

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #111 - Sides A/C/D

Subject: Jo Schroder (Mrs. Burt)

Place: Burns, Oregon

Date: August 21 & 30, 1984

Interviewer: Charlene Gates

Release Form: Yes

CHARLENE GATES: This is an interview with Jo Schroder on August 21 --- are we there already? ... Well, how long have you guys been in Harney County?

JO SCHRODER: We came here in the spring of '42, in Harney County.

CHARLENE: Where did you come from?

JO: Lake County, Silver Lake, between Bend and Lakeview. Burt and I both were born and raised over there.

CHARLENE: Were you from ranching families?

JO: Uh huh. My father was a sheep man, but Burt's father was a cattleman.

CHARLENE: So how come you came to Harney County?

JO: Burt and Hollie bought, the brothers, bought Potter Swamp. They came; to begin with, in the summer of '43, I hope I'm right. I can correct it later anyway. In the summer of '43, Burt and Hollie rented Potter Swamp; they put up the hay. Yeah, Tyler owned it, anyway. ... The boys and Homer Carlon --- what did they do, rent it or leased it? I'll have to find out and let you know probably. 'Cause they didn't buy it till the next spring. But Hollie fed the hay that winter on the swamp.

We were married in '41, and then we came over here in the spring of '41. Burt and Hollie owned Wagontire, and then we came over here in '40 --- Marion was born in '42, and Jeanne was born in '44. That's the spring we came. As long as you've got that down there, you'll know which is right. Anyway, we came over in the spring of '40. When Jeanie was a baby, we lived at Wagontire

that summer. Then, that's the way it was. Then Hollie fed out the hay on the swamp that winter, and we worked ... down at Alkali Lake, down for the state highway, that's right, that winter. Then the next --- '44, that's when we moved. There was absolutely nothing there on the swamp but an old corral that wouldn't even hold a pig, literally. So, they built it up to what it is. That's where Peilas live now. Peilas own it. Okay, that was in '44, and we've been here ever since. It took me a long time to remember that, but I got that straight. That was a long time ago.

CHARLENE: Do you remember what Burns was like? I know it's changed a lot.

JO: Actually, I couldn't help you there; I'll be honest with you. ... I was trying to think of some of the stores that were on Main Street. Fenley's, Roy Fenley had a locker, a grocery store and a locker down about where Bairds are now, in that block, and I'm sure Homer Richey's --- I may be wrong about that. Anyway, I don't know. There was somebody else, too, Macel Lowe. Oh, they had the old warehouse down where McAllister's are. But that wasn't right. Somebody else. I can remember when Bud and Millie (Eshelby) bought their store. But I can't tell you what year it was. You might get that information from somebody else. But I can remember when they bought it, and I actually --- I'll talk to Burt when he comes home and he can help me with some of these things, and then I can call you too. That's a good idea.

CHARLENE: Okay. You lived out on your ranch for years?

JO: We lived out on the ranch from '44 and sold it to Jack Peila in '59. Then we went --- we lived in town for six months, and Hollie bought the Double O Ranch. Maybe that isn't --- no Darwin Collins Ranch is what they called it, I guess, down in the Double O. And we lived in town for six months, and then we bought the old Whiting place from Leonard Lazarus, and we lived there until '66. And then we moved to the Island Ranch, and Burt worked there for a year, and then the next year we moved to the Bell A and were there until '70, or '72. We've been here since '72, and we were at the feedlot, at Pat Culp's feedlot. Do you want all this information?

CHARLENE: Sure, that's fine.

JO: We left the Bell A in '69, that's right. And we lived at the trailer court, you don't have to put all that down, but anyway we lived at the trailer court that winter and then we moved out to Pat Culp's

in '70 and moved up here in September of '72. Okay, so we've been here since. But you aren't interested in that, what you were wondering about is the town, and I can't remember.

CHARLENE: Well, I also wanted to know what ranching was like, you know, then.

JO: Rough, just like it is now! Yes.

CHARLENE: Hasn't changed.

JO: We had no road for many years out there. Marion started to school in '48, then we cleaned out the dike and put a road on the river and put a road up there. We fought the mud just like everybody else for about three years until we could get it graveled. And then when we got our road graveled, the county didn't have their road graveled for many years. So, I'll tell you it was rough. Winters were rough the same as they are now. Maybe not quite as bad as the last two. But I remember one winter, '49 was a rough, rough winter. But I think it was '51, we had a blizzard that Marion never came home. He stayed at Carter's; Carters lived down here, just as you turn down Potter Swamp Lane. You know where Potter Swamp Lane is, just on the other side of the mill? That lane connects this highway with Frenchglen. They call it Potter Swamp. Anyway, he stayed with Carters for --- from Monday to Friday 'cause we couldn't get through. Just a blizzard, closed the roads. So, it was rough then, same as it is now.

CHARLENE: I have heard it's very hard on cattle.

JO: I think so. Oh, you don't hear, Charlene, of losing so many too often because of the winter. But it's rough on the cattle. ...

CHARLENE: Did you have hired hands?

JO: Haying, usually. We had --- during haying. But most generally Burt and Hollie did it alone. Oh, once in awhile we'd have a man, but most generally in the winter they --- one winter we had a man all winter. That was the year we built the new house. That was '50 ... '49. We had a hired man that winter, but then most generally the men did it alone. And then Bub helped them all the time too. So, we didn't need a hired man, really. Had lots of hired men during haying, like anywhere else.

CHARLENE: I keep hearing how really hard it is for ranchers here, and how harsh the winters are.

I wonder why people come here! They keep coming here to ranch. There must be easier places to go to.

JO: I don't know. They have to love ranching anymore, Charlene, to stay with it, that's for darn sure. I don't think people are coming as much as they used to because of the water now. ... But anyway, I don't think that these winters, they were rough, yes, but they aren't any rougher than South Dakota, North Dakota and all those places, so Burns isn't so bad. Every place has its drawbacks.

CHARLENE: Yeah, that's true. Dusty here ... What school --- did your kids go through Burns?

JO: Our kids went to Hines, and then to grade school, and Burns High School. Marion graduated from high school in '60, and Jeanie in '62.

CHARLENE: You and Burt both went to Lakeview schools?

JO: No, Silver Lake. It's a little town just about halfway between Bend and Lakeview. Still exists, in fact my mother and Burt's sister still live there. ... We both graduated. They don't have a high school now, but they did when we --- about two years after I left, after I graduated, why they quit high school. So, it's just a little town like Crane, little bigger than Crane, maybe not. Maybe about the same, Silver Lake.

CHARLENE: I guess I must have heard of that. I did want to ask you something about what you remember about the Cow Belles. Was that going on when you arrived here?

JO: I'm sure it was, Charlene. Let's see, the state Cow Belles, the Cow Belles were organized in '52. Ilda May Hayes was the first president of the state Cow belles from here. I can't tell you what year it was that Bub and I became a member, but boy, it's been a long time ago. I'll bet it was in the early '50's, but I don't remember when we joined. I'll have to look up and see when I was county president --- well I'll have to look up, and I might as well do it pretty soon.

CHARLENE: You were state president, too?

JO: I was state president in ... '68, I guess.

CHARLENE: Why were the Cow Belles organized?

JO: As an auxiliary of the Cattlemen, and to promote beef, help to promote beef and make people

in the Portland area, all over the nation, all over the state, aware of beef, the good qualities and use of beef.

CHARLENE: I know some of the traditional things the Cow Belles always have. Don't they always have that breakfast, the breakfast at the Fair?

JO: The Cow Belle breakfast. We've had that since the early '50's. ... The first Cow Belle breakfast was held out in Hines Park with a chuck wagon, and they cooked out there. I think they did that for three or four years, and finally it started raining them out, so then they went to the Armory. We had to go pick up the dishes, bring them and wash them. We used to store them in a shed someplace, or wherever we could store them. Go pick them up and take them and wash them, and then wash them after the breakfast, and take them back. It really was a lot of work at the armory; indeed, it was. Now we have it at the high school, but I haven't been active since I worked. I worked for ten years at the mill. ...

CHARLENE: Do just ranching people belong to it?

JO: ... Any woman that is directly or indirectly interested or involved in the beef industry. ... And then we do have associate members too.

CHARLENE: I know it's been pretty important in Harney County ---

JO: Well Cow Belles are important all over the nation. Really, everywhere, because they have many different ways of promoting beef and making people aware of beef. ... Anyway, that's what the Cow Belles do, make people aware of beef. They have many, many different ways of ...

...

It's an organization generally of the cattlemen that help promote beef in all ways. All over the nation, not just in Oregon.

CHARLENE: I was wondering also, were you active in the Grange?

JO: Never joined the Grange.

CHARLENE: Has that kind of drifted away or ---

JO: No, I don't think so. I believe I heard the other day on the radio, Charlene, that Drewsey or here (Poison Creek Grange) was going to have a meeting of the Grange. Oh, it's not like it used to

be, but --- no, we never did. The only thing was the Cattlemen and the Cow Belles, I guess. ...

CHARLENE: I was kind of interested in what people did to entertain themselves before, recently when TV took over.

JO: Well, we always had lots of fun branding. We'd get together and brand different places. But dances at the Grange Hall mostly. Yeah, there were lots of dances at the Grange Hall. That was before --- well, I guess the Antlers has always been here for many years. ... And card parties. ... But that's what we did mostly, that was our entertainment. What little bit of entertainment we had -- Burtt always worked. ...

CHARLENE: I can remember when I was a little kid, there seemed to be more community fun activities that people did.

JO: They don't have time anymore. They can't get together anymore.

CHARLENE: I thought people have always been fairly busy.

JO: They're always busy, but when they used to go in the wagon, why they'd have to stay all night. No, I think TV has ruined all that, because there isn't any need of going anywhere, you just sit and watch TV. That's all I can say to you, but I'm sure there were many other things we used to do. But we really did have lots of fun getting together in the spring and the fall, or spring and the early summer, and helping different ranchers brand and make a day of it, and they came and helped us. And dances, and I don't know, I don't know what else.

CHARLENE: Actually, I don't think I've ever seen a branding. What do people do --- is that once a year?

JO: They do that in the spring, and then they usually gather them off the spring range and re-brand them before they, again --- the calves that have been born --- again before they turn them out for the summer range. I don't think they had the fall brandings as much, Charlene, really as they did the spring brandings.

CHARLENE: That would be just several ranchers get together? They don't do each one's?

JO: Yeah, they roped them. One roped the head, and one roped the legs and then they branded them. Now they have calf tables. They run them through a chute and put them on this table that

holds them solid till they get it done. They don't have to --- The old-time ranchers still use horses. But there's a lot of ranchers that use the calf table, too. I know Burtt helps Dick Hotchkiss once in a while, and he has one. Well, they're much faster. You can brand a lot more, but it isn't near as much fun.

CHARLENE: I guess people don't learn to rope ... That's too bad.

JO: The ranchers just like to do it and enjoy getting together, just like the ropings at the rodeos, you know. They still do that. I guess that's the reason. But times have changed all the way around. But anyway, we used to brand in the spring, and then we run the cattle on Wagontire, and used to go out about two weeks every summer and gather the cattle and brand them. They still ran out there all summer till fall at Wagontire. But we had two brandings a year.

CHARLENE: How long did each one take? Several days, I suppose?

JO: Branding, you mean? Oh, they usually do it in one day. Of course, one ranch would have several brandings because they would, we'll say, gather a certain field or something and brand them, and then they'd have another bunch and brand. But usually, two or three days in the spring. ...

CHARLENE: Oh gosh, anything you can remember about in the earlier days, before the '60's. Because I know that Burns just, the whole country really changed pretty radically in the '60's. A lot of social changes. I can remember the '50's pretty well. But I don't know much about ranching.

JO: You were growing up about that time, so you would remember it.

...

When we first came to the country, why we stacked hay with a Jackson fork, with a team, or Burtt always had just one horse that pulled up the Jackson fork.

...

CHARLENE: I didn't realize --- there must have been a lot of technological changes.

JO: Oh, my lands yes, Charlene. You don't even know what a Jackson fork is, really. ... Anyway, it was a great big fork, Charlene, that they set over a buck load of hay, see, they'd buck in the hay, great big load of hay, and they'd set this fork on it. Then a fellow on a horse and a wagon ... on the other end of the haystack, Charlene, would pull this load of hay up onto the haystack. And when

the stacker got it where he wanted it on the stack, he'd put up his hand or something, and then the man would trip it, and it would drop it right there. Then there was another person on the other end of the stack where it originated that would pull that, ... pull that back, get ready --- the nets. ... They had nets, chains that they straightened out here, and this fellow on the east end would straighten it out, the hay buck would bring in a load of hay, then he would fasten it on the top ... but then they'd signal to the one on the other end and he'd pull that load of hay up and the stackers would have them dump it where they wanted it, and spread it around and the man on the east, on horseback, would pull it back, and then the net-setter, now it's coming back to me, would reset the net again. Now that's the way they stacked.

CHARLENE: Yeah, that's really interesting.

JO: Then they loaded the hay --- this is what I'm talking about, the Jackson fork. Yes, when they loaded their wagons to feed out the hay, then they used the Jackson fork. ...

And Burtt had one old horse, just the one old horse that was the best old fellow in the world. His name was Prince, and Burtt would just holler at him, and he would pull that load up and Burtt would dump it. And one time --- I might even tell you this, I mean it was something kind of funny. He was a stud, and in the spring, there was a mare across the fence --- oh, I've laughed and Burtt was so mad --- he pulled this way, and usually they went straight. They knew what they were doing, you know. And then they'd holler, and they'd back up, so of course he just kept going. And he tipped the Jackson fork. Oh it's, it was a great big wooden platform with this fork out there. He tipped that over --- (Laughter) That was kind of funny. ...

Now that's what they did when we first came to the country, that's how we hayed. And we hayed like that till we left the swamp. ... Anyway, when we first came to this country ... we had horses over in Silver Lake before we moved here, and then they bought their first tractor the spring before they moved here, I think. So, they had one or two tractors when they first came to the country. Always fed with a team until ... But the tractor took it out of the haystack and put it in the wagons, of course.

...

We left the swamp in '59, and then there were still changes through the '60's, in the way that they ranched and how they moved their cattle and ... the boys had Wagontire until we sold in '59, and they always trailed their cattle out there three days. Peilas still do too. But there's a lot of ranchers now truck them. There are lots of changes.

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TAPE 2 - SIDE C

JO: Now I think I told you all that about the Jackson fork. The place we bought was Potter Swamp, was Miller and Lux, and we bought it in '42, and there was nothing there. We started from scratch and built a new house in '49. Had no road until we cleaned out the river channel in about, I figured '47, and started the road 'cause Marion started to school in '48, and we fought that for years. For many years, I mean for probably five or six years, the mud, anyway --- till we --- the county and us both got it graveled. ... I'm sure she's got that information, how they hayed years ago.

CHARLENE: I don't know, I don't know what she has. She may, or she may not. I'd like to know myself, because I don't know any-thing about haying. Makes me sneeze, that's all I know.

(Laughter)

JO: I was trying to think --- we hayed, we must have hayed with horses when we first came to the country in the '40's. Of course, we had one tractor, but we had the old-fashioned mowing machines. Yes, it was pulled by a team, of course, and raked, and hay bucks with the team. And we had one tractor when we came to the country. Burt and Hollie bought it before they came in '41, one tractor. And then later on before we left in '59, we had done away with the horses then, of course, and had new tractors.

But the way we stacked was --- had bunches of hay bucked in big bunches, and then the hay buck came and brought it, and put it on this net that was laying on the north end of the stack, we'll say, south end of the stack, doesn't matter --- on the net. And then when it was set, why then they pulled it up on the haystack to the hay stackers on the other side, and then the stacker hollered, and when he got where he wanted --- they had spread it around some, of course, but not as much as it sounds. It'd depend on the stacker. A good stacker didn't have to, but one that didn't know what

they're doing did pitch a lot more hay.

And then the man on the horse pulled the nets back, and the net setters they called them, and they'd set it and get it all ready. And the net came up like this, and they hooked it at the top, and then they just pulled it up on the stack.

CHARLENE: It must have been very hard work.

JO: They knew nothing else, you know, because that's all they'd ever done, really. Now it would be hard work to go back to it, Charlene, yes it would. Because now they have these great big, big, big bales. 'Course they have to buy expensive machinery to handle them too, but the big bales, round or oblong bales, and I don't know how they feed them out. I really don't. They must take that fork that they load them with, stack them with --- that's the only way they could get them out, 'cause they couldn't be handled. So that's the changes.

But it was just like this, we never had any other equipment, only tractors in place of horses before we left the swamp in '59.

CHARLENE: Was that a common practice? A lot of people were still using horses at that time?

JO: They used horses until; oh, I don't know when they started. But as I say, when we came in '40, '41, '42, '43, we had one tractor, so you just gradually added more. I know one of our tractors burned, I remember that, backfired or something and we lost the tractor, but it didn't start a fire. Well, I think maybe we might have had three tractors, Charlene, but I'm not sure. ... But then you gradually got rid of the horses, I would imagine by the '50's, I never asked Burt, but I imagine by the '50's then tractors took over.

CHARLENE: It was kind of everybody?

JO: Everybody, not just us, but --- and perhaps we stayed with horses longer than we did before, you know. But the first two years we were married, Burt hayed, contracted hay in Paisley at the ZX, and that was all done with horses except, yes, I remember, this was interesting, Charlene, we were married in '41, and Burt broke down, somewhere out in the field, and so he came in and got a part ... I had forgotten how many horse mowing machines they had --- but the field was so big that it took one round, till noon, quitting time. I mean that's hard for you or even me to visualize, but

just one round until they had cut it down a little bit. I don't know how many mowing machines they had, five, six, seven, eight, you know, I don't remember that really, Burt could say, but that isn't that important. But anyway, then they all went to tractors and used to --- well, they had to get a mowing machine that fit on the tractor, of course, and now they're, now it's swathers and --- you don't very often see any --- Virgil Millicent still has the old mowing machine, tractor mowing machine I mean, but then there aren't many left.

CHARLENE: Well, did you have special horses like the workhorses, or were they just quarter horses?

JO: No quarter horses, I'm sure. ... This one I was telling you about the other day, that tipped the derrick over. The stud horse you remember I was telling you about him, yeah, he was a great big old fellow, and I remember one time, oh many times, I got stuck in the mud coming home. Burt would just take him, just him alone, and he'd just pull that old car, yeah he pulled the car out of there. But they're big old horses. Naturally, you know, there was lots of difference between a workhorse and a saddle horse. ...

I was Harney County Cow Belle president in '66, I looked up this morning, and then I was state Cow Belle president --- Oregon Cow Belle president in '68. And they are an auxiliary of the Cattlemen, and do different --- lots of advertising, different projects to advertise the beef, like Father of the Year. When I was state Cow Belle president, I remember one throughout the state, over the whole state, a man was chosen to be Father of the Year, and we was interviewed on TV stations ... He and his family was brought to Portland, I think maybe for two nights, all expense trip paid. And I can't remember what else he got, I'm sure they must have given him beef gift certificates, which we sell all the time. But the man that was, I think he had a --- goodness I've forgotten, but he had a big, big family and even told something funny when they were interviewing him. Somebody asked him how many grandchildren he had. He said he didn't know; he hadn't been to the post office yet. But anyway, that was one project. And then they usually gave away --- now they give away a roast to the equivalent of the new baby, first baby born --- first of the year, that poundage-wise, to the first father of the year.

But the money-raising project for Harney County is the Cow Belle breakfast, and that was started, Charlene, I think in the late '50's, we'll say in the '50's sometime, '55, somewhere like that, and they had a regular old chuck wagon. I've forgotten who it belonged to; I should know. It's all up in the library. If you're ever interested, you can read those books and really you'd be interested in it. And they cooked outside, of course it was in September, at the City Park, Burns City Park, and it wasn't long, of course, till it was rained out. It was rained out, so then they moved to the Armory and stored their dishes, as I told you before. We had to go and wash all of the dishes because they were so dirty. Yeah, it was lots of work; it really was lots of work. And we were at the Armory until, I couldn't tell you because I went to work in '72. ... But we've been at the high school for ten years, I imagine. But we don't have to wash the dishes beforehand, thank goodness, and they have a dishwasher, which helps. And it really is much easier now.

And then in the spring we have the beef luncheon, which, for a long time, all meat, everything was donated by the Cow Belles. So, just about everything we had was profit. We do furnish the meat. The Cow Belles buy the meat, and then the salad and desserts are furnished. So that's in the spring and then in the fall is the, seems like they have one --- oh, the beef gift certificates, that's throughout the state --- \$5, \$10 and \$15 dollar denomination. And they can buy beef with them in any grocery store throughout the nation, literally. There are some that don't know what it is, but it's supposed to be an overall.

And the Oregon Cow Belles have started, since I haven't been active, they call it an Adopt-A-School Program where any Cow Belle organization adopts a school down in the valley, we'll say they --- usually it's a grade school, not always, but it's a grade school that has a junior school, high school. And they send money for their home economics, to use for their home economic cooking. And I think Cow Belles, Harney County, sends a \$100 to schools, and they send a \$100 during the year that they use to buy beef to experiment and cook with. Otherwise, a lot of the schools don't have hardly --- well the one that we have, it doesn't matter which one, the name of it is, the home ec. teacher told Anna Jane Prickett that they didn't --- \$25 I think or something like this for the

whole year. Well, you know, you can't buy much, you can't buy much. But they use more hamburger, many people do, but that's what they buy. But we try to help them get good ideas, new ways. That's one thing the Beef Council does, recipes for low, economy cuts of meat. And then now, the last three years they have, no I think they pay their own way, but we have invited the home ec. teacher from both schools, and they choose two children, mostly girls, but a time or two a couple of boys have come, to spend a couple of days on a ranch. Something they've never even thought of. And most of them, several of them have written to see if they could come back, and in fact, one girl has spent two different summers with Peilas, from there, just helping. But anyway, it's good education for them, too. So that's some of the things the Cow Belles do.

...

CHARLENE: You know, getting into ranching and the young people going out and learning what it's all about, you really don't just say, well, I think I'll be a rancher when I grow up, and decide, if you've never been. You really have to kind of grow up on it, in a ranch, don't you?

JO: I think so. Although I know two boys that didn't grow up on a ranch, two men, I mean, that love it. But no, you have to love it because cow prices won't get you anywhere anymore. ... People just can't realize what it costs the ranchers for machinery and stuff. Eight, nine, ten, fifteen thousand dollars for a swather. No, I'm not kidding now. ... Lots of ranchers are going under now because they over borrow. ... You see a rancher out in an air-conditioned swather, I don't honestly know how much they cost, but boy, they cost ten, twelve, fifteen thousand dollars. They think that they have a lot of money, but they don't.

...

Cattlemen don't lose every year, but perhaps when they do have two or three good years, we'll say, that they can get ahead enough that they --- unless, like I say ... anyway, they just borrow and borrow and borrow until they just can't pay the bank off, and that's all. It's nobody's fault ... I don't know why it's down ...

CHARLENE: I suppose winters like these have been hard.

JO: ... Oh, I think that through the years, we've never had the snow like we have now. Lots of

snow, but never, like I said, '49, Charlene, and '52 and '56, that I remember was lots of snow winters, but never anything like this, naturally. And then you'll have a mild winter where there isn't --- you have to have snow in the mountains yes, we have to have snow in the mountains to fill the rivers for flood irrigation. 'Course now it isn't so much flood, but when we first came it was all flood irrigation, and if we didn't have a hard winter with snow, if Baldy up here was, Burt used to say, was bare by the first of April, there would be no water for irrigation. There had to be enough snow up there to stay on until the first of June, and then we were sure to have enough water. And we had water rights. Somebody above us that had bought the ranch and had an earlier, like an 1885 water right we'll say, and ours was 1889, they got their certain amount of water before we got ours. See that's the way it was --- So that was all flood irrigation. Well, the meadows are still flooded, but they have so much more grain and alfalfa now that is irrigated by pivots. So that's just give you an idea.

CHARLENE: Is there more farming now than there used to be?

JO: Well, I think there's more irrigation, although lots more alfalfa than there used to be. But they still have patches all over Harney County, nine-tenths of them, shall we say, still have the meadow hay. And I just imagine, no not most of them, but a lot of them are still flood irrigated like we used to. But I'm sure there's a lot of them that have the irrigation pipes too, now.

CHARLENE: How many, I don't know anything about ranching, but if you wanted to, if beef prices were sort of okay, how many cattle would you have to raise to make a sort of a decent living?

JO: As I say, I'm just not that much of a businesswoman. You'll have to go to --- if you were interviewing ...

...

JO: It's interesting where we lived, I mean how we started from scratch and so forth, and there was nothing there when Burt and Hollie bought that place in '43, nothing but an old corral that wouldn't even hold a pig. And I'm serious. So, we really started from scratch. Jack Peila bought it from us in '59. Yeah, Hollie went to the Double O country and bought another old, the old ... the Cote family owned that ranch that Hollie has. And then we moved to town, and then eventually

bought the place that Hoyt's have now, the old Whiting place, after the boys separated. ...

CHARLENE: I was interviewing Agness Brown the other day ... and she mentioned this term --- do you know what a "Jim-wagon" is? She was talking about ranching way back.

JO: ... I think maybe they might have called the Jim-wagon the pull-up cart, that I was telling you they pulled up the hay on the nets up on the stack. ... But different ranchers called different things different names, too. Where Burt might have said a "Jim-wagon" for what I'm talking about ...

Now, is there any other term? Burt's out at the shop, we can ask him that you were wondering.

CHARLENE: Well, let's see. There's so many things I've heard all my life that I just have kind of taken for granted, but when I think about them, I don't know them. Let's see, you say, "buck hay"?

JO: Yes. ... It was a machine that either hooked onto --- the horses pushed them or the tractor, but it had teeth. ... And it ran into the raked hay. They left piles like this (drawing), bunches of hay.

Then this hay buck come in and bunched it into a great big bunch. And then ... all over the whole field. And then when they got ready to stack it, the hay buck would come and pick up maybe two or three of those bunches and take them close to the stack or put it on the net. But they usually stacked it around the stack and that saved time, you know, bunched it up around the stack. Now that's what a haystack --- the tractor here, or the team was here. ...

Stop into the boot shop sometime, and unless they've moved it, there is a hay buck that ... and I think it's what they call a horse buck, and then you'll see what they look like. ... So that'll give you an idea about a hay buck. And the sickle that the tractor was hooked on moved back and forth like this and had a lot of blades on it like that, and you turned something on for the horse or the tractor, either one, and it went back and forth and that's what they cut it with. And of course, I'm sure, naturally the swather is the same now, only just much bigger. ... Well now, the old dump rake, when we first came to the country, you tripped it with your hand. You've seen hay rakes, I'm sure. Now anyway, well, I think Burt might have used a dump rake this summer. If they're going to leave the hay in the field for the cattle to eat, they'll rake bunches, you know, just little bunches. But if they're going to stack it or something, the new rakes leave it in a row, literally, it must, bunches it up in a roll. And then they just go down with the hay buck and they still use the hay

buck with their stacking.

CHARLENE: How come they're all these different shapes of hay bales and haystacks? ...

JO: Oh, the round bales, they are huge. They weigh ... I want to say a ton. ... Oh, a man couldn't handle them. You have to buy a machine. I stopped down at Urizars the other day, Eleanor was with me, to watch them stack one of these because I'd never seen them. This is why it costs the ranchers so much more. These new bales, either the long ones like that or the round ones, you don't have to have anybody help you feed them out, and they save manpower, but they cost so much! But anyway, the new technology, like you say, I think maybe they ... you see, they went from stacking loose hay to the bales. And man or woman handled that, they're small. I don't know how many pounds. They're plenty when you go to lift them. But these new ones are huge. And as you go out by the Grange Hall, maybe you've been out that way; I think Urizars have a stack of the big bales right across from the Grange Hall. I mean that just gives you an idea.

CHARLENE: I was just wondering why there are so many shapes of bales --- just the farmer's preference or ---

JO: Well actually, I think because it's hard to get men to work on ranches anymore. Because ranchers, wage-wise, cannot compare with other wages now. And they have to want to, and really love to, Charlene, to work on the ranch. I don't know what they're paying for wages now, I really don't, but when we first came to the country and started haying, we paid, I think, \$5 a day. Now this is comparison. And I think Burtt got \$30 a day when he hayed this summer. So, see, that's just the difference. And they have to pay that price to get anybody to do it.

CHARLENE: Really eats up the profits.

JO: There isn't any profit. I don't mean that everybody's broke, but so many people see the cattle and think because they do have the cattle that they're rich, but that's what I'm getting at. So don't take me wrong, I don't mean that. But anyhow, they are getting a living, and the banks are good. A lot of them do make it. There are a lot of rich ranchers, really well heeled, as they say, but there's a lot more that aren't. But they keep going because of the P.C.A.'s, and the banks, and loan companies. And then will come a year when they can pay half of that loan off, and they can smile.

...

CHARLENE: I guess you have to love an independent lifestyle, take risks every day.

JO: You sure do. It's a hard old work. But that's it, people love it, or they just --- And a lot of them that love it just can't stay in it anymore. Make more money doing something else.

...

But I told you about the first time Hollie drove the tractor and came to a ditch ... hollered, "Whoa" and went right off into the ditch. So, there's always something funny. And like the old stud that tipped the derrick over because he was looking for the --- oh, it didn't do a bit of damage. I don't know how they got it up. But he was looking for his mare. ... There was always lots of funny things that happened.

One time, my brother came to visit us and their little guys were probably six, seven, or something, and the older one, we'll say eight or nine years old, was --- didn't feel good, so the little one asked, hollered and asked me to ask Paddy if he could go outside, outside the yard. I knew better, it was in the spring with water everywhere. We lived on the swamp with water everywhere. "Sure! Fine with me." I opened the gate for the little fellow, and just five minutes later I realized what we'd done. So, we all went looking because there were canals, water in the fields. Anyway, we looked in all the ditches and he wasn't around, and so Marion and I thought of a culvert up north, or west of the house. And we knew we'd find him, a little bridge on the culvert. No, we didn't find him. And Marion said, "Mom, listen." And he was going west, in more than knee-deep water looking for Mother, lost, see, crying Mom. Boy, I'll tell you ---

...

CHARLENE: ... What kinds of things do you cook for ranch workers?

JO: Oh, just staple. ... potatoes, beans. Oh, we used to go, before we started haying, to Bend in a three-quarter ton truck and buy, at that time, \$200 to \$250 --- 'course that was lots at that time --- canned fruit, canned food, and potatoes, and we didn't buy sugar, I guess. Let's see, what else would we buy? ... Staple items. 'Course we usually bought the flour here. And just plain old home cooking. Now that's all, no fancy --- Burt's mother could whip up a pie --- pie, cakes for

dessert, puddings and all kinds of vegetables. But just the usual ordinary cooking. We would cook for, from 5 to 15, three times a day, and didn't usually hay on Sunday. Sometimes we did, of course, if we had something that had to be done, but as a general rule they got Sunday off.

CHARLENE: Was the noon meal the biggest?

JO: No, all three were --- oh yeah, we had beefsteak. Usually we had meat, not just beefsteak, but usually beefsteak and potatoes. Now I never cooked potatoes because Burt's mother never did, but lots of ranch wives do. And sometimes eggs and gravy, or meat and gravy, and potatoes, and biscuits, or hotcakes. Three times a day we had big meals when we were cooking for hay hands, you betcha. And we went to work at 6 o'clock in the morning, and worked till 6 o'clock at night, with an hour off at noon, and nobody knew any different. No coffee breaks, believe it or not! No coffee breaks. And knew no different because that was what we always did. When we had horses why they'd get up at five and wrangle the horses, as they call them, get them out of the field and get them in the corral and harness them before breakfast, get them ready to go before breakfast. Breakfast at six. But like I say, we never knew any different because --- I didn't, I never lived on a ranch till I married Burt.

My father was a sheep man and we lived in the little town of Silver Lake, I told you, between Bend and Lakeview. But Burt lived on a ranch all of his life. He was born and raised on a ranch at Silver Lake, that we sold when we came over here in '43. But I had lots of fun as I grew up, going to sheep camps and shearing the sheep. Always took about three days to shear Daddy's sheep. He had four bands; I think. I don't know how many, three or four thousand heads of sheep. So that was my childhood, and we had lots of fun.

Three girls and a boy, and we used to pile in the back of the old pickup and up the road we'd go. They always had a rack on it so we wouldn't fall out, but we had lots of fun doing that. So, my father was a sheep man so I knew nothing about cattle when I married Burt.

CHARLENE: Is it a lot different, cattle and sheep ranching?

JO: Oh yeah. Lots different.

CHARLENE: How is it different?

JO: Daddy never had hay. ... I was thinking of the summer range. Always took the sheep up in the timber to --- for summer range, and then they brought them back to Silver Lake to feed them in the wintertime. 'Course they had hay. I just don't remember Daddy haying so much, because I didn't help. He didn't, maybe he had the hay put up, this could be. And they fed --- I remember one year they fed potatoes, they had an abundance of potatoes, the sheep loved them. But they fed corn and other kind of pellets, but ... They lambbed the ewes out in the spring, that was about a month's work, more or less. And they had to help them sometimes like they had to help the cows, help their calves. And then in June, they sheared. They shear them earlier now than they did when I was a girl. And in Silver Lake County country people from California came in, sheep shearers. There were usually four or five men in a group, and they usually took three or four days. Depended on how many you had. And then that was in June, and then after they had sheared them then they took them to the summer range and left them there until, I suppose, September. Shipped the lambs before they brought them back --- usually shipped the lambs out, sold them and shipped them out, and then they started over again.

CHARLENE: How long did it take to shear?

JO: A sheep, you mean? Oh, it's amazing; a good shearer could do one in three or four minutes. Oh, Burt's brother-in-law, sister's husband, was a sheep shearer. We might ask Burt when we go out, how many sheep they could shear in an hour. It's amazing. I'm safe in saying now, a hundred, maybe even more, but I may be wrong, Charlene, I just don't pay that much attention. You hear it and you are amazed, but you know you don't remember it, I don't anyway. But the cycle with the cattle business is the same, fed them on the swamp after we moved over here, and then branded all the calves in the spring, and in April, we took them to Wagontire. The boys had land at Wagontire, in fact they owned nine-tenths of it, and then took about three days to trail them out there. And then that was the summer range. And then they branded again in June, I told you that. And then they started in themselves, a lot of the time.

In the fall it was time to come in, and then they'd bring them in about fair time, September, August or September. They'd gather them all and bring them back and pasture them on the fields

that were hayed, see, they'd use that for pasture, and they didn't feed them hay until the snow came and nothing for them to eat. So that's the cycle of the cattle.

CHARLENE: How long did it take to raise a calf until you can sell it?

JO: Well, sometimes they sell them young, and sometimes yearlings. They keep them a year, usually a year, but sometimes they sell them, I can't think what they call the younger than that. But usually, yearlings is what they sell.

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CHARLENE: Getting back to this cooking thing, you know, this will be interesting in about 50 years. Probably it will have changed so much ---

JO: Oh, they don't cook for that many anymore. See the swathers and the big machinery has taken men's places so much. No, we never cooked for less than ten, I'm sure, all through the years. When we were haying, we had ten to fifteen, twenty, maybe not twenty, no --- our crew cut down too when we got tractors, but not really, because somebody had to run the tractor. ...

CHARLENE: I wondered what you fixed for a typical breakfast?

JO: Okay, like I told you, was meat, any kind of meat. And hot cakes or biscuits, and sometimes potatoes, eggs, or gravy.

CHARLENE: Real substantial.

JO: Very, always.

CHARLENE: Have to work all that off.

JO: Burt always --- before we went to bed, he always cut the steak for breakfast. A steak apiece for all the men. 'Course it depends, some ate more. Some drank lots of milk. We always had cows we milked, and had our own cream, made our own cheese, cottage cheese, and own butter. And we had a cow until we left the swamp and started working for wages. And I told him we'd been tied down enough, we didn't need any cows. So, I use powdered milk and I love it. But anyway --- And then just potatoes. Now Burt's mother --- I learned from her, naturally, but she always had beans. Maybe everybody didn't have beans every day of the week, when they were cooking for men, but I know Burt's mother did most of the time, usually red beans. Change off, lima beans, and white

beans, but mostly good old red beans. And then all kinds of vegetables, and all kinds of different desserts just like, you might say like restaurant cooking, maybe. But yet home cooking's much better. Burt's mother was a great cook, like all older cooks. And then nothing special for dinner. We always called it "dinner" and "supper" --- it's "lunch" now. But it wasn't lunch then, it was a big meal, and the same for supper. And get up in the morning at 5 o'clock and start over again.

CHARLENE: Had to start preparing that stuff about an hour before?

JO: Oh, usually. Yeah, I usually took that long.

CHARLENE: Did you cook by yourself when you were out on the ranch?

JO: No, Burt's mother lived with us, and she helped me in the summertime until she died. And then her sister was on the swamp, Potter Swamp, with us, till we sold the swamp. So, she helped me, so really, I didn't do it myself no, completely alone, I mean during haying.

We had a little tiny house. I told you about moving the cabins from town down there, down to the swamp. We had a little tiny house, and Mother Schroder was a great big woman, a large woman. And the kitchen was about as wide --- now I'm not exaggerating --- it wasn't as wide as this; I think maybe from the dishwasher. Real small. And then we had a great big cook stove, the big old --- with home comfort in it, so it was pretty small. But as I say, we cooked for probably ten people.

We moved here in '40; Jeanie was born in '44. We moved to the swamp to stay in '44, and we lived at the Baker place because there was nothing on the swamp. The boys bought the swamp in the spring of '44, and then we cooked in tents for two different summers on the swamp, and then we stayed in that tent the second summer until November. Then we froze out and the boys went to town and bought two cabins and put them together to make us a house. And we were in that little house on the swamp until we built the new house in '48, a bigger house.

Bub and Hollie lived in a little trailer house, a trailer house that they went back and forth to Wagontire. They took care of the cattle on the desert in summer, and they lived in the trailer house. And they moved the trailer house to the swamp and helped us feed in the wintertime until the boys separated in '59.

CHARLENE: That would be an awful long way to Wagontire.

JO: Well, it is a long way; it's 50 miles, isn't it? It took two nights and three days to get them out there, although they, at Silver Creek now they didn't take them too many miles on the other side of Silver Creek. They just ---

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JO: We had no water on the desert, no snow the winter before. I don't remember what year that was. And they moved them out in April, like they always do, but they brought them back to the swamp in July because there was no water. They depend on the water holes out there, see. They didn't have, apparently, must not have had any wells for water out there then. I think --- well, they have to have much more water than a well, anyway, for five, six hundred head of cattle. They moved them in, in July before they started --- or maybe they hayed one field, or two fields and then took the hay off so they could turn the cows in because they had no water. But that's the only time in all the years that we had it that that happened. ...

So that's the trials and tribulations of a rancher, really. It's interesting, it really is an interesting life, but everybody has trials and tribulations, really Charlene. They aren't, ranchers aren't any worse off. But it's an interesting life, it really is.

CHARLENE: You have to be pretty hardy, I think, to get through it.

JO: Oh yes, lots of physical labor.

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CHARLENE: Well, that's really interesting.

JO: Can you think of anything more?

CHARLENE: Not at the moment. I've probably taken up enough ---

JO: That's not worrying me. ...

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