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Date of Interview: 12-4-99

Date of Agreement: 12-4-99

Interviewee's Name (printed): Glen W. Lince

Interviewee's Name (written): Glen W. Lince

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Interviewer's Name (written): Jerry J. Lince

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## OUTLINE

- I. Personal background
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- A. Working in the Butte mines(not a place for a old man)
- B. Pay for mine work
- C. Bus driving and pay

X. Butte

- A. Explosion at East Butte
- B. Mine strikes
- C. Effect of mine strikes on local business

### Question for Interview

1. Where were you born and raised at?
2. Could you please explain the situation with your birth certificate?
3. What town did your father come from in Michigan?
4. What did your father do for a living?
5. Where was your mother raised?
6. What kind of pay did they receive for hauling logs?
7. Did you do any mining?
8. Did your father ever own a mine?
9. What was life like in Elliston?
10. What were the people of Elliston like?
11. What were the names of the mines in the community?
12. What different types of transportation was there in Elliston?
13. What did you do for recreation in Elliston?
14. How did your father work his claims?
15. What was the community's attitude toward WWII?
16. Were you drafted or did you volunteer for the war?
17. Can you share of the events of WWII?
18. What did you do after the war?
19. What was it like working in the Butte mines?
20. What was the pay like working in the Butte mines.
21. Can you recall any major events that happened while working in Butte?
22. How did the Butte mine strikes affect you?

*"Howdy, this is a taped interview with Glen Lince of Silver Star Montana. It was conducted on December 4, 1999, at his home in Silver Star, Montana at approximately 4:30 p.m. Uh sit back and enjoy!"*

Jerry: "Okay we're at the home of Glen Lince of Silver Star, Montana. We're going to discuss him and him growing up and the town of Elliston and people etc. So uh, can you start out uh telling us about where you were born and raised at?"

Glen: "Yeah, I was born in Radersburg, Montana, March 26, 1923, in a log cabin during a blizzard and my doctor was a midwife and uh my dad had a homestead place break and he went broke. So when I was about 3 months old he took poor horse Steven, a wagon moved all of our belongings to Elliston, which was a great mining and a lumber town at that time and we, there's five children and my mother followed several weeks, a month later on the pasture train. And, uh my dad first came to Montana 1904, him and his brother came up from Michigan. They worked in a lumber camp up around Orvando for I'm not sure how long and his brother eventually went back to Michigan and my dad stayed in Montana and worked in various mines. And uh, my mother was up there visiting from South Carolina and they met, according to my dad, in a dentist office in Helena and they were married in uh... So anyhow we uh first, the first thing I can remember we were living in a house in Elliston. And there was a small irrigation ditch run right behind the house and we had an outhouse and the outhouse was situated right over the irrigation ditch and in the winter time of course it stayed there but soon as spring come they opened the irrigation ditch and all that stuff floated away. We had a nice clean toilet all summer long. And then finally when I was, I guess about three years old my dad bought an old log house with several lots and three and a half acres, and they went clear down to the Little Black River. And he paid this whole total of seventy five dollars for all that.

Jerry: "That's good."

Glen: "And Uh,"

Jerry: "All right uh can you tell me about your uh situation with your birth certificate when you were born?"

Glen: "Yeah well since I never had a doctor my birth was never registered and I didn't know that till after I got out of high school and I went out to uh Birmingham, Washington to apply for a defense job and they said they had to have a birth certificate. Well, I wrote my mother and there was none recorded so I had to come back to Montana and I had to get an affidavit from my mother, and affidavit from the midwife, an affidavit from uh the school where I went to school for twelve years in Elliston."

Jerry: "Cool, kay um, so do you know the town your dad came from in Michigan?"

Glen: "Schboygan, he came from Schboygan, Michigan."

Jerry: "Schboygan, kay, do you know what uh your father's father did in Michigan, for a living, or?"

Glen: "What his name was?"

Jerry: "Uh, what he did for a living, ya know?"

Glen: "No I, I don't, my brother would know."

Jerry: "Okay, um, what about where your mom, the background, do you know if uh I guess,"

Glen: "Well evidently her, her folks' farm there they were from Shelby, North Carolina. And she claimed that her folks never had slaves. Uh, evidently they didn't believe in slaves."

Jerry: "Cool, kay, um now tell me a little about your father, what he did?"

Glen: "Well after we moved to Elliston, he uh he had a four horse team and uh he, he goes to uh Forrest Inquaid quite a bit, hauling logs and timber into Elliston. Used a wagon in the summer and a sleigh in the winter. And uh, they loaded on a railroad cars and uh I think some of the bigger logs they might've shipped to Bonner, but I know a lot of them went to Butte or maybe the Anaconda Smelter. And uh, he uh, long time that's about all he did was work in the woods, either hauling with his team, or cutting, and then uh,"

Jerry: "So what kind of pay did they pay for the logs, do ya know?"

Glen: "What kind of...?"

Jerry: "Pay"

Glen: "Pay?"

Jerry: "Yeah, do you know what they pay them, or?"

Glen: "Well I don't know what they pay but I know when I was a teenager I worked with a team of horses, for this guy and he paid me uh so many cents uh a log. I think he paid me like seven cents a log that I skidded with the horses. That was when I was about sixteen or seventeen years old. I, I know my dad there when things were tough yeah, he would get dry wood out of the hills and he'd cut it up with a buzz saw and he sold it for seven dollars a cord to deliver it cut into lengths. And uh that of course that was during the depression and uh, there's didn't make any money at all no matter how little it was uh likes something you know something."

Jerry: "Kay, so did you work in, do any mining while you were growing up?"

Glen: "Yeah, over the years there's always prospecting and he'd work and save up a few dollars and he'd think he'd found a place where there's a, good mining, he'd mine on that maybe a few months and, and uh, go back to work. And I member when I was probably bout nine years old he uh, leased a placer gold claim from a fella in Helena and uh I also remember gold was eighteen dollars an ounce at that time and uh him and I, there's an old uh flapboard house up on this one placer claim, just me and my dad stayed there most of the time. And uh we always had sourdough hot cakes for breakfast, he had sourdough and of course, of course we lived on venison quite a bit too. "

Jerry: "Huh, now did, so did he ever own any of his own, you know did he just lease the placer claim or did he ever own any, or?"

Glen: "No, he, he didn't own any, he just leased it. Oh, there was one up Hope Gulch, he had one somewhere it was, uh, it was uh a claim and he called it uh a claim, a claim of his own and he worked that, remember he worked that once up he didn't have to pay any royalty on that."

Jerry: "Kay, um can you tell me what life was in Elliston and growing up and?"

Glen: "Yeah, way back then when I was a kid practically nobody had a car there was uh most people walked and uh there was either saddle horse or buggy and of course a passenger train went through Elliston, uh I think twice daily, I believe once each way. And of course everybody was poor and uh but they did have a type of welfare they handed out an ole cornbread and, and uh well they had these welfare clothes too and some of them were pretty old clothes. I remember some shoes in there my folks got off of welfare and old time clothes, they were button and hook shoes and I remember this one pair of pants, they're called knickers, they button just below the knee and I hated them worse then anything. I know, uh course I was youngest and uh I had three sisters older than me and a brother the oldest and uh a lot of times I wore my sisters hand me down shoes which were

way too big and I had to put cardboard in the soles to make them halfway fit. And course uh my mother uh it was mostly my mother had chickens up until she died and uh we always had chicken to eat then uh they uh managed to get a milk cow and uh we always had milk. And my mother and I was the one to milk the cow all the time and course uh on the meat situation my dad had an Indian family name of John Hawkin and he was a great hunter. He'd get a deer or an elk and he'd come down and get my dad with one of his horses or two of them and uh they'd get the game out and of course he'd always shared the meat with my dad."

Jerry: "That's good."

Glen: "Of course which was a great help then cause uh unless you had a little money coming then it was really hard to buy beef."

Jerry: "That's true. Kay, uh why don't you tell me I guess a little about the people of Elliston and uh the goings on and um maybe the, what you would call the interesting folks of the community?"

Glen: "The what?"

Jerry: "Like the, the people you know of the community, you know this, tell me a little about you know the people you..."

Glen: "Oh ah..."

Jerry: "You're around."

Glen: "Yeah um everybody knew, knew everybody and uh they were great for helping each other out and different things. I don't think anybody in town locked their door in fact most people didn't have locks for their doors. I can't remember any crime when I was a kid uh at all if there was crime it was so little it wasn't worth mentioning."

Jerry: "So it was like, what was the, you know the like grocery store like? You know, did they?"

Glen: "Oh well uh back then they're too far into town, it was eighteen miles into Helena, thirty miles into Deer Lodge to go shopping so there was only two grocery stores in that little town. I guess in the earlier days they had a big hotel and several saloons back before I came along I guess it burned down twice and uh the last time they didn't rebuild it to what it was. Back, back before WWII there was several mines working around there a couple of them had mills and uh."

Jerry: "Kay, do you remember what the names of the mines were in the community or what they were called?"

Glen: "Well let's see Ontario Mine, Monarch Mine, Julia Mine, and uh there was another mine, I think they called it Nigger Mountain or something like that. Course they also had the phosphate mines down around Avon."

Jerry: "Kay, well uh what about other transportation ya know in the community, you mentioned horses, buggies was there automobiles or?"

Glen: "Well I remember when I was a kid a road went right in front of our house, a gravel road, and if a car should happen to go by me and my younger sister would run out and holler at them, "Your wheel is falling off." No, eventually people eventually started getting a car. Oh the model A and I can remember my dad had an old Oldsmobile Touring car and I think the first car he got was an old Model T, and frame Model T, and he had a Model T truck, it had a gear shift. And then he got a 1929 Graham truck I think it was about a year old when he got that. And uh, it seemed like the most popular car at that time was the Model A. And uh I know I heard of airplanes but I never seen one. One day I was

probably nine or ten years old, an airplane did fly over, a small airplane. And everybody in town ran out to look at the airplane.”

Jerry: “So it was for the first time most of the people in the town...”

Glen: “Yeah it was the first time anybody seen a plane you know everybody knew about them. Oh and of course we didn’t have television and some people had radio but uh they didn’t get a very good reception, it came in as static and fade out. And uh of course we had wood kitchen stove, a wood heating stove and I think it was in 1936 we finally got electricity. And uh we only had one light bulb hanging in the kitchen before that we either had a kerosene lantern or the best light we had before electricity was the gas lantern with two mantles on it. We hung it on a hook uh on the wall. Then when I was, well for our water we had to go outside and draw water out of a well with a rope. And then when I was thirteen our house burnt down and my dad built a new house right over the well and the kitchen was right over the well and he put a hand pump in the kitchen and I thought now boy this is really living with a hand pump right in the kitchen, you don’t have to go outside to get water. But we uh didn’t have an inside bathroom we still had to go outside to use the bathroom, bathroom.”

Jerry: “Went over the irrigation ditch Huh?”

Glen: “Yeah, and then uh my mother used to scrub clothes on the wash board and then she got a washing machine it was oak and it had handle on the outside and you turn that handle and it squished the clothes back and forth and then eventually she got a washing machine with a gasoline motor. Of course you had to run it outside cause it blew all kinds of smoke and uh she used that pretty much up until we got electricity and then my dad got her a regular type of washing machine.”

Jerry: “Cool! So with, ya know, with you only having one light bulb and lantern when you were younger would that make, you know, studying for school or doing....”

Glen: “What?”

Jerry: “You know, only having one light bulb in the house would that make it harder to study you know doing your school work at night or...”

Glen: “Well, I don’t ever remember bringing any school work home. If I couldn’t... well if I couldn’t do it at school well, it just didn’t get done because.. Most of the time when I come home from school I’d milk the cow and uh, my older brother left home and it was up to me to cut the wood and haul it in the house. And I suppose I must of studied a little bit at home but, but I don’t remember studying at home.”

Jerry: “Huh, so basically you didn’t have a lot of time to do recreational things you know after school. Mostly chores...”

Glen: “No, not... Well after dark we used to play cards allot, and uh, all kinds of different card games and of course uh, if it wasn’t too cold and the river froze over, allot of times we would go and and build a bon fire somewhere along side the river and skate up and down the river. Or, or go up Olson Gulch a time and take our sleds, walk up oh, about a mile and sleigh right down this old logging road to Elliston. We really wasn’t in the house all the time in the winter in the evenings you know, unless it was really cold.”

Jerry: “Okay, uh do you recall I guess any major incidents or accidents that uh, occurred in Elliston? You know, while you were there?”

Glen: “Well, the most major thing I can think of is, one time this Archie McCarthy, he was on a big drunk. It was in the winter time and there was snow on the ground and the moon was out and it was pretty daylight out. I was just a young kid, I don’t know about eight or



nine or ten and anyhow he came to the house and he ate and he drank so much he had the stinks and he said "Dixon's after me!" and he came in the house and he grabbed uh the rifle my dad had. And they knelt by the window and said "Here's Dixon now!" He laid the rifle against his head and pulled the trigger and blew his hat off and he passed out. I don't know from the concussion or what ever... And they laid him on the couch. My mother said "He's going to die! He's got his hands pressed or crossed over his chest!" Poor little kid I was terrified with all this."

Jerry: "I imagine. So, hum, growing up did you, you know I guess was there ever any strikes or any sort of uprising? Yeah, strikes would work, or is there anything..."

Glen: "No there were no strikes of any kind when I was growing up. I guess, uh, if the people was able to find work of any kind it was uh, it was uh, pretty nice. I think these wages at that time was \$3.00 a day. I remember when I was nine years old this rancher needed a... somebody to flood irrigate, so he gave me \$.50 a day to come up and flood irrigate and I got my room and board. And the room consisted of a horse blanket out in the hay barn."

Jerry: "Oh yeah? And how old were you then?"

Glen: "Nine years old."

Jerry: "Nine years old, wow!"

Glen: "And when I was about eleven this one guy he had a bad heart and he needed a bunch of wood to split up for his kitchen range and he give me a \$1.50 a cord to split this firewood for his kitchen stove."

Jerry: "Ahuh! That wouldn't go far these days!"

Glen: "What?"

Jerry" "\$1.50 wouldn't go very far these days."

Glen: "No!"

Jerry: "Okay, hum, can you tell me you know, a little bit how hum, when your dad when he was working his claims, you know how he dug the material out of the ground and how he worked and that?"

Glen: "Well, this one Placer claim he had there was this small trickle of water coming out this one little gully and he took and made a small dam out of sod and uh, then he put built sluice boxes and put a head gate on and he had a Model A truck with a hand print dump on it. And he had, I suppose about a mile to haul this dirt that he wanted to wash and he would dump it in this sluice box and open the head gate and wash all the dirt and rocks down, And he would take twizzers and pick up, what I've been told, what he could find and he could see by hand and then he would close the head gate and while it was filling up with water while he would go get another load of dirt. I suppose he put about maybe a ton of dirt and gravel on that hand pick."

Jerry: "Now, what did he use in the sluice? Did he use like a carpet or metal to catch it or..."

Glen: "He had ripples all the way down it. Then right at the bottom then he took gunny sacks and nailed it down in several places and then after, oh I don't know, maybe several days or a week he pulled that gunny sack out and... I can't remember if he washed it out in the tub or whether he burned it ... can't remember, but any how he get the fine gold out of that gunny sack, and pan it out and get the fine gold out of that."

Jerry: "Huh! So where did he get the material that he worked from? Did he load it with shovel or...?"

Glen: "Yeah, he just hand shoveled it on with a hand shovel."

Jerry: "Okay. Did he go like any sort of depth or did he just kind of stay just on surface?"

Glen: "They would placer mine that area, uh, with I believe with a hydraulic hose, it left portions that you didn't get and it was down in this sort of a guppy that was some that they left and he would do it on a bottom part of the bank."

Jerry: "Hum, I guess hum, I don't know maybe a point of interest with me is you know is as far as the war and that and you being in the war t.... What was the communities attitude about World War II?"

Glen: "What was their what?"

Jerry: "Their attitude? You know, how, did they think it was a good cause or you know..."

Glen: "What was the American people?"

Jerry: "Yeah, you know the people with..."

Glen: "Yeah, everybody thought that was the, the thing to do. You know, of course, this Japan they started it, and of course with Germany well, they were starting to sink our merchant ships and uh, everybody was for it right to the very end. It wasn't like the Vietnam war you know. I never heard of anybody who was against the war. With Germany or Japan or either one."

Jerry: "So what you decide to go in the war or were you drafted or...?"

Glen: "Well, I first got out of high school, 1941, May of 1941, uh, me and this other kid, Joe White, we went and volunteered for the Navy. And they took him but they wouldn't take me because my eye sight was to bad. And so uh, the army drafted me in March of 1943. By that time I had glasses and they figured I was good enough."

Jerry: "Good enough to shoot a rifle Huh?"

Glen: "Yeah. So I was uh drafted, and they put me in the 648th Tank Destroyer Battalion. We didn't always train on tanks we trained to do everything. We trained infantry tactics and um, um, and anti-aircraft fire. You see our tanks had an open turret and we had a 50 caliber machine gun on the turret. Supposin the tank got disabled we could take that uh, caliber, that 50 caliber machine off of there and mount it on a tripod and um... Anyhow we were trained to keep fighting no matter what, as long as we were still alive."

Jerry: "Okay. Uh, you know after the war and that, uh, you know how were you received back in the community? Was the community I guess supportive of what you did?"

Glen: "Well, after being in the war and getting out I was really unsettled. I didn't know what I wanted to do. I worked as a bell hop, as a lumberjack, a miner and a truck driver, heavy equipment operator. It took me quite awhile to settle down in one job. I finally settled down in being a miner. I worked in the mines for up until I was about 30 years old and I decided to get out of the mines at that time and so went to driving bus. And I thought that was more fun than work, driving bus. I drove bus for about 12 years and then I went to driving over the road semi up until I retired."

Jerry: "Okay. What was it like, you know, working in the mines in Butte. You know..."

Glen: "I liked mining, it was interesting. And we made good money. It was dangerous but we didn't...kinda like it was being in the service we didn't think about danger to much. But I did get hurt a couple of times in the mines and I think that's what made me make up my mind to get out of the mines. Cuz, I figured mining wasn't for an older,older guy."

Jerry: "How, you know how did they pay you for working in the mines, you know..."

Glen: "Well, they called it contract work. They paid you so much for the ground you broke, so much for the time where you put in. So most of the time, well at that time days pay was about \$16.00 a day. So contracting you could make like \$25.00 to \$35.00 a day. And

when I quite mining went to driving bus it only paid \$14.00, but it was nice clean work. And I enjoyed it. Making less money you just spent less. Thats all there was to it.”

Jerry: “So did they, um, when you were mining did they pay you so much for every piece of timber you put in and so much per foot that you dug or...?”

Glen: “Yeah, of course your drilled, blasted everything you know, and they had a set scale and if you were quick enough on the stope they would pay you by the cubic, uh, the cubic feet that you broke and then if you put in a set of timber so much for the set of timber. If you were working in a drift or in a raise they paid you so much per linear feet plus whatever timber you put in.”

Jerry: “Okay. So do you remember any of the prices, any of that is where you got paid for that?”

Glen: “No, I don’t remember.”

Jerry: “Okay. Um, Can you, you know, share with me a little bit more about the war and maybe I guess events, you know during the war that stand out, that stand out to you?”

Glen: “No, except, uh, when we first arrived at the front it was after the invasion and we moved up close to the front during darkness and uh, all that artillery coming in I was terrified. I thought I was going to die that first night, but as the war progressed you became less and less frightened. But there was times that, there was times especially that feeling that I totally figured it was the end of the world and uh, but of course you wasn’t up on the front all the time. The front would advance and then it would leave you uh, I could be up on the front for a week or two weeks and then maybe it would advance and they would leave you back for a few days to rest up and uh, clean yourself up and kinda rest up and then uh.... I remember one time uh, I got, they drew names out of a hat, and going to send us a week back in rest camp somewhere in France. So I was one of the few that got there name drawn out of the hat to go back to rest camp. And boy that was wonderful to have a whole week just to take showers and didn’t have to worry about nothing. And when it was time to go back to the front, it was, it was bad. It was pretty hard to take to go back up there again.”

Jerry: “I imagine. So how many years did you serve, you know, you know in the service and that...?”

Glen: “How many years, Jerry?”

Jerry: “Yeah”

Glen: “About three years. I spent about two years of that over in France and Germany.”

Jerry: “Uhm, You know after I guess, you know back from war and when you were in Butte you recall any I guess uhm, you know major events you know, you know that happened in Butte during that time? Anything stick out in your ...?”

Glen: “ The most major event that I can think of was the time they had all that dynamite over there in East Butte. And I was sitting in the house on Colorado Street and that big blast shook the windows. I was reading the newspaper, about tore the newspaper apart. I forget what year that was. It was in late fifties. Some people stole some dynamite and they had it up there on the slag pile in East Butte and near as I can remember the cops shot at somebody hit the dynamite and it all went off.

Jerry: “Blew everybody up, Huh?”

Glen: “Well, blew at least one guy up, that I remember.”

Jerry: “Huh.

Glen: “I never did get involved in the strikes in the mines. I guess they had one or two strikes after I left the mines.”

Jerry: "Now did the strikes get pretty violent, or were they pretty mellow or...?"

Glen: "No, not while I was there they weren't violent."

Jerry: "Okay, so this is pretty much... Were any of the strikes for any lengthy period of time or were they all pretty short strikes or...?"

Glen: "Well, I remember after one driving bus, well in fact it was when me and Art were, had the Butte Bus Lines. And we were doing fairly good and the mines went on strike and it seemed like they were on strike quite a long time and that's when our business started to deteriorate. That's when I decided to get out of the Butte Bus Lines, when I sold out. That was in 1966, that I sold out."

Jerry: "Okay. Uh, I guess you hear stories of, you know, how people during the strikes, you know, people that cross over the picket lines and stuff like that you know they burn down their house or that, you know. Do you recall any of that?"

Glen: "No. I think that was back before I started working in the mines. I think this was way back in the, probably in the Twenties, Twenties or Thirties they probably did that. It was at least before I started working in the Butte Mines."

Jerry: "So you know, the strikes were they mostly because of wages and working conditions?"

Glen: "Oh yeah, mostly wages."

Jerry: "Mostly wages, huh? "

Glen: "Yeah."