

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #300 - Sides A & B

Subject: June 1878 Indian Uprising - Discussions with Myrtle  
Barnes, Dell Witzel, Fred Witzel & Marion Louie

Place: Burns, Oregon

Date: 1972

Interviewer: Marcus Haines

Release Form: No

MARCUS HAINES: This is a color slide narrative of the Indian Uprising in June of 1878. The routes traveled by the Indians and by the Whites were retraced in a plane piloted by Freedy Witzel, the grandson of John Witzel, one of the principals in this story. And I, Marcus Haines, took the pictures. These pictures were taken in October of 1970, and then again we flew the route in June of 1971 and took the pictures over.

This map shows the route taken by the Bannocks of Idaho, and the Paiutes of Eastern Oregon when they passed through Harney and Malheur Counties on their way to Southeastern Washington to join forces with another tribe that was already to go on the warpath.

We are going to see this route from color slides and hear stories from folks whose relatives were directly involved in this uprising.

But first, let's take a quick trip over this route from this map. We will start at the Crowley Ranch in Barren Valley in

Malheur County, with the red lines showing the routes taken by the Indians. They entered Harney County near the Folly Farm, came up through Anderson Valley where the Tom Jenkins' now live. But before going into Happy Valley, they divided into two bands. The women and the children and some warriors, I'm sure, travelled west across the Blitzen River near the Rockford Lane and continued along the south and west shores of Harney Lake. Then north and camped a short distance south of the Bend-Burns Highway on Silver Creek. The remainder of the band, numbering several hundred warriors, and under the leadership of Chief Buffalo Horn, headed south through Happy Valley, Diamond Valley, "P" Ranch, then turned north and west and raised havoc at the Double O and other places on their way to join up with the rest of the band on Silver Creek.

The green line shows the route taken by the Whites who had the first encounter with the Indians in Happy Valley. The group went to "P" Ranch, then up on Jack Mountain, crossed on the Sand Reef that separates Malheur and Harney Lakes, and on to Fort Harney by the way of Wright's Point and the Island Ranch.

In this first slide we are looking east out toward Idaho. Now that's the route that the Indians came into here, and we're right directly over the Crowley Ranch. Perhaps that mountain that you see there is near the Owyhee River. But here is Star Mountain, we're looking at the south side of it, and directly

below is the Crowley Ranch. Then this is the, part of the Crowley Ranch that you are seeing here from different views here in these various slides.

And this is the place that Jim Crowley was living at this time. And Jim sounded the alarm, and these people all moved out and went to Trout Creek. I think there was a fort down there nearby. And just shortly after they left, the Indians moved in and burned up the house that Jim lived in. This present house is built near the site of the one that was burned.

Well we're looking south up through Barren Valley toward Folly Farm, or the Steens Mountains in the distance there. And in traveling up through there, we cross over the Morger Place, Darrell Morger I think is his name, from California. It was the old Hutchinson Place out there near Tommy Dowell's.

And then the next place we see is Tommy Dowell's. And the Indians burnt the house at this place. This is near where the old house was sitting that was burned.

Well we have a little better view of Steens Mountain here as we travel on south. And then we cross over the Burns-McDermitt Highway at the Folly Farm. That's the junction right in the center of the picture there. And then we turned west and go up through Lambing Canyon. As near as we can find out that was the route that the Indians took. And when they came over the top of Riddle Mountain there, after travelling up this canyon here, they

come down into Anderson Valley. Now that's where the Jenkins' live, and also Jack Davies on the old Company Ranch there.

But at the time of this uprising there was a fellow living there by the name of Anderson, Doc Anderson. I suppose that is the reason the valley got it's name. And Doc had started out, as I understand from the story here that Dorothy Jenkins told me, that had gone someplace to get some potatoes to, just a little longer, and while he was gone the Indians burnt up the house that he lived in. Here is Dorothy Jenkins pointing at the place where the house stood.

And from there the Indians headed west and when they got out, pretty well on the north of Riddle Mountain, they divided forces and the men and the women, and some of the warriors headed across to Saddle Butte there in the distance. And they crossed on the old Rockford, which is near what we call the Rockford Lane now. And then the rest of the band turned left there and goes directly into Happy Valley.

And now we are going to hear a story from Myrtle Barnes about what happened in Happy Valley. Now there was two of the Smyths burned in this uprising, and they were relatives of Myrtle Barnes Smyth. Myrtle is at the present time living in Burns, hale and hearty I think at about 84 or 85 years. So let's hear Myrtle's version of this.

Well this is an aerial picture of Happy Valley here. We're

travelling south and about in the center of the picture is your old home place, the Smyth Place. You can probably see the trees.

And then off to your right and back a little ways is the Darrell Otley place there. So we're going to go down and look these places over a little bit. So let's start with Coontown. Do you recognize Coontown?

MYRTLE BARNES: Yes.

MARCUS: Well you tell me a story about that. I know you've got a lot of good ones. You lived there, and your brothers and sisters lived there, and you graded roads around there. So who originated, who started Coontown?

MYRTLE: Well Sylvester Smith, they called him Coon Smith.

MARCUS: Coon Smith, the same ---

MYRTLE: Yeah, Coon Smith. And the road a going out north there, that was our main traveled road to Burns and Harney City at that time.

MARCUS: Yeah, the Diamond people went right on through there.

MYRTLE: Diamond people went this way too there.

MARCUS: Yeah.

MYRTLE: That was the road there. Well now the main building, the Coontown building, isn't in this picture. It has been torn down.

MARCUS: Oh.

MYRTLE: Yeah, the whole house there.

MARCUS: The sod house you were telling me about?

MYRTLE: No, no, we had a great ---

MARCUS: It was still a different one yet, huh?

MYRTLE: Yes, they had another big home right there ... do you remember me telling you? Claude tore it down and took it to Diamond and built that new store, first store.

MARCUS: Oh, that was old Coon Smith's home?

MYRTLE: That was Coon Smith's home. This was his post office, and also a bar.

MARCUS: This building here was ---

MYRTLE: That's it.

MARCUS: That was about the first building.

MYRTLE: General, general --- that was the first post office, it was named after Coon Smith. S M I T H.

MARCUS: Well I'll be darned. Coontown was the name of ---

MYRTLE: Coontown was the name of --- no, Smith was the name of the post office.

MARCUS: Oh, Smith, yes.

MYRTLE: Oh, oh. And that's where he run this general store, Happy Valley Store, and also a post office and a bar.

MARCUS: Well did he keep, did he have a livery stable and keep travelers there?

MYRTLE: No. He had a, he didn't have any livery stable, he had a place that he kept horses, a small barn.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

MYRTLE: What we call barn. We didn't call --- And yes, they kept people there. Their home was a large house, and they run an eating place, and also they had rooms there. And after he was married --- see he wasn't married for years. And before that he had just a small little cabin there. It's been tore down.

MARCUS: Uh huh. But I remember staying all night in the fall of 1929 in that building right there. And Corey Smyth, your brother, ---

MYRTLE: My brother and his wife.

MARCUS: --- Minnie were there at the time.

MYRTLE: My folks, my mother bought this place, the Coontown Ranch. And my brother and his wife moved there and lived. And they fixed this old store up as a living quarters.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

MYRTLE: Until it was sold to a B. B. Clark, and I think Claude sold it to B. B. Clark.

MARCUS: The Otley boys own it now I guess.

MYRTLE: The Otley boys own it now, yeah, they own all that. The first schoolhouse I went to, my first schoolhouse.

MARCUS: What year would that be do you suppose?

MYRTLE: Well I was nine years old. I was born in '86, so it's about ---

MARCUS: About '95 then, wouldn't it?

MYRTLE: '95 that was.

MARCUS: You were nine years old.

MYRTLE: I was nine years old. And there was about, let's see, Nanny Walls was our teacher. And her dad settled on Walls Lake in Catlow Valley.

MARCUS: Oh, yeah I've been there lots of times.

MYRTLE: Well that's where her --- her dad homesteaded that. And she was our first teacher. And if I can remember right there was the two Neal girls, and Alla Ward had one girl old enough to go to school. And John Anderson had a family that went. And there was one, two --- five of the Anderson children went to school there. That's Walter, and Ed, and Annie Comegys, that's Sid Comegys wife then, or now, and Francis and Lennis.

MARCUS: Yeah, yeah.

MYRTLE: The youngest boy died, Ollie, he didn't go to school.

MARCUS: Ollie.

MYRTLE: Ollie Anderson.

MARCUS: I never heard of him.

MYRTLE: He's the baby.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

MYRTLE: And that was my first school. (Laughter)

MARCUS: And then later Ralph Hutchinson moved into the home ---

MYRTLE: Oh yeah, that, they ---

MARCUS: --- many, many years later wasn't it?

MYRTLE: Many, many years, oh yes, years later.



MARCUS: But this was ---

MYRTLE: Well I'll tell you, before Ralph got that, Edna's dad went there and homesteaded it. Ed Hutchinson's father homesteaded that.

MARCUS: Oh, Browning?

MYRTLE: Browning, yes Browning.

MARCUS: Oh, yes, yeah.

MYRTLE: And then she fell heir to it you see.

MARCUS: Well, I'll be darned.

MYRTLE: That's how they got that.

MARCUS: Well Myrtle, would that have been the first schoolhouse in Diamond Valley, or was it part of your old home, or Happy Valley?

MYRTLE: That the first, no, the first schoolhouse in Happy Valley was my Uncle John Smyth taught school there. And John Witzel, now this is two that I remember, John Witzel and Bill King went to school to him, and they were in their teens about. And my Uncle John Smyth, that the Indians killed, taught the first school there. It was up near the Riddle Ranch.

MARCUS: Oh, up that way, uh huh.

MYRTLE: Yes. And after this was all over, my dad moved that schoolhouse over, and it's the kitchen to the home where I was born.

MARCUS: Oh, you told me something about the old schoolhouse

there.

MYRTLE: Yes, you see ---

MARCUS: That's how that came about.

MYRTLE: And that's part of my old home place there.

MARCUS: Well let's take a look at your old home place here.

MYRTLE: That part there, the kitchen was that schoolhouse. It was moved from over east, from the east side of Happy there to the place.

MARCUS: Your home place.

MYRTLE: The home place.

MARCUS: But it was ---

MYRTLE: It was the first schoolhouse.

MARCUS: It was the first schoolhouse.

MYRTLE: It was the first schoolhouse in Happy Valley.

MARCUS: The one that you went to was built later then?

MYRTLE: It was built later, oh yes, years later.

MARCUS: Yeah, yeah. Well you were born in this house?

MYRTLE: I was born in this house. And there was three --- my sister Pearl, and younger brother Rye was born in this house, this building. And there was a log building on this end, where this -- and it was torn down and part of, another part built on there where this log house was, and that's where my brother Corey was born. And my oldest brother Claude was born in a house, just about a quarter of a mile down the valley there. The next house

that was built after my grandfather's house was burned. And that's where my father took me, my grandmother, and his two brothers, and my Uncle John's children, and raised them up until they were grown.

MARCUS: Well was this ---

MYRTLE: It was a house just below this one.

MARCUS: Just below this one.

MYRTLE: Uh huh.

MARCUS: Well I'll be darned.

MYRTLE: Yes.

MARCUS: Well were the Neals in there about that time too?

MYRTLE: No, no.

MARCUS: They came in later.

MYRTLE: Oh way later. My Uncle Byron Mynatt came in there after the Indians, and homestead that, and then moved out again. And there was someone else, and I can't remember who it was, was there before Neals were.

MARCUS: Uh huh, uh huh.

MYRTLE: Yes. They never did prove up. They just stayed there and left. And then George Miller had a homestead above, in the upper fields, above the Neal place. It was a rock house.

MARCUS: Speaking of George Miller, Myrtle, you were going to tell me the story about the time that he attempted to kill your father in a place back down near the old schoolhouse there.

MYRTLE: Yes, yes.

MARCUS: Why don't you tell us that story? That's really a good one.

MYRTLE: Well at that time my dad was a violinist, and he played for the dances. And neighbors would have weekends, they'd have dances in whichever one had the largest room to dance in, square dances. And this place was a man by the name of Mr. Drake. It was around the point, right there from where the Allan Otley's live now. And when they got, in the morning when the dance was over, my father and mother went in the back room, there was two rooms, one was a dugout, and where they was dancing was built on, a lumber house.

MARCUS: This dugout was kind of the bedroom.

MYRTLE: Bedroom then.

MARCUS: Yeah.

MYRTLE: And they went in there to get my oldest brother Claude, he was a baby, to go home. And George Miller followed them in there and he had, I couldn't tell --- it was a large bladed knife, and he sliced at my dad's stomach. My dad jumped back and shot him in the face. And it went in his mouth, and out the side of his face, and they just picked up my brother and went out and got in their buggy and went home. And the next day my dad was inquiring, and this George Miller, he got up, when he came to. He fell when my dad shot him. And wrapped a ladies scarf around his

head and went down to Coon Smith's place, which was a sod house then, in the upper, south part of the ranch, and stayed there until he got well. And Coon Smith's sister lived with him, Sarah Smith. And she had taken care of him until he got well. And then he always wore sideburns afterwards. But after that then, he and my dad were good friends. He told my dad all about Pete French hiring him to kill him. And he said he never could. And on that night he was drinking quite a bit, he said that he got up courage to do it, but then he didn't get it done.

MARCUS: He didn't reach far enough in other words.

MYRTLE: He didn't reach far enough. (Laughter)

MARCUS: Over here we'll start this Indian War thing again here, Myrtle. Tell me about this slide here now.

MYRTLE: Well that's the rocks of, you might call it part of the foundation that was under the house that the Indians burned, that burned my grandfather and Uncle John Smyth. And that's just where the house set, that's in Happy Valley, where I was born and raised, is those trees and house across there.

MARCUS: Yes, it's within a half a mile of where you were born.

MYRTLE: Yes, yes.

MARCUS: Well Myrtle, they got the word of the Indian uprising and the people left this country and went to Fort Harney. And then your brothers and father ---

MYRTLE: Well they got the ---

MARCUS: --- came back, didn't they?

MYRTLE: Yes, oh yes.

MARCUS: And everybody else was gone except just ---

MYRTLE: Oh yes. They moved, they had taken all the women, and everybody went to Fort Harney. And my grandfather and uncle got worried about their stock, and they went back out to see how they was doing. And that night, and that evening sometime, why the Indians came in. And they were just not very many of them, there were just a few of them, and they were hid behind a little --- that's rocks and brush up there, they were hid in there. And when night came, evening, why they came down and tried to set fire to the cabin. And the dog barked, my grandfather and Uncle John had a dog with them. And my grandfather went to the door to see what he was barking at. And he was shot by the Indians, they said in the leg, they told. And my uncle, young man they said, come to the door and pulled the body inside. And then this cabin was a two-story building. And the Indians tried to slip up and set fire to the house. And they said somebody would shoot from above, down. And during that, before the house was burned, before they got killed there was, all told --- so these other Indians, that was Tabby and Scar Face Charlie ---

MARCUS: They were a couple of friendly Indians that were ---

MYRTLE: Afterwards, yeah.

MARCUS: Yeah, that was acquainted with your folks there.

MYRTLE: Yeah, that had got acquainted with them.

MARCUS: Yeah.

MYRTLE: Told my father what had happened, that's how they knew. And so they wounded and killed thirty-five Indians during this time. And Chief ---

MARCUS: Buffalo Horns.

MYRTLE: Buffalo Horn was killed that night. And the Indians took him in the rimrock, around about, oh I'd say it wasn't a quarter of a mile, it's from the house in the rimrock. And after we'd got, my brother and sister got old enough, we'd go over there and get beads off of this, off of these bones.

MARCUS: You found his grave there?

MYRTLE: Oh yes, oh yes. We got beads and strung them and had all kinds of beads off of the chief.

MARCUS: ... off of that chief.

MYRTLE: Of course that's all that was left there at that time was just bones.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

MYRTLE: Uh huh, yeah, like that.

MARCUS: Well Myrtle, why, how did it happen that your father wasn't with them? Now he got away from them, divided there some way or another.

MYRTLE: He went to Harney with them, and moved, and he stayed up there. I don't know. And then he went out with a pack horse to

see how they was getting along, you see. They went with a wagon and team. And he got in the valley that night, and these fires around, and the Indians had these horses, all their horses, all the neighbors around there, the horses gathered.

And they got close enough that they could hear them, shush, shush, to keep the horses rounded up. And my father brought a stallion to this Harney County with him when they moved here. And he was a nickering and my dad was afraid that, see he had this mare, one of these mares that had been running with this horse, packed, that he just turned and left. He was afraid they would take after them.

And he thought his dad and brother had gotten away. And he turned and went back, and went back to Harney, and waited there a day to see if they would come in. He thought they were afoot, and would take them quite awhile to get in. And they never showed up.

So he takes his horse the next day, the two days, and went back out and rode on the point, the hill there, yeah the point that you can see across there. And there wasn't a thing there. There was no sign of life. So he went down where the cabin was, and it was burned. And he picked up the bones and put them in a tub, a wash tub, and taken them across where the cemetery is now, and buried them there. And that's how this little cemetery got ---

MARCUS: The cemetery got started there.

MYRTLE: Got started, yes. And all this time now, he was gone two



days and nights, he didn't have a thing to eat. He didn't have anything with him to eat, you see. He figured on finding them.

MARCUS: Uh huh. Well he ---

MYRTLE: Then he went back, you see, and after this why he went clear over into Silver Creek.

MARCUS: Actually they were under siege then when he rode up then.

MYRTLE: They were under siege, and he didn't know it. He said if he'd of known it, he would have charged them.

MARCUS: Yeah, didn't know it. Yeah.

MYRTLE: He said he thought ---

MARCUS: There couldn't have been much that he could have done anyway, but he would have tried anyway.

MYRTLE: Well no, just, he said he would have tried anyway.

MARCUS: Yeah, yeah.

MYRTLE: But at that time he said if he'd have known that, he would have. See it was dark, but he just turned and went the other way. He thought they had gotten away, you see. They hadn't. So he knew that the Indians ... when this old band kept going, was shot, that they had to make their own ammunition then.

And he said he knew that his father had this --- you see they had a fireplace, mold those bullets, and fix them. And his brother would be upstairs doing the shooting. And he knew that there wasn't very much ammunition there, their lead and powder. So he always said, he told us, that he knew that his father and brother

killed themselves before the house burned, so that if the Indians got them, they would torture them.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

MYRTLE: He said he knows that's what they done. But nobody will ever know, you see. They were burned up, there were just bones left.

MARCUS: Then the Indians left and went on over into Diamond Valley from your place then I guess, probably the next day?

MYRTLE: No. Now this happened, Marcus, just --- this happened just when the Indian War started. You see these were scouts. These were Indian scouts out.

MARCUS: Yes. Well this same bunch didn't go, this didn't happen the next day? They didn't go down into the valley?

MYRTLE: No, no, no, no.

MARCUS: How much of a time lapse was there there, Myrtle, before ---

MYRTLE: It was, it must have been several days. I couldn't say now, I don't remember that.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

MYRTLE: But these were Indian scouts out. And Coon Smith was going back to Happy, you see, to his home. And as he come up, as he was on top of this little raise, the Indians showed up from below. And they ducked down, and he turned his horse and ran clear back to the Diamond Ranch, you see. And that was before,

right around that --- they were just scouts, you see.

MARCUS: Uh huh. Well the main body of Indians hadn't moved in to the country yet then?

MYRTLE: No.

MARCUS: Oh, I see.

MYRTLE: Yes, yes.

MARCUS: And they were just --- then later on this ---

MYRTLE: Yes, later on then ---

MARCUS: When they went into Diamond, that's when the main bunch came through.

MYRTLE: Yes, yeah. They were just Indian scouts out.

MARCUS: Oh I see, I supposed the whole thing happened at one time.

MYRTLE: No, no.

MARCUS: There was quite a little time lapse there then.

MYRTLE: Quite a little time lapse there.

MARCUS: I see.

MYRTLE: Yes. That's one thing, they knew the Indians were coming, and showed up, don't you see. That's one thing that warned them. Yes.

MARCUS: Uh huh. Well there is a rock fence there that comes down and has crossed the road, and there was a gate. There was quite a story I think about that, wasn't there?

MYRTLE: Yes. He fixed this gate so the Indians couldn't get

through. They didn't know anything about gates and things at that time, the Indians didn't. And he shut that gate, and blocked it with a rock or something, wire or something, I don't remember now what my dad said. But I believe it was a rock. And they couldn't get it open, and that way he outran them to the Diamond Ranch.

MARCUS: Myrtle, let's talk a little bit more about this rock fence here. Let's take this slide and look at it a little. Now we're looking right down into Diamond Valley, and the road that's going down there is the present grade that goes into Diamond Valley, from Happy Valley, and it's called the Diamond Grade. Now if we will look along the top of the hill here, there is a natural fence, a rimrock, as far as we can see in the distance. And then it goes back under our picture here some distance too, except where the road goes through here at the present time. And this is where Pete French, I assume it was, built the fence in there and put in the gate, and he had that country fenced up there, with just a little work right through that gap there. And it was this gate then that was involved in our story.

As I understand the story here, Coon Smith was coming up to Happy Valley, and he come through this gate, and continues on toward your place there, maybe three-eighths of a mile, such a matter.

And in this next slide, we'll see that the lake bed that he rides out on here, the lake bed has a water hole in it there. And

as he rides up and looks across there, he faces the Indians over here about where the road straightens out and heads on up into Happy Valley. Well he turns around, and the horse race is on, of course. And he gets to the gate and jumps off, and opens it, and then jams it with a rock or wire or something. Anyway, enough to slow the Indians up, so that he had a chance to get away from them. Because they had to open the gate, they couldn't get over the rock fence, it was a little too high for them as I understand it here. Well you told another story about a couple of fellows with a wagon. They run up there, and they got scared at their own shadows, and wound up in the wagon. Was that about in the same place?

MYRTLE: Yes. That's the same gate now, that he blocked to stop the Indians from overtaking him. It was a rock fence that had been built there, and this gate, I couldn't say what kind of a gate it was, pole gate I think though at that time. They made gates out of poles.

MARCUS: Yeah.

MYRTLE: And they were going to Burns, they was on their way with their wagons, and they come up out of the Diamond Valley, up the Diamond Grade --- that is there wasn't any grade then, it was just a straight road, right straight up the middle of the hill there, the draw. And they come to this gate, and they thought they saw some Indians. They didn't really know afterwards what made --- it

might have been some loose horses. And they jumped out of the wagons, unhitched their horses, and got on them, one of them, each one had their team, and started back down the Diamond hill, or where the grade is now, and one of the tugs on one of the horses foot hit, I think it was Cushman, in the back of the head. This was Lee Cushman, and Doc Kiger. And he said, hollered, he said, "Oh my god, I'm shot." And it was one of the tugs flew up and hit him.

MARCUS: He didn't fall off anyway.

MYRTLE: No, he didn't fall off, it kept a running to get home.

MARCUS: That would make a guy hang on alright.

MYRTLE: That was Doc Kiger, and this guy's name was Lee Cushman.

MARCUS: Uh huh. Yeah, that's --- Well Coon Smith though, he got through the gate and he didn't stop, and he got down in New Diamond where Pete French ---

MYRTLE: He didn't stop. Well he, after he got the gate ---

MARCUS: Or Old Diamond rather here.

MYRTLE: Yes, the Old Diamond Ranch.

MARCUS: Yeah, he really fogged down off of the hill there.

MYRTLE: Yes, he run his horse, he had him run down. But at that time there wasn't any fences in Diamond, he cut straight across.

MARCUS: I suppose. About the time this happened there was lots of water in that country though too.

MYRTLE: Yeah.

MARCUS: You know he was really knocking sloughs dry going across there. I imagine you would with the Indians right on your tail.

MYRTLE: I imagine you would. (Laughter)

MARCUS: You bet. Well Myrtle, is there any more you can tell me about this Indian War here?

MYRTLE: Well no, only, no I could, only I'm not --- see my father went clear on into Silver Creek with the Indians. And I think that's as far as he went. Or maybe on farther, but ---

MARCUS: Well he went with the --- he went with the soldiers there on ---

MYRTLE: No, he was just, no he was no soldier.

MARCUS: Just following them there.

MYRTLE: Uh huh.

MARCUS: Just scouting.

MYRTLE: Scouting.

MARCUS: Oh, I see.

MYRTLE: Yes.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

MYRTLE: Yes. And he went back out and they helped move their --- helped the neighbors and them move their families home, when they got a place for them to live. And that's as far as I can tell you about it.

MARCUS: Well by golly thank you Myrtle, you sure told us a nice story here. And I know that there is going to be a lot of people

that's going to enjoy listening to this. You can tell me this story, and I'd try to relate it, it wouldn't sound the same at all. MYRTLE: No. Well anyway, they wouldn't believe you.

MARCUS: With you ---

MYRTLE: They won't believe me probably.

MARCUS: With you telling it, why they won't believe you, but you don't care, do you?

MYRTLE: I don't care. I know what I know, that's all.  
(Laughter)

MARCUS: Okay, thank you Myrtle.

We'll continue our story now with Dell and Fred Witzel, the sons of John Witzel the principal of this part of our story. But before we continue on, let's review the statement of John H. Witzel that was taken in 1932, by a government attorney who was questioning John about the condition of Malheur Lake in the early days. And then he asked him to describe his experiences in the Indian War. And this is what he told him:

"I went through between the two lakes the 15th day of June in 1878. I rode through between the two lakes. The water was pretty near right up against us on the right hand side, and on the left hand side, on the west. Harney Lake was quite a little ways out to the water, 200 yards to the nearest water."

"But on the east side."

"Well I wasn't in very good shape to pay much attention at



the time. I had been shot."

"Who were you shot by?"

"The Indians. I had rested twenty minutes at the Reef. I had rode from Diamond to the "P" Ranch, and from there to the Reef."

"How many miles?"

"Forty or fifty miles."

"Tell me the story about getting shot with the Indians."

"I was working for Mr. French on the "P" Ranch and Diamond Ranch. Was working as a roustabout, getting the saddle horses, killing beef, done a little of everything. Sometimes I would be with the buckaroos, but I had no regular particular job. The Indians came in there on the 15th day of June and run us off."

"What were they, Paiutes?"

"They were Paiutes and Bannocks."

"You had quite a battle, did you?"

"No, not much of a battle, there was eighteen or twenty of us on the ranch all told. There was Henry Ruby and Pete French, and an Indian fighter from Jackson County down on the Rogue River by the name of Dickerson, and a man by the name of Sid Thomas."

"The Indians attacked you, did they?"

"Yes, we only had one gun between us. We had one 45-70 needle gun, and twenty cartridges."

"How many Indians?"

"There wasn't a very big bunch of them right at us, but they were as far back as we could see. About seven hundred warriors all mounted in the back. If they had ever got there, there would have been quite a bunch. They killed my horse. I rode out behind another fellow to Krumbo Creek and got another horse. Rode to the "P" Ranch and changed horses again, and rode to Fort Harney."

"Did all of them come with you?"

"All except the Chinaman, and he fell by the road."

"Were you riding your horse when you got hit?"

"No, I was getting on him. The same bullet hit me that killed my horse. He carried me about a quarter of a mile after he was hit."

"Have you still got the scar?"

"Well I sure have."

Let's start here with Dell telling his version of his dad's experience in the Indian War as he remembers it from a small child. He'd heard it many times, but it's been many, many years ago too. So Dell, would you care to continue here now?

DELL WITZEL: They was herding those horses there, up there in that field, which is noted as Schoolhouse Field now. But at that time I believe it was Cummings Field or something. I wouldn't be sure what the thing was. And then he ... I guess and he was fooling around there off his horse, kind of monkeying around and watching the horses. And then he seen, the horses kept a looking

up above him there at something there. And when he got to looking up there, to see what they had seen, and he seen either one or two Indians up there. They were off their horse, well maybe to get between him and the horses that was there. And they spooked the horses and they run down past him, and he followed them into the Diamond Ranch, and down there to where Pete French and all the rest of the crew was right there. I think they were catching horses or caviada, or something was in the corral there at that time, the saddle horses.

MARCUS: Well R. P. and Coon Smith arrived there about the same time, or whether Coon was ahead of him or not. Coon was out ahead of these Indians, he might have gotten there a little bit ahead of him, probably not much.

DELL: I think possibly Coon got there maybe just a little bit in the lead of him, maybe about the same time that the Indians were going out a ways, trying to get those horses that he was herding.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

DELL: But Coon got to the Diamond Ranch.

MARCUS: Well there wasn't too many of this bunch, Dell, right out in the lead. More scouts, would it be?

DELL: Well he said that there was just very few. The scouts there maybe at the most might have been six or seven of them, if there were that many. I don't know whether there were or not.

MARCUS: Uh huh. But that was the bunch that showed up around the

Diamond Ranch there while they were getting ready to leave. But there was quite a bunch following along behind, I guess.

DELL: I think there was quite a bunch of them farther back, maybe a mile or so, or two or three miles back. But these were scouting on out in the lead there, a certain number of them. But I don't think that any of them knew exactly how many was there. Whether there was four or five, or what there were of them.

MARCUS: Uh huh. Well this happened probably pretty early in the morning?

DELL: Well I think so, yes, possibly maybe around --- after they had breakfast, maybe an hour or so. And I don't know even what time they would eat breakfast in those days, probably pretty early though, you know.

MARCUS: Yeah, I imagine. Yeah. Well your dad probably hadn't been out very long. But the fact that everybody was around the New Diamond there, or the Old Diamond Ranch rather, makes you think that it would be before they had gotten organized. And they were branding calves in this area here somewhere. That's the reason they were in here, wasn't it?

DELL: Well I don't know as he ever told me exactly what they were doing in this Diamond Valley there. I thought that was his permanent job, staying there and herding those horses in Diamond Valley, you know. But maybe French and the rest of them maybe just came in branding calves, you know.

MARCUS: Yeah, yeah, I read that someplace. I don't know whether that's right or not. But anyway, they got everybody mounted, they had horses enough around fairly close by that they got everybody mounted, including the Chinaman cook. And you dad landed there and he had some things to gather up around there, he thought about them anyway, Dell, didn't he before he left?

DELL: Well I think he had some money, around sixty dollars or something that was in his bed, or his bedroll or somewhere at the bunkhouse. While they was sleeping he went to get that money, and it seemed like quite a lot in those days, sixty dollars, you know. Seems like, possibly today a fellow with that much excitement, he wouldn't stop for sixty dollars, you know.

MARCUS: No, I sure wouldn't, I know good and well. (Laughter) They could have that, you bet. They got mounted up then, and then they took off right up the canyon here.

Dell, how did it happen that the group choosed to go up through the McCoy here? It looked like they might have, could have been running into a trap had the Indians been above them here.

DELL: Well that was about the only way there was out from, they had to either go out that way, or out back through the Indians which way they were coming. There was only the two trails out of the Diamond, back this other way. One was out, what they call the Dauncy Place there, or the Barnes Place down below. And it was

the best and closest way into the "P" Ranch was through the trail up the McCoy. So that was the reason that they get out over top as fast as they could and get away from the Indians.

MARCUS: Well Dell, they had a steep climb to make there for, what would it be, a couple three hundred yards from the creek bottom until they got out through that pass where you're standing right here where the gate is?

DELL: Well yes, that was pretty steep all the way up there. And it was kind of single file, they would have to go single file all the way up the hill there. I believe French went up first, and then the rest of them followed up behind. And he tried to hold them back, but with the one gun that they had, the rifle that he had.

MARCUS: That was probably the reason why somebody wasn't killed going up that trail there. It was steep, and rocky, and as you say single file there. And we went up there last fall, you and I, and we concluded that the Indians would have gotten both of us if they would have been after us, because we had quite a time getting up there.

But getting back to leaving New Diamond now, or Old Diamond, they came right out around the hill there and right up your present road, would it be?

DELL: Yes, right up the road that comes into my place, then right on up to Thompson's. And then there was mostly trail around

there, it wasn't a road all the way, it was just a trail going out over the top. And they got there, why they had to just single file up through there, and I suppose maybe the Indians wasn't close enough at that time either maybe too, or had guns that would shoot that far maybe. Maybe Pete French was holding them back far enough with that large a gun too, that they couldn't get closer.

MARCUS: Well they got a Chinaman, the cook there, he, something happened to him along the route somewhere, didn't it?

DELL: Well he fell off his horse. He just had a, the horse they caught for him had a riata put on the horse, and then a loop around his nose. Then he fell off just about where I live today, right here. And so after he had fell off the horse, why Coon Smith had lost his horse, maybe shot or something, down farther below, and he was afoot. But when that horse came by him, why he grabbed the riata and hung on to that there, and the horse followed the other fellows right on up over the hill. And he stayed with the rope until he got up the hill. And from there on I think he rode that horse, from there on into Fort Harney or "P" Ranch or somewhere.

MARCUS: He got right on him first chance he got. Well Dell, I believe that your dad jumped off of his horse, I believe one of you boys told me here. He got hold of his tail, his saddle was loose and he was sliding back, and he just jumped off and got a hold of the horse's tail, and he walked up to save his horse.

Is that right?

DELL: Yes, I believe there was something to that maybe. It was a pretty steep trail, you see, and he hadn't cinched his saddle probably in the excitement or something. And he jumped off and just kind of grabbed the horse by the tail and followed him to the top of the hill. That's how he come to be fixing his saddle on top there, he was setting it and re-cinched it, when he was shot there.

MARCUS: Well he, there was only one shot up there, and this Indian did pretty good. He got your dad and his horse too, didn't he?

DELL: Yes. He shot my father through the hip, and then went on through and killed the horse. But there could have been other shots, you know, from there that possibly --- but he said he didn't know whether there was anymore shots or not himself. And he didn't know how many there was there or anything, according to that. He said he was pretty well excited.

MARCUS: Well, that's pretty understandable, isn't it?

DELL: You bet, yeah.

MARCUS: You bet. All he would be thinking about would be getting up over that hill and getting away of course, wouldn't it? Well he was left afoot then?

DELL: Well yes, he rode in behind one of the fellows from there on into the "P" Ranch. And I don't know which one it was, it



seemed to me like he said Rube --- for a first name it was Rube something, but I can't remember who the fellow was. There was several of them there, and names, I didn't know any of them, only French's name to remember. Because he was, his name has been brought up quite often all during my life, you know.

MARCUS: Sure. And you were well acquainted with this, what we'll call the Frazier Trail here, Dell. When you were a youngster you and your dad traveled that a lot, didn't you?

DELL: Well yes, in later years my father stacked all the hay on what they call the Lamb Ranch, before any settlers were in there outside of Bub Smyth and Fred Smyth, and the two Hortons. And every, once a week approximately either a Sunday or something, when we wasn't a haying, my father and I would go up that hill and go on up where Ruby Springs and that was, a fishing up in there, you see. MARCUS: Uh huh.

DELL: And that's how he come to tell me this stuff, what happened there and all.

MARCUS: He used to drive cattle up in there. You've driven cattle up and down that trail a lot too, haven't you?

DELL: Oh lordy, many years I have, yes.

MARCUS: Yes, yeah.

DELL: I have lived in Hines there, yes.

MARCUS: Thank you Dell for a very exciting and interesting story.

Now we will call on Fred to continue.

I'm talking to Fred Witzel, Fred is the oldest of the two boys that we're visiting here with. And Fred is one of the first triplets born in Harney County. I think there have been two sets of triplets, or White children born in Harney County, and Fred is one of the first ones. So Fred ---

SIDE B

MARCUS: So Fred, would you like to add a little to Dell's story here? You were telling me Fred, that there were some big sagebrush up there west of the present schoolhouse, it's probably the only thing that saved your dad there.

FRED WITZEL: Yes. The sagebrush was as high as a man on a horse across there. There was big sagebrush clear to the Diamond Ranch. From Diamond Point, clear across to Diamond Ranch, and then around up in the McCoy there was big sagebrush a ways.

MARCUS: It's kind of hard to believe now isn't it, to see some of the finest meadows in Harney County growing at the same place?

FRED: Why yes.

MARCUS: Well then he outran the Indians down through this brush and went on to New Diamond, and on to Otley, or to the Old Diamond and on to Otley. Were pretty darn close to it when he got there.

FRED: Well I imagine they was. I never heard him say just how close they was. But I imagine they was pretty close. Because French got the gun and come up on the corral fence, a setting on

a post, and they kind of hugged me in his back until the boys got the horses. And an Indian shot the post off right from under him.

MARCUS: It really dumped him, huh?

FRED: Yeah. Didn't take him long to get down off of that post.

MARCUS: I suppose not. That would shake you up too, wouldn't it?

Then they got saddled up there, and then they took off and right up the McCoy Creek there, and went out what we call the Frazier Trail now, Fred. They would have gone right through where Leon Thompson's house is now probably.

FRED: Yeah, that's right.

MARCUS: Well your dad just got up on top there and was cinching up his horse, when he got shot, wasn't he?

FRED: That's right. The Indians was down below under the hill. And they were shooting up, and the same bullet that hit him, and that killed his horse.

MARCUS: Did his horse die right there?

FRED: No, his horse went around the hill, and it was probably pretty near a quarter of a mile, and died. He took his saddle off of him, and they packed his saddle and put it under the rimrock there. And from there he rode on ... to Krumbo, and they got a fresh horse at Krumbo.

MARCUS: Well they must have had their, at the Krumbo then they must have had a ranch started there at that time, a little headquarters of some sort, huh?

FRED: Well I imagine they did have a ranch started there.

MARCUS: At least the ---

FRED: There used to be, on up into Krumbo there used be an alfalfa --- I heard him say. But when we first come over here, why there was a pretty good sized headquarters built there.

MARCUS: Oh, now that's what's flooded by the Krumbo Reservoir now?

FRED: Yeah, part of it is.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

FRED: Part of it is flooded.

MARCUS: Well the side of the buildings is pretty well covered by water there too, aren't they Fred? Are they ---

FRED: Yes, it is now.

MARCUS: As I remember, Krumbo was. Well then he got --- anyway he got a horse there, where they had some horses in the field, or what happened.

FRED: Yeah.

MARCUS: And then they went back up to Krumbo.

FRED: Well see they went back, and they got the horses there at Krumbo. And then they went across there, there is an old road that goes across to Krumbo to the Knox Spring. And from there up to the Juniper Field, went across into the Juniper Field there somewhere, and across to the "P" Ranch. I don't know just where they crossed at, but through there someplace.

MARCUS: It would have been quite a little trip, that would all be full of water in through there too, wouldn't it?

FRED: Well I imagine at that time of year there was quite a lot of water in there.

MARCUS: Yes. Well now Fred, with somebody with details, after you got up out of Krumbo there to go to Harney, wouldn't there?

FRED: Yeah, a man by the name of Bollenbaugh. And he crossed right, come right down on the south side of Krumbo, and crossed somewhere close to where the bridge crosses here by the ranch where I live now. And across to Jack Mountain, and down to Sand Reef, and from there around to Harney City.

MARCUS: Well in other words, he came right through about where you are living now.

FRED: Well somewhere right here close, I imagine.

MARCUS: Probably on the west side of the valley.

FRED: Yeah, I imagine somewhere close here.

MARCUS: Well he had a pretty good lead on the rest of the group. Did he bring back help? Did you ever hear anything about that?

FRED: No, I don't. I never heard Dad say whether he brought any --- mentioning anything about bringing back help, which I don't think he did.

MARCUS: Uh huh. Well then your dad changed horses at the "P" Ranch again. I think he was riding bare back all this time, wasn't he Fred?

FRED: Well he was riding bare back with just a big blanket thrown over the horse, with a rope or strap around it to hold it on. And he would have been, rode bare back just on that blanket.

MARCUS: That's from the "P" Ranch clear to Fort Harney.

FRED: Clear from the "P" Ranch to Fort Harney.

MARCUS: Well Fred, there must have been some more people at the "P" Ranch, don't you suppose? They had, that was kind of the headquarters, he worked quite a crew of men around here.

FRED: Well, I think they was, the way he talked. There was several men there at the "P" Ranch.

MARCUS: Yes, you would think so. Well Fred, getting back to their trip along through by Knox Springs, and that country there, they run onto a couple guys with a wagon in there, didn't they?

FRED: Well, I never heard him say anything about catching up with a wagon.

MARCUS: Uh huh. According to Dave Shirk's, it's in his book, "The Cattle Drive of David Shirk," he was living at the Home Creek at the time. And he said that they got these two fellows out of the wagons and they joined Pete French's group and went to the "P" Ranch. But instead of going to Harney, Fort Harney, they decided to go up through Catlow Valley and join Shirk over at Home Creek.

FRED: Yeah, I've heard that.

MARCUS: And then they were later killed by the Indians when they came back to get their belongings. But Pete French's group left

the valley, Fred, here near Frenchglen, didn't they, and went up on Jack Mountain?

FRED: Yes. They went up on top of the, by Peanut Lake, and across by Irish Lake, and down by ---

MARCUS: By the Hot Springs there.

FRED: Down by the Hot Spring. And between the two lakes ---

MARCUS: What time did they get there to the Sand Reef then, Fred?

FRED: Well they got there to the Sand Reef there, I imagine way before daylight. On account of they lit matches to see whether there had been any Indians there ahead of them or not.

MARCUS: We forgot to mention this, the purpose of getting up on the mountain was to, they thought that the Indians were down here in the valley. Had they come right on down and left the valley down here where they normally would, they would probably butted right into them down there.

FRED: I imagine they would. They thought maybe they might be Indians in the valley, so they got out on top.

MARCUS: And they thought maybe they could have gotten across the Sand Reef ahead of them. That was the reason for looking for tracks.

FRED: Yeah.

MARCUS: Well they didn't find any?

FRED: They didn't find any.

MARCUS: I think your dad said they rested about twenty minutes

there at the Sand Reef, and then they started on toward Harney.

FRED: Yeah, something like that, around twenty minutes, and then they started on down to Harney City, went through by the Wright's Point. And from Wright's Point right on north towards Harney City.

MARCUS: Well that was quite a ride too, Fred.

FRED: I imagine it was. I imagine it must be eighteen, or twenty miles across there.

MARCUS: Oh yes, it would be easy that. And a lot of it would be water too.

FRED: Oh yeah, I imagine, that time of year.

MARCUS: You bet, it would be a tough ride. With a shot in the hip, and riding with that blanket strapped onto a horse, you'd have to be pretty tough to survive that.

FRED: I imagine. Said his hip was broke.

MARCUS: Oh, it broke the bone in his ---

FRED: Well that's what he ---

MARCUS: Oh golly, he was in terrible shape, wasn't he? And then he spent quite awhile around there at the hospital at the Fort in ---

FRED: Yeah, I imagine he did.

MARCUS: Yes.

FRED: Well he talked like he was there quite a long time, at the Fort.



MARCUS: Well he didn't come back to work for Pete French then?

FRED: No. Never did hear him say anything about it. If he did, why it was a long time after that, that he did.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

FRED: He went from there to, down below John Day, or down, I think it was Hay Creek where his dad lived.

MARCUS: Oh, yes. Uh huh.

FRED: Went down there for awhile.

MARCUS: Did that wound ever bother your father in later years? Did he ever complain of it? Probably not.

FRED: Oh yes, his hip always hurt him.

MARCUS: It always bothered him.

FRED: In later years.

MARCUS: Well thank you Fred, for a real good story here. And I know that a lot of people are going to enjoy it.

This a story by Coon Smith who arrived in Harney County here just in time to get involved in this Indian War, and he gets back, comes, or goes up to Happy Valley and runs into the Indians and he comes back and gets with Pete French's outfit at the old Diamond Ranch, and we'll start him out from there. And he said that --- find a place here to start ---

The Indians scattered when the boys charged them, some went toward the swamp, some went up over the point toward the Diamond Ranch. Pete French tried to run his saddle horses out ahead of

him.

The Chinaman was so scared that he literally cried before we left the ranch. The three of us held our horses down until the Indians crowded us so close that we had to let our horses run ahead. Pete French run off and left us as he had the best horse.

The Chinaman and I rode side by side until the Chinaman's horse stumbled with him. The Chinaman wasn't a very good rider and as his horse stumbled he threw his arms around the horses's neck. I expect the horse kicked this Chinaman senseless, because if he hollered or even spoke a word I would have heard him.

As the Indians shot twice at me with an old copper breach Henry rifle, I looked back. The dust was so thick that I could hardly see anything. I went on, and as I turned to the right to cross McCoy Creek I saw an Indian jump off his horse, squat down and rest his gun on his knee. Several shots were fired at me, but all of them missed. By this time my horse was so near given out that I couldn't beat him out of a trot. I intended to, led him to the willows as soon as I got across McCoy Creek.

The Creek was high, up to the middle of my horse's sides. When I got across I was on the wrong side of the creek, there was no willows to get into. I got off my horse, as he was run down and couldn't go any farther. I decided to try to get into the rimrocks. I had my gun and powder canteen with me.

I didn't think I had a chance to get away from the Indians.

I intended to kill all the Indians that I could, but saved the last bullet for myself so I wouldn't be tortured by the Indians.

By this time the others had gotten up on the top of the McCoy Rim. Pete French, Bill Lambert and John Witzel had stopped and were shooting back at the Indians. Pete French kept hollering, "Run Smithy run."

About this time the Chinaman's horse came running past me with about twenty feet of rope dragging on the ground. I grabbed the rope and pulled in on him. The Indians were shooting at me and closest bullet came to about a foot and a half from my boot. The rest went zinging past me very close.

I managed to get the Chinaman's horse, get on the Chinaman's horse, and ride up to the McCoy Rim. When the others saw that I was about to make it they started on. John Witzel had been standing, holding Pete French's horse while he was shooting back at the Indians.

As Witzel put his foot into the stirrup to leave, a bullet, a needle bullet, passed through the fleshing part of his hip bones and the same bullet raced forward into the breast of his horse. The horse ran about a hundred and fifty yards and fell dead.

John Witzel got on a horse behind one of the other boys and we all rode to Krumbo. On the way John Witzel cried and said that he had blood in his boots. Tom Dickerson and Hickerson were camped at Krumbo, and Witzel got a horse from them to ride.

Dickerson and Hickerson went on with us.

We all went to the "P" Ranch and there we separated. Hickerson, Hickerson's boy and I went to Camp Creek in Catlow Valley. And Pete French, John Witzel, and Joe O'Neal went to Fort Harney and made a return to Camp Creek.

By the night of June the 14th, 1878, I had ridden a hundred miles that day. The Indians did not follow us any farther than to the McCoy Creek in Diamond Valley. One Indian was killed there.

The Indians got my horse that I left at McCoy Creek. I heard once that he was at Fort Bidwell. Rye Smyth had some horses there and as he was going after his, I told him to bring back mine, and I would pay him. Well he brought back his own horses but left mine there. I never saw him again. He was a black horse and I called him Nigger. The Indians got my saddle and bridle.

Now Coon Smith came back and settled in Happy Valley and started Coontown. And they were pretty successful there with a little operation of taking care of the public and that, and raised two children, Harry and Carry. And Coon Smith died in 1923, and left this diary that he had handwritten, and it has been typed up by Myrtle Hutchinson down in the valley down at Ontario, at Nyssa.

But anyway, it's a real good story. I hope you enjoyed this.

This is Marion Louie's story about the Indian War. I taped this with her back out here at the Paiute Reservation in about 1972 I think. And she was born in Drewsey in 1901, and spent her

life around here. And she tells now about the Indian War of '78. And I think after you listen to her just a little, you will be able to kind of understand. She is a little hard to understand, but after awhile you can get with her.

MARION LOUIE: And only this old Tabby was left here, and another young guy, and Scarface Charlie, they were stayed here, but the one got the horses. They went, beyond Juntura way back below there somewhere. Some Indians were, they were fishing, camping there, and some of the Agency. So they went down there, no one there, but nothing but this salmon spreaded on the, where they drying salmon. There were a lot of them.

They went there, no one there, all been gone. Only one old lady was walking around crying. So they went to meet that old lady. Old lady came and she was so glad, she told them, everybody already went with the Bannocks, I'm only left. He had nothing, no horse, nothing.

So my father-in-law he stopped there and she had a two salmon in her carrier, something, to go follow that track, that old lady.

So they stopped and they stayed over night with her. And she making a, kind of a saddle with a something, put it in a canvas to make a saddle or something, to ride on a horse. They give her one horse the next day. So they went, follow that track around in the Crowley, you know where that Crowley is?

MARCUS: You bet.

MARION: Around there on the other side.

MARCUS: Uh huh, there in Barren Valley.

MARION: Uh huh. And any houses they see, they destroyed it, the Bannock all around there. And this ... Johnson, they had nothing, they were afoot, they were afoot following the others. This one were with these Bannocks first, the one that was promised.

And my father-in-law, they were following, and they stopped by them, they were sitting under the juniper tree. They had a child, died, the two of them, our Charlie is passed away, we're going to put it somewhere, then we going to go on. So they just went on, follow those others. Way around, in this other Steens Mountain, there where they were gathered, all these Bannock Indians, some of these people here.

And the soldiers give a note to Egan. The one that gets to be left there, the white man give him a note to go and get this note and show to them. But those Bannock Indians go on, and they return these Malheur Indians back to here again, but they weren't.

They keep going with them, because they were fear we going to do something to you if you don't. So they come down from there toward Coontown. I guess you know where Coontown is?

MARCUS: Yes, uh huh, Happy Valley.

MARION: He will come, Happy Valley, he will come into that, all these Indians. And my father-in-law and the wife they will keep on following. Here is Blind Jimmy, I guess you know Blind Jimmy?

MARCUS: Uh huh.

MARION: He was coming on, following, on foot, they know him that he was there coming, following the others. Then they come to there into Smyths. You know where the Smyths are? I guess a building on a site which you see where the house was burnt on the little ---

MARCUS: Uh huh, there on Riddle Creek.

MARION: Uh huh. They come there, the Bannocks. They surround the building because they know that somebody is there, the people is there. They saw in the building, and the man from upstairs, I guess, he shoot down through the windows, shoot at them. He shoot two man, the head man got shot. And the one shot on his heel.

And when they couldn't do anything, they burned the house. I guess all this little children with the mother went in the cellar, you know, they crawl in there just trying to hide. But the man was fighting alone in the house. That's what my father-in-law story. Then the man, when they burned this building, start to burn, the man he just jump out of window from above, upstairs. His clothes was already start to burning. Come down to the ground, lay on the, fell on the ground. There they just hand him, he shot him I suppose, and a whole bunch of them.

And my father-in-law he heard something, kind of scream, the smoke just went to the cellar, you know, when they were in there. The smoke goes in there, and when the children are, the mother

must be smothered with the smoke, she kind of hollering something, hollering way in, he heard it. When the father was killed he had all kinds of money in his pocket, he said, this man. But he is not even attention to the money, only after that man. And the one guy, he knows about money, because he stick his hand in his pocket. He took a gold, used to have gold money. He had a lot of those things out of his pocket, he kept it. And this other, the other Indian died right there where he got shot. But the other one, the one that had a shot on heel, he took him up there on the hill, you know how they just murmuring, these people crying, things like that. And the one with the dead man, he took him up, you know where the little castle going around the little hill, he buried him there. And my father-in-law's, brother-in-law, Indian cap they call, I don't know how he was --- he already learned drinking from Harney because he was one of them there. He took up drink somewhere, he was a real drunk, laying around under the tree. He said I couldn't do anything, you better go follow whatever you want to do with these Indians. And a bunch of men, I guess they went toward Diamond, toward Diamond when the others were still here. They went on toward Diamond and they made a wagon, hauling a barrel up of whiskey, a big keg you know, a big kegs, and small, all kind size. They saw them, they were, went after them, toward them and those men saw two white guys, saw them unhitch their wagon. They got on this work horse, they got on a



horse and leave all these whole things there.

They run toward Diamond, and when they come into the wagon, they stopped there, and they breaking all this kegs, whiskey, let it just drain every way, they didn't drink it, maybe they don't know what that was. So after that they went on again, after they destroy this whiskey they went on. Just old guy keep a going, keep a going to Diamond carrying this message what the Indians are done, coming after them. They went on to Diamond.

Just in time, I guess, they having a dinner or something, all the workers must be there in Diamond. There was a Chinaman, a Chinaman was a cook. And this Indian keep on following them, those are the ones that took off from the wagon. They got there to Diamond where they were going to have a dinner. They was just about have their lunch, everything was on, spread on big canvas on a flat ground. And everything was already set up, the food was on there. They saw this Indians coming, they all got onto their horses and they run on toward this way.

The Indians come there, they got there where they run off. And I guess there is another guy with a wife, must be two couples, because keep way on a hill, they had a dog with them but the dog didn't bark. Some of these Indians saw that dog but they didn't tell this others. The dog was sitting, they must be hiding in the brush. But all these others got on their horse, they run. And these Bannock Indians used to shake all the ... all over. And the

Chinaman cook was there left.

Finally was a mule in a corral, only one mule left. The Chinaman instead of --- he was hiding himself. He got under the mule, he got on the mule and followed these other guys, the ones that run away. You know how the mule runs, how fast. He trying to whip the mule, he just gallops slowly. Here they just a catching him up.

Chinaman tried to whip his horse, and he fell off of the mule. And some of the, they didn't do anything, they just stop by him and go on after the others. And the last came, the last man came that shot the Chinaman. And they went, follow on with others. The mule just keep on following slowly toward, how they call it ---

MARCUS: Well they went up McCoy Creek there toward "P" Ranch.

MARION: Yeah, toward "P" Ranch, they going.

MARCUS: French ---

MARION: Yeah.

MARCUS: Yeah, and then John Witzel was shot and ---

MARION: Yeah, he got a shot on his leg or somewhere.

MARCUS: Supposed to be up on top of the hill, uh huh.

MARION: That's what the --- that was, the Bannock done all these things. Make us lost this big reservation. We were, our people would be ... with this Bannock Indians. If they turn back, nothing would be happen.

MARCUS: No.

MARION: Because everything was already helping at Beulah. They starting to school, everything, it happen.

MARCUS: Well your people were treated just like the Bannocks then when they finally caught them over here by Battle Mountain. They really ---

MARION: Yeah.

MARCUS: --- they really made it rough for them then, didn't they?

MARION: Yeah, they were all gathered with these, mixed up with the Bannock Indians. Go around, go around Riley, you know.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

MARION: Just around there, and destroying things, clear to Pendleton. They was going to go to Pendleton and let those people be with them, but they wouldn't.

MARCUS: Yeah, the Umatilla.

MARION: Umatilla Indians.

MARCUS: Wouldn't join them.

MARION: They were already well off. They try to send our people back, he wouldn't do, he would keep a going. That's how they got in trouble with them also. Many are killed I guess. That's why they keep this Egan.

MARCUS: Yeah, he was killed up there around ... he was wounded out here on Silver Creek.

MARION: Uh huh. They already warn him, they already warned him

that's why they get him, uh huh.

MARCUS: Well getting back to the early days of Chief Louie, you read these early diaries here, and there was very little game in this country at one time. Did you ever hear Chief Louie say anything about scarcity of game? Here in the '50's they tell about coming through here and some of them eat their horses. ... and some of the other fellows, and I have their diaries, and they just can't find any game. The country undoubtedly dried up at one time and the Sand Reef blew in down here, and that's when the buffalo perished in the mud trying to get water down there below Sod House Springs. In 1931 we dug out a wagon load of buffalo skulls when the lake --- that's about the driest the lake has been in our day anyway.

MARION: Yeah.

MARCUS: And we found buffalo skulls, and on toward The Narrows in farming there, I have dug out buffalo skulls there. But did he ever, he told you about buffalo I think, didn't he?

MARION: Yeah, he told us.

MARCUS: He told this morning that ---

MARION: Yeah, buffalo was here in the valley.

MARCUS: Yeah, there was buffalo in here.

MARION: And those, the summertime some of the buffalo goes into the thicket, and they comes down to valley again.

MARCUS: Yeah.

MARION: And this old Tabby, when he was a young age boy, he saw there were nothing but Paiute Tribe here in Harney Valley. Way back time.

MARCUS: Yes.

MARION: And a long this way a man, he had a real bad witch doctor of Indians. His wife was dead and he had one son. And all this ... and he sent his boy to go look for some woodpecker, you know how the nest are in a tree.

MARCUS: Yeah.

MARION: He sent him out there to kill some, to look for some. And that young boy went, I guess he climb in the tree and stick his hand into the hole. There was a snake in there, and the snake just a bite his hand, it swell up. He couldn't get his hand out, he was a hanging in that hole, his wrist was all swell up. He was hanging there, and his father was missing him for around about three or four days. He was a looking for him, looking for him, finally he found his son was hanging up dead. He just cried, cried all summer long, crying for his son. I don't know why, he was talking to his people, crying. Those time, in the falls, in ripe time of the seeds, seed, you know that black seed what they call "Whaddi", that's what they call "Whaddi", they call "Whaddi" for this valley here.

MARCUS: Oh, uh huh.

MARION: "And that day I'm going to destroy all my people," he

said to his people. "I'm going to destroy." And in the fall when they gathering up all this seed he --- all the people were lying in their bed dead, he was a real witch doctor.

MARCUS: He really did the job then, yeah.

MARION: Yeah, kill a lot of people. When this old Tabby was a little boy. He didn't get to die, he knows about it. And the second time, do the same thing, he said the same thing, the second year. All people the same thing, they dying off. He was still crying.

That day my father-in-law's mother were one of the dead in the second death. They don't know, they were little, him and their sister and brother when the mother died. All the others died, just a few people that's left.

MARCUS: That happened here in Harney County?

MARION: Here in Harney County, by the lake.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

MARION: Then the people, a big mans they decided they going to kill that man. He has his living place by himself. There he was a sitting by the fire, they took all their bow and arrow, they went to him. They tried to shot him, they couldn't do nothing. After they run out there, their equipment ... They just grab him, grab him and tell the others put this wood by his fire, make a big fire, we're going to throw him in there.

So they grab him, the witch doctor, they grab him a bunch of

mans, throw him in the fire. Yet he don't die, he just keep on holding him in fire. And they said his body was just sounding like a gun. He was a real witch doctor.

MARCUS: He was a good one, wasn't he?

MARION: Yeah, that's how they destroyed him, so they leave the rest, after they done to him. Oh, he destroy his own people. They were many, that was the second death, this old Tabby was kind of a big boy, he remembers everything. He used to name the names, those man's names, but I forget.

MARCUS: Yeah.

MARION: All these old guys sitting together and tells story one another how they were doing, and how this people were living in the wintertime, all in the country. Some live in a cave, pretty tough it out.

MARCUS: You bet.

MARION: Living on the rabbit, things like that.

MARCUS: Well now they did a lot of fishing down on the lake here too.

MARION: Yeah, you know where that, on this, how they call it, around in The Narrows.

MARCUS: Yes.

MARION: I didn't see, but he said the water just come from underneath of the hill or something.

MARCUS: Yeah, Sod House Spring.

MARION: A kind of spring, and the water just come swift under.

MARCUS: I live a half a mile away from that Sod House Spring, that's the place.

MARION: Yeah, that's why the man folks during the wintertime, because they got nothing to wear. In the wintertime the women, women folks carry a lot of sagebrush wood to build fire to keep the men folks get warm and get more fish. That's how they catching fish. Some catch enough fish, and they just leave ... warm in the fire and go get more fish. That's why they living on fish in the wintertime.

MARCUS: When I was a kid there was a walk built out in that Sod House Spring where we're talking of, it was down from spring that you're relating here.

MARION: Uh huh.

MARCUS: And we would take a ladder, or a lantern and at night and go out and sit on the end of this walk and take a ... and you could just fill a wash tub full of fish, they would come up to that light and just ... them out.

MARION: Uh huh.

MARCUS: Yeah.

MAN: ...

MARCUS: You see then the Sand Reef down below The Narrows, you've been across there?

MARION: Yeah, soft.



MARCUS: Yeah, it was in, you see, and it held Malheur Lake, it was ten or fifteen feet deeper than it was after this went out, which I guess went out in '83 I think. And Mart Brenton, you remember Mart Brenton?

MARION: Yeah.

MARCUS: He's the guy that was supposed to kick the Sand Reef through. You see Malheur Lake drains into Harney.

MARION: Uh huh.

MARCUS: So after that happened then, it lowered the, Malheur Lake never filled up again as high as it was at that time.

MARION: Oh.

MARCUS: I'll tell you a little more about Mrs. Louie, I was a little stingy with my tape here. But anyway, she married Chief Louie's son, and some of you older folks remember him. We have some pictures of him riding in the parade.

And she raised a lot of boys and girls here. They're, most of them I guess are out here at the reservation I guess, I don't know them, only one, and it was Justine, a real fine woman. She used to spend quite a lot of time with her mother. We took Mrs. Louie and Justine over to Drewsey a time or two. And she told about her early days there. We took her to school there, and she told the school kids about living in Drewsey.

And she saw the first Negro person that was living there in Drewsey, and said it liked to scared her to death. And then

different stories about a horse falling in a well. And about the smallpox hit Drewsey, the Indians would go jump off the bridge into the river there in the wintertime, and of course that made short order for them then, that finished them up for sure.

And they said they put, the old timers said they would put the Indians on a pack horse and go back out to the north there someplace and come back without an Indian. And so I asked Mrs. Louie, I said, "Well what did they do with those fellows?" Well she said there was a big, big crevices up there in the rims, and they would take them up there and just dump them off into these crevices. I don't know if anybody ever found that or not.

(END OF TAPE)

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