

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #412 - Sides A/B

Subject: Dell Witzel

Date: October 8, 1994

Place: Burns, Oregon

Interviewer: Edward Gray

EDWARD GRAY: ... date is this?

DELL WITZEL: The 6th, 7th, 8th.

EDWARD: 8th? This is Ed Gray with Dell Witzel, October 8th, 1994 in Burns, Oregon, in reference to the death of Pete French. And we'll be talking a little bit about that. Now Dell, when was your dad born, do you know, recall?

DELL: No, I couldn't say offhand, no.

EDWARD: About when did he die?

DELL: He died somewhere around, about '44, sometime.

EDWARD: '44. He worked for Pete French?

DELL: When he was 17 years old.

EDWARD: John Witzel, your father.

DELL: Yes. He was working there when the Indians broke out, the war.

EDWARD: 1878. Was he working for Pete French in 1878?

DELL: He was working there when the --- I couldn't say whether that was the date, must have been the date when the Indians come in there.

EDWARD: Around July 1878, at Diamond Valley.

DELL: At Diamond Valley.

EDWARD: Was your father working for Pete French at the Diamond Ranch?

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: At 17 years old. What was he doing, do you know? Did he ever tell you?

DELL: He was herding the horses for him out there.

EDWARD: Did he ever mention how many horses Pete French had?

DELL: He said there must have been 35, 40 head of horses in that bunch there. The horses that they used from the P Ranch back and forth, there all over. And he was out there herding them when them Indians come in there, and he seen them Indians there, and they was trying to steal the horses. They were scouts that come in before the --- that come in there. And he got them back to the ranch; he was about a half a mile from the ranch with them. And he brought them back to the ranch there and they corralled them. Then is when they began to get their horses to leave there. And they all got their horses and started up the, get out, over the trail to go to the P Ranch. And when they got on top of the hill there, and that was in Diamond there. That's when Pete French had the rifle and held them back until almost all of them got up there. There was a Chinaman in the bunch, he got killed, he was bareback on the horse and fell off and they put him in under a culvert there, hidden out, but they found him and scalped him there.

EDWARD: They found him.

DELL: And it was --- I don't think that other feller that --- he was, didn't have a horse ... Coon Smyth, and this horse and the Chinaman fell off that horse, he just had a rope, a lariat on the loop, a loop on his nose. When he fell off, why --- I just said his name there then ---

EDWARD: Smyth.

DELL: Smyth. He got a hold of that rope, and that horse was ... and them others when they was running and going over the hill. And he held to that rope and stayed with him, and got up the hill on that horse.

EDWARD: Did your father ever mention anything about when he first saw the Sod House Ranch? What did your father say, that you recall Dell, about the Sod House Ranch?

DELL: Well I couldn't say when he moved up to --- I was only a baby at the time that he moved to The Narrows there. And that was just 3 or 4 miles from there, you know.

EDWARD: Right. You --- oh, okay. After the 1878, the Indian uprising, did your father work for Pete French a long time after?

DELL: Never did work for Pete French after this.

EDWARD: Oh I see, I see. Okay, I didn't know that, didn't know that. Alright ---

DELL: After the ranch was taken over by Swift and Company he worked there, back there, and built roads and stuff for them, you know, contracted. He was a contractor and built roads, and haying for that outfit for 14, 15 years. Except when the hay come in the summer, and built after haying, he built roads and stuff. He built that road down through the Sagebrush Field there then.

EDWARD: Okay, I want to get to that a little bit later, Dell. So he quit Pete French probably in 1878, after the Indian War.

DELL: Yep.

EDWARD: Okay. Then we went off in --- I don't know what he did.

DELL: He worked, he went back and forth probably worked at different places from John Day, Canyon City, over to Burns around there.

EDWARD: Canyon City. Okay.

DELL: His mother was the first white woman that was ever buried in the, Canyon City.

EDWARD: Oh. When did your father get married?

DELL: Well I don't know, probably when he was ... I don't never remember that.

EDWARD: Okay, no problem. Now you say you were born in Burns in, August 8th, yeah, 1901.

DELL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: And then your family moved to the Reineman place?

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: Why did, why did they do that, do you know ...?

DELL: I think they found out that down toward The Narrows, and out through there, there was easier winters than they were around Burns here. They used to have some hard winters here. More snow than ... have today.

EDWARD: And cold.

DELL: That's the reason he moved down to The Narrows, just because --- he had cattle and stuff and he figured that would be, maybe a better range or something off in there, around. I don't know just why.

EDWARD: That was about when you were born he moved down there.

DELL: I was about a year old when he moved down there.

EDWARD: Oh wait a minute, what was your mom's name?

DELL: Morandy.

EDWARD: Brandy?

DELL: Morandy.

EDWARD: Morandy? Boy, that's a neat name, Morandy.

DELL: Yes, it ...

EDWARD: That's an unusual name for that long ago.

DELL: Yes it is.

EDWARD: It is.

DELL: Yeah. I've --- I think I've seen one woman or something that had the same name after, since then, through my life.

EDWARD: Never heard of that. I've talked to four or five hundred people, old timers; I've

never heard that. That's a new name, that's a modern name. That's a neat name. Anyway, so you were born in 1901. About 1902 your dad, John and Mom, Morandy, went down and were on the Reineman place.

DELL: Lived there, leased that, and then lived there, yes.

EDWARD: Albert Reineman, that was his name, the guy that had that place.

DELL: I wouldn't say what his first name was; I was too young to remember that.

EDWARD: Yeah, Albert.

DELL: Because they had those places leased. I don't know whether he leased it year by year, or whether he leased it for several years. But he had, we lived there on that until around --- I was about 8, 10 years old when they went to The Narrows, moved into The Narrows and I went to school from there.

EDWARD: What do you mean --- okay, about 1912 you left the Reineman place and moved to the town of Narrows?

DELL: Uh huh, yes.

EDWARD: What the heck did your dad do in the town of Narrow?

DELL: Well he just moved there so the kids could go to school. I had some brothers and sisters and we all went to school there. I have a little pamphlet of when I went, my first year to school. Told the teacher's name, all the kids, ...

EDWARD: Yeah, I've seen those, yeah. Well what the heck was, how did your dad make a living in Narrows?

DELL: Well now he didn't live right in The Narrows, he was out a working, he was contracting somewhere with haying, or ditch work or something, you see. And the family lived there. And of course in the wintertime when you didn't do anything, he lived there at home at The Narrows.

EDWARD: Do you remember ---

DELL: He had cattle, he run cattle at the same time though. And maybe he still had to run the place, leased maybe, and fed them cattle and stuff from there, was only 3 or 4 miles back down there.

EDWARD: Of course that was nothing to ride 3 or 4 miles.

DELL: No, no, not at that time, no.

EDWARD: Now let's say you were approximately 10 years old, and that was 1911, 1912, what do you --- do you remember the George Simmons place?

DELL: Yes I do.

EDWARD: Was that in Narrow?

DELL: That was Dixon's, wasn't it, the place of... Because the, Dixon was living right close to them, to us there. And there was a Taylor Simmons, they were brothers.

EDWARD: Brothers. No, George was there.

DELL: Well now maybe Dick's name might have been George.

EDWARD: Oh, I see what you mean.

DELL: Yeah, maybe it was a nickname.

EDWARD: What about George Cawlfeld?

DELL: I know him well, he lived at The Narrows. He run a saloon there, and he worked for Charlie Haines at the store there, for years there.

EDWARD: Cawlfeld was married to a Simmons.

DELL: Cawlfeld?

EDWARD: Yeah.

DELL: Nope.

EDWARD: I think.

DELL: Not George.

EDWARD: Not George. Does that look familiar by any chance? I know it's a poor

picture. I'm showing Dell a picture of supposedly George Cawfield's house at The Narrows in 1906. That's ---

DELL: Yes, that could be, yes.

EDWARD: It's hard to tell with it. It's a very poor --- I've got a better, I've got the real picture at home, in Eugene.

DELL: Yes, yes. But this is Alva Springer and Lewis --- there is Lewis --- oh wait. Lewis Springer is over here somewhere. And Alva is over here, and Eddie Springer is over here. And Eddie is holding little Wilbur. Right there, there is Eddie Springer. But that's supposedly the George Cawfield house.

DELL: What year was that taken?

EDWARD: 1906. You might be in there. (Laughter)

DELL: Could be all right.

EDWARD: Yeah.

DELL: They just lived --- oh you might say a couple of blocks from where we lived there.

EDWARD: Right, right.

DELL: Yeah. Of course that --- had two girls and one boy, I went to school with them.

EDWARD: Now there is Lewis Springer.

DELL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Eddie Springer, Alva Springer. They're doing something there. Somebody said that's Pete French, and they're celebrating that he is dead. (Laughter)

DELL: That could be, I don't know.

EDWARD: Okay. When you were there around 10 years old, and you got a great memory, Dell, you know, and that's good. Did any of these old homesteaders say anything about Pete French, do you recall anything?

DELL: Well you know I had the understanding when I was a kid, back, I don't know where

I get this from, maybe old timers talk or something, that Pete French was running all the fellows that had, the small guys, it was --- made it up, his mind, that he was going to --- they had homesteads or anything, he was going to put them out and kick that ... up there. And there was kind of a talk between all of them they were going to have to do something about that. Now I understood maybe that they all ... they would have to kill him. And it finally wound up that Oliver done it. Now I was just kind of, my belief of that. I don't know how true that was.

EDWARD: Did you ever hear --- I mean you knew all these old timers?

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: I mean you knew them, you knew the Springer's, and the Dunn's, and the Reineman's and all those people.

DELL: Now Reineman's never were here at that time, that's when they leased that place, they went to California or off somewhere, I don't know where. But maybe they come back once a year.

EDWARD: Yeah.

DELL: And just in there. But Dunn's, we lived right close to them, we was neighbors, visit back and forth when we were kids. Went to school together. And the Springer's was the same.

EDWARD: Right.

DELL: And so was the Smyth's, and the Marshall's.

EDWARD: Marshall's.

DELL: And --- well I ---

EDWARD: Nancy Simmons? Does the Simmons ring a bell?

DELL: Simmons, I knew the Simmons well. There was Vic Simmons and his wife lived right close to us there, that they neighbored back and forth. I always understood in later



years I got to imagine that or something, that Simmons' wife was a sister to Augustine Gilbert, and she was part Mexican.

EDWARD: Yeah, I've got all that out there too. It's not that important. Did you ever hear of Ed Oliver? Who Ed Oliver was?

DELL: Yes, I've heard my --- talk about Ed Oliver quite often, everybody talked about Ed Oliver, from my little kid up, you know. And then after I moved to Diamond in '35, in there, why I worked

--- Burt Oliver used to come there quite often every year and visit a man by the name of Hawkins up there on the Little Kiger, and I knew him well.

EDWARD: What did they say about Ed Oliver, all these old homesteaders and stuff, the Dunn's, the Springer's, the Marshall's? What did they talk about, do you recall?

DELL: Well I just remember ---

EDWARD: Dell, you can say any damn thing you want to.

DELL: Well just all I can remember is that they would just speak of him as, nothing, any bad words about him. He was a nice enough guy, is all I could say about him.

EDWARD: Do you think Ed Oliver was picked out to shoot Pete French?

DELL: The way I always got that, that they made up their mind that they weren't going to take this from Pete French, that they were going to kick the homesteads and stuff in there, and whichever one of them had to they was going to shoot him. If they take them to trial they'd back them up on it.

EDWARD: Which they did.

DELL: Which, yes.

EDWARD: Did you ever hear of the 101 Society?

DELL: No.

EDWARD: Okay. Did you ever, when these guys were sitting around talking, your dad

and whoever, did they ever talk about the settlers meeting together in The Narrows to discuss what to do with Pete French?

DELL: Well I would say back, if older people were talking like that or anything, possibly, I never paid any attention to it, like other kids we were off doing something else.

EDWARD: Yeah, oh yeah.

DELL: So we never knew nothing about that stuff.

EDWARD: Did your father have an opinion on why Pete French was killed, John Witzel?

DELL: Well as near as I could say is the thing that the man shouldn't have done what he done, run people off and this and that, and that he had it coming to him in a way. Sooner or later he would get, that was just as near as I could say my opinion of my dad had.

EDWARD: I found a diary in the Oregon Historical Society Archives by Fred Otley, Red Otley's great-grandfather ---

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: --- who lived at Lawen.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: He wrote a daily diary, Dell.

DELL: He did, yes.

EDWARD: I couldn't believe it, from 1888 to 1930.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: Two days after Pete French was killed, all he says is, "I heard some more news today on the killing of Peter French." That was it! In 1897, that's all he said about the shooting of Pete French. Of course he was on the north side of the lake too.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: He didn't get a lot of information.

DELL: Now his, Harold Otley comes here every, maybe every week to visit with me quite

a little bit, at Diamond, you know. And now he has told me a million times about it, he wished he'd have went right on with that diary of his granddad, and kept that up.

EDWARD: Do you know where that original diary is?

DELL: I don't know, but he could tell you, I think he could tell you. He might have it.

EDWARD: Because the Society's is on microfilm, it's not the original diary. They took pictures of it. I don't know where the original diary is.

DELL: You know it wouldn't surprise me that Harold hasn't got that. Now he was just that type of guy, if he got, because he always said I wished that I would have kept that diary right on up.

EDWARD: Harold Otley.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: Might have Fred Otley's diary. Is that what you are saying, Dell?

DELL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Because Red Otley wants to know where it is. Nobody --- I guess he doesn't know where it is.

DELL: Well I bet you Harold could tell you, if he hasn't got it.

EDWARD: Well there is so many Otleys, I don't know who is who yet.

DELL: Well there is three of the boys down in Diamond, and two of them live in Happy Valley, Red and ---

EDWARD: I can't remember the other one that lives over there. What, no that's the Jenkins that has the Diamond Ranch.

DELL: Yeah, Jenkins, yes.

EDWARD: Yeah.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: That's the old Pete French's Diamond Ranch, is where Jenkins ---

DELL: That's where my father was when they --- when he was shot.

EDWARD: Yeah, yeah, that's that picture. I'm pretty sure that's the old Diamond Ranch. Okay, we're getting all kinds of stuff here. Back to Ed Oliver and all those guys. Did --- when you were in The Narrows --- now wait a minute. You came there in 1902, and left -- - when did you guys leave The Narrows, 1919?

DELL: Somewheres around 1919, is when we moved up to the P Ranch Valley, yes. Maybe 19--- we were in the P Ranch Valley in 1917 though, because I worked at the P Ranch for Frank ... buckarood there in 1917. My folks lived there at Baca Lake.

EDWARD: You were 13 years old.

DELL: I was 17 years old when I went to work there for, at the P Ranch, buckarooing for - -- that was Eastern Oregon Livestock Company.

EDWARD: Right, right. Back to old Pete French. Did any of the, while you were young, a young kid, did you hear of any of the settlers talking about what happened to Ed Oliver, his where abouts, where he went? What the heck happened to him?

DELL: I heard offhand, that different talk, people talking, a lot of that stuff I never paid very much attention to, but later on I heard them say that he run off with some other woman.

EDWARD: He did?

DELL: Yes. I heard that ...

EDWARD: Do you know what happened, or did anybody tell you, did Burt Oliver tell you what happened to his dad. Did he die; did he run away, did he move to Illinois, whatever?

DELL: I talked and visited with him maybe ... time, be around him, but he never mentioned back of his father or anything.

EDWARD: Never mentioned it.

DELL: Or anything like it. It was always what was going to happen tomorrow, the next

day, or what was happening ... But Burt never spoke of any of that stuff.

EDWARD: I know that Burt and Roy Oliver looked for his father one time. This is from the Oliver family. The story is, and see if you --- I have written every county in the State of Oregon asking for death records of Edward Lee Oliver, or marriage records of an Edward Lee Oliver --- nothing! I wrote Idaho, Washington, California, Nevada --- I don't know what happened to him. He could have changed his name.

DELL: All I can ever know that, that there was some talk of that, that he had run off with a woman. I don't know who the woman was.

EDWARD: He did, it was Annie Ward.

DELL: Yeah, but forgot what they said, it just kind of slipped my mind on that. And it seemed like from there on they never knew nothing about him.

EDWARD: Do you know who Annie Ward was?

DELL: No I don't.

EDWARD: I'm trying to --- as you can tell here this tape has gone nutso --- you can play it a little longer, and I realized the problem and corrected it. He was on his way to Prineville, Oregon in September of 1898. And Burt Oliver thought that maybe he moved to Pendleton or Heppner. I'm having a horrible time trying to figure out what happened to him. Shelby Petersen states clearly, clearly, that the Simmons family felt that Ed Oliver was murdered in Burns when he came back to town to pay a bill. And I know he came back to town to pay a bill, and he was murdered going to the outhouse, privy, by some French cowboys.

DELL: I have heard some people mention that there, but as far as, I wondered if that was just talk, they were talking, that they didn't know nothing about it.

EDWARD: Yeah, yeah.

DELL: I thought because that would be pretty well traced up, that they would have found

out who that was.

EDWARD: Shelby told me that Mart Brenton knew exactly who did it. Who supposedly slit Ed Oliver's throat here in Burns. ... I don't know, I can't find this guy, and I don't know where he went. I haven't found him yet.

... (Note: Tape is distorted, can't understand what is being said.)

EDWARD: Now who was that person down there by, that had the Witzel, no the Craven Ranch was it you said?

DELL: No, that was Eastern Oregon Livestock, they were, they started to lease out the P Ranch, all that country there and sell it out, different ones. There was several, there must have been 20 families moved in there and had homes and stuff in there. Now my father lived there, raised grain, and still dug some ... for the Eastern Oregon Livestock Company. And they cut the hay at the P Ranch, and he stacked it there, seven or eight thousand ton of hay each year.

EDWARD: When ---

DELL: He lived on that place and raised grain, and had cattle and stuff. And run the cattle on the Steens Mountain there when I was a kid. And later on when I got married I got a piece of that land right above there, and I raised grain there from about '26 up to '35, right in there, and run cattle and farmed. You could farm that, they'd give you, you could raise grain on out, they'd take a third of what you raised, and the rest was yours. And if you --- they were fixing that so that everybody could buy that. They sold all that Diamond ranch about that time, most of that.

EDWARD: Swift, Swift Company.

DELL: Yes. I think the Swift Company sold out, and then that turned out into the Eastern Oregon Livestock Company from Swift, had that then, I'm sure.

EDWARD: It's hard to figure all that out, how they maneuvered all that stuff.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: Because the Frenchglen Company was huge.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: Roaring Springs, and Spangenburg Ranch, and ---

DELL: All that, yes.

EDWARD: All that.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: Home Creek, and ---

DELL: All that was in the Pete French ---

EDWARD: Right.

DELL: And then that went into the Swift and Company, I think, after he died, they got that. And then after, they had that for years, and then Eastern Oregon Livestock Company come up with that.

EDWARD: Hanley was in there somewhere too.

DELL: Who?

EDWARD: Bill Hanley.

DELL: Oh Bill Hanley was there when that was Swift and Company.

EDWARD: Boy, it's hard to ---

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: It's a mess.

DELL: He was manager of that, and run that.

EDWARD: Oh.

DELL: He had this other ranch there, the ranch out here from Burns.

EDWARD: Oh, Bell-A.

DELL: Bell-A, yes.

EDWARD: And the Double O, he had that for a while.

DELL: Yes, uh huh.

EDWARD: Boy that's a beautiful place, that Double O.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: Okay. Now you said --- you know where the Center Patrol Road is today?

DELL: Yes, yes. My father built that.

EDWARD: Okay, this is really important. Do you know when they built that south of Coyote Buttes to Rocky Ford Lane?

DELL: You mean that ditch?

EDWARD: No, that road. The Center Patrol Road. The one that we drive on now.

DELL: They started that there at the Rockford Lane, and they built that road, my father did, right straight down through the field there to the Wright's Field there. Here was the Rockford Lane, and he went right straight north in there until he come to the Wright's Field there. He never built that from there on, that year. I think he maybe, had that just about finished when he went to the P Ranch and stacked all that hay down there.

EDWARD: Okay, I've got to back up a little, Dell, because this is kind of a biggie here, real important historically. When he built, helped build that road from Rocky Ford Lane north, the one we're just talking about, to the Wright Field, what year was that?

DELL: I couldn't tell you exactly what year that was that he built that, I couldn't.

EDWARD: Was it, well let's try to break it down, Dell. Was it --- now you said it was before he went down to the P Ranch?

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: You left Reineman's place in 1918?

DELL: Maybe '15.

EDWARD: '15. You went to The Narrows?



DELL: Yes. We already had the place in there, bought in '15. He moved to the P Ranch around where Baca Lake is. My brother had a homestead there. We moved in there and there was a piece of land there that the Company hadn't taken up that was, laid right in there, and my brother homesteaded on that. And we lived there then back and forth in there, and we worked for them --- and from there on for a year or so, then he went into the P Ranch above the Grain Camp there and farmed that in there. I don't remember how many acres he farmed there, and raised grain on. And then he had, we had a few cattle, and he kept building the cattle up and leased more of the land from there. And then all at once it was sold to the refuge.

EDWARD: Right. That was 19---

DELL: And everybody moved out of there.

EDWARD: That was 1935.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: So let's go back to that road. Was it before 1930 he built that road, do you think?

DELL: Oh, it must have been along in 1910 or '12, somewheres a long in there, but I couldn't say just what year. Somewheres, we'll say from '12 on up to maybe '14.

EDWARD: Did he build it when they were building the Stubblefield Canal?

DELL: He built the Stubblefield Canal, maybe --- I'll tell you he built that about '12, and about 1914 he built the, he done the Stubblefield Canal down there.

EDWARD: Right, that's right.

DELL: And I can go back and remember that pretty well. But I was about 12 years old when he built that road down through there, that was 1912.

EDWARD: Okay.

DELL: And then the next year or two he went, 1914 I know that's when he built the road,

the Stubblefield Ditch over there. I know positive, well I was just thinking back.

EDWARD: Right. Because the Stubblefield Canal was finished in 1913 or '14.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: And so your father, John Witzel, built that road after that?

DELL: He built the road down through there before he went to Stubblefield.

EDWARD: Oh he did?

DELL: Yes. That road was built, maybe a couple of years before he went to Stubblefield.

EDWARD: Just as straight as a string.

DELL: Yes. Goes right straight to Rockford, right straight to the Wright's Field, and when you hit the Wright's Field there, out here, it was just --- not very far was the corner of the fence, went down that way, and there is where Pete French was killed.

EDWARD: Right. I'm not going to say nothing yet. Okay. So you drive on that road and you get to the Wright Field fence?

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: Was there a gate there?

DELL: Not right straight where ... gate there, no. When you hit the Wright Field, you had to go right straight out that way for maybe, oh a couple hundred yards.

EDWARD: West?

DELL: Yeah, would be west, yeah. And then the fence turned and went that way. And after it turned and went that way, maybe oh just a little ways, the gate was there, on that side. And then right on back up that way was where those rocks was there ...

EDWARD: What's a little ways from the corner?

DELL: Huh?

EDWARD: What's a little ways?

DELL: Little ways, you mean?

EDWARD: Like a block?

DELL: Yeah, a block or more, or maybe two.

EDWARD: Maybe two blocks?

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: Maybe three blocks? That's too far?

DELL: It's somewheres between two and three blocks right there, we'll say it like that.

EDWARD: Okay. Now I'm going to do this over, now you correct me, Dell. In about 1911 or 1912 your father, John Witzel, you were living at the Reineman place then?

DELL: Nope. We was living at the ---

EDWARD: Narrows.

DELL: --- Narrows.

EDWARD: Okay.

DELL: And he ... my dad had the Reineman place leased, and run his cattle out there.

EDWARD: So in 1911 or 1912, right in, one of those two years we think ---

DELL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: --- your father built a road from Rocky Ford Lane straight north to the Wright Field fence.

DELL: That's right, yes.

EDWARD: And the road stopped there?

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: No gate.

DELL: No gate, no.

EDWARD: Just stopped there?

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: All right. And at that fence line, the Wright Field fence, is that the south fence

of Wright Field?

DELL: That would be the south fence, yes.

EDWARD: Okay. If you turned and went west down the fence line to the corner you would be at the corner of the Wright Field.

DELL: Yeah right, yeah.

EDWARD: The southwest corner.

DELL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Right. Southwest corner of Wright Field, right?

DELL: Yeah.

EDWARD: How far was it to that southwest corner of Wright Field from the road, going west, half a mile, quarter mile, two miles?

DELL: We'll say somewhere around, under a quarter of a mile.

EDWARD: Okay. And is that road that your father built to the Wright Field fence, is that the same road we use today?

DELL: I suppose it is the same road, yeah, down through there.

EDWARD: Now if we walked, and we're pretending this is 1911, and we walk --- you were 10 years old.

DELL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Yeah. And you walked from that road that your father built, west to the corner of Wright Field fence, and then you went north towards Coyote Butte along the fence line?

DELL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: You come to a gate.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: Is that the gate where Pete French was killed?

DELL: You're right.

EDWARD: And you're saying that that gate is about two blocks, you said?

DELL: Two or three blocks ---

EDWARD: Two or three blocks.

DELL: --- down there.

EDWARD: North.

DELL: It would be, after you get to Wright Field it would be north, yeah.

EDWARD: Okay, north. What was there? In fact I'm getting really picky now Dell. Did your dad tell you that Pete French was killed there?

DELL: Yes. We've been down through there maybe, it would be, we'd used to go down there and then turn out and go to The Narrows different times, maybe Saturday or Sunday when you go up on that, we had a buggy and team, you know, a hack, whatever you called it, and we'd go through there. He would say well, right out there by them rocks and stuff out there, as near as I can remember white rocks and stuff out there. And he said that's --- Pete French was killed between that and the gate right there somewhere. He wasn't right setting in the gate or anything. He was out, just along with the cattle there.

EDWARD: Was there a gate there then?

DELL: Yes, there was a gate there then.

EDWARD: What kind ---

DELL: What type of a gate?

EDWARD: Yeah.

DELL: A wire gate, just a wire fence.

EDWARD: It was a wire gate?

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: No, was there two posts?

DELL: Two high posts there, yes.

EDWARD: I've got to tell Red Otley that. Okay. The typical two high post with a wire across the top?

DELL: Yes, yes.

EDWARD: But a wire gate?

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: Wasn't no big swinging gate?

DELL: No, no, no, it was a wire gate.

EDWARD: What else was there by that gate? Was there a house?

DELL: I thought maybe at one time that that's what maybe them stones was out there, was a house. Why did they have those stones, is what I always got to wondering later on? I don't know. Maybe that was a homestead somebody had, and had those, and had a house there or something.

EDWARD: Was there a mowing machine there? (Laughter)

DELL: I never seen one, no. There was nothing there that I ever seen, and I was by there several times when he was building that road there. We used to go by there maybe every --- oh, once a week or so. We used to go through there into The Narrows and get the groceries and the mail and stuff.

EDWARD: How old were you then, when your dad was building that road?

DELL: Oh, I suppose I was about 12 years old, just guessing at it.

EDWARD: What the hell did he build that road with, fresnos?

DELL: Fresnos and teams, yeah.

EDWARD: Okay.

DELL: Well there was no, nothing much, that's the way they built. He was a contractor.

EDWARD: Why in the world did they put a road from Rocky Ford north to the Wright Field

fence?

DELL: They was going to put that right straight on down to the Sod House, but that's as far as they got with it.

EDWARD: They never, they never got any farther.

DELL: Never finished it, no.

EDWARD: Okay, the wire gate --- how wide do you think that gate was, Dell?

DELL: Oh, probably 12, 14 feet wide.

EDWARD: 12 or 14 feet. This is really important, this is for Red.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: Because I'll show you that sketch, okay. Okay, wire gate, 12 to 14 feet with two --- two?

DELL: Two. Two, the post maybe was 10 feet high.

EDWARD: Juniper.

DELL: Juniper posts, with maybe a wire across the top.

EDWARD: All right, in your recollection --- okay, in 1912, 1911, when your dad was building that road from Rocky Ford north to the Wright Field fence, there was no house where the gate was?

DELL: Nope, no house.

EDWARD: There was, was there any buildings at all?

DELL: No building at all, no. The only thing that was out there, a little ways from there was those rocks, like there might have been a homesteader, and a foundation for a home or something. Now I don't know what they were.

EDWARD: Were these rocks west of the fence line from the gate?

DELL: West and a little south.

EDWARD: A little south. Do you recall them being --- this is really hard, Dell, I know that.

But do you recall them being on a sagebrush knoll, or were they in the tules, or ---

DELL: Well it was all kind of sagebrush knolls and grass in there. There was no tules in there, because there wasn't no water right in there, the floodwater in there. Farther over in the field there was lots of floodwaters in the spring.

EDWARD: Farther over, which direction, east?

DELL: I mean over west.

EDWARD: West.

DELL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Do you think you would know the place if you saw it today?

DELL: Where that gate was now? I think I could --- if I go from the Rockford Lane down there, I think I could, when I got down there I think I'd know exactly.

EDWARD: Well don't you die yet, because I'll be back next summer.

DELL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Now the reason I'm asking all this stuff --- let me, let's see, I've got to think if there is anything else. Oh, from that road that your father built to the Wright Field fence, and if you go west to the corner of the fence, was there a gate in there?

DELL: No gate in the corner.

EDWARD: Just ---

DELL: It just went out there solid fence, and then it turned and went right through, that would be north, and there was no gate until after you turned the corner and went down there two or three blocks, you'd say down there. I couldn't say just how far. And then there was a gate there. That's where they were putting the cattle through ... told me when French was killed.

EDWARD: Was French killed on the west side of the gate, or the east side of the gate?

DELL: I couldn't say.



EDWARD: Oh, was there --- where this gate was, was there within oh 50 yards, 100 yards, a overflow canal, natural canal, do you recall that by any chance, where the water from the Blitzen, you know, kind of goes all over?

DELL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Do you recall that by any chance?

DELL: No, I don't. That's the clock. (Chiming)

EDWARD: I'm --- how far --- I'm really getting you now, Dell. How far did that fence line go, that north south fence line of Wright Field go? Did it go to Coyote Butte --- did it go, where did it go?

DELL: You mean the fence on the Wright Field from that corner, from the gate on the north?

EDWARD: Right, the gate, that north fence line.

DELL: The gate on down there, how far that fence? I've been wondering about that in the last few years when we got to talking about that. I think that went down there so far, and that was a field, and I think it turned and went back towards the river again, I'm not sure of that.

EDWARD: It did, it did. It went past, way past Dunn's about a mile. See Dunn's were in Section, the southwest quarter and the southeast quarter of Section 15. And Dunn's, you know where the Dunn's place is?

DELL: No, I don't.

EDWARD: River Ranch.

DELL: That's Billy Dunn's dad?

EDWARD: Yeah.

DELL: Well that was clear across on the river, on the other side.

EDWARD: Yeah, right.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: But he owned a mile in there.

EDWARD: Yes.

DELL: Half mile, mile long.

DELL: That's over where the Stubblefield Ditch was.

EDWARD: No, no, that was way west, east, east. His place was right on the river, old Billy Dunn's dad's place was right on the river.

DELL: Yeah, but that was over from the Sod House across over from there, over in there.

EDWARD: South, southeast ---

DELL: It was on the east side of the river.

EDWARD: Yeah, right.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: And that's about a mile and a half from that corner. But I'm, let me do this first. Okay, okay, Rocky Ford --- do you know where the Rocky Ford is, Dell?

DELL: Yes, that's that leg that goes through there.

EDWARD: Yeah, shoosh!

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: And it goes across the Blitzen River there?

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: Okay.

DELL: Goes out to Diamond.

EDWARD: You know that crossing of the Blitzen River is old.

DELL: That's the road that used to go up there from The Narrows, and go straight across, and then to Diamond. That was an old stage road.

EDWARD: I wonder who built that?

DELL: Oh, God, I don't know.

EDWARD: You know, I don't know who built that.

DELL: I don't either.

EDWARD: And that's where Johnny Crow and I went down there to go to Diamond by the lava beds, by Oliver Spring.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: You couldn't drive across that road anymore if you had a tank, or a bulldozer. It's gone!

DELL: Well when I lived in Diamond ---

EDWARD: Goes through the lava beds.

DELL: Yep. When was you and Johnny there?

EDWARD: This summer.

DELL: You went down there this summer?

EDWARD: Yeah. We went, we went across Rocky Ford, went out where the old road --- down by Oliver Spring.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: You can't get through there. The sagebrush in the middle of the road ---

DELL: Oh yes, that's all growed up, yes.

EDWARD: It's this high.

DELL: Yeah, you're right, yes.

EDWARD: You could see where they dynamite --- I can't say that word, dynamited.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: That lava rock.

DELL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: I couldn't believe it. Why in the world did they go that way?

DELL: Well they turned up, around that fence, and went out through the lava beds, along the edge of the refuge there, and it wasn't --- it's the refuge now. And then it turned off across, went through the lava beds into Diamond.

EDWARD: Yeah, right through those ---

DELL: That was the old stage route.

EDWARD: Right through those lava beds.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: Johnny said he hauled a lot of moonshine over that.

DELL: Well I don't know what he --- he is a little windy from time to time.

EDWARD: Yeah. See I took him down there, and things have changed so much down there where Pete French was killed. There is tules all over the place. ...

DELL: I suppose they put a lot of water out in them, in those tules, and there might be changed so much, I wouldn't know, but I don't think it would be.

EDWARD: Well Walter just mowed it here two weeks ago.

DELL: Who?

EDWARD: Walter McEwen.

DELL: Is that right.

EDWARD: I'm gong to draw a rough map here, Dell. Okay the Reineman place would be --- this is Narrows --- Reineman place is right about here. Sod House Ranch is right about --- Sod House Ranch is right about here.

DELL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Old Dunbar's are right here now.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: Old Marcus Haines' place.

DELL: Yeah, uh huh.

EDWARD: Okay. Let's see, what else do I need? Rattlesnake Butte, you know where that is?

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: They named that appropriately, I'll tell you that. Okay, this is Rocky Ford Crossing. Want to make sure you --- this is right here. This is Rocky Ford --- I don't know whether they call it Rockford Lane, Rocky Ford Lane.

DELL: Rockford is all I've heard it by.

EDWARD: Rockford Lane. I have no idea --- I think this was put in in 1880's by French, I think, but I don't know for sure.

DELL: I think it was. That was put across through there I suppose. They went right through the, French's field on each side.

EDWARD: Right.

DELL: And that road went into from --- from there into --- from Narrows into Voltage, and when Voltage come up on the other side, and they could meet there, and they went into Diamond.

EDWARD: That Diamond is sure beautiful place.

DELL: Beautiful place, yes it is, yeah.

EDWARD: Stubblefield Canal goes something like this. It kind of borders the French property.

DELL: Yes it does, yeah.

EDWARD: Yeah, something like this let's say Dell.

DELL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: It comes from the Bussey Dam, I believe.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: Does that sound about right?

DELL: Yeah.

EDWARD: Hey, did you know where Ed Oliver lived?

DELL: No, I didn't. I don't know whether anybody knew exact where he lived over there. They called that the Oliver Spring right there. I think he lived right there at that Oliver Spring.

EDWARD: He also had a place, 160 acres, right out in the middle of Pete French's field, by the Bussey Dam.

DELL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: About a mile south of that. Okay, I'm giving Dell a real rough map. Rockford Lane ---

SIDE B

EDWARD: Alright, Dell Witzel would you draw in where that road is your dad built about 1911, and the Wright Field fence line and that gate? Don't worry about, you know, best you can. That's north.

DELL: Now this is Rockford Lane?

EDWARD: Yeah.

DELL: I would say ---

EDWARD: Rattlesnake Butte.

DELL: That's Rattlesnake Butte. Well I'd imagine that would be over about like that.

EDWARD: Okay.

DELL: Right straight down through there.

EDWARD: Okay, go ahead; throw it in there, Dell.

DELL: Now where is your Wright's Field out here?

EDWARD: I don't know, you draw it in there. There is Coyote Butte. Now I'll put, okay, I'll

put in, I'll put in Wright's Field. That's the fence line, let's say.

DELL: Which direction that going?

EDWARD: That's going, this is west.

DELL: Uh huh, I get you. Well that would come right about, right, just right straight down through there.

EDWARD: Okay.

DELL: Just kind of like that there. Come right into that there, and stop right there. And here is the corner lot here, and then you go right down the corner here a little ways, and there was your gate, and then right back out here was where those rocks was as near as I remember.

EDWARD: Okay.

DELL: Did you find them?

EDWARD: I'm not going to tell you yet. (Laughter) So he stopped right here.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: How far, two blocks you said, or something like that to the corner?

DELL: Yes, or maybe ---

EDWARD: Or three or something?

DELL: Yes, somewheres to the corner, the Wright corner, there is your, the corner. And then it turned and went right straight north again.

EDWARD: Right.

DELL: Just around the corner about the same distance from here, when you hit the corner, about the same distance down there was the gate.

EDWARD: And this fence went way on up here ---

DELL: Yes, I didn't know where it stopped at.

EDWARD: Almost to Coyote Butte, and then it went across.

DELL: I thought it did. I thought it went way up into them ...

EDWARD: And they called this Wright's Field.

DELL: Yes you're right, yes.

EDWARD: All of this was Big Sagebrush Field.

DELL: Yes, all of this was all Big Sagebrush Field, yeah.

EDWARD: Yeah, okay.

DELL: Yes, on both sides here.

EDWARD: Right, yeah, on both sides.

DELL: Yeah, both sides was out there. I don't know how far this fence went over here.

EDWARD: This went over to the river.

DELL: I thought to the river, yes.

EDWARD: And then he had a fence out here too.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: The outside border of his property.

DELL: ... and went down that side.

EDWARD: And Dunn's place sat right about ---

DELL: Yeah, you're right.

EDWARD: That was Dunn's. And this is a mile, that's a half a mile.

DELL: Yeah, uh huh, you're right. That's about as near as you can absolutely, as you could get that thing.

EDWARD: I have all the maps on all that.

DELL: If that was the map of it, or drawn right out, you wouldn't be off on that any at all.

EDWARD: Okay. Now right here ---

... (Telephone rings)

EDWARD: Boy that thing is loud.



DELL: That is loud so I can hear it.

EDWARD: This is one section.

DELL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: The south, the southwest section, the southwest quarter of Section 20, this here was Hiram Wright's homestead.

DELL: Who?

EDWARD: Hiram Wright.

DELL: It could be, I don't know ...

EDWARD: Yeah, it is. W R I G H T. Now I'm going to blow this up a little bit. Now Marcus Haines asked somebody if Wright had a house. Yes, he had a house. Okay, here is your dad's road. Whoops, I always like to go north. Here is the fence line and the corner.

DELL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Okay, the gate, let's say, is here.

DELL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: And you say this is two to three blocks from the road to this corner, then the fence goes north.

DELL: About the same way down here ...

EDWARD: Right, two or three blocks.

DELL: Yeah, to the gate.

EDWARD: To the gate.

DELL: Just off, I'm guessing.

EDWARD: Now, this is for you Dell. In 1898 Emanuel Clark drew a map, and I have it out there. And he puts something like this, and he puts in here --- Emanuel Clark, now he was there the day Pete French was killed. He puts barn, and he puts house, and he puts

a gate. And he has this like this. Don't forget about this now. Oh no, don't tell me, don't poop out now. And he goes like this. This was Hiram Wright's house and barn in 1897, and there is the gate. Okay. So that's why I was asking you very strictly if you recall a house or barn in 1911, 1912.

MRS. WITZEL: I'll be back, Dell, I'll be back.

DELL: All right.

MRS. WITZEL: Watch the old dog.

EDWARD: But I don't think it was there then. I think it burnt down.

DELL: In 1911?

EDWARD: Before that.

DELL: It could have been there before that. I didn't even know there was a house and stuff in there.

EDWARD: Yeah.

DELL: Or a ranch, I didn't know there was.

EDWARD: It was Hiram Wright's. And Wright bought that 160 acres from Wright, Hiram Wright, in 1896, one year before he was killed. Wright Field is named for him, evidently. I don't know what happened to the barn and the house. Evidently --- maybe they tore it down, I don't know.

DELL: I don't know, I wouldn't have any idea. I didn't know there was any place there at all. But Emanuel Clark claims he was killed down there at ---

EDWARD: He was killed on the fence line. He's got an X right here.

DELL: Oh, Emanuel Clark worked there on the Sod House out there for years there.

EDWARD: Yeah.

DELL: Now I know Emanuel Clark well, I know his son was on the P Ranch later years when I was there. And, but I don't know whether Emanuel Clark was working there when

French was killed or not.

EDWARD: He was with Pete French the day he was killed.

DELL: I don't think so.

EDWARD: Yeah, yeah he was.

DELL: I never heard of that before.

EDWARD: Yeah. It was Pete French, Burt French, Emanuel Clark, Tebo, Chico, William Gilliam, who I have no idea who that is.

DELL: No, I don't either.

EDWARD: And --- I'll be right back.

... (Pause in tape)

EDWARD: Was Judd Wise known for his honesty when he talked, or was he kind of on a windy side?

DELL: Well I always thought Judd was pretty straight forward and everything, yes, I did.

EDWARD: Well 1972 with an interview with Marcus Haines, he said he was the only one that knew where Pete French was shot. I don't quite believe that, I think a few other people knew.

DELL: You mean Judd said he was the only one there?

EDWARD: Yeah.

DELL: Oh, that's, that ain't true at all, no.

EDWARD: No, no. So anyway he said that there was a mower at this gate where Pete French was killed, the last time he was there. Now this interview was 1972, and he said there was this mower. Now when the mower was there, I don't know.

DELL: Oh, there is no such a thing as that, that's just a guesswork.

EDWARD: Okay.

DELL: No truth to that. As many times as I was there when I was a kid, there was no

mower there. And I don't know why they would have a mower there. You mean a mower to cut hay?

EDWARD: Yeah.

DELL: Yeah, I don't know why it would be there, such a thing there. That's clear out of reason.

EDWARD: Okay. From what all I have seen, and I have probably ten versions of where Pete French was killed.

DELL: That's true, I know there is. In town of everybody ---

EDWARD: But you, the reason I questioned you pretty hard, Dell; you told me exactly where I think he was killed.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: About 200 yards north of that corner.

DELL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Okay.

DELL: Yes, you're right.

EDWARD: And that's through --- I'm not just making that up, that's going --- Wilber Springer said the same thing, and he was there. John Crow said basically the same thing, or David Crow.

DELL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: I can't remember them all, okay. It doesn't make that much difference. Today where the Center Patrol Road is, that corner of Wright Field, the southwest corner of Wright Field, is a half a mile west of the Center Patrol Road.

DELL: It could be, it could be.

EDWARD: It's a half a mile, exactly.

DELL: Yeah.

EDWARD: That's why I kept asking you about how many blocks.

DELL: Well, I just remember when you get there you go out there quite a little ways and turn, then back ---

EDWARD: Then go north.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: Half a mile. You get to that center, that corner ---

DELL: Corner.

EDWARD: --- there is, we found it yesterday. There was an old stake there, you believe that?

DELL: It could be, yes.

EDWARD: Yeah. And right ten feet from that corner there is a well. Somebody had put a well pipe casing down in there.

DELL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Well Walter McEwen said that was put in there in the 1930's, they watered those fields there. Okay.

DELL: Well yes, uh huh. Yeah, that's about right too.

EDWARD: Okay. You go north of that corner; Wilber Marshall said it was 200 yards, okay, up the fence line, the Wright Field fence line from the corner. You go north 200 yards and that's where this gate was. So Chris Palmer and I, he's got all this measuring, fancy survey stuff.

DELL: Yeah, I know he has.

EDWARD: He found the corner, the Wright Field corner, measured off 200 feet, 200 yards north from the corner, and right in the center of that was a big sagebrush knoll. Well they ain't going to build no darn house in the tules in the swamp.

DELL: No.

EDWARD: So that didn't mean anything to us except there was a depression in the ground, big depression about five feet deep with rocks. Well what was that? Well it could have been a rock cellar, I don't know. It could have been --- it's probably Hiram's, Wright's, part of his house. But there were rocks ---

DELL: What color were those rocks?

EDWARD: They were sandstone.

DELL: Yeah, you're right, uh huh.

EDWARD: And what's funny that morning I was over to old man Dunn's house that he'll push down, and guess what kind of rocks they had for the chimney? Sandstone.

DELL: Sandstone.

EDWARD: Right, whitish color.

DELL: Yeah.

EDWARD: And I go, (slap of hands) that's it, bingo, we found this place.

DELL: Yeah, uh huh.

EDWARD: Well that didn't, that wasn't all to it. So Chris brought his metal detector, he starts taking his metal detector right around within 20 feet we find nine things, objects, metal objects. We found a spike, we found, what, kind of a U-bolt looking thing, and these are four inches underneath the ground. That stuff is growing up over.

DELL: Yeah, uh huh.

EDWARD: We found, oh some, just odds and ends. But we found a mower head, we found the end of the sickle, you know on the end of the mower. We found another gear that fit to this mower evidently. We found a gatepost ring, and we also found an old Dutch oven pot that had been put in the ground with the bottom up. And you go, well, how important is that? Well first of all it's the mower thing, what the hell is this mower thing doing out here, you know? Well maybe Judd Wise was right.

DELL: Well I was just going to say, after you said that, maybe that mower that Judd was talking about, maybe he thought it was by the gate, maybe it was over by that fellow's house over there. That could be over there.

EDWARD: Crazy. But we found objects that man had been there in that one spot, see. My god you could take that metal detector and run all over out there, and not find a cotton, you know, anything.

DELL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: And our calculations were right. Okay. Then that pot, that Dutch oven, that just gets me. Now I know in my papers some place somebody said that they put a pot where French was killed. You know that? And that's got to be it, has to be. Because Chris, you know, what do you call looking through that surveyor thing --- he got the fence line.

DELL: Yeah.

EDWARD: All this stuff was ten feet west of where the fence line would have been if they were correct, you know. And they were pretty close in the old days.

DELL: You found this mower stuff up where the rocks were there?

EDWARD: Just around them.

DELL: Just around them, close to them, yeah.

EDWARD: Oh, from here to your door, front door, 20 feet.

DELL: How far, about how far was those rocks and stuff from where the gate would be?

EDWARD: Ten feet.

DELL: Were they that close?

EDWARD: Ten feet.

DELL: I thought maybe that was, I thought those rocks, always had in my mind those rocks were farther back up there.

EDWARD: Farther west?

DELL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: You're probably right. I would guess that these rocks were for foundations or something. But the problem is, Dell, there are so much tules out there, you couldn't find a rock pile if you tried.

DELL: You know it's, when I was there that wasn't irrigated like the refuge is, ... that ground, you know.

EDWARD: Oh yeah.

DELL: Yeah.

EDWARD: That's what I'm saying, times have changed a wee bit.

DELL: Yes, they've changed. I know it would be changed, yes.

EDWARD: The only thing you could get your bearings on, because we know exactly --- Palmer is good.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: He found that corner, no problems. You find a corner then you might be able to get your bearings a little bit.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: But ---

DELL: That corner was probably a government surveying there to start with.

EDWARD: That was never marked.

DELL: Never was marked?

EDWARD: No.

DELL: Wasn't marked.

EDWARD: Through all the field notes, Chris checked all that out, and through all the field notes that particular Wright Field corner was never marked.



DELL: It wasn't.

EDWARD: But up, up a mile it was marked, north a mile with that rock that we found in August.

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: Yeah, that was marked. That's the only corner that was marked there. But I think we got it though, Dell, I think we --- what I want to do --- this is the best time of year to go down there.

DELL: Yes, it would be, because it's dry now and you can get through around in there.

EDWARD: Oh god, you can just drive ---

DELL: Anywhere, yeah.

EDWARD: Yeah. I can't do it. I want to take, the trouble is you don't want to take John Crow, you, and Scharff, and everybody together, because they'll all get mad at one another.

DELL: Yeah, naturally, yeah.

EDWARD: (Laughter) You know.

DELL: John Scharff is so far off on lots of that stuff. His, that's all guess work, and somebody else has told him. Marcus Haines was the guy that lived here in town, and Marcus --- Jinks Harris, wasn't it, he lived in there. And he was raised with me in school out there; they come from Colorado in there.

EDWARD: Who, Jinks Harris?

DELL: Jinks Harris. And he could tell you more about that stuff out there, and not one word of it was the truth, anywhere.

EDWARD: Oh, okay, I won't look him up. I don't want that then.

DELL: No, he was --- he would tell you everywhere French was killed, and everything that happened. He just would kind of make notes of that and keep it. And he didn't,

absolutely know one thing about it.

EDWARD: One damn thing.

DELL: One damn thing.

EDWARD: See when you said that your dad built that road to the Wright Field fence, that's really important.

DELL: I know that he built that, of course he was there, and there was no guess work in that there.

EDWARD: That's important. And up from the corner, see that's important. There has only got to be one place, and I know French was killed by the gate; there is no doubt about that.

DELL: That's right, yeah. They was putting those cattle through there.

EDWARD: Yeah. And what's important is what you just said, is that damn Wright's Field corner, that's what's important. Then you go up the fence line, and Chris Palmer has the stuff to do that, and that's what we did.

DELL: Yeah.

EDWARD: But that pot, that still gets me. They ain't going to throw away a Dutch oven.

DELL: Well no, unless their Dutch over was --- everybody used to have Dutch ovens, you know, in them days, you know.

EDWARD: Yeah. But somebody ---

DELL: They were a very common thing, except --- as a frying pan or a sink would be in a house today.

EDWARD: Or a match, yeah a match. But here is this Dutch oven. Huh, interesting. But that has to, got, it just has to be the place, because it's up from that Wright Field corner 210 yards.

DELL: I don't think you have any question there, that French wasn't killed there. Dave

Crow would, knew pretty well about that.

EDWARD: Right.

DELL: Judd Wise should know from what he, he was there a long time, that that was about the place. And my father knew that pretty well. And all of those older timers, old timers knew back there. A lot of fellows they imagined that, and tell different things, you know. Now I heard a fellow tell one time, just take up your time for a minute; I was in the Arrowhead Hotel, that was back, 50 years back. And this fellow said, was telling them guys in the Arrowhead Hotel, they was all different guys, he said, "You know, I come by where French was killed today," he said, "I was up between here and John Day" ---

EDWARD: (Laughter)

DELL: He said they built a monument up there on that, he told them all about that. And he said you know Oliver had followed French for somewheres around 30 or 40 days trying to get a chance to kill him, but French had that gun in the car. And if he killed ... got his dead shot ... so Oliver had to sneak along the line, and he was going along there, and that was a pretty rough road, and French's gun had fell off on the ground, and Oliver says, "This is my chance." So he got the gun and killed him with it. And them fellows all believed that now. They was all strangers in the county ... and they were talking about it later, and said, "Gee that old fellow sure knows a lot about all that." And they said something to me about that, and I said, "That fellow I don't think was ever in Harney County before, only he read some book somewhere." So, and I don't think he was either.

(Laughter)

EDWARD: You know what really messed up a lot of our old timers is that stupid Elizabeth Wood book on Pete French.

DELL: I never heard of that.

EDWARD: Okay, it was done in 1951. And it was all B.S., she just used Pete French's

name, she used Tebo's name, she used Link Hutton's name --- Link Hutton is in that book, you know.

DELL: Oh he is?

EDWARD: Oh yeah.

DELL: See, yeah, I know he is. I glanced through all them pictures.

EDWARD: Yeah, he was a mean son-of-a-gun.

DELL: Yes, he was, yes.

EDWARD: I don't know how many guys he killed.

DELL: Yeah, he was, he was kind of captain of that whole country out there. But I'll tell you a fellow that knows about that, kind of out there, and that's that guy that called you on the phone.

EDWARD: Oh, Harold.

DELL: Harold, yeah.

EDWARD: Yeah, Harold and I spent a lot of time out there.

DELL: Now he don't lie to you, and he knows what he is talking about.

EDWARD: Yeah, he was pissed off (oops) he was mad because I didn't stop by and see him. But I didn't have any time, I got to head back to Eugene today. God, that is a long drive.

DELL: Yeah it is, yeah.

EDWARD: Oh geeze, hate it, hate it. Anyway, a couple other things. Did your father ever say anything about Pete French, coroner's inquest being held at the bunkhouse at the Sod House?

DELL: No, I never heard him say that.

EDWARD: Well Marsden went, Dr. Marsden went down there, and I guess that's where the coroner's inquest was held, was in the bunkhouse at Sod House.

DELL: Oh, it was?

EDWARD: Yeah. But I have no real way to prove that. Let's see, what else? Wright house, we got that. Pile of rocks, we got that. Road, we got. Death site, we talked about. Okay. I think we're in pretty good shape, Dell. Is there anything else you can remember about old Pete French and Ed Oliver?

DELL: No, but with me it was all, I was so small it was just hearsay from fellows that --- I've heard a thousand different fellows, but I just went by the guys that really, my father and Dave Crow and different ones that really knew about it, you know.

EDWARD: David Crow was, didn't lie, from the way I understand.

DELL: He was what?

EDWARD: David Crow, from what I understand, wasn't no B.S.er or liar either.

DELL: No, no, he was a good guy.

EDWARD: Straight forward, yeah.

DELL: Yeah, he was straightforward.

EDWARD: Yeah. Dell, can I use your phone to call Red?

DELL: Yes.

EDWARD: To call Red ---

(END OF TAPE)

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