

Trip to Yakima, Washington in 1918
an Oral History

Watson Bartlett, Interviewee
Of Mendota, Illinois

Interview Date: May 20, 1975

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Q: We are interviewing Watson Bartlett about a trip that he took.

Watson, when did this trip take place?

A: In 1918. We left here on June 18, 1918.

Q: What was the purpose?

A: Well, the Darby family with whom I went, Mr. Darby was a railway mail clerk, and he had gotten fed up with this riding on the train and sorting mail, and he and two--three--other brothers, the four of them bought a 40 acre orchard in, near Yakima, Washington. And they decided to move out there and build a house. And so Mr. Darby left in the spring and had the house about made, and as soon as the boys were out of school, in June, they were moving out there. And they had a car, on the railroad, for their furniture. And there was plenty of room in it for this Model T Ford, which was relatively new--that had only run six hundred miles. But, by Jove, the railroad wanted either a hundred fifty or two hundred dollars extra to put the car in. So they decided to drive out. So there was Mrs. Darby, and Farwell was eighteen--he just graduated, and Lawrence was fifteen, and I was 21. And when I think of the courage that Mrs. Darby must have had to start out with three kids in 1918 for across the continent. (laughter)

Q: What were the roads like in those days?

A: Well, there was a little bit, we studied the maps and the Lincoln Highway, is what is now 30, I believe, and that had been laid out as a transcontinental road. And from Dixon to Morrison, or somewhere in there, was a few miles of pavement. And I think it was brick pavement,

A: at that time. But there was quite a little gravel roads at that time, but there was an awful lot of just plain dirt road. And we left in the morning and went to Dixon and then on to Sterling and Morrison and on to Clinton, Iowa. And we headed for Omaha where Mr. Darby had a sister. And on the way across Iowa, Iowa mud. There come heavy rains and we went for miles on low speed. Those old Model T with two speed, high and low, you know. You hold the pedal down to go on low and it was about ten miles an hour. And it was something. But we got through. I don't remember how many miles, it was in the soup.

Q: About how fast did a car go?

A: Well, on good roads we wouldn't get much over 25 miles and hour. Possibly up to 30. They, the Model T would run up to 40, 45 miles an hour, if you opened it wide up. But nobody did that except kids.

Q: Well, what did you do for your food?

A: Well, we, sometimes if we hit towns right we'd eat at restaurants. Otherwise we ~~would~~ buy and carry stuff along with us. However, I think we ate entirely at restaurants between, and stayed. . . At that time there was no motels, you could go to a hotel, but there was also, people would put out signs--rooms for transients--and you could rent a room for overnight. And so we stayed in places like that to Omaha, And then starting out of Omaha, I remember we spent, we got in there midday or a little after midday, and stayed at Mrs. Curtis' and took the next morning looking over Omaha, which to me looked much like Chicago. Of course it didn't have as many people, but it's big buildings and busy and everything. And we left right after dinner and ran 110 miles. I remember and came to a big cottonwood grove--see there's no woods

A: after we get across the Missouri--that had been planted and we decided to spend the night there. Well, we weren't too well prepared, we weren't experienced in camping, but we had with us a single--one of these folding canvas Army cots--and a double Army cot. That would be enough. Well, Mrs. Darby decided that she would sleep in--she was a small, slight built woman--and she decided to sleep in the car. And I had the single cot and Farwell and Lawrence the double one. And it was our first experience, and as you go West and the altitude increases the differences between day and night temperature increased too, and we got pretty cold before morning out there and wasn't-- there was none of us too well satisfied with our accommodations. But from then on till we got to the mountains we stayed in towns--Laramie and along the Platte River and then to Cheyenne. I think we hit Cheyenne on a Saturday night and we stayed in a hotel there. And the next morning we visited the capitol, and climbed clear up into the dome, and you could see Long's Peak and Pike's Peak, seems as though there were seven that you could see down in Colorado, from the top of the capitol building, in Cheyenne. So we spend part of the morning and then started for Laramie which is in Wyoming, and spent the night there. And then the next day we were between the Medicine Bow and the Wasatch Mountains, there was kind of a long valley, and I think that was the--they call where you go over the Sherman Hill, up by Laramie, this is following the Union Pacific Railroad, and they call that the continental divide, but the actual true divide is a number of miles farther west, right on the big plain. It isn't but a few feet higher, maybe 50 to 100 feet higher, than it is there but it is

A: the real divide and there was a big monument. I remember, we stopped on this Sherman Hill and this big pyramid-like pile of stones marked the site of the Ames Brothers--Oliver and I don't recall-- who were instrumental in the development of the Union Pacific. Well, we--when we stopped there we saw a little gravestone about a block away, I suppose, just sticking out of the sage brush. So Farwell and I started running over to it and we didn't run half the way till we was walking and panting for all that's out, at 8,000 feet when you've been used to 730 feet or so. It was, it was--someone had been buried there. But it was no one that we knew anything historical about. So then we went on past a little, oh, just a station, along--on the UP, and decided to camp. In that place the roads--weren't even--there was no grade--it was just a path through the sage brush. And some of the way there had been a grader through that had tóoted out the sage brush and kind of crowned the road a little bit but a lot of the way it wasn't, it was just a track. And no fences or anything so we just pulled to the right and run it two or three hundred yards and stopped the car and decided to camp there. Well, I had frozen from laying on that cot, so I said, well I dind't want the cot, I'd sleep on the ground. And so Mrs. Darby took the cot and I took the two cushions out of the Ford, and they're only about--they weren't eighteen inches wide, I don't think--so if you turned over without _____ you rolled off from them, you know. And rolled up in the blanket and at first the mosquitoes bothered. Now this would be in the latter part of June, and the mosquitoes bothered, but about ten o'clock as I recall a breeze come up and it was just heavenly--blew the mosquitoes away. And went to sleep and probably two o'clock or sometime I woke up rolled up like a caterpillar and just about frozen to death. And our fire

A: had pretty well gone down and all you had to burn was this dog-gone sage brush, seems to grow on one side and die on the other, it's kinds flat ftuff, and smokes and don't burn good. Well, in the meantime I had traded--I had two light woolen blankets--and I traded them to the boys for the old horse blanket. We had an old horse, Pudie. And they had the blanket and I thought that was heavier, so I was up with that like an Indian wrapped around me, you know, and they were up and we was squatted over the smoke, cause that's about all we could get warm in the middle of the night. Why we never run into rattlesnakes I haven't the least idea. We didn't see any.

Q: Well, was there any snow out there?

A: No, only on the mountains. You could see the snow. So then we went on and the only place we got off the road, although you'd go miles without a mark of any kind, and the Lincoln Highway was marked by a red, white, and blue stripes about eight, ten, or twelve inches wide, one after the other around a pole, but you might go ten miles before you'd see a pole with stripes on it. And there was one little town, we'd been on the south side of the UP, oh, it's be smaller than Meriden, because Meriden has a number of houses, and this didn't have over three houses, I don't think, and we should have crossed--the road turned and crossed the railroad--and we should have turned immediately left and gone along the railroad, but we didn't. We kept going north and in about maybe two miles, you couldn't hardly see any track at all. And so we commenced and a coyote ran across in front of us and we commenced to get suspicious that we were off, we knew we were going north, and should be going west, but you go north and west anyway to get. . .so, and we come to a little ranch and there was a kid there and

A: he didn't seem to know the ad. . .of course there isn't any towns. We got no information, we turned around and came back. And I think it was only between three and four miles that we'd gone out of the way. And came back and then we see where it went west alongside the railroad. And that was right. And that was the only time we got really off the track. So by night then we came to Evanston, Wyoming, which is right on the border with Utah. And Utah was dry and Wyoming was wet. And Evanston was at that time quite small. But there was this place that it was kinda of a--they had rooms--upstairs--rooms. But downstairs was a bar and a dance floor, I think. Well, us kids, we could lay down on the floor and sleep and it didn't disturb us, but we got a couple of rooms there, and Mrs. Darby, I guess, didn't get any sleep that night with the hoopla going on downstairs (laughs), but it didn't bother us kids. Well then, it was short--not too far-- and you go down this long valley with a little stream--not too much bigger than Mendota River here--Mendota Creek--but it was the first time that I had ever seen. . .this stream you would swear ran up-hill. Because, the stream, of course, was running down the valley and so was the road, but in places the road went faster than the stream, and it just looked like that water was running up-hill because the whole thing is tilted and you lose sense of what is truly level. And that was a good many miles, 25, 30 miles, down that canyon to, into. . .and it's water that they use in Salt Lake City, I believe, was coming down this. . . it's melted snow and were was the snow, and boy, it was cold. I had sweaters--we had all the clothes we could scratch up to--while we were going along, before we got down away. And that snow water, that's what you can drink in Salt Lake. And the sun gets terribly hot. It

A: was hot down in Salt Lake, we got in there about noon and we stayed and we went out to the lake and put in the half day and I guess, didn't get started till noon the next day, out of there. And the blocks are real long, the city is very clean, the blocks were real long, the water--these bubbling cups--were running, and the water ran down and ran along the gutters. There was this surplus of it and it just run through. And at every bubbling cup I had to drink, that snow water just don't--you're just as thirsty at the next corner--bubbling cup as you was at the last. It tasted cool and nice but it sure didn't quench your thirst. And of course, Salt Lake, the water in that was just as clear as crystal and of course there was junk in those days, there was a Prince Albert tobacco can at the bottom of probably ten feet of water. And you could read it just as plain as could be, it was that clear. And the people in there swimming, we didn't any of us get in, they'd come out and stand a little bit and they just glistened, they were just covered with salt crystals, it's that salty. So then we started after noon, had dinner there, heading northwest towards Idaho. And through Bringham, there's a lot of lombardy poplars out there, and some of them had been topped--they were funny looking things because you got the top off of one of those and it looks like an inverted cone. And we finally come up to and paraelleled the Snake River. Well, just before, I don't recall the name of the town, Mrs. had got fed up with the camping out, and she got a room and we drove out into these hills and fixed our--just a little place to sleep, and it was moonlight, and after I got back, this was in Idaho, and these hills are cinders and they are--it's volcanic cinders, a great deal

A: Like the old coal cinders--hard--and the jackrabbits there, we'd pick those up and you could jump those things out at twenty feet from you, you know, and we was pegging cinders at them but we never could hit one. And after I got back I used to subscribe to the American Sportsman, a hunting and fishing magazine, and there was some fellow from out there wrote about the prairie dogs, and burrowing owls, and rattlesnakes right in this--and how thick they were--right where we were, but we never saw a rattlesnake any of the trips we made. And it was probably just lucky because at nights when they're out and (laughs). . . Well, anyway then, along the Snake River, the Snake looked just like a little tiny rivulet, you know, it's so far down and you're way up on this high. . . and we cooked bacon and I think fried eggs, and you couldn't take anything--you just had to cut it off--and eat it off your plate because the wind was blowing and it was blowing this sand, so that your food--a certain amount got on the food--but by not--trying to mop up your gravy or anything, you just had to let it go it was so full of sand. And we crossed this Snake River three or four times, on ferries that were run by the force of the river, was an interesting experience. You'd have to wait maybe until two or three cars come along and then these boats were oblong--about three times as long as wide--and there was a heavy cable across the river, and pulleys, and so you could crank the thing so that the broadside hit the current and it would just force you right over, and you switch it and you go back the other way. The force of the river took you over and back. And I think we crossed on two or three of those. And then we had to go over, I think it was the Blue Mountains of Oregon, and that was interesting because, I remember we met a Ford, and we had to stop and kinda back into--the roads were just not worked at all--it was just a path wide enough for a team

A: of horses or car to go through, and find a place where you could meet. And so we saw him coming, and there was a little spot where you could get off, and we backed back a little and pulled up into the vacant place, and this other guy scraped the brushes on the other side and got past us. And we didn't get quite to the top when we decided and had lunch and we stopped to eat and we sat a little tent--oh, four or five hundred yards away I suppose in the valley--and pretty soon the guy comes to see if we had any old newspapers. And he had two dogs and 4,000 sheep. I don't know whether he was one of those Basques that I've read about that comes over. But they stay up there and I think he said that they come up with provisions twice a month. You have to go two weeks without seeing anybody but your dogs and your sheep. And we couldn't get much out of--he was no talker--but he wanted to see the paper. And then we went on and as we reached the top of the mountain, the timber petered out and it got grassy and rounded off and there was an Indian on a pony, and he neither looked to the right nor the left, he just joggled along. Never looked at us at all. And then a little bit farther you start down the other side, and I've forgotten, it seems to me, it's about 35 miles down that mountain. And we used up the brake and then we was using reverse, you know those old--what are they called--planetary transmissions--they were drums with bands like brake bands that made it function. So you could use the reverse as a brake, and when we hit the bottom after a couple of hours of going downhill, we had used up--we had worn the bands of the low speed and the reverse so we had to stop and pull the boards out and get in--of course Farwell and I understood all these things--and tighten up, they weren't worn

A: out, but they had to be adjusted and tightened up because we were in heavy sand, and had to go aways. And that was the Columbia River. That was after the Snake had _____ and it's a mile wide. And there was a steam ferry and there was probably six or eight cars and you waited till you got a load. And they started right off up the river and you wanted to go across and you wondered about that. But, boy, the current was such that you landed across and it looked like you were going upstream entirely, before you got there. And it was supposed to be a mile wide there. And I believe it was, it was terribly wide there, terribly big river. Well, that was in, is that in Washington or just on the border between Oregon and Washington, I've forgotten now. But, anyway, from there on we were in irrigated country in the Yakima Valley and the wheat, of course they just watered the fields, and there was to be no weeds or anything along the roadside at all because they didn't give it any water, and the wheat would stand fence-high as beautiful wheat as you ever saw. In fact I never saw wheat in this country that was so uniform, it was absolutely level on top, absolutely every stem was the same height. And then we ran into the orchard and the Darby Ranch was, it's about 30 miles from Yakima, there was a little town, Toppenish, and there was some other little town not too far. And Indians, the reservation lapped over in there, and this one town that you went to, there'd be more Indians than white people. And they'd be, they were dressed more or less with, all of them had moccasins and. . . (Phone rings)

The last few days I might mention, in those days tires didn't run as long, and the last few days of the trip, I think on the last day we had three flat tires, imagine that on one trip

Q: Where did you get the gas?

A: Well, the gas, there wasn't regular stations but places where-- well not exactly a garage--but usually it was kind of in connection with some kind of mechanic that could fix things a little bit. We did in, yes, it was in Idaho, our radiator, I remember, shook loose--got to leaking on us--and we stopped at Weiser, Idaho and had it soldered, soldered the radiator up good. It was pretty bumpy going a lot. Our average, I think we averaged 160 miles a day and we put in ten hours.

Q: How long was it all the way?

A: Well, it lacked just four miles when we got there of being 2,400 miles, it was 2,396 miles to be precise. And we, they had to get new tires, we had just worn out. But, in those days, some of the guarantees were, a lot of them, was 3,500 miles, was your life of your tire. Because I remember on our first Ford, which was a 1915, we got 6,000 miles on one of our tires, fifty something on another, and that was something to brag about, you know, that it would go that long. Well, when we finally got there, it was--we didn't see Mt. Rainier and Mt. Adams--see this is in the Yakima Valley, and they're way to the west--and the first clear day, of course, you could see them and then I stayed there a couple of weeks and it was in--well, the cherries, the big sweet cherries had been picked, and there had been some left, and I remember, I thought, of course I knew I couldn't eat all the sour cherries that we have back here that I could hold, but out there I thought maybe the sweet ones were different but they weren't and I got sick from eating too many cherries. And then they

A: thin the apples because every apple has to be shipped out, you know, and count and you never let two apples touch one another and they had to be so many inches apart on the tree and they had, well, I and two Darby boys, and this brothers and two girls that were about our age, and the five of us and plus one or two others worked there for a couple of weeks going through thinning--thinning out apples. And they sprayed, they had of course, it was a team of mules to pull a sort of a flat rack with a sprayer on it, and they sprayed for aphids, and well, it was mix and I don't know what all was in it, but there some the littlest sprinkling rain that, you, well here, well you didn't even go in out there, it hardly gets you wet, and they were all concerned it was going to wash the spray off, you know, because it never rains. And they plant alfalfa in the orchards and then these little ditches are about every four feet or something--I know, it practically--my spine was disconnected--because in there you couldn't see where the ditch is and you couldn't get the rhythm of walking through there and every little bit you'd go down about eight inches into a ditch. Maybe it had water and maybe it didn't, if they had turned water in you was clean over your shoetops in water and if not, it was dry. But I can't say that I liked that too much. The dirt--I helped them, we dug an outside cellar-way, a way to get into the cellar, to put in an outside doors down three and a half feet, and the soil is, was just about in the color and like cement that isn't worked, you know. A gray--and it is volcanic ash. And it cuts your socks, it gets into your shoes, it was abrasive and you could wear a hole in your socks in one days walk, you know.

A: But rich, it would produce stuff--we'd put water on it, you know. Well then, I got called back for examination for the Army, for the World War, so I had to leave and come back on the train.

Q: So you took the Union Pacific back?

A: No, I come back on the Milwaukee. I took, I think it was the Northern Pacific to Spokane, and the Milwaukee--at that time they advertised highly--there was 440 miles of electric engines, so it wouldn't set fire to the woods. And I don't know how many tunnels you went through. That some something to talk about in those days. I took the Milwaukee from Spokane to Minneapolis, and boy we pulled into Minneapolis on time. And it only averaged over the whole distance 25 miles and hour, that train. And it would only stop about ten minutes or something like that and you'd jump off and grab a sandwich or something.

Q: No dining cars?

A: No. Well, I guess in some buy they wasn't on that train. And then I took the Q from Minneapolis to Aurora and then--I had to change in Aurora, cause it was going up. . .

Q: How long were you gone altogether?

A: I was gone. . .less than a month, about three weeks or so. But we were sixteen days running covering the 2,400 miles. And of, well of course, some of those was off a little bit, you know, half a day here and there, but then. . .I guess I was out there pretty near--well, I must have been about a month gone, all told.

Q: And then how long did it take to come on the train altogether?

A: Well, I left sometime--it was several hours from this Toppenish station to Spokane--and I got a room at a hotel, and stayed there, and then I went to Minneapolis and I got there in the evening and

A: I stayed all night there, and then I got home here--because I had to change at Aurora--I got on what they used to call the midnight train from Chicago to Mendota. So it was, so let's see, it was three days and two nights across from Spokane to Minneapolis. Hmm, that was. . .

Q: Did you see much wildlife?

A: No, we really didn't. That one coyote I think was the only, we did see some prairie dogs, and of course the--related to the bluejay-- I can't think of the name of the bird, they're in the bluejay family. Hmm, well. . .we did not see much of any wildlife. And the only snakes we saw were along the rivers, just common snakes, in spite of all this rattlesnake stuff in the bad places, we never saw one.

Q: Did you see many cars going out, not in the towns, but traveling?

A: No, not too many. There was one stretch, about three miles that the road was on an old abandoned railroad pike across a big flat, but you could see the whole thing and it was only wide enough--there was no passing on that whole three mile stretch. And as you come in from the east you looked and if there was nobody there, you took off. And anybody that saw you better wait until you got across. Because there was no way, it was graded up from six to ten feet high across a flat, a long--it might have been a dried up lake bed--or something, it was very level. Of course it was interesting in going up some of these-- the whole surface of the earth is tilted--we had of course, in those days, you had a cut-out, you could open--you could cut the muffler out, you know. And you'd open that once in awhile and that engine, it would be just be snap, snap, snap, you know, it was just pulling and it looked like it was going on the level but you're climbing a hill, for miles and miles you're going up, the whole earth is tilted. And you

A: couldn't get over twenty miles an hour, even if it was smooth. Of course, it wasn't too smooth, it was just ordinary dirt road. And as I say, there was miles in that sage brush country where it hadn't ever been graded. It was just a track, like in back through your pasture or in the woodland here, you know, just wide enough to drive. And if you met anybody you turned out. We met people and. . .but, boy there was miles without marks or anything. There was a little, little-- some of the big towns there would be gravel roads and I think there was a few miles of pavement near Boise, Idaho--maybe four or five miles. But otherwise it was the primitive road. I suppose now you could go through in two days, the whole thing (laughs) probably.

Q: You wouldn't have to sleep on the cold ground either?

A: No, no. (laughs)

PAUSE

Q: You've lived in Mendota all your life?

A: Right. Born here in 1896.

Q: It seems to me that you talked one day about how you used to accompany your father down to Ottawa?

A: Ottawa, yes. We'd take the IC, part of the time a freight, you'd ride in the caboose, from here to LaSalle and then you'd get the Interurban from LaSalle to Ottawa. That run on--well it runs along by the Rock Island tracks more or less and past the old County Farm, you know, and into Ottawa. And my first trip to Starved Rock, which was probably about 1905 or something, we took--I remember my dad and mother and I and Nick Cummings and his wife and Lillian Perkiser, who later was principal of the high school here--and we went to LaSalle and took the Interurban and there was a little bit of a building--it would

A: hold two or three people anyway in a rainstorm--on the north side of the river and I think you put up a flag or something, I don't remember--I was only, it might have been 1903 or 1904--I wasn't over six or eight years old--and a ferry boat come over and carried you over to the Rock. And at that time there was a hotel about, well, it would have been north, a little northeast of where the caretakers house is there, south of that driveway. There was a big hotel there and we had dinner there and climbed around in the canyons and the, I don't recall the going back, but it was the reverse, we got the ferry over and got the Interurban and then to catch--at the time there was four trains a day on the Central, two each way in the morning and in the night. And the same--it was possible to to to Ottawa and take the Rock Island, but you had to walk clear to the west--the Rock Island depot is the same place it is now, between LaSalle and Peru. Way at the west side of LaSalle, pretty well west. And you had to walk from the Central, which is clear down to the far east end of LaSalle, almost at the creek there, the Little Vermillion. You had to walk down there and I think I did that once or twice. And then there was another possibility, it was kind of scenic, we'd take the Q to Earlville. But apparently it wasn't right in town, we'd get off the Q and this branch that goes to Ottawa, along the Fox, was, would stop, it wouldn't dare cross--the railroads crossed there some way--and they'd stop for that and you could get on that thing and go to Ottawa. And I took that trip a few times. And that follows the Fox Valley and was scenic.

Q: I bet it would be.

A: But I used to get a kick on this trip--to and from LaSalle--on the freight trains in the--because the brakeman, of course I was just

A: a kid, and they'd let me ride up in the cupola. Let me look all over and see the whole train, and everything which was quite a . . .

Q: Well, they did have passenger cars on that at one time?

A: Oh, they run passengers but apparently the blame passenger train didn't make connections with the Interurban Line, to get to the proper time, to get to where Dad had to get to.

Q: When did those go out, the Interurban? Do you remember?

A: No, but the automobile was the basic thing that run it out because there was a--property was acquired and some of the work of grading for an electric railroad from Mendota to Ottawa, crosscountry--went out east here, well by--it went past Jane Setchell's folks and on out past--and worked on down and it petered out, they never got any rails laid or anything. And it was the automobile, that was a good idea till the automobile, and that never got to function and this other one petered out as a result of it, yes. I would say, well we got our first car in 1915, and I would say it was out probably ahead of that, I don't think that the thing run after 1915, maybe not after 1910 or 1912, I don't know.

Q: We need it now.

A: Well, that's right. And it wasn't. . .it was pretty good. Well, it was like those old streetcars, only bigger. It had that trolley thing up above. And they'd go along pretty lively.

Q: Before you got your car you had a regular carriage and horse?

A: No, we never owned one.

Q: You didn't? You walked?

A: Walked. (laughter)

Q: Most people in town owned horses in those days, or didn't they?

A: I wouldn't say most, no. But every block had probably two or three horses. But see, that would still be relatively small percentage, yes. In our block, Gepperts had a horse and ~~Co~~omans had a team, Darbys had this old pony that had all the riding on his father said, it was a western pony with lots of brands on it. And we used her to go hunting with, drive up to Knox Grove--seven miles--we'd take two long hours to get up there. You couldn't gether off a walk and then we'd stay there and hunt and when it come time to go home she'd trot home in pretty near an hour. (laughter) The feed bag is at the other end. They had their own ideas those western. . .

Q: Anything else that you can think of in the transportation line particularly?

A: We burned wood when I was a youngster and that was all hauled with horses. We never had any--there was no trucks to haul it. So we would cut. . .and at the earliest, why whoever father got to haul the wood we'd drive with the team and wagon and cut the wood and load it and bring it home. But later, after we got the car in 1915, then we'd get out wood all cut and ready to load, not cut up ready to burn, but into log lengths, and haul it wil a team, especially in the winter--on a sled. And I'd haul--you could only haul about two loads a day. It took about four miles, it would take about an hour and fifteen minutes, because of the load,you see. And I have hauled--I ~~remember~~ remember one time I was helping Mark Setchell, he used to haul too for us, and that was before he was married, and he hauled for his folks. And I think we was hauling for his dad than, and it was eighteen below that morning, and we walked, we didn't ride, you'd take ahold of the stake of the sled and trot along, it don't take much energy but it keeps you from freezing.

Q: Then you heated with all that wood and cooked with it?

A: Absolutely.

Q: And that was it?

A: That was it.

Q: No furnaces?

A: No, stoves, two stoves.

Q: Did many use coal?

A: Yes, most people did. My grandmother had a hard coal stove for the front room and soft coal in the kitchen. Cobs, they'd use cobs in the summer for quick. . . But we had nothing but wood. Of course, it's much cleaner, the coal is dirty. Although the hard coal is clean. Very little ash and those stoves were magazine feed, it would hold about tow big hods and it would run, well in very cold weather, you'd probably have to put in about four hods a day. But it would run for hours and keep feeding down. There was very few that burned wood as I remember. We always did.

Q: I was wondering, was there ever a streetcar in Mendota?

A: No.

Q: There was in LaSalle and Ottawa at one time?

A: Yes, I think so.

Q: But Mendota wasn't that large. About how large was it in those days, about?

A: About 4,000. It didn't change from around 4,000 to between four and five thousand, they claimed five--they probably didn't have it over a period of 30 or 40 years. Only in the last 30 or 40 that it's grown up, gathered additional. . . What is it now, seven?

how

Q: Yes, seven I think now.

A: Well, I think if you check the census it would run from 3,800 to 4,500 there over a long, long period.

Q: Well, I think in 1947 it was about 4,000, a little over. That would be about right.

A: And the first roads here with the car, the road up past Northbrook School--that comes to a dead-end up there a couple of miles--that had gravel. And what is now 34 was graveled out to what is now the golf course. That was a square corner out there, of course now it swings around. And then east, past the Methodist Church. . .

END OF TAPE

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PLACE Library - Mendota

DATE May 20, 1975

Watson Bartlett
(INTERVIEWEE)

(for _____)