

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #22 - Side A

Subject: Lloyd Hill

Place: Burns Nursing Home - Burns, Oregon

Date: October 28, 1972

Interviewer: Pauline Braymen

PAULINE BRAYMEN: This is Pauline Braymen and I'm at the Nursing Home on October the 28th, 1972. ...

LLOYD HILL: I think it was 1916 I took the homestead out. But ...

PAULINE: Well it doesn't have to be exact, you know.

LLOYD: It's been a long time, you know.

PAULINE: Yeah, it doesn't have to be exact. But it was about 1916 when you took a homestead. And this was at Trout Creek you said, or ---

LLOYD: At Trout Creek, yeah. I ... on Trout Creek there, the land ... at Trout Creek. I got my mail at Fields Station.

PAULINE: Where did you come from?

LLOYD: I come from --- I got to chasing all over California, and all over everywhere. I wouldn't stay nowhere, I was just a roaming. ... people had homes to live in like that, and I tried to get me a place and settle down and stop this running around. I'd just go from one place to another. Just as soon as I get in one place, and as soon as I'd get enough money I'd go on to another place. I was all over California. Had quite a time. I don't know just what place I come from down there, where I was when I went to Fields Station.

PAULINE: Where were you born?

LLOYD: I was born back in Vermont, Elmore, Vermont.

PAULINE: Well then you covered a lot of territory between here and there, haven't you?

LLOYD: I have. I went from Vermont to Seattle, Washington.

PAULINE: Well do you remember how you happened to hear about Harney County? Why did you come to Harney County? Or do you remember?

LLOYD: I don't think I could tell you, I just happened to be there, that was all. I don't remember just why I did go there, come down there. Just happened to strike there. I was running here, there, and everywhere, and I stuck there, and took up a homestead there. That's all I can remember. But why, and how I happened to go there, I was, as I said I was just roaming around here and there, and everywhere and I decided I wanted to settle down. And I just happened to settle down there.

PAULINE: Did you have a family?

LLOYD: No, I was a bachelor, bachelor yet. When I took up the homestead there, and my mother come out from Vermont and visited me, and she was there. I was a terrible site. She sold out her home back there, where she raised six of us children, and come out there and built a house there. So we had one of the best houses in Harney County. Then my brothers and sisters come out there and we made quite a place out of it. I had a cattle ranch.

PAULINE: What was your mother's name?

LLOYD: Mother's name was Mehitable.

PAULINE: Mehitable Hill.

LLOYD: Mehitable Hill. That was quite a bunch of us, six children she had. But I don't know whether I can tell you what you want to know. That's the main thing; you want to know something that has something to do about the people. ...

PAULINE: Oh, no, I'm just looking for stories about the early days. And I'm not really

choosy about the subject matter. I mean I want to find out about what it was like to ranch and have cattle in those days, what the country was like.

LLOYD: I liked it there. I had just enough money to file on the land when I went there. And I went over to Fields Station, and George Smyth, I think it was George Smyth run the store there, and he gave me credit --- to use credit. If it hadn't of been for that, I don't think I could have made it through it. He give me a year's credit there. And darned if I didn't just go buying cattle, and raising cattle, and made good.

PAULINE: Did you graze on the Steens Mountain? Did you graze your cattle on the Steens Mountain?

LLOYD: No, I grazed them on the, oh I guess it might have been Steens Mountain, I never knew just what they did call it then. I grazed them right around that. Trout Creek wasn't, Trout Creek wasn't on Steens Mountain, was it?

PAULINE: No.

LLOYD: Steens Mountain was over there quite a ways.

PAULINE: Yeah.

LLOYD: No, I didn't graze them over there, I grazed them around Trout Creek there.

PAULINE: Trout Creek.

LLOYD: ... well I said Harney County.

PAULINE: Well that would even get over into, that's pretty close to the Lake County border too, isn't it?

LLOYD: Well I never went over there. I just grazed them right around the, not far from the ranch there.

PAULINE: You said your brothers and sisters came out too, and your mother. What were your brother's names?

LLOYD: That come out there, let's see I think my brother's name was Philip Hill, one of

them come out. Of course we had, help make a place. And I know --- I don't remember which sisters there was --- Phyllis.

PAULINE: Did they stay here, Phyllis?

LLOYD: Phyllis, Phyllis come out there. Now let's see Zola ... I guess Zola came out there.

PAULINE: Zola.

LLOYD: Two children, Mary and Dorothy, girls, they went to school there. They went to school there, a horseback. Then Zola come out there, and her husband died. ... she was married to, they don't know died, he just come up missing, and they never did know what happened to him, they never knew what become of him. He just come up missing. Well of course she went along just like --- later on in life married again, just like he died.

PAULINE: Well after so long, why ---

LLOYD: And nobody ever ... you know, they didn't know, just come up missing.

PAULINE: Yeah. Just checking to be sure that's all working all right. What --- do you think the winters then were more severe than they are now? What was it like in the wintertime?

LLOYD: Snow.

PAULINE: Lots of snow?

LLOYD: Quite a bit of snow. That's what gave us our water in the summertime, to make Trout Creek run. Come from the snow in the hills, is where we got our water to, well to water the land, see I irrigated that. The Trout Creek was running ... When there was a lot of snow, we had a lot of water. When there wasn't much snow, we didn't have much water.

PAULINE: That's about the same as it is today, isn't it?

LLOYD: Yeah, it's the same. I sold out there ... too many years ago. Come up here to

Burns. I sold out to, let's see --- one of my sister's boys, Zola's boy. ... boy, another sister's boy. There was another sister, Phyllis Grove, I sold out to him. And my part, I let my mother have it, interest in it. When she died she left her interest to Phyllis Grove, as I remember it. They sold out in time, they even got it all paid for, I think it was paid ... I don't know just what the names was. Two or three rich fellows wanted it for a place to have people come hunt and fish ... They rented it for, to other people for a cattle ranch. They've got it now. They sold, my sister and them sold it for \$50,000, that homestead I took up. Pretty good, wasn't it?

PAULINE: Yeah, I would think so.

LLOYD: They sold it for \$50,000. This boy that bought my, he bought another place for \$12,000, and when he sold the other place he sold that for \$20,000. He had another ranch, not far from there. Now I liked the ranching there. I liked ---

PAULINE: Were there a lot of people down there?

LLOYD: ... my brother ... and ... that ranch. People said they come by there and they'd hear me singing in the night, out there working on the ranch, building, making a home out of it. I had a beautiful home there. My brother he come there, well he worked for me, he planted a 100 trees there on the place.

PAULINE: Oh, that would make it beautiful.

LLOYD: Oh, he did. Poplar trees, a 100 of them. I suppose that's what attracted these people to come there and wanted it for a place ... A good place for me to run cattle. I had a pretty good ... and chickens. It was so long ago it's hard for me to remember. There was six of us children, I know that. I got them mixed up when I was telling you, I notice that. There was Zola, Zella, Lloyd, Lynn, Philip, Phyllis. It used to tickle me when we was going on the train anywhere, they'd come, when the train would start up again the conductor would --- well Zola, Zella, Lloyd, Lynn, Philip, and Phyllis, we're going.

PAULINE: Get you all on. Was this back in Vermont when ---

LLOYD: ... trying to call ... Zola and Zella, they were girls, and Lloyd and Lynn, boys, and Philip was a boy, and Phyllis was a girl. Three girls and three boys in the family.

PAULINE: Were you the oldest?

LLOYD: No, Zola is the oldest. That's the one that come out there the last ... And her daughters kids, she had two daughters, and ... But she married again ... in Harney County, they had a ranch right near us, by the name of Starr.

PAULINE: Oh, is Zola Starr your sister?

LLOYD: She's my sister, Starr.

PAULINE: Yeah, I know ---

LLOYD: You know her?

PAULINE: Yes, I know her, uh huh.

LLOYD: She lives right down --- come out and lived down ... But they had a ranch back there at one time. Starr, and they sold out then, they come here to Burns.

PAULINE: Well is Zola still living?

LLOYD: No.

PAULINE: Oh, I didn't think so.

LLOYD: No, she died way back, quite a few years ago.

PAULINE: Yeah, I was thinking ---

LLOYD: Oh, four or five years ago.

PAULINE: Yeah, I was thinking that it had been a few years.

LLOYD: Four or five years.

PAULINE: But sometimes a person loses track.

LLOYD: I come out then --- when I sold out I come out there and stayed with her for two or three years, until she died. Since then I went up to this hotel, what you call the hotel up

here?

PAULINE: The Central or the Plaza?

LLOYD: No.

PAULINE: Bennett?

LLOYD: What? ... It's right up here ... I stayed there two or three years. ... she had a little house in back of the hotel that she rented me. But she wanted for them, I had to move out, so I come here. My brothers and sisters they wanted to give something ... off, way off and around. They want to be taken care of. So if I get sick ... come here. And I'm just here to spend my life out. But if I had, if I was a younger man I'd like to go right back down there in Harney County and build me another ranch.

PAULINE: Yeah.

LLOYD: I just enjoyed it. I had an awful lot of enjoyment out of that, buying and selling cattle. ... the bank down here, the United States National Bank, Burns, Oregon, Harney County Branch, they lend me whatever money I needed. And I'd buy and sell cattle, and I did pretty good.

PAULINE: Well it's a good life. I'm a rancher's daughter, and my husband is a rancher, he is ---

LLOYD: Yeah, and I tell everybody ---

PAULINE: And it is a pretty good way to live, all right.

LLOYD: If I had it to live over, I'd like to go right back to where I was, and get that place right back and go ahead and put some wells down there. And get me some water from wells, along with my creek water, and I'd make a paradise out of it. They ... right below me, they put down a well there, and they got, wet the whole place from that well they put down. Creek water, some years was short. But it works up pretty good with me. In the good years I call it, put me over the bad years. I didn't, careful not to run too many cattle.

And ... that poor year there wasn't much water, and didn't raise much hay, why then a good year would come. ... when I was there, I used to call the rainy weather a good one. I'd go right out in it. A nice little rain, well it was just what made that place. Get that grass to growing.

PAULINE: Yeah. Did you put up quite a bit of hay?

LLOYD: Yeah, I put up quite a bit. I forget just how much.

PAULINE: Did you use horses and the nets and slides?

LLOYD: I raised some horses, and sold them. I had, when I quit the horses --- I had 19 stole off me one year, that was too much. And I took the rest --- I had about 40 head then. I had grain, work horses, mares and stallion there, and I'd go ahead and raise that grain with them, and raise these colts besides. And I'd put them out in the range and leave them there, as soon as I could wean them. I got to 40 head, and someone stole 19 head one year. Well I just sold the rest of them, and I quit the horse business.

PAULINE: Well it wasn't too profitable if you're losing them.

LLOYD: They never did steal my cattle though. Never did bother them. Well I was pretty careful with my cattle.

PAULINE: What was your brand?

LLOYD: Well --- I forgot already. ... I don't think it was Hill. I forgot, I sure have.

PAULINE: Did you --- did you have a car when you first came to Harney County?

LLOYD: Mother bought a car when she come there. I didn't have any. But when she come out there to stay with me, she bought a car.

PAULINE: Was that the first car you'd ridden in?

LLOYD: Yeah. ... Come out from there. She had a car, and both the girls could drive a car. I never did even learn to drive a car ...

PAULINE: Really, you didn't?



LLOYD: No.

PAULINE: Not even in later years?

LLOYD: What?

PAULINE: Even in later years?

LLOYD: No, I never --- they drove the car, they was always right there with us all the time. Wanted to go anywhere, they was ready to take us. They went to school there. When I first --- horses, went to school with, a horseback. Two of her girls ... Now what do you want this for?

PAULINE: Oh well, the Harney County Library is compiling just memories about Harney County, the earlier years. And of how people lived, and where they lived, and why they came, and just so that years from now people can go back and read and know how people lived in the early days here.

LLOYD: That's the reason I went there. I say I wanted to settle down anywhere. I was just going place to place, get work and earn enough money, then go on to another place. Just seeing the country.

PAULINE: Did you ever pan for gold?

LLOYD: I decided I'd better go ahead and settle down. So I had just enough money to put down on that place there, get the land.

PAULINE: Did you ever hunt for gold or anything like that, as a young man?

LLOYD: No, I never had, no I didn't do that.

PAULINE: Do a lot of buckarooing?

LLOYD: Oh yeah, I did a lot of buckarooing to run these cattle. I can't remember now how many I run there. I had somewhere around a 100 head. She run too big a ranch, you know.

PAULINE: Yeah.

LLOYD: 200 acres. I couldn't run too many cattle on account of the hay. Some years I didn't, according to the water, according to what hay I got. If they hay was short ... didn't have it. I tried to run enough so the good years put me through the bad years. I think 175 head or something like that, if I remember right.

PAULINE: Well that has been a very productive country down there, it's really --- raised a lot of cattle, and a lot of sheep.

LLOYD: Oh yeah. It was a nice country, yeah. The Trout Creek Ranch there is not far from me. My uncle, he bought Trout Creek Ranch one time. Oh, that's how I happened to come out there. I come out there to see him. Yeah.

PAULINE: Do you remember what your uncle's name was?

LLOYD: Edwin Hill, Edwin Hill. But he was shot over the water then, killed him.

PAULINE: Oh, for heavens sakes.

LLOYD: Yeah.

PAULINE: Can you tell me about that? Do you remember what happened?

LLOYD: No. Found him shot there. Never found out who did it. I sat out there all night, him a laying there, the worst night I ever put in. They wouldn't do anything with him for a while, you know, the sheriff. But they never did find out who shot him. He was shot over the water. He bought that Trout Creek Ranch off of, I forget who it was now. But he went back to Vermont, back there, and got people that he knew back there and they come out there and formed a company. He sold them --- he bought it off of them and then he sold them an interest in it. ... off the ranches around there, he was killed over the water ... They never did know who did it. Never could find out.

PAULINE: And then you set up with him that night until they got --- probably until the sheriff or somebody came out to ---

LLOYD: Yeah, the sheriff come, looked out, took care of him. ... and tried to find out who

did it. But they ... That was the worst night I ever put in.

PAULINE: I could imagine. I don't think that would be much ---

LLOYD: Then there was some fellow there, I don't know who he was, come up there, and stopped there, and talked. ... There was quite a few people setting, watching there. ... No, he was killed --- I didn't think they tried very hard, myself. They questioned me at the trial. I don't know if it was a trial, but they questioned me. I was with him all that day, or part of the day. I wasn't with him when he got killed. He was watering some cattle. That's a terrible thing to happen like that, one of your relatives killed like that.

PAULINE: Yes, it is.

LLOYD: Didn't know, find out who did it. They asked, questioned me, asked me. ... show you how hard they was trying to find out who did it. ... E. B. Hill's uncle. "No," I said, "He's my uncle." Well ... look old enough to be his uncle, and that's all they asked me. That showed me they really wasn't trying to find out. They was just getting --- probably some of them probably knew him, that Trout Creek Ranch was a big ranch. ... people wanting it.

PAULINE: Yeah. Well this is the way things like that happen, I guess, maybe still do. You're 87 years old now, aren't you?

LLOYD: 87. I was down there all them years. ... I told you, until 3 or 4 years ago I was ... About 4 years ago I think, yeah. What was that hotel?

PAULINE: Well it's this --- you're thinking about this one over here on the ---

LLOYD: On the hill.

PAULINE: On the hill over here.

LLOYD: Up on the hill there.

PAULINE: Yeah. I can't think of the name of it either, but I know which one you mean.

LLOYD: It was on the hill, right up on the hill there.

PAULINE: Well I sure thank you for taking time to talk to me.

LLOYD: Well I liked to talk with you, yeah.

PAULINE: Yeah, well I have been having lots of fun talking to people about these early days.

LLOYD: Harney County, about Harney County.

PAULINE: Yeah.

LLOYD: Yeah, it's a good county, I think. I don't see anything the matter with it.

PAULINE: Well, I don't either. Of course I've lived here all my life, I'm kind of partial.

LLOYD: I liked it. Of course I took that place up, we sold it for --- a few years for that amount of money, that's pretty good business.

PAULINE: Yeah, it is.

LLOYD: \$50,000 when we sold out amongst us. And when I let, when my mother come out there, I let her ... I think one of her boys got in on it someway, or Zola's boy. No, Phyllis' boy, that's John ... he got in on it. I let him in on it. When I sold out, I sold out to him. He was afraid I wanted to quit, and he was afraid --- he wanted to keep it in the family, he said. So he bought me out, to keep it in the family. Well they didn't keep it very long. In a few years they sold it ... I think ... one of them died. ... if I remember right. I never did see them; I was gone when they bought it.

I've never been back down there. I don't know, as I want to go back there. I don't know what --- I had the place just like a nice place, the way I wanted it, and it probably ain't that way at all now.

PAULINE: Well this is the thing about going back. I talked to a lady the other day and she went back to the place where she grew up, and now she wishes that she hadn't, because it wasn't at all like she remembers.

LLOYD: That's what I say; I probably wouldn't even know it. I don't know what they have

done to it. I had it in a cattle ranch out there, is what I made out of it. And of course they come there, and these people they, get their friends to come in there and go hunting and fishing like that. And rent it out, and some-body else runs cattle, and they may have let the place run down on the cattle, see, the hay like that. So it might not be a cattle ranch like it was. I wouldn't want a place just to bring my friends.

PAULINE: Well, it would depend on how much money you had, you know.

LLOYD: Well I think what caused them to do that, was all them trees there. You see them trees for miles.

PAULINE: Well a 100 trees is a lot of trees.

LLOYD: You bet, they was on just ... acres of land. ... I can't think of what that hotel was.

PAULINE: Well there is this Plaza over here, and that other one, and I can't either.

LLOYD: It's right up here on the hill.

PAULINE: All I can think of is the Arrowhead, and that isn't the one you mean.

LLOYD: The Arrowhead is still up above it, just above it.

PAULINE: Well, I've got to go pick up my children, they're downtown, and I told them I would pick them up in about an hour, so I'd better go. And I sure thank you for ---

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