

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #245 - Side A

Subject: Charles Chapman

Place: Chapman Home - Ontario, Oregon

Date: 1978

Interviewer: Marcus Haines

Note: Charlie Chapman was born in Rawlins, Wyoming, January 20, 1898. He came to Ontario when he was a child, and later worked at the Alvord Ranch in Harney County when he was 14 years old. He left Harney County in May 1931, and moved to Riverside, and later to Ontario. He was engaged in ranching. He died in 1979.

MARCUS HAINES: Tim, I'll do some talking.

TIM ?: Hey, I want to do some talking.

MARCUS: You're going to do some talking too, huh? Well, let's see if we're recording, yeah. It's recording here now. Now Charlie, we're going to talk a little bit about --- about riatas. You used riatas long before you ever saw a sea grass, didn't you?

CHARLIE CHAPMAN: Oh yes, a long time.

MARCUS: Did you ever make a rope?

CHARLIE: No. Always ---

MARCUS: You just used 'em and let somebody else make 'em.

CHARLIE: Yeah, but it's pretty hard to make it work, making a good riata.

MARCUS: Yeah, that's a, that's a trade of its own, isn't it?

CHARLIE: Yes, it is.

MARCUS: You bet.

CHARLIE: If you don't pull it right, it's too loose, they're no good.

MARCUS: What is the longest rope, the biggest rope that you ever used?

CHARLIE: Oh, pretty good-sized.

MARCUS: Well a pretty good-sized riata is what, 60, 55 or 60 feet to about --- is about what they used, wasn't it, normally?

CHARLIE: Oh, yes it was.

MARCUS: But a ---

CHARLIE: At least 60 and 70, 75 feet.

MARCUS: Yeah. You could use them; you used rope 75 feet long.

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: And you used a heavy rope. You made a, you lass a horse and hold him, and ---

CHARLIE: You bet.

MARCUS: Who was the best roper you ever saw, you think?

CHARLIE: Juan Redon.

MARCUS: Well who was Juan Redon now?

CHARLIE: Well he was a Spaniard. He used to be down around the Wildhorse.

MARCUS: Well was he in here with Devine?

CHARLIE: Yes, yes.

MARCUS: Probably come in here --- he was Mexican?

CHARLIE: Devine come in with, he come in with Devine.

MARCUS: Yeah. And was he a Spaniard, or was he a Mexican, do you think?

CHARLIE: He was a Spaniard.

MARCUS: Yeah. Well was he the --- he was the buckaroo boss down there for a long time too, wasn't he?

CHARLIE: Oh yeah, a long time.

MARCUS: Yeah. I think you told me about him roping the elk that they crated and sent from the Alvord down to San Francisco, wasn't it?

CHARLIE: Yeah, they crated them. They didn't have these closed in trucks at that time like they got now. Put each one in a crate. Then they put them on the freight wagons with teams. It took quite a while to take 'em down there. They had to water them, and feed 'em, and do the best they could with them till they got 'em there.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

CHARLIE: And in Winnemucca crowds, of course, rushed out to see them, and had to pet 'em and one ... and one of them elk fell over dead right there.

MARCUS: They scared him to death, didn't they?

CHARLIE: Yes.

MARCUS: How did they get 'em in that crate though? Now that's where Juan Redon came in, wasn't it?

CHARLIE: You betcha. Roped 'em and drug 'em right in, just like you would a cow.

MARCUS: Well he --- I think you told me about --- that he got in the corral with these elk by himself. He wouldn't let anybody else; didn't he do it all alone?

CHARLIE: Uh huh.

MARCUS: And a, well would he, would he throw 'em down? Would you, would he throw 'em and then you would have to tie 'em and then drag 'em into these crates, or how did you get 'em in there?

CHARLIE: Run this riata through the back of the crate.

MARCUS: Just pulled them in like you would something into a trap you made?

CHARLIE: Yes.

MARCUS: Uh huh. But a --- well you used a, you never tied a rope hard and fast, did you, like they did in Texas and that ---

CHARLIE: No.

MARCUS: --- that was the purpose of --- Well you used single-rigged saddles all of the time too, didn't you?

CHARLIE: Yeah. Rawhide ropes for the riata, and you take their turns, you let up slack, let 'em go. Don't break things.

MARCUS: Yeah, that's the purpose of, that's one reason you use a long rope. You use the rope on your saddle horn as, to a, to keep from pulling your saddle off, or to get your horse in shape, or breaking something's leg out there. And maybe you'd use, you would have 50 feet of rope in your hand when you catch something. And by the time you got everything settled you would be right down to the end of it, because you were letting it run on your saddle horn.

CHARLIE: You bet. You betcha.

MARCUS: You didn't use rubber on your saddle horn ---

CHARLIE: No! (Laughter)

MARCUS: --- like nowadays, you ---

CHARLIE: No. You would be in trouble if you did that.

MARCUS: Yeah. Of course in those days ---

CHARLIE: See that big knot?

MARCUS: Yeah.

CHARLIE: Well that's from a --- coiling a rawhide riata.

MARCUS: You got it around your thumb instead of the horn, huh?

CHARLIE: No, it's from coiling it up.

MARCUS: Oh, it's from coiling it up. Just the wear on it there.

CHARLIE: Yeah. See, coming right through here.

MARCUS: Yeah, yeah.

CHARLIE: Well that's ---

MARCUS: Well I'll be darned. I never saw that before.

CHARLIE: Well it's still right there.

MARCUS: Well it sure is.

CHARLIE: That's what caused it.

MARCUS: By golly it's hard too, just like a joint isn't it?

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: Well you used to rope lots of horses, didn't you?

CHARLIE: You bet, right outside.

MARCUS: Yeah, right outside. I think a fellow told me about seeing you rope a horse out there at Star Mountain not too awful long ago with --- and you got him tied up to a fence, and after you got off you had to cinch up your saddle, was that right?

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: You tied him up to a tree and waited for him to get there, did you?

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: He was supposed to be helping you, and you caught the horse and tied him up to the tree, and then got off, and you was cinching up the saddle when he got there. (Laughter) If he had been tied hard and fast, with some of these little short ropes, you would have lost your saddle.

CHARLIE: Oh, yes, I would have lost my saddle.

MARCUS: You bet. But in branding outside like you used to do when you, with the

wagons, you didn't have something up in the corner someplace where you could put it on a sheep hook if you had to.

CHARLIE: No.

MARCUS: You had to, had to have a long rope to catch something; you made long shot in those days.

CHARLIE: You would be out of luck if you didn't have.

MARCUS: Yeah. Well you buckarood down there for Clerf. You were just a kid when you come to the Alvord, weren't you Charlie?

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: How old were you?

CHARLIE: Oh, time I arrived, about 18 or 19.

MARCUS: Oh, you were, you weren't that old.

CHARLIE: I'm not, no ---

MARCUS: No.

CHARLIE: No. No I wasn't.

MARCUS: You weren't that when you left there, damn it. (Laughter)

CHARLIE: I went down there in about 1914, I think.

MARCUS: Yeah. See you were born in '98, weren't you?

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: Yeah. You were about 16 years old when you went down there and went to work. Well you had won the steer roping contest here in Ontario at the Fair before you went down there, hadn't you?

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: Won a saddle and ---

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: You used a riata for that?

CHARLIE: No.

MARCUS: You didn't use a riata when you, when you were roping the steer here in the contest?

CHARLIE: No. Nope. When you're roping in a contest, you got to --- every second counts, you're running against time. You just can't use too long a rope, you're too far from it, it takes you too long to get there.

MARCUS: Uh huh. So you use the shorter rope.

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: Well did you use the sea grass then, or did you, was you using the short rawhide?

CHARLIE: No. I was using the sea grass. You'd break a rawhide rope in two when you get to busting big steers.

MARCUS: Oh, uh huh.

CHARLIE: But a, you can catch a big horse or steers, or anything outside if you got a long riata, let 'er run on the form. I've seen it; well it'll cut a fellow's fingers off. I've seen 'em.

MARCUS: Well yeah, I've seen the smoke fly out of 'em too.

CHARLIE: Out of there. Smoke will fly out of there just like they was branding the cows.

MARCUS: Yeah, branding the cows, like you've got a fire in the saddle horn.

CHARLIE: Want to keep your fingers out of there.

MARCUS: Yeah, you bet you want to keep your fingers out of there. Well I think you told me one time about seeing a riata made out of an elk hide.

CHARLIE: I did.

MARCUS: Did you tell me that?

CHARLIE: Yes.

MARCUS: And the thing would just stretch, stretch, stretch, until it ---

CHARLIE: Never would quit.

MARCUS: Never would. No, never would ---

CHARLIE: When you'd stretch, stretch until it gets loose. The braiding gets loose ---

MARCUS: Then you don't have anything; they're just like a dishrag then, aren't they?

CHARLIE: Yeah, it's no good.

MARCUS: That's one of the purposes of braiding the rope good and tight, wasn't it? The rawhide ropes, then they stayed, stayed braided tight, and then they always, then they would stay stiff, they wouldn't ---

CHARLIE: Old Buck Miller, he can braid a good rope.

MARCUS: Yeah, there's a, there isn't very many people left around anymore who can make a rope.

CHARLIE: Hell no, they don't even know how to. It's quite a job, you got to cut them strings and flesh it. Take the hair off of it. Damn sight more work to it, but the time you get it made, you'll know you made something.

MARCUS: Yeah, you bet. But a --- a fellow up at Diamond, or he lived at Burns, Dwight Hammond, they come up here from California and bought out Walt Cooley. You know who I'm talking about?

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: He retired and then the son is running the ranch. But that's his hobby, is making and working rawhide. And he got him a special motor, geared way down, to pull

those strings, to flesh and that sort of thing.

CHARLIE: Oh yeah?

MARCUS: Yeah. I borrowed it from him for an exhibit a year ago last fall. Yeah, a year ago last fall for the Fair. I think it made nineteen turns a minute, but my gosh, it would pull a car across the street. Just a quarter horse motor, but he could dally on that, you see, and pull these, pull these strings through the, through the gates. He would cut them to size and that, he fleshed them. But he was an old man; he had lost the strength in his hands, and that ---

CHAPMAN: (Talking to child) Now you're going to fall.

MARCUS: That's why he was using this motor. He made a lot of stuff. But a ---

CHARLIE: Go tell your Grandma she wants you. Run on. Go tell her, go tell her. (Laughter) Go on, that's the stuff. Go tell her she wants you. She'll paddle your pants if you get out of there. Go on.

MARCUS: He's a pretty busy boy. He's going to be all right.

CHARLIE: Go tell her she wants you.

MARCUS: Well if I remember right, you want an old poor cow to make a good rawhide rope out of, didn't you?

CHARLIE: Oh, yeah.

MARCUS: Because a beef, beef ---

CHARLIE: Beef cow is no good.

MARCUS: --- beef cow is no good.

CHARLIE: No.

MARCUS: There's too much fat in the hide, and it got rotten or what?

CHARLIE: Yeah, too much glue in it.

MARCUS: Was that what it was?

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: I remember they always, an old cow they got on the lift and ---

CHARLIE: You wanted an old poor cow.

MARCUS: Yeah, died from poverty. Why everybody wanted the hide when we were young fellows, to make ropes.

CHARLIE: And they wanted a solid colored hide.

MARCUS: Oh?

CHARLIE: If you get a spotted cow, hell you got a weak spot in that rope.

MARCUS: Oh, there's a difference in the hide where there is the difference in the color, huh?

CHARLIE: Oh, yes. You got it spotted; you'll have a weak spot there.

MARCUS: I didn't know that.

CHARLIE: Yeah, it will.

MARCUS: Uh huh. What, you used to have to; you bought your ropes, or traded them, or what? You didn't buy that from Bob Hewitt, he just made it and gave it to you; I remember that.

CHARLIE: Yeah, a present.

MARCUS: But what would you, what did you pay for a good rawhide when you were buckarooing, do you recall? And --- but they would last you quite a while, wouldn't they?

CHARLIE: Yeah, but then you couldn't go down to the store and buy one.

MARCUS: No, no you couldn't. I mean you'd hire, get somebody to make you a rope.

CHARLIE: Yes. As a rule some friend made it for you.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

CHARLIE: As a rule. Oh, sometimes you might have to give him a quart of whiskey.

MARCUS: Yeah, help him drink it too. (Laughter)

CHARLIE: Help him drink it. (Laughter)

MARCUS: Fred Osborn was a pretty good rope maker. I remember ---

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: --- he did a lot of rawhide work, and ---

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: --- and made the mecate (Note: Mecate, a horsehair rope) or the hackamores

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: --- and romals and bridle reins and headstalls. He done a pretty darn good job of it. I've got a rope at home he made for me. Gosh, I've had it for 25 years, I guess. Well you put a honda in it for me here, you remember?

CHARLIE: I might be able to find it, I don't know for sure, but I should have a bosal that he made me.

MARCUS: Yeah, you probably have. The kids, he made the kids some bosals and they took them with 'em, they're not around home anymore.

CHARLIE: But talk about my bosals, these young fellows wouldn't know what the hell you was talking about if you were talking to them about a bosal.

MARCUS: No, I'm sure they wouldn't.

CHARLIE: They wouldn't know what you meant.

MARCUS: No. These war bridles you use, you couldn't use one anyway. (Laughter)

CHARLIE: But a, these young fellows, sometimes I think these older fellows think they are nuts, but you can't blame 'em.

MARCUS: No, no you can't. I know sometimes they thought they were nuts too, when they look back at the things they did. I remember you telling about jumping on behind somebody one time on a cranky horse. You had on long shank spurs, ended up both of you got bucked off in a pile.

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: You remember that. You look back now; you wonder why you did a stunt like that, huh?

CHARLIE: I thought I'd just give that horse a good start, then I'd just step off. But hell, I never had time.

MARCUS: (Laughter) He give you a start all right, huh?

CHARLIE: Sometimes a horse would get to bucking with you and you would want to get a hold of the horn, but you don't know which one to get a hold of, there was three rows of them there! (Laughter)

MARCUS: They'd go by too fast! Yeah. Well by gosh; it was always a pleasure to see a good roper at work, you know, like you used to have here years ago. You'd never see cattle with broken legs, and horns yanked off, and all that sort of thing. They knew how to handle one after they caught them. If they didn't know, the buckaroo boss saw to it that they did, or they didn't stick around.

CHARLIE: You betcha.

MARCUS: You bet. They didn't put on the turns or rubber corners take off looking in the other direction, they ---

CHARLIE: Say, would you give me an ashtray, please?

MARCUS: Well it took quite a while to make a rope, didn't it?

CHARLIE: Yeah, you bet it did.

MARCUS: A rawhide rope.

CHARLIE: A long time ago.

MARCUS: Yeah. You had to, well you had to soak the hide to begin with, and then cut the strings, is that the way they worked it?

CHARLIE: Yes. And then they had to stretch them strings out and take the hair all off and flesh them. But damn, it was a lot of work.

MARCUS: Yeah. And each string was, you would have four strings, and I suppose to make a 50-foot rope, would they have to be 60 or 75 feet long, wouldn't they?

CHARLIE: Yes, you betcha. A lot of that braids up, you lose it.

MARCUS: Yeah. It would take quite a cowhide to make a 65 or 70 foot rope, if you got it all out of one hide, wouldn't it?

CHARLIE: You bet it would.

MARCUS: Yeah.

CHARLIE: You don't want a black hide.

MARCUS: You didn't want a black hide?

CHARLIE: No, huh uh.

MARCUS: Oh. What kind did you prefer?

CHARLIE: Oh, just red ones.

MARCUS: Just a Durham?

CHARLIE: A Durham, yeah.

MARCUS: Well you wouldn't of wanted a Hereford hide then?

CHARLIE: No, no.

MARCUS: Where you would have the two colors on that.

CHARLIE: No.

MARCUS: Well the black hide then, it had too much glue in it, like the ---

CHARLIE: Well it'd have no life in it.

MARCUS: It had no life in it?

CHARLIE: No. Throw the culo (sp.?) (Note: The phonetic spelling for a Mexican word.) shot, hell, it'll just hit him and that's all.

MARCUS: Oh, uh huh.

CHARLIE: It won't swing on.

MARCUS: Oh, it won't follow up there?

CHARLIE: Huh uh.

MARCUS: I was telling somebody the other day about you roping calves, the little old calves a branding. You'd use 30 feet of loop and hit him along side of the --- you never shot around the neck, you'd hit him along side and let him go through the loop and start following along, gathering up the loop, and when things come tight, you had him around the neck. I seen you do it hundreds of times.

CHARLIE: Yep.

MARCUS: And that's where the good rope came in, wasn't it? It had the life and would go where you wanted it to go.

CHARLIE: Roping calves outside a long time ago, you get to chasing them calves too much and they get wild. You just see one sauntering along side the road there, you just hit him behind the ears with the end of your loop and the front of it, a good riata will just go right on to him, and you give it a jerk.

MARCUS: Yeah. That's what I told them. You never tried to put 'em around their head. The big loop that you used, you probably never touched them anyway. But just hit long side of the head and they stepped through the loop and it was pulled, then they were

pulling it with their --- down here on their chest and they went away and it'll come up right around their necks.

CHARLIE: Yep.

MARCUS: They hardly ever got a front foot through it. Same way with heeling, that rope stood up there for you.

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: Yeah. Yeah, and you could ---

CHARLIE: Pulling the calf along there, you could just throw your riata right out there and hit him right behind the front legs, well it will ... in the middle, that loop would just swing right on under that.

MARCUS: Uh huh. Well then your culo shots, when they were going away from you, and kind of turning, you went over the hip and he stepped through the rope, wasn't that kind of the way you shot the culo?

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: You didn't, you threw clear over him, but it hit on the side that he was going away from you on ---

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: --- and he would go through it.

CHARLIE: Going away.

MARCUS: Yeah, yeah. That was your culo shot. But that rope would swing under, it just didn't die right there.

CHARLIE: But the, long time ago it was the fellow leading the calf for you that got that one. If he knew his business, he'd just keep a going ---

MARCUS: Uh huh.

CHARLIE: --- but now I see 'em just getting out there and lets him stop. Hell, you can't catch a calf that way. Keep a going with him and you might catch him.

MARCUS: Yeah. But you never, you never did ride into a rodero (sp.?) (the whole group of cattle and horses) and catch a calf either, did you? You always did your roping from the outside.

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: You never did go in.

CHARLIE: Hell, you'd just scatter the cattle and make the boys a holding them just a lot of work.

MARCUS: Yeah.

CHARLIE: That's all.

MARCUS: Yeah. You just fiddle around the edge. I never saw you throw your rope that your horse wasn't trotting or galloping either.

CHARLIE: Huh?

MARCUS: I never saw you throw your rope with your horse walking.

CHARLIE: No.

MARCUS: You always had him at a trot or galloping, didn't you?

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: It might be only three or four steps, but that's the way he went when you threw the rope.

CHARLIE: Well there used to being an old Spaniard by the name of Miranda, he lived --- he was a damn good old roper too.

MARCUS: That's Miranda Lane down there was named after him, I bet, there between Mann Lake and Alvord?

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARCUS: Yeah.

CHARLIE: He run his cattle in "Catalow Walley", he used to call it.

MARCUS: Catlow Valley, yeah. Yeah, I've heard of him all right. By gosh, those, a lot of those Mexicans was real good, real good ropers, good horseman. That was the thing of it; somebody knew what to do with his horse ---

CHARLIE: You bet.

MARCUS: --- was about 75 percent of the roping, you know. Did you ever, you never knew old Fred Brown at the "P" Ranch, did you? Did you ever rope with him? He was supposed to be a --- I didn't think you did, he was kind of out of your area, and then in a different time too. Well let's see what we got here. That ought to make a pretty good tape.

-vt-

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Subject: Charlie Chapman interview by Marcus Haines #245-A

Place: Marcus Haines Home - Burns, Oregon

Date: July 19, 1987

Interviewer: Virginia Tabor

No Tape Available

Note: Virginia Tabor at Marcus Haines' home in Burns, Oregon, July 19, 1987. Talking to Marcus about the interview he did with Charlie Chapman in 1978.

VIRGINIA TABOR: ... on July 19, 1987. I just got through transcribing a tape that Marcus made of Charlie Chapman, an interview that he did in 1978, and he was talking about riatas, and how to make them and so forth. And there were some terms that I didn't really know anything about, and I thought maybe it would be interesting if Marcus would tell how they were used with roping, and in regard to roping. So Marcus, I might also say that some of these terms I got out of the book, the Oregon Desert by Jackman and Long. Now I will just let Marcus kind of talk about some of the things, the terms, and how the ropes were used.

MARCUS HAINES: Well the first one you have here, Virginia, is mecate. And a mecate was a rope that you tied around your horse's neck, and down through the curb strap on the bridle, and came back up and tied onto your saddle.

VIRGINIA: I see.

MARCUS: And they were about, oh about 15 to maybe 20 feet long, and you used to use them to tie your horse up with at the fence.

VIRGINIA: Oh, I see, at the rails and so forth.

MARCUS: Yeah. And they used to make them; I've helped make them, out of horsehair -
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VIRGINIA: Oh, did you?

MARCUS: --- and that was a winter job for a buckaroo to make that sort of thing. And he had a spinner and he'd feed it, horsehair into it, and you'd spin it, and it would just be a string of --- it would be a string wound up with hair ---

VIRGINIA: So it wasn't braided, it was twisted?

MARCUS: No, it was twisted.

VIRGINIA: I see.

MARCUS: And then you would use sorrel hair, you would use white hair, and then different colors, or strands, and then put them together, and then you had your mecate. And then you would have, oh four or five different colored strands of hair, and it was horsehair. Then they used the tail sometimes for that too. And that's the --- it was called the mecate when they got through with it.

VIRGINIA: And they just used it to tie the horses up?

MARCUS: Yes.

VIRGINIA: Oh, okay.

MARCUS: And the horse, they weren't too strong; they were kind of careful what they --- what they tied up with it. And then they used it then when they used --- when they used a hackamore on the horse they would, they would work this around and tie into the bottom of the hackamore, and make a loop rein so it was tied onto the saddle ---

VIRGINIA: I see.

MARCUS: --- and that was another purpose for a hackamore, and a little cotton rope was made for the same use.

VIRGINIA: Uh huh.

MARCUS: And then when, like on this mecate now, we're talking about, this fellow would either tie this on his saddle so he, the end of it that wasn't used to make the reins. Now this is on a young horse that might buck him off. And he would put this mecate down in the front of his pants, what was left of it, then if he got bucked off, if he was lucky enough, he'd grab the end of that and keep from losing his horse.

VIRGINIA: So he wouldn't lose his horse too.

MARCUS: Yeah, that's right.

VIRGINIA: But if he wasn't able to grab the horse, it wasn't going to drag him along either.

MARCUS: No. No, it would just pull out of his, out of his pant, around the waist of his pants. It was poked down there in a little coil, and so if he didn't grab that why somebody had to run his horse down, or else he walked home.

VIRGINIA: Well, that's interesting.

MARCUS: That's what that amounted to. And then the romal, here, was on the end of the bridle rein. You had your bridle rein, they was a loop down to your bridle bit, and came back up, and then where they folded up in front of you here, why that's where the

romal, that was a heavy --- it was made out of rawhide, most all of it. And back in those days, and then later on they just took a heavy piece of leather and riveted it together, and it would be three and a half feet long, or such a matter, with a little flap in the end of it. And you'd use that to whip your horse, or if the cow wasn't going or something, you'd reach down and whack them with the romal. It was just a whip actually, on the end of your bridle reins, is what a romal was.

VIRGINIA: Oh, uh huh.

MARCUS: And then we already talked about bridle reins, there was different kinds. The buckaroos would braid, there was small, they would take the real small strings, their rawhide strings, and braid them, and then they would make bridle reins and put ornaments on them and all of that. And then others was just a piece of leather that was different types. Sometimes they used to have round, round bridle reins, and they were screwed into a thing, down into the bridle reins when you set down, really set down on your horse. That would pull out and leave you setting up there without anything.

VIRGINIA: Oh.

MARCUS: That could happen. So they didn't use them very much.

VIRGINIA: I bet not.

MARCUS: And then of course, the headstall here was the thing that held, the bit was fastened on that, went into the horse's mouth and then come up, and there were different types. One of them was the, was the, it went up over and back over both ears, and there was a little, there was a little brow band around here. And then what we called the throat latch come down over the top and through the end of this band, and then went down and you buckled that up under a horse's neck and that would keep him from pulling the bridle off. He couldn't get it off.

VIRGINIA: Yeah.

MARCUS: And then there was another type; there was just a split-ear that was just a piece of leather that went up. There were bridles of different types, of course, and there was a place left there for the ear to go through. That kept the bridle from, the headstall from sliding down the horse's neck.

VIRGINIA: Oh, uh huh.

MARCUS: That was that. And the honda, that was a loop in the end of your riata, or sea grass rope, or whatever it was. Now with a riata, the rawhide braided rope they braided, they made, they made the honda out of rawhide, and there was a little different methods of making them, but that's what the rope was run through. And then with the sea grass, you used to use a little, they would make a tie in the end of it, a knot in the end of it, an eye, you might call it, and then there was a brass honda that fit inside of that thing there --

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VIRGINIA: Uh huh.

MARCUS: --- and let the rope run real easy. These ropes, they would cut down in this honda that didn't have this eye in it there, and sometimes wouldn't let your rope close up as quickly as ---

VIRGINIA: Oh, when you were roping a calf?

MARCUS: Yes, and that was the purpose of this brass ring.

VIRGINIA: Oh, I see.

MARCUS: Yes, yes.

VIRGINIA: I know you said in this interview with him, that he had made you a honda once for your rope.

MARCUS: Yes, yes that's right, he did.

VIRGINIA: Now you talked about something ---

MARCUS: Would you like, would you like to turn that off for a second.

VIRGINIA: Yeah.

(Marcus went to get some of his ropes, bridles, etc.)

MARCUS: ... and you get him on and that rope was still going there, and that knot come through there, and it would get you.

VIRGINIA: Yeah.

MARCUS: So this would pull right through your hands, wouldn't it?

VIRGINIA: Yeah, right.

MARCUS: So this is what we are talking about there. And here is a bridle that belonged to Jinks Harris, and when Jinks died, Ethel gave it to me. Now here is the headstall.

VIRGINIA: Uh huh.

MARCUS: And here, see, this is all handmade here.

VIRGINIA: Oh, my goodness.

MARCUS: And little fancy buttons.

VIRGINIA: Is that rawhide too?

MARCUS: Yeah, this is rawhide. And, I don't think, I'm sure Jinks didn't make this, but I don't know who did. Now this one here is made here to go over, see the horse's ear went through that, or you could put it through this side. See you could put it through both sides for that matter, if you wanted to. As a rule, you just had one.

VIRGINIA: Yeah.

MARCUS: And this was the adjustment.

VIRGINIA: Uh huh.

MARCUS: For different size horse's heads. And then this is the, this is what you call the

curb strap. Now they rarely use a chain, but this kept the horse, you set down on the horse and you pull them hard here, and this bit would turn upside down in his mouth if this wasn't on.

VIRGINIA: Oh.

MARCUS: And that prevented that from happening. And they had different types of bits; some of them were quite long, called spade bits. This one is called a grazer.

VIRGINIA: Uh huh.

MARCUS: And then the bosal, which we will talk about here pretty quick, was just a small hackamore that you put on your horse before you put this on, and his nose would be right around in here. And the purpose of that was to let it keep a horse from getting his mouth too wide open.

VIRGINIA: Uh huh.

MARCUS: Keep him, it up under his chin here, and he couldn't open his mouth too wide, and this would keep the bit from turning over in the event that he did. But the old Spanish bits, they were long and they would have to get their mouth pretty well open before this bit could turn over.

VIRGINIA: Uh huh.

MARCUS: And that would prevent that. And then here, these were what they call the bridle reins. They all have the reins on them here. And here, this is a round bridle reins here.

VIRGINIA: Now how was that made?

MARCUS: Huh?

VIRGINIA: How was that made?

MARCUS: That was just, that was just cut out of leather.

VIRGINIA: Yeah.

MARCUS: And here's where they fasten this screw into this thing right here. And after you have used them a little bit, they pull out of there.

VIRGINIA: Oh yeah, I see how that ---

MARCUS: See, he's got a rivet down through here, but it'll ---

VIRGINIA: It still could ---

MARCUS: Yeah, it does, and that covered that up there.

VIRGINIA: These little round things that look like beads; those are rawhide too, aren't they?

MARCUS: Uh huh. Yes.

VIRGINIA: Boy I can see, in this interview, where they --- where Charlie talked about when you got through making a riata, you knew that you had done something. I can see what he means. (Laughter) Because that had to be, besides just getting it ready to the point ---

MARCUS: You bet.

VIRGINIA: --- that you could braid it, and getting it braided that tightly, and that perfectly round, would be really a job. It would take a lot of skill, I would think.

MARCUS: Now this is what I was talking about, the romal.

VIRGINIA: Uh huh. Oh, I see. Uh huh.

MARCUS: And this one happens to be braided, and is a lighter one. Most of them like heavier romal, but the horse, that's about, oh four feet away.

VIRGINIA: That's just a switch actually.

MARCUS: This thing popped when you hit, that's the purpose of that. But you wrapped that around an old horse a time or two he woke up and kind of went to work for you.

(Laughter) So at least you'll know what we're talking about here.

VIRGINIA: Right. I'm glad you showed me those.

MARCUS: Now let's see, we got ---

VIRGINIA: Well you talked about sea grass, and you talked about that today too. What was that, a sea grass rope?

MARCUS: Well it, a sea grass rope was a, was just a, it was made I guess out of sea grass!

VIRGINIA: Well that was what I wondered, if it was a weed or something that was around ---

MARCUS: Yeah, yeah, that's right.

VIRGINIA: --- that was called sea grass. But I don't know what it looks like.

MARCUS: Uh huh. Yeah, that's right, and well I have one of them out here in the shed if you want to see it.

VIRGINIA: So it must have been a real tough, stringy weed. Is that what it was?

MARCUS: Well it was, they were a three-strand rope. They were just spun together like all ropes are made.

VIRGINIA: Uh huh.

MARCUS: And they was a harder twisted rope than what the little soft rope that you would use around if you ever --- they had different, there would be strands, three strands, but they would be pulled tighter and stiffer rope, than ---

VIRGINIA: Uh huh.

MARCUS: Nowadays they are using different materials too, nylon, and make a real strong rope that is stronger than the sea grass---

VIRGINIA: Yeah.

MARCUS: --- and that. But that's what the sea grass was, and these nylon ropes that just came in fashion in the last, oh 20 years, such a matter, I guess. And then there's been other different kinds that gets introduced into the country once in a while.

VIRGINIA: Well are the nylon ropes good?

MARCUS: Well yeah, they like 'em.

VIRGINIA: Or are they too stretchy?

MARCUS: They use them more now than ---

VIRGINIA: They like 'em.

MARCUS: --- you don't see many rawhide ropes any more.

VIRGINIA: Well, I don't imagine. People wouldn't have the time or even the knowledge to make a rawhide rope.

MARCUS: No, they don't have the time or they got the ambition for that matter for making those things.

VIRGINIA: Yeah, right. That would be a real job.

MARCUS: Yes.

VIRGINIA: But it is something that would last probably forever too, wouldn't it?

MARCUS: Yeah. These ropes here, of course if a fellow was out here buckarooing and that was his business, he had to furnish his ropes, and he might have two or three ropes. If he was branding calves, he would like a little lighter rope ---

VIRGINIA: Yeah, I suppose.

MARCUS: --- and then if he was branding horses or grown cattle he had a heavier rope that he used that for, so he wouldn't be breaking it and that.

VIRGINIA: Yeah.

MARCUS: Those ropes are a little dangerous too when they break. They generally break

right around where the honda pulls out around the neck, and they give quite a little bit, and boy they just come back like a ---

VIRGINIA: Snap.

MARCUS: --- wrap right around somebody's head!

VIRGINIA: Right. It could almost kill the person.

MARCUS: Oh yeah.

VIRGINIA: Yeah.

MARCUS: I've seen fellows with their face all skinned up. Looked like they had been in a fight, and they had been hit by the end of the rope breaking, and come back, a lot of them.

VIRGINIA: Well the only kind of roping, of course I've ever watched really, has been at the rodeos and ---

MARCUS: Yes.

VIRGINIA: --- and you were talking in this also with Charlie about a good roper. You know that Charlie was a good roper evidently ---

MARCUS: Yes. An outstanding roper.

VIRGINIA: --- and that he let the rope work for him, and that sort of thing.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

VIRGINIA: That wouldn't be the kind of roping you would see in a rodeo?

MARCUS: No, no. No, it isn't.

VIRGINIA: Yeah. That's what I gathered ---

MARCUS: Yeah.

VIRGINIA: --- from your talk. And I was wondering too on the, in a rodeo of course they are working against the time clock, and the way he did it where he just sort of let the calf

walk into the rope and pull itself tight ---

MARCUS: Yeah, he ---

VIRGINIA: --- it would waste too much time. I suppose waste too much time, I suppose, in a rodeo.

MARCUS: --- he'd just throw the rope out and he hit that calf, he roped a calf different than anybody else. He'd have a, he made quite a little loop, and he used 60 or 70 feet of rope all of the time.

VIRGINIA: Uh huh.

MARCUS: He would make bigger coils than this and just have to --- where he could hold them in his hand. And when he hit the calf on the side, and just so that end of that rope hit him on the neck here, and the rest of it would go under him, you see, the bottom of it. And he would walk through that and kind of follow through and wind his rope up, and he would have that calf right around the neck.

VIRGINIA: Huh. Sounds like it was a real art.

MARCUS: Oh it is, you bet, to see a good roper. They use, these fellows now, they use rubber on the saddle horn so they can take two or three turns and everything stops so --- the old buckaroos would never think of such a thing as that. They would rope with this rope here, and they would catch a horse, or catch something big, and they would put on a turn or two and let it run on this. Around this horn, just keep it, finally slow things down and come to a stop, you see.

VIRGINIA: Uh huh.

MARCUS: Had they just put the thing on, and with no give there, you would snap that rope into that.

VIRGINIA: Right.

MARCUS: But of course, they weren't working against time for that. And these fellows in the rodeo, they use shorter ropes and different ropes. It's a different ball game altogether.

VIRGINIA: Two different purposes, really.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

VIRGINIA: A, there were a couple of things --- I think I'll just turn this off.

... (Finding the part of the transcript in question.)

MARCUS: ... hide they made here, they made a rope out of, they never used a black hide

VIRGINIA: Yeah.

MARCUS: --- and a ---

VIRGINIA: And I couldn't catch quite what kind of a ---

MARCUS: They liked to, they liked an old poor Hereford cow.

VIRGINIA: Oh, a Hereford? Now I was thinking when you were saying ---

MARCUS: Anything but black. The Durham ... I think that most times they liked a two color hide.

VIRGINIA: Yeah. Well he said here, you said something about you wouldn't have wanted a Hereford hide then?

MARCUS: Let's see what he says here.

VIRGINIA: Because it would be weak, have weak spots in it. So I couldn't tell, something about a red cow --- in here somewhere.

MARCUS: Oh, just red ones, that's what he is talking about.

VIRGINIA: Yeah.

MARCUS: (Reading from transcript) "Nor a black hide. What kind of a hide did you prefer?" "Oh, just a red one, just a red." Well that would be, what I'm trying to say here

probably was ---

... (Pause to read the transcript.)

VIRGINIA: Maybe we'll need to find that spot on the tape.

MARCUS: Durham. Durham is what I'm trying ---

VIRGINIA: A Durham, okay.

MARCUS: Yeah.

VIRGINIA: I thought it was a kind of a cow, but I just couldn't quite ---

MARCUS: Yeah, a Durham, that's a red cow.

VIRGINIA: --- I couldn't quite pick it up on the tape.

MARCUS: Yeah. Just a Durham, that's what it would be. A Durham, yeah.

VIRGINIA: Oh, okay.

MARCUS: That's what it would be.

VIRGINIA: Now do you know what he was talking about down there at the bottom?

MARCUS: (Reading from transcript) "The black hide then, it had too much glue in it?" "Well it didn't have no life in it, it had no life in it." No, throw the thing out is what he is saying.

VIRGINIA: Okay.

MARCUS: "Hell, it would just hit him, and that's about all." Yeah, I think that's what he's saying, throw it out.

VIRGINIA: Okay.

MARCUS: Throw the thing out ---

VIRGINIA: On this he was talking about, you were talking about bosals, and he said, you said that someone had made your kids --- and I picked it up as bows and arrows, but I think it was bosals, wasn't it? (Laughter)

MARCUS: (Laughter)

VIRGINIA: I mean that was after I talked to you, I thought. Well that was bosals, I'm sure.

MARCUS: Yeah.

VIRGINIA: It's hard when you don't know for sure what somebody is talking about sometimes.

MARCUS: Sure, you bet.

VIRGINIA: Sometimes it's a little bit hard to pick it up on the tape. That's what I thought that would be. This was probably the easiest tape I ever transcribed. I really enjoyed doing it because it was just these very few things that I couldn't quite figure out.

MARCUS: Yeah, Fred Osborn made this rope for me.

VIRGINIA: Oh, Fred Osborn made it.

MARCUS: Yes, Fred Osborn was a good, a pretty good rope maker.

VIRGINIA: That rope is braided so tight that it almost doesn't look like its been braided, you know. It, it's just as tight and even as it can be.

MARCUS: Uh huh. Now what they would do, they would soak these hides, Virginia, and then they would take a pocketknife, stick it in a log. Have it nice and sharp and then they'd have a stopover here on this side, and they would just keep a pulling that through, and that cut the size of this string. Well there would be a hide, there would be hair left on this, and then they would have to go through and take the hair off of this rope here. And then they would gauge it again, and then they would soak this and have it in strings kind of like they got ready to knit and it was just a, you had to have good strong hands. They had to pull those, braid those things and pull them down, and that kept the size, you see. That's the same size all the way down.

VIRGINIA: Yeah, it is all the way. It is beautiful. Yeah, it really is. Well I think that was

all of the questions I had about that (interview). We might ---

MARCUS: Whether I answered you here or not.

VIRGINIA: Yeah, I think you did.

NOTE: At this point, Marcus was scanning the transcript to see if he had cleared up the questions that I had. vt

MARCUS: Now let's see --- (reading from transcript). Where the hackamore, yeah, this made the mecates out of horsehair, and this was made out of rawhide, the hackamore. Yeah. And the romals and the bridle reins, and headstalls, he done a pretty darn good job of it. I've got a rope at home he made for me.

VIRGINIA: It's that one that we just looked at.

MARCUS: (Reading from transcript) Gosh, I've had it for 25 years, I guess. Well you put a honda in it for me here, you remember. I might be able to find it, I don't know for sure, but I should have a bosal that he made for me here, you remember. I might be able to find it, I don't know for sure. But I should have a bosal that he made for me. See that's ---

VIRGINIA: Uh huh.

MARCUS: (Reading from transcript) Yeah, you probably have. The kids, yeah, he made the kids some bosals and they took them with them when they aren't --- took them with them since they aren't at home anymore. They got married and left.

VIRGINIA: Right. That's what I thought you probably meant.

MARCUS: (Reading from transcript) But talk about bosals, these young fellows ---

VIRGINIA: Oh, here we are, here.

MARCUS: I think I saw that some place here.

VIRGINIA: You were talking about anyway that they wouldn't know how to ---

MARCUS: Yeah, they wouldn't know what they were talking about.

VIRGINIA: Yeah. Well see, I didn't know either. (Laughter) But I've never even pretended to be a cowboy either.

MARCUS: Yeah. Well doesn't that about ---

VIRGINIA: I think that takes care of that.

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