IDAHO YESTERDAYS, VOL 54, NO 1 (2016)

IDAHO YESTERDAYS
VOL. 54 (2016)

THE ENDURING FRONTIER: JOSEPH AND ERCELL FLOOD AND HOMESTEADING IN POSTWAR IDAHO, 1941-1956

Will Michael Wright *

The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Illinois, brought the presentation of historian Frederick Jackson Turner's essay entitled, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." In his paper, Turner asserted that all unique characteristics in American culture originated from the "frontier," or the region just beyond the moving line of settlement. "The most significant thing about the American frontier is," according to Turner, "that it lies at the hither edge of free land." [1] But after drawing from census records, Turner concluded that the frontier had closed and no longer existed by 1890. From that point forward, the "frontier" and the American West have captivated widespread attention in the United States. Ray Allen Billington and Martin Ridge captured this framework of frontier understanding in a book entitled *Westward Expansion*. The frontier comprised a crucial element of the scholarship on the American West for many years. [2]

Historian David Wrobel, building upon the work of Richard Hofstadter, argued that Turner's announcement of the closing of the frontier created a "frontier anxiety" in the American people, present from the late-nineteenth century to end of the New Deal in the 1930s. Over time, the notion of the frontier became flawed and old-fashioned according to some historians. In 1987, Patricia Nelson Limerick prodded at these deficiencies in her book, *The Legacy of Conquest,* and stressed the importance of continuity in the history of the West. Moreover, in 1991 Richard White wrote an overview of the American West titled *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own,"* which did not mention the frontier or Turner's ideas. In the 1980s and 1990s, the frontier seemed to take on a negative connotation with some western historians who believed the term "frontier" would fade away. [3]

The frontier, however, seemed to be a more powerful and enduring subject than anticipated for it began to reappear in historical works in the late 1990s and 2000s. For example, Walter Nugent's *Into the West,* and Robert Hine and John Mack Faragher's *The American West* focused on frontier processes, which occurred when two cultures met and intermingled. Nugent also based his book on an enduring Turnerian insight: "The rise and collapse of homesteading underpinned the entire history of the United States for over 200 years, from the Atlantic to the Sierras and beyond, and the West is where homesteading peaked and then died." [4] Nugent and others asserted that "homesteading withered away, already over when the Taylor Grazing Act closed the public lands to new entries in 1934." [5] In their works, these western historians turned to examine the metropolitan and urban West during the latter half of the twentieth century. Historian Brian Cannon has commented that statements like those above and changes in interpretative focus "reinforc[ed] a common misperception" that the end of homesteading in the West occurred in the 1930s. [6] Instead, Cannon demonstrated that government-sponsored homesteading did not end in the lower forty-eight states until 1976 and not until 1986 in Alaska. [7]

This article recounts the agricultural settlement experiences of Joseph Carr Flood and Ercell Norine Flood in postwar Idaho. Their undertakings serve as a case study for both continuity and change on the homesteading frontier in the twentieth-century West. The Old West and the New West collide in this story as Jeffersonian yeomanry meets urbanized, technologically-driven farming. The experiences of different peoples—European Americans, Japanese Americans, American Indians, and Mexican Americans—are depicted as their lives are intertwined by the same landscape. But most importantly, the homesteading experiences of Joe and Ercell Flood provide an account of the enduring frontier, by which the prospects of new settlement did not vanish as lands became available to farm. [8]

In order to understand federally-sponsored farming in the twentieth century, it is important to look back to the original Homestead Act and other laws that led up to this postwar phenomenon. The Homestead Act, passed by Congress in 1862, stipulated that any citizen twenty-one years or older was eligible to file a claim for 160 acres of plotted land on the public domain, most of which was located in the West. Homesteaders were required to farm the acreage, build a house or barn, and reside on the property for five years. Upon successful completion of these criteria, they received title to the parcel of land by paying a $10 fee. Alternatively, homesteaders could purchase the claim outright at the price of $1.25 an acre after six months of living on the plot. Over the course of its tenure, the Homestead Act turned over 285 million acres of the public domain to private hands. [9]

Along with many other problems the homesteaders faced—namely, land speculators, fraudulent entries, and small allotted acreage—a chief difficulty was the arid landscapes in much of the West. To remedy the situation, Congress passed the Newlands Reclamation Act in 1902. The law specified that the federal government would fund the creation of dams along rivers in the West in order to "reclaim" the arid lands for farm irrigation. To oversee these projects, the U.S. government created the Reclamation Service (later renamed the Bureau of Reclamation in

1923) within the Department of the Interior. The Bureau began to build irrigation projects all over the arid West, turning the desert areas into fertile, workable lands for small family farmers, with a provision that the farmers must repay the federal government for the cost of the waterworks. Indeed, the prospects of free land from these reclamation projects suggested the continuation of the frontier in the American West. Furthermore, the federal water diversion projects turned the expanses of the West into what historian Donald Worster has called "hydraulic societies," in which the ability to manipulate water made it as valuable as capital. These irrigation developments transformed the areas along barren river valleys into productive farms and, in many cases, provided hydroelectric power, particularly helping the states of California, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, Washington, and Idaho. [10]

Within the state of Idaho, the Snake River Plain became a site of considerable reclamation efforts. The Reclamation Service created an "irrigated Eden" within this formerly arid area, and white people gradually displaced native Shoshones and Bannocks from the lands near the Snake River, with the population of Idaho rising to 431,000 by 1920. The Minidoka Project sought to irrigate the valley of southeastern Idaho through the introduction of a number of reclamation developments. One such venture called the Minidoka Dam took place near the town of Rupert, Idaho, a structure which was built over the course of three years, from 1904 to 1906. The dam created Lake Walcott, which provided irrigation for approximately 116,000 acres to be cultivated on both sides of the Snake River, as well as hydroelectric power. From the time of the passage of the Newlands Act in 1902 to the time of World War II in 1939, the Bureau of Reclamation generated over one hundred irrigation projects in the American West. [11]

As the end of World War II became imminent by 1944 with the Allied invasion of Normandy and advance toward Germany, U.S. Congress sought to provide assistance to military veterans returning home from the war front. By far the most famous piece of legislation that came out of these "grand expectations" for the veterans was the 1944 G.I. Bill of Rights, an act that provided federal assistance for education and home buying. Along with this provision, Congress passed an act to provide preferential status to veterans applying for homesteads on newly completed or expanded reclamation projects. Any man or woman who served in the armed forces (as long as she was head of household), or widow of a military veteran, could apply for a homestead. Later, in the mid-twentieth century, U.S. Congress decided to extend the same homesteading benefits to Korean War veterans, passing a similar law in 1954. Many former service men and women took advantage of these acts: "Between 1946 and 1966 the Bureau of Reclamation advertised the opening of 3,041 new farms on government land." These prospective openings were concentrated within the states of Arizona, California, Idaho, Washington, and Wyoming. [12]

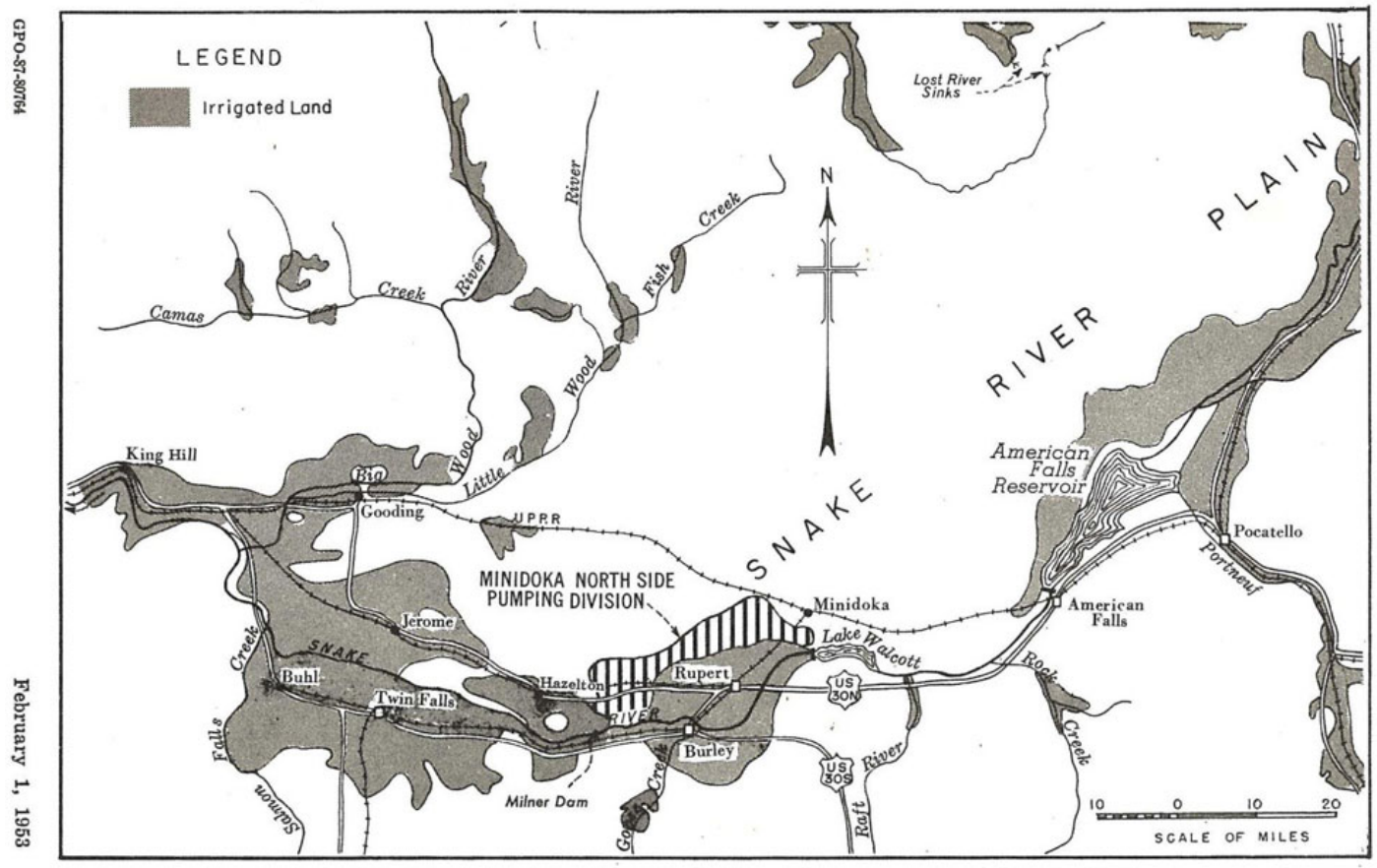

Fig. 1: U.S. Reclamation Service map of the irrigation projects in southern Idaho, 1953. Courtesy of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Denver, CO. Note the North Side Pumping Division, where Joe and Ercell Flood received their farm, at center-bottom.

Joseph Carr Flood was one man who seized the homestead opportunity afforded him by the U.S. federal government. Born on March 4, 1916, in Montgomery City, Missouri, Joe was quickly surrounded by an agricultural lifestyle. His parents, Mary Ruth and John Thomas Flood, worked on their family homestead in Missouri. The oldest of four children, Joe assisted his father around the farm until he graduated from Montgomery City High School in May 1933. Because of hard financial times during the Great Depression, Joe joined the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to supplement his family's income. Joe worked at CCC camps in Sullivan, Missouri, and in the Almaden Valley near San Jose, California. Joe and other enlistees improved the landscapes in those areas for further utility, no doubt a tool that Joe would use later in his life.

Joe's family followed him to California in 1937 and they settled in the city of Campbell to look for better economic opportunities. Already accustomed to a military atmosphere when his CCC work ended, Joe enlisted in the U.S. Navy in March 1938. [13]

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States catapulted itself into World War II. At the beginning of U.S. involvement, Joe served in the Pacific theatre as an electrician's mate aboard the U.S.S. *Northampton*, which patrolled around the Marshall and Wake Islands. In the summer of 1942, the U.S. Navy sent Joe to Washington, D.C., in order to attend Interior Communications (IC) School and achieve an advanced naval electrician certification. During liberty one evening in Washington, Joe and a buddy attended a United Services Organization (USO) dance. At the event, Joe danced with "a pretty blond girl" who worked at the newly-constructed Pentagon Building. The girl's name was Ercell Norine Smith. That night, she had immensely enjoyed dancing with Joe, and at the end of the event, the two exchanged phone numbers. [14]

Fig. 2: Admiral's inspection aboard the U.S.S. Santa Fe, 1943. Admiral Laurance T. DuBose right and Lieutenant Joe C. Flood left walk past the sailors. Courtesy of Ercell Flood, Twin Falls, Idaho.

Fig. 3: Ercell Flood poses dressed up in Joe's sailor outfit while he was out to sea, Washington, D.C., 1943. Courtesy of Andrea Wright, Fruitland, Idaho.

Ercell's trip to Washington, D.C., was a remarkable one. Born on December 15, 1922, in Goshen County, Wyoming, her life had little to do with the national government as Ercell grew up on a cattle ranch. Her parents, Lottie Mae and Guy Duward Smith, owned a small beef operation in eastern Wyoming and western Nebraska. The oldest of five children, she graduated from Garden County High School, Nebraska, in May 1940 and then attended the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. While at college, World War II broke out and Ercell noticed that her cousin, Emma Jo Campbell, had passed a civil service exam and was off to the nation's capital to work for the U.S. War Department. Because close to 16 million men were drafted or voluntarily enlisted in the U.S. armed forces, and many more males took industrial defense jobs, many new positions were opened to women. Accordingly, the female employment rate rose from 26 percent in 1940 to 36 percent by 1944. Intrigued by this opportunity, Ercell passed the government administration exam and asked for her father's permission to leave school. Guy Smith reluctantly bought her train ticket to Washington, D.C., and she began working at the Pentagon in Arlington County, Virginia. [15]

Young and single while working near the U.S. capital, Ercell Smith and some girlfriends decided to attend a USO dance one night. The day after the soirée, Ercell received a telephone call from Joe Flood. During their conversation, Joe apologized to Ercell for not being a skilled dancer. As a tradeoff, Joe remarked that he would make it up to Ercell and asked her on a date. After a few months of courtship, the two decided to marry and did so on December 12, 1942. Joe completed IC School a couple weeks later, and then boarded a light cruiser, the U.S.S. *Santa Fe*, to head to the Pacific once again. Joe was honorably discharged with the rank of lieutenant, junior grade, on February 25, 1946. [16]

Following his service in the U.S. Navy, Joe Flood and his wife decided to settle down in Brewster, Nebraska, in the early 1950s to work on the ranch of Joe's father-in-law, Guy Smith. Joe was kept occupied with raising cattle and harvesting corn and alfalfa, while Ercell cared for their three young children, Barbara, Jane, and Patricia. One day in the summer of 1953, Joe sat down to read a copy of *American Legion*, a favorite magazine among military veterans. As he flipped through its pages, he noticed a government advertisement of an upcoming drawing for homesteads on a reclamation project in Idaho. When discussing the announcement with his wife, Joe was enticed by the notion of free land, an essential component of the enduring frontier. So with the decision made to take advantage of the offer, Joe mailed a letter requesting an application form. [17]

Joe received an application, as well as information describing the requirements for farming on the North Side Pumping Division, a new portion of the Minidoka Project in Idaho. Approximately 69,500 additional acres of land would be irrigated by pumping water directly from the Snake River, or from groundwater wells nearby. In this particular drawing, 7,289 acres of irrigable land, comprising 72 farm units, were available for the taking. Each unit averaged about one hundred acres at the approximate value of $10,000. The requirements for the homestead-drawing applicants included World War II veteran status with at least two years of farming experience, $4,500 in personal assets, and four letters of character reference. Joe gathered the necessary materials by the July 20 deadline, and waited for an answer. [18]

On August 4, 1953, over five thousand people gathered at Rupert Town Square Park to hear the results of the land lottery. Harold T. Nelson, regional director of the Bureau of Reclamation, spoke to the crowd, stating that the land had the potential to become one of the "garden spots of the northwest," and that the homesteads awarded to the veterans were part of "the last frontier." Furthermore, the lieutenant governor of Idaho, Edson Deal, proclaimed that "new horizons have not vanished." Their words of encouragement suggest that the frontier was not closed. Rather, the free land open to these postwar homesteaders signified a continuation of the frontier. Local businesses donated prizes which were given to the veterans. At the ceremony, Nan Braegger, nine-year-old daughter of the Rupert mayor, drew Joe Flood's name out of the "wheel of fortune" mixer-barrel. But like most out-of-state veterans in these lotteries, Joe was not present because the chances of winning were too small to warrant the expense of a trip. A tide of good fortune was extended to Joe that day when from a pool of 4,645 applicants, Joe was the 63rd name drawn for the 72 available farms. [19]

The Bureau informed Joe via mail that his name was drawn for a farm, but that being selected in the drawing did not necessarily guarantee receiving the land. First, interviews of the veterans were conducted by an examining committee at the Armory Building in Rupert to ensure that they met the qualifications. Potential homesteaders were interviewed in groups of eighteen, and some initial winners were deemed ineligible because they did not meet the criteria. After the interviews, qualified veterans were finally able to choose their plots. Leaving snowy weather in Brewster, Joe and Ercell drove westward from Nebraska to meet with the committee. Joe's group interview took place on November 23, and was conducted by Merle L. Tillery, superintendent of the Minidoka Project, and his staff. Afterwards, Tillery showed the

plots of land available to the veterans. Two days later, Joe arrived at the Armory to select his parcel. Due to disqualifications and some late arrivals, Joe was bumped up in his selection spot. Joe thus chose what he thought was one of the better claims, a parcel of 159.6 acres of land. Joe and Ercell signed the necessary contract paperwork for the Bureau of Reclamation, paid some processing fees, and on November 25, 1953, they became the proud owners of their own farm. The Floods were only two of the many other veteran families who received land that day, a sign that homesteading was alive and well into the 1950s and that the frontier was a continuing presence.[20]

Joe and Ercell traveled back to Brewster to prepare to move to the new farm in the spring of 1954. Joe sold his cattle at his father-in-law's ranch and used the money to buy a small Minneapolis Moline tractor. In the first days of February 1954, Joe and his "hired hand," George Woodward, traveled by pickup truck, tractor in the back, to Rupert. Ercell and the young children stayed behind until Joe made some basic improvements on the homestead. The first objective for all homesteaders was "proving up," or "fulfilling all of the legal prerequisites for gaining legal title to one's lands." [21] The postwar homestead law stipulated that the veterans must move onto the land within six months of the award date. The homesteaders needed to live on the land for at least two years, create a permanent dwelling, and successfully cultivate at least half the acreage during that time period. When these criteria were met, the farmer sent documentation to the Bureau of Reclamation, and upon verification, received the patent to the land.[22]

When Joe and George arrived at the homestead, the pair built a sixteen-foot by thirty-foot chicken coop on Joe's home-site, the highest point of the land which overlooked the entire farm. Until a house was built, this small structure would temporarily serve as their home. Joe purchased a small coal stove to heat the building and cook meals. On February 8, a drilling company drilled a well for potable water while Joe and George dug a hole and built a crude outhouse. The first night that Joe stayed in the chicken coop, the cold set in, and Joe wrote in his journal, "This is certainly a dreary, desolate place. Times like this, I wonder if I was wise to leave the security of my in-laws for this." [23] This chicken-house dwelling almost seems anachronistic for the 1950s, as many former servicemen bought their own houses with indoor plumbing and television in Levittowns or other suburbias. Life was difficult for the postwar homesteader, but the notion of free land convinced many to stay. [24]

Fig. 4: An inside view of the chicken house, 1954. The tanks in the foreground were used for water storage until the groundwater well was dug. Courtesy of Barbara Adams, Rupert, Idaho.

Fig. 5: Another inside view of the chicken house, 1954. Note the coal stove on the right. Courtesy of Barbara Adams, Rupert, Idaho.

The next task for many homesteaders was to clear the brush and other vegetation that inhabited the area. Joe pulled a large "V" blade behind his tractor to upend the thick sagebrush that covered his land. The blade cut four to six inches under the dirt, leaving the brush on top of the ground where it was raked into rows and burned. The conscientious effort to remove all the brush worked against Joe in the long run, as the organic materials of the brush could have helped prevent soil erosion, particularly for the fine-textured soils of southern Idaho. The clearing process also disrupted the habitat of many living rodents, rabbits, and snakes, and Joe "had to be careful of the living creatures." [25] However, when nature interfered with the farmers' plans, the homesteaders tried to alleviate the problem. For example, Rupert farmers occasionally held "rabbit drives," where groups of homesteaders surrounded, clubbed, and exterminated the numerous jackrabbits that inhabited the landscape. For many postwar homesteaders, these tasks were their manly duty to subdue nature, and often nature fought back in the cruelest ways. [26]

After Joe and George cleared and leveled the land, which needed to be sloped at a three-degree angle to allow for proper irrigation, they made ditches along the perimeter of the field with a system of dikes, levees, and weirs. Before they even began their work, some basic irrigation structures were already present at the Minidoka Project, built by the thousands of Japanese Americans who farmed at the Minidoka War Relocation Center during World War II. Over the course of their internment, Japanese Americans excavated over thirty miles of ditches and prepared over one thousand acres for these would-be farmers. Although aided by these earlier improvements and assisted by the local Reclamation Bureau, Joe and George struggled with these earthen structures. The ditches often collapsed because of the dirt's fine, volcanic texture, causing water to gush out onto the field. They spent numerous hours retrenching, fixing, and repairing the waterways. Providing proper canal irrigation proved to be a challenging task. [27]

Once the difficult process of establishing a consistent water supply was completed, Joe and George began plowing the field. Yet again, nature was more determined than the farmers could have imagined. When plowing, the tractor easily sank a foot or more in some areas, causing it to get stuck in the region's powdery soil. During this time, high winds, which nearly always characterized the Snake River Plain, blew the outhouse over. Disregarding the unusual soil features and windy gusts, Joe dragged a disc harrow behind his tractor to break up the dirt clods. He then pulled a cultivator behind the tractor to corrugate the fields, creating furrows for water to reach the crops. After making these basic improvements over the course of February through April 1954, Joe was now ready to plant and water his crops. For this postwar homesteader, the farmer's frontier was not over. [28]

Fig. 6: Joe Flood takes a moment to rest while digging a ditch, 1954.
Courtesy of Barbara Adams, Rupert, Idaho.

Fig. 7: The Flood homestead with the Minneapolis Moline tractor and storage shed in the background and a ground leveler attachment in the foreground.
Courtesy of Barbara Adams, Rupert, Idaho.

At the end of April 1954, Joe journeyed back to Nebraska to gather Ercell and their children. The couple packed everything they owned into the back of his pickup truck. Joe and Barbara headed off to Rupert, while Ercell, Jane, and Patricia followed by car. After a couple days of traveling, the family finally reached their homestead. Observing the high winds, Barbara recalled that her mother's hat immediately flew off her head the moment she stepped out her vehicle and Ercell scowled as she tried to retrieve the cap. Joe and Ercell moved the family into the chicken house, partitioning a section for their children and cleaning up the farm implements and supplies that occupied much of their dwelling. For the time being, they slept on mattresses lying on the ground. During the first couple weeks living in the chicken coop, Barbara and Patricia recalled a memorable childhood experience. At dusk, just before they were tucked into bed, the girls watched in amazement as row after row of burning sagebrush lit up the night sky. Because of the frequent gusts, many postwar farmers in southern Idaho waited until the wind died down at night to burn their brush. Patricia remembered, "There were no trees. The land was flat, nothing to block our view. No electricity yet, and we could see these giant fires for miles and miles across the desert." [29] It took time for the Flood family to adjust to their new environment and times like this often provided relief. [30]

After the Floods were settled, George Woodward left for Nebraska in the first days of May and Joe commented, "From this day forward, Ercell was my helper." [31] Indeed, Ercell and all the children, Barbara, Jane, and Patricia, "helped out" with farm labor during the early years. When closely examined, Ercell and Joe were complementary partners at their homestead. For the first growing season, Joe planted seed for barley, alfalfa, wheat, and a small acreage of sugar beets and peas. However, irrigating these crops became a daily routine for all members of the Flood family. Siphon tubes became the primary method for irrigation, with the farmer pumping the tube in the channel to fill it with water before dropping it over the ditch and letting in run down the furrows. Joe and Ercell became frustrated with the process at first, having never irrigated before. After some time, Joe, Ercell, and especially the young girls became experts on setting the tubes, transferring them from one area to the next on the farm. Ercell remembered, "Carrying all those arm-loads of muddy, wet tubes became heavy and it was hard work for a woman." [32]

Fig. 8: Ercell Flood rests on the seat of the outhouse after arriving at the homestead, 1954. Courtesy of Barbara

Women's labor on the homestead was essential to the success of many postwar farming operations. Ercell's work was no exception, as she made her own individual contributions to the homesteading process. To supplement their income derived from the crops that were to be harvested, Joe and Ercell bought a few dairy cattle to be raised and milked daily. The couple was up at five o'clock every morning to start working, and while Joe went to the field to check on the crop irrigation, Ercell milked the cows. Over time, they built a barn and each cow was milked by an automated milking station. Even then, Ercell led the cows into the station, hooked up the machinery to the cows' udders, and guided them out when they were finished. One day, as she was leading in a cow, the animal spooked and reared back at her. The cow's kick hit her hand and knocked out the diamond from the setting on her wedding ring. She frantically searched through the hay and manure for the diamond. Luckily, as Ercell dug around, the light entering a window hit the precious stone at the right angle and it shimmered, enabling her to find the diamond. "That was the worst experience of my time

homesteading," Ercell remembered. [33] But that incident did not stop her from doing her duties as a farmer because, from her perspective, she had to do what was required to be successful. [34]

Fig. 9: Ercell Flood right places a siphon tube while Patricia far left, Jane center left, and Joe top look on, 1955. Courtesy of Wisconsin Historical Society Digital Archive, Madison, Wisconsin.

Because the Floods and other farmers possessed little money for hired help, children's work was of indispensable value for the postwar homestead as the younger generation assisted with many of the day-to-day activities on the farm. For irrigation, the Flood family developed a plan over time to more efficiently water their crops. First, Joe instructed the girls to place siphon tubes in either all or every other row of corrugates, depending upon the desired degree of water saturation. Then as Barbara, Jane, and Patricia worked ahead, Joe and Ercell pump-started ditch water through the tubes. When ditches collapsed, Patricia remembered instances when her father used their small bodies as patchwork for the trenches. She recalled, "Dad would have us girls lay down parallel to where the ditch should be; he would get scoops of mud in his shovel and pack it up against our bodies until there was a solid wall for a ditch. Then, we'd move to another spot and fix another wall there. Not only did it help out dad, but it was a lot of fun for us." [35] From their point of view, the distinction between children's work and play was often blurred, but necessary for farm success when labor ran short. [36]

In order to become productive, the farm needed irrigation water to turn the almost uninhabitable desert into fertile soil. This transformation perpetuated the Edenic myth of the garden and many farmers applied the nickname "Magic Valley" to southern Idaho. After Joe and Ercell labored for nearly a year, this irrigation "magic" produced many crops that were ready to be harvested. When Joe and Ercell started to gather their crops, the farming operations proceeded smoothly for the barley, alfalfa, wheat, and sugar beets. They received $2.25 per bushel for the wheat, but sugar beets brought in the most substantial amount of money for the harvest. Unfortunately, the Floods were limited to only ten acres of beets in the first year of farming. The Amalgamated Sugar Company, located in Twin Falls, Idaho, contracted acreage to farmers in the Magic Valley because their factories could only process so much tonnage of beets to be refined into sugar. As a result, new farmers, such as Joe and Ercell, were limited to the amount of land they could dedicate to sugar beets. [37]

Joe and Ercell also contracted a small acreage of peas to be sold to a food processing company, but in this instance, the harvest went terribly wrong. "In our dream world of inexperience," Joe remembered, the couple tried swathing the peas, but the vines became tangled in the machinery. [38] This procedure made the peas difficult to load, to the point where they only filled two trucks in an entire day. The next morning, Joe borrowed a mechanical pea cutter and loader from the processing plant and the harvest went much easier, with the remaining work completed in one day. But when the factory inspected the peas, the plants were too mature, or more specifically too ripe for human consumption, and they received a low food grade. Consequently, the company did not accept the peas to be processed and canned, so Joe and Ercell had to sell them as livestock feed, making only a portion of the expected profits. As a result, the first harvest for Joe and Ercell provided mixed results monetarily. The couple broke even, with dairy production providing much of their actual income. That winter, Joe worked as a pipeline driller near Declo, Idaho, to supplement the family's income. [39]

With the help from a Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loan, Joe and Ercell hired construction workers to come to the Flood homestead. The workers built the basic structure for the house for approximately $13,000, with Ercell and Joe finishing the siding, roofing, and painting on the building to save money. Once that was finished, Ercell and Joe planted four rows of evergreen trees around the house as a windbreak. At close to the same time, power lines made their way from the town of Rupert into the countryside and the Floods obtained electricity for their house. Completed by early 1955, Joe and Ercell now fulfilled one of the requirements to obtain a patent to the land—a permanent dwelling—but perhaps more importantly, they now had a home. [40]

Fig. 10: The Flood's house, shortly after it was completed, 1955. Courtesy of Barbara Adams, Rupert, Idaho.

At the conclusion of the last spring frost in 1955, Joe and Ercell planted their next season's crops, including sugar beets, alfalfa, and fifteen acres of a new addition that became famous for Idahoans—Russet Burbank potatoes. Applying the same irrigation techniques from the previous year, the plants began to grow. In particular, the sugar beets needed to be weeded and thinned in order to grow properly. Joe and Ercell hired Navajo Indian migrant workers to thin and hoe the beets. The crew traversed the fields, crawling on their knees and using small-handled hoes to dig up any weeds. In later years of farming, Joe and Ercell relied on Mexican and Mexican American migrant workers for much of this work. Ercell recalled appreciating their "backbreaking work" and she often prepared lunches and dinners for the laborers after a long day of thinning beets. [41]

During the growing season, Joe and Ercell worked long hours, normally going out to the fields at sunrise and leaving them at sunset. But with the numerous responsibilities of farm work, Joe and Ercell did what they thought would make them successful. Recalling these long days, Ercell remarked, "Sometimes, we quit around 4 p.m. on Sunday, instead of working all day. Otherwise how would we know a new week starts on Monday?" When the harvest arrived during the fall, the couple quickly labored to get the crops to market. For their first season

with potatoes, Joe drove the tractor over the fields, turning up the spuds. Then, Ercell, the girls, and various neighbors followed along with sacks hooked into their belts. They filled the sacks until they could hold no more, tied them off, and then started the process over again. Once that task was completed, they turned to the alfalfa. Joe dragged a hay baler across the fields to package the crop. Then, Joe remembered, "Barbara, at only eight-years-old, drove my truck, and I picked the bales of hay and threw them on the pickup. Ercell rode on the bed of the truck, and she stacked them up." [42] When winter began in 1955, they had completed the harvest for the second season. But more importantly, Joe and Ercell cultivated most of their acreage for the second straight year, fulfilling the next requirement to obtain patent to the land. [43]

During the winter of 1955-1956, Joe prepared the necessary paperwork to receive full title to the land. He provided four witnesses that wrote testimonies stating that the Floods had been cultivating at least half the acreage, as well as documents from Bureau inspections. In March 1956, two years and one month after he first arrived at his Rupert homestead, Joe sent the documentation to the Bureau of Reclamation. Joe and Ercell impatiently waited for an answer, checking and double-checking their mailbox daily for the notice. On May 10, 1956, Joe and Ercell Flood received verification that they had obtained the patent to their homestead. Although the couple had numerous loans for housing, irrigation, and farm equipment, Joe and Ercell owned the land free and clear. Thus, the notion of free land still existed, an essential component of the frontier. [44]

For Joe and Ercell Flood and many other homesteading veterans, the frontier, or the availability of free land, was not closed during the postwar years. In fact, the belief in the availability of free land enticed many former service men and women to farm. Historian Brian Cannon noted that "from 1946 to 1966 the Interior Department received over 150,000 applications—some veterans applied for farms on several projects—for 3,041 farms." [45] Like the homesteaders of old, some sodbusters did not succeed. On the Minidoka Project, "11 percent of the 623 homesteads that were established between 1954 and 1958 changed hands by the end of 1960." [46] For those who were able to hold onto their land, as Joe and Ercell did until they passed it onto their children, they embraced what historians have called "pastoralism," or the "affinity for land and farming as a way of life." [47] When reminiscing about the homestead experience Joe stated: "There are easier ways to make a living—easier work, fewer hours, better conditions—but [in the end,] I still like to farm." [48]

Fig. 11: *Left to right*, Joe, Ercell, Patricia, Jane, and Barbara Flood gather near their home, 1960s. Courtesy of Barbara Adams, Rupert, Idaho.

A deep connection to the land developed for Joe and Ercell after many years of cultivation and hard work. In some ways, Joe and Ercell tried to subvert the land to become fertile soil and perpetuate the Edenic myth of the garden. For instance, they tilled, irrigated, planted, and successfully harvested crops, transforming the land, at least in their minds, from barren desert into fertile soil. But in other ways, nature fought back: irrigation ditches collapsed, weeds grew, and weather ruined crops. Furthermore, the very act of irrigating the crops sometimes caused toxic salts to increase on the surface of the terrain as the water table rose. As a result, the soil became alkaline, or overly basic, to the point that Joe and Ercell had to construct drainage ditches to try to alleviate the problem and save their produce. The Floods created what historian Mark Fiege has called a "hybrid landscape" on their postwar homestead, where there was interplay between human and nonhuman nature. [49]

Fig. 12: Joe and Ercell Flood pose near their dairy cows, 1958. Courtesy of Barbara Adams, Rupert, Idaho.

On the landscape of the Minidoka Project, the natural resource of water controlled the lives of many farmers in the arid western region. After Joe Flood and other veteran farmers established farms on either Unit A or Unit B of the North Side Pumping Division near Rupert, Idaho, they formed the A&B Water Users' Association to manage the use of water provided by the Bureau of Reclamation. The group provided oversight for the delivery and measure of water, as well as maintenance for the hydraulic pumps. Soon after the liquid resource was turned over to these private farmers, fights arose over its management. Some homesteaders claimed that they did not receive their correct allowance of water, an oversight which resulted in "shouting matches" between the farmers. Although fisticuffs never occurred, the association's executive board, of which Joe was a member, placed padlocks on the head gates of main canals to deter farmers from adjusting their water supply. Barbara, the daughter of Joe and Ercell Flood, remembered, "There was just barely enough [water], and everyone had an allotment. Individual farmers were not allowed to be in charge of their own water because they would just take it." [50] Farmers paid yearly fees that delivered specific quantities of water. If there was extra water available, a farmer could make an extra payment and receive the additional amount. However, "If everybody was using their allotment," Barbara remarked, "You couldn't have any more. That's it. Whether you needed [water] or not, you could not have it." [51] Although the irrigation association usually fostered cooperation instead of conflict, divisions did occur over the allocation of water used to sustain the family farms in an arid environment. [52]

With the creation of the Flood farm and many other small, family homesteads, the Jeffersonian dream of the hardy, yeoman farmer seemed to continue well into the twentieth century. Indeed, in some instances, Joe and Ercell exemplified the characteristics of independent farmers. They completed many of the day-to-day tasks on the farm themselves, from irrigation to harvest. Joe stated, "To me, to have my own place

and not to be working for someone was the best aspect of homesteading." [53] However, other aspects of homesteading undermined the Jeffersonian ideal as Joe and Ercell had to be reliant on other people and structures to sustain their operation. For example, they relied extensively on the federal government for numerous, low-interest loans in order to provide a house, farm equipment, and irrigation waterworks. The Bureau of Reclamation, a federal agency, provided assistance to Joe and Ercell on many occasions on the farm. Further, the couple relied on the work of migrant workers, neighbors, and schoolchildren to help them with their crops. While Joe and Ercell enjoyed the independence of owning their own farm, they were also dependent on others. Joe and Ercell's farming experiences created a crossroads of interdependence, where different groups relied upon one another. [54]

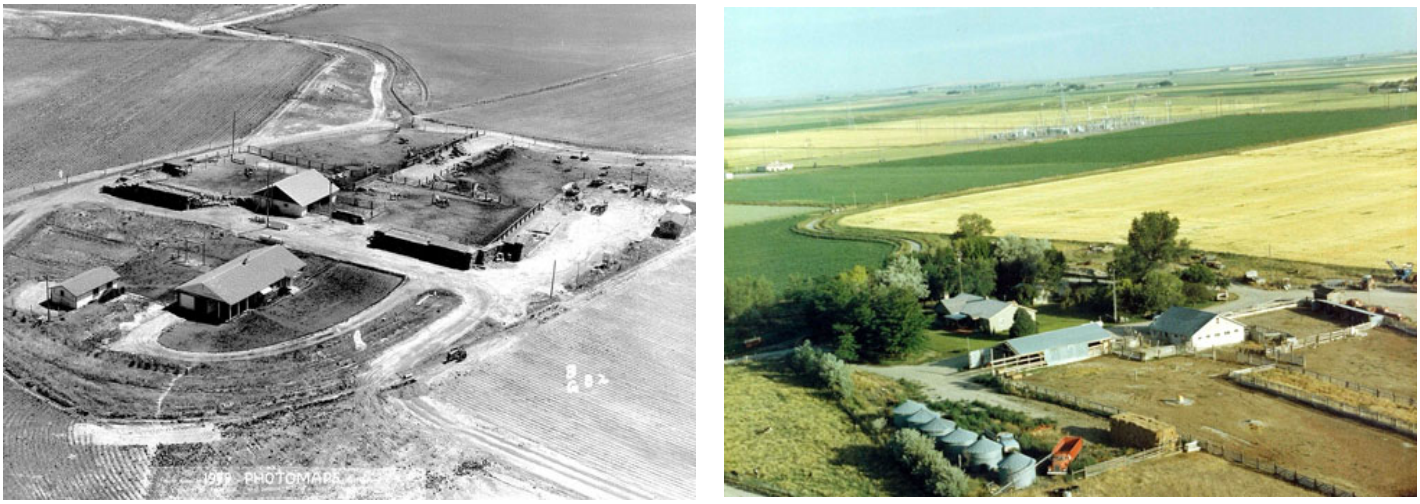

Fig. 13: Aerial views of the Flood homestead, 1959 and 1983. Courtesy of Ercell Flood, Twin Falls, Idaho.

Although the availability of farms for veterans on reclamation projects in the West ended when the U.S. Congress passed the Federal Land Management Act in 1976, the federal government had provided over three thousand farms to veterans from 1946 through that year. As a result, homesteading did not end in the 1930s as many historians of the American West assert. Instead, it continued to operate, but on a more limited basis. Still, these homesteaders, Joe and Ercell Flood included, clamored to try to receive free land during the postwar years. When historian Frederick Jackson Turner stated in 1893 that the frontier existed at "the hither edge of free land," he might as well have applied the same concept to 1953. As the reclamation projects developed land to be made available to veterans like Joe Flood, these actions suggested that the frontier existed well into the twentieth century across much of the American West. [55]

Will Michael Wright grew up on the Snake River Plain of southern Idaho. Wright earned a B.A. in history from Carroll College in Helena, Montana, and recently finished an M.A. in history at Colorado State University. He is currently a Ph.D. student at Montana State University, specializing in western and environmental history.

Notes

1 Richard W. Etulain, *Historians at Work: Does the Frontier Experience Make America Exceptional?* (Boston: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 17; Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *Frontier and Section: Selected Essays of Frederick Jackson Turner*, ed. Ray Allen Billington (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1961), 37-38 (quotation 38).

2 Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," 39-62; Ray Allen Billington and Martin Ridge, *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier*, 5th ed. (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1982).

3 David M. Wrobel, *The End of American Exceptionalism: Frontier Anxiety from the Old West to the New Deal* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 143; Patricia Nelson Limerick, *Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987), 25; Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991); for a discussion of the New Western History, see Patricia Nelson Limerick, Clyde A. Milner II, and Charles Rankin, eds., *Trails: Toward a New Western History* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991) and Patricia Nelson Limerick, "Turnerians All: The Dream of a Helpful History in an Intelligible World," *American Historical Review* 100 (June 1995): 697-716; Kerwin Lee Klein, "Reclaiming the 'F' Word, or Being and Becoming Postmodern," *Pacific Historical Review* 65 (May 1996): 179-183.

4 Walter Nugent, *Into the West: The Story of Its People* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), xix.

5 Historians Walter Nugent, Robert Hine, John Faragher, and Richard Etulain all made strong claims that the close of public lands occurred in the 1930s. Nugent's quote was noted in this paragraph. Hine and Faragher stated: "By 1935, when Roosevelt issued an executive order finally putting an end to the program, the Homestead Act had created farms for more than four hundred thousand families." Further, they made a robust statement that was used as the opening epigraph. Etulain remarked: "Previous to [the Taylor Grazing Act], the government intended to sell most public lands to individuals; after 1934, remaining public lands were withdrawn.…" Nugent, *Into the West*, 182; Robert V. Hine, and John Mack Faragher, *The American West: A New Interpretive History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 334, 461; Richard W. Etulain, *Beyond the Missouri: The Story of the American West* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), 324; Brian Q. Cannon, *Reopening the Frontier: Homesteading in the Modern West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009), 3.

6 Cannon, *Reopening the Frontier*, 3.

7 Ibid., 3-6, 183.

8 Ibid., 4.

9 Hine and Faragher, *The American West*, 333-334; Etulain, *Beyond the Missouri*, 191-193; R. Douglas Hurt, *American Agriculture: A Brief History*, Rev. ed. (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2002), 187-189.

10 Hine and Faragher, *The American West*, 338; Richard W. Etulain, and Michael P. Malone, *The American West: A Modern History, 1900 to the Present*, 2nd ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 16-17; Earl Pomeroy, *The American Far West in the 20th Century* (New Haven, CT:

Yale University Press, 2008), 36-38; Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, & the Growth of the American West* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 7; Lawrence B. Lee and Donald J. Pisani, "reclamation and irrigation," in *The New Encyclopedia of the American West*, ed. Howard R. Lamar (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 947-950; for a journalistic account of reclamation, see: Mark Reisner, *Cadillac Desert: The American West and Its Disappearing Water*, Rev. ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1993); or for an environmental perspective, see: William Cronon, "Landscapes of Abundance and Scarcity," in *The Oxford History of the American West,* ed. Clyde A. Milner II, Carol A. O'Connor and Martha A. Sandweiss (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 613-626.

11 Mark Fiege, *Irrigated Eden: The Making of an Agricultural Landscape in the American West* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 16, 30; William G. Robbins, *Colony and Empire: The Capitalist Transformation of the American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994), 140-141; Leonard J. Arrington, *History of Idaho*, Vol. 2 (Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1994), 480-485; Carlos A. Schwantes, *In Mountain Shadows: A History of Idaho* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 164-169; Eric A. Stene, *The Minidoka Project*, 5th Draft (Denver: Bureau of Reclamation History Program, 1997), 2-8.

12 James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 8, 14, 68; John Morton Blum, *V Was for Victory: Politics and American Culture during World War II* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 248-250; An Act to Allow Credit in Connection with Certain Homestead Entries for Military or Naval Service Rendered during World War II, Public Law 434, United States Statutes at Large 58 (September 27, 1944): 747-748; An Act to Allow Credit in Connection with Certain Homestead Entries for Military or Naval Service Rendered during the Korean Conflict and for Other Purposes, Public Law 402, United States Statutes at Large 68 (June 18, 1954): 253-254.

13 See Joe Flood, Personal Memoirs, Joseph Carr Flood Private Collection, Twin Falls, ID, 1A, 17-21A, 4-27B, 1-3C (hereafter cited as Flood Memoirs).

14 Flood Memoirs, 74-78C, 80-82C.

15 Ercell Flood, interview by author via telephone, Twin Falls, ID, January 11, 2013, digital recording (hereafter cited as Ercell Flood interview); for men's draftee and enlistment rates and women's work during World War II, see David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 709-711, 776-782 (the statistic for women's labor-force participation rate is found on page 779); Ercell's situation was not unique, Kennedy noted that about 3 million of these new female employees were "young women school-leavers"; Flood Memoirs, 107-118C.

16 Flood Memoirs, 83-106C.

17 Joe and Ercell Flood, interview by author, Twin Falls, ID, June 28, 2012, digital recording (hereafter cited as Joe and Ercell Flood interview); Flood Memoirs, 8D; Cannon, *Reopening the Frontier*, 48.

18 U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, *Evidence of Qualification of Farm Applicant,* August 19, 1953 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1953) Joseph Carr Flood Private Collection, Twin Falls, ID; U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, *North Side Pumping Division,* February 1, 1953 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1953) Joseph Carr Flood Private Collection, Twin Falls, ID; U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation, *To the Recipient of this Public Notice: Important Information to Applicants,* April 21, 1953, by G.W. Lineweaver (Denver, CO: Government Printing Office, 1953) Joseph Carr Flood Private Collection, Twin Falls, ID; Flood Memoirs, 8D; "North Side Pumping Homesteads Hold Promises of Success for Vet Applicants," *Twin Falls [ID] Times-News*, May 28, 1953; "Notices Posted for Drawing on 72 Homestead Farms at Rupert," *Twin Falls [ID] Times-News*, August 21, 1953.

19 Cannon, *Reopening the Frontier*, 52-53; "Rupert Makes Final Plans for Drawing Names on 72 Homesteads Next Tuesday," *Twin Falls [ID] Times-News*, July 31, 1953; "Rupert Prepares For Homesteads Drawing Events," *Twin Falls [ID] Times-News*, August 3, 1953; "Rupert Is Jammed For Land Drawing; 72 Farms Awarded," *Twin Falls [ID] Times-News*, August 5, 1953.

20 U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, *Minidoka Project, Lottery Drawing Notice* (April 6, 1953), by Merle L. Tillery (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1953) Joseph Carr Flood Private Collection, Twin Falls, ID; "Interview for Vets on Area Farms Slated," *Twin Falls [ID] Times-News*, October 23, 1953; Flood Memoirs, 9-10D; Cannon, *Reopening the Frontier*, 54-57; Joe and Ercell Flood interview, June 28, 2012; U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, *Minidoka Project, Invitation for Group Interviews* (October 15, 1953), by Merle L. Tillery (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1953) Joseph Carr Flood Private Collection, Twin Falls, ID; U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, *Minidoka Irrigation Project, North Side Pumping Division, Public Notice Announcing Availability of Water for Public Lands and Opening of Public Lands to Entry* (April 6, 1953), by Fred G. Aandahl (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1953) Joseph Carr Flood Private Collection, Twin Falls, ID; U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, *Recordable and Interim Repayment Contract, North Side Pumping Division, Minidoka Project, Idaho* (November 25, 1953), by M.L Tillery (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 1953) Joseph Carr Flood Private Collection, Twin Falls, ID.

21 Cannon, *Reopening the Frontier*, 61.

22 Flood Memoirs, 11-13D, 3E; Joe and Ercell Flood interview, June 28, 2012; Cannon, *Reopening the Frontier*, 61-62; for an outline of the Bureau's legal requirements for the farmer to obtain the patent to the land, see U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, *Homesteading on Reclamation Projects: Information for Homestead Entrymen* (October 27, 1953), by William H. Tuller (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1953) Joseph Carr Flood Private Collection, Twin Falls, ID.

23 Flood Memoirs, 4E.

24 Patterson, *Grand Expectations*, 71-76; Flood Memoirs, 4E.

25 Joe and Ercell Flood interview, June 28, 2012.

26 Flood Memoirs, 5E; Joe and Ercell Flood interview, June 28, 2012; Cannon, *Reopening the Frontier*, 63-65; Barbara Adams, interview by author via telephone, Rupert, ID, January 3, 2013, digital recording (hereafter cited as Adams interview); Fiege, *Irrigated Eden*, 71-72, 174-175; for a discussion of the cultures of manhood in the American West, see Matthew Basso, Laura McCall, and Dee Garceau, eds., *Across the Great Divide: Cultures of Manhood in the American West* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 1-21.

27 Cannon, *Reopening the Frontier*, 41, 65; Flood Memoirs, 6-12E.

28 Cannon, *Reopening the Frontier*, 66-69; Flood Memoirs, 11-15E.

29 Patricia Knoblauch, interview by author, Rupert, ID, November 22, 2012, digital recording (hereafter cited as Knoblauch interview); Adams interview, January 3, 2013.

30 Flood Memoirs, 16-17E; Knoblauch interview, November 22, 2012; Adams interview, January 3, 2013.

31 Flood Memoirs, 18E.

32 Flood Memoirs, 14-18E; Joe and Ercell Flood interview, June 28, 2012; Sandra K. Schackel, "Ranch and Farm Women in the Contemporary American West," in *The Rural West since World War II*, ed. R. Douglas Hurt (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 99-118.

33 Joe and Ercell Flood interview, June 28, 2012.

34 Susan Armitage, "Through Women's Eyes: A New View of the West," in *The Women's West*, ed. Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson (Norman University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 9-17; John Mack Faragher, "History from the Inside-Out: Writing the History of Women in Rural America," *American Quarterly* 33 (Winter 1981): 537-557; Joe and Ercell Flood interview, June 28, 2012; for more on women's experiences in the American West, see Sandra K. Schackel, ed., *Western Women's Lives: Continuity and Change in the Twentieth Century* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), Joan M. Jenson, *With These Hands: Women Working on the Land* (Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press, 1981), and Seena B. Kohl, "Image and Behavior: Women's Participation in North American Family Agricultural Enterprises" in *Women and Farming: Changing Structures, Changing Roles*, ed. Wava G. Haney and Jane B. Knowles (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 89-108.

35 Knoblauch interview, November 22, 2012.

36 Jane Allen, interview by author via telephone, Rupert, ID, January 6, 2013, digital recording (hereafter cited as Allen interview); Knoblauch interview, November 22, 2012; Adams interview, January 3, 2013; Elliott West, *Growing Up with the Country: Childhood on the Far Western Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989), 73-98.

37 Cal Bernstein, "Homesteaders in Magic Valley," *Harvester World*, August 1955; Henry Nash Smith *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: 1950), 201-216; Joe and Ercell Flood interview, June 28, 2012; "Acre Limit for Sugar Beet is Seen Unlikely," *Twin Falls [ID] Times-News*, June 27, 1955; Ken Hodge, "Sagebrush yields to homesteaders," *Twin Falls [ID] Times-News*, December 20, 1976.

38 Flood Memoirs, 18E.

39 Flood Memoirs, 18-19E; Joe and Ercell Flood interview, June 28, 2012; Hodge, "Sagebrush yields to homesteaders," December 20, 1976.

40 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farmers Home Administration, *Real Estate Mortgage by Homestead Entryman for Idaho* (April 27, 1954) (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1954) Joseph Carr Flood Private Collection, Twin Falls, ID; Flood Memoirs, 25-26E; Adams interview, January 3, 2013; Joe and Ercell Flood interview, June 28, 2012.

41 Joe and Ercell Flood interview, June 28, 2012; for more on migrant labor and agriculture in the twentieth century, see Hurt, *American Agriculture*, 308-310, 331-376, and R. Douglas Hurt, *Problems of Plenty: The American Farmer in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002), 124-153.

42 Joe and Ercell Flood interview, June 28, 2012.

43 Bernstein, "Homesteaders in Magic Valley," August 1955; Joe and Ercell Flood interview, June 28, 2012.

44 U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, *Notice for Publication,* October 11, 1955 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1955) Joseph Carr Flood Private Collection, Twin Falls, ID; U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, *Certificate of Compliance,* March 21, 1956 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1956) Joseph Carr Flood Private Collection, Twin Falls, ID; Joe and Ercell Flood interview, June 28, 2012; U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, *Patents issued under the Reclamation Homestead Laws, Act of June 17, 1902,* May 10, 1956 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1956) Joseph Carr Flood Private Collection, Twin Falls, ID.

45 Cannon, *Reopening the Frontier*, 49.

46 Ibid., 83.

47 Ibid., 86.

48 Cannon, *Reopening the Frontier*, 83-86; Hodge, "Sagebrush yields to homesteaders," December 20, 1976.

49 Flood interview, June 28, 2012; Danbom, *Born in the Country,* 244; Richard White, "From Wilderness to Hybrid Landscapes: The Cultural Turn in Environmental History," *Historian* 66 (Fall 2004): 557-564; Fiege, *Irrigated Eden*, 9, 44-47, 205-9.

50 Adams interview, January 3, 2013.

51 Ibid.

52 "North Side Has Interesting History," *Minidoka County News*, farm review edition, March 25, 1965, Barbara Adams Private Collection, Rupert, ID; Joe Flood, *A&B Irrigation Board*, VHS (Rupert, ID: Bureau of Reclamation, 1986); for conflict and cooperation over water in earlier years on the Minidoka Project, see Fiege, *Irrigated Eden*, 81-116.

53 Joe and Ercell Flood interview, June 28, 2012.

54 Joe and Ercell Flood interview, June 28, 2012; Richard Etulain, "Meeting Places, Intersections, Crossroads, and Borders: Toward a Complex Western Cultural History," *Historian* 66 (Fall 2004): 509-516.

55 Cannon, *Reopening the Frontier*, 183; Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," 38; Joe and Ercell Flood interview, June 28, 2012.