

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #128 - Side B

Subject: Ora Hayes & Gus Bardwell

Place: Burns, Oregon

Date: January 29, 1972

Interviewer: James Baker

JAMES BAKER: What was Kiger Canyon?

ORA HAYES: Old Tebo was a riding there one time and he seen this big old rock settin' up kind of on the hillside of the canyon, just balanced, so he got down and dug out in front of it, below it. And he dug out a little more and he finally laid down on his back and put his feet up against it and got it to rocking a little, and shoved it over, and it went down that canyon and up on the other side, and come back and just kept a doing that. And he said he come back there six or eight years after that and it was still a rollin' and it was about the size of his fist. (Laughter)

JAMES: Did he ever pull it out of his pocket and show it to people? And here's that rock? I guess he had a nice horse, too.

ORA: Yeah, Barb Wire, yeah I remember him. You've seen that old horse run up here, haven't you? When they used to have the old fair ground?

GUS BARDWELL: I don't remember, Ora.

ORA: Old grey horse. He got cut in the wire, and that's what he called him, Barb Wire.

JAMES: Did he ever have a palomino?

ORA: Well when I knew him he didn't buckaroo much then. See it was in French's will and all of those fellows, that if that ranch ever changed hands, why he went with it.

JAMES: I didn't know that.

ORA: And where the old buildings was at the P Ranch, that was Tebo's homestead. They had some pretty good saddle horses in them days, too.

GUS: You bet they did.

ORA: Sagebrush Field, you know where that is, they had a bunch of cattle there, and they had a bunch of saddle horses turned in there in the summertime. They went down there to get them, Tebo said, rode all over that field and couldn't find them. But they finally did find them, and these horses had these cattle all bunched. And the colts, the young horses, they was a holdin' them and the old horses was doin' ...

GUS: All they had to do was to catch the horses and take off, didn't they.

ORA: Yeah, there wasn't anybody on them. Like old French, he took a bunch of cattle, I guess they were beef cattle or steers or some-thing back down to California, and they come across that big gorge and they rode up and down that for a long ways in all directions, and they couldn't find any end to it. And finally a big old tree fell across there, a redwood I guess, so they drove these cattle across on that tree. And when they got on the other side, why he said, he got to lookin' at them, and he didn't think they had them all, so they counted them and they were 1,500 cattle short. And by god they said they rode around there and they finally went back on the tree looking for them. And he said they found them all out on one limb, grazing. (Laughter) He'd tell some wild stories.

And the fish he got over there, he planted the fish at the P Ranch. He was coming from California this way and he come to this creek and he was going to fish. And he had an old grain sack tied on his saddle, and he got down and wet it and caught some of them fish and wrapped them up in that sack and tied them on his saddle and brought them and turned them loose in the Blitzen. And them fish all new him; they'd climb out on the bank and follow him around, land lubbers!

JAMES: Land lovers!

ORA: You've been around the P Ranch, haven't you?

GUS: Oh yes.

ORA: You remember between the barn and the bunkhouse, that ditch that used to go through there, they had to walk on that, you know. One of them was following him around one day, and he fell off that foot walk and drowned, he said. The fish was following him right along on that trail, fell off the bridge and drowned.

JAMES: Fish? Yeah, and drowned. Now wait a minute! I heard one in which, something about he hooked a fish in the Blitzen River and had to back it down to the Malheur River.

ORA: It was the Malheur Lake, and he started up the Blitzen. And he got up about the Grain Camp, you don't know that country.

JAMES: Not too well.

ORA: You do.

GUS: Yeah, I know it.

ORA: He got up to about the Grain Camp, this fish did, and he tried to turn around and couldn't do it, so he just backed himself to the Lake. Too big to turn around in the river.

GUS: There used to be a dam right there.

ORA: Yeah, there's one there yet.

GUS: I used to go in there, and boy I'd catch trout there three feet long.

ORA: They've got a new dam in there now, a big one.

GUS: But you're not allowed to go in there.

ORA: No.

JAMES: Part of the Refuge?

ORA: Well you go further up, up to the P Ranch.

GUS: You can fish there ...

ORA: Yeah. Another time, there was a fellow from over there and they was a huntin'

ducks, and whatever they could get, and they had damn poor luck. And old Tebo, he took a cord and tied it onto the doorknob a goin' into that old big bunkhouse, there at the White House that burned down there. And took it clear out and throwed it in the river and he had bait on it, but he put some ... of some kind on this bait, and the duck he'd swallow that and it would just go right on through him. And another one would grab it and he'd swallow it. And he said the next morning, why there was ducks right up to the doorknob.

JAMES: I can't hardly believe that. That's a good one. ...

ORA: He showed them how to hunt ducks.

JAMES: That's for sure.

ORA: That old Tebo, he wasn't doin' much, they had some studs over there he was taking care of, that was in 1930 that I first met him. He'd leave that old stud down there at the river and water him; he'd fill up on that cold water. He'd drag Tebo for a ways and he'd let loose of the rope and the old horse would go on back to the barn. Tebo would have to foller him in. He was getting pretty old then.

JAMES: Yeah. I heard that when he was younger he caught this horse and the horse just kept going and his riata was going 75 feet straight out, and there was flies resting on the end of it.

ORA: (Laughter) There was, we was talking there a while ago, there was three of those, Chino and Tebo and Plassador, they came in here with French. Juan Redon and Tala Mattas, they came in with Devine. They were all Mexicans. I didn't see all those old fellows, but I seen old Chino, and Tebo, and Juan Redon.

JAMES: I don't know why there are so many stories that I've heard that are about Tebo's horse. But I guess one time he was pulling something and some skin came off the back of his neck. Is that enough?

ORA: Yeah, I've heard that too.

JAMES: Well I say the way I heard it, he put the hides of six sheep on this horse's back, and by spring it had all grown out and he sheared it and he sold it for 54 cents a pound. And that was 8 cents more than anybody else was getting for sheepskin.

ORA: Yeah, I've heard that too, but I'd kind of forgotten. I haven't thought of anything like that for a long time. Yeah, I heard that too. And probably a lot more that I won't think of until you're gone. Well, that's like, it wasn't Tebo, but there was another fellow, he was a freightin' here and he was coming up the old Bendire Grade, you know where that is, and he had 14 to 16 head of horses and mules on there, jerk line outfit, and it used to be a crooked old road, you know. And he had a big hound a followin' him, and he got to the top of this grade and he stopped his team and he couldn't see his dog. So he walked back down the hill a ways, and he found him down there cramped on one of them turns. He'd made it up with the big freight team, but the dog couldn't make the turns. (Laughter)

JAMES: Must have been a Dachshund, maybe couldn't get around.

ORA: Another fellow tellin' about, he had this old dog and you give him anything too hot to eat, and he'd stand there and blow it. ...

GUS: I didn't know him too well, never been around him.

JAMES: What was that story you were telling about the Kiger Gorge, when I came in?

GUS: Oh, that's the one we was telling' about Sandy Anderson, he said he shot that deer across the Gorge and by the time he got to the deer, it was spoiled. It took him that long to get there, way down and way back up again.

ORA: If you ever get out here in the summertime when the snow is gone, take that loop that goes around there, you can go right to the head of that gorge. You see pictures of it, but it don't show that canyon, it sure doesn't show the size of it.

JAMES: Real big, you can look a long ways across.

ORA: I've still got one of them calendars of the Steens Mountain. ... The first job he ever

got was at Twin River that was just below the Oregon line in Nevada. He fed cattle, bulls, for the Pacific Livestock Company. They owned all that country down there too, at \$1 a day, 700 head of them, with a pitchfork. And some fellow out there on that desert had about 700 to 800 head of old ewes, they were gummers. And old Kueny got them and he done good, and then one of them spring storms come and by god it killed them all. That's happened here a few times. But he never done like you and me or Gus would. He waited until them old sheep laid in the sun and got ripe and got about half rotten, and the wool just slips right off the hide, you know. Went out there and pulled that wool off and sacked it up and sold it and put it back in sheep, and he give the Shrine \$400,000 when he sold the ranch over there. And the old lady has give the Shrine something over \$1 million now, when she dies, she's still alive.

JAMES: Oh, Kueny, Frank Kueny.

ORA: Frank Kueny.

JAMES: I'll be darned. Isn't that something?

GUS: He'd come to town, and by gosh you wouldn't think he was a man with any money. He looked like a tramp, didn't he? And he'd never go to a hotel, he'd go out here, down here to the stockyards or in the sagebrush somewhere and lay down and go to sleep.

JAMES: He saved his money that way too.

GUS: He saved his money.

ORA: He told me, I knew old Frank, he said he'd make money settin' up \$2.50 a night for a hotel room where they had a bed, he'd just roll 'er out in back of the old Ford car, truck, no doors or cab or anything on it.

JAMES: \$2.50. Well I guess that's what it takes sometime. I sure don't do it.

GUS: Of course, he might have got a kick out of life that way, I don't know. He made all that money and then just give it away. He wouldn't spend it, you know.

ORA: The old lady, her and her sister, their dad owned that old Folly Farm Ranch over here. They used to drive freight teams and haul wool, them two girls. Ontario and that country, before the trains or anything ever come in here, you know. That's the way they used to freight it out. Gus, he can remember that. Teams and them old hard-tired trucks.

GUS: Yes, I took a load of freight down to his place down there at Andrews one time, and I went to the door to see for sure that I had the right ranch, you know, and yeah, it was the Kueny Ranch. And I thought I was talking to a man. My gosh, she looked just like a man, tan and big and a buckaroo hat on. So I said, "Well, I have a load here for a Mr. Frank Kueny." "Oh yes," she said, "back right over, drive around here and back up to that shed over there. I want it in that shed." So I did, and she was around there then and showed me, and by golly she worked just like a man. She helped to unload that truck. I thought it was a man I was talking to.

GUS: Her maiden name was Redding, wasn't it? Reddich, Renwick? ORA: Oh, he was the first surveyor in this country. The old Folly Farm, he was the man that started that, you know.

GUS: Yeah, that was Renwick.

ORA: That was Bill Renwick, wasn't it?

GUS: Bill Renwick's father, I don't know what his name was. He was the father of these Renwick boys here in Burns.

ORA: Well, he was the father of old lady Kueny, and their mother was this old fellow's daughter. And Mary Kueny, them two women was sisters. ...

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