

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #201 - Sides A/B

Subject: Don Hotchkiss

Place:

Date: April 21, 1978

Interviewer: Marcus Haines

MARCUS HAINES: And I think Don is kind of like I am, he had to stay in Harney County all of his life, because he never could make money enough to get out. That's what I tell folks. Don, why don't you get up here and tell these folks about your experiences here in Harney County. I know they're all anxious to hear it.

DON HOTCHKISS: Don't know as I can tell you much that would be of interest to you folks here, even if I have been here a long time. But the last meeting here, there was some reference made to a football game here in the early days. And Wally Welcome mentioned it, and I went over and visited with him afterwards, and told him I thought the first football game that was played here in Burns was in 1913. And it was --- there were 20 boys in high school here. Ten of them were in the sophomore grade, and ten in the other three grades. It balanced off there, with the sophomores playing the rest of the school. And I'd just like to read you a little of a page --- this is our annual, it's called The Rodeo. It was what they put out at the high school each year, and kind of sum up the doings during the year at the high school. And there are several articles in here, and there is quite a few old advertisements, that we got to help pay for putting out the annual here. And I just want to find the one thing on that football game here, to read you if I can get it up here.

To letter in athletics. During the present year, this was in 19--- put out in 1914, on

the graduation in 1914. During the present year, in a largely interest in ... have been taken in athletics, which is due to our principal H. K. Shirk.

The first thing taken up in the fall was a half-mile relay race at the county fair. This race was between the Harney County High School and the Indians of the locality. The Indians lost by a good many yards.

The next thing in line was football, which was taken up soon after the relay race. The contesting teams were the sophomores, the seniors, juniors, and freshmen. The former were coached by Professor Shirk, the latter by Mr. McDade. The final struggle came in the forenoon of Thanksgiving Day at the baseball park. And that was right down here south of where the Burns Lumber used to be. During the first quarter, the combined passes made a touchdown, and then held the sophs down to nothing for the first half. The second half the sophomore team, by the good work of the center, managed to tie the score. From then on until the last, the teams clashed in an effort to break the tie, but neither one could put the pigskin over. With but a few minutes to play, and one of the sophomore players racing down the field with the ball, his interference collided with a burly senior, all went down in a pile. When everyone was straightened out, the sophomore was found to have a broken leg, broken below the knee in one of the strange incidents that can never be fully explained. This stopped the game, and the score stood 6 to 6, but each team declared that if the accident had not happened, the tie would have been broken.

And that sophomore that was packing the ball was Cecil Bennett. And the burly --- the senior that he tangled with was me. That ended the football game. I thought just from what Wally told you before, that it might kind of fill in there.

Now when I was talking to Marcus and Wally there, why Marcus came up with the bright idea that I should fill in some more today. And so I didn't think I could talk enough

on football there, so I thought I would take you up Main Street. In the early 1930's there, I think you are all pretty familiar with Main Street as it is now, and I might be able to fill in a few things that were in the early '30's there. I had a good deal of help in filling this out from Allen and Twyla Turner, Wally Welcome, and the Jenkins, and, oh just ever so many people. And I wish to thank them all for how they have helped me, whether I mention their names here or not. And Beulah and Glen and --- we'll get started up Main Street --- Broadway, as it is known now.

Well from the time that I can first remember, the road came into Burns about like it does now, along the highway here, a little bit different out there the other side of the graveyard, but pretty much the same. It came in here on the highway and turned up Main Street, or Broadway as it is now. At that time there was --- I was going to talk about the early 1900's there, and I'll vary a little bit.

Before 1900, there was only two buildings on Main Street that are there now. That's the Brown Building, is the oldest building, and that was built in 1896. And then the Voegtly Building was built in 1899, and those were the only two buildings that were there at that time. But it seems like from about 1900, to 1913, or '14, there was quite a building program here in Burns, and a lot of the buildings have gone up since then. There are --- between 1900, and 1913, or '14 there. There is several buildings that are there now that were put up at that time.

But when we come in here and start up Main Street, there were two buildings south of the turn here. Broadway didn't go on down to the depot. There was no street from where you turn up Main Street on down south. There were two buildings south of where you turn in Main Street. One of them was a residence that George Hagey lived in, and it was where the Shell Station is now. The other one was across the street, and it was a rooming house, the Savage Rooming House. And Jessie Williams tells me that the

first time that she came in here to go to school, they had a little apartment up in the upstairs of that building. And so she remembers it very well, and went to school there.

Now as we turn north, there where the Shell Service Station is where George Hagey lived, turn north there. We have a Texaco Station on the left, and on the right we had the Smyth's Grocery Building there. But the early times, I can't remember much on the left, but there was a residence there, I think. But on the other side, there was a blacksmith shop there; Grant Kesterson had a blacksmith shop. And in these blacksmith shops they serviced your car, or your wagons, shod your horses, and so forth. And there were no --- well they had a blower there --- no acetylene welding or arc welding, or anything like that at that time. They did it all with a forge. And heated --- worked coal in the forge to heat the iron. And the iron was heated until it got to be a cherry red before you tried to work it.

I remember when my brother Newt was in that shop there, it was Grant Kesterson to start with. That was Allen's wife's grandfather. And then it was later taken over by Drinkwater and Slocum. And I remember Newt used to go in there, kind of liked to go in there and pound around some iron, and they were good enough to let him work there. And one of them told him one day that, he was kind of pounding some cold iron, or iron that wasn't red hot. And he says, "Young fellow, more people have gone to hell for pounding cold iron than for any other ..." Always get that iron pretty hot to pound it.

But then I can't fill in too much, but there's a car wash north of that, in that block. Then we go on up past the Madison Street, and there is a service station there now, and there was a livery stable there at that time, and --- Simon Lewis Livery Stable. And that's where you took your horses when you came to town, if you wanted to stay all night. You could either put them in a corral, out in the corral they had behind there, or you could tie them in individual stalls in the barn. And they fed and took care of your horses there, and

you could do what you wanted, about the place you put them. And I think if you turned into the corrals, was two bits a night to stay there. And if you had them in the barn, the stall, if they had to clean the barn, and one thing and another, it was a little more.

But on the other side of this street, there was a little saddle shop there. The Hopkins and Hunter, or Hopkins and Garrett Saddle and Harness. And I don't remember just how those names were split. But we had a little saddle down home there now, that was built there in that shop. It was --- Dad got it when Newt was just learning how to ride.

I got a little farther along, and my dad was a partner with a sheep man here for a couple years, and the sheep man had an old saddle there that he gave me to ride. So, I never got to ride this little saddle. But we still have it at the ranch there, and there --- all the kids in our family there, that was younger than I was, learned to ride on that saddle. Then Dick learned to ride on it, and his three girls have all rode that saddle. And it is still in pretty good shape down home.

And then we go --- there's maybe some office buildings I think, W. T. Lester might have been in there, in some buildings. There's some wooden buildings in there that I can't just place exactly in line. But then we go on up to the Burns Garage. And I have several pictures of Burns Garage here. Here's this old blacksmith shop down here, and one thing and another. I finally got them labeled here as to what they were.

But the Burns Garage was a wooden building to start with there. And Wally tells me that it was originally a grocery store there before the Burns Garage took it over. It started in 1910, with Smyth and Archie McGowan in there. And they brought in about the first Ford car in about 1910, I believe. And ... our fairgrounds and racetrack used to sit right south of here. And they brought one of those first cars down there to the race track, and gave a bunch of us kids a ride around that half mile track there. That was the first

auto ride I ever had.

Then we go back over on the other side of the street and we have --- livery barn was there, and in the middle of the block was a ... Beulah's dad's shop, and living quarters, carpenter shop. And he was a carpenter, and a well driller, and a band player. And she tells me that he was --- tutored the ladies orchestra that they had here at that time, or shortly after that. And a picture --- one picture on the plaque here is of that woman's band marching on Main Street there. So he was the main man behind that. And ---

BEULAH CLEMENS: Now Frankie --- Allen's mother was in the band, and I think her picture is ---

DON: Yes.

BEULAH: --- she played a bass horn, I think.

DON: Frankie Turner was, is in that. And then we go up --- well is what they called the Cottage Hotel, right on the corner there. That's where the Hilander Restaurant is now. Then we move on up a block, north there, and there was a little brick building right on the corner there when I can first remember it. That is where Daddy Byrd, Julian Byrd lived, they had the Times-Herald. Was born, I guess, in that building there. Anyway, they put it out from there for quite a little while.

And there's --- Silver Spur Motel is on up there. But there was a picture show, I think one of the first picture shows in town, went right in there, in that block.

And then you go on up there, and you get in there where the Sears Roebuck Store is, and the First National Bank is now. When I first remember it, that First National Bank was a little China joint there. China Ben was there, and he took in washing. Had a little laundry in the back of it there. And he used to give us kids some Chinese New Year's --- They had some Chinese nuts that they would distribute to us kids there. We thought quite

a lot of those nuts, we always wanted them.

Then across the street on the other side is where the post office is now, and I can't just --- this building exactly what was setting right where the post office is. But up just where the Palace Cafe is now, was what they called the Cackins (sp.?) Hotel. It was a little wooden building there. And then there was a --- on up on the corner there was a building, had been moved in from out the other side of town there, and the first Nazarene Church started in that building there. And it's a parking lot there now, with the Palace Cafe in the middle of the block there.

Then we go up across the street there, and it was originally what you called Lunaburg and Dalton Store. And I first remember it as a little --- they had a little wooden building there. And it looked very much like, or something like the Burns Garage did originally there. But they later built a stone building there, and it is where the Hirsch Value Center is now.

Then you went on up the block a little bit, and there was another livery --- or blacksmith shop, right at the center of that block there. I don't --- I think it was just north of where the Odd Fellows Building is now. It was either just north of where the Odd Fellows Building is now, I wouldn't be sure.

But then, then went on up and there was a building there that John Gemberling had built for a jewelry store. And then the next one is where Bud Garland is now, and that originally was the First National Bank of Burns. Then Gemberling is Carter's Jewelry there now.

Then the Odd Fellows Building was built in 1909. And I don't remember just when the Dalton Building was built there, but it was a little while after that, just a short number of years.

Then on the other side of the street where the Voegtly Building is there now, is The

Vogue that's in it, the first building there. And they originally --- where the Home Drug is now, Voegtly's had a storage shed that run north there. And he just took storage --- where he run a hardware store in the building there for years.

And then you go on up about where ... is, and there was a meat market in there. And that was --- I'll fill you in a little more on that a little bit later here.

But then on up --- you go on up the street there where Jordan's Realty is now. And other buildings in there --- and so forth. But up on the corner there where Jordan's is now, is originally a shoe shop, a shoe repair shop. And when I first remember, there was a fellow there by the name of Jim Smith, was running that. And he might have sold a few pair of shoes, but he --- it was mostly just cobbler work there.

Back up just a little bit there, and I think there was a barbershop right in there. And in those days, a barber shop, you went in there to get your hair cut and a shave, got a shave, and they all had a bath in the back of them, a bathtub. And you took your clean clothes in there if you come in from out in the country, and cleaned up before you went out on the town. (Laughter)

But then over where the Burns, or Baird's Hardware is now, that was the Masonic Building, and it was built in 1910. An I happen to have an old picture here of that. It shows the First National Bank here, and it shows a little meat market right across north of it there where the Masonic Building is now. And that was run by Smith and Young, George Young and Bill Smith. And George Young was the main man in the meat market there. But afterwards that went down across the street in the middle of the block over here. Chip Smith was the butcher that worked in the shop, and he went over there with it. And then Butch Hansen run it there for quite a while, and then Schroder went up there, went into it there. And it wasn't long until he moved it over into the Odd Fellows Building,



on the other side of the street.

And then as we go north in that block over there by the --- from the Masonic Building, why in the --- well I'll get back over on the other side of the street here. The building where Corbett's is now, was built by George Frye, and that was in 1902. And when he first built that, why it was Schwartz and Budelman went in there with their grocery store. They'd had some kind of a deal on this store there, or just before that, with George Frye there. It was in a wooden building there, and evidently, this is from Wally Welcome there, on the deal there. The deal evidently fell through until he built this new building here, and then they took another lease or something with him there. And they were there for a year or two until the Masonic Building was built on the other side of the street. And then Schwartz and Budelman moved back over there.

Now there was quite a homestead --- a lot of this land was homesteaded between 1910, and 1914 in this country, just an awful lot of it. And most everybody thought they had to have a homestead. Well Schwartz went up here on the hill west, about two or three miles past Miller's Spring up here, and took up a homestead right up there. I don't -- - I'm not sure who owns that now with Peterson kids, one thing and another. And we called that New Jerusalem. And he had his brother Maurice Schwartz, and he took up a homestead a little north of that. But his buildings was over in a draw, and we called that Seldom Seen. You never see that.

And then there was A. K. Richardson had a store in that block there. And the L. E. Reed's had a store in it. And there was a barbershop on up there. And then you went up the upper end and there was a saloon, and The Vogue is up where the saloon was. The Ranch Supply in there, and Nyleen's, and Office, Arts and Supplies all along that side of the street there.

Now we go back over to the other side there and --- or you get up there --- the old

post office, years ago used to be just about the middle of the block on the east side of the street there, right about opposite Nyleen's. And my wife's grandmother was the postmistress in there, Mother Whiting, for a number of years when it first went in there. Then Mamie Gould took over as postmistress in there.

Then we go on up to the U. S. National Bank there. There is two restaurants and things in between there. But up where the U. S. National Bank is, when I can first remember there, that was what they called the Brown Bank, was built in there. And it was built in 1905.

Then we go north up there across the street, and it is vacant right there on the corner there now, where it burnt out there. But that used to be another livery barn there, a Red Front Livery Barn. Then just north of that was the French Hotel. And then there was some little buildings on up there to the --- fill out the block, and I can't just place all of them. But the French Hotel burned in 1914, and the Red Front Barn burned at the same time. That whole block burnt out. There was ... livery stable back on the northeast corner there, White Front Livery Stable, and it burnt. There were several horses that burnt in those barns at that time. And in that fire ... across the street there --- in below the First National Bank, and burnt out some buildings there before it was finally stopped.

On the other side of the street, where the Burns Department Store is now, that used to be the Dibble Hotel. It's on a picture here, it's listed as the Burns Hotel. But they -- now in these hotels, I don't know what time it was that the first restaurant came into Burns. In old days, you didn't have such a thing as a restaurant; you had rooming houses, and boarding houses. And your meals were all set on the table family style. And you --- they had regular hours for the meals. And they used to say that this Del Dibble that run that hotel, he had a bell and he'd go out and ring that and he'd make it say a dollar for Dibble, a dollar for Dibble, a dollar for Dibble. (Laughter) But they generally

rang a bell. Now sometimes they had a --- that was Del's way of calling. But they'd have a triangle that they'd beat with an iron stick to announce the time for meals.

But you just --- if you wanted something to eat in the middle of the day, the middle or forenoon, or afternoon, why you went and got you a lunch at the grocery store or something. You just didn't have a restaurant to go to.

Then you went on up that street there and you come to Brown's Store. It's still there very much as I can remember it from the old days. And then there were several buildings in between there. There was --- I. S. Geer run a hardware store right north of Brown's Building there, in the old days. And he lived out here; he had a place out here right above the mill, up north of the mill there is where they lived. But after, I guess he sold out to P. G. Smith there, in the hardware store. And P. G. put --- and Neil Smith and Tubby Smith up there to run that store. And they run it for a while there, and then they went out of business there, and the picture show went into that building there.

Then you went on up and found Reed's Drug Store there, before you get to the corner. And Mart Brenton had a saloon right up on the corner there. There is a service station there now.

Then you go across the street there and you come to the Bennett Motel. That was originally what they called the Tonawama Building, and it was built in 1911. And after it was built there, well the Times-Herald ---

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DON: ... and they evidently had a pretty good flow of water. I know there was a good flow of water in the one up there just catty-corner from the U. S. National Bank, across from the Burns Department Store. Because --- by the time they had --- to fight that fire there, and the French Hotel burnt, the livery stable, and those horses. We saw the fire

from down to the ranch, and my dad and Newt and I walked up town there, and we helped run that pump. They had one of these old side blocker pumps that they pumped water with. And we run that pump a good deal that night there to help them put out that fire. We didn't put it out, we just kept it a going --- I don't know, we worked at it; I don't know what we did do.

And I think that kind of gives you a rundown on what we had, and what we had. Any questions there --- some of you that could answer, why if you're willing to. If I can't, why I'll call on Wally here, I know he can.

WOMAN: Well you left out George Hagey's Store. And it was right next to the saddle shop there on the corner. Because I ... the first nickel I ever bought myself, and spent myself, was in George Hagey's Store there. Sure some of you must remember that store.

WOMAN #2: Yes, I bought candy there.

WOMAN: Yes. Because you lived on that rock candy ...

MARCUS: Don, you mentioned two saloons here in your dissertation, there surely must have been more. You're not a drinking man, so you probably didn't know where they were at.

DON: Well, there was one saloon right there just south of Burns Department Store, that I remember. And then I think there was one right across the street, south of the U. S. National Bank there. I believe that was Odell's.

WOMAN: Bill Coffrey had that. Bill Coffrey had it.

WOMAN #2: There used to be one right there where the post office is setting now.

DON: Did they?

WOMAN #2: Yeah.

DON: And then there was one on up there where --- this side of Tonawama, or the Bennett Motel. And the only thing that I can say is, that it seems like in the old days,

saloons took up --- didn't take up quite as much space as the service stations do.

WOMAN: Don, I can remember they said there was quite a few more saloons than there were churches.

MARCUS: The Narrows along about that time had four of their own down there.  
(Laughter)

MAN: Before we get out of here --- Don doesn't know this, but he talked about graduating from high school, so I thought it might be fitting to know how academic he was during those years. So I'm going to read it. This is about the faculty he went to school with. Titled: The Faculty. The high school has a man named Shirk, if he had a beard, he'd look like a Turk. He walks with a jerk; his nose has a quirk, for a homely old geezer is Shirk.

A young lady in Burns named Locker, whose name you see rhymes with mocker. Her classes all declare, that for looks she's a bear, and the voice of her name would all dock here.

We've a charming your teacher Miss Calgill (sp.?), whose name has to rhyme with flow bill. She pines for a farm, to do the cats harm, otherwise she's not very slow bill.

We've an English instructor Miss Forsythe, whose courage and demeanor are quite blithe. She came here last summer, for a tenderfoot she's a hummer, but gee in our classes, she does make us write.

There is a young man in Burns named Leedy, whose hair is exceedingly seedy. He said if I'm not greedy, I shall never be needy, for an extremely wise young man is Leedy. (Laughter)

DON: If you'd like to come up and look at these pictures, or look at this magazine or anything, why you are welcome to do so.

MARCUS: It kind of dates me a little bit too. Well I guess we stand adjourned then.

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