

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #222 - Side B

Subject: John Scharff

Place: Braymen Home – Burns, Oregon

Date: 1976

Interviewer: Pauline Braymen

JOHN SCHARFF: ... some of that information that we could give you, you could use without quoting. Because it is a matter of record ---

PAULINE BRAYMEN: Yeah.

JOHN: --- if you want to dig it out, you know.

PAULINE: Yeah.

JOHN: And the, then what I was thinking was, you probably have the story pretty well up to 1935, when the Blitzen Valley was purchased, which would be the time that I would be able to pick it up for you.

PAULINE: Yeah. Well up until 1935, not too much had really been done other than just to try to control the hunting and ---

JOHN: Yeah, it was just patrolling was all that had been done ---

PAULINE: Yeah, yeah.

JOHN: --- up until 1935. And then of course the Blitzen Valley was purchased there in May of 1935, and they --- it was August the 1st, '35 when I came to work.

PAULINE: Then you supervised the building of --- the building of the buildings, and the work that the CCC boys did around.

JOHN: Yes that's right.

PAULINE: Yeah.

JOHN: The fencing and the water control system, and I was there all during that period. But, I was just thinking too, it would be well to record some of the conditions at the time, which a lot of the people don't appreciate it. And you have your machine on ---

PAULINE: Yeah let me see if this --- Okay, we're back on the air again now. And you were going to tell about some of the conditions that you found there when you came in '35.

JOHN: Well when the Blitzen Valley was purchased in '35, you must kind of keep in mind that was right at the height of the, both the depression and the drought period. And at the time the Blitzen Valley was purchased, it of course took out of --- took off the taxation the largest individual tax base in the county. Also at that time there was uppage of 300,000 acres of the land that Harney County didn't put on the tax roll, and had reverted to the county because of --- couldn't pay the taxes on it. And the county was in dire straights. Ira Gablesen (sp.?), who was then the chief of the bureau made a deal if the county court --- a verbal understanding that the grazing would be expanded as rapidly as possible to compensate in the county, under the 25 percent cut which ... they got under the law in lieu of the taxes. And my instructions at that time was to increase

the usage, and use it then to derive as much income as was possible from the grazing resource, which was the only resource.

PAULINE: Well really you jut wanted control of the water?

JOHN: The original intent for purchasing Blitzen Valley was to gain control of the Blitzen River. Well, from '31 to '39, the Silvies River didn't reach Malheur Lake, and in the --- there was a little water that came from the Blitzen source, with the exception of 1934, when the Blitzen River didn't meet the lake. It was just that dry.

So a large, a large part of --- well in fact the entire Blitzen Valley had been leased to, well H. B. Duplin (sp.?) Company and the Fine Sheep Company, and to Kitridge and other lessees. And the water systems, since there was no water to use, it had deteriorated to where it wasn't useable in many areas. There was no diversion dam at the "P" Ranch at that time. It was very difficult to use the water. It was judiciously, a constant lack of control. It was a number of years before the control was hand-able on it. Because we had to put the river in that canal there for 26 miles in order to keep the water from just coming back into the river without irrigating much of the land. Much of Diamond Valley was, lower Diamond Valley was dry.

Malheur Lake had been farmed for a number of years, and there was just a very small area of water in '35, mostly coming from the Sod House Spring. And the sloughs to the east, or to the west edge, and also to the east had grown up without greasewood, and rabbitbrush, which was indicative of the fact that it had been dry for quite a number of years. And so it was kind of a sorry spot.

Also during this period there was a controversy on this to the ownership of Malheur Lake, and the receiver had been appointed to administer the lake and issue permits there. And that money was held in escrow pending the final settlement of the lake as to how it was divided, and who was to get the --- And the money was of course, was divided eventually on the basis of the land ownership. And so it turned out that the refuge actually owned a small part of the best land in Malheur Lake. And it was a number of years before it was entirely purchased. In fact one tract was never purchased, which is owned by Walt McEwen at this time.

So the --- and the grazing then was increased along as the valley was improved. And it's the --- grass ... is, grazing coming up, and the increased use, and also the increased waterfowl production was accelerated at the same time. And was sort of leveled off when they had that outbreak of carp in about '48 to '50. And then there was a downward trend of the, of the production. Now the upward, the show that is put on, and the writing that is put on by Ferguson and those, indicates that this grazing curve come up. And then all at once it reached about 150,000 AUM's, and then that's when the big drop-off come.

But they --- there isn't any consideration given to the fact that these tracts of land were being purchased and added to the refuge in Malheur Lake, which during that time was highly productive in grass. And then also during that period, I think in '46 it was, or '47, the Double O was purchased, and the grazing increased somewhat.

But during all this time with much less cover than they have today, the waterfowl production was increasing. Well, of course now the carp were introduced into Silvies River sometime in the '30's. And there are people here at the mill that had come from back east, and they had --- were used to fishing for warm water fish, and they wanted warm water fish planted. So the state went down in the Columbia Slough, and they say now these bass supposedly --- but evidently at least got a male and female carp.

And so we recognized that after the water reached Malheur Lake in '39 and '40, so we recognized that we had quite a number of bass. But --- and then we could see there was a big trout run by that time, built up in Malheur Lake, into the Blitzen, I supposed come up into this country too.

But we noticed then there was, for some reason or another, there was a decline in this route trout run up the river. And then all at once why it was this carp explosion, which just annihilated the feed in Malheur Lake.

Well then in '55, they had the first major control program which went up the --- as far as we could find carp in all the streams, that come into the valley, and poisoned them out. And we figured that just on Malheur Lake alone that we killed about 3,000 tons of carp. I don't know too much about carp, but evidently the age were there for the explosion next year, because we had millions of little carp that hatched the following year. And so they --- the same condition prevailed as far as the sago pondweed was concerned.

There is no question in my mind that then the grazing kind of leveled off there at about the same amount. Although all during this period too, we were increasing the production in the valley by the improvement in the water distribution system. For instance, the field right south of the light field, right south of the center there, it was quite dry. Produced very little feed of any kind. The Big Sagebrush Field was dry. Those sloughs were all dry. And it was probably in the mid '40's before we got that area covered back with water. Got structures rebuilt, and dams were built, and we built a dam that ... and get the water back into the canals. And it was kind of a slow process.

I remember I was criticized by some of our own people because they grazed the area at all. But I had found previously that it was much easier to re-establish the grass in areas such as that where you had the water with some grazing, than it was to get --- let them set without any grazing. And so it increased to where probably the Big Sagebrush Field country was using as much, or producing as much feed as the entire valley was in '35.

And so there is no question in my mind that Malheur Lake is the key to the waterfowls in the Harney Basin. And when it isn't working and producing, why we aren't going to have the waterfowl. Now they, they've been voicing at this thing for five years, and still no noticeable increase in the production. Some areas that they claimed having watched for 40 years, why I have a pretty fair idea of just what is taking place.

PAULINE: Well Joe's going on --- basically on this, the study that they are doing in South Dakota.

JOHN: What's that?

PAULINE: The study that they're doing in South Dakota on grazing, and cover, and this sort of thing. It's basically what he's basing his management policies down there on. Now he sent a copy of the report that George Benzell (sp.?) did to them for an evaluation.

JOHN: Yeah.

PAULINE: And one of the points that they make in their evaluation is that the report places too much importance on the Malheur Lake itself.

JOHN: Oh, uh huh. Yeah. Well ---

PAULINE: So it appears that they will just write off Malheur Lake as being a major factor at all. And history doesn't really prove that.

MARCUS HAINES: ... No.

JOHN: No.

PAULINE: But the history of the thing doesn't really indicate the rationale for that.

JOHN: No, no, that's right. Now when the heaviest production of waterfowl just in your end of Harney Basin, why Malheur Lake was unfenced. Most of it on the East Side, there was no fence there in '35, it was probably '38 or '39 before we got all that country fenced, wasn't it Marcus?

MARCUS: Yes.

JOHN: Or maybe '40. And they --- that country was just a dustbin. It was, it would be maybe a couple thousand head of cattle, and several hundred head of horses would

naturally drift into that country. And I don't think I'm off on numbers. I imagine there's times when you've seen probably a couple thousand head of cattle at the east end of Malheur Lake when Dunn's was --- those people ---

MARCUS: I worked ... on the East End of Malheur Lake that were that large.

JOHN: Yeah. And that was grazed right down to the water's edge every year. And out in the water they'd --- the cow would walk out to where the water's not very deep and graze the tules off, where there was any. And no, the muskrats clean the sago pondweed. Sago is probably the best waterfowl feed that grows in any of this western water, and is the most productive. I recall, for instance, Tule Lake wanted some sago seed to take over there and plant. And there was windrows along the edge there of pure seed that was a foot deep, that we just shovel up the scoop shovels and loaded a couple state trucks with sago seed and sent to Tule Lake. Dr. Gablesen was down there with me one day, and he come through here, and I took him down there and he mentioned to me he said, "You know John, there isn't enough, there aren't enough birds on the Pacific flyway to eat the food from Malheur Lake."

And there was hundreds of muskrats, we caught muskrats by the thousands. Twenty-four thousand I think one year, and twenty, twenty-four thousand wasn't unusual. There is no muskrats now, there's nothing for them to eat. And it's grown up into thick bulrush stand that I just don't know how they're ever going to get it back into production, until it goes bone dry again, and maybe burn it off, or something. I don't think that there is enough food produced in there for muskrats to ever take a hold again.

PAULINE: Well now, what was it here a couple years ago I caught the news release from the refuge, and they said that there was an abundance of muskrats and they were opening it up to trapping and hunting again. And I don't know what kind of --- they quoted some kinds of large numbers that they had built up to. And Marcus was telling me about the trapper, that when he went to trap them found that they weren't there.

JOHN: ... Well you talked to ... visit with on that is Roy Heinz.

PAULINE: Yeah.

JOHN: And Roy had a permit down there, and he said it just wasn't worth the effort to --- And they --- Roy knows the history of that, lives right along side of it there for years, as a young fellow. Raised his family down there on the Woodell place, and he knows that trapping pretty well. And he can give you a pretty good idea of what conditions are now, and what it was then, as far as trapping is concerned.

MARCUS: Well it's Roy's opinion that they destroyed their rat population that very year. He said that they had taken aerial pictures of the lake, and everything looked like house, was considered a muskrat house. But he said a lot of them were out on dry ground, and it wasn't inhabited at all. So he said he went down, he and Art, and they put out their traps, and I think they run for three days and got hardly any rats. And there was other trappers there too, but he said as soon as the lake froze up, from what houses were left were just prime targets for the coyotes. He said the place was just lurking with them, and no control of the coyotes. And they dug these houses open, and of course you open a muskrat house in the cold weather, and that's the end of the muskrat.

JOHN: They freeze to death then.

MARCUS: And between the trappers and the coyotes why the population was annihilated, you might say.

JOHN: The population wasn't too great to start with.

MARCUS: No, they didn't have the rats to begin with. And they just took out the population then.

JOHN: So --- of course when I was first on the refuge why there was no regional office, and everything was controlled out of Washington. And some of those fellows were pretty hard-nosed. I recommended one year that we take the --- that was the first year that the rats really come back, we take ten thousand rats off the lake, and we got shot down for it.

Then the chief of the refuge division was out, and they was, just looked like hay shocks out there. And he said, "Why aren't we taking these rats?" And I said, "Well because you signed the letter and said we couldn't trap them" ... And so, well he said, "We'll have to get busy and take those rats." Well as a result of that build-up, well then they had the big migration. They left the lake, and just like --- well reached the people and you saw them up on Wright's Point.

The high school kids over there at Crane, you know, they made more money than anybody else, just hunting them out there in the sagebrush with a stick, and killing them.

(Laughter) And so then we got that sort of stabilized and tried to ---

PAULINE: Well about what year did that happen?

JOHN: I really don't remember. But it must have been, it had to be in the early '40's.

MARCUS: Early '40's, uh huh.

JOHN: Yeah. In the early '40's.

MARCUS: "40, '41, there some time.

PAULINE: My understanding is that, that this is, that as long as you control the population and keep it at a healthy level they'll stay. But if they build up to be too many, then they just take off.

JOHN: You can --- I think that's true, up to a certain point. But some time or other there is going to be an explosion of them. And I think they're very cyclic also. So --- but, because there were several times that they would leave the lake even when you thought, we thought the numbers were, you know, within bounds. And there seems to be an urge there to ---

PAULINE: To migrate.

JOHN: Yeah. To ---

MARCUS: But they don't deplete the population when they do this.

JOHN: No, no they don't.

MARCUS: No.

JOHN: No, there is always a healthy population left.

MARCUS: No. There is always a population left.

JOHN: That's right.

PAULINE: Well the other thing that I'd like to go back to, is you mentioned that when they bought the "P" Ranch and the Blitzen River Valley, you said there was an oral agreement with the county court. Was that ever formalized into writing? Was it ever put in any county minutes, or ---

JOHN: No, no it wasn't. That was just --- I recall attending a meeting there with Judge Higgs, and Ira Gablesen and that seems to me like Clyde Whitenhellar was a commissioner at that time. And then who else --- Billy Carroll was there and it was discussed. And ... were going to bring in just as much revenue as we possibly can to compensate the county for taking this off the tax roll.

And so we --- I know I would get letters from the Washington office and the ... I remember one day I got a letter from my boss and he said he wanted to remind me that we were building a refuge instead of a cattle ranch. And that afternoon I got a wire from him asking me what the maximum AUM's we could sell to get the county more money.

And so it was --- but then of course later in the '40's, and then well later than that I guess it must have been in the '50's, or early '60's, somewhere along there that they worked up this other formula. Which was --- and neither, the county received the greater of the percentage. That's when they started re-appraising the land every five years, you see, and the value of the land. And since then why that formula has given the county more money than the grazing ...

PAULINE: Than the grazing.

JOHN: Yeah.

PAULINE: Yeah.

MARCUS: How large ---

PAULINE: So actually, you know, as far as that understanding --- it's valid as far as proving that the cattle, increase in cattle grazing didn't affect --- wasn't, the effect on the birds wasn't caused by the grazing, but it won't certainly hold any water with the people who say that ---

JOHN: No and I don't think you even want to mention it. For that's just ---

PAULINE: Yeah. It's good background though.

JOHN: Yeah, just background for --- But all during the time that this waterfowl production was coming up, and the grazing was increasing and coming up, why the Malheur Lake was highly productive of sago pondweed. And then as sago pondweed tipped off, and we tipped down on the production, and it has never come back since.

MARCUS: John, there is one thing I think you should explain to Pauline. You told me this, that the prime purpose of buying the Blitzen Valley was to get control of the water for Malheur Lake. And at that time there was no intention of making a refuge out of Blitzen Valley.

JOHN: That's right. And I'm going to have to take credit, I think, for finally selling the idea to develop the Blitzen Valley. And it was really --- and the, in the '40's before we --- in earnest, you know, really took after the Blitzen Valley for development. And it wasn't fully developed at the time the CCC program was folded up. And then it was

shortly after the war followed then, every year why we had a project that kept working at it. Building the additional structures, and cleaning canals, and things of that nature.

MARCUS: But the important factor there to me is that the birds came right back without the benefit of Blitzen Valley.

JOHN: Yeah.

MARCUS: You see, you didn't have any intentions, your mowing and grazing without regard to birds that were there for quite a little while. The main thing was to get the revenue off of the Blitzen Valley that you did. And in the meantime, Malheur Lake had recovered from this dry spell of '31, 1931. And '34, all the water that was in the lake was just what little trickled out of the Sod House Spring. And then this all came back, and the birds came back, and was all done. All Malheur Lake, you might say, up until in the '40's or later there, before you really got Blitzen Valley into production.

JOHN: Well that's right.

MARCUS: It was --- along, John, about in the --- well say in '40, '39 along in there, you would go up by the ponds that you were making in Blitzen Valley, and you found mostly shore birds. You didn't find the ducks and the geese. I remember that quite well.

JOHN: Yeah, I think that's right, Marcus.

MARCUS: Yeah, you bet. There were the shore birds. The birds, the ducks and geese were down in on the lake.

JOHN: Yeah, I remember the first pond in development. ... pond there in --- down below Buena Vista. And fenced that up, about 320 acres, there was no grazing then at

all. And the birds just --- they really took that over. And for about two seasons, and then all at once they quit it. And so after three or four years we opened that up to grazing. But for some reason or another, the birds never have come back to that pond like they did at first.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

JOHN: Never have utilized it. And I think it's --- I noticed they must have been loaded with carp, because, well all the ponds are ---

MARCUS: Oh, yeah.

JOHN: Because there was several hundred pelicans spent --- well I know there were two, two times I went by there about a week apart, why there were several hundred pelicans on that pond, feeding on there. And then they let the water down pretty low and now I see they haven't filled it up again.

Another thing in the Blitzen Valley that I haven't understood, Baca Lake was probably, is the one area that they can keep clean water in. They can be filled from the Bridge Creek, and Mud Creek. And have --- and would take very little rotenone to clean up the small amount of lake area that they have there. We used to figure that the --- well a number of years there the inventory would show 300 to 350 broods on the --- on that lake. And lots of sago pondweed grew in that. But ever since I've left there, why they've kept it dry for some reason or other. And I just --- I don't know why but it's probably one area that they can have a nice clean area.

MARCUS: You bet.

JOHN: And it's --- but ---

PAULINE: Well, do you mind if I quote you on the statement that you feel that the Malheur Lake is the key to bird production down there? I think really I'd like to emphasize this. This is the ---

JOHN: Yeah. It all developed back when these fellows were conducting these studies. I know some of the boys that --- From Harold Dubert (sp.?), he was the refuge manager here, and he's the fellow that has been doing the corresponding on it. They have a different situation all together there than we have out here. They have a short grass area in comparison to what we have. We have blue joint and sugargrass, and other big grasses that they don't have in that country. It's a short grass country, comparatively speaking.

And I think, I believe that you could take the Blitzen Valley and graze it, all of it to a certain height, you see. Not clean it out; we never had any intention of cleaning all the feed out of there. And you would get more production than you would by having it the way they are and letting it build up.

Now I walked up the canal there, the Malheur Lake ... during the nesting season, about a mile or a mile and a half, and that dead grass was that deep. And there was no way the sunlight could ever get to the ground. And a lot of those areas, already the growth is getting less every year. There is no chance for the sunlight to get in there and get it started. And I didn't find a single nest in that ... up there. I did find one nest under the greasewood, but a --- a little dry area there. But there was nothing, where there used to be quite a few nests. You'd expect to find quite a few nests.

And I'd always been on Malheur Lake with a canoe when it's, about the only way you can see anything. Go out there in that airboat and you never get a chance to see anything. Everything is scattered and gone before you get there. And it was --- just every place you look in the sago or Malheur ... channels would be ... ducks.

PAULINE: Well now the biologists I've talked to, one, two, three biologists in the last two or three weeks and that's not counting Mr. Mazzoni. I don't know whether, I assume that he has some training in biology. But anyway they've all told me that when you talk about the Malheur Bird Refuge, that you have to make a distinction between the birds that nest on Malheur Lake, and the kinds of birds that nest in the Blitzen Valley. They say that the kinds of birds that nest in Blitzen Valley don't nest on the lake. And this doesn't seem to hold true to anybody that you talk to that has been around this country very long. Am I making an error in my understanding of what they've told me, or ---

JOHN: Well I --- of course I don't know ---

PAULINE: Well they say ---

JOHN: --- of course the conditions now are such that --- that most of the birds that are nesting on Malheur Lake are the colonial nesters like the grebes, and the herons, and that type of bird. And they nest there in colonies, the egrets and the ... gulls --- because they're --- With this fish situation like it is, why they ---

PAULINE: They eat fish.

JOHN: --- there is a lot of feed there for them. They're fish eaters. But you take a mallard duck or a gadwall --- of course a gadwall is a duck that, late nesting bird that

usually nests in the meadow areas, and short grass country. And of course they are a few of the diving ducks that --- like canvasbacks and scaup and ruddys. You don't see those there like there used to be. There used to be lots of those birds nesting there. At the moment, they're probably right. Because --- but if Malheur Lake was cleaned up like it should be, or could, or was, why that doesn't hold water at all.

ALLEN BRAYMEN: John and you say Malheur Lake needs cleaning up like it should be, or ought to be, you mean less carp and less tule type growth ---

JOHN: Yeah.

ALLEN: --- and more open water?

JOHN: Well yeah. They --- the thing, as long as they have the carp in here, there isn't going to be possibility to, as I see it, to clean Malheur Lake up. It's --- now I heard some fellows talking the other day, that they're getting mostly perch out of there now. They can't find any carp, but it's perch. But then they're probably just as bad as the carp, only they aren't as big. But the combination would be pretty rough to do anything with.

I actually think there is only one solution to the Malheur Lake area, and I had recommended that a number of times, is to purchase the Dunn property in Mud Lake, which is also, a fine sago producing area. And build that one structure down at the --- in the sand dunes there, and that's the inlet into the Harney Lake, which has been on the plans for quite a number of years. And then go across to the dike from, on the East Side of the Walt McEwen property across to Graves Point, and pick up the shallow canal that they built this water on this side, and by-pass Malheur Lake. And it's already; a

provision is made to by-pass Malheur Lake with the ditching water. Well it wouldn't take very little ... the Dunn Dam and the Sod House Dam and still by-pass all that Blitzen water. And dry that Malheur Lake Basin up, until they could get it either burned or dried up, and to where they would get the --- annihilate the carp. They're always going to have carp; you can't get away from it. I don't think there would be a Chinaman's chance to killing the carp. It's going to be a case of figuring out something to live with them. And --- but you got to live with them in a way that you keep the numbers down. And that way you can say put the water to ... say a period of three years, and get Malheur Lake down to where it could be poisoned out. And you could eliminate a lot of that damage to the bulrush, and then rotate it back the other way, see, and dry the other side out.

But I got a letter here a couple three years before I left there; I had ... Larry to exchange up in Diamond Valley and pay them the difference. And I didn't get that done. Well it was turned down in the regional office. But finally sold the idea to the regional office, and so then it was presented to Washington and they turned us down there. But I kept after it, and finally they sent a man from Washington out here. And I went over with him on the ground, and well he said, "By all means that's going to be the only answer." And he was very much in favor of it. But when he got back in Washington why then he --- his superiors turned him down, so nothing was done about it. But I'm sure that's the only, the only way that they're ever going to live with the carp.

PAULINE: Well I have the carp study that has been done this year; it's quite a document. Have you seen it?

JOHN: No, no I haven't seen it.

PAULINE: Well, let's see, there it is.

MARCUS: Holy smokes.

PAULINE: Holy smokes is right. (Laughter) It's quite a document. And one of the alternatives is that, is to get a hold of the Dunn property. But every time they mention doing something about draining the water off, and siphoning it off into Harney Lake, they come back to the fact that politically --- you're under the political objections that they have been ... And they go through everything and then you come to the political.

JOHN: I don't think that you would want to ---

PAULINE: Object ---

JOHN: --- some years. If you had extremely high water year, you would have to put some water in there.

PAULINE: Yeah.

JOHN: But you take from Graves Point west, including Mud Lake and --- with a good ... the essential structure, at Sand Dunes there, would cover up all ... lake country. It would make quite a lake down in there.

MARCUS: Oh, yeah. You bet it would, a dandy, you bet.

JOHN: And there wouldn't be too many years that you would have to let any water go into --- whatever.

PAULINE: Yeah. Now I've got it on I think. Yeah, we're set. We're going again. What about this report now that was written in 1912, that you were telling me about, Marcus. Have you read that, John?

JOHN: Oh yeah, but not in recent years, I haven't.

PAULINE: Not --- yeah.

JOHN: I've read it a number of times --- by Lewis.

PAULINE: Yeah.

JOHN: Yeah.

PAULINE: What was his full name; do you remember what his full name was?

MARCUS: He was an Alva ... J. Alva Lewis. Alva Lewis was his name though.

JOHN: Alva, A L V A, wasn't it?

MARCUS: I think so. Yeah. And he was sent in here to, well it wasn't to make a study, it was to run over the refuge. 'Cause he only spent fifteen days here. Came in the first of July and left the 15th. And Herb Fawcett's dad, I think his name was Richard, was the game warden at the time. And he set him up with a cabin with a ... Bought him a canoe for \$20, and was in the process of getting him a big Harley motorcycle, for \$240 some dollars. Then he'd go around the lake, a 130 miles around the lake, and it took 4 days with a team to make the trip. And he figured if he got on this motorcycle he could make it in one, if he was really being pushed. But he went --- had to say that the settlers were in on Malheur Lake and the holdings by ... shotgun rights, or squatter's rights, or whatever you wanted to call them.

PAULINE: Yeah.

MARCUS: And in the process that they were stacking 2,000 tons of hay. And then they were burning off a lot of the tule patches in the spring. And --- it seemed to be kind of a thorn in his side that this was happening. But he went ahead to say then too --- now the water had to be high at this time when he was here, because he says that the water in Harney Lake was 6 feet deep. And that the Malheur Lake, he wasn't right sure, but it was close to that depth too. And he shows, has some pictures in this narrative report, and he shows grebe nests out on the East End of the Malheur Lake. Well not on the East End, but the picture was taken from Crow Island back, and you can see Saddle Butte at about an arc east angle across --- northwest angle across. And it was over 1,200 grebe nests in this picture. And there was no tules, you could see through, and the tules were floating in bunches and these grebes were building their nests on them.

And then he went ahead to say that he had conferred with Dr. Hibbard about the, about the predators around the lake. And the raven was considered the worst one of the bunch. He went ahead to say that the raven family will all spread out, and start out across a meadow, flying along, and one of them finds a bird's nest, or something to eat, why he gives a call and they all come in. And they clean that spot up and away they go again. I didn't know this. But he went ahead to say that he and Dr. Hibbard, he said, made the same observations. And Dr. Hibbard told him, he said, "Now if the eggs were big, that the raven will take them to a place where they eat them, places where they carry the eggs to. If they're small they eat them on the spot." And he said, "We can find spots around

here where you can scoop up eggshells with a shovel, to that extent.” And he said, “There should be a lot of good trapping program for the coyotes. That the coyotes were one of the worst predators there.”

And the game warden, and this was the amusing part of it, in the fall of the year he was supposed to patrol this lake here, and the same time trap all the coyotes out here. He really put him to work around here. (Laughter) But he estimated ducks and different places on the lake, and the different types of ducks and that. And so it’s generally what the report is about.

PAULINE: Well, I’m going to try to get my hands on it. I have a good excuse because I’m working; I’ve got material to do some writing about Dr. Hibbard. And I feel like it’s really going to turn into more of a history of the refuge than a story of Dr. Hibbard before I get through.

MARCUS: You bet.

PAULINE: Yeah. But George gave me a lot of background. We --- he taped and then I have these tapes. We were going to write a book, you know, together. But --- at least I have all the --- everything that we could get that he could give me before he died. So anyway ---

MARCUS: Well it’s in the, it’s in the file down there, and there’s later ones than that, Pauline. I was supposed to get a copy of that, but I don’t --- thinking about there, I don’t know whether it would be important to my work or not, John. What do you think?

JOHN: A copy of the Lewis report?

MARCUS: Yeah. I got Erickson's there; I thought I did pretty good to get that. But I can try it. But ---

JOHN: If you get a copy of it, it'd be interesting. They ---

MARCUS: Well what I'd like to do, and then I will do too, I know Joe will let me go in and sit down and --- there is a lot of them that go back to 1911, and then another 1911, and I think 1909. This 1912 is, just happened to be one I pulled out. Now whether the others are by Lewis or not, I don't know. In 1918, the whole story is there. Here's something that I'd like for you to quote.

PAULINE: Okay, you get it on here. Hurry up, because I'm running out of tape.
(Laughter)

MARCUS: I'm --- no, I'm just kind of kidding about this, but this was kind of a payoff. I went over the other day to refresh my memory about this, this Lewis report. I read it last spring. And so there wasn't anybody there except Larry Napier (sp.?), the biologist. Well he had never heard of such a report, and didn't know where to find it. And I said, "Well I know where it's at." And it is in this office here, and we went in. The office had been locked up; it was Griffin's office. And so I fished the report out. And it was cold in there, he said, "Come on over, Joe's gone, you can read this in his office and I'll get you some paper, you can take some notes." And I don't need paper.

So he just stayed right with me. So we read this and we read that, and pretty soon he said, "Well it appears like maybe we're going backwards on this thing." Well I said, "Well there isn't any doubt about it." (Laughter) That's exactly what was ---

PAULINE: Well maybe you did more good.

MARCUS: --- exactly what was said.

PAULINE: Maybe you did some good this afternoon than --- you know, if it ---

MARCUS: Well, I turned him around a little. I don't know.

PAULINE: Might have to turn some people around. Because I ---

JOHN: I ---

MARCUS: It was really amusing to me, you know. Because he said, "Well maybe we're going backwards on this thing."

JOHN: Well it used to be an old flyway biologist, Luther Goldman, that came through here, and for years, a number of years he went north with the birds, and come back in the fall. But had these flyway biologist later that put them in airplanes. But he traveled by car and horseback and went up, clear up into that Alaska country every year. And he was kind of an eccentric --- ways. And he always stopped spring and fall, I don't know whether you remember him or not, Marcus, and visit with him.

He was, he would go out and say now you ought to do this or that with the water, this is the way to handle water. And he'd always give me some advice. He'd get so interested in what he was telling, or talking ---

(END OF TAPE)

bl