

Interview with Nephi Grasteit

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Interviewer:

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Mr. Grasteit did not work for the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, but was a commercial fisherman who operated in a number of western states including several waters in Montana. Also assisting in this interview is Emmett Colley, retired Hatchery Bureau Chief, who is a friend of Nephi's.

AW: Well, Nephi, let's start out with a little of your early history – where you were born, where you grew up and how you got into the fish business.

NG: I was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1910, on December 29. We lived in American Forks shortly after that time. My parents moved to American Forks and we lived there for several years and Dad started fishing carp in Utah Lake in about 1915. The market was awfully slow, there was no market for fish and when you got fish he delivered them to the state fish hatchery at Midway at Provo Canyon with a team and wagon. We got 1 cent per pound then. It was fish for fish food. They was real happy to get them and Dad was happy to have them. By the time we were able to hardly walk around, we was out fishing and I remember going to school. We'd lay our head on the desk and sleep because we'd just been out fishing early morning till school time and then after school as soon as we'd get home, we'd go fishing again. The teacher knew what we were up against and they never did anything to change it.

AW: You got a good rest when you were in school so you could get back and fish?

NG: That's it. When we got out of there, Dad got the flu in 1917 and it was a bad one. We thought we was gonna lose him. We had some men working for us and Dad said, you're the boss, you tell them what to do. That was pretty neat to me. I happened to let the bag out and it went across the oar pin and tore a hole in it. I went back to the bag and picked it up and tied a knot in the end of it so it wouldn't leak the fish out. That lasted for an eternity cause Dad couldn't go. It took years for him to get back where he was at. By the time he was back, he'd come out and go fishing with us and grab a hold of the wench handle and he'd saw the handle off some more. When we was first using the wench, we had to stand on a box. One

time, we had a dip net made that towed about 150 pounds. He got in there and went home to rest after that, just one haul is all it took. We was delivering fish at that time; that was when.. the biggest business was for chicken feed. I guess they mixed it with mashed potatoes or whatever they had. That went on for quite a few years and then Utah Lake went dry in 1934. We had to go other places. By the end of 1934, Dad had a market in Los Angeles.

AW: Were you fishing in California then or hauling fish there?

NG: No, he wasn't fishing in California. He had a market there. He took the fish we caught. And then after you're there about two years he had one of the boys go down there and set up an outfit and they fished in parts of California. But they still didn't get all the fish they wanted so they bought some of ours. We had to ship ours by train at that time.

AW: You could ship carp by train from Utah to California and still make money at it?

NG: Yup, yea. From Ogden and Brigham City, at that time.

AW: Were they still being used for animal feed in California?

NG: No, no. All them, everything we shipped was going for human consumption. It was about 4 cents a pound. From there, 1934, I got married and went out on my own. When Utah Lake went dry we went to Idaho and fished there. I had an uncle and he said the Snake River is full of fish so we went up there and fished around there for about two or three years pretty steady. Then we had to take fish from Lake Lowell in Idaho back then. We fished that pretty regular for a while. Then when we got done fishing in there and they wanted more and more of them in California, they was draining ponds and lakes that had most of the carp and planting the areas with grain. So he was out of fish and we decided to get a truck and haul in to California weekly. We hauled about 5 or 6 ton at a time. Had them iced and boxed.

AW: This was carp from Idaho to California?

NG: Yup. Then we went from there to Washington, the Columbia River there, Pasco and that area there. The sloughs were full of fish. At that time we'd haul trout feed and saved our good fish for California. That went on for a while till we couldn't stand the amount of hours we were putting in. From there they wanted suckers so we had to backtrack into Idaho again for suckers on the Blackfoot River. At the time we were there we also was able to get quite a few carp in Blackfoot Reservoir. We were starting to fish about three states and still get to California every Monday

morning. It was a chore cause you had to do the driving and the fishing. Most of the help was never able to take care of much more than just draw wages.

AW: Were the California sales still for human consumption?

NG: Yea, everything we hauled to California was for human consumption. Then, later, the trout feed took most everything over that we could afford to send. We got a cent and a half for suckers and carp both. And, later a lot of chubs were caught too. We'd fish in Wyoming for a while. There was an article in the paper about fishing in Wyoming. Right after that we went into California for the winter to fish Clear Lake, there were a lot of carp in there. When spring come, why then we backtracked into Idaho and Washington. From there we went into Montana.

AW: When was the first time you came to Montana to fish?

NG: About 1940, 42, somewhere along there. Still on the truck.

AW: Do you remember what lake you fished first in Montana?

NG: The first one we fished was Malta, and from Malta we worked there, the wife, my son and Tom's wife and they were putting the fish on the truck. The mosquitos were so bad we had to go to town to get bee nets so we could load them. Well, we finally got it loaded. We was done in one day. And went on back home.

AW: Was that carp?

NG: Yea, just carp. We went on back home and after all that work we put in there and all the time we drove, we got \$600 for that whole load of fish. I said, hey this ain't no good. We can't afford this.

AW: How many people were involved in that?

NG: There was four of us. And we worked several days and to load it and drive back, it was just impossible. So from there, we come in here, I don't remember exactly the year. Since then we fished on and off in Montana in Lake Helena and Fort Peck. We fished that for several years. About '37, no, '47 or '50. Then we were in Washington for a while and my son said you know, so far, you've averaged a million pounds in 25 years.

AW: Was that really a million pounds a year?

NG: Yea. We were fishing winter and summer both. In 1963, on Friday 13, we was fishing in ice and we got 206 tons in one haul under the ice. It took 30 days to haul those fish to the trout hatchery in Idaho. This man had built a freezer for us, just for fish, and he took all those fish and we filled it up and he was feeding up to 10,000 pounds a day.

AW: What lake did that 206 ton come from?

NG: Spread Lake, Washington. Then we went to North Dakota and we was there for 10 years.

AW: You were on Garrison Reservoir there?

NG: Uh, huh. That's about the only one we fished.

AW: But even when you were at Garrison in the fall you came to fish Lake Helena?

NG: Yea. In the fall we'd come through and do this area here. After this froze we'd be in Washington on the Columbia River or over to Lake Lowell till that froze up and then head for California. Fish California for the winter.

AW: What kind of lakes did you fish in California?

NG: Just Dear Lake was the only one that they had – just carp only. For the winter. We come back in April, first of April.

EC: All these lakes you fished, was that for carp only?

NG: Yea, just carp and suckers. Mostly carp, very few suckers where we were fishing.

AW: Well, in Fort Peck, you also got into buffalo, didn't you?

NG: Yea, we had some buffalo there that one of them weighed 62 ½ pounds and the party at the lakeside resort had it mounted and that fish is hanging on the wall in the museum at Glasgow.

AW: The record buffalo.

NG: There was a lot of buffalo in there that was 50 pounds. There'd be some there now in the 80's.

AW: Nobody's fishing them now.

NG: Nobody's fishing it. The water is so high that, or low enough first, to grow all kinds of brush, and water come up when you're in the trees and you don't do much fishing for them. But that'd be a good place to fish if you understood it.

EC: The other commercial fisherman at Fort Peck are not fishing it at this time?

NG: I don't think there is.

AW: Sport fishing on Fort Peck has exploded. I just interviewed Bob Needham two weeks ago down there and he said the northern fishing, the walleye fishing, the coho salmon fishing and the lake trout fishing has just exploded. People are trying to fish everywhere.

NG: One mistake on Fort Peck was when the gill netters were there before we started. That was murder.

AW: Well, there were a couple different... there was Ole Neigard, gill and trammel nets, and then they had several operators that contracted for goldeye only with floating gillnets.

NG: Yes, we was in there and one from...

AW: Well, there were several. All your commercial fishing were limited to the rough fish. You've never been anywhere where you could sell game fish. I think that's the remarkable part. This interview should focus on you as a person who as made his living by utilizing a resource that would totally go to waste if somebody else wasn't working with it.

NG: There was one definite thing I had when we was over at Fort Peck. Waived in the gill net, using gill net for buffalo and goldeye and then we fished carp on the side, when it come to a new area, we would never put more than one gill net in a big old bay. We'd see how many fish, if there was too many northerns, when you get 20 or 30 of them big ones in 300 feet of net that was too many for me. But we've seen netters come in after we was there, going to the same area putting 8 or 10 nets out. Oh, that got me madder than hell. That was bad.

AW: Well, I would like to get on here. I know the times I've been out seining with you that you used the word earlier about corners. And people who aren't used to seining are not going to know what a corner is. From the standpoint of the person on the land, it would be a bay, but you think like a fish, you've been catching fish for so long, to you it's a corner. This has always impressed me in our discussions when you talk about corners.

NG: Yea. That one thing that the first boat that I built to go fishing, I paid \$20 for it. Complete. I built it one day and it rained that night and we used the boat the next day. It was made out of pine and we went on the Bear River.

AW: \$20 for lumber and hardware.

NG: Yup, and we built them in Pasco. We lived there, no Ephrata, Washington. We had a warehouse and we lived there for several years. We built boats like these out here now, about 24 or 27 feet long and 7 foot wide on the bottom. And those boats cost us at that time around \$300 a piece. We built those. All plywood. Today the same boat would cost up to \$600 or \$700 with the fiberglass.

AW: And the price of carp per pound hasn't come up comparably.

NG: No, we started with Stoller's at 4 cents per pound and over the years it has come up, we got 8 cents laid in. We had to deliver. The ones we sent here last week was a partial load and hauling was \$1279 and we got 12 cents for them big carp, but the time they get through with it you're lucky to get 10 to start with. Then they take the ice off, the hauling off, and if you haven't got a full load, you might come up with 5 or 6 cents. They take off the pour ones and the ones that aren't in good shape. Or injured ones get thrown out. They use them for fish meal. But you don't get nothing for them. The best time we had in the fish business was over in North Dakota. We made 2 ton of ice every 24 hours and had the scale that weighed everything. We had 400 boxes on the truck, 100 pounds each. You could mark it on there and that was the money you were going to get. And you did get it.

EC: There's one question, Nephi, I'd like to ask. Did you ever transport live fish into California so the consumer could pick out the fish they wanted – or was it all dead fish?

NG: Nope, nope. Oh, the last 15 years where the California oriental market had picked up and they wanted live fish. But those all come right out of Clear Lake and the black fish is the one they wanted the most. The carp didn't go over it at all. Things today changed a long ways from where it was when we were getting chicken feed for 1 cent a pound; mink feed that went for 2 cents a pound; and they lasted just a few years and they left and then the trout come in. Then the big market for carp in the L.A. market and then after that one it was Stoller's market back east. Instead of having 35 people on the fillet line, they had four in a machine line and they handled up to 20 tons in one day.

AW: This is at Stoller's, the processing plant in Spirit Lake, Iowa?

NG: Yes. Now their fish goes through there and it's all machined. The first machine cuts the head off and the next one guts it out and washes it and it goes down several machines and it goes on a spinner and all the meat is skinned right off the bones and put in 50 pound bags and frozen and it goes all over the world.

AW: This is just the meat? The scales and bones and everything else are gone.

NG: Yea, when they had those big carp, like the 20, 25 pound carp, they fillet them by hand because they want the skin to make leather. They send it out and use it to make boots, handbags, and stuff like that.

AW: I wonder why they only want the big ones.

NG: For a bigger piece of leather. It was really some pretty pattern that the skin leaves after the scales are off and the fresher they get them to get them into the solution, the prettier the stuff looks.

EC: Didn't you tell me sometime that they used the pituitary glands for medical purposes?

NG: Yea, they were doing that, too. Using that, the glands for medicine and they were getting \$3200 for a baby food jar of carp pituitary glands.

EC: So the fish were completely utilized, skin, and meat and all.

NG: Now, your L.A. market the last year has gone to pot. Utah Lake has been so high that there's six inch trees out in the water now. When it comes to winter, they'd be able to fish but market don't stop for you. If it passes you up, you lose it.

AW: Somebody else fills it or they eat something else?

NG: No, no. They just.. the light fish, hauling in them jalopies and grass carp and stuff like that take that market over. It's really... money don't seem to be anything of the cost of it. Sales are because them fish are \$3.50 a pound live weight and some of them go for \$3.75 a pound.

AW: And they are sold alive?

NG: That's live. Your live carp going on the market right out of Clear Lake, California right to the market and they get 75 cents a pound for live carp but they have to be the smaller fish. Not over 4 pounds.

AW: That's just the opposite of you, didn't you get a better price for larger?

NG: Yea, from here, we shipped them to market.

The reason we left North Dakota – when we bought the fish house and we paid \$50,000 for it that was going to be our retirement when we had it paid for. And when the Indians come in there and moved the line clear in to take New Town in on it, that meant that property wasn't meant worth what you thought.

AW: When you built it, it was not on the reservation? The reservation expanded to include it?

NG: Yea. So people from the city come over to the place and they was looking in the back in the alley way, and they was going to build a building right in front of our outlet. So I asked them what they was doing and they said they had to build a place for the tractors and stuff and we said why don't you buy ours, it'll be for sale. And we sold it that same afternoon. Well, it wasn't worth nothing, we'd been there now and working all those years and just like people who were trying to sell them homes. They had auctions on them and nobody came. They put them down, a \$100,000 house for \$20,000. They were not going to be on the Indian reservation. So that's why we left there.

AW: How many years have you been on Lake Helena?

NG: Off and on since 1962. We bought the property in 1964.

AW: I was in Helena in '62 and shortly after that somebody by the name of Peck contacted me and was going to make millions here. He didn't understand the market and went broke awfully fast.

EC: So, over the years, how many tons of carp have you taken out of Lake Helena?

NG: Oh, I wouldn't even venture to guess. The first few years we took a lot of fish out of here.

AW: You took enough fish out so that you increased the size of the fish, didn't you?

NG: Yea, yup. We got 30 pound fish in there now. We got a lot of them that are so strong they can go through that mesh out there. It was terrible, we had that thing solid, not solid enough. That's where we made the first mistake. We should have crowded them up so they didn't have room to run, instead we didn't want to kill them so we left them in the water a little bit so they had room. Then they'd jump.

We could cover them but pretty soon more of them jump and they got the daylight up there and it would be a stream. Figure we lost 9,000 pounds from jumping. And the worst part was, when we went to replace them, that 9,000 pounds took the whole damn bunch out. We come up with 300 pounds only. Take a couple years for them fish to come back.

AW: In the area where you wanted them to be?

NG: That's just the same thing as when I put, when I got permission to put the gates in. I put them in and when I fished them up, we had a mess on the side where they poured them out there, 2 or 3 tons where they were laying on the shore, whether we could get the net on the bottom I think is what was the matter, we couldn't catch them fish at that grate. So then we pulled the grates out and said we can't profit by it, so we let em go. Then when it come time for them to come back the next year they didn't come back. About only half come back.

AW: This was a run from the arm of Hauser into Lake Helena?

NG: Yea, so we made a heck of a mistake there instead of doing something good with them coming back.

AW: You told me one time when you were seining and carp were just starting to go over the top, a jet went over and the jet boom drove the fish back down and then you started using cracker shells to keep them down when you were seining?

NG: Yea, I was thinking about taking a shotgun going out there and shoot above them and see where they were at. There's one thing that was really hard to believe and that is when you have fish in the pocket they can tell you whether they can get out or not. If that net is too soft they will fight and fight. Pretty soon they're gone. They can pick the whole thing out. If you put them in good net that will calm them down some until you get a certain temperature in your water and you get them tight and they just explode. Many a day I've been right down to the last end of my fingers I couldn't hold it another split second and they'd quit. But then the damage is all done. They dug a hole about 10 feet deep under the net. Oh, man.

AW: So, they're pulling the net instead of you pulling the net.

NG: I'd like to be out there in this kind of weather, nice and calm. Water isn't quite cold enough yet, maybe another couple of days. If I can get them to understand California type where they fish and pull everything with a boat and you have to know how to stay apart so go down with it, I don't think there's many who know that.

AW: To somebody who might buy your outfit?

NG: Yea, Jim wants to buy it.

AW: What advice would you have for someone who might want to start out in the commercial fish business today?

NG: No way can you do it. He'd have to know what he's doing and be willing to make that his number one deal. It can't be his house, can't be his woman, it got to be fishing to be number one or you ain't gonna do nothing. We built our own boats, put our own nets together and they worked.

AW: But you also have to know something about the market too. You can't just go out and seine up a bunch of fish and hope to sell them.

NG: Well, you can build the market from your service you give and the type of fish you have. Just like now Stoller's wants them so bad his teeth ache. He ain't got any. Not any on the market. Idaho is all fouled up the lake is about 30 feet higher than its every been for years this time of year. This time of year they can go into some areas and get tons and tons and tons of suckers and carp. Not this year. They can't do it. It's really something. If you don't know it you can't fish it. But we've fished Montana, Utah, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, California, North Dakota, Wyoming and Canada.

AW: You fished in Canada, too?

NG: Yea, we went up to Canada, we spent 18 days in there. The wind bothered us most of the days we couldn't fish. We made such a reputation that the man in the fresh water place where they get the fish said you come back and we'll take care of you. And you can't get back there.

Right out of Winnipeg. Right in through there. When the boats were there and you went in the cafe and I showed him the piece they had in their outdoors book of North Dakota, when they read that and the fish we took, boy. They said that was the first time they ever had fish like what we get. We sold them one boat and net we had still in good shape. We got some cups up there that said North Dakota carp on account of us.

AW: Well, do you have anything else you'd like to add to this?

NG: Well, there'd been times we'd been out in them big red boats that people had come up and said, I've seen boats like them in California. Well, that was us. I'd seen red

boats like these over in Washington. That was us, too. We've been all over. Just like the man from Great Falls called and said, I'd called the fish and game to get a permit and they told them to call Mr. Grasteit. He called and just the way he was talking he said he'd got fish for sale and they said you could handle them. I said I'd be ashamed to offer you a price. They're not worth nothing. Well they ought to be worth 50 cents a pound and I said, mister, we're getting 8 cents a pound delivered in Iowa and if you don't put 20 tons on there you don't even get that much out of them. Well, thank you a lot.

AW: He wanted to start fishing?

NG: Well, he wanted me to buy the fish that he caught. You couldn't do that. First thing you'd get is somebody that wouldn't take care of them. No good. Just cuz you see them in the water doesn't mean you're going to catch them. Any beavers around, they've got the brush all chopped up. When the suckers get overpopulated they'll back off to about a pound and a half and very little meat on them.

EC: Do you figure there's still a pretty good population of carp in Lake Helena today?

NG: Nah, not right now, no. There's too many cormorants in there to raise any small fish. We had this corner here this fall, I imagine you could caught 20 tons of little fish. Carp and suckers. We had to go to Idaho and when we come back our boats are whitewashed and I'd try to keep them birds back. The cormorants are the worst. They absolutely should not plant fish until hunting season on Saturday. Because all the cormorants are gone. The second day after hunting season, they are gone. The day they planted the bass, they said, Nephi we'll put a bunch on your side too. We had about 100 grebes there for about 4 days. Right here in the bay. You could take a flipper and bounce a rock off them and they'd look at you and make you feel like you'd done something bad. And then planting them when the bass bite are aggressive as hell, they'll bite anything. Fishermen are taking them home cause they're bass and they're good to eat. Six to eight inches. When they come in the office all the time. You don't plant any fish, well we can't catch any fish; he had three that morning. And I said for gosh sakes, you aren't going to take them home are you. Oh, they're good to eat, he said. There nice. Just like your walleyes. They should have a starting thing when you can take them home. About 14 or 15 inches. Well 14 is even too small. Between 14 and 15. Just like over there at Sacajawea in North Dakota where they plant millions around 14-15 inches. That one time I was over there and went fishing a nice bay in there. I got a lot of them about 15 inches, just short of the legal limit. But they'll grow. You bet.

We was over there to North Dakota below the big bridge. Emil come in said he needed 300 pounds of goldeye. He was the only one at that time who would use

them. Alright, I said, I made a mistake. I put two nets in there that day and went out there the next morning. I figured two nets would give me 300 pounds. It sure did. I just pulled up the first float and looked and went along a little further. Hey I got to get help down there cuz I'd never get them myself. I figured there was 1000 pounds of fish in that 300 feet. A lot of them was walleye and they were up on the first notch – the first mesh on the top against the rope. Because before you could go there at that same time without them rainbow smelt you'd never see a walleye. You'd never see them in the fall. They'd be in there thick after them goldeyes. As soon as you go in there now and put them smelt in there is no season when you could separate the walleyes from the goldeye.

AW: Are they trying to get smelt, is that why they are up there?

NG: I guess. Really something. That just ruined it. The goldeye netting. We was over to a reservoir in Wyoming and you could throw rocks in the water and suckers would come right to you. The thing I wanted to say, when Charles Russell sent that letter to his boss about how the animals looked and how they were dying, that area that we was at that time had dozens of animals that were winter killed. Just made me think of that one letter he said. They showed it in the collection they had. Then we was over to Lake DeSmet in Wyoming the first time they had in the paper they were going to get rid of all the carp and they would put wooden traps in the bays. They did have some fish in there but they couldn't handle them all but we went over and hauled some of them. We went back the next year when they was supposed to be in the corners and they wasn't in the corners. They was out in 25 feet of water spawning. They'd been shut out of their spawning beds and they didn't even go in there. Spawned right on top of the water.

AW: Well, you tried fishing in Canyon Ferry didn't you for carp. Were they too small for the market.

NG: Well, right now the way it is you could sell them fish that wouldn't be the number one fish. They'd dock you on it. Probably get a nickel for em, taking the freight off. But Canyon Ferry's got too deep of water to start with on the edges. On the corners where it was good to fish it's all shut off. So you'd have to use bait and when you start putting bait (grain) in there you'd have to keep people out of it. The only place that I've seen was right beside the boat dock they put in. The guy from North Dakota called me and he said, Nephi, we're over here at the lake. Before you get into the Canadian border near Winnipeg and he says we're supposed to do some work to see if we poison it or whether we don't. Emil called and said, you go call Nephi and whatever he said, that's what we'll do. So I told this kid, I asked him, well what are you catching. We had 18 suckers and yet you can catch suckers all along the shore. People are having a fit cause there's no trout. Just suckers. They

wanted to poison it. I said, there's one thing them suckers are good for. Don't poison them off. Let 'em go spawn and use the little ones as bait. He went and they passed it up and got out. Another one asked me the same thing. I says well, the first thing you gotta know when you go to a lake and you got a lot of little carp. That lake is still raising fish. You can put pounds on them but it tells you, you're going to have an overpopulation pretty soon. Just like Canyon Ferry. It'd be nice to take some of them out of there but you wouldn't have to take many out.

AW: Well, in Canyon Ferry, now you can see large schools of carp a mile from shore working just underneath the surface. Before they were associated with the shoreline. I wonder if purse seining would be possible. They sure are way out in the middle in large schools.

NG: If it was deep enough the purse seines could catch them. Cause they only drop 30 or 40 feet and you have to stop. Because the one guy at the...that come down...he came with a purse seine down there and they fished the shallow parts of the lake. And every place he left a big cone, a big pile of mud. You can't go and fish all the places with the purse seines. He made a big cone there. But if he got out into the deeper water he could do that without hurting it. He fished Hells Canyon over there around the dam, not Hells Canyon Dam, cause that's little bitty fish and skinny as can be. But he got 10 or 15 tons out of there.

AW: How big a purse seine did he have?

NG: About six hundred feet. They have one that they leave there and the other one goes around the lake and they come back to the same place. Most of the time they'll pull this other one with a motorboat and they'll put it there and tie them both together and every fifteen minutes they can make a haul. I went down with him once and he caught 21 black fish and the next day he was supposed to go on vacation. And he said, if I could get that much I'd be here all day. We see very few of them. But when I see what he had and the way he done it, I said that I didn't learn a damn thing from coming over there. It didn't do me no good. But he came and watched me and he made some money. Fishing was good.

AW: At Lake Port, in California?

NG: Clear Lake, California. The largest fresh water lake in California. But they also got a problem with their weeds. Hydrila, just loaded. They're liable to have that place shut off for everybody. They've got floats out saying that you can't go here and can't go there, but the bass guys can go anywhere they want.

AW: Commercial fisherman can't go?

NG: We can't go but they can. And they's the ones that brought it there in the first place.

AW: They certainly look over your outfit. I had a boat behind coming from California to Arizona and they look at your boat prop pretty good to make sure you don't have any weeds hanging on it.

NG: Going there now the fire department calls a man to check your net. If it isn't absolutely clean you can't fish in California and they put a tag on the net and that's the only place you can fish, Clear Lake.

AW: Cause Clear Lake has hydro in it and they don't want it anyplace else?

NG: Yea. They probably won't issue permits any longer than one more year. The lake was just about dead when they left. Then the Grebes – they were there about every third year. The lake would just be solid, thousands of them on the lake. Usually they're not over 10 or 15 in a big haul, but they are sure nasty. The prettiest bird to take out, the most gentle one to take out of the net, is the loon. He's big and he starts looking around and wondering what in the hell did I do. You take a hold of him and he watches you and he won't hurt you. He just looks like, what are you going to do with me? Really, really something.

AW: I've caught loons but I've caught them in gill nets when they were dead.

NG: No, they were really something. The reason you don't see many is that they only have two chicks. The birds pick them off, the eagles and such.

AW: Yea, I guess they live 30 or 40 years.

NG: Boy, they are big, a big animal. Some sloughs on the north side of Burley, Idaho, and we had our cousin there, or nephew from California, he had to go fishing with us. He thought we'd get a bunch of them in the net but we didn't cause they got smart enough to run in the weeds and hide. About that time, I pinched him on the butt and he come out of the water like... he thought a loon had him.

AW: Well, it's probably a good time to end the tape with that story, Nephi.

End of Interview.

Transcribed by Margie Peterson.
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