

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #233 - Side A (Beginning)

Subject: Raymond W. "Red" Walter

Place:

Date: June 13, 1976

Interviewer: Nel Bosch

Release Form: No

RED WALTER: ... not too many, but I knew Warren, he was a pretty old man when I worked at the Whitehorse, 1925.

NEL BOSCH: Well, did he work at the Whitehorse or the Alvord?

RED: Well, the Alvord and the Whitehorse was all the same outfit.

NEL: John Devine's outfit.

RED: Well no, Miller and Lux.

NEL: Company.

RED: They had that --- you see, the Alvord at that time belonged to a Clerf, and he was a Yakima Indian. And the Company had that Alvord leased. They never did own it. They had all that, and Old Juan, the last I knew of Old Juan, he was at, he was a living there at Andrews.

NEL: Retired?

RED: Oh yes. At least he must have been a hundred, you know.

NEL: Uh huh.

RED: But ---

NEL: I was reading some of Buck Millers' oral history that had been taken. I think Jim Baker took it for the library. And he said that he was just really the one, that he would rope a hundred steers, and take a hundred steers, just one, two, three.

RED: Them old fellers never missed.

NEL: Yeah.

RED: No. No, I've seen Old Juan when I --- god, I was just a young feller, yes. He had a --- he'd take more rope than most of these young fellers got now days to make him a loop.

NEL: Well, how does a big loop work? I know I've seen an exhibition or two of it, but --- would they just slide the loop down the rope as it went out, or would your loop just go out big, and then they'd send it out?

RED: Oh --- oh god no, it went out big, and they always told me that if you put it on right, you --- the calf would take up the slack. (Laughter)

NEL: Yeah. Well, how long were most of the ropes they used? I've heard 75 to 100 feet, and that's a lot of rope.

RED: Yeah, was. Well, most of them old fellers, packed I would judge oh, say from 60 to 75 feet, yeah. I'm not --- I've heard them tell if a horse bucked a feller off out there, Old Juan would tie his mecate on to the end of his rope.

NEL: (Laughter) Well, obviously they're using dallys.

RED: They was what?

NEL: How much would they use in a dally? You know in their dallys?

RED: Oh god, they didn't need over three feet.

NEL: Yeah, okay, then all the rest of it is out there in front along with the cow on the end of it.

RED: Yeah.

NEL: We talked about Juan Redon, well how about some of the other old buckaroos there. How about Chino?

RED: He was one of them old Mexicans. And he was buckaroo boss there at the "P" Ranch for oh, years.

NEL: Uh huh.

RED: And old ---

NEL: That's Chino Berdugo?

RED: Yeah.

NEL: Uh huh.

RED: Old Tebo.

NEL: Yeah, Tebo. Were they pretty good too?

RED: Oh god yes. But not --- there was another old feller down there, old Brown. He wasn't any relation of these Browns, I don't think.

NEL: Viola and Glen.

RED: I think he was --- well now --- oh that Fine woman, you know. Jack Fine's wife.

NEL: Catherine?

RED: Catherine.

NEL: Uh huh.

RED: She's got the old Fred Brown place.

NEL: Uh huh. Just out of the refuge.

RED: Yeah.

NEL: Just south of the refuge.

RED: And old --- he was a great roper.

NEL: When did he come to the country? Do you happen to know when?

RED: Oh god, no. But he might have come here with that French outfit.

NEL: One year after God then, huh?

RED: Yeah. But you know, I didn't come here until '17.

NEL: Oh. You're just a Johnny-come-lately then.

RED: Yeah, I was just a kid of 15 years old.

NEL: Where did you go to work?

RED: Went to work at the Double O.

NEL: Yeah. Who was your buckaroo boss then?

RED: Well, they didn't have much of a buckaroo boss them days. There was only two or three fellows ---

NEL: Buckaroos.

RED: --- yeah.

NEL: Yeah. Who had the spread at the time, the Company?

RED: Old Hanley.

NEL: Hanley. Uh huh.

RED: Yeah.

NEL: How long were you at the Double O, Red?

RED: I was there about 5 years. I grew up with Winnie and Bill Gouldin.

NEL: Oh.

RED: That was old Harry's two kids ---

NEL: Yeah, yeah.

RED: --- you know. Winnies more like my own sister, than my own sister.

NEL: Well.

RED: She comes to see me every time she comes through.

NEL: Well, that's great. Did you go from the Double O then to the Island Ranch?

RED: Yes, yes.

NEL: And then you worked there, how long? Who was your boss there?

RED: Buck Miller.

NEL: Oh, he was buckaroo boss?

RED: Yeah.

NEL: Yeah. Who owned the outfit then?

RED: Well, Miller and Lux.

NEL: Oh.

RED: It was --- well it was called Pacific Livestock.

NEL: PLS.

RED: But it was, you see it had been handed down to that, I think he was a nephew of old ---

NEL: Henry Miller?

RED: Well, some relation there, I don't know.

NEL: And then you went to Whitehorse after that?

RED: Yeah. Old Charlie. Old Charlie Miler was superintendent of the whole country, you know.

NEL: Yeah.

RED: Nevada, and Oregon.

NEL: All the PLS holdings in both states.

RED: Yeah.

NEL: Uh huh.

RED: And he shipped me to the Whitehorse.

NEL: What did you do down there, some more roping?

RED: No, no, there was just a little bit of misunderstanding between me --- well you see when Buck left the Island he turned the outfit over to me, and I run the buckaroo outfit one summer. And then I told old Miler, I said, "I don't want the outfit." I said, "You get somebody." So, he brought George Smith, he was the buckaroo boss at the Agency. They brought him over here, and George and me didn't hit it off too good. So, I was going to quit, and old Miler just loaded me up and took me to the Whitehorse.

NEL: Oh, that's --- How long did you stay there at the Whitehorse?

RED: I was there a year. You see that was right --- they was just --- the outfit was just starting to slip then.

NEL: Uh huh, yeah.

RED: And it wasn't but a year or two until they was all wound up.

NEL: Selling off.

RED: Yeah.

NEL: Yeah. About what year was that, Red?

RED: That was in '25.

NEL: About the depression then, huh?

RED: Yeah.

NEL: Uh huh, yeah. Well, when did you go --- where'd you go after the Whitehorse then?

RED: Oh, I went to, I went to the Horseshoe Bar outfit, running horses.

NEL: Well, where is that?

RED: Bill Brown.

NEL: Oh, out to Wagontire?

RED: Old Bill Brown ...

NEL: Uh huh. Yeah. Well, how many of your buckaroos out that way used the big loop? Did you use them pretty good down there at the Whitehorse?

RED: Oh yeah. Them old fellers used the big loop, too. Yeah.

NEL: Well, why do you say that they used the big loop around here?

RED: Well, I don't know. I think it's just one of them things that --- They, I think they --- most of them took the pattern off of that --- them old Mexicans.

NEL: Uh huh. And they brought it with them.

RED: Why, yes.

NEL: --- Mexico through California, and north.

RED: Yeah.

NEL: Uh huh. And the buckaroos, just kind of in competition started using it, to compete.

RED: Yeah, yeah. You know this, probably just like the, myself for example, you know, we was just kids. And you watched them old fellers.

NEL: Uh huh.

RED: Now, old Link Hutton out there at Wagontire was an awful good man too, with a rope.

NEL: Uh huh, uh huh. Yeah. Well, it isn't necessarily because the cows are a little spookier or anything like that ---

RED: No, no.

NEL: --- it was just because they were good at it, and everybody kind of practiced the pattern.

RED: But the cattle was wilder, and you couldn't get as close, you know. And you had to throw a little farther.

NEL: Well, there is really a practical reason behind it ---

RED: Yeah.

NEL: --- from that point of view. Uh huh. Lute Kendall used to tell about roping hogs out on the "P" Ranch. Did you ever do that?

RED: No, no, I never done much --- I might have roped a hog or two in my time. But not --- But Johnny Crow, Johnny Crow and Fred Witzel --- or Dell Witzel ---

NEL: Yeah.

RED: --- they, they caught a lot of them pigs down there.

NEL: Would that kind of spook their horses a little?

RED: No, no, no not too much.

NEL: Well, they were just like razorbacks, weren't they? Just kind of young native?

RED: Not too bad.

NEL: Oh, really.

RED: No, they was some pretty nice hogs in there.

NEL: Uh huh. You didn't have too many of them there at the Island Ranch.

RED: Oh, no.

NEL: Yeah.

RED: No. But you see long towards the last there, why I lived there at the Narrows, after I was married.

NEL: Yeah. Oh.

RED: And they used to go out there in the swamp with them. Catch a hog ---

NEL: Uh huh.

RED: --- and just skin him out. `Course them days, whatever you could get to eat, you eat what was set before you. (Laughter)

NEL: That's right. ... on then pretty well, huh?

RED: Well, yes, I'd say. I visited with the old man quite a little bit. But they was a, Old Chapo that was there at the Double O. Now he was one of them old Mexicans, but I think when --- I'm not too sure about any of this, but I think when old Hanley --- you see Hanley was the

administrator for the French outfit. And I think he got Old Chapo to the Double O. And he was a little, just a little Mexican. But he was, he was good.

WALLY ?: ...

RED: She's --- Wally, she is getting my life's history.

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