

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #148 - Sides A & B

Subject: Steens Mountain

Place: Harney County Historical Society Tour

Date: June 4, 1977

Interviewer: Marcus Haines

MARCUS HAINES: ... Virginia Valley and this was all homesteaded at one time. There's a few homesteads left here, and they're developing them just like they --- they're starting to, out the other way. I don't know what the water situation is here, but the Davies, that's Bill's boys, live back in this area here.

And then Claude Wright's place was right --- the last place we passed here. I understand that Ken Bentz from over at Drewsey has bought it.

And the next place on to the west belongs to Carl and Violet Jones, and the next place --- there is three of them along there that belongs to Fred Briggs, who bought Johnny Crow out down at lake --- and he comes from Lakeview. If you ever go up this road here six miles you're in Anderson Valley, and that's where the Jenkins' live. That is Tom Jenkins, and of course Tom is dead now, but Dorothy has her home up here. They have two homes.

Mrs. June Hall used to live there, and they have sold the place there to one of the daughters that married Tommy Maupin. So Tommy Maupin and Delta lives up in this area here. And had you been through here forty years ago, you wouldn't have come through here, you would have gone over what they call up Well Hill and through Adobe Flat back over here and into Anderson Valley, and up on Riddle Mountain here, and then down Juniper Grade, which we will see from the other side. There was --- it was a little

trick to get down, and was a bigger trick to get up, I guess. (Laughter)

They tell a story about a Mr. Currey who used to drive the stage down South End, in an old Model-T Ford, and he had a drummer with him, and they started down the Juniper Grade and the old thing flew out of gear. And any of you ever drove a Model-T; you know you didn't have any brakes once you got out of gear. And the old man was just sitting there just steering for all he's worth. And this drummer said, "Mr. Currey," he said, "if you'll stop, I think I'll get out." He said, "If I could stop this damn thing, we'd both get out." (Laughter) And on down the grade he went. George has had some experiences on it, I'm sure of that. ... the other side, and we'll drive on up here another three or four miles and you'll see the road going into the Malheur Cave, which is just about three miles, two and a half miles off the main road. What the supposition is, I guess it's a known fact that at one time Malheur Lake drained down through this country into the South Fork of the Malheur River and on into the Snake River there at Ontario. In 1931, when the lake was surveyed, they run a line of levels from the lowest part in Malheur Lake, which was about 4,087 feet as I recall. And there was a fifteen foot hump right out by Princeton there that shut the water off here from coming on out when --- well where it come out was the lowest place that it could come out from the valley. And some of you remember that C. B. McConnell and some others started the reclamation program for Malheur Lake, and started to cut a channel out through here --- was going to drain the lake right down through this country here, and right into Malheur Cave and on down the line. But it didn't work.

TOMMY JENKINS: The old riverbed, Marcus, is very plain after you get a little farther down here.

MARCUS: Yeah, we'll see ---

TOMMY: The farther down you go, the deeper it gets. And you can see it very plainly where the old drainage ---

MARCUS: Where the drainage was.

MAN: ... that old bachelor that used to live right back over here.

MARCUS: Old John the Greek, John the Greek.

MAN: John the Greek, yeah. Yep, Cal warned her if she didn't stay home, she wasn't worth keeping.

MAN 2: No.

MAN: He sold her.

TOMMY: He ... over on the other side of that ridge there.

MARCUS: Yeah, he was back ... over there.

MAN: If she didn't stay home, she wasn't worth keeping.

MAN 3: She did all of the old branding too. He had his trough inside of his corral.

MARCUS: I guess old John --- is he dead, Tommy?

TOMMY: Yeah, he sold out and went back to Greece, you know.

MARCUS: Yes.

TOMMY: And Hank Dickerson used to take care of his business up here. And old John has been dead, probably six, seven, eight years.

MARCUS: We have never heard for sure whether John --- he'd be an old, old man of course, you know. But --- probably the old devil never died too, you know.

MAN 4: How long has the ... school been open in here?

MARCUS: Well, I'll have to call on my wife back here.

EDNA HAINES: I don't know. It's been a long time.

MARCUS: Well, ten or twelve years ago.

EDNA: More than that I think, more than that.

MARCUS: Dorothy Jenkins was the last teacher here, well; I'll speak with Dorothy Spires here. You'll notice this whole country has burned out, which was a real good thing. Dorothy went out and set some trash on fire here, and she really cleaned the country. (Laughter) Probably the best thing that ever happened to it.

TOMMY: The BLM came out there and stopped it. As far as it going over on this other, east of us here, they stopped it from going over there. Well, the best thing in the world would have been for it, to let it go.

MARCUS: Yeah.

TOMMY: They had to stop ...

LADY: Those were the days before they let them burn.

PATTI ENGSTROM: Yeah. Right.

MARCUS: ... to Fields for noon, they are going to close that little restaurant, a person told me, at noon for this rodeo. But those of you that ---

PATTI: What rodeo?

MARCUS: --- want a sack lunch and all --- why I'll eat it for you and you can go to the restaurant. (Laughter)

...

MARCUS: ... and then just over the hill is what we call Indian Creek, and that's where Elgie Brown lived and raised --- raised a family here --- he and Opal and Glen, and Ethel, Harry ... She taught school, I went to school to her, that's the reason I was trying to forget her, I guess.

Anyway, if you read in the paper here the other day about the house burning, well it was burning the big Brown house, the Elgie Brown house, just over the ridge right here,

about ten miles from where we're at right now, is where the fire was.

We're starting up, we're leaving the valley now, and we're going to go up to Summit Springs, and when we get up on top here, why we'll have Tommy Jenkins tell you a little something about this country. This is Tommy's old stomping grounds up here. It's very interesting country up in here too. We'll have him explain it to you.

TOMMY: On the west side of it here there is the Summit Springs. There's three springs -- - the east summit over here, the middle up here where we had the buckaroo camp, and back in that draw is another spring. That's the only water that there is here in the whole country this year. We had --- my nephew couldn't even bring any of his cattle over there on account of the shortage of water. They always come back over in here toward Duck Creek. There's always --- we have a lot of good big water holes over in there but they're all dry. There is only one little spring over there, we own it, it's on our side of the allotment. We always run our steers over here, and kept them here until long in July. And there's worlds of water, and it's really a good feed country, early feed country. It's all fenced in; it's a private allotment. We had to fence it. There's twenty-three miles of fence around this one allotment here. But it sure isn't doing anybody any good this year.

And I'm --- you can see right ahead of us there to the east there is --- that's where the BLM put a new road down through there. It comes out down, way down towards the Crowley Ranch. It stays up on top there, and they put it in there for what they call a patrol road. I don't know what they want to patrol, because ---

LADY: There's a few cows out there.

...

TOMMY: But it goes on over across Duck Creek and ahead of Dedmond Creek and comes in way down on the other side of Tom Dowell's, and drops down over towards

Crowley. But the old road never used to come across this way. It --- first road that I remember traveling was one that was on the other side of this ridge over here, came up through by the old --- Elgie Brown place there. And then on up through Big Gulch, which lays right over in there. And then it went on the other side, and then down another draw that we will cross down below. But that was the next road after they had the Juniper Grade Road. But it wasn't much better than that Juniper Grade Road because they always got a lot of snow --- snowdrifts. It was narrow, and adobe country is pretty bad road in the wintertime. And then they did put a road across here. It wound around and ... just down here about that first stake is where it turned off and goes a different direction down this draw. And meets then where the old road used to come across down from Baker Pass there.

But then there is another road took off of it and went down to meet the Twinman Road that goes along the foot of the mountain from --- well from --- clear along from Denio and that --- Fields and all through that country. And they went out and went through by the Crowley Ranch, and then on over and came out at Harper. That is where; it used to be one of these main --- those old freight roads.

And there is also --- a lot of people don't know there was two telephone lines through this country. One of them came up through by Elgie Browns, and went on over on --- out of Big Gulch into Duck Creek Flat and down that road there, and it came out down at --- one of the old Stewart homesteads there. And they had a post office there. And I don't think they had much of a store. But, they would keep people over night, along that old freight road there. There is some pretty good springs there.

And Cert had a big house and barn, and they called it, it was a three-story house. And the upper part of it had windows in the ceiling --- or on the roof --- in the roof. So they

nicknamed it skylight. And then just up about a couple miles, be south of Cord is where the telephone ended, was at Cord --- at skylight, whatever one you want to use. The telephone ended there. And there is also another telephone that went up through Anderson Valley, or above Anderson Valley and across Burnt Flat and down Juniper Grade, and it went clear down to Augustine's. It was in there for years and years. It was the first one in, and it was put in before this one over here that went down to Cord.

MARCUS: ... we had better get on the way Tom, and stop down here at, stop down here at Folly Farm and you can tell us some more down here.

JIM: Marcus, Marcus ---

MARCUS: --- you and George --- yeah.

JIM: When I first came here this Adobe Flat, just a little ways ahead of us that Tommy mentioned --- I come over that one time when the moisture was just right and I would drive a few feet and stop and dig the mud out from the front wheels of the car. Roll up like a snowball.

TOMMY: That's on the old Anderson Valley ---

JIM: Yeah.

MAN 5: You didn't hit it right Jim, when you step in it your feet would get ---

JIM: Yeah.

MAN 5: I had the experience.

JIM: I left Fields one time with Meryl Weittenhiller ---

MARCUS: We'll stop down here at Folly Farm ---

... Tommy was telling about the BLM built ... county, was that George?

... since they built up here with the rock here, that I think George was telling you back here about it, and I --- yeah.

JIM: ... a hired man was driving; he tipped it over, brand new pickup, right up here.

MARCUS: ... right here, but if you were to go on down maybe another half a mile, you would turn to the left and you'd go into Barren Valley. This is Barren Valley, off to your left, great big valley, big ranches in there too.

... (Inaudible)

LADY 3: Maybe we could talk them into letting us skinny dip in

... there's a bath house ...

MARCUS: ... after he killed ... he took right up over the mountain here and I think four or five days later he was over ... up above Diamond --- that general area, on that side of the mountain anyway. I think the boys shot his horse out from under him, I think.

... Folly Farm is over here on your right. Moved over here I think, George told me the post office ... I'm going to have George tell you about him.

GEORGE RENWICK: The Pollock family came here from Bandon. I don't remember just what year, about 1913 or '14, I believe. ... the old man took up a homestead. The oldest boy Tom --- Tom's homestead ... is what they call the new Folly Farm. Three boys, Tom, Jack and Fred. Jack is the only one living. They run that store, Jack used to run the truck that hauled in the supplies. Tom ... the store. ... The store is ... This is primarily sheep country in the early days.

... (Inaudible)

LADY 3: Louder, George.

GEORGE: In 1933 then, they bought the Juniper Ranch. We lost it during the depression, and Dad bought it in '28. The depression and drought, so we lost out on it, and they bought it then. Fred moved down there --- back and forth to the store. Mrs. Pollock--- Mrs. Pollock was down there too. They lived there then ... until he died. Tom



Pollock got killed in 1940. A fellow by the name of Charles Rodgers stole his car there at the Juniper Ranch, and took off south. Tom seen him leave, and he took out horseback to the next ranch and got a car and followed up. Got down this side of Denio ... didn't stop there. And he went to stop the car then and he --- Tom told him to get out of his car, and he started to open the door, and this fellow had a gun laying in the seat, and he shot Tom and killed him there. Backed out, and went around, and took off. The next day they caught him down in Nevada. They tried him for murder, and he went to the pen ... out on parole now.

Then over to our right here is what they call Five Cent Lake. Next one is Ten Cent Lake, the next one Fifteen. I don't know who got the bright idea of naming them that way, but that's the way they were named.

Here is the main entrance of the reservoir, they put a dam across the lower end ... made a ditch ... around and irrigated the Juniper Ranch. We haven't done that too much.

... hill is where Juniper Grade comes down. That's pretty steep, and pretty rocky and pretty long grade, but that is the way the road came in the early days. It's the way the mail came, Crane to Denio. Right about in the middle you can see a line there. A lot of sagebrush there. That burned off in 1928, and after that, a little skiff of snow come along, why the road was gone. Mann Lake here ... water rights to it, and it belonged to the Juniper Ranch, or Pollocks. No deeded land in any of these three lakes here. Yellow flowers out there, they call them anemones. That's what the animals like.

... mountains on the left, they are known as Sheepheads. They got their name in the early days from the sheep there. The range on the Steens ... congregated there ...

LADY 4: On the Folly Farm road, headed towards Fields --- towards Andrews --- it's 9:30.

This is George speaking.

GEORGE: ... (Inaudible) there is water in all three of them. Most of the time there is just water in Ten Cent Lake. ... there is generally water in them. Next one you can see water down there is Juniper Lake. ... I'll tell him about this Juniper Lake down here then.

Hugh Tudor took up a homestead, and he didn't want to clear the brush so he decided to plant some ... So he plowed it, and planted it and these winds come up. It started blowing it up over the hillside, and it has been doing it ever since. I think they is probably ten or fifteen feet deeper than when he started. ... Canyon over here to the right is Squaw Creek Canyon. That's where the Juniper Ranch gets the main bunch of their water to irrigate the meadows. It's a fairly stable canyon; it's got a little water coming down, unless it's an exceptional dry year. ... there is quite a few rock forts that the Indians built.

... over on the ... side, the Indians ... dropped down to the Squaw Creek Canyon there. They put up a whole bunch of little rock forts there. And the soldiers surprised them and come down Juniper Grade and come in behind them and kind of routed them --- take off to their forts. Didn't do them much good.

The ranch here to our right now --- the Vivian Pollock now.

When Dad came here in 1928, he had a big fire and burned all the fences off. He bought all this woven wire and changed it around as you can see. He was going to run sheep, and do away with the sheepherders and coyotes. The coyotes were smarter than he was, so they would duck under.

... my dad ... wire fence, you can guess what that would cost today.

... is one of our princesses of the fair court --- I don't remember just what year, but she was one of our princesses. Her husband and her are kinda running this now for

Vivian.

She married a Hawaiian, and has two children, and then she got divorced, and then she married Jerry Dowell, and that only lasted a little while. She married John Maupin, and that seems to be sticking.

Juniper Lake is mostly overflow water from the Juniper Ranch and Squaw Creek. There is a ... but the big share of it comes from Squaw Creek.

As a kid I used to hunt arrowheads around the edge of that. That's where I got my first two or three thousand arrowheads. Now this hasn't been dry very many times --- 1931, is when it was practically dry, there was a couple mud holes. It was really what you call dry.

LADY 4: He's talking about Juniper Lake.

GEORGE: And that time it started to be serious. It started drying up in '29, '30, and '31, it kind of reached a peak. I don't actually believe it was any dryer in the winter, than it was this year. But it was dry enough, all right.

To the right here now is a lot of early history. Used to be four saloons here and bootleg, and they had a store. And before --- that was the real early days, all the sheep men used to come down here to get their supplies, about the closest place. Come down Stonehouse Canyon, or down this other draw, and ... in the money, and go back up.

... for several years, the railroad come to Crane, they started up in Diamond then.

... They had a rockslide here where the store was. They had two saloons right next to it. One over there over the edge of the lake, you can see the rocks there yet. They had their first house of the ill repute here, so they say. Even beat Burns and Harney.

LADY 4: Just talking about a school where the rancher pays --- two ranchers pay for the four children to attend.

GEORGE: I'll tell you about the schools. Well, first up at Folly Farm we had a school there until the First World War, and then --- so many of the kids moved out after the war was over, they abandoned the district. And half of the Harney County side went over here to the Alvord District, and the part from Malheur County went to the Barren Valley District. So when I got ready to go to school, I had to come down here to go to school. I went down to ... Alberson Place where I started learning my "A", "B's" at. I'll point it out to you when we get to it. Wherever the kids was, well that's where the school was. Most kids at Alvord, they held it there. Most kids at Juniper, they held it there. Right now they are holding it at the Juniper Ranch, so I understand.

MARCUS: The school of Harney County back here, it's called the Steens Mountain School, they just moved in here. Now George, where did the nickel fellow Anderson live?

GEORGE: Right back there where that school was. Yeah, where the trailer house is. He lived there for a good many years, and run cattle, a shoestring ... done all right.

Now this is that Tudor place I was telling you about, where you can see --- they fed up on the hillside. And this barn and these old buildings here, he sold out his sheep, I think it was 1920. He built that big fancy barn, livery barn; he was going to make money off of the freight teams. He ... live in them little bit of a rock house over there; I think it was ten by twelve. She wanted a new house instead of a new barn. But he thought they was going to make money off of this barn, so he built the barn. So they built the barn.

Well, things started to go bad then, and he ... it started to go up over the hill, and then the wind come along and took the roof off the barn. Well then the next thing he lost his wife. But later on the PLS Company went broke, why he bought the Crooked

Creek Ranch, over on the east side of the Sheepheads. And he got her back then, and they finished raising their family then, a boy and a girl. And that's the happy ending I guess, of a hard luck story.

Down below here to the left is known as the Stonehouse Ranch. It belongs to Vivian Pollock too. The creek that comes out of the right here, that's Stonehouse Creek. One of the Albersons homesteaded it, and sold it to the PLS Company.

To the right here there's a steep road that you can go out over the top and get into these other roads that go up ... or back to the Jenkins land. I think you can go on down to Diamond too. All of these gulches along under here used to be good places for moonshiners. Each one of them got water in them, and he would have a still in pretty near all of them. The last time hasn't been too long ago.

... you got your winter range and summer range all together. Nobody to bother you, it's really a good set up.

... you don't think there is a lot of them, you just start counting them.

... down there about seventeen, eighteen years ... if they miss a draw, I don't know how they do it, they'll get a deer in every one of them.

... This place here is the last of the Alberson places. That's where --- over to our left you can see a few little old shacks. There used to be an awful fine orchard there, lots of big trees.

... there is nothing left.

... the train, Crane to Denio, they switched cars here.

... right here, straight ahead to the left where that tree is laying down, that used to be where the schoolhouse was, where I started first grade.

This here they call it Summit Creek. It's not a very long, or very big creek, but they

did name it Summit Creek.

The boundary line between Pollocks, Mann Lake, and their BLM permits. Incidentally, most of this land is BLM, very little deeded land.

... water in a place or two, most of it is BLM land. They got a little bit of Mosquito Creek too, I think. ... ranch you can see up front here to our right on this side of it is Mann Lake waters. You can see the reflection of that building in it. You can't tell its water yet.

LADY 4: Going past the Mann Lake Ranch, I can see a mountain covered with a very little bit of snow. It's really a nice sunny day with a little scattering of clouds.

GEORGE: Probably one of the homesteaders name was Mann, and they called it after him I suppose, but I'm not really sure.

... Clark was foreman here at Mann Lake for quite a while, I don't know just how many years, but for a long time. Mother has got some pictures, they went down there to celebrate the Fourth of July, had a ---

SIDE B

GEORGE: ... pockets along here under the Steens, got names on it, they are the bigger ones. The first kind of saddle butte we see here --- you can stand in the crotch of that and hold your hand out one way, and drop a rock in the Mosquito Creek. And hold it out the other hand, and out the other way and drop it into the Kiger. There is quite a little breeze that goes through there most of the time, you got to get yourself kind of stable, but you can do that.

LADY 4: The road is running along the ridge of the Steens Mountain.

GEORGE: Mann Lake of course was homesteaded in the early days. The PLS Company bought them up, and they run until they went broke in the early '30's. Then Paul Stewart

bought it --- oh see 1933, I believe. And he built a fancy new house and developed it. And he also bought Mosquito Creek on below after another PLS holdings --- Now he sold out and bought the Whitehorse Ranch there. Polk had the Alvord Ranch there awhile, leased, then he bought this --- Paul, Paul needed the money to buy the Whitehorse. He went over and bought the Whitehorse.

These sprinklers along here they have planted alfalfa, most of it is alfalfa, and some grain. That looks real good from the last time I seen it. A small patch here looks like it's got --- extended clear on down here now.

LADY 4: Going past a large field of very green alfalfa being watered. It's part of the Mann Lake Ranch. There is a bunch of antelopes, with a baby one. George Renwick is talking about how a sheep rancher used to run his sheep on the very craggy looking mountainsides to our right.

GEORGE: That's known as Alvord Desert, I imagine most of you know it. Where they had their big racetrack here this spring, trying to set the world record.

Then them cracks to the rim is what's called the Sand Gaps. ... stopped at a freight team, name of Mirandi, he was a Mexican, a real good roper and buckaroo. He is the one that built the stage down there. His claim went clear up to the foot of the hill, and then they called it Mirandi Lane. About thirty years ago they cut the road off to the left, and we don't go all the way up. Mosquito Creek is on our left here, runs all underneath, part of the Alvord Ranch here for quite a ways. Pretty good-sized place. Cuts quite a lot of hay.

Water we just crossed, that was Willow Creek.

See how they divided Mosquito Creek, I think they took the one called the north side here and went with the Mann Lake and what's on the other side of the road went to

the Alvord. This Willow Creek here is awful bad to wash, and we had a lot of problems with the road here trying to keep it from washing the road away. It has been too dry to turn the cattle out, seems they have them in here on the pastures already. Must not have been enough outside to turn them out.

... tremendous a lot of deer in here. It used to be a refuge on the east side of the Steens, and they opened it up. Boy you never saw so many buck deers.

They bought that land for their hunting lodge. It was up ahead of Mirandi Lane to the right there towards Mosquito Creek. Sneaked in there and got forty acres, or a hundred and sixty, I don't remember. Thorn in Polks side when he found out he went to sleep on it.

This ranch, you will see a concrete flume runs from the road clear up to the mouth of the canyon. They put --- they built that out of concrete and they run the water down that, and they got a power plant there at the house. That water runs that power plant.

The Alvord Ranch we are coming up to now. That big red barn there, John Devine built. The roofs blowed off of that more times than ... hunters did. Over on our left is one of the old Clerf, or John Devine I mean. He built this rock corral here too. Go around, straight ahead. Bunkhouse --- now turn right.

The house on the left --- used to be on the right here, then he changed it to a cellar.

LADY 5: ... and we came through the Sand Gap, and Charlie Cronin was foreman there at the Whitehorse. And he had to go out with the saddle horse and --- with the riata, and he just hooked onto the car and pulled us through the Sand Gap. And then we stayed at the Mann Lake Ranch for about three days.

LADY 4: This is the Alvord Ranch.



... (Inaudible)

MAN 6: The old storeroom here, and the old granary, and the barn, and the corral. But all the cabins the cookhouse, and all the cabins was all done by Jim Pogue in '47. He must have had a depression about like this year, and didn't have nothing else to do.

MAN 7: The old rock buildings was built by a fellow by the name of Bernard.

MAN 6: Bernard, for who?

MAN 7: Well, I imagine Devine.

MAN 6: Devine. I would imagine.

MAN 7: 'Cause he built the rock house up on the ... place, up on the mountain there. He done a lot of work down there on the South End, different places there. He worked so long and then he'd go up Alberson, when they had all those saloons there. And that --- that was it, until he got broke.

MAN 6: He got broke, then he'd come back and go to packing rock.

MAN 7: Yeah.

MAN 6: Geeze, that would have been exciting to look forward to ---

MAN 8: ... born sixty years too soon.

ILDA MAY HAYES: What year did Frank Clerf leave here?

WALLY WELCOME: 1908, Clerf.

MAN 6: He come in 1908.

ILDA MAY: Well, he bought it from Mrs. Devine, didn't he? Clerf, Frank Clerf?

WALLY: Oh, well. See --- that after Gilchrist ---

ILDA MAY: Pogue.

WALLY: Well, Pogue was real later. But I mean after, when Gilchrist was here --- you know, I mean Gilchrist was here the turn of the century. I mean in that particular time, and

then on Gilchrist --- I mean they had --- the first school they had was at their house, Gilchrist's house.

MAN 6: How many horses do you run here?

ED DAVIS: About forty.

MARCUS: Did Clerf buy the property? Charlie Chapman told me he had it leased.

WALLY: Oh yeah. He may have leased, but I think he owned some too.

MARCUS: And he left here in about 1920. Charlie Chapman and Dory were married in 1919, and they left here shortly afterward.

ILDA MAY: Were they here with Clerf?

MARCUS: Yes.

... (Inaudible)

MARCUS: Yeah. Shorty told me he never did --- he --- you know George, there is another little period in here that we are trying to get a little history on, you know, and that's the ... Clerf --- was it ... outfit?

GEORGE: ... between --- when Pogue was here.

PATTI: Is this land all owned by the Alvord, or is it BLM and you lease it, or ---

ED: We lease 200,000 acres from the BLM, and we own about 25,000 acres.

MAN 7: Well, Gus Davis and McFarland let's see, they come in --- well, they didn't come till long in the late '20's.

PATTI: Mr. Davis owns this ranch, was this it?

ED: Yeah, my dad.

PATTI: Oh, that's your dad.

ED: Yeah.

MAN 7: Does Tom Jordan work for you?

ED: Ben ---

MAN 7: Ben?

ED: No, Ben --- the last I --- he was working over here with McEwen.

MARCUS: He is with McEwen.

ED: With McEwen, yeah. I run into him there at the Princeton Store here awhile back.

ILDA MAY: Ben Jordan?

MARCUS: Yeah.

ED: Yeah, old Ben.

MARCUS: Not the old fiddler --- but farther down the line.

ILDA MAY: No, no.

MARCUS: You're thinking back too far.

ILDA MAY: Yeah.

MARCUS: You'll have to shorten up your imagination a little bit.

... (Inaudible)

ED: The biggest part of these meadows are just sloughs, they really are. The creeks sink up here --- what they call this alluvial fan, and the creeks are running real good up high.

And all that water sinks ---

PATTI: Before it gets down --- yeah.

ED: --- before it gets here, and then it raises back down in these meadows. And these meadows just turn wet. Heck, there will be that much water just cover hundreds of acres that you never even set, you know. Just comes up there. And right now, you can go down there in these sloughs, where that water comes up, and you can ride your horse right through the slough. A cow can't even get a drink in 'em.

MAN 9: Some of that land will even be better --- drying out a little bit won't it?

ED: Oh sure, it will help them sloughs.

MAN 9: Yeah.

ED: But then your best land, where you get your clover and all that lush feed is just plumb dried out. It's hard to believe that this land can be so dry. Yeah, and this is the first of June, you know, my word, we got June and July to get through. I don't really know, maybe some storms.

PATTI: Maybe it will be like last year, rain all summer.

ILDA MAY: August.

PATTI: Rain all summer.

ILDA MAY: Not just August.

ED: We will start haying some day. It will probably start raining then.

MAN 9: You don't really hay until August anyway.

PATTI: Rained all month last year in August.

ED: Yeah. Do you think so? He's just got the house down at the Hot Springs.

MAN 9: Oh, yeah.

ED: He sold that --- the place there. I guess it wasn't even a local guy.

PATTI: Well, you have quite a ranch here, you really --- I've been by here ...

... (Inaudible)

MARCUS: Let's load up.

GEORGE: The lightning started a fire back up here at Mirandi

--- Mirandi Lake, and we kept --- we kept the fire above the road, till we got it just above the buildings, and we got across --- and got up to within about a hundred and fifty feet of those buildings you saw back there. If this was a good weather year, this is quite a cheat country, this ...

We had lots of rabbits at that time, some of those rabbits would get panicky and they'd run right back through the fire line. Their ears would be all crumpled down and the hair all burnt off. Some of them would just keep going. It got in --- got back across the road down here, in this Pike Field right below us on the left. Burnt up three haystacks. We had just got --- just got through haying, got through stacking, and --- continued clear on down through here to the point just before we go into Andrews. You can see these little spot fires around, looked like a bunch of lights around --- from a city. Quite a big city too. I've seen that, two or three different fires. Really pretty in a way, to see fires burn all the way up to the top of the hill. Remind me of a big city when it starts burning now. ... it's still part of the Alvord Ranch.

LADY 4: Just visited the Alvord Ranch, and on our way back to Fields.

GEORGE: All this down below the Alvord Ranch here is what they call the Alvord Desert. But it's oh, some places it's four or five miles wide, and about fifteen miles long. That's where they held them race trials last spring.

... years ago the Model-T's along with the Model-A's, we didn't set any high records. Even got lost out there coming back from a dance one night, the fog settled in. I thought I could follow them tracks across there. I got out on there, and there were tracks everywhere, and I didn't know which tracks to follow. Had people with me, they was all pretty smart, but they couldn't figure it out either.

LADY 4: The Alvord Desert is a wide expanse of just barren white and brown sand. It looks like in the background there is some mesa; desolate looking in the foreground, green and sagebrush.

GEORGE: ... go out across there, the coyotes would be leaving the Alvord Ranch, going out towards the Sand Gap. I don't know why they do that, but they seem to do it. We'd

go out there and we'd chase them, try to run them down --- about run down to my ... try to kill them. ... got out there, he was too drunk or so --- he couldn't --- he run about fifty yards and the old coyote just pick up some more speed, and away he goes.

This here now on the left is a hot springs. They built a bathhouse there. This is where our hay hands used to come down in the evenings and take a dip in there. They got a pretty good kind of a tub carved out there and lined. Hot water runs in and ... makes an ideal place to swim in. The water is real hot when it comes out. If you run the whole thing straight in there it is too hot for you to get in the tub, you got to kinda just run a little stream in and let the rest go by. Got any eggs, why stick them in there awhile and they will cook.

On up to the right here now, they got interested in mining--- Harry Alexander and different ones. They took out a lot of claims and they thought that they was going to strike it rich. Nobody got too rich. But they did do a lot of prospecting and digging around different places. Built some roads and one thing and another. Even went clear over into Pike Creek pocket and built some roads. They thought they had found some up there but it didn't pan out either.

Well ... tell about the county roads across the desert. I think that's the best road Harney County ever had. Got on it, plenty wide, you could do anything you wanted to on it. No bumps in it or anything in those days. I haven't been on it for quite awhile. It's an ideal racetrack before they built this road up here around by the Alvord. It used to be pretty bad --- well, everybody crossed the desert. Go across over there, and come out by Mosquito Creek.

... it's a alkali and a ... it's a pretty hard base. It gets wet and slick but it doesn't get muddy. On that rim way over to the east, that's where the Sand Gap is, where the road

goes through to the Whitehorse.

... these mountains is called over to the left, east side --- you go further down, and the Trout Creek Mountain and further to the east is Whitehorse Mountain. Through here, I don't believe they got any claim to fame.

Coming over the hill now, we're getting into Wildhorse Valley. This place, the first one, lower one on the right here, whole bunch of high trees, is where Harry and Bessie Blair live. That one up on the right there is one Mrs. Kueny built before retiring, but changed her mind and she sold the ... home.

... Berrington I think owns it. Rube Blair also has a place on up there at the head of it.

... Serrano Point Ranch is to our left there, you can't see it yet.

... and had it for years, and then he sold it to the Allied. ... Joe Fine sold it to Mrs. Kueny, and she had it then till she sold out to the Allied. It belongs to this --- whatever outfit you want to call it now. It's got the Roaring Springs and all of that. This little homestead we just went through, it belongs to Rube Blair now. I forgot the name of the fellow that took it up. Here at the end there, Jerry Hollaway retired from the road department, and he bought a little acreage and drilled a well and set a trailer house there. ... belongs to Mrs. Penland. I think John Henry has it now, I think. Leased out to somebody.

News media tells me about up here in this draw, a religious sect had a deal going there. That's new since I was here.

Coming into Andrews now. A lot of history to this town here, I probably can't think of all of it. It's the farthest town anywhere in the United States from a railroad. Crane was the closest from the north; Winnemucca was the closest on the south --- as Andrews.

... later years, Voegtly took over. I think he sold, he sold ... as I understand it.

The schoolhouse here was built by a rock mason. It's one of the best buildings in Harney County, in my opinion. I was on the school board there, and a woman come out from Salem and condemned it. That was forty years ago, and look at it. She claimed there was too much hard light coming in from the south, not enough soft light coming in from the north.

The store on the left --- there used to be two stores here. This one right straight ahead on the right, this building up on the right here --- there was another store operated by a fellow by the name of Joe Lausirica, until they closed it down.

Here is, a lot of the old Smyth --- a lot of the old timers here. That building right straight up there, that still belongs to Johnny Smyth. Cactus here, you probably heard of him as a character.

MARCUS: Didn't the hotel sit on the right here, George?

GEORGE: Yeah, right behind it --- here on the right of the old Andrews Hotel.

LADY 6: Is there still a post office there?

GEORGE: They sort mail, but I think they closed the post office part.

LADY 6: We have the post office ... right up there at the museum.

GEORGE: Yeah, I think they closed the post office, and they just have sacks now that goes out of Burns. But this has been in the Smyth family for years and years. ... Yes, this one on the left. They founded it, and it has been handed down through the generations.

LADY 6: What Smyth?

GEORGE: I think George Smyth was the first one, and then of course Marjorie Shull, she run it for years. And Greg's got it now.



ILDA MAY: Greg Smyth?

GEORGE: Greg Shull.

PATTI: Oh, didn't he sell it?

MAN 6: I think so.

PATTI: He told me he did.

GEORGE: I think it was, but I'm not positive.

MAN 6: Used to stay there quite a bit.

GEORGE: He's acquired quite a little land down below here too that goes with it, Greg Shulls.

ILDA MAY: Does Cactus live up there?

GEORGE: I think Cactus is there now. I've seen his car there, unless he is out horseback.

MAN 7: You bet. It's a long ways then.

MAN 6: I remember they had quite a large family. And all the older kids had Basco names. And the littlest one was Danny.

MAN 7: Danny.

GEORGE: Now out back this hotel here, Harry Olesen (sp.?) used to run that, Cecil and his wife. He raised a family --- Harry Olesen, they run the hotel there at the last. And Bill Buckwilder, he used to live here for a long time, he used to have cattle. Some of you folks

---

ILDA MAY: Where did he live?

GEORGE: Right behind us here, that ---

ILDA MAY: Oh, that cabin.

GEORGE: Uh huh.

ILDA MAY: He was something.

LADY 6: Sounds like him.

MARCUS: Take after that woman, Clyde.

ILDA MAY: Ask her if she wants a ride.

CLYDE: Want a ride? I usually don't pick up hitchhikers.

MARCUS: Didn't take her long to get on anyway, did it?

GEORGE: ... you can see through the stores here in the olden days, hotel, two gas pumps, it was quite a town in its time. Don't know exactly when Lausirica's store was put up, it has been a long time ago. I guess I would say about 1914.

TOMMY: ... ask you a while back where this Serrano Point Ranch is, they can see the trees over there where the ---

GEORGE: Yeah, we just run over a rattlesnake too.

TOMMY: Well, that's good.

GEORGE: Over to the left here now, that's the old Serrano Points Ranch. They got it from the PLS Company, and had it for years till he sold out.

... to Mary Kueny's place, used to be Frank Kueny.

Lots more water in those wells, lots of willows. Don't seem like it takes near as much feed to winter a cow as it does ...

... used to run sheep, he generally had two bands. He had a couple partners, Tonio ... or, uh --- can't even say it --- you done better.

MAN 7: ...

GEORGE: He run sheep for years until Frank died, and then he carried on a little while afterwards, and then finally they sold and quit. This place up at the right here now belongs to the county road department now. Used to be Ted Currey's old place. Maybe

some of you folks remember Ted Currey. Assistant at the post office there, Elmer Currey.

Right below us to the left here is the old Bill McLean place. That belongs to the Allied now too, they bought it.

ILDA MAY: Warren McLean?

GEORGE: No, Bill McLean. That was his uncle.

MAN 6: No, his Dad, wasn't it?

GEORGE: John was his uncle. Up there first place, that's where his house used to be. Yeah, Bill McLean.

MARCUS: ...

GEORGE: No, this is the Alvord Lake now, where I used to be confused when I was a little kid. This one down below here is the Alvord Lake.

Telephone system here, they got another reflector clear up on top of the hill. Over to the right here is the --- is Pats. What is his name now? Used to be Pat Algard.

ILDA MAY: Frazier.

GEORGE: Frazier. That's Frazier's place.

On the right here, just at the hill, a fellow by the name of Johnson took that up. Then Warren McLean bought it, and that's where he got his start a good many years ago. I think it belongs to Harry Blair now, seems like somebody told me.

LADY 4: We're going towards Fields still, now we're passing Alvord Lake, the ranch he was just referring to was on the right.

GEORGE: Now to your left down here, that's one of --- Stella Smyth started out, married Jim Page, married Ed Calderwood. That's where she started out.

MARCUS: A fellow last night on the phone invited her to meet us down here at Fields

while we are having our lunch, and they'll visit here. But she told me she was sick with a cold, she was afraid to come out. But she is 83 years old. And I guess she has spent most of her life here, hasn't she George? And I understand that they --- call somebody down here and want to find out some information --- we'll wait until I see Stella McDade, she'll tell you. She seems to have all the answers.

GEORGE: Well, she was a real busy person all right. She kept track of everybody. She ought to have a few answers. Out here on the flat, you can't really see it --- well you can look away across these trees way over there, about half way in between here and there is what they call the borax works. That's when they used to haul borax back to Winnemucca; they got that name of twenty-mule team borax. That's where they first started mining it. Later on they mined it in different places, but that's where it started.

... remind me that they used to bring those Chinamen out from San Francisco to work in those mines for a little bit of nothing. They knew they had to work; there was just no way to get back. And they just kept them there until finally they rebelled, then they'd get another bunch.

Right here to our left there used to be our first experiment station here in Harney County.

... see if they could grow trees out in the desert with no water. ... had a drink of water for a good many years. I'll remember --- 'course there ain't near all of them there, but they planted all kinds of different trees trying to figure out which ones would do best in this country. That's all that survived, is what's there now. They had fruit trees, shade trees, windbreak trees, everything imaginable. That's what's left of them.

... what they call the Pueblo Range. Furthest one to the left there is Pueblo Mountain, and the rest of them is Pueblo Range. Quite a lot of deer up there. Not as

good a range as the Steens, but it's pretty good for sheep and cattle.

... when we start going back we'll go back to the right over the hill there. I might mention a few things out to the left here. That road that goes all around the bottom of the Pueblo goes into Denio. You can go on into Winnemucca or any place in Nevada. Or you can go to the left up Trout Creek there and go across White Horse, McDermitt, or whatever. Pretty good ranches down here in the bottom here to Denio.

... cross Cottonwood Creek where Bert Hamilton used to live. Maybe some of you knew the Hamilton's. It comes out of the right of the Cow Creek Hills. Can't really see it from here. It's on beyond anything we can see in the trees there. You can see one bunch of trees if you know where to look, the next canyon over from that.

That was Marjorie Shull. ...

LADY 6: Nellie Sherman.

GEORGE: Nellie Sherman. There is another one yet, isn't there? But I think there were four of them girls. Marjorie Shull --- they were Smyth girls, yes. One married a Shull, one Jim McDade, and Algard, or Sherman now. There was another one too, I can't think of it.

... Yes, Bill Alfner was a half-brother to them. Another was Lucille Thornburg, I just now thought of it.

This is the big town of Fields. We will have our lunch now. You can go around I guess. Around that fence.

MARCUS: ... that again, he was forced to resign. In an uncommon act of generosity Miller deeded the Alvord Ranch to Devine. He gave him a lifetime, non-transferable ownership of the big ranch, with the livestock to run it. Devine died in 1901, and the owner-ship of the Alvord Ranch reverted to the Pacific Livestock Company. And in 1907,

Miller bought out his partner Lux, and John Gilchrist was installed as the Alvord manager at that time.

And he goes ahead and talks about the house. Might --- there is something about these buildings here if you might be interested in hearing --- if I can read it. It says a large frame house became the residence for Gilchrist and their three children. It was painted white, and it had a large front porch and veranda. The house had eight rooms, a living room, dining room, kitchen, and five bedrooms. Kerosene lamps were used for the lighting and there was no plumbing. The house at later date was burned down.

(END OF TAPE)

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