

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #269 - Sides A/B/C

Subject: Sam Boyce Discusses Bill Brown

Place: Bend, Oregon

Date: September 10, 1979

Interviewer: Richard Cowan

... (Unrelated conversation)

RICHARD COWAN: Frank Morgan said a dozen times, he said, "There was only one Bill Brown."

SAM BOYCE: That's right, I've said that myself. There will never be another Bill Brown either.

RICHARD: That's what he said.

SAM: Yeah, there'll never be another Bill Brown. You got that thing a going?

RICHARD: Yes, it's all going.

SAM: Well anyway, this nephew that come there to see me, he didn't tell me he was writing any book or anything, but I told him, I said, "Well," I said, I was telling Bill once, I said, "Bill when you had all that damn money," I said, "why didn't you go someplace and see something?" "Well confound it," he said, "we did. Me and brother George went back to New York." And this guy spoke up right quick, and said, "Well that was my dad." Said, "That was something I didn't know anything about." He said, "I never did know they went back to New York." I said, "Well that's all I know, is what Bill told me." I said, "Well Bill," I said, "when you got back in New York, what did you do when you got back there?" "Well," he said, "we got a room in a hotel," he said, "brother George went around town ..."
From all I could get out of Bill, I don't think he went anyplace. I think he stayed in the

room. No, I don't think he did. He never told me about seeing anything.

Of course the brother was a doctor, you know. He'd been all around Portland and one thing and another. I guess it didn't bother him to get around the city. But I think Bill was afraid of getting lost, probably if he got out of that room.

But anyway, this nephew never told me nothing about writing any book at all. And I had some Indian boys out there piling that hay for me, it was about dinner time and I had the car there and I was on the inside of the fence, and he was on the other side. I said, "Well I'm going to have to go get my men for dinner." I said, "You better come up and have some dinner with us." "No," he said, "we won't go up there," he said. Had a woman with him, I guess was his wife. He said, "It's been very interesting talking to you," he said.

Well these Tracy's there from Lakeview was trying to buy us out, and they had the banker from Klamath Falls, Federal Land Bank man, and they had the banker from Lakeview both out there. And I had to run around all day with them there showing them this country, you know. By golly, I couldn't figure out why that guy come to see me. See because hell, I didn't know him, never seen him before. And I was sitting in the back seat with this banker from Lakeview, because I knew him. Never done no business with him, but I knew him. And I was telling him about this. I said, "I can't understand," I said, "why that guy come to see me." "Well," he said, "I can tell you why he come to see you." He said, "They are writing a book," he said, "about Bill Brown's life." And he said, "This Jackman is writing a book, that wrote that book for Rube Long." And he said, "Jackman is not very well." And he said, "This nephew is going around," he said, "getting information," he said, "for Jackman." He said, "Jackman will be around to see you some of these days." But Jackman died, see.

So this nephew, I was in the hospital there awhile, and, in Burns there, and he come up there to the hospital to see me. Well then I knew what he was looking for. And I said, "I could have give you a lot more information," I said, "the day you was out there if you'd have told me you were writing a book." But I said, "You never said anything about writing a book." I said, "have you been down to see Virgil Shields?" I said, "Bill Brown give himself up to Virgil's dad when he killed that man out there at Wagontire." "Oh yeah," he said, "I've been down there," he said. But he never went to see Henry Street. And hell, Henry could have give him a lot of information. Henry told me he never come to see him.

So anyway, why Bill told me how he, well you know I knew he killed that man. And when I worked for him I never did think that ---

RICHARD: When did you work for him Sam, do you remember? What years was it?

SAM: Oh, I don't remember just, well I worked for him just when he was going broke out there. Gathered horses for him the same time Frank was gathering horses.

RICHARD: Uh huh. I see.

SAM: I gathered them by the head, you know, so much a head. That's what I say, you can never tell nothing about Bill Brown, you see. He come over there, he fired me and Frank McCulley once over there. We was helping them in the spring to lamb, you know. A lot of us buckaroos would go out there and help him lambing, because he never run no horses until about the first of June, until they got fat, you know. And so Frank and I was working out there for him lambing, and we just started out there. And Frank was going to herd the drop band at night, you know, night herd the drop band. And so the herders brought the drop band in, you know, in the evening. And they put them in this kind of flat down there. And there is where Frank herded them. Well Frank was ---

RICHARD: Was this on Buck Creek?

SAM: What?

RICHARD: This over on Buck Creek?

SAM: No, that's out here by Benjamin.

RICHARD: Oh, okay.

SAM: Out there. There is where he usually lambled is out there, you know. Well the next morning why Bill looked down there and he seen them sheep in the flat there, see where Frank had held them that night. Because the day herders brought them there. I think Frank was more right than Bill was. And he jumped all over Frank because there was a rim rock up there for holding them sheep down there in the flat. "And confound it," he said, "don't you know enough," he said, "to put them sheep up under that rim rock," he said, "out of the wind?" Frank said, "That's where the day herders put them." "And," he said, "I thought that's where you wanted them." He said, "If you'd have wanted them put up under that rim rock," he said, "you should have told me, or you should have told the day herders to put them up there." And they got into it see, and he fired Frank.

Well Frank and I had been pretty damn good buddies, and he come in the tent there, you see, and Frank he went out there --- I'm getting a little ahead of my story, and he saddled up old Seventeen, old rope horse there that we used there roping on. The horse he'd stay in camp, you know. Bill had this old horse out there in camp, and Frank just went out there and saddled up that horse, you know, and was going to ride off. And Bill he come in the tent there where we was, and --- "Confound it," he said, "you know what you can do about a man," he said, "taking a horse," he said, "right in front of your eyes," he said. "I know," he said, "you can have a man arrested for stealing your horse." But he said, "When he takes him in front of your eyes, I don't know what you can do."

"Any of you fellers know what you can do?"

I didn't want to see Frank get in trouble, so I went out and told Frank, I don't know whether I'd take that damn horse or not. I said, "By god he's talking about having you arrested if you take that horse." And Frank he just yanked that saddle off of that horse and laid him up that tent and said, "Stick him in your ass," he said. And so then he fired me, see. Because he knew I went out and told Frank. I didn't give a damn, because I didn't want to see Frank get in any trouble, you know.

But then I worked for him other times, out there at different times. I don't remember, just --- but the last work I done for him is when he was gathering them horses. And I gathered horses around Glass Buttes, around that Perry place there. You know he come over there and he stayed all night, Bill did there this one night. And I hadn't been riding my saddle horses for quite awhile, and pretty good shape, you know, and the next morning why we was out there at the barn and these saddle horses come in there to water.

And Bill he was looking at them saddle horses of mine. "Well," he said, "you have some very good saddle horses," he said, "there." He said, "I want to hire you," he said, "to go to Alkali," he said, "to gather them horses for me," he said. "Not very much feed," he said, "down there at Alkali." "But," he said, "if you want to take horses," he said, "that are good ones," he said. "Horses," he said, "that can run fast," he said, "and a long time." Said, "I've not handled very many horses," but he said, "I've handled enough sheep, and I know how horses should be handled," he said. You couldn't help but laugh at him sometimes. So I said, "Bill, how much you going to pay me?" "Well I'll give you seventy-five dollars a month," he said, "and your board." "Why," I said, "I wouldn't run them damn saddles horses for anybody for seventy-five dollars a month." "Well confound it," he said,

"how much do you want?" I said, "Well I'm not going to go to Alkali to gather horses for you." I said, "I'll gather these horses right around here where I live, Bill, for two and a half a head." And I said, "If I don't get any horses then you don't owe me nothing," I said. But I'm not going to Alkali to gather horses. Hell there is no place to stay down there; you'd have had to build a corral. No corral or nothing, you know. Hell he didn't have no horses down there anyway, many horses down there at Alkali. "Well," he said, "thought that was a little steep, but that was alright for me to go ahead and gather the horses."

So "Punk" Robinson he was there with me, and we went out there, and we were just a few days, we had about seventy-five head of horses in the field there, you know. He just come over there just a raising hell. Some guy brought him over in a car, he never could drive a car, you know. He owned a car once there, but he never could drive it, he always had somebody else drive it. Well he come over there, he said, "Confound it," he says, "they tell me you're gathering these horses over on the head of the river," he said, "where they're all gentle." He says, "You used to get these wild horses out of Glass Buttes, and out of these junipers around here." Well hell, we'd never been near the god damn head of the river. In fact there was never no horses running around the head of the river, because there was never enough grass over there much anyway. They all come out to Glass Buttes, you know, in them junipers there, get grass, something to eat out there.

And so he said, "Well," he said, "I shall not pay two and a half a head," but he said, "I shall pay a dollar and a half a head, and you can gather them anyplace you want to," he said. Well he just took off; he had this guy leave, see.

Hell we had them horses. Goddamn, the more I thought about it, the madder it made me. And I said to "Punk", "God damn it," I said, "people don't lie like that." I said,

"Hell, we never been over in the head of the river." And I said, "People just don't lie like that." I said, "Nobody told him we was over in the head of the river. All he come over here for is to Jew me down on the price of these horses." And that was all it was too. And by god I commence to getting mad then. So I said, "To hell with him, god damn him," I said. I got in my car and I headed for Buck Creek, I know that's where he went.

So Frank Morgan, and Frank might have told you about that, I don't know. But anyway Frank Morgan and old Rick, I don't know if you ever know old Rick, Rickman was his name, we called him Rick.

RICHARD: Leonard.

SAM: From around Silver Creek there.

RICHARD: Yeah, that's, yeah Barney has his old place.

SAM: Probably dead now. Yeah.

RICHARD: Up there in Long Hollow. Had his old place, yeah.

SAM: Yeah, yeah. Well anyway, all them guys was setting around there see, when I got over there. Hell Bill didn't get over there until them guys was pretty well in, you know, all setting around there. And damn I said, "Bill, I want you to come and pay me what you owe me, and get them god damn horses," I said, "out of my field." "Because," I said, "I'm through gathering horses for you." "Confound it," he said, "I was depending on you getting twenty-five head more anyway," he said. "Well," I said, "I'm through getting horses."

Well he kind of give his buckaroo outfit hell. Frank Morgan and them guys, and I knew most of them guys, pretty good horse runners, you know. He said, "You've gathered more horses in two or three days then this confound it outfit," he says, "gathered in a week," he says. "I went out," he said, "I had a good horse or two," he said. "I'd get more horses myself than this confound it outfit," he said. He said, "I went out this

morning," he said, "I brought in nine head," he said, "I went right back out," he said, "I got in seven head more."

Old Rick he spoke up, "Yeah, but Bill," he said, "whose horses did you have?" He said, "That first nine head of horses," he said, "you brought in was all Wesley Street's saddle horses and his bell mare." "And," he said, "the other bunch of horses that you brought in Bill, you never had a damn horse in that bunch that belonged to you." "Confound it," he said, "how was I to know whose horses they was." (Laughter) He didn't know a damn thing about horses, you know.

So I got --- I said, "Well Bill you get in the car," I said, "and come on home and stay all night with me, and I'll get them horses in the corral in the morning and count them for you, and we can do something with them." "All right," he said. So he come on home and stayed all night.

The next morning we corralled horses. There was one old black mare in there that was awful thin, and she had a little colt there that was damn near leppy, you know. Old Bill he could look at that and see that that damn colt wasn't getting any milk, you know. Just like a leppy calf. "Confound it," he says, "what does that belong to?" "Well," I said, "I think it belongs to that old black mare there, Bill." I said, "She ain't got no milk." I said, "She is older than hell." "Well," he says, "do you want a little pet?" I said, "No, I don't want that god damn thing," I said. So he said, "Could you take him to Hampton for me?" I said, "Yeah, we can take him down to Hampton for you."

By god he just starts off a foot. I said, "Where are you going Bill?" "Going down to Hampton." Hell it's ten miles from that Perry place down there to Hampton. "Are you going to walk down there," I said? "Well confound it," he said, "I can step it off in no time." I said, "Hell I got a car here, and old John Perry is living right there in that little house right

across the road there." And I said, "He can drive a car." I said, "Hell I'll have him take you down there, you don't need to walk." And, "Alright," he said. So I went over there and told John to drive him down there to Hampton. "Yeah," he said, he would take him down there.

So I --- before I went to running these horses for Bill there, I'd got twenty-five head of them damn old horses of Bill's there, and they were wilder than hell and running around with my horses there. And I held them in the corral there and I went up to Wagontire and Frank was riding up there. And Frank and Les and that outfit together, pretty near all his horses, you know.

And I told Frank, I said, "I got twenty-five head of them old rat heads," I said, "down there of Bill's. And I wish you'd come down there and get them," I said. "I want to get them away from my horses," I said. "They're hard to handle." I said, "You better send down a pretty, a couple of pretty damn good men," I said, "to get them horses, because they're pretty snaky." "Alright," he said, "I'll send somebody down there in the morning."

Well he sent his brother Les, and Bobby Bryant down there. I turned the horses out of the corral for them, and by god they headed towards Wagontire, and as far as I could see them, one man was ahead of them and another behind them, and them horses just run like hell. Well you could see down there a mile and a half or more, and they were still running like hell as they went over that little ridge there out of sight to Wagontire. And I told Bill, you know, about giving him these horses. And so old John he taken in, and we taking the horses.

So when we got down there with the horses, and put them in the corral there at Hampton, why by god no Bill, no car, and no John. I said to Mrs. Meeks, "Where did they go with my car?" Well they headed, the outfit was coming across from Buck Creek, you

know, and they was going to pick these horses up, see there at Hampton, go on into Bend and chicken feed them. And Bill wanted to go back over that damn ridge there where he could look back over there to see if he could see them guys a coming. And Christ, nothing but a god damn old wagon road up there, you know. And they took off up that damn thing, and hell they wasn't there when we got there with the horses.

So pretty quick here come old Bill, walking down the road there. I said, "What the hell happened?" Well he said, "He hit a high rock up there and," he said, "all the oil run out of the car," he said. And he said, "If he runs a car," he says, "it will ruin it." And he said, "Which is possible, so --- possibly so," he said. "I don't know nothing about a car," he said, "he wants you to come up there with something to plug the hole and bring some oil up there so we can get it down here." So I got some oil there and some old rags from Mrs. Meeks and went up there and we plugged that damn hole to hold the oil in the damn thing, until I got it home that way. I had to take the damn pan off of the thing to fix it then.

So when I went to settle up with Bill, why he wrote me this check for these horses. I said, "Now Bill I want to ask you a question, and I don't want you to lie to me." "Alright," he said, "what is it?" I said, "Ain't these the cheapest horses you ever gathered," I said, "if you'd have given me the two and a half a head?" "I'm mortally certain they are," he said. "I'm mortally certain," he said, "that the tail end of these horses cost me seven and a half a head to get them."

Well what the hell can you do with somebody like that? I won't make any money, but --- Bill Brown was a guy that thought everybody ought to work like hell for what he got. And he thought I got that money too easy. But he never paid me off at two and a half, but he paid me for them twenty-five head that I give him up there. "And you say you give the boys twenty-five head more." I said, "Yes, but Bill I'll give you them god damn

horses, I told you I'd give you them horses." "Confound it," he said, "nobody should do something for me for nothing." So he paid me off at a dollar and a half a head for all of them. Amounted to about, you know, what the two and a half a head would have been on the bunch. But I don't know.

RICHARD: Well you know, he seems petty this way.

SAM: What?

RICHARD: He seemed kind of small and cheap that way.

SAM: Yeah.

RICHARD: But yet all these homesteaders, why he gave them anything they wanted, didn't he?

SAM: Oh, yeah. Hell, he'd, Christ he told me he was forty thousand dollars behind on the store over there, you know. But he said in them days I was doing a lot of charity work anyway. And he said that I didn't care, he said, then. He told me he said, "If I'd of give the horses away after the First World War," he said, "I'd of been better off." It's the last big sale he ever made was in that First World War he sold a thousand head of geldings to the government for the army. I guess most of them was infantry horses, I think, eighty dollars a head. He made about ... thousand dollars for them horses. But he told me I spent forty thousand dollars a riding for them horses, and never realized a dollar out of them. He said, "If I'd of given them away, I'd of been better off, after the First World War."

He told me how he got all them horses. I don't know, I never heard anybody ever tell me, that Bill Brown ever told him just how he got all them horses. But he did me. He probably told other people too, I imagine he did. But I never heard anyone ever mention it. He told me when he first come out there, he said, he got a hold of four hundred head of sheep. Old Jimmy McCuen told me he stole them. Now I don't know whether he did or

not, but old Jimmy McCuen lived there with Bill for years. And lots of people thought that Jimmy had something on him or something. Because by god he'd take anything he wanted around there, old Jimmy McCuen, was a Scotsman, he was. And --- but anyway he got a hold of these sheep, he said. And it was when he first started out there, you know.

And he said, "I done all of my own herding, all of my own camp tending, until I had five thousand sheep." He said, "I never hired nobody," until he had five thousand sheep. And he said, "There was no such a thing," he said, "of selling lambs." He said, "Them days, that was never heard of," he said. And he said he had a lot of old wethers in that band of sheep when he had these five thousand sheep. So he said, "I hired a man," he said, "to herd my sheep." He said, "I hired another man to tend camp for him." He said, "I hired another man to help me," and he said, "we took all them old wethers out of there and they drove them I guess, to The Dalles." That's the only damn way I know he ever got them down there in them days. Took them down there to The Dalles and he sold them.

RICHARD: This would be in the real early 1900's, huh?

SAM: Oh, no, hell that was way before that.

RICHARD: Oh, way before then.

SAM: Christ yes, he come in there in the 1800's and something.

RICHARD: Oh, I see.

SAM: Oh, yeah, that was a long, way before my time. And we come in here in 1909, see.

RICHARD: Yeah.

SAM: And he --- well my dad told me all about that. That slump come in horses, see, my dad told me what caused that. You see they pulled all of these damn streetcars in all

these cities with horses and mules at one time. Because I rode on a streetcar myself, and I can still remember that. I was just a little kid in Lake Charles, Louisiana, that was pulled by mules. And hell they got that electricity, and it just shoved all them damn horses onto the market. They didn't have no use for them, and they just sold them.

They just flooded the damn country with horses, see. My dad told me about that. Bill never told me nothing about that, but my dad did. And it had to be the same time, must have been. But he said, "Nobody --- everybody thought that horses would never be worth nothing again." But he said, "I did." And he said, "I sold them wethers," and he said, "I went on down to Portland," and he said, "I borrowed twenty thousand dollars," he said, "from my brother." He said, "I come back here," and he said, "and I bought all of the best horses there was," he said, "in Lake and Harney Counties, all of the best horses." He didn't say he bought all of them, he said he bought all of the best horses. And he said, "I never give over ten dollars for any horse." And he said the best buy that he thought he ever made on horses was right there at Silver Creek. Now he told me that party's name, but hell he was talking before my time then, you know, and he told me the name of this man but I've forgot what that was. He said he thought that was the best buy he made on horses, was right there.

He said, "I was going to Burns," he said, "for a load of supplies," and he said, "with a wagon." And he said, "I met this man a horseback that owned these horses," and he said, "of course," he said, "he had heard of me buying horses," he said. And he said to me, "Mr. Brown," he said, "you better buy my horses." Bill said, "I said to him, well," he said, "I don't know," he said, "whether I would or not." He said, "How much do you want for them," he said? And he said he had two brands of horses. Horseshoe horses, I suppose there is where he got that horseshoe bar, probably horseshoe horses, and spear

"F" horses, he said. Two different brands of horses.

And he said, "I'd been told by reliable sources there was three or four hundred head of them horses." And he said, "I'd been told by people that knew how many of them horses, just about how many of them horses there was." He said --- I said to him, "How much do you want for them?" He said he'd take a thousand dollars for them. So he said, "I wrote him a check right there," he said, "for the horses."

Said he said, "Now Mr. Brown, you come down to the ranch," and he said, "I'll sell you my stallion." He said, "I went down to that ranch," and he said, "he had an imported Shire stallion there," he said, "it had cost him over three thousand dollars." And he said, "I bought that horse for ten dollars." So he said, "Five years," he said, "from the time I bought those horses," and he said, "there was a number of horse buyers come in."

Well it would probably take about five years for them old streetcar horses to die off, probably, you know. I imagine then there was a demand for horses. "Never sold no horses," he said, for five years." Said, "Five years," he said, "from the time I bought those horses," he said, "there was a number of horse buyers come in." And he said, "One man offered me sixty dollars a head for the horses in a private sale." But he said, "I told this man no, I'll not sell the horses that way." He said, "I've talked to other buyers," he said, "there is other buyers interested in buying horses," and he said, "I'm going to hold a public auction sale," he said, "on the other side of Wagontire there," he said, "at those Lost Creek Corrals," and he said, "if you want to buy horses," he said, "you be there." He said, "I told him the date I was going to hold this auction," he said.

Well Bill told me, you know, he was kind of a funny talking old guy anyway. He said, "I had on a very large pair of bib overalls," he said, "very large pockets," he said, and he said, "I'm a fairly good auctioneer myself." And he said, "I went away from that corral

that day with twenty thousand dollars in my pockets. He said this man, he said that wanted to buy horses at sixty dollars a head, he took a hundred head at a hundred dollars a head. But he said, "I heard afterwards that the horses broke him." But he said, "I don't know whether they did or not," he said. Well hell from then on he just kept selling horses, you know forty or fifty thousand dollars, or a hundred thousand dollars worth of horses every year.

How in the hell --- he got so god damn much money he didn't know what the hell to do with it, you know. He just give it away. Well he told me there when he stayed all night with me there, quite a few times there, just when he was going broke, you know, chicken feeding them horses. He told me, he said, "I was very foolish," he said, "in giving my money away," he said, "when I was so young." He said, "Now it would have been the time to give it away."

Well Bill Brown would have never went broke if he hadn't of give that money away. The depression is what broke him. The depression come along there then, of course them horses, you know, too. Spent a lot of money. But forty thousand dollars wasn't much money to Bill Brown along in them days. Said he was forty thousand dollars --- spent forty thousand dollars riding for them, never realized a dollar out of them.

But the sheep I think would have probably paid him out, you know, eventually. If he'd of had all that money it would have carried him through there, he wouldn't have been broke anyway. Like he said, he was foolish, he said. Told me once, he said, "I was offered twenty thousand dollars for the Gap." He had that all in alfalfa, you know. Had a ditch running down there from Sheep Mountain. Told me about that, he said, "I was offered twenty thousand dollars for the Gap." He said, "I was very foolish I didn't take it," he said. Of course that went to hell, you know, and he didn't have no water anymore

there.

RICHARD: Well actually he wasn't a horseman then. He kind of ---

SAM: Oh, he didn't know as much about a horse, all he knew was get on a horse and run him to death. That's all Bill Brown ever

--- no, he just seemed to think a horse was like an automobile. You could just keep a going faster all the --- hell he walked in over there at the Perry place there once and "Huck" Smith, you knew him didn't you?

RICHARD: Sure, yeah.

SAM: Well old "Huck" Smith was working over there for him then. He borrowed this horse from "Huck" I guess. Hell along towards the last there, you know, never did have no saddle horses. Hell he had lots of good saddle horses there when he was running them horses. But towards the last, he didn't even have a saddle horse. Hell he walked in there to the Perry place. He told me, he said, "I got a horse," he said, "from Smith." "Confound it horse," he said, "I never seen such a worthless horse," he said. "I seen a bunch of horses," and he said, "I run them a ways," he said, "and pretty quick," he said, "the horse started trotting." He said, "Pretty quick he wouldn't trot anymore," and he said, "pretty quick then he wouldn't walk anymore." "Well," he said, "I just pulled the saddle off," he said, "and he walked in there see." Well I know Bill Brown enough, he run that goddamn horse to death, I'll betcha.

Hell he killed a horse there at Sand Springs, just run the damn horse to death. And then he let him water there, you know. I wasn't over there then, but a guy was telling me about that. He told me about it too, he didn't tell me nothing about his horse a dying, but other people did.

He had a, he built a big corral there right at, you know where the lost forest is don't

you?

SIDE B

SAM: ... and god he must have had a --- I never did run any horses in that corral there. But he must have had quite a lot of manpower there. Because god them logs was that big around. He had them notched, you know, and just put them one on top of the other. He had them high enough to stop horses. The guy told me that run the horses there when he had that corral there, he said them horses awful damn wild. And he said them big logs there, he said that twelve head of horses had broke their neck there while they was running horses there. They run into them logs, you know, just broke their neck in that corral. Hell they couldn't knock the corral down.

But anyway, he was running horses there and Bill was out there, I guess, this time. He told me about that. And Newman, that was the first, about the first buckaroo foreman he had I guess, old Dave Newman. I don't know whether you ever met him or not, he was over there at Burns awhile. But a horse fell down and hurt Newman, broke his leg or some damn thing. And he went over there to Burns and sued Bill for five hundred dollars. And hell, Bill he didn't even --- the damn thing didn't even go to trial. He just went over and give him five hundred dollars. He left and went up to Alaska, I guess. He must have made quite a lot of money up there, because he stayed there at that Central Hotel there until he died. And by god you couldn't stay in a hotel all the time like that unless you had a little money, you know. And anyway Newman was running his buckaroo outfit then.

And Bill told me they'd lost a bunch of horses out there. Got away from Newman two or three times. I guess they was pretty wild. And old Bill he was telling me about this see, he said, "I went out that morning especially," he said, "to see if I could find that bunch

of horses," he says, "and I did." And he said, "If they started in a southwardly direction," he said. And he says, "As I would get near, towards the front the wilder ones would start charging toward the front like they were going to split." He said, "And I would drop behind them however and follow them along and they went around Sheep Rock." Well Jesus Christ I've run horses all over every foot of that country, and hell it is ten miles from Sand Springs to Sheep Rock. And you go around Sheep Rock that, hell there is three or four miles around that, just that circle around there.

And he said, "I got them turned back," and he said, "if you'd have seen me driving that bunch of horses," he said, "you couldn't have told but what I was driving a gentle bunch of horses." He said, "I was only forty yards away," he said. Hell he, goddamn he had them horses run down. He must have had a hell of a good horse. Well he said, "I would have got everyone of them." But Bill Currey was riding there at Sand Springs see, and him and his daughters there, and they was good horse runners, and old Bill Currey had about fifteen hundred head of horses."

Well they seen Bill a coming with his horses see, and they was going to come out to help him, corral them there. And them damn wild horses; I run them enough to know just what they'd do. You see a bunch of new riders coming up there, and that scares the dickens out of them horses, and if they got anything left, they'll put on another burst of speed, see, which they did. And old Bill he said, "Confound it old horse man like he was, he should have known better." He said, "I was waving my hat at him to stay back," he said. And he said, "The damn horses would split," and he said, "I wouldn't have got any of them then if they hadn't of helped me." But he said, "They got three or four head of them I think, something like that." I'd only got a few of them anyway.

Bill told me that part of it, but he didn't tell me that his horse died. But another guy

told me he did, said they pulled the god damn saddle off his horse and he was red hot anyway, and the spring right there, all kinds of water, you know. Said, "Bill, don't water that horse, you'll kill him." "Oh confound it," he said, "I like a drink when I'm thirsty," he said. (Laughter) The next morning his horse was dead. If he hadn't of watered him he might of made it. But then he might have died anyway. Hell you can't run like that, a horse can't hardly take it, you know. But god damn, Couch a running the outfit, the buckaroo outfit, Couch wouldn't give him a good horse. He come out there, hell he wouldn't, give him the most worthless son-of-a-bitch he had, you know. Because he'd run them to death.

RICHARD: Yeah, his own horses.

SAM: Give him a damn horse out like that, Couch did, you know. God old Bill, he'd --- Couch, "Confound it," he said, "a man must be an idiot," he said, "to break a horse like that to ride," he said. Couch said, "I didn't break the horse to ride," he said, "I broke him to rope on." Bill couldn't hurt him.

RICHARD: Well did they steal many horses from him?

SAM: Oh, you damn right they stole horses from him.

RICHARD: He had to depend on you guys to buckaroo for him.

SAM: Well, I didn't think, I thought Bill Brown was exaggerating about people stealing horses; I really did, from him. Until Del Overton told me what he did. He was an old timer out there, you know. I don't know whether you ever been to that natural corral out there right close to where I lived there from Dry Valleys, between Dry Valley up there close to Big Juniper, in there you know. Just a natural corral in the rocks. All you, they had to do was put a gate across there, pretty near, to corral the horses. We used to use them corrals, you know, a lot out there. Well Del Overton told me, he said, "I rode up," he said,

"and looked over into that god damn corral there," and he said, "and that was the bloodiest mess," he said, "I ever seen in my life." He said, "Them guys had about a hundred head of them damn big horseshoe bar geldings," he said, "in there, and they was just throwing them damn things down," he said, "and just cutting that horseshoe bar off of both jaws," and he said, "I knew every damn one of them guys." Said, "I had a rifle too," and he said, "I told them well hell I never saw nothing," he said. And he said, "He never did say nothing about it."

Of course pretty near all them guys was dead when Del told me about it. Del worked for me out there awhile, you know. Well I said, "Del, what in the hell," I said, "would they do with them god damn horses," I said, "until them damn jaws healed up?" "Jesus," I said, "Bill ever got a hold of some of them horses, them guys would have been in trouble." Well them days there wasn't many people in this country, you know.

Well Del said, "I don't know," but he said, "they'd have to put them in a field someplace," he said, "until them jaws healed up and everything." Well I said, "What the hell would that look like, anyway?" Well he said, "What they was doing," he said, "they was, they was just cutting that off." And he said, "Then they'd just take a rawhide and just stitch it, pulling that skin kind of back together, you know, and sewing it back together." He said, "I imagine it would just look like a straight bar or something across there when it healed up probably, I don't know." He said, "That's what they was a doing."

Well hell, a hundred head of them damn horses, when we first come to this country even in 1909, you couldn't get no kind of a horse for less than a hundred or a hundred and fifty dollars. That was a means of transportation in them days, you know. There wasn't any automobiles or nothing. And he said, "I guess," he said, "they'd head down through Nevada, probably down through there someplace into California, you know." And

they could sell them horses, Christ for probably a hundred and fifty, two hundred dollars apiece down there, I imagine.

But I didn't, you know he had Bill Moss arrested for stealing horses from him. And the jury turned Moss loose. "Coons" Carlon, Homer Carlon's dad was on the jury, and "Coons" told me all about that. He said, "I held out to convict that god damn Moss," he said. But he said, "Hell every damn one of them other jury men," he said, "they was against me," and he said, "hell I couldn't do nothing by myself." So they ended up by turning Moss loose.

And old "Coons" he talked pretty loud anyway, said, "I was in a pool hall there in Paisley," and he said, "I was a talking there and telling them, some people in there." "Well I thought that son-of-a-gun," he said, "ought to have been convicted, but by god," he said, "everybody was against me." He said, "There wasn't a damn thing I could do." And by god he said, "Bill was in there, and I guess he heard me say that." Said he come over there, and he said, "Well," he said, "if I was a drinking man," he said, "I'd buy you a drink." But he said, "However," he said, "I'll buy you a box of candy," he said. (Laughter) Old "Coons" would probably rather had the drink.

RICHARD: Well Bill, he didn't drink at all, huh?

SAM: No, claimed he never tasted alcohol in his life. Stayed one night over there, and old "Punk" Robinson, you know, he was always joking, anyway. "God damn him," he said, "he never did say," said he never tasted alcohol in his life, and we had whiskey there and in fact we was making it back there then. Said, "I'm going to pour some in the hot cakes," he said, "and get some of it down him anyway." So he did, he poured some in the hot cakes. I don't know if Bill --- probably never did know there was any in there, you know.

RICHARD: Did he ever have a girlfriend?

SAM: Huh?

RICHARD: Did Bill ever have a girlfriend?

SAM: Oh, yeah. Hell, yes. He had one he was crazy about, but that didn't work out very good. That was, that was --- you knew

RICHARD: Oh ---

SAM: Ruby Street.

RICHARD: Sure.

SAM: Henry Street's wife, didn't you.

RICHARD: Yeah, sure.

SAM: Her sister.

RICHARD: She was, yeah. Uh huh. Well she was just a kid though, wasn't she?

SAM: Yeah. Well she told me, Ruby told me, said, "God she was scared to death of him." God dam, said he'd kill me. Oh Christ yes, you know. That song that guy wrote about Bill, you know. Some guy working over there, he was kind of a poet anyway, guess he wrote a song. Said Bill fell in love with a girl on Silver Creek, he bought her a diamond and pinned it on her neck. She took it and she shook it, and she stomped it on the floor, and Bill was more than certain that he didn't love her anymore. (Laughter) Hell he bought her a diamond broach, I guess. Cost a lot of money, I guess.

Ruby was telling me --- I didn't know who that was, and I was talking to Ruby once, telling her about Bill telling me about his girlfriend, you know. Bill he was telling me about that. "Confound it, you know," he said, "I could just see that girl just a floating in front of me," he said. "And doggone," he said, "it took my sheep," and he said, "went right down

there, and doggone it," he said, "after I was there awhile," he said, "I just knew they was making fun of me behind my back," he said. "I took my sheep and I got out of there," he said. (Laughter) I guess that was after she --- I guess she took that damn broach and just threw it on the floor.

RICHARD: Did he have any other girlfriends?

SAM: None that I ever knowed of, no.

RICHARD: Never chased around in town or anything?

SAM: No. No, I guess that ended him on the women friends. He didn't even want any women around camp, sheep camp or anything like that, you know. Come over there, after he got Charlie Houston to run that buckaroo outfit for a while there. He about stole him blind too. And by god this old Charlie he had some girl, she was about sixteen or seventeen years old, and old Charlie was about fifty or sixty living with her. And old Bill, he come over there at the Gap, you know, and somebody told him that Houston had a bunch of women over there. Come over there, and it was after dark, you know, in the night, and ... beds all over the floor there, I guess. And lighting matches around, "Where are you Houston?" "In here," he said. And Bill, he went in there and lit a match there and a woman laying in bed right there beside him, pretty near it, and he sat down and said, "Who is this?" And Charlie says, "That's Irene." That was this girl he was living with. "Confound it," he says, "no gentleman shall sleep in the same room with a lady." "Confound it you get up and move your bed to the granary," he said. Made him get up and take his bed to the granary. And he slept out all night with him there in the granary. The next morning fired him. (Laughter) He said, "Confound it Houston, how many women have you got," he said? "Well there is three here, Bill," he said.

Christ he was always, I know Charlie Houston, you know, there never was a bigger

thief. We branded right there where Bill Brown had ten horses to his one there at Pringle Flat. I was riding there with the outfit myself; we branded fifteen head of oreans there for Houston, and one for Bill Brown. God damn, you know, them guys a working there got to even making kind of fun of that old Charlie you know, as soon as one of them would hit the ground. They say, "Well bring on that CC," he said. Hell he just, all them, branded them, he just took them.

Old Bill bragging on what a good man he was. By god, if out there in a sheep camp once one spring there, you know, old Bill he had a, tried Perry Cross over there at Prineville for stealing off of this damn Houston. Well hell, I knew this Perry Cross, I testified for him over there, and that was when old Bill, he thought that Charlie was so damn good, you know.

Got a letter from him, somebody, the camp tender brought it out there to the sheep camp, you know. And Bill he was reading this letter, and said, "Well," he said, "how is Charlie making it," he said? We had this trial over at Prineville, see and I'd just come back from there, a witness on that damn thing. He said, "Well," he said, "Charlie said there was a lot of liars over there," he said, "on that trial," he said, "they'll do it," he said, "every time," he said. "Turned Cross loose," he said. After Bill throwed that damn letter down there, you know, and after he left and got out of there, I picked that damn thing up and read it. And he'd evidently stole the harness or something off of old Bill, you know. And I guess old Bill had kind of found out about that. I guess about that time he was getting kind of fed up with him. Then anyway, he must have sent him word or something about this damn harness. Old Charlie, I don't know whether you knew Sumner Houston. Frank Houston, his boys, I don't know whether you knew them or not. But anyway ---

RICHARD: Sumner is still alive, isn't he?

SAM: Huh?

RICHARD: Sumner is still alive?

SAM: Sumner is, yeah. He had an operation in the hospital a while back. I went up there to see him and they took his nuts out. Yeah he had a damn cancer, or something a growing. He said they operated on him once before, and told him that they was going to have to do that, I guess. And I guess they did do it this time. But anyway, anyway in this letter Bill said, "Well," he said, "I got some of the back straps and some of that harness over there." He said, "I'll bring it back," he said. "I don't know," he said, "how the boys come to get that," he said. Well hell I know how they come to get it, Christ when he ended up at the Perry place there a riding for horses there, he took all the god damn grub out of Bill Brown's wagon and put it all in his. (Laughter) God damn that, oh he's the worst there ever --- Henry Carlon run that thing for him awhile. That was a different Carlon. There is Carlon's over here at --- I rode with them a lot. Knew Henry pretty well. A horse fell down with Henry, and he was in that camp wagon, was laying in that camp wagon, the rest of the boys out there riding, you know. Bill he come over there, and he looked up in that camp wagon and seen Henry laying in there. And said, "Well," he said, "young man," he said, "I suppose you're drunk." "No," Henry said, "no I'm not drunk Bill. A horse fell down and hurt my leg," he said. "I can't ride." "Well," he said, "I suppose you're not seriously hurt or you'd be in the hospital at my expense." (Laughter) He was up --- I guess he is still living. I asked Sumner here a while back where old Henry was, and he said he's up here at Williams Lake, up there in Canada.

RICHARD: Huh. Well if someone was hurt on the ranch, did Bill take care of him?

SAM: Oh, I think so, yeah, hell yes. I think anybody like that he did. Well John Condon, I traded John Condon out of all of his saddle horses. He's over here at Prineville. I went

over to see John here. Christ I hadn't seen him for four years, and god damn, he didn't know me. I traded him whiskey for all them saddle horses. Two of them were horseshoe bar horses, and he'd been a running horses see for Bill Brown when he was chicken feeding them horses, along when Frank was running the outfit out there, you know, Frank Morgan. And run a horse of his to death, I guess, and killed him. And Bill give him these two unbroke horses. And I asked him, I said, "How did you get these horseshoe bar horses, John?" And told me what happened, he said that Bill give him them two horses. He broke them to ride, and they just started horses. One of them was a hell of a good horse. The other son-of-a-bitch turned out wasn't worth a damn. Just young horses. He said, "I'll ride them for you, just to show you they're all right," he said, "you know."

Oh, well, did you ever hear that song that guy wrote about him, over there, that worked over there at Buck Creek?

RICHARD: No. Do you know it?

SAM: Well, I know most of it. But I don't know all of it either. Anyway it starts out, it says old Bill Brown of Fife come to the desert to herd sheep for the rest of his life. He started out for Benjamin with a few old ewes, a hiking right along in his number eleven shoes. McCuen seen a bunch of broncos and they wasn't very far, so Bill decided to brand them with a horseshoe bar. Along come Newman a looking for a job, said he was a rustler, but he didn't like to rob. They talked him out of rover and it wasn't hard to choose, and Bill made him foreman of his Cayuse buckaroos. Bill started for Buck Creek with his pockets full of chuck, but he thought he'd go to Hampton to try and change his luck. But the weight of a 30-30 come a whizzing down the draw, and Bill was more certain that the work was pretty raw. And a cowman killed four hundred head of sheep for him up there in Hampton Buttes. All of that song, every bit of it is truth.

RICHARD: I'll be damned.

SAM: A fellow was telling me about this, somebody sang that song to him over there at Buck Creek once, and god he just commence to laugh to beat hell. "Said what are you laughing about, Bill?" "Confound it," he said, "I wear number twelve's." (Laughter) Had his shoes one size too small. (Laughter)

RICHARD: Do you remember the rest of it Sam, after they ---

SAM: What?

RICHARD: Do you remember the rest of the song after that?

SAM: Well I don't know all of it. But anyway, his sister was kind of mixed up in it. I did practically know all of it at one time, but I kind of forgot it.

But anyway, there is an old Italian out there, Gabriel Fatonie, (sp.?) had a homestead right at the other end of Hampton Buttes there. And he was another guy that didn't know a damn thing about horses either. But he had some work horses, and he done some freighting there for Bill. And Sarah, Bill's sister, she stayed out there, you know, a lot. And helped him out quite a bit, and run the store there some. But anyway, she was mixed up in the song too.

She had a mine up there at Snow Mountain, they called it Greenhorn's Mine, and she thought she was going to make a lot of money out of that, I guess, I don't know. But then she hired this old Italian Uncle Fatonie to haul some stuff up there to that Greenhorn Mine, I guess. But anyway it says in this song, it says, sister Sarah hired Fatonie to freight to the Greenhorn Mine. Said Fatonie was out to make a little dough, but Fatonie said he couldn't make it through eleven feet of snow. He got stuck up there, I guess, and had a hell of a time getting out of there. Oh, that old Fatonie, when they put in this irrigation system over here at Prineville, I was about sixteen years old I guess then.

Burns Young out here on the desert, he had a bunch of work horses out there, and he wanted to get them hired out on that job, you know, it was all horse work then. He wanted, said to me, he said, "Why don't you go over there," he said, "and drive one of them teams for me?" He said, "God damn, they're paying two and a half a day over there." And hell that was pretty good wages then, you know. Said, "I'd rather you be driving one of them teams than somebody I don't know," he said. And so I did, I went over there. And this old Fatonie, he got his horses working over there too, see. I found out he didn't know a damn thing about driving horses. They found out he was pretty damn good with powder. So they put him to blasting there, you see. A pretty good powder man. Well they'd play poker there every night, they just had a tent camp there, you know. Played poker there every night. This old Fatonie he'd get in that damn poker game there every night, and hell he'd never have any money in front of him hardly. And he'd win ten or fifteen dollars, he'd quit and get out of there, you know. And the poker players, they kind of got fed up with that. Because he wouldn't put no money out in front of him, you know. Somebody, see, he stayed right in the same tent there with us. And somebody said to him, "God damn it Fatonie, if you want to play poker," he said, "get out some money in front of you." And old Fatonie, he says, "Ten a cents," he says, "is good enough," he says, "for good poker player." (Laughter) All the money he wanted to put out.

RICHARD: That's all he wanted to put out, huh?

SAM: Yeah.

RICHARD: Well was Bill a pretty good sheep man, or was he, were the sheep, the way he was with horses?

SAM: No, no he wasn't. Hell no. You put five thousand sheep in a drop band, how in the

hell --- you couldn't make anybody believe he was a good sheep man doing that, and that's what he done. Hell a bunch of them god damn sheep early in the spring out there, lamb out there in April, and five thousand sheep, hell them ... just eating the grass all up. God you just, one man a herding them had to just keep a driving them, or he'd lose half of the god damn sheep, you know. And Bill he'd just keep a dog going this way and that way. Hell sheep can't get enough to eat that way. Hell, he never did, out there on the desert if he got seventy percent of lambs, he was doing pretty good. No, I don't know why he --- he didn't, Bill Brown didn't know much of anything about stock, as far as I'm concerned.

But he did make a lot of money, because by god then, with no taxes in them days. Hell you know you hire people to work for forty dollars a month, you know. Hell them horses --- I told him once, I said, "Bill, you never did make no money out of them damn sheep." I said, "You made it out of them horses." And he swore he made money out of them sheep. But --- well he could of too, because even at seventy percent of lambs, Christ you hire people to work for forty dollars a month, and you don't pay no taxes, why hell if you got anything out of the damn sheep ---

You know he contracted his sheep there, I guess you heard about that though. Probably contract his sheep there one year, you know, and contract was wrote out on a shingle. And he was telling me about that. God the lambs just went down, I guess, to beat hell. And them guys wasn't going to take them lambs because the contract was wrote on that shingle. Didn't have nothing to write on, old Bill he just tore the damn roof off, a shingle off a roof and wrote out that contract on that. He told me all about that. And I'd heard about it before. And he said them guys said they wasn't going to take them lambs.

Well he said, "We'll go down to Portland," he said, "and see a lawyer and see whether you have to take them or not," he said. So he said, "We went down there to Aladdin Tilton's bank," I think he said. And they had a lawyer in this bank there. He said he took his shingle in there, and these two guys told this lawyer that they didn't have to take them lambs because that was wrote out on a shingle. And so they said this lawyer said to these two guys, said, "Is that your name on that shingle there, you signed that, you signed your name on there?" "Yeah, that's our name, we signed that." Said, "You can't get out." Said, "There is only one way fellers you can get out of that," he said, "if you ain't worth the money." He said, "If you're worth the money," he said, "that man collects everything there is on that shingle." "That price of them lambs there," he said, "there is only one way that you can beat it is if you ain't got the money." Well Bill told me, he said, "They took the lambs," but he said, "I kidded them largely." He said, "I told them well maybe a sheep herder didn't know very much, but he can still run his own business." I imagine he did pour it on him, because he would too. Something like that, you know.

RICHARD: Well this is what surprised me, you know, he didn't know horses, he didn't know sheep, and yet he was a cattle, and he was a horse and sheep king of the country.

SAM: Yeah.

RICHARD: Well he must have been a pretty --- he must have seen where the money was.

SAM: Well he looked ahead further than other people. Seemed like to me on them horses, he did now. Because everybody else thought they wasn't going to be worth nothing, see. And by god he out-smarted them there all right.

Another thing too that he done, he, where he could look ahead. He'd go around to everyplace there was a damn waterhole, see. You could scrip land when he first come up

here, you know. Forty acres here and there, and if there was a goddamn waterhole there, he'd scrip that and buy it see, hell he owned water scattered all over hell, you know. He had thirty-six thousand acres of land. But I couldn't see where he was, god damn it, he just didn't seem to know nothing about sheep.

When I was working out there at lambing there for him, you know, and god damn I had a weak lamb there, and Christ if you could get a little milk down him, I think maybe that damn lamb would have made it, you know. But god, he was so bad off he could hardly swaller you know. Bill he come up there, "Confound it don't you know how to suckle a lamb," he said? And he just grabbed that lamb, you know, and mouth wide open. Had that old ewe down and just kept a pushing milk down --- well it choked the goddamn lamb to death. I said, "Bill," I said, "you choked that lamb to death." Hell he'd stand there thinking he was going to come to, and he'd poke his finger in his eye to see if he was still alive yet. I said, "You choked the lamb to death." "Oh confound it," he said, "I never did do that before," he said. Well I said, "By god you did for that, if you'd left me alone with the lamb, I believe that lamb would have made it."

One spring I worked for him out there, and Grover Caldwell, a great big bronc rider here, and he worked for him some too, you know, and he come out there to help lamb. And he had one man a herding this band of sheep, five thousand sheep. Well I guess he was out some markers, some black ones or something. He wanted to count them sheep.

Well Grover and I, when this herder quit see, or he fired him, I don't know which. Anyway he put Grover and me both of us to herding that band of sheep, see. And we'd only herded them sheep just a day or two, and he put them in that horse corral there at Benjamin Lake there and counted them out of that horse corral.

I'll say one thing for Bill Brown, he could count sheep. Damn good counter. Anyway he counted them sheep out of there see, and he was three hundred sheep short. Well he just commence to going on then, you know. "Well," he said, "if I don't find the sheep," he said, "I'll know they are stolen." And he said, "I'll know that the herders had something to do with it." He just kept that up, about the herders had something to do with it. And I know who lost them sheep. That one man couldn't keep all them goddamn sheep. He lost them before we ever come there. We never lost no sheep. But anyway, finally I got kind of god damn tired of that. Him talking about herders having something to do with it. Well I said, "Bill, I've only been here two or three days, do you think I've stole three hundred head of them already?" Well he said, "I don't know," he said, "I shall look for them," but he said, "if I don't find them," he said, "I'll know then that the herders had something to do with it."

Well he left there at that camp, he had camps scattered all around there anyway, you know. He never come back that day. But the next day after that, I think he come back into our camp. And I said, "Well Bill," I said, "did you find your sheep?" Well he said, "I found two hundred and ninety of them." He said, "I guess the coyotes got the rest." (Laughter)

SIDE C

SAM: Well I'll tell you about what Bill told Jim Sutherland now, about when he killed that man at Wagontire. That's one of the most important things. And I never did ask Bill anything about that, because I never did think that anybody would be very happy about having to kill somebody. So Jim Sutherland, you know, knew Bill real well too, and I asked Jim once. I said, "Jim, did Bill ever tell you anything about when he killed that man

out there?" "Oh yeah," he said, "he talked about it." He said he told me that he had these little bunch of sheep there, there is where he started to settle I guess when he first come there to Wagontire. And he said, "This Foster come up there with a big band of sheep, and he had this tough guy, this Overstreet working for him." And he said, "This guy caught me out there and I didn't have no gun." And he said, "He made me get down," he said, "and bark like a dog, and blat like a sheep, on my hands and knees, and he made me drive my own sheep away from my own land on my hands and knees holding this gun on me." He said, "I finally got far enough away from him that I didn't think he could hit me with that pistol, and I got up and I made a run for it."

And he said, "My brother was coming down the end of Sheep Mountain with my wagon," and he said, "my horse was tied behind that wagon." And he said, "I got my horse and I got my rifle and I come back up there." And he said, "We both went to shooting." And he said, "One of the bullets," he said, "come so close to my head," he said, "I could feel the wind of it." And he said, "I knew I had to get down to business then." So then he killed this Overstreet. Well anyway ---

RICHARD: What did the argument start over?

SAM: What?

RICHARD: What did the argument start over?

SAM: Oh they just come by. I asked Jim, "What the hell," I said, "did Foster come up there with that damn big bunch of sheep?" "Well hell they just come up there to run Brown out of the country, and it didn't work." "Why," I said, "hell all the country there was them days," I said, "Foster didn't have to come up there with the sheep." I said, "Hell he could have went some damn place else." Well I guess that's what they done. They figured they'd run him out of there, and they'd have that water and stuff, probably, I

imagine, you know.

And they had this --- I've heard that, now that's just hearsay, whether there is any truth to it or not, I don't know. But I'd heard that several times, that the sheriff was looking for that guy that Bill killed from Modoc County. He'd killed somebody over there. But that's just hearsay, I don't know whether there is any truth to that or not.

But anyway, Jim Sutherland said the old timers tell him that Bill went to Silver Creek and he give himself up to Virgil's dad. He was the first justice of the peace, see, in Harney County. Well Jim told me, he said, "The old timers tell me there was a mob went down there and they --- that Bill stayed there for about a couple of weeks with the justice of the peace there after he killed this guy. And then the mob went down there, and they was going to lynch Brown."

Well Virgil was still living when Jim told me that, and I said, "By god I'm going to find out whether that's true or not." So the next time I see Virgil I asked him. I said, "Do you know anything about that Virgil?" "Yes," he said, "dad told me all about that." He said, but he said, "They was just a bunch of drunken buckaroos," and he said, "they was a bluffing." And he said, "They rode up there," and he said, "I come out with this log cabin," he said, "out there to talk to them to see what they wanted." And he said they told me they'd come there, they was going to lynch Brown. And he said, I said, "Well he's in there alright." "He's got a 30-30," he said, "and a box of shells." And he said, "We're going to fight now." He said, "I'm determined," he said, "to see that this man gets a fair trial." And he said, "If you don't go away from here, and leave us alone," he said, "some-body is going to get killed." Because he said, "We're going to fight." "And by god," he said, "they rode away." RICHARD: Huh. Well do you suppose they wanted him because he was a sheep man, or ---

SAM: I don't know. I don't know what the hell, I --- But Virgil said my dad said it was just a bunch of drunken buckaroos. And he said, "They was bluffing anyway," he said he thought. But what the hell they wanted to lynch Brown for, I don't know. But you know, did you ever read that book, "Harney County Rangeland"?

RICHARD: Uh huh.

SAM: It said that Brown was defended by two lawyers from Lakeview, and was acquitted. So goddamn it, that's enough to kill a man for looks like to me, a doing something like that them days anyway, you know.

RICHARD: Might have been where if he didn't kill that guy, the guy might have killed him too.

SAM: Yeah.

RICHARD: Well was Bill pretty, would he fight pretty hard for what was his?

SAM: Oh, I think so, yeah. Jim Sutherland told me, he said, "I seen Bill when he killed another man," he said, "he had a gun." Said, "We was riding for horses down there at Lost Creek, and this god damn guy," he said, "dammed the water up," he said, "on Bill's land up there." "And hell," he said, "we was out of water down there." The water run right down to Lost Creek there years ago, you know. Run right down there to that lake there, and there's where they had the first corrals down there at that lake. And he said, "Hell, we was out of water. Didn't have no water for saddle horses." And he said, "Bill went up and he dammed this god damn water up on Bill's own land." And he said, "Bill went up there and kicked the damn dams out so the water would come down there so we had water." And he said, "That guy just come down there and cussed Brown something awful." And said, "Bill told me," he said, "if I'd had a gun I'd have killed that man." And he said, "I think he would have too."

But you know, working for Bill you couldn't hardly work for Bill, because he'd have some of the god damndest screwball ideas you've ever seen. About the only way you could work for him is just do as you damn please. Because I don't think there is nobody got along working with him too long, I don't think.

I worked on the highway there a little while when they surfaced that highway there from Lakeview across there to Burns, you know. And I thought hell; I didn't have anything then when I first come there to that Peterson place, no money much. And I thought well hell I ain't got too much to do, maybe I can get a job on this damn highway. So I went out there and asked this guy and, "Yeah," he said, "yeah, I can put you to top loading them trucks," he said. Hell there wasn't nothing to it, you get up on that truck, you know, and they just dump the gravel in there, and you just had to smooth that back so it wouldn't run over the slag, you know, so they'd get a decent load on there. Pretty easy job.

Sometimes we'd be waiting for trucks, and there was an old fellow working there, see, and I got to talking to him. And hell he'd worked for Bill Brown when Newman was running his outfit. He told me that they was out to Benjamin, he said running horses out there, and Bill come out there and he couldn't get nobody to drive the team over there for him to plow. And this old fellow's name was Marion, and he told me his name was Marion, and I had never met the man before. And he said he wanted Newman to let him have one of his buckaroos out of the buckaroo camp to come over there and drive that team, plowing. Then he said, Newman said to me, "Well," he said, "I guess it is pretty hard to get anybody to help," he said. "Why don't you go over there," he said, "and drive that team for him," he said. So he told me ---

(Telephone rings ...)

Oh, there is quite a few more things that I could tell you about. But I suppose if

you've got to fly back, why ---

RICHARD: Oh, we've got about another fifteen, twenty minutes. Go ahead until this tape is used up.

SAM: Yeah. Well anybody ever tell you about the hogs he had over there, butchered a bunch of hogs?

RICHARD: Claude mentioned it once. Claude was telling me about it, a little bit.

SAM: Yeah. Didn't have pork enough to feed the outfit the next morning. They stole all of them on him, pretty near it.

RICHARD: Well this is what surprises me about the man. He's so, build up all this land, cattle, I mean horses and sheep, and yet people stole hogs from him, they stole this from him ---

SAM: Yeah. Well he, like I say there will never be another Bill Brown. Did you ever read that book "The Chip of the Flying Ewe"?

RICHARD: No.

SAM: You ought to read that book. That old guy that they tell in there, they called him the old man. That just fits Bill Brown to a "T". Tells about this Chip, see he's the foreman; he's the bronc rider on this ranch. And this god damn horse was a bucking down by the house, and said the old man rushed out to shout a word of advise, he says, just as Chip changed hands with his quirk, he said, which nobody paid any attention to. The old man was shouting orders, he said, nobody paid any attention to. Well that's just about the way with Bill Brown. You couldn't pay any attention to him much. If you did, you'd be doing something wrong all the time. But he was a hard workingman. He thought --- he told me once, he said, "My belief is," he said, "that a man should work from the cradle to the grave." He told me that. Well he built this orphan's home down here at Salem see. Cost

him twenty thousand dollars to build that. And he bought a hundred and sixty acres of land down there. I guess the land was a lot cheaper then, you know. Well he said after he got it built, he thought he'd go down there and take a look at it. So he said he went down there, and there was about forty or fifty boys there he said, setting around there. And he said, this guy was working out there on the land anyway. And he said, he went out and talked to him. And he said I said to him, "Why haven't you got these boys out here," he said, "a doing something?" And he said this guy said, "Oh," he said, "you can't get them to do nothing," he said. Bill said, "I realized that I just give my money to a bunch of hobos." Well Bill was right about that. It would have been better if them damn kids was out there doing something. God damn it they would have learned something that way maybe. Goddamn it, I can see it all over the country today, goddamn kids don't do nothing anymore. And if you tell them to do something, they never do it.

RICHARD: That's right.

SAM: And it's a different deal than it used to be with me when I was a kid. They told me to do something; I knew I had to do it. RICHARD: Well he gave money for that orphanage, is it still operating?

SAM: I don't know whether it is or not.

RICHARD: But he gave money for an old folk's home or something, didn't he? A Methodist Home?

SAM: Yeah, that Methodist Home, that's where he went see, when he went broke, you know.

RICHARD: Uh huh. Well did he build it entirely, or just ---

SAM: Well I don't know how much money he give them. He told me about all of these places that he give money, and how much he give. But that fifty thousand dollars that he

give to some outfit there in Pendleton, I can remember that. Because that was the biggest amount that he give, you know. But he told me about this here boys home down there, it was all supposed to be for boys see, he didn't want no girls there. It was all supposed to be a boy's home. So that's what he told me about that.

Anyway Davey Jones, you know, he stopped down there where that old home, to see him down there once. Davey was telling me about that. And he said, "I asked this woman that run the place there, is Mr. Brown around anyplace?" Said, "Yes," he said, "he is probably outside, he stays outside a lot." So he said they went out there and they found him out there. And Bill said, "Well," he said, "we should go in my room," he said. So he said he went in this room, and he said didn't no more than get the door closed, Bill said, "Confound it hoodlum place." He said, "I had a proposition here," he said, "I could raise enough potatoes," he says, "to support the whole institution." He said, "They wouldn't let me do it," he said.

And so he said after he told me that, he said then I talked to this woman awhile after I left Bill there, you know, before I left, telling her about Bill said he had a proposition where he could raise enough potatoes to support the whole institution. Said, "Yeah, Mr. Brown is awful ambitious." Said he went down town one day and got a bunch of shovels. He said he come back here and he was going to have these old fellows here help him. He was going to spade up this lawn and put it into potatoes. (Laughter) Of course they wouldn't let him do that.

RICHARD: Still planning and scheming, wasn't he?

SAM: Yeah.

RICHARD: Uh huh.

SAM: Yeah.

RICHARD: Well you know what impressed me, another thing about him Sam, was the vision he had on this water.

SAM: Yeah.

RICHARD: He could see where to put the water, and ---

SAM: Yeah, but you know he told me, he said, "They wanted to sell me land," he said, "over on the river, you know, on Crooked River." And he said, you know, he could see, you know that was about the time he was going broke. That land was commencing to get pretty valuable. He said, "I was very foolish," he said, "I didn't buy something over there," he said. "There is more water over there." But what he wanted was this water for these horses and all these sheep and stuff, you know, around on the desert. You know, you know where that Cheeseborough Springs is up there in Glass Buttes?

RICHARD: Uh huh.

SAM: Well anyway, he scripted that; see they used to be quite a lot of water run out there. But I suppose that thing's dry now, ain't it? Or I wonder if it's still around?

RICHARD: I know where it is, is all.

SAM: But anyone, see Joe Garske, I don't think you knew him, I think he left here, but Joe he just took a homestead all around that spring there, see, just circled Bill in, you see. And Bill must have reported that see, and the homestead inspector come out there see, when I was, I was with ... on this end of Glass Buttes, see. And he told me he had to inspect that homestead up there, and he wondered if he could stay up there, see. Well he stayed there a day or two and they canceled Joe's homestead see, the government did, I guess.

But anyway this here homestead inspector see, why I got quite a kick out of him, you know. We had a still back there, making whiskey there then, anyway, you know. Had

whiskey there at the house, and I thought we had --- asked this guy if he'd like a drink, see. "Yeah, yeah," he said, "I'd like to have a little drink," he said. He didn't know it was moonshine. We just had it in bottles there. I give him a drink of this whiskey, see. I never drink whiskey anyway. But I usually, in all the whiskey I made, I don't think I --- I bet I never drank a half a gallon of whiskey in my whole life, 'cause I don't care nothing about it. But I always had it around usually, for somebody that wanted a drink. So I just set the damn thing back up in the cupboard after I give him a drink. I never thought no more about it.

Before we got ready to eat, I was cooking supper, he said, "Would you mind if I had another little drink?" "No," I said, "hell I didn't set it up there to keep you from drinking more of it. Hell, just help yourself, drink all you want of it," I said. "Hell I don't drink it much myself." By god he got to drinking, he really liked that whiskey, you know. Then after we eat, he got to telling me about his family. And he says, "I got two boys and a girl." He said, "The boys don't smoke, but the girl does," he said.

Anyway, you know, Bill he was telling me about this, about him taking that homesteader around him. He said, "I know what he done it for," he said, "he figured on selling out to me," he said. "And I would have probably bought him out," he said, "too." But tamper with that homestead, that ended that. (Laughter)

Oh, Garske, you know, he lived out here a long time. I guess come into the country long about the time we did. His folks did anyway. By god, going to go out there and help Bill lamb there in the spring. Well I wasn't out there that time. Another guy was telling me about that. Bill already had started lambing there, and all this crew then, they called a strike see, for higher wages. Well Bill, he --- this guy was telling me about it. And he figured that out see, Garske is the one that started that, you know, started after a strike

there. I guess he had that figured out all right. He said, "Well," he said, "say to this guy I guess I can raise your wages," he said, "five or ten dollars a month, something like that." And all the rest of --- come to Garske, he said, "Garske," he said, "you can work for the same wages or you can go back to the ranch and you can work for forty dollars a month back there." He was paying about seventy out there, see, lambing.

But I was out there once when they started to pull a strike on him, you know. Johnny Carrows, (sp.?) he was another buckaroo out there. Johnny was going to do the cooking. Was threatening to quit see if Bill didn't raise the wages. Johnny he said, "Bill if you don't raise my wages I'm going to quit," he said. Old Bill he said, "Johnny, if you quit me now, I shall never hire you again," he said. (Laughter) That didn't work that time. But he did raise this guy's, he was telling me he did raise his wages all right that one time. I guess they was going to strike. But he fixed Garske up pretty good, he had to leave.

RICHARD: Was Bill a pretty good judge of people?

SAM: Well, I don't know, but he must have --- that time he must have had that pretty well figured out there.

RICHARD: Uh huh.

SAM: Oh, I don't think he was anymore judge of people than anybody else would have been, as far as that's concerned.

RICHARD: I once heard that, you know, that people would come up to him and say Mr. Brown, I've been working for you for a month, and I think I'll move on. Would you pay me? And he'd just go ahead and pay them, whether they'd been working there or not. Is there any truth to that?

SAM: Yeah. Well, I don't know, I don't hardly believe that. But I do believe one story there though that old Jimmy McCuen, I guess he, some guy come along there, and of

course he had quite a little crew there then see, he was haying there. This guy was going to go on the next morning, see. And old Jimmy McCuen, he said, "Ah," he said, "why don't you stay," he says, "Bill will pay the men off tomorrow," he said. And he said, "You just step up there and Bill will pay you," he said. And so this guy did, you know. They said, I guess he is a damn poor bookkeeper. He'd say to this one, how many days did you work, or how many days did you work? And paying these men off, you know, he'd come to this guy there, and he'd never worked a damn day. And he said, "How many days did you work?" And he said, "I worked ten," he said. "... old Jimmy McCuen," he said. "Oh," he said, "you're mistaken, you worked eleven." He said by god he paid him off for eleven days.

But he, you know, he didn't know anything about horses much. Henry Street was telling me, you know, when he worked there for him. He said some guy come along there and sold Bill a saddle horse there. Well Henry said, I come in that evening, working there, he run the ranch for him there awhile, irrigating, one thing and another.

RICHARD: At the Gap?

SAM: Yeah. At the --- no, not at the Gap, at Buck Creek, see. RICHARD: Uh huh.

SAM: And he said, he come in there one evening, and Bill said, "Well," he said, "Henry," he said, "I bought a very nice horse," he said. "In the morning you shall ride him," he said.

So by god, he said, he went out there the next morning and I looked at that horse, and that goddamn horse he said was just branded all over. Brands everyplace. So he said, "I saddled him up." He said, "I went to get on him and he fell over," he said. Said I thought well, guess he is a cinch binder, and maybe loosen the saddle up a little bit, and lead him around a little bit, maybe he will be alright. So he said he loosened his saddle up around a little bit, and went to get on him again, and he fell over again. Well he said, "I finally got

on him." He said, "I rode that damn horse three or four days," and he said, "that was the most bullish son-of-a-bitch," he said, " I ever seen in my life." He said, "He wasn't no good for nothing." "Said," I said, "Bill I ain't going to ride that horse no more, he's no good."

Well he said, "Henry, in the morning," he said, "we shall brand him." So he went out there, and he said he built up the fire there, and said I caught that horse in the front feet and throwed him down. And he said old Bill he, with the rope, "Well Henry, you shall brand him." "No," he said, "I'm not going to brand that horse." "Well," he said, "Henry, if you don't brand that horse," he said, "I shall fire you and Ruby both." "Alright, by god you fire us." He said, "I'm not going to brand him." Said, "Brand him yourself."

He said Bill went over there and got the iron out of the fire and went up there, and he went to put that iron on that horse's jaw, and there was a damn brand there. Said he raised up the other side, he branded on both jaws, a horseshoe bar on both jaws, and there was another brand on there. He laid that horse's head back down, he said, "Well," he said, "where shall we brand him?" (Laughter) Henry said, "Brand him where you damn please." He said, "Well Henry, we shall turn him loose," he said. So he said by god he turned that goddamn horse loose, and he said I don't know where the hell he went to. But he said, "I never did see him again." (Laughter) You see a horse's brands all over him like that, you know damn well he ain't much good.

RICHARD: God, I guess not.

SAM: Oh, Henry he was telling me once about Bill there, you know, he'd been out to the sheep camp a long time and he was working there, irrigating there, you know, at Buck Creek. And by god he said, "I done a damn good job irrigating," he said, "I had a damn good hay crop there."

Old Bill he come back and they'd been out of sheep camp a long time, he said, he hadn't been in there. "Well Henry," he said, "we should go up and look at the hay," he said. Went up there, and god he said I had a damn good crop. Said I had done a damn good job irrigating. Said, "Well Henry," he said, "you've done a very good job," he said, "here irrigating." He said, "We shall walk over to the other place." I guess over to the McIntosh's place. Christ I don't remember how far it is to that McIntosh place, but that was a long way over there, you know. Henry said, "Well by god if he can walk over there, I guess I can, I'm younger than he is."

Started down the damn road, he said, and that road a ways there, and he said, "There is a damn log chain," he said, "laying in the road." Hell it was about twenty foot long, and he said pretty fair size chain too. Said Bill he looked at that, "Confound it," he said, "that's my chain," he says. "I suppose some sheep herder dropped it off a wagon or something." "Well Henry," he said, "you shall carry the chain." "No by god, I'm not going to carry that chain." "Well if you don't carry that chain Henry, I shall fire you." "Alright, you fire me," he said, "I'm not going to carry that god damn chain." So he said he wadded the damn thing up, and about that long, and throwed it over his shoulder, got it all done up, and throwed it over his shoulder. "God damn," he said, "that thing is heavy." "God," he said. By god he didn't go very far with that. He come to a corner of a fence, he got out there and throwed it down at the corner of the fence.

He said, Ruby and I, when he was telling me about this, that was a while before Henry died, you know, he said, "Ruby and I was riding around over there," and he said, "I just happened to think of that chain." He said, "I bet by god he never went back there and got that damn chain." He said, "I went over there and there it was, laying right there," he said. Yeah.

RICHARD: Where did he get his equipment from, you say he put up this hay. Where did he trade, in Burns or Prineville?

SAM: Well all horses and stuff, you know. And towards the last there he might have had some tractors and stuff, I don't know. But he always put that hay up with horses.

RICHARD: Did he trade in Burns, or in Prineville?

SAM: Yeah, he traded in Burns. Yeah.

RICHARD: Did he bank there too?

SAM: Well I guess so. But he told me they wanted him to start that bank in Burns, see. He told me, he said, "I guess I should have." He said, "You know," he said, "they never loaned no money unless they're absolutely safe," he said. I guess he learned that from borrowing from them, because he went broke. Borrowed money. Well that damn Johnson, you know, he owed this money, some finance company is what he owed this money to. And that damn Johnson come out there too, to handle that finance company, you see. And hell, he just took over there, Bill he didn't have nothing to say.

And Wayne Houston he was working over there for him, the fellow was telling me about that. And by god him and old Johnson got into it there, you know, and said this here Johnson, he said, "Shut up Bill, shut up Bill." He said Bill said, "I'll not shut up," he said. "There is only one way you can shut me up, and that's to kill me," he said. Said by god Wayne Houston said to that guy, "Johnson, by god you better shut up," or he said, "I'll shut you up pretty god damn quick," he said. And hell, he just took over there, you know, and hell Bill didn't have nothing to say.

They just forced him --- if they'd have left Bill Brown alone, another year or two he would have paid all his god damn debts with his horses. I had horses, you know, and them horse buyers come to me and tried to buy my horses for a cent a pound. And I'd tell

every damn one of them, "Can you make any money raising horses a cent a pound?" "No, no, I can't." Well I said, "By god don't come around to me," I said, "when you're buying horses for a cent a pound. Because I ain't got none to sell." And just a year or two after they took every damn thing Bill Brown had, I was getting thirty-five and forty dollars a head for horses. Hell he'd have paid his debts if they'd have left him alone. That's where you get.

RICHARD: Did they take his sheep, too? Did he lose his sheep the same way?

SAM: Oh, yeah. Hell, they took every damn thing he had, land and everything else, you know. Yeah, they took it all. He didn't have nothing. That's the reason he went to that home.

RICHARD: How old a man was he when he went down there Sam?

SAM: Well, he must have been around seventy-eight, seventy-nine. He was eighty-six years old when he died, I think, I seen it in the paper that he died down there. I thought he died at that home. It said in that paper, in the paper that I read that he did. But this nephew that come to see me that I didn't know, I was telling you about, he told me he didn't. He said he died at our house. He said the last year or two, he said, he stayed with us, with his brother and them up there, you know. And he said he never could get used to eating three meals a day. He said he'd have breakfast, and he said he'd eat you know, they'd call him for dinner, well he said, "It can't be dinner time," he said, "we just eat breakfast," he said. Well he was so used to on that desert, you know, maybe eating two meals a day. Buckaroo outfit, that's all you ever got. Of course Bill was never around the buckaroo outfit much.

Hell Newman, said Rogers told me that Newman wouldn't allow him to stay all night in the buckaroo camp. Told him, he said, "Hell you stay all night here you'll have

these goddamn men a fighting and quit before morning," he said. Hell --- that's what Sid Rogers told me that he didn't want him to stay all night in the damn buckaroo camp. But according to "Punk" Robinson, he knew that Newman pretty well. "Punk" told me that was the best damn buckaroo foreman he ever had. "By god," he said, "there wasn't any unbranded horses," he said, "running around then when Newman was running that outfit." He said, if Newman got a mare, he said, that was, they was always closing a herd of horses I guess then, selling some each year.

Got a mare that was going to have a colt pretty quick, by god he said, "He'd take that god damn mare right along in them herd of horses until she had that colt, and then branded it and turned her loose." "By god," he said, "there wasn't any unbranded horses running around in Newman's time."

RICHARD: Well Bill I guess got some pretty good men to work for him, didn't he?

SAM: Oh, yeah.

RICHARD: He got you and Frank Morgan, and Newman and ---

SAM: I guess that Newman, he would even steal for Bill Brown. A feller was telling me over there at Summer Lake once, you know, when that Newman was riding over there. And this guy didn't have very many horses, I guess, and a mare of his had an unbranded yearling there, and by god Newman just branded that yearling, and put the horseshoe bar on it. This other guy, I guess this feller wasn't too good a horseman either, you know. And I guess he didn't notice that. He said, "I went over there and told that feller, god damn it," he said, "they put the horseshoe bar on your ... "

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