

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #24 - Side B

Subject: John Porter

Place: Marcus Haines Ranch - Harney County

Date: November 17, 1972

Interviewer: Pauline Braymen

PAULINE BRAYMEN: Okay; now his name is John ---

MARCUS HAINES: John Porter. And he's from Scotland, and near Aberdeen, I think, is the general location, as we might know it. And he came here in 1911. And he came here with another Scotsman by the name of John Gordon, John Gordon.

PAULINE: Now John Gordon, I've heard that name before, I think when I talked to Alex McBain.

MARCUS: Yes, you would have, yeah. They all landed here about the same time. There was John, and what was it Bill Gordon, was that the other one's name.

EDNA HAINES: Bill Gordon, uh huh.

MARCUS: But here is the thing that you will probably enjoy, you will be interested in getting, is these experiences on these trips. Now they missed Ontario when they came in and ended up in Huntington. They were asleep and went through Ontario. And finally they got off and they, I think there was a banker on there that kind of took the green Scotsmen in hand there and helped them a little bit. And got them on a stage to Alberson Station. Now that is over on the south side, or east side of Steens Mountain. And believe it or not in those days they had telephones. And he called Jim Paull and, Jess Alberson did, and told him he had a couple of old country Scotsmen there for, looking for his place.

... just about get on the boat over in Scotland, and tell them to take them to Jim Paull's out in Harney County. (Laughter) That's about the way they worked that, you know.

But he'll tell you about that, ask him about his experiences coming in on the stage. And the team balked on them over around Dry Creek someplace there. And he said a buckaroo come riding in, someplace, he'll tell you a good story about this. He put ... and took his riata and put it around one of these horse's necks and gave him a yank, and got them a going again. And I guess that, they'd never seen anything like that. Of course that really was something. And then they come on to Alberson Station, and it was in the summer, late summer or early --- late spring or early summer. And they spent, they worked out there, their keep there hoeing a garden for this fellow, I think. So --- There is little human-interest stories that you can fish out of this as you go along there, Pauline.

And then he, they finally get to John, up to Jim Paull's place. And then Jim Mahon, of course, he was going strong in there too, and they would go help Jim Mahon. And Jim always liked John ... quite well apparently, because he always gave him the biggest drink of whiskey that he dished out to the hired help. He always set John, I think, next to him at the table, so the story goes. And then he tells the story about; I think he was working at the Riddle Ranch at this time. And I think Harold Cawfield was involved in this one too. And Walter Anderson and some of them, and they go to Diamond to a dance, or something. That was one of his first wild rides in a wagon. I think they all got drunk and he really got a spin down to Diamond Valley, Happy Valley, down the grade and into Diamond. And then he --- so then he is starting to kind of get on to the ropes a little bit. And then the stories get a little bit milder, but --- He can tell you some of those if he will. He'll make you a pretty good story about them.

And then if you're interested in his way of living back in the old country there, he'll tell you that, about the family. I think there is six or seven brothers ... quite a family. And

how, the work that they did, and the type of work, and all that sort of thing. Just give you a little something there to take along, to take him along there. If you get him to going you won't need it. But if you can refresh his memory just a little bit ---

PAULINE: Yeah, this will help. This is more than I usually have, that's for sure.

MARCUS: Yeah, I bet. When you don't know the person, why it's a little difficult sometimes.

PAULINE: I know with Alex McBain, that was really a good time that I had with him. But he, you know, was a little difficult to get him to talk about things. Well he worked in, mostly a sheepherder, or as a ranch hand?

MARCUS: Well he worked as a sheepherder, ranch hand, and then he worked for the survey crew, Arthur Page. He worked with him for several years. And during this time that he bought some of the property in Diamond that the Eastern Oregon Livestock Company was selling. And he bought a piece of property there. And then a little later on, I think, around 1930, along there, he acquired another piece of property. And then he got married and lived in Diamond Valley until, oh about 1942 or '43, I think, and then he sold out to Myrtle Barnes. And moved to Vancouver, he had a stepdaughter living in Vancouver, and he and his wife moved down there. And then later moved to Salem and worked in the paper, the paper mills there during the war. And then moved back here in 1948, and has been here since. He lost his wife in the fall of 1954. And he was working at the refuge at the time as maintenance man around the headquarters there. Can you think of anything else, Edna, that Pauline could use there to ---

EDNA: No, I was just thinking about the remarks he made, something about his mother didn't believe in celebrating birthdays. She never gave him anything for his birthday. And they used to have half an egg on Sunday.

PAULINE: A half an egg.

EDNA: ... egg.

MARCUS: Yeah, half an egg, the rest of the week they had none.

EDNA: I think that's how he told it; they'd have half an egg on Sundays. I guess that is why John is so conservative now. He had a niece come out to visit him here a couple of summers ago. She's a nurse in, isn't it Edinburgh, no not Edinburgh, but it's near Edinburgh. At Inisch, I believe it is called Inisch.

MARCUS: Yeah, I think that was the name of it.

EDNA: I N I S C H, Inisch. He wants to leave all his money to her, but he won't make a will.

PAULINE: Well Marcus tells me that you came over from Scotland here a few years ago.

JOHN PORTER: A few years ago, quite a few years ago.

PAULINE: About 1911?

JOHN: That's when I come. I was back in '31, and I come back again in '32. I been going to go back again, but I ain't made it yet.

PAULINE: You came from Aberdeen, Scotland, Aberdeen?

JOHN: Aberdeen, yeah. Relatives, you say?

PAULINE: This is where you came from?

JOHN: Huh?

PAULINE: This is where you came from, Aberdeen?

JOHN: Yes, yeah, Aberdeen. Yeah, Aberdeen. Just about 18 miles from there, was out in the country, yeah.

PAULINE: What did your parents do?

JOHN: Huh?

PAULINE: What did your parents do?

JOHN: They were farmers.

PAULINE: They were farmers.

JOHN: My dad was a farmer, yeah. Oh, I've got three brothers alive over there yet.

PAULINE: How old were you when you came to the United States?

JOHN: Twenty.

PAULINE: Twenty years old.

JOHN: Twenty years old.

PAULINE: And you came across on a ship, of course, I imagine.

JOHN: Yeah, came across on the California, was the name of the vessel. And then I went back, and the name, that was the Ben-Gurion. That used to be a German boat, you see, the captains have the, during World War I.

PAULINE: This is in 1931 when you went back?

JOHN: I went back '31.

PAULINE: '31.

JOHN: Then I come back in '32. I went over in November and came back in March.

PAULINE: Did you land in New York City the first time you came over?

JOHN: Did I what?

PAULINE: Land in New York City the first time you came? Did you come to New York?

JOHN: Yes.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

JOHN: And then come right here.

PAULINE: You had someone with you, didn't you?

JOHN: I came, I forget, well --- I landed in New York and then come west as you say.

PAULINE: You had a fellow with you, didn't you?

JOHN: Another fellow was with me, yeah.

PAULINE: Was this John Gordon?

JOHN: Yeah. How did you get that information?

PAULINE: Well do you remember a fellow named Alex McBain?

JOHN: Sure.

PAULINE: Well I talked to him a few years ago, and when his relatives came to visit him from Scotland.

JOHN: Yeah, he came right close, where I came from.

PAULINE: He mentioned John Gordon.

JOHN: Yeah. And he had a brother come here too. I, John come with me, and his brother was here two years before. They come out, one other Scotchman, and run sheep up here on Steens Mountain.

PAULINE: Uh huh. Well this is how you found out about coming then. I mean, the brother of John Gordon told you about it, or---

JOHN: There was quite a little immigration about that time, you know, from the old country. There was quite a lot of young fellows just like me, some went to Australia, and then some come to America. It was just a toss-up whether I'd go to Australia, so me and this John Gordon we decided to come to this country. And as I said, he had a brother out here two years before. And he was working for this Scotsman, sheep man, and of course we was writing back and forth. And this Scotsman that was running the sheep, he said, "Tell them to come on out, I'll put them to work." So that was how.

PAULINE: Well things were pretty tough in Scotland at this time, as far as making a living, weren't there? It was hard for a young fellow to make a living in Scotland at that time?

JOHN: I just didn't have --- I ain't got this thing right. It's too high I think. That's the only thing that's wrong with me, I don't hear good.

PAULINE: Well that happens when we get older.

JOHN: Yeah. Now you can say it again.

PAULINE: Okay. Was it hard for young people in Scotland to make a living at the time you left? Was this the reason that people were leaving, or ---

JOHN: Oh yeah, they were making a living, all right. But just, as I say, there was lots of immigration at that time. And lots of young fellows left.

PAULINE: Well how did you get from New York City out to Harney County?

JOHN: Oh, just come right across, train.

PAULINE: On the train?

JOHN: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, you can book your passage, you know, over the, clear to where you're going.

PAULINE: Really, you just say I want to go to Harney County?

JOHN: Well it was --- I was booked to Huntington, you know where Huntington is?

PAULINE: Yes.

JOHN: Well that was the end of the ---

PAULINE: The railroad.

JOHN: And I should have come off, we should have come off at Ontario, but I think that was in the night. So the next day we had to take the train back to Vale. And we had to pay for that part of it, you know. But all the rest was paid for before.

PAULINE: So what happened when you got to Huntington, did you know where you were?

JOHN: Oh yeah, just by map, you know, just by map. That was where we, where the ticket was billed to as you'd say, Huntington. And that's where we were. Then we had to come back, back to Ontario.

PAULINE: Then how did you come from Ontario on ---

JOHN: Stagecoach.

PAULINE: What was that like?

JOHN: Oh, that wasn't good.

PAULINE: Wasn't good.

JOHN: Just a stagecoach. It carried the mail too, you know. They carried the mail and any passengers. We come to, what they call Alberson Station, a way over here. I don't know how many miles that is from Ontario, but it took us three days, anyway. And then from there, there was phones at that time, across the mountain to this Jim Paull. That's the fellow that we come to, Jim. That same fellow that McBain come. McBain was there when we went there. And we phoned, so Jim Paull he sent a man over with a hack to bring us over to the ranch, you know, over the hills.

PAULINE: What did you think of this country when you first got here?

JOHN: I didn't think nothing of it. How could you, after leaving a country like that? But, the longer I stayed here, the better I like it. And when I went back in '32, '31 and come back, the last month I think was the longest month I ever put in, in my life. I just wanted to get back. But the fellow I went back with, he wanted to stay another month, so of course I agreed. We stayed a month longer than we intended to come. Of course our passage was all paid for, you know, you see.

PAULINE: Well that's interesting. I know that a lot of the women that I talk to, a lot of the women that I talked to, say that when they first came into this country, they thought oh, they just, you know, they didn't want to stay very bad. But they, on so many, have told me that the longer, you know, the longer they stayed, the better they liked it.

JOHN: Oh yeah, oh yeah. I wouldn't --- they have tried me to go back, you know. I ranched up here in Diamond for 17 years, and they wanted me to come back and buy a ranch over there. I said, "You couldn't get me back there."

PAULINE: Well you said that the stagecoach ride was pretty wild. What happened?

JOHN: It wasn't --- we both had trunks, you know, both of us, a trunk. We brought lots of clothes and everything that we would wear, and it was pretty heavy. Oh, I guess it weighted about 150 pounds maybe, 300. But anyway the horses that we had was awful pooped, they was just no good, you know, and they balk. We just had an awful time with them, you know.

PAULINE: What would they do when the horses would balk?

JOHN: Well the first time they balked, first one that balked, we met a mule team, you know, that hauled --- there was shearing plants over here, and then they hauled the wool to Ontario. So you know how the roads was then, that you don't know, but then I know how the roads was then, just a cow trail, you know.

PAULINE: Yes.

JOHN: And the wool teams had the preference to the road. And the stage fellow he had to pull out into the sagebrush. And so, he went by, and he seen that we couldn't get that horses started again, you know, they just balk. And he come off, and they had, I think he had about 8 horses all strung out. So he come back and he told the driver to slack up on the lines, you know, and he just held the lines like that, and kick it on the shins, you know. And it reared up, and then away we went, you know. So, well we was going up, and something else stopped us, and we was stuck. And so a cowboy, we call him, a buckaroo come off the hill, saddle horse, you know, and he put his riata onto its lower jaw and went on out a ways, and took his ... and got us started again. And so that's the end of that team. But the next team, it was a balky one in it too. And there was nobody to help us out there. But we pulled sagebrush and set a fire under him.

PAULINE: Oh, no.

JOHN: And by god we ---

PAULINE: I bet you took off in no uncertain terms then.

JOHN: And we got it in. It took three days though. Three days to make the --- Of course there was stops here and there, you know, all the way. Two stops, and then the next day, next night we was into Alberson.

PAULINE: Do you remember what the other stage stops were?

JOHN: The what?

PAULINE: Do you remember what the first two stage stops were?

JOHN: Well yeah, I should. One of them was, wait a minute, by gosh now --- I couldn't tell you for sure. It was ranches that we stopped at, you know. Seward was the people that run that ranch, Seward. And then we come on --- that was one of them. And then Alberson was the last one, you got that, Alberson. And then we come, as I say, Jim Paull sent a hack over and took us over the land.

PAULINE: Now he was a sheep, he ran sheep?

JOHN: Yeah, he ran sheep.

PAULINE: Uh huh. So is this what you did then first?

JOHN: I had the sheep a couple of years, but I got tired of the sheep. And then I moved down below to a ranch, well that was a big corporation that owned all of this. What did they call it, the Eastern Oregon Livestock Company, and then I worked with them a long, long time.

PAULINE: Uh huh. This was more with cattle then?

JOHN: Yeah, that was all cattle, yeah, yeah, that was all cattle.

PAULINE: Edna makes pretty good coffee.

JOHN: I'm not a coffee drinker, no.

PAULINE: Marcus was telling me about one time when you went to a dance, he said you had quite an experience.

JOHN: Went to what?

PAULINE: Went to a dance, one time.

JOHN: A dance?

PAULINE: Yeah, Marcus said that you went to a dance one time and had quite an experience. Do you remember about that?

JOHN: Where at, where was it?

PAULINE: At Diamond.

JOHN: I don't remember. I've been at lots of dances at Diamond. But I don't remember what experience I had there. No.

PAULINE: And you said you had a ranch in Diamond for about 17 years or so?

JOHN: Yeah, I ranched there, right close, yeah Diamond.

PAULINE: In Diamond. Did you find life out here --- how did you find life out here different than in Scotland?

JOHN: Did I find out what?

PAULINE: Life was a lot different here than in Scotland?

JOHN: I'm better off without this thing, but I thought I'd put it on. I'll put it plumb off. Now ---

PAULINE: Life here was a lot different than it was in Scotland, I thought maybe you could tell some things about how it was different.

JOHN: Was it different when I went back, you mean?

PAULINE: Yes, uh huh.

JOHN: Not too much. But I understand it's more like this country now. I've known other Scotch boys that's been back, you know, and they say it's just like this country now.

PAULINE: But more modern conveniences.

JOHN: Of course they had no electric light when I was back in '31. But they've got them now, you know, and telephones and all that. They've got all of that nowadays, practically

just like this. But they didn't have that when I left. They don't cook, I don't know if they do now or not, but they didn't when I was back in '32. They don't cook on stoves like this. It's all open fireplaces, you know, just put your pots, hang your pots on a chain, you know. Then you can put them up or down, and so forth.

PAULINE: I've seen pictures in magazines of that.

JOHN: And then just all coal oil lamps, and like that. But that's all changed now, I know, that's all changed.

PAULINE: Well when Alex's brothers were here to see him ---

JOHN: What?

PAULINE: When Alex McBain's brothers were here to see him a few years ago I talked to them, and they said that ---

JOHN: He was here 10 years ahead of us, 10 years. Worked for that same fellow up there. Yeah.

PAULINE: Uh huh. What was school like in Scotland, when you went to school?

JOHN: School, oh that was just a public school. There was two rooms, and up to about 10, 12 little fellows was one room, and then the old ones in the other room. Just two teachers though. One teacher had a whole lot of scholars them days, you know. I think there was about 12 or 14 in my class. And this, he was a man teacher; the other one was a woman teacher. And he had about four classes, and they were all average about 10 to 15 in the class. But as high as you could go there, it's a little different than here. I think we went further on what they call grade school here. We went further on our school than they do on grade schools here. You go as far as the six grade, and then what they call the X-6 over there. And that's where I quit. I was 14 years old then, and that's when I left school. That's as far as they went there, at that school. But then you could, of course, they didn't call it college after that, they called it something else. But then you went from

there to college if you wanted to.

PAULINE: Well what did you do then between the time you were 14 and when you were 20 and came to America?

JOHN: What did I do there before I come here?

PAULINE: Uh huh.

JOHN: I worked on a farm.

PAULINE: With your father?

JOHN: Yeah.

PAULINE: Did he have sheep, or cattle, or did he raise crops?

JOHN: Yeah, we raised grain. It is more of a grain country. I worked for an uncle after I was 14; I went to an uncle, because there was other brothers besides me at home, you know, didn't need me there. So I went to an uncle and I stayed there until I come out here, out to America.

PAULINE: Uh huh. Are there some other things you can remember---

JOHN: All together different over there now. You see ... lease, my dad he didn't own that farm, he leased it. But then it come on, you remember the depression, the same depression there as here. The landlords there, they sold lots of the farms, you know, and individuals bought them.

PAULINE: Did you work in the sheep shearing at all? In shearing the sheep?

JOHN: Shearing?

PAULINE: Uh huh. Well I was just ... the sheep, you know. They come --- there was a sheep-shearing outfit come in, 10-12 shearers, and some of them was 14. And they sheared the sheep, but you penned them for them, you know. Big corrals, and you penned them, and you count them in. I think you had little pens, and I think they held six. Each shearer had six in a pen. When he had that sheared out, you put six more in there,

you know.

PAULINE: I've heard stories that they worked very fast.

JOHN: Huh?

PAULINE: I've heard stories that they worked very fast, the sheep shearers.

JOHN: Oh they shear around --- he ain't a good shearer unless he can shear a 100 a day. And sometimes some of them 125. But 100 is about right. They shear a band of sheep in a day, you know, regardless. And maybe 1200 in a band, but they'll shear them out, you know. But some will shear a 125, but most of them around a 100.

PAULINE: And then they had ---

JOHN: Some, no blades like that, it's just a machines. It used to be blades, you know. In fact the record is with the blades, the record. I think around 150, or something.

PAULINE: Were they still shearing with blades when you came to this country?

JOHN: No, they had the machines when I came.

PAULINE: They had the machines then. They were run with a gasoline motor, weren't they?

JOHN: Oh, small bunches, small like the ranchers had 10-12, that used the blades. But they had the big shearing plants, you know, here and there and all over. They start out with the, they went to the sheep way down in Ontario country, and a way down in there. And then along about April they start up to this Steens Mountain, you know. And then the shearing plants on the way up, you see, the shearing plants on the way up. And they shear, and go on up.

PAULINE: And then they loaded the wool into freight wagons.

JOHN: Just freight wagons.

PAULINE: And hauled it out.

JOHN: I made one trip with wool.

PAULINE: Oh, tell me about that. I want ---

JOHN: Me and this McBain ---

PAULINE: Well I was going to say, I think I've heard something about this before.

JOHN: You see we got --- then they shear in May, so he, this man had a lot of horses and wagons then, you know, so I drove four and McBain he had six. So that took, I think that took about all of Jim's wool. And we made the trip to the railroad. Oh, you go about 20 miles a day, 15. It depended on the water situation. There was grass every place then, you know. We just, when we hit water we stopped and watered the horses, and hobbled them, and fed them grain, and then just turned them out. And they wouldn't go very far, you know. And then in the morning we rounded them up and fed them grain and harnessed them and away we went again. We went about; some days we went 20 miles all right. I don't know how many days it took us, quite a few.

PAULINE: Well it would, going --- I mean it's a ways across that desert there.

JOHN: What's that?

PAULINE: It's quite a ways across there, at twenty miles a day.

JOHN: Yes, yeah. Yeah, it's a long ways there with a team walking, you know.

PAULINE: Were you and Alex alone, or were there other crewmembers with you?

JOHN: What's that?

PAULINE: Were you and Alex alone, or were there others ---

JOHN: Yeah, just the two of us, yeah, just the two.

PAULINE: Did you bring back a load of freight when you came back then?

JOHN: He brought back freight for this store down here, used to be a store for Haines, Charlie Haines. That's Marcus' granddad, would have been, I think. I was loaded for Smyth's up here, Rye Smyth; he is a big rancher too. So I was loaded for him with groceries. And then of course McBain, he went back again. But I just made the one trip.

And then he was loaded for Jim Paull that time, you know. They used to get in a whole year's supply of grub, you know, just a whole year. Fruit of all kinds, canned fruit you know, and beans. And bacon, they used to get, oh crates. I don't know, you can't keep bacon anymore. That would keep a whole year, just as good as the day you got it. But now---

PAULINE: No, it molds, doesn't it?

JOHN: Mold, and they don't cure it the same anymore, as they did them days. That's 60 years ago.

PAULINE: I can't imagine ---

JOHN: Huh?

PAULINE: I can't imagine making out a shopping list for a whole year.

JOHN: Yeah, a whole year.

PAULINE: It's hard, you know, that's hard.

JOHN: That's when they got their supplies, when they hauled the wool, you know, the ranchers, yeah. All kinds of, had all kinds of canned good them days, you know, and dried, a lot of dried fruit, you know. He had a big cellar up there, you know, it just cooled all the time, about the same temperature. It all kept good, you know. Yeah. When you mentioned Alex McBain, that got me. You know, he --- oh I used to go up and see him all the time, you know. He got so he lost his mind completely, you know.

PAULINE: Well I talked to him, oh I think it was about 1968, I'm not sure, about then.

JOHN: Oh well, he was all right then.

PAULINE: He was still fine then.

JOHN: Oh yeah, he was all right then.

PAULINE: So I thought he was quite a gentleman. And those brothers of his from Scotland were charming.

JOHN: He was the best fellow; I think he was the best fellow to ever hit this country. Everybody liked that man, you know, he --- everybody that knowed him, liked him, he was a wonderful man. Yeah.

PAULINE: Oh, let's see now I ---

JOHN: When I first come here, I think there was about 30 Scotsmen if you counted them all. All of them in connection with the sheep, you know, sheep. They run sheep. And now I'm about the only one left, they're all gone. The fellow that I come to the country with he's dead, and his brother is dead. And they're all dead, they're all gone now, all gone. A few Welshmen left, but then I have to come ... that is around here. They were all up there, you know. They run thousands of sheep up there on that mountain in the summertime, you know, but not anymore.

PAULINE: No.

JOHN: No sheep now, it's all cattle.

PAULINE: Well someone told me the other day, let's see, it was Peterson. Do you remember ---

JOHN: Who?

PAULINE: Peterson.

JOHN: Peterson?

PAULINE: Uh huh. And he had sheep.

JOHN: Oh, oh yeah.

PAULINE: And he said that he would have, oh I think he said some-thing like 15,000 head of sheep.

JOHN: I know a Scotchman that used to work for him. He went to school with me, Lumsden was his name.

PAULINE: Jim Lumsden?

JOHN: Jim Lumsden.

PAULINE: Oh really. I didn't ---

JOHN: I went to school with him, the same school, the same grade.

PAULINE: Yeah, and you ended up out here in Harney County.

JOHN: Only thing, he was a better student than I was in some respects, you know. He had the awfulest memory that man, that ever was. He could --- history, you know, we knowed more about America --- just as much over there as I do now. And geography, you know --- but he could remember --- he had an awful memory.

PAULINE: He was a nice man too, I liked Jim.

JOHN: Jim Lumsden, he's dead too.

PAULINE: Yeah.

JOHN: Just a few years ago, quite a few years ago.

PAULINE: Yeah, I knew him a few years ago.

JOHN: Yeah.

PAULINE: Well in a band of sheep, was there always the same amount in a band of sheep? Or did it just depend on who called it? The number in a band of sheep.

JOHN: Yeah.

PAULINE: Was the number in a band of sheep always the same?

JOHN: Yeah, about 1000.

PAULINE: A 1000.

JOHN: Well that's a 1000 ewes. But then in the summertime that would have been about 2000, you know, the lambs. But a 1000 --- and then after the lambs was shipped, they'd put two bands together, probably have about 2000 in a band, you know. That is they'd be shipping lambs, the lambs would be shipped before now. Then in the fall there'd be about 2000 in a band. A 1000 head of ewes and a 1000 head of lambs, that's a band for the

summertime.

PAULINE: That's a band.

JOHN: For the summertime, yeah.

PAULINE: Well what kind of work did you do for Eastern Oregon Livestock Company?

JOHN: When I when?

PAULINE: When you worked for Eastern Oregon Livestock Company?

JOHN: Oh, I worked for them a long, long time, just on the ranches, you know. Just irrigating and haying, and just so forth, so forth.

PAULINE: Did they run cattle up in the Steens?

JOHN: Oh yeah. Steens Mountain, way back in the desert too. They had lots of cattle, thousands and thousands of cattle. See all this here, that was all, that all belonged to them then. But lots of it was sold, you know. You see that's where I bought my ranch there. It was, Texas, it was Corbett and another, Corbett, a Portland man bought it. And then they decided to sell all this land, you know, and they were going to build a big reservoir up here, up here about 15, 20 miles, and settle all this country with Mormons. That was their idea. But that was along in the depression time, and that fell through.

PAULINE: That was about 1930 then?

JOHN: That never come to pass. But they did sell quite a few ranches. More so in Diamond than anyplace else. See that's where I bought my ranch then, you know. Then there was several bought in Diamond. There was several ranches sold. They weren't ranches then, just the land. You built the house, and you done the fencing. And they also sold some up here. In fact Marcus' mother bought a piece of land right down here from that same outfit. Yeah, but now the government, finally the government bought it and turned it into this bird refuge, you know. Yeah.

PAULINE: I understand you worked for the bird refuge too.

JOHN: Huh?

PAULINE: You worked for the bird refuge.

JOHN: Oh yeah, I worked just five years there. Yeah, I worked for the bird refuge.

PAULINE: Were you married and have a family?

JOHN: I got married when I bought the ranch up there at Diamond. But my wife she died in, I believe, '54. And that's when I --- well that's when I was working over here to the refuge. So after that I just, wherever I hung my hat, as you say. In fact it's hung here a long time. I can't tell you how many years, it's quite a few.

PAULINE: Well knowing Marcus and Edna, it's a pretty good place to hang your hat.

JOHN: Oh yeah. Well I didn't work with the force up there at the "P" Ranch all the time. I worked seven years with the, he had a survey, he had a survey outfit, you know, surveying land all the time. And I worked with that man, Page was his name. Just chaining and roding, you know, for seven years.

PAULINE: Well that would be interesting, you'd get to see every-thing.

JOHN: Then I was a single guy in them days.

PAULINE: What would you do, just go out for --- You would go out, probably, for days at a time and survey out through the ---

JOHN: Out to the ---

PAULINE: Well when you were surveying, how did you work that, when you were surveying? How did you work?

JOHN: We just stayed at ranches, you know. Go survey all day, and we'd stay at this ranch up here ... and Diamond, and "P" Ranch. And then we was way over in Catlow Valley. We'd stay at the ranches all the time, work from there all the time.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

JOHN: Oh, we have been out, way out on the desert, but we boarded there ... camps

then, you know. We never done no cooking. We just, we boarded out with the outfit, you should say. We never bached any at all like that, no.

PAULINE: Were the people here, when you first came, were they different than back in Scotland? Was their way of life different than what you'd been used to in Scotland?

JOHN: Well most --- I wasn't too much acquainted with the people here until I worked at the refuge, you know, that was the late years, you know. My stomping ground was up there at Diamond.

PAULINE: Well by here, I mean in Harney County where you were at?

JOHN: What?

PAULINE: Where you were at when you came here. Did the way people live, was it different than in Scotland?

JOHN: Oh yes. There was quite a few. There was the same ranches as here now, yeah. Same along the ranches, yeah. In fact there was more ranches then, then there is now. Because, oh next to the lake there ... they bought a lot of them fellows out down here, you know. But still there is one, two, three, there is three that they didn't get to buy. But they bought quite a few of them. All around the lake here, they bought them, you know.

PAULINE: Do you remember the first time that you rode in a car?

JOHN: Oh yeah.

PAULINE: Was it in the United States?

JOHN: That was a Ford. This fellow that I come out with, this John Gordon, we was both working at the Diamond Ranch then, that's the PLS then. And he had one, and he had about the first one in the whole country. Yeah, that was it. Oh, that was in, let's see that was around 1916, '17 I guess.

PAULINE: Did you like it?

JOHN: Oh yeah. And then a few years after that, I was still there. No, I was working for

the, I was working for the surveyors, I told you that. That's when I got one. But I can't tell you what year that was.

PAULINE: Was it a Ford too?

JOHN: Uh huh. Oh, it was just before I went to the Army in 1917. I bought it, and I think -- I didn't run it much, just weekends, you know. And I sold it to the fellow that was running the ranch up there, Frazier was his name. And I got a \$100 more for it than I paid for it. You couldn't get a car in them days, you know. That was wartime, you know.

PAULINE: You said you were in the service? Did you go overseas, or were you stationed in the United States?

JOHN: No, no I done all my soldiering at Camp Lewis down here, Camp Lewis. They call it Fort Lewis now, but anyway it was Camp Lewis.

PAULINE: Uh huh. What kind of work did you do in the Army? What did they have you do?

JOHN: I was in what they call the 13th ... Motor ... Motor Battery. You had a rifle too, but it was a --- we didn't have the actual guns, they had dummies, you see. But they were --- some-thing you just put the shell in, and pull the --- and then it will ... that was the idea of the thing. ... motor battery they called it. Oh, I was just there six months. And then when the war was over, you know, the ones that come in late they were going to send our company, that was the 17th ... motor battery, they were going to send it to Siberia ---

PAULINE: Oh dear.

JOHN: --- for some reason, that was Russia's then. But that didn't come to pass, so we --
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PAULINE: Probably didn't bother you too much.

JOHN: So we was discharged after that. But there was a lot discharged before we got, my outfit got out, lots of them. Yeah. 13th ... motor battery, that was my outfit.

PAULINE: Did you ever go on any cattle drives? Or how did you market your cattle when you had ---

JOHN: Cattle drives?

PAULINE: Yeah.

JOHN: No, no, no.

PAULINE: When you had your ranch, how did you market your cattle?

JOHN: Just sold it right there. Then they took them from there. PAULINE: Did they, were they still then driven by foot, or did they have trucks then?

JOHN: Trucks, yeah.

PAULINE: They had trucks.

JOHN: Trucks, from my ranch, yeah.

PAULINE: Well you've seen a lot of changes then in this country.

JOHN: Oh yeah, I've seen a lot of changes in the roads, you know. The roads more so than anything else, you know. This was just --- there is a highway there now. You know at Diamond, and all at Ontario, and Vale, and down, that was just a cow trail. But now there is highways all over. Oh, that's all changed, that's all changed. Changes, I should say so. Yeah.

PAULINE: Well can you think of anything else that we haven't talked about that we should?

JOHN: No. As I told Marcus, I don't know nothing to tell her.

PAULINE: Oh, but you have, yeah. Well I think Marcus probably told you about this project.

JOHN: Of course if Marcus had been here, maybe he'd have thought about things that I've forgot, you know. Then he could jog my memory, you know, but he not here.

PAULINE: Well I sure appreciate you taking time to ---

JOHN: Huh?

PAULINE: I sure appreciate your talking to me.

JOHN: Yeah.

PAULINE: It's really interesting. I'm learning a lot about Harney County by talking to people this way.

JOHN: Yeah, well I don't know. I think that's all I know.

(END OF TAPE)

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