the railroad track? I can't tell you too much about it.

SECOND INTERVIEWER: Did you know any of those fellows?

ERNEST MOORE: No, like I say, when we left there in about 19 and 15 we never did go back there no more, only on visits. We wouldn't be going back to that town, [inaudible] I'd be going to my grandmother's they lived out there in **Renton** 1:07:15. The only time I would see them was at a picnic, see. So this could be, I

can't recall the name now, but like I say, let's see, there was **Marshall** 1:07:33 and **Franklin** 1:07:34 and **Harding** 1:07:38 and oh, some others that lived there. You have the picture of the one, of **George Hardy** 1:07:54 with a bunch of other miners?

1:07:57

SECOND INTERVIEWER: The real long hair?

ERNEST MOORE: Yeah. One miner **George Hardy** 1:08:03. You have that one with the engine and about twenty men standing by it?

SECOND INTERVIEWER: I don't think so.

ERNEST MOORE: I saw that up at **Renton** 1:08:15, I thought it was. And if I had a camera I'd have took a picture, but I didn't have a camera. Never did see it no more. I'd go back and ask them about it. They don't know which way it [inaudible]. I don't wonder, you know, too seriously. So, you see, this story I'm telling, I tell it straight from the heart. I just pull a little punches, but not too many of them, you see.

INTERVIEWER: Good story.

ERNEST MOORE: I go up to **Black Diamond** 1:08:50, I looked up there today, you want to extend that depot that's there [inaudible]. They had pulled down the shades, but I wouldn't say nothing to them, you know. Make up old scores, sore spots, you know. There's one fellow, he's a year older than me, his dad's German, he's German. And when they came to **Black Diamond** 1:09:20 he was in that trouble, see. And he would [inaudible] and he would train them Germans to work the front, to get them colored people. And they found out about it and they, "Oh no, you can't do that." He's was trying to make armies of their

own. See, there's always something going on. The blacks they just got away from there, **New Castle** 1:09:51 went down. But **Pacific Coast Coal Company** 1:09:55 owned **New Castle** 1:09:57, **Franklin** 1:09:59 and **Black Diamond** 1:10:02. **Northern Pacific** 1:10:03 owned **Ravensdale** 1:10:04, see. And **Roslyn** 1:10:07.

1:10:10

INTERVIEWER: Is that a good company to work for, **Pacific Coal**?

ERNEST MOORE: Mmm, they all got shortcomings, but if you can't do no better, you have to take it. They say, "Well, we pay so much" and if they're paying by the hour, you have to do so much work, well, and like I say, they were Republican, they were Republicans. When the blacks first come here, they had to sign being Republicans. We'd be union. They took all that [inaudible].

1:11:00

INTERVIEWER: They make them sign that they wouldn't join the unions?

ERNEST MOORE: Well, they just, that was only an agreement coming here. Like they run the Chinese out just before the blacks come in. The Chinese [inaudible] worked on the railroads. Burnt their shacks down and everything. And there was, when the railroad was first laid the **Northern Pacific** 1:11:27, they run them Chinamen out so they didn't have nobody to lay the steel. And they sent to **Louisiana** 1:11:32 and got them **Louisiana** 1:11:34 boys up here and they finished laying that track.

1:11:

INTERVIEWER: I didn't know that.

ERNEST MOORE: Oh yeah, it's history. But some of it you're not going to find.

INTERVIEWER: A lot of it never made it in the books.

ERNEST MOORE: Oh no. When I was doing my little review in the history books, I was looking for when **Washington** 1:11:57 became a state, how many blacks was in there. Now, there was eight or nine families here in **Seattle** 1:12:02, but they wasn't even in the books, in that history books, instead of white and Indians. But now when the history books come out they going to have to name a lot of them in **Washington** 1:12:17. So, my book is in **Olympia** 1:12:27, I was glad it made it there, that the younger generation come along, and see what the blacks did years ago. I say that the blacks provided for the ones that's here today, see? It's not a hundred percent, never will be a hundred percent. It'll be like that manager told **Satchel Paige** 1:12:52, "If your face was white I'd sign you up, but as long as you're black I can't sign you." That's the way the ball bounce. So someday they might pass this on [looking at picture] and say, "There's Ernie Moore, that's that six finger guy." [Laughs] Say, "When he hits you, he hit hard."

INTERVIEWER: Thank you very much, a real interesting afternoon.

1:13:42

ERNEST MOORE: Okay.

End of Interview