

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #310 - Sides A/B

Subject: Wilber Springer

Place: Vale, Oregon

Date: 1970

Interviewer: Marcus Haines

MARCUS HAINES: This is Marcus Haines who made this tape here with Wilber Springer back about 1970, at his home near Vale, Oregon. Now Wilber was born in Harney County here in 1906, and moved away from here in 1950, and lives up Bully Creek there fifteen miles from Vale. And his folks had the encounters with Pete French, and had got pretty well acquainted with him during the time that he was alive, when he was killed in '97. Now the one correction in this tape that needs to be made, and that's about The Narrows, and the bridge there, one report was '92 and '93, but it had to be '91 and '92. And when the bridge was in, Charlie Haines moved down to The Narrows and started his store. Well the post office was established at the Sod House Spring there, by the Springer's in '89, and it was called Springer. And at that time the post office was transferred to The Narrows in '92, and the name was changed to The Narrows. And people by the name of Hembry, who were at The Narrows at the time Charlie Haines moved down there, took the post office and had it in their Hotel, and a place of business there. They had a little store when Charlie moved there. And in '97 then, Charlie got the post office and moved it over to the store. And the Hembry's, I think, left at that time and moved out to Silver Creek. But anyway that's the story, so I hope you can get some little information out of this, because ---

MARCUS: I'm visiting with Wilber Springer down here at Willow Creek about the murder of Pete French. We're trying to locate the site, and then some early history about the country here. So we'll listen to what Wilber has to say on this. First Wilber, we're interested of course in finding out where Pete French was killed, and I believe you told me that he was killed, what would you say, in the southwest corner of the Sagebrush Field.

WILBER SPRINGER: Uh huh.

MARCUS: How did you happen to find out about, let's say the spot where he was killed, let's put it that way?

WILBER: Well, back when I was pulling sagebrush for wood, I come through there at the corner of the Wright field. And the way I remember that gate, was in the south fence going east and west of the corner of the Wright field. And we come through that gate; you just got on a wagon and started on a little ways. And they told me that French was killed right over there, if I wanted to stop and walk over, it was only about two hundred yards up the fence more.

MARCUS: Yeah, can your remember the old Wright house?

WILBER: No.

MARCUS: You don't remember any trace of it? I don't remember it either. Judd Wise told me, he came, I think here in 1906 --- now you were born in 1906, weren't you?

WILBER: I was born in 1906.

MARCUS: Yeah, what the 20th of January?

WILBER: Second of January.

MARCUS: Second of January, yeah. Charlie Chapman was the 20th; he's got cooned a little bit though.

WILBER: What did he say?

MARCUS: What?

WILBER: What did he say?

MARCUS: He said that the old ---

WILBER: No, I mean what day was he born?

MARCUS: You were born the 2nd day of January 1906.

WILBER: Yes.

MARCUS: And Charlie Chapman was born the 20th of January.

WILBER: Oh, the 20th of January.

MARCUS: Yeah.

WILBER: In 1906?

MARCUS: No, no, he was born in '99.

WILBER: '99, that's what I thought.

MARCUS: Yeah.

WILBER: He was a little older than I am.

MARCUS: Yeah, that's what I say, he's got you cooned by a little bit.

WILBER: Yeah.

MARCUS: But Judd told me when he, I think he came here in 1906, and he said the old Wright house was still standing. And I asked him what type of house it was, and he said, "Well, just similar to what they built in those days, a little old two story shack." You know they've got the, they got an upstairs out of it for a bedroom in most cases. But it was right near the Wright house. It was, there is some discrepancy about where the gate was. Some of the fellows say that it was down; it was on down north from the corner there a couple hundred yards, right at the Wright house. But that's immaterial; it's up in that northwest corner in there. And it was marked ---

WILBER: Northwest or southwest corner?

MARCUS: Southwest corner.

WILBER: Southwest.

MARCUS: Yeah, and it was marked some way, wasn't it Wilber, that you remember?

WILBER: Yes, there was a little box. A wooden box that had been placed over the, where there was blood at one time, there had been blood there. I didn't go over to it, we just went on down, but that's what I understood, that it had been put over this blood. Where French fell, when he fell off of his horse. And I don't know, he may have stayed on that horse a few feet before he fell, of course, but ---

MARCUS: Yeah, but that was the purpose of the box, is where he fell.

WILBER: Yeah, that was the purpose of the box.

MARCUS: Yeah, where he fell there. But you were a pretty small kid about the first time you saw that too, so it's been quite a while ago.

WILBER: Yeah, it's been a long time ago.

MARCUS: Yeah, you bet it'd be a long time ago.

WILBER: I'm sixty-seven now, it'd be ---

MARCUS: But back in those days, all the good sagebrush was up in Sagebrush Field, and we used to cut our winter's wood up there. WILBER: You bet. The folks would take a chain and a team, on each end of that chain, about a hundred foot of chain, and drag that down. I suppose you folks did too.

MARCUS: Oh yeah.

WILBER: The way we drug it down, drag it both ways, and then we'd just pick that loose stuff up, why you'd get what? It'd be four or five feet long, that stuff.

MARCUS: Oh, easy that. You bet.

WILBER: It'd cover; you couldn't see a man a horseback.

MARCUS: No, no you bet you couldn't see a man horseback.

WILBER: With some of that brush.

MARCUS: Yeah, you break it down, and then there was always some dry stuff in it there, not that, you wanted a little green brush to make a fire with.

WILBER: Yeah.

MARCUS: Well Wilber, getting back to Pete French, your granddad came here what, in the mid '80's, was it?

WILBER: '88 was what I understood. But when they first settled here was in June of '88. But they were the first settlers in Harriman, and then along a little later that summer, or spring whichever it was, well the rest of them begin settling on down, and I expect that's the reason why they got that spring in there.

MARCUS: Yeah, they had their first choice there.

WILBER: Had their first choice.

MARCUS: Yeah, yeah that's right. And I think the Marshall's came in, in '85.

WILBER: George Marshall?

MARCUS: Yeah, George and Alfred, and well not Alfred, but Bill.

WILBER: Not down there.

MARCUS: Well according to the testimony, yeah. They were down, they came in the country here, they were there at that time.

WILBER: Well, they may have came in Harney because the folks, see George Marshall was, had married grandfather's sister.

MARCUS: Yeah.

WILBER: And I understood the folks say they come into Harney there about that time,

and that's about the only place ... there too.

MARCUS: Well they all came; they came from Arkansas didn't they? The Marshall's came from Arkansas.

WILBER: I don't know where they came from, but they were already here.

MARCUS: Your folks came from Missouri, didn't they?

WILBER: Yeah, but that don't mean that they come from Missouri here, but they landed in Harney about the same time. Now I understood that George Marshall come down here about the time the folks did and settled on that Cato place about the same time that they did. I don't know why ---

MARCUS: Well, that's immaterial. Anyway your dad, your granddad, and your great-granddad were both holding adversely against French, actually weren't they?

WILBER: Yes.

MARCUS: So that's, that's, they got pretty well acquainted with him in that respect. And I think to begin with then your dad was the principal in a suit that French brought against the settlers there for possession of the lake, didn't he, wasn't he?

WILBER: Yes, he come down to the folk's house and ate dinner with them, and spent the afternoon. And then that evening when he got ready to go, why he told my grandfather, he said, "Now Alva," he said, "I'm going to have to bring suit against you for this land." And he said, "If I win the suit," he said, "you'll have to leave." He said, "There will be a test case for everyone here," he said, "but you'll be a test case." And he said, "If you win," he said, "you can stay on, but," he said, "in the meantime, we'll be friends."

MARCUS: Well, your granddad and Pete French then, they weren't on the outs, as we might say too much then?

WILBER: No, no, they weren't.

MARCUS: Then your granddad respected him, and he respected your granddad.

WILBER: Yes.

MARCUS: But great-granddad, now that was something else again, wasn't it? He shot at the buckaroos and old Rawhide Johnson and kind of made them step around there a little bit, didn't he?

WILBER: Well, some of them buckaroos, and the folks had it too, as far as that goes.

MARCUS: Oh, did they?

WILBER: But I think as far as both grandfather, and my father was concerned, my great-grandfather, why they got along with French himself. There was no trouble there, with French. But French's buckaroos that caused the trouble, or French's people working for him was where the trouble come there on that. And that was probably the trouble that caused most of the trouble other places too.

MARCUS: I remember your great-granddad, Jetty was his name I think. And Wilber, what year was he born, do you remember that? He was an old, old man the first time I can remember him.

WILBER: He died in '35, and he was ninety-five years old.

MARCUS: Well, I reckon he was about; he was born in 1940, wasn't he? 1840. You bet.

WILBER: 1840. 1841, I think, he voted for Abraham Lincoln when he was twenty years old.

MARCUS: Yeah, yeah. But he told me one time, he used to like to tell about the scraps that he used to have, and he'd tell me about the buckaroos shooting at him with the six shooters. And he said he'd trot off down the field, and pulled his rifle out of the scabbard, and he said he was ready to scatter buckaroos. And I imagine he was a pretty good shot, wasn't he? I imagine he could have done it too.

WILBER: Well, what I always understood he was a good shot.

MARCUS: Yeah, you bet. He was an old man the first time you can remember him.

WILBER: Yeah, first time I remember him, he was a man up in his seventies.

MARCUS: Yeah, you bet. Well then you, your dad, was it your, was it Jetty that moved the house back and forth with the buckaroos there at the head of the spring? Or was that your granddad?

WILBER: Moved the house?

MARCUS: Yeah, you were telling me about. And pulled the cow into the middle of the house when they got through moving it around.

WILBER: They moved the cow out away from the house. The company buckaroos, French's buckaroos, or French's foreman moved the cow down on to Grandpa's place, and then Granddad hooked onto the cow, and moved her up and pulled her through the --

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MARCUS: Oh, it was the cow that he was moving around. Oh, I see.

WILBER: It was the cow he was moving around, he didn't move the house.

MARCUS: Oh, I misunderstood.

WILBER: That was at the head of the spring there where the original house was. It wasn't a sod house, it was a box house, there was a door on the south, and a door on the north, and he just took a log chain through the house, and drug the cow inside. MARCUS:

Well then your, Jetty, your great-granddad, he took a shot or two at the fellow by the name of Johnson too down there, didn't he at one time?

WILBER: Well, they shot back and forth a couple of times.

MARCUS: Anybody get hit?

WILBER: Well no, nobody got hit. My granddad hit the old man in the foot, and then the



battle was over.

MARCUS: Oh, he got that close.

WILBER: Got that close.

MARCUS: Well Wilber, you told me about an encounter that we all spoke of, the old man Reineman had with French. I think your granddad was a witness to it, or he happened to be along at one time.

WILBER: Yes. I was over at the end of the lane, out in front of where the old Reineman place, I don't know what they call it today, but it was the old Reineman place then.

MARCUS: Yeah, it's still the old Reineman place.

WILBER: And it was out south of ... then, maybe a ways, but French had a fence out in there, and they was at this gate a talking. And French come along and talked to him just a little bit, and pretty soon he told Mr. Reineman that he had a good notion to whip him. And Mr. Reineman said, "Well now Mr. French, don't spoil a good notion." And French leaned over and picked up his whip and raised it up, and when he turned around and looked at Reineman, he set the whip back down and rode on. Reineman happened to have a six-shooter, and I'd expect he would have used it.

MARCUS: Uh huh. He wore a vest didn't he?

WILBER: He wore a vest, and he had on gantlet gloves. And he used that glove to ... and when French looked back around, why Reineman had his pistol in his hand.

MARCUS: Oh.

WILBER: He pulled that pistol out enough for French to see it, and French just put it back in his sock and rode off.

MARCUS: He knew kind of how far to take somebody then, didn't he?

WILBER: He knew when to quit.

MARCUS: Yeah, apparently he did, you bet. Well Wilber, let's get back to the site of Pete French's killing. You have a neighbor here named Herman Durell, lives right near by, and he spent his younger days at Voltage.

WILBER: Yes.

MARCUS: Is Herman about your age? He must be isn't he?

WILBER: He's about a year younger than I am.

MARCUS: About a year younger.

WILBER: Uh huh. I believe he's sixty-five, or sixty-six.

MARCUS: Sixty-six. He's probably closer to me than he is to you then.

WILBER: Yes.

MARCUS: And he recalls somebody pointing out the same situation that you're talking about, about the box there.

WILBER: Yes. About two hundred yards up from that southwest corner of the Wright Field. Yeah, he said that's the way he remembered ...

MARCUS: Well then you told me something too about your mother, when she was just a young woman. It must have been shortly, just after this happened.

WILBER: Yeah, I'd imagine it was. When her and George Curtis were ---

MARCUS: It was George Curtis.

WILBER: Uh huh. They were up there after wood. And she was messing around there and found this box, and turned the box over, and there was blood under the box. She went back to, George was her uncle.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

WILBER: She went back to George and told him about it, and he said, "Yes, that was where French was killed." And it was in this general area where ---

MARCUS: Where we're speaking of.

WILBER: Yes.

MARCUS: Yeah, that's what we're interested in.

WILBER: It was along that fence on the north, on the west side of the Wright Field. It ran north and south.

MARCUS: Well now then have you got any idea when the Sod House Lane was put through? I mean when the bridge was built there?

WILBER: When the bridge was built?

MARCUS: Yeah, and the bridge would have been built.

WILBER: No, I really don't.

MARCUS: I don't either.

WILBER: I don't remember when that was, I heard the folks talk about it, but when it was built, I don't recall.

MARCUS: Now the bridge at The Narrow was put in, in the winter of '92 and '93, there is a record of that. And then Charlie Haines started the store there the spring of '93. There was a store there before, the Hembry's I think had a little store, and it burnt up right there.

WILBER: There was a post office there too, I think.

MARCUS: Yeah.

WILBER: Now at one time wasn't there a post office at the head of the spring?

MARCUS: Sod House Spring?

WILBER: Yes.

MARCUS: Gosh I don't know Wilber, I never heard of it.

WILBER: Well now, it seems to me that there was.

MARCUS: Now there might have been.

WILBER: For a little bit, there was a post office there.

MARCUS: There might have been.

WILBER: That might have been after the store burned down there, the old Hembry's store. Between there and C. A. ... because he had the post office if you'll remember. You remember him?

MARCUS: Yes. Sure, you bet I knew him. Yeah, he died in 1916, was a pretty good chunk of a kid then.

WILBER: Yeah, both of us.

MARCUS: May of 1916. Yeah, I've got pictures of The Narrows, and I blow them up and it shows those fellows pretty good. Have you got a daughter coming in here?

WILBER: I don't know.

MARCUS: Somebody just came in.

WILBER: If she does, well she'll be in, in a minute. I expect if that bridge was built at The Narrows in 1892, that the Sod House must have been built along about that time or before, 1890.

MARCUS: Yeah, it probably was, but I just hadn't thought about it. I'll look into that though.

WILBER: I really don't remember about that. I know to cross the river they had to go up to where the Sod House dam, what we call the Sod House dam now, and cross the river. I don't remember if there is a bridge up there or not, but they crossed the river, there was a crossing up there, to get across.

MARCUS: Uh huh. Well Wilber, in this testimony here of Pete French's' in '97, where was the dam that this fellow tells about going with Pete French over and they crossed on a dam and pulled two cows out of the ice?

WILBER: I don't know.

MARCUS: And that's when he cut the willow that he whipped Pete French with, or Oliver with.

WILBER: Yes.

MARCUS: Could that have been the Sod House dam, you think?

WILBER: I don't think so, that must have been a dam that they had up there in the Sagebrush Field, because he got it up there, the way I took it. It'd be up there in the Sagebrush Field.

MARCUS: Well they left from the Sod House though, you see.

WILBER: Yes, he left from the Sod House.

MARCUS: And whether ---

WILBER: But they were bringing these cows down to put them in that area down there at the Sod House, out of the Sagebrush Field. MARCUS: Well, they put them in the Wright Field, is where they put them, you see.

WILBER: Yes.

MARCUS: Yeah, but they had to go up --- now you take, Wilber, at that time of the year, all the water there was in that field was the river.

WILBER: Yes, but Marcus, there may be something about that river that you are overlooking. The original river come down through by the schoolhouse, and it went toward the schoolhouse in that area, was the original ... where it went into the lake off down there. And then after a while they moved it, they put a dam in somewhere along the line and diverted that water down the slough there where the old river is cut out now.

MARCUS: Yeah, I know that, but Wilber, but on up, I'm talking about water for these cattle that's in the Sagebrush Field.

WILBER: Yes.

MARCUS: You see they would be up around the Rockford Lane, in that country. They had to go up in there to get these cattle. Because you take over Pat Donegan's, and over along Riddle or Saddle Butte, that was all dry in those days, you see.

WILBER: Oh yeah. They didn't even have that canal in there then.

MARCUS: No, there was no canal then, so they had to go up through that area, you see.

WILBER: Yes.

MARCUS: And maybe this, there wasn't much out of the way to go to the Sod House dam, or maybe it was, maybe it was the Dunn dam for that matter.

WILBER: Yes, yes, it could have been.

MARCUS: But there couldn't be any cattle in there. They shouldn't have had cattle in there in '97. But anyway, because they'd already proved up on it then, had it fenced I think. According to ---

WILBER: But didn't that testimony though say that they crossed on this dam, over on the east side?

MARCUS: No, he doesn't say where, he just said he crossed on a dam, and pulled out two cows from the ice. Yeah. And they crossed on the dam to pull the cows out, that's kind of the way I got it.

WILBER: Yeah.

MARCUS: And at this time the reference was made to this dam and the cows to establish when he cut this switch. You see he took this switch off of old Chino's horse along there. That was the reason for that, I think.

WILBER: Yeah, I think so too; it was just to establish that little switch.

MARCUS: Yeah, I think so.

WILBER: It wasn't a very big switch.

MARCUS: Yeah, that's --- That was the reason, and this fellow; I've forgotten his name now, Gilliam I think, was the guy that was with him, that accompanied Pete French. All that Sod House there, according to Dave Crow, you know his testimony there.

WILBER: Uh huh.

MARCUS: But John Scharff says that Manuel Clark told him that they were all camped on Rockford Lane, but there isn't any of this testimony that says that that's true.

WILBER: No, apparently at that time that this was done, the Sod House was the ranch, was built up at that time when this, because French was, according to what the grandfather said, that this was Mrs. Manuel Clark testified, when she went into French's office to make his bed. He had a bed in there, and to clean up in there that morning after the buckaroos had gone to ride, French's two guns laid on his desk.

MARCUS: Oh.

WILBER: So that would be at the Sod House where the ranch house is now.

MARCUS: Yes, yeah.

WILBER: And apparently that was built up at the time that French was killed.

MARCUS: Yes. Well it was the headquarters there.

WILBER: Yes, the headquarters was at the Sod House.

MARCUS: You bet. Apparently they had kind of abandoned the Sod House.

WILBER: Uh huh. They had moved down to the spring.

MARCUS: Yeah, they had kind of given that up, hadn't they?

WILBER: They had moved that all out of there, and apparently moved it up to where it is today.

MARCUS: Uh huh. Do you, I don't suppose you could possibly date the time of the trial that your dad had with Pete French? Your granddad, can you?

WILBER: No, I wouldn't know when it was. But French was killed in '87.

MARCUS: You mean '97.

WILBER: I mean '97, so that would probably be a couple of years before French was killed, because the first record of that, the first that my grandfather told me was, that they went to Portland, they had to go to Portland to fight this case. It was brought in a higher court. And when he got to Portland the judge kicked it out of that court and told French he'd have to start it in at a lower court because there wasn't enough value, this land wasn't valuable enough to get into that court at that time.

MARCUS: Oh.

WILBER: So it would be, so that would be --- and the suit was brought when French was killed. Well they already had suits, and that would probably be a couple years before that. So that would be around about 1895, or maybe sooner than that.

MARCUS: Uh huh. I've got a picture that was introduced in evidence in that trial. It starts at the head of the spring, and it's put together, and comes back around and shows the ... place, and the old Hughet place. ... was pretty well built up at that time, there wasn't too much to the Hughet place. And it shows your dad's homestead in there.

WILBER: Uh huh. Old Grandpa settled there.

MARCUS: Uh huh. And nobody that we've ever talked to, I've talked to Ralph Hutchinson --- Myrtle Barnes was borned in '86 and spent a lot of time, you know, down on the lake there at that time, and there isn't any of those folks who can remember that old Sod House there when it had the roof on it, the roof had fell in.

WILBER: That old barn out there. Well, I don't suppose they probably could. I don't



remember.

MARCUS: So that's the reason I was wondering what --- because this is all, you know the fireplace on the end of it, that old Sod House building there, and there is stockade corrals and wire fences around there, and ten wires high.

WILBER: Yeah. What was the Sod House, right there at the head of the spring where they had all that. The next time you come down will you bring those pictures with you?

MARCUS: You bet, sure will.

WILBER: I'd like to see those pictures.

MARCUS: Yeah.

WILBER: What I understood with the folks was, at the Sod House, at the house itself, was a frame, was a box building right at the head of the spring.

MARCUS: Well now, you know somebody picked this picture up and showed it to John Scharff. And she rolled out that long, and it was as wide as this, and it shows your old milk barn, shows the Cato house down in there.

WILBER: Called what?

MARCUS: Cato house. And here is the spring right around here, and here is the site that they have for the Sod House. Now there was a Sod House here, and there is a brick stone chimney over on the end of this building right here. And right around here where the spring starts back north again, it shows the roof of a house. It's got a slope roof on there; it just shows about that much of it. But it doesn't cut back here far enough to see your grandpa's trees in that. But there is two or three of those buildings right along the edge of the spring. And ---

WILBER: But it shows the Cato house.

MARCUS: Uh huh. It starts there, I'm going backwards here, but it starts right about this

angle, about northwest Wilber, from where the Sod House was, as they've got it marked now. And apparently this photographer set up his camera right back up here. Now here is the old Sod House that's got a chimney on one end of it and sets this way. And, or this way, and we got north here. Here is the way the old road used to go, right here.

WILBER: Yes, yes.

MARCUS: Well he set up right here, and he took it about this angle right here. And he cut just right, barely across where the spring turns around and goes back down through here. Well, you can see the Cato house in through here, but you can't see this far over.

WILBER: This would be on the west side of the spring then.

MARCUS: It's on the south side, yeah, the southwest corner, yeah.

WILBER: Southwest, yeah. Spring would be over here on the ...

MARCUS: Yeah, you can see the river going down through here. You can see Saddle Butte, it's marked, you can see Windy Point, it's marked. And then he took five pictures, starts here, he takes this one, then he takes, he splices one right through the house. And the next one is here, and the next one is here and it shows the ... house, and right back out in here, but he doesn't quite get around to the lane, which would be back around in here. And it's interesting, there isn't any willows or anything along here, there is some haystacks back down here below this house along the spring. And down, way down here close to where you, I think your granddad re-routed the river, cut the channel right down along the fence didn't he?

WILBER: Yes.

MARCUS: Well right above it there is quite a fence all through here, running east and west, and comes up here in the corners and comes out here in front of this house and goes through here. And then there is corrals on the inside, all around this house right

here. And then there is this house, and you can just see the, you can just see the one corner. Now in the original, now the pictures that, John has some prints made, and he gave me one of them, and it doesn't show this. And here in the original picture there is a man standing right along this fence. But whoever redone the picture did such a poor job of it that it doesn't even show the man. But the original picture showed a man standing right here about where the road came right around the head of the springs here.

WILBER: Oh.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

WILBER: Well that must have been, well that was introduced in the evidence, huh?

MARCUS: That was taken for that trial between Pete French and your granddad.

WILBER: Oh, oh.

MARCUS: That's the purpose of the pictures.

WILBER: Oh, I see.

MARCUS: And they introduced as evidence, yeah.

WILBER: And that wasn't the murder of French?

MARCUS: No, no, no, it had nothing to do with the murder of Pete French, no. It was in your granddad's trial.

WILBER: Well I don't remember anything he told me about those pictures.

MARCUS: Well you wouldn't, no you wouldn't remember that. But I mean I was just mentioning here, this stuff here that comes back to you. And I'll tell you another one that, of a picture that I have too. It's a picture of your mother and your father just shortly after they were married. And you'd never guess where I got it, and I copied it, and I've got it in a slide, and I can project it on the wall. I got it from Peal Witzel, she had some old picture up there, and she said, "Do you know who this is?" And I said, "Yes sir, that's Ed and

Oakley Springer." I said, "Millers gave it to me, Jack Miller." And I happened, I was up there, had the camera and I just copied it, and I got a good picture of them.

WILBER: Oh.

MARCUS: Yeah. That was taken a long time ago too, believe me.

WILBER: Yes, it was several years ago.

MARCUS: Yeah, you darned right. And it's funny how these pictures will show up. Now Ethel Fine ---

WILBER: Yes.

MARCUS: --- gave me a picture of my mother and dad. And it was probably their wedding picture that her mother gave, that she got out of her mother's things, Mrs. Thompson, when she died.

WILBER: Yes, yes.

MARCUS: And she gave me the picture, and I've copied it. (Laughter) Yeah, it's nice to copy these old pictures and project them on the, when they're bigger than these pictures here. And gosh a lot of stuff comes out that you don't see in this --- the colored film will, on these old black and white pictures, it just does a lot for them it seems like. And I have these four pictures of The Narrows, and a strange one happened the other day. A fellow walked out to the shop there and he says, "Are you Mr. Haines?" And I said, "Yes." And he said, "Well my name is Sullivan." And he said, "My dad clerked for Charlie Haines down here in 1909, and we lived at The Narrows for about six months, and I went to school down there." He said, "I was born in '98." And he said, "I was eleven years old." And he and Wilber were great friends. And he told me Wilber, that they would wait to watch the freight teams come from The Narrows.

WILBER: Yes.

MARCUS: And they would run down here to where they had to make the square turn, and then go east across the bridge.

WILBER: Yes.

MARCUS: You remember that was a square turn right there, and they'd go down and watch these fellows put the horses over the chain, and get those big teams around that square corner. He said that was, oh they said they just lived to see those teams come in.

WILBER: Well don't you remember those freight teams coming through there, don't you?

MARCUS: Sure I remember them too. But I mean here this fellow has lived in Portland all his life.

WILBER: Oh he did?

MARCUS: He is retired now, he had an electrical business there in Portland, and he's retired and just came up here hunting. And he went over to the refuge visiting around and somebody told him about me living ... and he come over to see me. It was two weeks ago. Yeah, it's strange how things will pop up here.

WILBER: Yeah, you bet.

MARCUS: But this old car, there is an old car in one of these pictures, you've seen it. It's an old postcard I'm sure, that you have seen it. And Wilber is sitting on the running board of this old car. And he was born in 1900, and he looks like he is, oh seven or eight years old, just a little old guy.

WILBER: Uh huh.

MARCUS: And this guy looked at the picture and he said, "Well that is Bill Hanley's old one cylinder Buick." And I thought it was always Charlie Haines' car, you know, because he had something similar. But Charlie is in the back seat, and old R. L. Hass and somebody else. And old Bill is in the front seat, and he's got a driver there. The fellow,

you know, drove from the right hand side in those days, and the picture is taken from the right hand side. And old Joe Butler, you remember him, the old freighter?

WILBER: Yes, yes.

MARCUS: He is holding the watermelon, he's got it up on the fender of this old car, and the thing is that long. And then the clerks and a bunch of them were all standing out in front of the store. And Harry Church is in the picture.

WILBER: Harry Church?

MARCUS: Uh huh. He's got a foot twisted up; I'm sure its old Harry.

WILBER: I don't know when he come in here, do you?

MARCUS: No, no, I don't.

WILBER: He must have been in there quite awhile, he settled over at ...

MARCUS: Yeah. But anyway these old pictures are pretty fascinating.

WILBER: Well you remember old Joe Butler, he used to peddle feed up through there every ...

MARCUS: Oh yeah, I remember old Joe quite well. You know he ended up out at Blitzen.

WILBER: Yes.

MARCUS: Had a little dive out there, and he went in, I think, I remember old George Cawfield laughing about it. Old George had a bar, a speakeasy or something there in Burns, you know, Pastime. And he come in and wanted to know where he thought he could get some girls, he had a pretty thriving business out at Blitzen, and he needed some women to go out. (Laughter) Whether he got them or not I don't know. But that was his business. That was where he was at when he died.

WILBER: He was quite a character.

MARCUS: Well Wilber, another thing now, and the fence was there to prove it too, I think it's the only piece of fence that's left, there may be some more, but not to my knowledge, I think its all torn out, that the settlers cut for Pete French.

WILBER: What?

MARCUS: That the settlers cut for Pete French. Remember they had the meeting down at The Narrows there in the old schoolhouse to organize the group, and part of them went up to the east side from the Sod House Lane, and the other up the west side and they cut his fence, until daylight the next morning?

WILBER: No, I don't remember anything about that. I don't remember ... Joe Ivy and another worker for French. They cut posts for French.

MARCUS: Uh huh, but ---

WILBER: ... cut his fence.

MARCUS: The fence going up, see when they built the, here is Sod House Lane here, and here is Calamity Buttes, and they built this Job Corp up in here. They took off right along the west side of my mother's fence and went up around her corner. And then went into Calamity Butte field and made a gravel road, an all weather road up here. And this fence from here to here has got a splice between each post.

WILBER: That would be on the west side of the valley where that fence was cut.

MARCUS: Yeah, the west side of my mother's. And my mother always told me they went up both sides of the fence. Well the government has changed all of that fence, except that piece right there.

WILBER: Well I don't know.

MARCUS: You don't remember that.

WILBER: I don't remember that. But I don't doubt that they did that.

MARCUS: Oh yeah, I know they did it. But I didn't know whether you would remember that or not.

WILBER: Well you remember Jim Ivy don't you?

MARCUS: Oh yeah, I bought his place up there.

WILBER: Yes. Well his brother, and I don't remember who the other fellow was now, but they cut some posts for French, and French didn't pay them for the posts. And they went down to Rye Smyth's ... and Jack Ivy, or the other one, one of them was a blacksmith, and the other one ... and they cut that fence on, up along the Rockford Lane and above. They cut above and below the Rockford Lane for several miles.

MARCUS: Uh huh, uh huh.

WILBER: And French paid them their ---

MARCUS: ...

WILBER: He paid them for cutting the posts.

MARCUS: (Laughter) Yeah, you'll have to come up some of these days, Wilber.

WILBER: ...

MARCUS: There is a lot of stuff around there. I'd like to show you my Indian story, you'll hear some of the stories that Myrtle Barnes tells about Pete French too, you know.

WILBER: Well it was on Rye Smyth, Myrtle's dad, that told French he said, "I believe if I was you I'd pay them boys for these posts." Because he come a crying about his fence a being cut.

MARCUS: Uh huh.

WILBER: And ... who cut the fence and why. And he said, "If I was you I'd pay them boys for cutting them posts."

MARCUS: They took his advice, huh.



WILBER: Well French, French paid the money, paid for the cutting of the posts.

MARCUS: Well, we're just about out of tape here, Wilber, so I think we've got about all on here we need anyway.

MARCUS: Since making this tape with Wilber Springer, I received a letter from the postal department, stating that the records of the post office department in the national archives show that The Narrows Post Office was established as Springer, Harney County, Oregon, on August the 2nd, 1889. It was, its name was changed to The Narrows on April the 6th, 1892, and I assumed it was moved to The Narrows from the Springer place here. The Springer, they speak of the Springer place, would be the Springer property there at the head of the spring, and was in their, probably in their house at the time. I think in talking to Wilber that he says that his grandparents were responsible for getting the post office in here for the first time.

(END OF TAPE)

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