

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #138 - Sides A/B

Subject: Fred Black

Place: Burns, Oregon

Date: March 10, 1972

Interviewer: James Baker

JAMES BAKER: About the fire of 1914, from a personal point of view, because you came running over the hill to do it.

FRED BLACK: Well, I lived back up here. Well, it's down about four or five blocks from here, off back on the back of town. I had to run clear down there, you see, quite a little ways to run. Of course I was quite a lot younger then than I am now, but I run down there. When I got in front of the French Hotel, that was right back to the barn that was burning, and it was afire too, from the barn, you see. I see there was an old fellow coming down the stairs from the hotel, and he had a woman's trunk, there was a woman who was a trying to get her trunk out of there. She was up there in the rooms, too, and she was trying to get her trunk down the stairway. This old guy, he tried, he was one of the Craddock boys, he grabbed the trunk with one hand and here he come right down the stairs. And when I got there he was running right up the street dragging it and hollering, "Fire". I don't know, he must have left it out there, because I went right back to the pump and went to pumping, to pump water there then, but he was hollering, "Fire, fire," every time he took a step pretty near, why he hollered "Fire".

He was one of the Craddock's from in the Silvies Valley. There was a whole bunch of them up there. And we fought that fire all, it must have been afternoon the next day before we got it so we could stop to get out and --- But it burned a lot of the buildings

along the street there, and clear down into the Safeway, where the Safeway, well it's Nyleen's Store now. It stopped in the wall of that store. And there was an old rooming house behind the bank there, and it burned too. And where the Arrowhead Hotel is was a pool hall, a big pool hall, called the Hessner Pool Hall. It all went up in that too. It was made out of an old barn, it had been a livery stable and they made a pool hall out of it and it went up in smoke there too. It was quite a fire, I'll tell you.

And the folks, they lived just down in the next block, they had a house there, and when I got loose from the pump, I went down there and was a helping them move their stuff out, move all their stuff out. The fire was going right down the street and they didn't know when they'd get it stopped. It got in that wall there and they checked it there.

JAMES: Did they ring the bell early in the morning, is that how you knew about the fire?

FRED: Yes, the fire bell, ... he jerked it as fast as he could. I've rung that bell a good many times.

JAMES: You pulled on your shoes and ---

FRED: Got on my shoes and my overalls, and my old blue shirt, and that's the way I went, buttoned them as I went. I didn't get my shoes tied until along some time in the day.

I don't know how many saloons burned up along there that day. Eighteen buildings entirely consumed. Several saloons that was in that deal that burned, seven or eight saloons along the street there right close, and they all just carried out cases of beer and whiskey and set them on the sidewalk. Come and get it if you wanted it. But a fellow didn't feel much like taking it when he was a pumping that water into that fire.

We'd stay in front of the building until the fire came over the roof, and then you'd have to take that thing and get out of there, you couldn't stand the heat there, too hot for you. Quite a fire, I'll tell you, I never want to be in another one like that.

JAMES: You mentioned that the well right in front of the hotel was dry, right in front of the

livery stable.

FRED: Well, there wasn't any on that block where the livery stable was, it was right up Main Street. See the wells were all right up the center of Main Street. And it was the one on the square above the hotel was the one that was dry, and they had to take the hose clear around the building to get to the barn. But it was pretty well gone; it didn't do that much good anyway. They had to get in there and try to head it off before it got into some of the rest of them.

The bank, where the bank is, it was a stone building and it burned around it, so it didn't burn the bank. It cut right in below it, and then took it all out below, a saloon or two in there. And there was a drug store in there that burned up. Welcomes had a drug store in there and it burned out at the same time.

JAMES: And of course a lot of horses were killed?

FRED: Oh yes. A whole ... of horse that was killed in there. A lot of them, I don't know how many got away; there was quite a lot. Generally had quite a bunch of horses in there. They had several, they kept driving horse, you know, you could hire a team or buggy and stuff like that. And then they had these teams to haul hay with; they had to haul hay to feed all that stuff.

JAMES: That was McKinnon who had ---

FRED: Yes, Bob McKinnon.

JAMES: Did you pull any horses out, or did you say your father did?

FRED: My father was working for Bob there in the barn, and he was a night man, and slept there, and stayed right there. And he was the one who was getting the horses loose. I didn't see him until the next day some time. But everybody was working, everybody that was near. They can't stand them pumps very long, a lot of those fellows out of those stores and things, they can't stand them pumps very long. You get out there

and work on them pumps, you know, and get short-handed, why they pump pretty hard. I don't know where that old rig is, I don't know whether it is around here any place or not.

JAMES: You were talking about one horse that came out with his tail and his mane on fire.

FRED: That was his team that he hauled hay and stuff with, and he used them on --- they had a dump cart, you know, that they cleaned out the barn with, well he had a sorrel horse, and a bay that he worked on that, he worked the sorrel one on that cart to clean out the barn and haul the hay, and pulled it up in with a Jackson fork and took it off of the wagons. ... You could just turn him with a singletree, drive him any place you wanted to. Johnny and Billy were the two horses. I worked them a long time, hauled hay with them for a long time. And they took that bay horse after he got all right and they took him back to Wyoming with them, moved up there and farmed 13 years. I guess he died up there.

WOMAN: I remember them having him down in the corral down there in back of the house, and they doctored him.

FRED: He burned his mane and you could just see him going down the street and the blazes flying out of that mane and tail.

JAMES: Those fires in the early days were really terrible.

FRED: Yes, well you get in something like that and it's worse, where stock is and stuff like that. They don't understand and that heat, they say, you can't hardly get a horse out of it. A lot of fellows, I've heard them say that about the only way to lead them out of a barn that way is to put a blanket over their head or something, and blindfold them and you can pull them out of there. A lot of them you can't without blindfolding them, you can't get them out of the barn.

I never tried to, I didn't try to pull any of them out, because I was on the Fire Department and I had to stay there.

JAMES: What were some of the other fires that you recall going to?

FRED: Well that hospital fire that I went to was one that was a bad one; burned up one man in that.

JAMES: Was that the incident you were telling me where the fellow said that, what was it he said to you as you were going up the stairs?

FRED: Well, he says, "You go on and get the other fellows out. I can get out myself." Old Dave Miller was his name. And he had his brother was out there too; he was an old man too. Johnny Morral and I was about the only two young ones that was in there. We tried to carry them other guys out. We carried Billy Carroll; he was County Clerk there for years, after he got out. But he walked on two crutches ... but he got around good, went every place.

JAMES: Well let me make a big jump, jump from the fires to Mart Brenton. You mentioned that ---

FRED: Remember old Mart well. He owned a saloon here, had a saloon down here on the corner where the Richfield station is, called the Star Saloon, he run that for years. He also worked for the Company, for the Frenchglen Livestock Company. I was ... a kid and he was running the Sod House Ranch then. They had a man on each ranch, you know, around and he kept so many men there to run the ranch, you know. ... myself, and I had a brother younger than I was, and my father, we cut the wood on Jack Mountain. They were putting in a dredger in that swamp down there and we were cutting wood for that dredger. So Mart he happened to be --- and we were cutting posts too along with it, and he was the receiver for the posts. My brother and I, we were just small kids, but we was cutting wood all the time, posts anyway. He always came up and received the posts, you know. We'd pile them up and mark them, and he said, "You boys put anything that a steeple won't split, I don't care."

JAMES: Did you do any other kind of work for him?

FRED: Oh, I've painted for him a lot after he came back here, lots of times when he had any painting to do.

JAMES: What kind of work did you do for Hanley?

FRED: Well that was the first work I ever done in my life, I raked hay for Hanley. Started work when I was 10 years old on the hay rake. And he put me out in a field off out toward Harney there with, there was an old fellow they called St. Clair, I don't know what his other name was. They called him Saint, everybody did.

He and a colored old boy was working out there on mowing machines, they was a mowing the hay and they sent me out there to rake it. And I had a big horse out there, he was about as high as the door, and I couldn't reach the top of his ... to put the harness on him. And this colored boy used to come and throw the harness on. I could pass them down and hitch him up, but I couldn't put the harness on. I went through the hay field there until --- they moved us when we got through there, moved over to the ranch, and when I got there why I hired to George Craddock, he was one of the Silvies Valley Craddock's too, and he hired me as hay boss there. And Henry Barkel was the ranch boss. Old George had hired me to hay there, and so I come back over to the ranch and started haying right there, raking, just crossed the bridge from the house there. I broke a bolt out of one of the shafts on the rake, and I took it over to the blacksmith shop to get them to fix it and Bill was there, old Bill Hanley himself. And he fired me! He said I was too little to rake hay. So he told me to go over to the office and get my time. And I went over and he got my check. And so the folks they was working just south of me there a ways, my folks for another outfit there, so I thought I'd go home along toward evening there. I started home and old George he saw me going, and he got on his horse and he come out and caught me in out in the field and said, "Where are you going?" And

I said, "I'm going home." "What's the matter?" And I said, "Bill Hanley fired me, that's what's the matter, and I'm going home." He said, "Oh, don't pay any attention to him, you come on and go back, and I'll take you down to the Tule house and you can work down there." So, I turned around and went back and he got the buckboard and got my bed, and he took me down to the Tule house, and I stayed for the rest of the haying. Raked through the haying.

And so when we got through down there, the morning we finished up down there, and George come down and he said, ... "When you get through take these rakes to the ranch and put them in the shed and go over to the office and get your check." So we did, we took them up and put them in the shed, put the horses in the barn, and went over to our my check, and old Bill he said, "I thought I fired you." I said, "Well you did, but George hired me back." So, he paid me. But I never did care too much about him after that. I guess that was his ... well I wasn't very big, I was pretty small. JAMES: Not if that horse was as big as the door.

FRED: Well, he was an awful big horse. And they called him "Mule", I can remember his name yet, they called him "Mule". And he was a flea bitten grey, a white horse with little bits of red specks all over him, thick, just like you took a pencil and just punched them all over, just thick like freckles on a kid, or something. He had spots all over him, and they called him "Mule".

JAMES: You would have been too young to know Tebo?

FRED: Tebo, I knew him well.

JAMES: Oh, you did?

FRED: Oh yes, and old Chino and Tebo.

JAMES: You knew those fellows?

FRED: Yeah. And ... and Hanko, and a whole bunch of them Mexicans. I lived there

three years at the P Ranch. Old Tebo had a cabin right there, right on the P Ranch, right where the buildings are there now, they kind of set off on the side. That was his homestead, he homesteaded that. Yes, I knew him well. I've seen him catch many a hog with a rope.

JAMES: Was he a pretty good roper?

FRED: Oh gosh, he was one of the best, I think. They were all good. All them fellows were good. Old Chino was awful good. He was a big fat fellow, a big old fat Mexican, but by golly he'd give that rope a little turn and he'd throw it out there full length, you know, and catch a horse right around the neck every time. And old Hanko and Loopy was the same way. They were old men when I knew them there, but I saw them roping horses in the corral in Catlow Valley there, there was a band of horses in there, they branded all the young ones. And I've saw them two old fellows roping horses in there. And they'd start them, get them running around the corral, and they'd pick out what they wanted, and one of them would throw his rope out this way and catch a horse by the front feet. He'd just throw that rope over there and pick him up by the front feet, ... just like he was settin' in a chair and doing that. That's the way they throwed a rope. And there was two or three of the younger boys there that was good. Chino's nephew was there. They were good ropers, awful good horsemen them fellows. They had some wonderful horses there. And they knew how to handle them. Yes, I knew them quite well, all them fellows.

JAMES: Tebo had a horse he used to race by the name of Barbed Wire, I think.

FRED: Yes, Barb Wire, a grey horse. He had a big wire cut on his shoulder. Yeah, that's right. He had another, he had a sorrel horse he called Bird that he rode a lot, he roped off of him a lot, rope the hogs and stuff. And that horse was a nice gentle horse. You couldn't get on him no way in the world if he told him not to let you on. He could stand there and talk to that horse, and you couldn't get on him to save your neck, he'd reach



down and get you by the seat of the pants and pull you off or anything, anything to keep you from getting on him. If he didn't tell him to let you on. He was a nice gentle horse, but if he told him not to let you on, you couldn't get on him. I was just a kid then, but I knew all them guys.

JAMES: Jinks Harris told me that once Tebo dared him to pull him away from the wall by his ears, you know what I mean by that? Tebo got up against the wall and Jinks grabbed on to his ears and tried to pull him away, he had so much strength down there that he couldn't get him away, couldn't get him away from the wall.

FRED: Jinks was around there quite a lot, but he was around there after I was, Jinks was. He knew all them guys. He was down there and worked a while. I carried mail right down to the P Ranch for seven and a half months. From the P Ranch to Diamond, carried it a horseback. I left there when I was 14 years old, so I was a kid there then. I had two horses, I'd go down one day with the mail sack, and the next morning I'd come back to the P Ranch. That's the way they carried it, worked for the Company. The stage just went to Diamond and left the mail, and I'd pick it up there for the Company. That was quite a job in the wintertime, when them creeks was all up, and there was no bridges on any of them. I floated through several of them creeks there. I remember I got into one, one time, at Krumbo; it's a little creek in the summertime. But Dora Clark was with me that morning. She'd went to Diamond with me a horseback, her mother and father was on the Diamond Ranch, ... and she'd went over there and stayed all night with her mother.

And the next morning we was going back a horseback to the P Ranch. We come to that creek at Krumbo, and gosh, it was clear out over the banks, and I was riding a little short-legged bay horse. And I had on a great long canvas coat way down on me, and I rode into that thing, and it was right in a turn, the creek kind of turned there, and this ford was right in that, and I got out in there and washed sand and stuff down in, and that horse

got his feet stuck in the sand and he just socked me up and down in that water there for quite a little bit. But I hung to the saddle and he turned around and got back out on the same side that he went in on. Dora thought we should go back, and I said let's go up the creek a mile or so to where it was shallower and we could go across.

So we rode up the canyon half or three-quarters of a mile, I guess, and there was some big quacking aspen there, and there was a narrow place on the creek, and so I laid two or three of these poles across for her to go across on, and I took the horse and went across the bed on a riffle, and got him across then. We got on then and got into the ... field there, there was a Basco boy feeding there, feeding cattle, and the creek there was all over everything, ... and she wouldn't go across, and wouldn't let me go.

And she said, "We'll stay and go across with Juan," he had a buckboard and a span of mules there, he'd drive out there of a morning feeding, and then he'd drive back to the ranch. So we got in that buckboard, we had to wait a little while until he finished feeding, and then we got in that buckboard and started back across the creek. And the first creek he come to, he had to go into the creek and then go straight up it for quite a ways to get out. ... The darn mules couldn't go against that water. He went right off the bank into it so he could get down to this road to get out. We all sat up on the back of the seat because the water was so high, and we was sitting up on the back of that buckboard seat with our feet in the seat, and when the buckboard went over that bank, why we all sat down in the seat again, and so we all sat in the water clear up to our necks. The old mules had to swim down across that to the other side to get out. That was fun carrying mail in that kind of times. Of course of a morning it had gone down, and that's the only bad day I had that winter.

JAMES: That must have been quite an experience.

FRED: Yeah, it was. That was a lot different times than there is now. You talked to Judd

Wise, didn't you? He got a lot of that. I knew him when he come there. I was there before he come there. Him and my brother was just about the same age, and they run together there all the time. My father had the Roaring Spring Ranch after he moved on to the ranch, and they had the Home Creek Ranch. So his brother, I guess, it was had the Home Creek Ranch, and he was working there for him and ---

JAMES: What other kind of work did you fellows do?

FRED: Well, I didn't do anything much after we got through cutting that wood, we cut 1,300 cords of wood there on that mountain, that was quite a little bit of work, them posts. I don't know how many thousand posts we made. They was all cut out of that old juniper, and you know what that is. Right up on that mountain there, there is nothing but rocks, grew right in the rocks. Hardly ever got a tree in the dirt, grew right in the rocks all the time. Crooked, awful crooked stuff. Take a big pile of them to make a cord of wood. But we made more wages out of that; we got a lot better wages than we did working on the ranch.

JAMES: Was that much fun?

FRED: Not too much, not bad for a little while, but it runs into work.

JAMES: What did you do for entertainment?

FRED: We read books and stuff like that, darned little, because I never went to school enough to learn to read. We stayed there three years and never went to school at all. The winter that I worked there at the P Ranch, I went to school a half a day each day. I'd go for the mail, and each morning I'd get back about 11 or 12 o'clock, and then I'd go to school in the afternoon. They had a private teacher there and she said, "You come just the same as the other kids." The Clark's had two boys and a girl there, and they had hired this teacher to teach them. And she said I could come just the same, wouldn't charge any more. I got to go to school a little bit that way.

JAMES: Was she a pretty nice teacher?

FRED: Yeah, I've forgotten what her name was now. Yes, she was nice, a nice person. She was a teacher, and I got my leg broke there, and she was the only doctor I had. She was a nurse too, she had nurse training. And she took care of my leg until it healed up.

JAMES: She didn't stay in this area?

FRED: No, she moved away from here, but I've forgot what her name was. She was raised here when she was a girl. The Clark boys are dead now. Their sister is alive; she lives in Ashland, Oregon.

JAMES: What part of the country did your father come from before he lived in Harney County?

FRED: Well, he come from Iowa, and he come here in a covered wagon, and landed at the Hot Springs down here in Modoc County. They had a covered wagon and train that he come with, they landed there in the Indian War up there, at Modoc. He had two brothers that was in the war there, the Modoc Indian War.

JAMES: Was he a cattle rancher in Iowa?

FRED: I don't know what he done there, never did, he was young, he was just a kid when they come. I don't think he was over, probably 7 or 8 years old when they came here. Because he worked there in the Fort, they had a Fort there. And they kept a lot of horses there, and he stayed there and rode horses and trained horses there for quite a while. He was only about 14 years old then, so he couldn't have been very big when they landed there. But the kids started to work pretty early them days, I'll tell you.

SIDE B

FRED: ... As soon as they got big enough to work, why they was working. I know I was, I never stopped.

JAMES: He came out with his brothers?

FRED: Well his father and mother, there was nine of them boys in that family, and they was all with that wagon train with the father and mother when they come. Two of the boys was old enough to fight in the Indian War there. His oldest brother and the next one to him. One of them got his thumb shot off, that's all that got hurt.

JAMES: There was an Indian War around, in which somebody got hit in the belt buckle and knocked the wind out of him.

FRED: Yeah, I believe I've heard that story someplace here. That might have been some of the Wetzel's. I believe it was. Old John Witzel, probably. He was quite a peddler. It might of happened, but he could tell a lot of pretty good stories.

JAMES: You mean he sold medicines, he was a drummer and went around selling medicines and spices and things?

FRED: Oh, no. He had a ranch out there at The Narrows, and some of the boys lived up there the side of, on the swamp there now, this side of the P Ranch. They live there, the Witzel Ranch. Some of his boys is there yet. He's been dead quite a while.

JAMES: He could tell a good story?

FRED: Yes. He said he come here when Dog Mountain was just a pup. (Laughter) Yeah, he was a ... I was on the jury with him one time, I was just young, that was the first jury I was ever on, I was on with him. And that was over a fire that burned up a second hand store down there, Noonchester's Second Hand Store. And I guess he set it afire, but he come clear of it. But old John was on that. And there was two or three other old fellows on there. He was just a telling stories all the time. We was locked up four days in the jury room there before we ever come to an agreement, before we ever could settle on that. We was locked up four days and nights there in the jury room. We slept on the floor there, they had mattresses and blankets, and they'd throw them in there and we'd make

our bed on the floor and sleep right in there. They'd take us out to meals. They'd take us downtown, two bailiffs, one at each end of us. Wouldn't let nobody talk to us. But old Johnny, you never had to stop, he was telling stories all the time.

JAMES: Do you remember any of them?

FRED: No, I don't, ... but Dog Mountain was just a pup, when he got here. I guess he was here most of his life. He claimed he was in the Indian War too. I don't know whether he was or not.

JAMES: Who were some of the other storytellers?

FRED: There was quite a few of them that told stories, I can't remember them too much.

JAMES: You say you were buckarooing for many years?

FRED: I drove several cattle drives clear from here to Pendleton. You know what that distance through there; I made several trips through there with cattle. Cooked two or three trips.

JAMES: Are you a cook?

FRED: I was just a bachelor, but I cooked, got started on the road and the cook quit, and the boss said, "Well, it's up to you. You'll be to cook." I had to take the cook wagon, they had a wagon and all, a cupboard, there was grub and everything in the back. A stove to cook on. I just set that on the ground and put the wood under it and cook on it. I cooked for seven men out that way. I'd move and get their dinner, and supper, and breakfast. Get up about 3 o'clock and get their breakfast, so they didn't have to stay in bed very long.

That Joe Fine, have you caught him? He was on one of them, the drive, the first drive that I made, he was on with us. Either the first or second drive that I made in 1905 or '06, something like that, driving cattle from here to Pendleton. And I drove to Huntington, several trips to Huntington from here. Of course not as near long as this drive

from there.

But we started one time with the same boss; I worked for him all the time, Frank Mattney. He's dead now and gone. But we started from Lawen down here one time the 16th of March with a bunch of cattle. We had 700 head of steers, and there was five of us. He brought a cook, a fellow that was cooking, and he was going to cook for us in the cook wagon, and he had one boy. And I was with the cow buyer, old Henry Blackwell was buying cattle all over the valley, and down at The Narrows, and Lawen. And I had been with him, and he'd buy, you know, and we had a big field over at Lawen. And I'd take the cattle when he'd get, oh 100 head or a couple 100, why I'd drive them over there and put them in this big field, good grass and lots of pasture and water and stuff. And then on the 15th of March why we started them from Lawen to go to Huntington. And they were just feeders, we gathered them up off the feed grounds, and we was just going to graze them through, you know, went across through the Hole in the Ground, and out through Crane Creek and out that way. Lots of desert grass and stuff out through there, and some days we didn't go over four or five miles, or some days not that far if we got in good feed, why we'd just let them go that direction and feed.

So we had one guy that he had with him was a pretty good kid, he had his own horse. I had five horses that Blackwell had bought for me, he bought five horses for me when we started out that spring, and they were good ones, real good horses. So, he give me one lead point, and he give this other kid that he brought down with him the other point, he was a McDuffey. Well, and he'd hired three kids out here from out her at Harney City, and they each had a horse. One of them was a man, he was a grown man, he was 30 years old or better, and the orneriest people you ever saw. They wasn't worth a nickel. And you take 700 head of steers, you know, driving out that way, why you got to watch them or you're going to lose some of them. In the spring that way, they're great to scatter

out and get away.

Lots of times I'd go from the lead back two miles to get cattle that they'd leave at the back. They'd ride right by them and leave them at the side of the road, when they could have just rode right around them and put them in the bunch, but they wouldn't do it.

We went out through that way, and we got out to what they call Hole in the Ground, it's away out on the Owyhee Desert there, and I guarded cattle a half a night every night alone. They wouldn't guard cattle. We had to guard them at night or they would all get away. Well the boss and this McDuffey, they guarded till 12 o'clock, and then one of them came and wake me up and I'd go out and take them till they got out there in the morning. And then I'd go in and get my breakfast and go back to the cattle. Well I done that clear out there. And there was one night; well two nights that I didn't stand guard a going out there.

And we got out there on that desert, why this McDuffey boy had picked up a big old brown mare that his stepfather had started to break to work, and he drove her just two or three days and lost her out there, she got loose out of his team. They turned them loose, you know, and she run off with some other horses. She'd been gone for a couple of years. He kept saying all the time, well he only had one horse, "When I get that mare, if she's in any shape, I'm going to ride her and make me another saddle horse." Well, when we got her she was all right, she was a big fat animal now, weighed about 1,600 pounds, and just a little hog back on her, and she was just about as wild as they got, you know. She'd forgot everything that she'd ever known. We drove her for a couple of days, and every little bit she'd quit the bunch and somebody would have to go after her and chase her back there. We drove our saddle horses right with the cattle, you know.

Well one day we was setting down, a whole bunch of us settin' down on the hillside



and the boss was with us, and we was just letting the cattle feed around us, there was good feed, and decided, well somebody was going to ride this old mare. ... Well, what are we going to do? Who's going to ride it? The boss says, "Let's draw straws to see who rides the mare first." He said, "I'll fix the straws, I won't ride her, but I'll fix the straws for the rest of you." And we all agreed. He said, "The one with the shortest straw has to ride her first," and he made them all different lengths. He said, "The next shortest one will ride her next." That's the way we fixed that out to go. When we drew, I was lucky enough to get the short straw. So there wasn't much more said about it that night, so the next morning about daylight we got the horses in, so he said, "Well what about the old brown mare?" I said, "Well, I got the short straw, didn't I?" "Yeah, do you want me to catch her?" And I said, "Catch her." So he caught her. He had a rawhide riata, and he tied a sea grass rope on the end of it. So he caught the ... to the wagon ... when he choked her down there and got her on the ground, why I put my saddle on her and buckled it up good and tight, laying down on the ground. I said, "This is just as good a place as any to get on, she's closer to the ground." So I just got on her lying down. And I had an old sweater, one of them that slides over your head on, and it was rolled around me four or five times, ... and they turned her loose, and when she got up, why that old sweater hooked over the saddle horn. And by golly that old mare went right from there. And I rode her until about 11 o'clock or a little after, and I don't think there was five minutes that she wasn't a bucking. She just give clear out. She got so she wouldn't do anything when I 'd spur her and try to get her to go. She'd buck a jump or two and then she'd stop with her head down there, and just stand there. So Buck come back and he said well I better catch you ... A pretty rough life.

JAMES: With a horse like that, none of those guys would want to ride her for sure.

FRED: A lot of them didn't want to ride her. And the boy that was cooking, I knew him

pretty well, I rode with him and worked with him a lot, and he says, "If you other guys ride her, why I'll ride her too." But there wasn't a one of them would ride her, wasn't a one of them tried to ride her. Some of them rode colts a little, but they wanted little ones, they didn't want no animal like that.

JAMES: Do you feel anything special about this country out here; is there any attachment you have to this land?

FRED: I wouldn't stay no place else. Well I wasn't born here, but I come here when I was 4 years old. I wouldn't stay no place. My daughter lives in Washington up there, they run bees up there. He's got 2,000 hives of bees up there and it's a big outfit, grinds out that honey in them great big 60 gallon barrels, you know, by the ton. But I don't stay up there; I don't like it up there. We go up there once in a while. And Eulah's daughter lives in Portland, she works for one of them machinery outfits there, and her son has been working there for Fred Meyer outfit for 17 years now. And we go down there, and they used to say, "Well why don't you guys sell out and come down here, and get a little place and live here?" I couldn't live no place like that. I've lived out here too long for that.

JAMES: What do you like about this part of the country?

FRED: Well I don't know, seems like we're more free out here, and then we have more room, there's a lot more room. You get in a place like that and you're, it's too close to everybody else. I couldn't drive there, on them highways the way the people drive. I never did ... in traffic there. So I couldn't drive in that stuff.

JAMES: Do you feel any spiritual attachment to this land?

FRED: Oh, not to speak of, anything like that. I think it's a good country. If we had a little more water here, it's a wonderful country, I think. We get a lot of water at times, but it don't last long enough. It runs off to the lake and we're short of water later in the summer. We're short of water for irrigating and everything.

This year now we may have good water again, they claim we're going to have. It was fairly good last year. But at that they called it a short hay crop last year. I've hayed here, I've stacked hay, I've worked in the hay fields nearly all over the country here, all over the valley here and around. And the Double O, I've worked and hayed there several years. I've never hayed on Silver Creek yet, but I've been out there lots. I've worked out there.

I've painted here for 63 years. ... In the summer when haying would come I'd go out and hay. I'd get better wages for a while, but I got so I couldn't get better wages. Get better wages painting. But when I started we'd work for 50 cents an hour painting. That was the wages when I started to painting here. I started the spring I was 21 years old, I started painting. I was 84 here the 23rd of last month. I told them this year I wouldn't buy any more license, I was through. I wasn't going to paint any more. Let some of the rest of them do it.

JAMES: This ends the conversation with Fred Black.

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