

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #263 - Sides A & B

Subject: Sam Dunn & Larry Dunn

Place: Dunn Dam

Date: March 28, 1972

Interviewer: Marcus Haines

Release Form: No

MARCUS HAINES: Well this is Walt Anderson and Marcus Haines visiting with Sam Dunn up at the Dunn Dam here on the refuge, the old Dunn property here on this --- what is the date, 28th ---

WALT ANDERSON: 28th.

MARCUS: 28th of March 1972. So Sam, why don't you tell us about how this piece of property happened to get into the ownership of your family?

SAM DUNN: Well French told Dad, my granddad about this place. And he sent his surveyor down with him and had it surveyed. And they took the place up there, that was in 1885.

MARCUS: Well now, there is 320 acres in this field?

SAM: Yes, 320, in the two --- place together. There was 160 each.

MARCUS: Each one. And your granddad homesteaded on the east side of the river. We've just been out and looked at his, what's left of his cabin. And then your dad's place was on the, was on the west side here. Is it nearby where we're at now?

SAM: It was, his house was back there on the knoll there, just behind us there a couple hundred yards.

MARCUS: I think I ---

SAM: It never did have anything but a little cabin.

MARCUS: I think I kind of remember where the remains of that is at. It's been quite a while ago.

SAM: Yes, I think ---

MARCUS: But, tell us how you're granddad happened to get up into this country.

SAM: Well he worked for Glenn in Sacramento Valley. This Glenn had a, I think he had one of those old Spanish grants down there.

MARCUS: Well Glenn, now that's Dr. Glenn, that was the partner or the fellow that financed Pete French to come to this country, isn't it?

SAM: Yes, he was. Well afterwards he was French's father-in-law. You see French married his daughter.

MARCUS: Yes, yes.

SAM: And Granddad worked for him. Then they come up to Surprise Valley. And they was living there when Granddad, I don't know how he got connected with French, maybe he come out here to see him. But that was how he happened to get out in this country to start with. That was sometime in the late '70's, I don't know just when. The family though, they stayed in Surprise Valley. Well I think Dad come out here with Granddad along about in 1880, and

worked for French. But the family didn't move out here until 1882. Now I don't know just where they lived until, before they took up this place. They lived around the neighborhood somewhere, I guess. But I, if I've ever knew, I've forgotten it.

MARCUS: Yeah, well, getting a little drift away from here for a minute here, take Johnny Crow place, the Briggs place now. That was, we always called that Grandma Dunn's place. Now what was the story on that?

SAM: Well she, she bought that place herself. I don't know, she must have been a pretty good manager, a little better than Granddad. (Laughter) And she bought that property herself. And she lived there most of the time, and Granddad up here. Well he'd go down there and stay with her part of the time, you know, but---

MARCUS: Yeah, they didn't ---

SAM: A good share of the time he stayed up here.

MARCUS: Yeah, they weren't living together when I can remember them.

SAM: No.

MARCUS: Of course you say your granddad died in 1917.

SAM: We weren't as old as we are now by quite a bit --- quite a lot of difference.

MARCUS: Yeah, quite a little difference. But I do remember him quite well. The way he used to drive the team. Well he used to play for the dances too. He was a violinist.

SAM: Yes.

MARCUS: Yes, soft tunes. And he worked four horses on a wagon. That was probably part of the running gear we found over there on the backside of the cabin. He went in a long run wherever he went, didn't he?

SAM: Oh yes.

MARCUS: As I can remember him.

SAM: See he drove a, one of them Overland Stages. Somewhere he come into Virginia City, or somewhere over in there. That was the end of his line. And then he went back, I've got it in my head it was Placerville, but that seemed like it would be too far. But I know he said that you had to, that he had to change horses ever fifteen miles. He come through them mountains there, bad road I guess. And he said he had to average twelve miles an hour, supposed to.

MARCUS: Well he had to move right along then.

SAM: Well he had to move right along.

MARCUS: Your darn right.

SAM: And he never, he never got over that, you know. He had no time for a big horse, you know.

MARCUS: No.

SAM: No, not a bit. He said, "They're no good, you can't go nowhere with them, and if you want more power," he said, "just put on more horses." (Laughter) That was always his theory. Seemed

to work for him.

MARCUS: By golly he could sure get down the roads though, no mistake about that. And he generally led a horse, or ---

SAM: Yes. He led that old black horse a big end of the time. Just why I never did know.

MARCUS: He used a log chain on him. He had to go whether he wanted to or not.

SAM: I can remember one time he didn't have this chain on him. Granddad and I started to go down to The Narrows. And we got down there where the old big house is, where Mrs. Woodcock used to live, you know.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

SAM: And this old black horse, he sits back. He usually led good. But he sits back and breaks the rope. So Granddad he stops and he puts this old log chain on him right there. He'd set back three or four times on his way to The Narrows, and Granddad said, "If he pulls that --- when they start back," he said, "we'll just hook him up and work him." He'd never been worked of course. We just got out around the point going back and I think Granddad got a few groceries, about ten pounds of flour, and a little bacon, quart of whiskey.

MARCUS: Most important item probably.

SAM: One of the important items. Well he just got around the point anyhow, and the old black horse he sits back. Had his neck

all skinned up too by that time. Well we stopped right there, and Grandpa had a bay horse, stallion that he worked all the time, him and that little gray horse he worked a lot together. So then the harness of this old stallion, I remember we had to tie the old black horses foot up to get the doggone harness on him. (Laughter) Well hooked him all up and got the old stallion tied down, and he led good. I got in the wagon, and Granddad got his black snake and I tell you we come home.

MARCUS: Was that long about the same time he got old Daddy Lynch and the trail wagon and they started to Harney after a load of lumber? That's a good one.

SAM: That was after that. Well he, the old cabin, you know, used to sit down there just along the fence there west of Mud Lake ---

MARCUS: Oh.

SAM: --- the house is now. Graves, he got Granddad to go up to Harney after this lumber for him. He had about eight or ten head of horses on the, these two wagons. The front wagon had a big high box on it, but the back wagon he just had the running gears, you know, standards there to put the lumber in. Well he had part of these horses, they hadn't been worked for I don't know when, and they was pretty snaky. Well he got them all hitched up, and Graves he was standing around there, and Granddad said, "Well get in the wagon." "Well," he said, "what wagon will I get into?" He said, "I don't give a damn, but if you're going with me," he said,

"you'd better get someplace." Graves got back there, and I can see the old fellow yet, he set right over the hind axle and had a hand on each one of them old standards that come up there. Well they took off low and level, and I can just remember the long trail of dust they was leaving going around towards The Narrows on the dirt road. They come back in about three days with a load of lumber, and a long trot. Graves was sitting on that trail wagon, on top of the lumber when they got there.

MARCUS: He was riding in the same wagon, huh?

SAM: He lost old Graves, and the trail wagon on the way up, up here in Sunset. He never looked back, I guess. He always stopped and talked to everybody, you know. Anybody he met, why he'd stop and talk to them whether he knew them or not. He'd always stop and visit. And he stopped and visit somebody up there in Sunset, looked back and his wagon was gone, and Graves with it. So he had to turn around and go back and get the wagon. I remember Graves telling about it. He said he sure give him the devil for not hollering. He said Granddad was as deaf as a post, he couldn't have heard old Graves, you know, if he'd have screamed his head off.

MARCUS: Who was Graves?

SAM: That was old Andy Graves' dad.

MARCUS: Old Andy Graves.

SAM: His dad.

MARCUS: His dad, oh.

SAM: He was deaf too.

MARCUS: Well they got along pretty well then.

SAM: Granddad didn't have much time for Graves, I remember that. When they got home, why they unhooked, just why they didn't take the lumber on over to Graves, I don't know. But we was living at Mud Lake there then, and they unhooked the wagon right out in front of the house, the two wagons. And Graves he come around and asked Granddad if there was anything that he could do to help him. "No," he said, "you just get the hell out of the way. I'll tend to this team," he said, "you're about the nearest thing to a wooden man I have ever had around me." (Laughter)

MARCUS: Yeah, that would move you out, wouldn't it? Well Sam, getting back to the property here, we're sitting right here in front of the dam now. This place presently belongs to --- I don't know what the fellow's name is that bought Pug Catterson out.

SAM: I don't know either, I don't even know him.

MARCUS: I don't know. But your father died in '46?

SAM: In '45.

MARCUS: '45. And then in '48 you sold out the property ... and Lloyd Hill bought this 320 acres here.

SAM: Yes, that's right.

MARCUS: Then later he sold it to Eldon Catterson. And then Catterson in turn sold it to this fellow here in the past year. I



don't know what his name is. But anyway, you folks, your father and you had a hand in it to, put this concrete dam in here, didn't you?

SAM: Yes. Well there was the Jones', you know, Lyle and I've forgotten what the other ones ---

MARCUS: Calvin.

SAM: Calvin. And their boys done the work on the dam here, they done the cement work. We hauled all the sand and gravel and cement up here to them.

MARCUS: Well where did you get this sand and gravel?

SAM: We got it at that gravel pit that --- oh, it was the other side of the Bell-A there a little ways off to the west of the road there a couple hundred yards. You remember where that gravel pit set in there?

MARCUS: Yeah, near Burns there.

SAM: Yes, close to Burns.

MARCUS: But in later years, you know, they couldn't make buildings stand up with the sand and gravel from Harney County. I think at the present time it's all hauled in here from Ontario. But this dam here has been in here for what, over forty years?

SAM: Yeah, it would be, wouldn't it.

MARCUS: About 19 --- early '30's, wasn't it, 1931.

SAM: '31, uh huh.

MARCUS: You wasn't bothered as much with the water that year?

SAM: No, that was ---

MARCUS: Probably one of the driest years I've ever seen. And that was probably the reason that your dad picked that particular time to build the dam.

SAM: Well it was. There was just a little stream of water coming here, you know, and they channeled it around this dam.

MARCUS: Yeah, it didn't bother them at all, when it come to putting in the dam. Well before that Sam, of course you used this place for many years and you raised some good crops here too. I can remember when this was a good producing place. But you had a rock dam in there didn't you?

SAM: Yeah, that's what they built first was this rock dam. They started right in on that right the same year Dad took it up. They started putting this rock dam through. There's a bunch of those rocks down there now, where that spillway is, you know.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

SAM: Scrapped them, rolled them, and done everything else to bring them out there for that water gun so it wouldn't wash below that dam here. It went straight across, just a little below this one, where this dam is here.

MARCUS: We used to catch some awful big fish right below this dam.

SAM: Boy, I've seen some awful big ones. I never did get a hold of anything. And there was big ones. I've caught lots of smaller

ones in here.

MARCUS: You bet. I've seen some big ones caught here too. Well, shall we drive on up the line, we're up here to see if we can find Trapper Bill's --- it was a dugout, Sam?

SAM: Yes, it was a dugout. Well just a hole. The swale was still there, you know. I can remember seeing it the last time I was up there. I'm afraid that new road that comes in there is going to be awful close to it. Or maybe right at it.

MARCUS: Well it wasn't, it was above this property?

SAM: Yes, above this property.

MARCUS: Oh, it's above this property. Oh, I see. I was under the impression it was on this property. Well let's go on up and look ---

SAM: Well two or three hundred yards, about three hundred yards up there, I guess.

MARCUS: Well Sam, you say your dad --- where did he get acquainted with Trapper Bill? He is the one that told you the story about him I guess.

SAM: Yes. Well Dad was a --- and this Trapper Bill were both, they raked hay up there at the "P" Ranch for French. And that was where Dad got acquainted with him. And he was telling Dad about trapping in here. And as I remembered, it was along around 1850 sometime. And he had this dugout, and he stayed here all winter. An old rocky ford up here.

WALT: One winter?

SAM: Uh huh, in one winter.

MARCUS: Five hundred.

SAM: Five hundred.

MARCUS: Holy smokes.

SAM: I guess they must have had a lot of beaver here at that time.

MARCUS: Yeah.

WALT: Man.

MARCUS: There couldn't have been many willows left along here, could they?

SAM: No, I don't suppose there was.

MARCUS: No.

WALT: Boy they really cleaned them out, that many.

MARCUS: Gosh they ---

SAM: Of course that was the story. Maybe they didn't catch that many.

MARCUS: No, but by gosh there was lots of beaver and mink and that sort of thing caught through this country, you know. I think in 18--- in the early 1800's. Of course that was the purpose of coming through here. The Hudson Bay Company, I think, was doing their trapping through here. Peter Skene Ogden and John Work and some of those fellows here, that was their prime purpose for being in the country here was to catch those furs.

WALT: John Scharff was telling me that in the 1880's, a freighter took out fourteen hundred beaver one winter out of Diamond Valley.

MARCUS: Hauling.

WALT: Must have been a tremendous amount.

SAM: Must have been.

MARCUS: Yeah.

WALT: Fourteen hundred in one winter there.

MARCUS: Well you know, I don't know whether something happened to them Sam, when we were kids we never saw beaver.

SAM: No, we didn't.

MARCUS: I think at one time here the beaver were practically gone. SAM: Yeah.

MARCUS: Whether they were just trapped down to nothing, or whether they got a disease in them like the rabbits have and kill them off, and the mice, and that sort of thing. You get an over population, or what. But we were sure --- I can remember the first beaver I ever saw.

SAM: I can too. I saw it right above this dam here.

MARCUS: You don't see many mink either. Well getting back to the dam here. You had an uncle drown right here, Sam.

SAM: Yes, he drown right below the dam here. He was the youngest one in the family, Elmer was his name. He was quite a lot younger than the rest of them.

MARCUS: That was in the early 1900's?

SAM: Yes, it was in 1903, somewhere, '03 or '04. I'm not just sure. And the boy could swim like a duck, he was raised right here on this river. And he went in swimming there. And Dad was working on this old rock dam, doing something to it. And Dad heard him holler, and saw he was having trouble, you know, and he grabbed an old rope there and throwed to him. But he, Dad said he just looked like he reached for it, but he didn't get a hold of it. So they didn't find him until the next morning. They put a hay rake in the river, and put a team on each side, or a horse on each side, and drug the hay rake up the river and picked him up in it.

MARCUS: By golly, in order to do that, these willows must have been about out of here too.

SAM: There must not have been willows along in here.

MARCUS: No, they couldn't have. They couldn't have done that. Well that just --- the old picture of the Sod House, shows the old Sod House, you know, we've looked at it there. Had your mother take a look at it one time. Pete French built up there around and all. There were very few willows around in there in that picture.

SAM: No. Well you know, when Dad told me when he first came here that there wasn't very much sagebrush around a lot of this country either. But it came after that, lots of it. There was always sagebrush in the sagebrush field. Said a lot of that desert out there didn't have anything, no big sagebrush. It had some of this

little small, oh kind of a gray sage there, you know, that grows out there.

MARCUS: Yeah, Davies called it chicken brush.

SAM: Yeah.

MARCUS: That's as good a name as any for it. (Laughter) Well you're, you told us here I think earlier that your granddad died in 1917?

SAM: '17, yeah.

MARCUS: He was eighty-three years old.

SAM: Yes, he was eighty-three at the time.

MARCUS: He went through a pretty rugged part of our history then, didn't he, out in this country?

SAM: Yes, yes he did. When he got into San Francisco, I've heard him tell this story about it. And the place was just full of boats, and all the sailors would all jump ship and went off gold mining, you know. And I guess the boat he went on they done the same thing.

MARCUS: Now where was he, how did he happen to be on a boat, Sam?

SAM: Well he came, he put in this crop for his uncle back in Ohio, and he got five hundred dollars for his share of that crop of wheat, is what it was. So he took a boat and went --- I don't know whether it was down the Ohio River where it hit the Mississippi, and on down. He went out in New Orleans, anyway. Then he got on an old sailing vessel, an old windjammer, and came

around Cape Horn. He said it was five months on the trip. And as I was telling you a little while ago there, he got into that big storm there below Cape Horn, and blowed this old vessel a thousand miles, captain told him, off his course, you know. And they was right down among big old icebergs, all around. I guess they must have come, drifted up there from the Antarctic, you know. And he said when they got into San Francisco all they had left to eat there was salt pork and what he called hard tack. That was all they had left of their groceries. I guess it was pretty slim pickings.

MARCUS: I'll bet it was slim. Well actually then he had heard of the gold strike in California?

SAM: Oh, yes.

MARCUS: That's what brought him ---

SAM: That's what brought him.

MARCUS: --- brought him out here, rather than to come overland he went the water route there.

SAM: Well he didn't know anything about mining, you know. He was just a kid too. And he --- well Granddad was born in 1833. And he landed there in 1850, when he landed in San Francisco.

MARCUS: Yeah, seventeen years old.

SAM: Seventeen when he got there, wasn't he? He was only sixteen when he left.

MARCUS: He had a birthday on the way, probably. He was gone long



enough, wasn't he?

SAM: He was gone long enough to have one. I don't think he wanted much to do with old sailing vessels after that.

MARCUS: Maybe that was the reason he took up coach driving.

SAM: Might have been.

MARCUS: Well a thousand miles off course, that was quite a trip in those sailing vessels, to get back on to where you even started from, wasn't it?

SAM: It sure was.

MARCUS: You bet.

SAM: It must have been a pretty wicked storm, you know. Well them old vessels they could pull a lot of them sails off if it wasn't too bad a storm. Wouldn't drift too much out of the way.

MARCUS: No.

SAM: He said there was some awful waves. I guess they looked bigger to him maybe than they actually was.

MARCUS: No. I'll bet they looked big.

SAM: Granddad, he never made any money in the mines. He worked in a lot of mines down there for other people. But he never made any money trying to mine himself. Didn't know anything about it. Granddad, he had an awful thing against, oh, what was I going to say about that now --- On circumstantial evidence, you know, that was what I was trying to say, I guess. He told about a --- he was working on some mine I think down there out of Sacramento Valley

somewhere or other. There was a couple fellows there that had some trouble. I think this one fellow had threatened the other guy. Anyhow, why this fellow he got --- somebody killed him. So all the evidence pointed right to this fellow, you know. Even found his gun there pretty close, which should have told them that he wouldn't have went off and left his gun, I would think. Anyhow they, just a miners court, it was probably pretty primitive, and I believe they hung this fellow, the miners. And a few months after that, why they had a cave in there in one of these mines where he was working. One of these fellows was mashed up pretty bad in this cave in, and thought he was going to die, and maybe he did die, I don't remember that part of it. But anyhow, he confessed to killing this fellow. I don't know whether Granddad was on this miner's jury, or not. I don't believe he ever said that.

MARCUS: He didn't tell you all that.

SAM: You couldn't talk anything of circumstantial evidence to Granddad.

MARCUS: Oh, my gosh.

SAM: I guess that bothered him. It bothered him all his life I think after that. I heard him tell that story several times.

MARCUS: He probably had a hand in it, all right.

SAM: I think he did.

MARCUS: It sure happened. It has happened many times too.

SAM: That's right. Of course in them times I guess they didn't

hold court for any great length of time. They didn't have anything going for three or four months in the courtroom.

MARCUS: They didn't have any pre-sentence investigation and all that that they have now, you know.

SAM: No.

MARCUS: Well, shall we drive on up and see what we can find up here of Trapper Bill's fold? We have only gone south from the Dunn property probably a quarter of a mile and came to this place here that you feel is, pretty sure is Trapper Bill's abode back in the '50's during his trapping days here, Sam. And I think you told us you got this story from your father, didn't you? He worked with Trapper Bill up at "P" Ranch?

SAM: Yes, it was the "P" Ranch there. They raked hay, him and this Trapper Bill. Each one had a hay rake, they were raking hay there for French, and he was telling them about it. And I don't know, he could have been down here with Dad one time or another too. I'm pretty sure that that's the spot. It has to be within a hundred yards one way or the other. And I'm sure that's it.

MARCUS: Well, from all indications here, it looks like --- there has certainly been something here. We found evidence of a board. And of course when you stop to think, he wouldn't have had a sawed board with him in those days either.

SAM: No, he wouldn't, no.

MARCUS: Anyway, that's a possibility. We're within a short

distance of it anyway, if this isn't the spot. But from all appearances this is where it very well could be. But when you stop to think that we're talking back here, well over a hundred years, this whole country could have changed here considerably. Be as close to the river here and all. And in our lifetime, Sam, we were talking here a while ago with, this was all meadow up in through here. Not that it was cut, but there wasn't any brush, there was rye grass out on the hill, on the ridges here. But this lower country was a meadow where these willows are growing. And the rye grass apparently has eased in toward the riverbank more than what it was here fifty years ago, forty-five. But anyway, we've taken pictures here of it. And one view is the end of this mound of dirt here, dug out here with dry ... back in the early '30's here, late '30's possibly. When the government was going to tap the river here, we're within a couple hundred yards of it, generally where the head gate is now. So that gives us a little idea of what, where we're at here. Is there any more you want to add to this, Sam?

SAM: Well, nothing that I know of. I'm almost positive that that must be it. That hole isn't natural there.

MARCUS: Sam, what about this stone here? That didn't get in here by itself. It looks like it came out of this rock quarry over here on the hill to the west of us here?

SAM: Well it's just coming back to me that there was a little old

stone chimney here at this place. Set up two or three feet there above the ground. So this almost has to be it.

MARCUS: If that's the case then, it's a cinch we've got the spot here then.

SAM: That's right. I don't think there is any doubt about it.

MARCUS: No, I wouldn't think there would be either. Because this stone is buried, and you can see the hole dug here. It's a cinch that any wood material that he used for a roof, little willows and dirt on the top made the roof there. It would be rotted out years and years ago. There would be no evidence of it at all.

SAM: No.

MARCUS: It would be down in this hole. So I think you're right. I believe you've got the spot here. At least we're going to say it is, Sam.

Well Sam, let's talk a little bit about your dad. He, we've talked about your granddad a great deal. So, let's start in and talk a little bit about your dad here.

SAM: Well Dad, he came here I think about 18 and '80. He was just a kid. He came from Surprise Valley. The family, Granddad he'd already been out here before that, working for French. Well when they had the Indian War, my granddad was, Surprise Valley or something after ... French then.

MARCUS: Well let me interrupt you here just a second. I think we ought to have it in here; didn't your granddad drive a bunch of

hogs in here?

SAM: That was --- yeah, him and Dad.

MARCUS: Yeah, tell me about it before we go any farther, I nearly forgot it.

SAM: Well I haven't thought of it. Well they brought that; they brought a bunch of hogs clear across from Surprise Valley. I don't know how many they was. Quite a herd of them though. And Granddad he ... the wagon, had feed and water for these hogs. And Dad drove them confounded hogs. I guess they got about half the kids from Surprise Valley to help them get started the first day. But Dad said after a day or two why them old hogs would just take off down the road following that wagon, you know. And then they'd get the troughs out and feed them. And French bought them hogs from him, from Granddad when he got out here with them. That's where all those, the starter of all those hogs used to be out there in that swamp.

MARCUS: The tule rooters up there in the --- gosh "P" Valley up there was full of hogs at one time.

SAM: Oh, yes.

MARCUS: Filled up the whole country. Well then Sam, they ended up over here at the Double O too.

SAM: Yeah.

MARCUS: They had the same situation over there. Louis Hughet told me about --- they finally got rid of them there. Whether

Bill Hanley brought the hogs on over with him when he was running this "P" outfit, or how they got over there, I don't know that part of it.

SAM: I don't know either.

MARCUS: But anyway your dad was responsible for getting hogs into Harney County.

SAM: Yeah, him and Granddad. (Laughter) Well Dad, you know, he herded horses too for French when he first, well not when he first came out here I guess. He stayed at Pickett Corrals, you know, and herded saddle horses.

MARCUS: Oh, they kept their ... up on that side.

SAM: Well he had two bunches; he had a lot of saddle horses. And he'd bring up a bunch and leave them for about six weeks, a hundred head or so, and then take the others back, you know. Keep switching them.

MARCUS: Oh.

SAM: Dad, he just range herded them out there.

MARCUS: Oh, I see. Where would he have stayed, where would he stay?

SAM: He stayed at Pickett Corrals.

MARCUS: Pickett Corrals?

SAM: That's where he stayed.

MARCUS: Be about the only water up there later in the summer, wouldn't it? Late spring and early summer that country gets

pretty dry right in there, except for a place or two there, Keg Springs and Pickett Corrals and that.

SAM: Well that, talk about being dry there ...

MARCUS: Talking about horses, Sam, when we run out of tape. So if you'll start in again here about that.

SAM: Well, Dad was telling about he was chasing a bunch of horses out there. They'd get scattered pretty much, you know, some of them. And he told, as I remember, he was way out there, not too far from Clover Swale and he was running this bunch of horses and his horse fell down. And it was right in the hot summertime, you know. He got up and got away on Dad. My dad, he had to walk clear back. And he come in there to Keg Springs, he'd walked all day out there, and it was in the early morning I guess, and he walked all day. Got in there at the evening, Keg Springs. And he said his tongue was swollen until he couldn't even keep his mouth shut, you know. And he started to go right over and get him a big old drink there. And there was some Indians camped there. Said a great big old Indian woman just come over and get him by the back of the neck and yanked him right out of there. And she just give him a little bit of water at a time. He said he supposed he would have killed himself probably.

MARCUS: Yeah.

SAM: But that old Indian woman just yanked him right out of there. And she just ---



MARCUS: Probably saved his life.

SAM: I suppose she did. He always, he never let horses out there anymore without he had a mecate and stuck in his belt or something so if the horse did fall down or buck him off he'd have a chance to keep him with him anyway.

MARCUS: Well Sam, that would be, if he was over there around Clover Swale, that would be twelve, fifteen miles.

SAM: Yeah, it was a long walk.

MARCUS: You bet, that was a long ways across there.

SAM: He had a tent that he stayed in there at Pickett Corrals. Said one day he come into the tent one afternoon, he laid down, he felt tired and just laid down on the bed he had in there. He said he seen a shadow come right across the side of this, passed this tent, the shadow on the tent. And it was an Indian; he had a great big old knife about that long in his hand, coming around the --- in front of that tent. And Dad said he had an old forty-four six-shooter there. So he just picked this old six shooter up and when that old Indian parted the flaps of the tent, why he was looking right straight into Dad's old forty-four. Dad said that old Indian just said, "Ugh" and just turned right around and got out of there running. (Laughter)

MARCUS: He wasn't as friendly as the squaw.

SAM: No, not near so friendly. Dad thought maybe he would kill him and get a whole bunch of them horses.

MARCUS: Sure, you bet. Well then your dad, after he got through there with French he ended up down here and homesteaded just north of Sod House Lane here, Sam, out toward the west end of the lane, didn't he?

SAM: Yes, yes. Well, just a quarter of a mile north is where his south line of his fence come across there.

MARCUS: Yes.

SAM: Yes, he had that surveyed out, somebody surveyed, run the lines, you know, around. Several in here at that time, you know. Of course this Jim Caldwell. I don't know whether Warren Curtis was here, or George Curtis was, had that place when Dad --- I don't believe he did. I think that was open there. But he took that up afterwards.

MARCUS: Well they ---

SAM: Afterwards Dad bought it.

MARCUS: Now this was a squatters claim that he got the first go round out here, wasn't it?

SAM: That's right, it was a squatters claim.

MARCUS: You bet. He was, a home by adverse possession or shotgun rights, as it was known at that time.

SAM: Yes. Of course the river rights, that was a pre-emption.

MARCUS: Yes, well it was surveyed land at that time.

SAM: Yes.

MARCUS: And below the lane at this time was on surveyed land.

And that's when Pete French was trying to hold to the center of the lake on the riparian right of ownership. And actually was the thing that led up to his death, was --- if he'd have stopped at Sod House Lane and hadn't tried to go on to the center of Malheur Lake, he'd probably have lived out a normal life.

SAM: I wouldn't wonder.

MARCUS: I think I've always felt that. You bet.

SAM: You know Dad liked to work for French. He said he was a fine man to work for. Dad, he really liked him. They never got along so good after --- He wanted to buy the river ranch back, you see.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

SAM: Well Dad said they made no such agreement, and he hadn't even said anything to him about buying it.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

SAM: Until they got everything all proved up on it, and the like. And then French wanted it back. Well Dad wouldn't sell, and neither would Granddad. But that was mostly tules down here in the old homestead that he took up.

MARCUS: Yes, it would have been.

SAM: That was a dry year. I don't know whether it was a dry year, but it was a cold winter here. Oh, I don't know, '89 I believe it was.

MARCUS: I believe that's the winter they speak of all right, was

'89.

SAM: Dad he went in there, and he wanted to get rid of these tules. Said they wasn't flags, they was just big old round tules. They got him a mowing machine and he went in there and he mowed that whole thing, and stacked them up just as green as he could stack them. Well everybody made fun of him, you know, stacking them tules. Well a lot of people at that time didn't put up any hay, you know. They figured on running out here the year round. Well there was so much snow that year, you know, that they couldn't do that. So Dad sold every bit of them tules he put up for five dollars a ton.

MARCUS: He did?

SAM: People was glad to get them I guess.

MARCUS: Yeah, I bet.

SAM: I didn't know a cow would live on those old tules, but I guess they will if they're put up green.

MARCUS: Yeah, I think they get quite a belly on them, but they get enough of them they'll --- if they're put up green there, they got a little protein in them.

SAM: Uh huh. I don't think them old dry flags have any.

MARCUS: No, no. But the tules, if they're cut green like that, why they will make some hay for you. But I can remember Sam, of burning tules down there at the home place there, right west of the house over there toward the Reineman place, right along that

fence. There used to be a big tule patch in there.

SAM: Big tule patch. I think I remember it too, now that you mention it.

MARCUS: Yeah, you bet. But when the Sand Reef was in down there it was, it flooded this whole country. And I think John Witzel, I heard him say one time that the, when he first came here that the tules extended nearly up to Sod House, where the buildings are up here at Sod House Ranch.

SAM: Oh.

MARCUS: But when we were talking a while ago, if you maintained the water level here above 4100 feet, why you'd cover lots of country here.

SAM: You bet you would.

MARCUS: You bet. And then it takes awhile, of course, we know when this water goes off why these tules die out and you get a different type of vegetation. So it could very well have been. Well then your dad, he got busy and bought out some neighbors and acquired a lot of land here during his lifetime, didn't he?

SAM: Yes he did. He just seemed to require land. He had the idea; he said that the land would always be here. Everything else might get away from you, but if you had that land why you always had something to fall back on.

MARCUS: Yes.

SAM: And he, I think he bought the George Curtis property first.

That run, well it run right along the fence there just across over from the schoolhouse. Then it goes clear around and around and joins on to your mother's old place.

MARCUS: The old Warren Curtis property.

SAM: The Warren Curtis property. Then he bought the, I can't remember when he bought the George Curtis property; I don't remember George Curtis at all. I can remember then when he bought the ranch here, the old --- well it was originally the old Gene Caldwell property here.

MARCUS: He bought that from Sid Comegys.

SAM: He bought that from Sid Comegys.

MARCUS: That would, what would be, along in 1910, '12, somewhere, '14, sometime?

SAM: Yeah, it must have been along about 1912, '13, somewhere along in there.

MARCUS: Yeah, I would make a guess there. I remember, Augustine Comegys and I were just about the same age. And I can remember playing around there with him. We were kids five or six years old. And we were born in 1907. So that would hit in there generally pretty close. Well he was living there at the time of his death, wasn't he? He still owned all that property.

SAM: Yes. He still owned all that property there. And he bought a Dick Smith property at Mud Lake. And then he bought some more land there from boys, two brothers I think. The name was Weare.

MARCUS: Milt and Paul Weare probably.

SAM: Maybe so. Then he bought some land there from somebody named Oakerman. And also some land from Aztec Land and Cattle Company, Arizona. (Laughter) They had a chunk of land up here. They had made some kind of a trade deal or something on this land. And I still have the old original deeds, you know, for every one of them places.

MARCUS: Yeah. You bet. These abstracts are interesting to read.

SAM: Yes, they are.

MARCUS: Anything on this Pete French holdings here. I've got an abstract on this 283 acres your mother passed on to me. And gosh, this is an inch thick, you know. There's a lot of history. Well then he bought some property from Farnsworth too.

SAM: Yes, from Farnsworth. He used to be an old --- he was related to old Bill Harris' wife. He was her dad I believe.

MARCUS: Yeah, I think you're right about that.

SAM: Then he bought another piece of property down there from a fellow by the name of Roy Smith. He was no relation of Dick's, I don't believe. Then he bought some state land. All together he got a hold of a lot of property. And then he bought the property where you live here.

MARCUS: That was some of the old original Pete French holdings.

SAM: Yes, that was the original Pete French holdings. He bought that land from Craven when he was in here. He was superintendent

here then. And just why he sold it, I don't know. He bought the hay from Dad every year, the first three or four years. And the hay paid for the ranch.

MARCUS: Your mother told me that in five years time the hay paid for the ranch.

SAM: Yes.

MARCUS: It was really a hay-producing ranch in those days.

SAM: Oh, yes. It produced an awful lot of hay.

MARCUS: I think she told me they put up over five hundred tons of hay here.

SAM: I think he did.

MARCUS: The first two or three years they had it. Well the same thing was true of my mother's place over there. I think she sold over four hundred tons back for two or three years there too, off that 208 acres. And quite a sizeable piece of that was the greasewoods, you know.

SAM: Yes, that's right.

MARCUS: But then, I think we decided here your dad ended up with nearly 3000 acres of land.

SAM: Yes, he had just about, around 3000 acres of land here.

MARCUS: And a thousand head of cow to go with it too, didn't he?

SAM: Yes, well that's what he always wanted to get up to. A thousand head of cows.

MARCUS: Oh, uh huh.



SAM: That was, it seemed like he --- he'd buy one of these ranches, well he'd have to kind of sell down, you know, and get the ranch paid for. As soon as he got one ranch paid for, you know, he'd go looking around to buy another one somewhere. He finally did get his, got his thousand head of cows all right. And then the government took an auction on all of his property at one time. You know after this Malheur Refuge was established ---

MARCUS: Yes, bought out here in 1935, and that was the next move they made then. I remember they camped right over here on Lyle Hill's doorstep, along with your folks. Well then Sam, at about that time, in the early '30's when your dad was running most all of the cattle there, you did a lot of fall and wintering up on the east end of the lake.

SAM: Oh, yes. Yes, we used to keep cattle around there until, well lots of times till January.

MARCUS: You would come off the desert and move them right on around up through there.

SAM: Yeah. They had a big old dug well out there, and one of those old water barrels, set-ups.

MARCUS: Yes.

SAM: You know.

MARCUS: That was on Pelican Island?

SAM: Yes, right there by Pelican Island.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

SAM: I think that one would be at the south end of Pelican Island. And he had a pump there too. Cattle get to crowding, you know, why he'd start up that old Cadillac and hook on to this here water barrel hook-up. And they couldn't crowd in hard enough on the troughs then to keep them down, you know, with ... I think he was the first, about the first one that invented them water barrels.

MARCUS: I was going to ask you that. There was the only time, I think he was the only fellow I ever saw use it. My mother put one in over here, but we didn't have well enough to hold it.

SAM: Uh huh. Well Uncle Frank had one down in the swamp.

MARCUS: Did he?

SAM: Cabin there, he had a water barrel.

MARCUS: Your dad was probably the inventor of it there for Frank.

SAM: Yes, I think he was. He got those old oak whiskey barrels, one from Charlie Haines, you know. Charlie had most of his whiskey shipped in here in those barrels. And he'd buy those old empty barrels.

MARCUS: Well he had a, guides built on this barrel here, and he just let the barrel down into the water and ---

SAM: And float to the top, kick up there.

MARCUS: He had a valve that would trip when he got up even with the trough, and you just pulled that old barrel up, and that bottom opened up, and out shot fifty gallons of water just as fast

as it would go out through there.

SAM: That's right.

MARCUS: And it was just as fast as you could put it down in the well and pull it up.

SAM: That's right, you could ---

MARCUS: And you could really pump water with it.

SAM: You could water all the cattle you could get around the water trough with that thing. If you had water enough in your well.

MARCUS: You sure could. Yeah, that was the biggest problem keeping the source of water. You bet. Well then he got this property together Sam, and then he started selling off the cattle in the mid '30's. Started cutting back, maybe I should say.

SAM: Well yes. Well come to start cutting back. The government took an auction on all of his land here, wanted to buy it at one time. Well he sold, they said there was no doubt that ---

SIDE B

... (Repeat of some of Side A)

SAM: --- the auction would be taken up. And they sold off a lot of his cattle then. Didn't sell them all. But they turned the auction down and condemned the River Ranch, the old original property on the river. That was the reason that he had sold his cattle down. Of course he got arthritis awful bad too, you know,

he wasn't able to look after things.

MARCUS: His health started failing pretty bad; along about that time too, didn't it?

SAM: Yes, it did.

MARCUS: And I remember you and Blanche used to take him and your mother to California. He went to Arizona some too, didn't he?

SAM: Yes. San Diego quite a lot.

MARCUS: Warmer climate there for oh ten years. He died in ---

SAM: He died in 1945.

MARCUS: Well he was up there pretty well then Sam, wasn't he?

SAM: He was eighty years old.

MARCUS: He was eighty years old the year he died? Yeah, he, Billy Dunn had a lot of wisdom ---

SAM: Yeah.

MARCUS: --- you know. He didn't say much, he didn't have to.

SAM: No. He was a great hand for this water right business, you know. He always looked into that. He, well he studied it an awful lot. There had been lots of lawsuits over water. And Dad he'd read everything he ever found on it, I guess.

MARCUS: Yeah. Of course he came up during the time when you had to scrap for what you got, or you didn't get it too.

SAM: Well, that's right. You know when you stop to think about it, they didn't any of them have very darn much to get along with. The things that really, we'd call absolute necessities now, would

have been luxuries for them.

MARCUS: You bet, you bet. Well Sam, he had the first automobile around here ---

SAM: Yeah, he had one of the first ones.

MARCUS: --- if I can remember right.

SAM: He bought a Buick here in 1910. Had carbide lights on it, I can remember the old outfit. And the only ... it had was a set of these dry cell batteries. I think it was four.

MARCUS: Oh, uh huh.

SAM: Well they went dead pretty regular seemed like.

MARCUS: Yeah.

SAM: I don't know whether Dad would leave the switch on, or what.

MARCUS: He probably didn't have to.

SAM: It had some kind of a clutch on it that run in oil. Well the old oil they had in those days, they didn't have anything that, but 10-30 or the like, that they have now.

MARCUS: Most are castor oil, wasn't it?

SAM: Yeah. But they'd do pretty good in the summer. In the wintertime, why that clutch would drag, you know, until that got well warmed up. Dad he'd tear the gears out of that transmission trying to get it in gear. I don't know how many times he did it. Well he'd hook up four horses and a wagon and trail that old Buick to Burns to get another set of gears put in the thing. He sold that to Alvie Springer.

MARCUS: Oh, that was their first car?

SAM: That was their first car. Dad sold it to them. And then he bought an old Cadillac.

MARCUS: He went to Cadillac's then, didn't he?

SAM: Yes, he bought it in 1912. But it was the first car that came out with a starter and electric lights.

MARCUS: Oh.

SAM: And I can remember, I was looking at that, you know. Big old high top, you know, you could stand right up on the floor boards, never come anywhere near to the top of the thing. But it had a good starter and wonderful lights on it. You could read a newspaper a mile away with them lights a shining. Big old things, about that big around, you know. There was no restrictions of course on the lights. Why they wouldn't let a fellow even turn one on around his ranch that strong now. (Laughter)

MARCUS: They were brass too, weren't they?

SAM: Yes, I think they was.

MARCUS: I think they were too. That was one of the ... you had of shining your lights on the car. Well I can remember riding with your dad, and probably the first automobile ride I ever had. And see there was seven of you kids in the family, wasn't there?

SAM: Uh huh.

MARCUS: And then you get the neighbor kids, he had a pretty good load of kids. And he didn't mind taking them.

SAM: No, he always liked, he liked having kids along.

MARCUS: Yeah. He liked to chew tobacco too.

SAM: Oh, yeah. (Laughter)

MARCUS: It was kind of a struggle to see who was going to get over on the other side of the back seat away from your dad when he'd let go. Once in awhile he'd spray a kid pretty good. We used to kind of scrap to see who had to set on the driver's side of the back seat. I can remember that pretty well. You bet.

SAM: That was quite the automobile in them days. I can remember when Dad brought it home. He went to, he bought it when Frank Dibble was at the agency for them. They had to go to Portland after them. And they was a couple other fellows went with Frank. And Frank's boy Billy went along. He was about fourteen. And there was two of these fellows that never drove an automobile in their lives. But Dad, he could drive a little, you know. He drove the old Buick before that. Well they shipped them up; they got them at Colby Motor Car Company in Portland. And they shipped them up as far as The Dalles on a boat. And I think they was about three or four days getting from The Dalles home. (Laughter)

MARCUS: I'll bet, I'll bet.

SAM: Billy, he'd go back and he'd drive the cars up the hills for these other fellows, the other two fellows, you know. They didn't know how to shift gears. And Dad said you had quite a time too along there. They were doing lots of freighting; big old freight

teams and they'd meet them on the road. They were scared to death of these automobiles.

MARCUS: Yeah.

SAM: They'd have to pull the cars clear off and stop them. Then the freighters would cuss them.

MARCUS: Boy, I had taken a ride, got a tongue broken out of a buggy swinging around the corner and meet an automobile.

SAM: Yeah.

MARCUS: You bet. Scared the team to death.

SAM: Why is it now, you --- even horses out on, bring one off the desert, he don't seem to be much afraid of an automobile.

MARCUS: No, and these old cows, they live by an automobile.

SAM: Sure.

MARCUS: You can't get them out of the road anymore.

SAM: No, they won't move out of the way.

MARCUS: Well, shall we talk a little bit about your mother, Sam? Let's talk about your mother a little bit now.

SAM: My mother's folks, they came here in 18 and '92. Mother went to school here in Burns, finished her high school. I guess she had some grade school; she wasn't out of grade school yet when they came here. She stayed up town and worked for some old lady that run a rooming house up there. And she went to school and finally got her teacher's permit. And then taught for several years here before her and Dad was married. They were married in



1899, May the 8th.

MARCUS: Well what was her maiden name, Sam?

SAM: Hutchinson. Effie Hutchinson.

MARCUS: There was quite a family of them, wasn't there?

SAM: Yes, there was a big family. There was, I guess there was eight of those kids.

MARCUS: See Ralph stayed here. He died here not too many years ago.

SAM: Yeah.

MARCUS: And I can remember your Uncle Ira. He lived in Canada, didn't he?

SAM: Yes, yes, they lived in Canada. Well Mother's folks after, well I don't know just when they did leave here, 19 --- oh see, it must have been 1907 or '08, somewhere along there. They moved from here up into Alberta. I think Granddad was pretty fiddle-footed. He'd moved all over the country.

MARCUS: He wasn't about ready to settle down.

SAM: Didn't seem to be. Finally, he stayed in Canada though as long as he lived. But ---

MARCUS: Well the first school that your mother taught, was it in Burns?

SAM: No, I think it was over here close to Lawen.

MARCUS: Oh, yes.

SAM: And the Ausmus boys went to school to Mother. Dick Ausmus

went to school to Mother, and Ormand. And there was a girl, I believe. That went to, Ausmus girl that went to school. And then there was some Withers family that went to school to her. Then they had another schoolhouse out to, around this side of the lake somewhere. Or on the west side I mean. It would have been north of The Narrows. And she taught a term there. And they also had a schoolhouse right down here; well it would be just east of the refuge headquarters, in that field there somewhere. I don't know just where it was at.

MARCUS: Well you know there is, you ride around out in there, and you can find two or three building sites in the old Kado field.

SAM: Uh huh. That's where it was.

MARCUS: I know your mother's told me about teaching school over there at the --- Well Sam, there was a schoolhouse down here at the end of the lane, that was the beginning of the Sod House School, wasn't it?

SAM: Yes, that was the beginning of it. That was, well Dad bought, after Dad bought the Warren Curtis place, why he moved there, had a little better house from his old homestead house. Well he moved this homestead house, him and a bunch of the neighbors, right down to the mouth of the lane there, just inside the field there.

MARCUS: Yes, I remember.

SAM: They moved that down there. I don't know, they taught one

or two terms there. I remember when Judy, well it was Judy Wise, well it was Judy McKenzie at that time was teaching there.

MARCUS: Now did your mother ever teach there?

SAM: No. No, she didn't teach there.

MARCUS: When she and your dad were married.

SAM: Yeah, she never did teach any after then.

MARCUS: She was too busy raising a family I guess ---

SAM: Yes.

MARCUS: --- to teach school.

SAM: She never taught school anymore after her and Dad were married.

MARCUS: Well by golly Sam, she just passed away here just recently. She was well in her nineties, wasn't she?

SAM: She was ninety-four.

MARCUS: She was ninety-four. When did she die?

SAM: She died the 30th of June.

MARCUS: That would be a year now?

SAM: It would be a year.

MARCUS: Just this --- she hasn't been dead quite a year.

SAM: Not quite a year, no.

MARCUS: But she got awfully, badly crippled up with arthritis too, didn't she?

SAM: Yes she did. Especially in her hands and her knees.

MARCUS: I remember her hands especially. She got around pretty

well here, well several years ago. But her hands were getting stiff and her knuckles were getting large. Then she was a comparably young woman. She was inflicted with it for many years.

SAM: Yes, she was. She had it for, oh I don't know for how long. But she'd had it for twenty years I'll bet anyway.

MARCUS: Oh yes, easy that.

SAM: I'm sure.

MARCUS: Yes, she had it.

SAM: Oh, yes I know she had it longer than that. Because I remember one time we had Dad down to California and her hands got to bothering her awful bad and she went to a doctor down there to see what was the matter with them. She didn't think she had arthritis, but the doctor told her that's what she had, right to start with.

MARCUS: They are a pretty killing disease, and there still isn't too much they can do about it. Crippling disease, it doesn't kill too many people I guess. It just takes them down.

SAM: I know when Dad died; I don't think there was very many joints in his body that wasn't out though with that, you know.

MARCUS: Yes. It just nearly solidified, I guess, wasn't he?

SAM: Yes, he was.

MARCUS: Yeah. You bet.

SAM: I just thought of something. That old Cadillac when Dad come home with it, he had all this, he left quite a lot of time

since --- but he was living at this Warren Curtis place, and there was a little slough there. He got it in the spring of the year, the middle of May or something like that, and they didn't have any bridge across this little slough. Well instead of Dad leaving the Cadillac on the other side of the slough, why he --- we all went out to take a look at it of course. We'd been watching day and night practically for him to come home.

MARCUS: That's when he came home with it?

SAM: That's when he came home with it new. Well he said, "I'm going to back up and take a run at that ditch." Well I was only six years old, and I can see Dad yet come chugging along that run he took at it. He got it in second gear, come chugging along about ten miles an hour, drove off in the middle of the darn thing and got stuck. Well there was the new car sitting there, and none of us could ride in it. Well they finally went and got an old team that we had out there, and had them to feed with, kept them in, and hooked them on to this old Cadillac. Well one of them balked. The other one couldn't pull it. (Laughter) I remember Mother getting the pitchfork and getting after that old balky horse. And he went to pulling all right, and they pulled it out.

MARCUS: She was the one that wanted the automobile ride, wasn't she?

SAM: Yeah. Well the heck of it was, then she pulled it across you see on the knoll by the house.

MARCUS: Oh.

SAM: Dad had a little old garage he had fixed up there for this Buick.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

SAM: Well he got the Cadillac there, and it was too high to go in the garage anyhow. (Laughter) Well then we had to build us a bridge before we could get out and ride in that car.

MARCUS: Well your dad never did drive fast, did he?

SAM: No, no, twenty miles an hour was just about ---

MARCUS: That was top speed for him, wasn't it?

SAM: That was top speed.

MARCUS: You bet. He didn't --- Well he had a Chevrolet he used to drive, didn't he, a touring car?

SAM: Yes.

MARCUS: In the early ---

SAM: It was a 1925.

MARCUS: '25 was it?

SAM: Yeah, he used to drive that around a lot.

MARCUS: He never drove it over twenty miles an hour?

SAM: No. No, Granddad would get ahead of him, you know, they was going to The Narrows. Granddad, he didn't like that car very much.

MARCUS: I bet he didn't.

SAM: I think he was about half afraid of the thing. He didn't

understand how it worked.

MARCUS: Yeah, yeah.

SAM: And if he was there, he'd hook up his team, you know, and that little wagon. He got out ahead of Dad. Dad never passed him all the way to The Narrows either.

MARCUS: No, I bet he wouldn't.

SAM: He just run that old team low and level all the way down there to keep Dad from passing him.

MARCUS: You bet. I can readily understand that all right. And then Ed Springer, Ed Springer, Ed Anderson had an old car, called the old EMF.

SAM: Yeah.

MARCUS: Every morning fix 'em.

SAM: That's right. I remember it too.

MARCUS: I can remember they just drove down there to the house one time. That was down there where the Shelley's are now. And I got down on my hands and knees and looked under it and the flying wheel was, you could see the flying wheel turning on it, you know.

SAM: Uh huh. All open flywheel.

MARCUS: I will always remember that as long as I live. I didn't know whether it was going to roll out and get me right then or a little bit later. Yeah, those were the great old days. You know what amazes you now, Sam; we can't go anyplace unless we got a four-wheel drive pickup.

SAM: That's right.

MARCUS: And by golly in those days you went plugging around with those old cars where we couldn't begin to go with them now.

SAM: I know it. Those things had old high wheels on them, you know. And they'd run through snow with them old high wheels, you know, better than these cars with the big wide tires.

MARCUS: Gosh, you can't hardly do anything with these big tires and that sort of stuff, you know.

SAM: No.

MARCUS: I always remember Dora Chapman's sister, she said the better the roads, the better roads they make, the better the automobiles they make. If we'd have had one of these four-wheel drive pickups fifty years ago, we'd have really been in heaven.

SAM: Wouldn't we though. That would really have been something.

MARCUS: Yes sir, it really would have. Well Sam, we've got a little tape left here. Is there anything else you want to put on it?

SAM: Well, I don't know ---

b1



Harney County History Project

Subject: Larry Dunn

Date: January 26, 1990

Place: Hot Springs S.E. of Harney Lake

Interviewer: Marcus Haines

MARCUS: I'm visiting with Larry Dunn and Renee and with this fellow here, what is his name again? Brian couldn't think of it here. They brought the possibility of running a Chinese mining down here in the hot springs area. We're just over the hill from the hot springs, north, and we found one shaft here with the amount of dirt taken out of it, it must have been really deep. But it's caved in now, and we've looked around for others.

But the Job Corp ... fence line through here, and we see where the dozers have gone off to one side of the line here in various places. And we think maybe that they have filled up some of these, but we don't know. But we're going to have Larry tell us a little bit here about what he saw back here in the early '40's.

LARRY DUNN: Well it was about 1940, and we'd hold the cows at the hot springs. And some of them come back while we was eating. Got

around the hill north of where we're setting now, or close to here, and I almost jumped my horse into one shaft, and it was real deep. It had old wood ... there, but I didn't get over to look into it, because I was afraid I would fall in. But you could hear a rock rattle for quite a ways. There were several other shafts around. At that time, why the dirt was higher than my head. And I believe it was my grandmother said that they were mining for quick silver, but I'm not sure who told me.

MARCUS: Yeah, I don't recall in visiting with your grandmother back, about, I think in the early '60's sometime. We took her up to Sod House Springs to review an old picture that was taken. It showed the Sod House corrals, and the old Sod House building all taken before 1900. And on the way up then, she told us about the holes dug out near the road there, and ... by a Colonel, what did your dad say his name was this morning?

LARRY: Fremont, I believe.

MARCUS: And Fremont, and anyway she finished up by telling about that the Chinese had mined down here around the hot springs, she remembered when she was a girl. I think she came here about '92, didn't she Larry?

LARRY: I really can't remember. I believe it was, yeah.

MARCUS: I believe it was ... in the early '90's anyway. And that's where Mrs. Clarey ... of course I've been around here a couple days myself. (Laughter) And I don't remember anybody ever

mining or living down in this country here. I'm well acquainted with the country here since the late '20's. And there has certainly been nobody in this area then. And your dad, Sam Dunn, had known this area here ever since he was big enough to ride through here. Because this is the way they went with their cattle here from the time he was a youngster.

LARRY: Yeah, I know it was.

MARCUS: But anyway, there is quite a pile of dirt right here and some lumber and stuff sticking out of the hole here. It looks like that maybe some work had been done in the recent years on this. But I'm not right sure about that. But there is a ... pile enough here for a shaft to be really deep. But unless there was a pile of dirt around here that they started on, why a big well that somebody would dig here, it would seem then that fifty, seventy-five, eighty feet deep, and they wouldn't have that much dirt around, Larry. I've seen in Catlow Valley, and they don't have that much dirt around them. So this used to be quite a shaft here, there is no question about that. So anyway, this is the only one that we can find. And I think that that's probably what has happened, the other ones have been covered with dirt.

Renee now, you want to tell us what you're seeing around here? Come up here and tell us what you think about this country. Would you like to live down here?

RENEE DUNN: No.

MARCUS: You wouldn't, huh? Wouldn't this be a nice place to winter down here?

RENEE: Uh huh.

MARCUS: You'd kind of like that. How about you Brian, would you like it down here?

BRIAN DUNN: Yeah.

MARCUS: You wouldn't mind staying here then?

BRIAN: Huh uh.

MARCUS: Just for a couple days, that would be long enough probably. Well we're going to go on down here and see if we can find a place here that John Toelle and I rode by here in '68, and Toelle picked up a real nice green bottle. And there was some lumber and evidence of a building being there at that particular place. But we didn't stop, we were just riding through. So we'll go try.

(END OF TAPE)

b1