

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #354 - Sides A/B/C

Subject: Steve Miller - With Video

Place: Miller Home - Seneca, Oregon

Date: May 12, 1994

Interviewers: Dorothea Purdy & Barbara Lofgren

Release Form: Yes

DOROTHEA PURDY: This is Dorothea Purdy, along with Barbara Lofgren, and we're at the home today of Steve Miller and his wife Elsie. The date is May the 12th, 1994, and we will be visiting with Steve about the Pon Ranch, and his life in Harney County, and some of his life in Grant County. Steve, we'll start by asking you your name, and we'd like to have you pronounce it in full.

STEVE MILLER: Steve Avis Miller.

DOROTHEA: Okay, and when were you born?

STEVE: I wasn't borned, I was hatched. (Laughter) April the 16th, 1917.

DOROTHEA: What were your parent's names?

STEVE: Clara May Miller, Steve Douglas Miller.

DOROTHEA: And what was your mother's maiden name?

STEVE: Jones.

DOROTHEA: Jones. Okay, that was one question I was going to ask you, whether she was a Kimball or a Jones. Can you tell us something about how the Drewsey people are all related?

STEVE: (Laughter) Well, marriage, relation, pretty near all of them used to be, not so much anymore. But used to be the Dunten's and the Millers was related by marriage. My brother married a Dunten.

DOROTHEA: And your mother was a Jones, and she is also somehow related to the Kimball's?

STEVE: Yes, her sister married a Kimball. And one of them married Joe Cronin, so we're related to the Cronin's in Drewsey. My aunt was married to Joe Cronin. One of my aunts was, well two of my aunts was married to Kimball's, Ellis Kimball and Johnny Kimball.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

STEVE: They're all dead now, of course. But that's the way the relation there was.

DOROTHEA: Okay. Let's go on, and did you have brothers and sisters?

STEVE: Well, I had half-brothers, one half-brother, and a half a dozen half-sisters, and one sister.

DOROTHEA: Now, were they Millers?

STEVE: Yes, they was Millers.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And how were they half-brothers and sisters?

STEVE: My dad was married before he married my mother.

DOROTHEA: Okay, so I understood that your dad died when you were quite young.

STEVE: Yeah, he did.

DOROTHEA: So you didn't have any full brothers and sisters?

STEVE: One full sister that was born just shortly after my dad died.

DOROTHEA: And what was her name?

STEVE: Thelma.

DOROTHEA: Okay, and she lives in Mount Vernon, John Day?

STEVE: John Day.

DOROTHEA: And she is still alive then?

STEVE: Yes.

DOROTHEA: What did your parents do for a living?

STEVE: Well, they farmed, ranched, and worked at different jobs all over the country, haying and everything else like the people used to do. Everything they could make a dollar, they worked at it a little.

BARBARA LOFGREN: Did any of them have cattle around there?

STEVE: Well, we had cattle at home. Had a little ranch there, had a few cows, milk cows and

whatnot.

BARBARA: So, he made his living mostly by working for someone else then, rather than raising cattle.

STEVE: Yeah, that's right. He worked out, everybody, everyplace. And hauled a lot of wood to Drewsey during the fall of the year and all, everybody bought their wood from him. He hauled it in in logs. Of course, a team and wagon at that time, there wasn't no trucks or nothing; hauled everything with a team and wagon. Loaded the logs with a team with a cross-haul cable. Tell somebody about a cross-haul cable nowadays, and they don't know what it is. But --- it's a cable to roll a log up on a log with. But if you're on a wagon, roll a log up on a wagon with a cross-haul cable. A team ---

DOROTHEA: Kind of describe the process of logging with a team.

STEVE: Well, there is a lot of different ways. I skidded logs with a team. Had a set of tongs, and you'd take a log and go down to a landing with it, and go back and get another one. Just like they do with a Cat, only you didn't haul that many.

DOROTHEA: How much, kind of --- now listen to that question. How much of that work did you do?

STEVE: How much of that work did I do? Not too much of it. I done a lot of it over the years, short time at a time, you know, and then worked in other jobs between times.

And I cut and hauled wood into John Day and that country after I got older, during, back during depression time in the '30s. Hauled wood into John Day with a team and wagon. And you got \$5 or \$6 a cord for sixteen-inch wood at that time, which now you'd starve to death a doing it.

BARBARA: For sure.

STEVE: I cut, made watering troughs, and cut posts, and poles, and fence posts, and everything else. And hauled them in, and they had a trading post in John Day. And I hauled them down and piled them up on a lot there they had. The posts, I got a nickel a piece for them, and I had to take it out in groceries. They had a grocery store there, and there was no money-changed hands; it was all just trade.

And I'd break a horse for somebody, and I'd take the horse back and they'd give me \$5 or \$6 for breaking a horse, but I had to take a sack of apples, or a sack of potatoes, or a ham, or a quarter of beef or something. No money, there wasn't nobody had any money.

DOROTHEA: Whatever they figured was worth, what you was ---

STEVE: Yeah, that's right. We just traded.

DOROTHEA: You started work at an early age. I understand you were about 11 when you started working.

STEVE: Well, I worked earlier than that for the Pacific Livestock Company during the haying season. I packed for the Porter-Sitz when they had the sheep. I packed for them on Strawberry Mountain up here when I was 11 years old. I packed in there all one summer.

DOROTHEA: What was your job? How, describe what you did, and what time you started in the morning.

STEVE: Well, daylight in the morning you was out. I had a string of mules, three mules and the bell mare to pack. And the shepherd he'd go with the sheep. I'd wash up the dishes and everything, and pack up, and pack the camp outfit on these mules, catch up with him at lunchtime, and we'd eat lunch. And then he'd tell me where he wanted me to go, and go on there and unpack and set the tent up and everything for night.

DOROTHEA: Did you pack the food then, is that what you had?

STEVE: Yeah, packed the food, and the bed, and the clothes, and tobacco, and everything. All packed on them mules.

BARBARA: As an 11-year-old, was it scary for you to be out on your own and running around the country by yourself, and just being on your own?

STEVE: No, not that way.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

STEVE: It was quite a chore to get a pack up on a mule.

BARBARA: Uh huh, I imagine.

STEVE: A lot of times, I'd have to lead them up aside a log or something, you know, in order to

get the pack up there. The pack would probably weigh a 150-200 pounds, not all at once, but it would be in three different pieces, you know. But it was quite a chore. And then, I had to look after them mules and everything. Turn them loose at night, and then go get them in the morning, and hard telling where they'd go. They was all hobbled and belled, but they'd travel sometimes quite a ways during the night. I'd have to go get them, and get them back, and pack up the camp and everything. Catch up with the herder.

BARBARA: So you had a lot of responsibility at a very early age.

STEVE: Yeah.

BARBARA: You say your father died at an early age. Did you kind of then take over ---

STEVE: Well, I had to.

BARBARA: Did you have older half-brothers then that kind of took care of ---

STEVE: Yeah, but they wasn't home.

BARBARA: They had already left home then?

STEVE: Yeah. I had an uncle that was home with my mother there, and us most of the time. One of my uncles was there. But other than that, of course, in the summertime I hayed, by the time I was old enough to run a mowing machine and drive a team. I worked for the Pacific Livestock Company or somebody during the summer.

BARBARA: Did your mother ever remarry after your dad died?

STEVE: Later years.

BARBARA: Later.

STEVE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Tell us what driving a team and mowing was like? Did you ever have a runaway, or what happened when you broke down in other words?

STEVE: Well, if you broke down you just took it to the shop and fixed it, whatever it was. If it broke down so bad you couldn't get it to the shop, they come out there, blacksmith. Most of the ranchers had a blacksmith that took care of the machinery and things. Pretty near all of them hired a blacksmith through the summer for haying, and harvest, and that sort of thing.

But, oh, I've had runaways. I never did have a team get away from me. I've had them run until I thought they was going to, but I never did have a team get away. I had them drag me quite a ways by the lines, but I never turned them loose.

DOROTHEA: You've broken your legs, and arms, and several bones in your body. Did that happen when you were young, also?

STEVE: Oh no, after I got older and awkward. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: So, when you were young, you kind of flew along the top of the ground, huh?

STEVE: Yeah, when I was younger, I was more pliable. (Laughter) I had an accident down at the old Dam Ranch below Kimberly one time. I broke a horse for a fellow I was working for, had a sheep outfit. And I was working with the sheep and was camped up on top of the mountain, and this fellow brought this horse out and wanted me to break him to ride. And I went to riding him and packing a tepee tent, and I stayed out with the sheep at night to keep the coyotes and things out of the lambs. And I put that tepee off wherever I was going to be that night.

But anyway, this horse, I rode down to the main camp, about the first time I rode him outside anywhere, I rode him down to this camp. And they had rolled up a roll of net and wire and set it on the porch of this old house. And just as I come around the end of the house, the wind blowed, and blowed that newspaper up in that roll of wire. And he whirled around, and when he whirled around, he fell and upended and rolled over top of me. And I got up and my foot was hung in the stirrup, my left foot, and he started down the river, which would of, if he had went on that way it would have put me dragging right through under him. But he turned back and turned up the river, and he drug me about a quarter of a mile around a hillside in the sagebrush and rocks. And I finally got turned over on my belly and got my foot loose. But had a pair of little oxbow stirrups about an inch wide, and I couldn't kick them off, kick it off of my foot. I'd kick, and it would just follow my foot back and forth. And when I caught that horse, I pulled them oxbow stirrups off of there and threwed them in the river, and I rode him three days with no stirrups. But I never rode oxbow stirrups since.

DOROTHEA: No, they're not the nice ones.

STEVE: It didn't have weight enough, couldn't kick it off of my foot. If it had been them old big heavy stirrups, you know, I could have kicked it loose, but couldn't kick it off.

DOROTHEA: You probably wouldn't have gotten hung up in a wider one either.

STEVE: No. So I've been drug a time or two over the years, but that old feller up their kind of looked after me. Took pity on me or something.

BARBARA: You say you started doing these type of chores at age 11, did you not do this in the summer, or did you go through school later ---

STEVE: I went through school; I went in the front door and out the back most of the time.

(Laughter) That's the schooling I got.

BARBARA: Uh huh. So you didn't go through eighth grade then?

STEVE: No. Most of the schooling I got was looking at the north end of a southbound cow.

DOROTHEA: Did you go to school in Drewsey a little bit, or where did you ---

STEVE: I went to Kimball Flat School.

DOROTHEA: Kimball Flat?

STEVE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Who did you go to school with when you went to school?

STEVE: Well, Byron Duntun, and Clarence Cronin, and oh, let's see. I don't remember what all, whether there was a --- no, there wasn't a Howard there at that time. Byron and Clarence Cronin was the older ones. And I think Jesse McMullen; I think he went there a while.

ELSIE MILLER: Jesse Cronin was there, too.

STEVE: Huh? Jesse Cronin, yeah, he went there, and Cecil Cronin. Howard and Sam McMullen. Well, I didn't go with Sam much, Howard. And Fannie and Ella Louise, I think they went there.

And then I went to work for Pacific Livestock Company at a pretty early age; I'd work for them during the summer. Later years, I worked for them when they, I was buckarooing for them when they sold out their holdings in Harney County. But I worked around a little at everything. Even took a siege of cutting saw logs with a misery whip.

BARBARA: What's a misery whip?

STEVE: (Laughter) Crosscut saw.

DOROTHEA: That's where you have one on one end, and one on the other?

STEVE: Yeah, only I didn't have but on one end.

DOROTHEA: Oh, you just had on the one end, huh?

STEVE: Yeah. I had a rubber man on the other end.

DOROTHEA: Well, that's a little difficult, isn't it?

STEVE: Yeah, yeah, that's a little different. But I was falling alone, and bucking the logs alone.

ELSIE: He just as well not have somebody on the other end dragging their feet through the dust.

STEVE: Yeah. But we cut saw logs over in Canyon Creek, what Canyon Creek Reservoir is now. Canyon Creek Meadows, at that time, we cut logs all up in there. And they hauled it to the mill in John Day. But they was all short logs, twenty-foot logs is the longest they'd take, and they didn't want many of them.

DOROTHEA: How did they haul them?

STEVE: With a truck. We loaded them with horses, and they hauled them on the truck.

DOROTHEA: Tell how you got a log on a truck.

STEVE: With a cross-haul cable and skids.

DOROTHEA: Same as the ---

STEVE: Had two skids and they put a cable, cross cable, and just role them up onto the truck. And when you got the first layer on, you raised your skids up and put them on the next log up, and rolled right on up until you got a load.

DOROTHEA: How long would it take you?

STEVE: Oh, it would probably take two hours or better to load a load of logs.

DOROTHEA: Have you gone up and watched them load logs with the way they do it now?

STEVE: Oh yeah.

DOROTHEA: It takes about what, twenty minutes?

STEVE: Yeah, or less. Some places they load them pretty near one fork full. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Oh, that's Kimball Flat School. Is this an album, what is this? Cookbook.

ELSIE: That's my cookbook.

DOROTHEA: Okay, Wilma Dunten, I was going to ask you if Wilma Dunten had gone to school with you.

STEVE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Erma Miller, is that a sister?

STEVE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Clarence Cronin, Zelma Dunten, now, who was she?

ELSIE: That was Jack Miller's wife.

STEVE: No, Zeta was his wife. Zelma, you're talking about, she is dead now. She was married to Lonnie Ward; you might have remembered Lonnie Ward.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

STEVE: Well, she was married to him.

DOROTHEA: I'm looking at Elsie's cookbook called, "Drewsey Days", put out by the Drewsey Elementary School, and it shows a picture of the Kimball Flat School in 1924. And mentions Robert Currier was the teacher.

STEVE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Lindsay Hall, you went to school with Lindsay?

STEVE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Yep, you had a Tom Howard in there.

STEVE: Yeah, I was thinking Tom was there. Loren Dunten, I think he was there, and Byron Dunten.

DOROTHEA: Cecil Cronin, and Ina Cronin, Jesse Cronin, Mildred Currier. Was she some relation to the teacher?

STEVE: Yes.

DOROTHEA: Must have been a daughter?

STEVE: Daughter, I believe.

BARBARA: C U R R I E R, is it?

DOROTHEA: Uh huh. See if you can find Steve in that picture there.

STEVE: Oh, I ain't changed that much.

DOROTHEA: You look like a little boy to me. (Laughter)

STEVE: Yeah, I wasn't very big, but I was meaner than hell. (Laughter)

ELSIE: He had a potbelly, too.

BARBARA: Right in the middle of the front row next to the little girl?

STEVE: Yeah.

BARBARA: Okay.

STEVE: I think that was Evelyn Howard, that girl.

DOROTHEA: It doesn't say, Tom Howard is the only Howard I saw there. Is that ---

BARBARA: Mildred Currier was next to you.

DOROTHEA: That was the teachers ---

STEVE: Yeah, the teacher's daughter.

DOROTHEA: --- daughter? Tell us something about winters.

STEVE: Winters.

DOROTHEA: How did you handle winters?

STEVE: Very quick.

DOROTHEA: Did you have lots of snow, and what did you do in the wintertime?

STEVE: Well, fed cattle mostly in the wintertime. And later years, after, like here at the ranch and everything, down here in the Silvies Valley, I had all them buffalo and everything to feed. And we used horses some, mostly tractors and stuff with the buffalo. I fed those buffalo one winter here with a TD-9 Cat, and the snow was up pretty near to the radiator on that Cat. I just cut off a load of loose hay and shove it right out across the meadow. Them buffalo would eat it up. And that's the way I fed them with that Cat. Most of the time, with baled hay, we hauled it out. But with that loose hay, and the ground was froze, and snow on the ground, I just shoveled it out that TD-9 Cat, out of them loose stacks.

DOROTHEA: Where did you stay in the wintertime, say when you were a kid and you were

feeding cattle? Did you stay at home?

STEVE: As close to the stove as I could get. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Or did you live with the ranchers, or ---

STEVE: Oh, some places. Most of the time I stayed at home when it was close to home. But a lot of places I stayed to the ranch. I worked for Mike Acton over there; I put in a lot of years with him when I was younger.

DOROTHEA: Tell us some of the names of the people that you worked with in Drewsey area.

STEVE: Well, the Sitz and Milers. Milers, of course, at that time was Pacific Livestock. But Charlie Miler was a supervisor of the Pacific Livestock Company cattle in this country. He was a superintendent, and Acton's, and George Riley, and oh, pretty near everybody in that country.

DOROTHEA: Where did you go then from Drewsey as you graduated from ---

STEVE: Well, after I got older --- and my mother and my granddad lived over between John Day and Prairie City. And my mother went over there, we sold the place at Drewsey, and she went over there to live with my granddad. And then eventually, I went over there and stayed there, and worked from there, oh, with wood and timber, in the timber and everything. And worked where I could get it, sheep outfits or whatever, you know. Some places, I would get a riding job, maybe for a few days. And then maybe I'd go help somebody with sheep, and so on. Anyplace I could make a dollar or get a job.

DOROTHEA: How long did this go, and how long did you work like this before you worked for the Forest Service?

STEVE: Well, I worked for the Forest Service some when I was there, in the fire fighting and one thing and another. And I had a pack string when they had the big fire at the head of the river, and the Malheur River, and all that country burned up. I had a pack string and I packed for the Forest Service up there on them fires, packed those camps out on them fires with my pack string. I had six horses up there, and a saddle horse. And I packed them camps out all over up there, the Strawberry country, and over on the head of the river and the Malheur River.

BARBARA: Were these forest fires that they were fighting?

STEVE: Forest fires, yeah, they had a big fire in there. And oh, they had men from all over the country.

DOROTHEA: Did they have more fires then than they do now?

STEVE: No, I don't think so. They had that fire, was about the worst fire I know they had in the country at that time. But it seemed to me, as I could remember when I was a kid, younger, and down in the Drewsey country, we'd look back there and see a fire in the fall of the year or something, but hell, nobody paid any attention to it, you know.

Of course, there wasn't too much underbrush or anything. You could drive around with a wagon, where you can't crawl through now, you know. And if it did burn, there wasn't enough stuff on the ground, or down brush, or anything, it didn't kill little live trees. Just burnt the stuff off the ground, and that stuff. But hell, they went in and went to saving all this stuff, and not keeping it burnt up and everything.

The fact is, they about fired me when I was working for them here for burning. Had me out here hunting porcupines, and every time I found an old log in one of these thickets someplace in the wintertime, you know, I'd set it a fire, and I had fires all over here; it looked like the Indians had come back. They was after me every night for building them fires. But I told them I would lot rather see it burning then than I would in the summertime. Trees was froze and everything, and if it burnt up around a tree and burnt some of the bark off a tree it wouldn't kill it because the tree was froze, and it wouldn't kill it, you know. But they was chewing me up every night. Said it looked like the Indians had come back.

DOROTHEA: You wouldn't be very popular today, I'll tell you.

STEVE: No.

DOROTHEA: From there, where did you go, to work for who?

STEVE: Oh, I worked for a lot of people over the times, and hell, part of them I don't even remember now. But I worked for the Forest Service around here, and then down in the Burns country, I worked for Hines in the mill. I worked in the mill for a while. And then I went to work for the Fish and Wildlife Service.

BARBARA: What did you do at the mill? What was your job at the mill?

STEVE: You name it.

BARBARA: Whatever they said you go do?

STEVE: Worked on the pond, and up in the re-saw, and all over the place. And this was back during the war, you know, and I was working on a deferment. And they took me off of the green chain and put me down in the dry sorter chain, pulling that slick lumber off of that dry chain. And hell, I couldn't even keep it in the mill. I finally told that fellow, I said, "Damn it, if you ain't got something better than this for me, I'm going to quit." And he said, "You can't quit, you're froze on the job." I said, "Like hell I am, I just thawed out." And I threwed my apron and my gloves on the table and the way I went. But I fooled them, they was going to turn me over to the induction center, but I was already up there and volunteered for immediate induction when they got up there.

(Laughter)

DOROTHEA: So did you go to the service then?

STEVE: Yeah, they took me to Portland and give me a physical and sent me home.

DOROTHEA: You must have been 4-F.

STEVE: Yeah. And then I went to work for, well, I worked, while I was working in the mill there I worked for Frank Triska out there on the ranch. I worked nights in the mill, and then I'd work days on the ranch, and then I'd go back to the mill at night. And I worked for him there during the war.

DOROTHEA: What did you do for him, feed cows?

STEVE: Everything.

DOROTHEA: Everything.

STEVE: Yeah, I took the cattle to the mountains, and gathered them, and put them out, and hayed, and everything else.

DOROTHEA: How many acres did he have then? Just down the river or ---

STEVE: Triska?

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

STEVE: Well, they had that Lone Pine, and all that country back in there. I think Baker's got the upper place up there later years. And ---

DOROTHEA: Now is that Fred Baker?

STEVE: No, Harold.

DOROTHEA: Harold Baker.

STEVE: And they had that place where Warren Raymond is, and the place there where the old Triska house was, and up on the hill there. I lived up there on the hill, in that house up there on the hill.

DOROTHEA: That old house? Is that the one that Starbuck lived in for awhile?

STEVE: Yeah, I think he did.

DOROTHEA: When you were working for Pon.

STEVE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: ...

ELSIE: His daughter married Jesse Cronin.

DOROTHEA: Joe Cronin.

ELSIE: No, Triska's daughter married Jesse Cronin.

DOROTHEA: Oh, Triska's daughter.

ELSIE: Jesse Cronin, he lives in Portland.

DOROTHEA: What was her name?

STEVE: She's dead now.

ELSIE: Yes, she is dead, Frances.

DOROTHEA: Right, right, that's right.

ELSIE: She's dead now.

STEVE: The older one, now I think she's still alive, Florence.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

STEVE: She lives in Portland. Oh, I worked all over, and I worked in the mill, and worked for the Fish and Wildlife Service.

BARBARA: What kind of work did you do for them? Did you trap?

STEVE: Trapping, trapping yeah.

BARBARA: Uh huh, and what were you trapping?

STEVE: Coyotes, bobcats. I went over to the Lamb Ranch at Drewsey, over there, and Mike O'Toole had sheep over there. And I went to the Lamb Ranch, he called me up and wanted me to come over there, the coyotes were killing the lambs. And they had the bubonic plague in that country, and it killed all the rabbits, and the muskrats, and beaver, and everything else. There wasn't hardly a living thing. And them coyotes would tackle anything practically.

And I went over there and put out a poison station. And I took a quarter of horse meat and put it out one night, and I wired it to a stake in the ground, and the next morning when I went out there a whole quarter of horse meat --- when I went there the next morning, the only thing that was left there was that bone that I had wired to that stake, and it was just plumb shiny. So, the next night, I put out another quarter of horsemeat there and wired it down. And I put out about a hundred and fifty poison baits around there. The next morning, I went over there and I picked up forty coyotes that I could skin. And I don't know how many that I'd, that had died with the poison, and the other coyotes would eat them up. All I would find are the legs and pieces of them, tore all to pieces, so you know how hungry they was.

And old Mike O'Toole, I drove in there to the Lamb Ranch and throwed forty frozen coyotes on one of these pickups and see what kind of a load you got. I drove in there, and old Mike said to me, he said, "Be Jesus Christ," he said, "it's a wonder they hadn't eat up me herders."

DOROTHEA: True, that sounds terrible.

STEVE: Yeah. Yeah, they was, and that's the only time in my life I ever seen a coyote tackle a colt. We were corralling a bunch of horses there, and this mare had a little young colt, and it run over the hill from us down there in the sagebrush. And when we come on top the hill, there was two coyotes had that colt down. They was that hungry. The mare come back a fighting them, but they were a working on that colt when we got there. Of course, when we rode up there, they left. But it's the only time in my life I ever knew a coyote tackling a colt.

DOROTHEA: Did they kill it?

STEVE: No, when we rode up there they run then. But they ---

DOROTHEA: Did they act like they would attack a person?

STEVE: Well no, I was around them, among them all the time, of course. But every time I seen one he didn't attack me, because he was probably running like hell and me a shooting at him.

Anyway, I fooled them, an Irish sheepherder one time, and I pulled one on him. I was going across the ... over there, and wanted me to come over there at this camping up there. And there was a brushy canyon, rocky, dead-end canyon there, and it was all full of brush, and rose briars and stuff. They bedded these sheep up on top of the hill above it, and every morning this herder said this, that the coyotes would kill a lamb there.

So, I went over there and I went up in there a looking, and I found one of these lambs they had killed, but it wasn't a coyote that killed it. So, I got to looking down this brush patch. But anyway, when I was up on there, I was going across Harney Valley over there, I shot a coyote out there in one of them fields and I just throwed it in the back of my car. And when I went up there to find these tracks to see where this coyote was coming in a killing these lambs, and I still had this coyote in the back of the pickup. And when I got ready to go back to camp, I just shot in the air, and I went down there and throwed that coyote out in front of the tent. And I said "There is your damn sheep killing coyote." That Irishman, I never told him any different, you know. And he was telling everybody, "Be Jesus Christ, it didn't take him long to get my coyote."

But I went up in that brush patch that night and set a trap down in there, and I caught an old crippled bobcat that had been doing the killing. But he was down in there, and every night he'd go up there and kill him a lamb, you know. And he was crippled, he couldn't hunt much, but them lambs, he'd get one of them every night. But after I got him, the killing stopped, but he thought I got that coyote sure. (Laughter) Hell, I'd killed him forty miles from there.

ELSIE: Was that the same one that you killed the bobcat and put it on that crooked limb?

STEVE: Oh, it was the same outfit, but a different herder. This guy called me up and they told me, well, they didn't call me up, they sent word to me that every time they'd leave the bed ground, these

coyotes would kill a lamb, or something, every night on this bed ground. I went out there and went around there, and hell, I couldn't find no coyote sign. And then I went up around there and over that Motley Flat, it looked like a, oh, just a miniature badland, you know. And I went back in there monkeying around, and I found this old bobcat track, where he had been a coming down in there every night and getting him a lamb. So, I set a trap and I caught him. And the next day, I was up there, I found this bobcat in the trap. And this sheep camp was right down there just a little ways, and that herder had drug in a juniper limb, and it was crooked, to chop sagebrush on for wood, you know.

But anyway, I killed this bobcat and the herder wasn't there, and I wanted him to know I got that cat, you know. And I just took it down there and stood it up over that chopping block, and not a thinking about him a coming in there in the dark.

BARBARA: Wow.

STEVE: He come in there in the dark, and when he come in there, you know, and he bumped into that thing, and he struck a match and he was looking that cat right in the face. I guess he liked to tore the tent up trying to get in to get a lantern, or rifle, or something. It liked to scared him to death.

BARBARA: He probably told you about it later.

STEVE: Oh yeah, and did he tell me about it. But that's a funny thing with a coyote, I watched a coyote one time, and that same outfit practically, they wanted me to come, a coyote was a killing the lambs. I went over there, and I went there early in the morning and went around above this bed ground where these sheep was. And this herder told me, he said, "Every morning, them sheep pull out up on that big ridge, and they get a lamb every morning." So, I went around up there and got in under a juniper tree where the limbs were right down to the ground. And I crawled in under there and set down. Pretty soon, about the time the sun was coming up, between daylight and good sunup these sheep was a feeding right up toward me. I see this bitch coyote, she just come a trotting out there and got up on a rock like that, and was looking at them sheep coming along there. And she just stood there, and the sheep was a going by, and pretty soon she jumped off that rock

and she cut a lamb out of that bunch, just like you'd cut a cow out of a herd. And she started that lamb out there, and run it quite a little ways out here, she got out far enough away from that, them sheep, you know. When she got out there far enough, she decided to go back in there, that she had went far enough, and she'd run that coyote out there. And she started back in, that coyote turned around and trotted right, pretty near between that sheep's hind legs right back into that herd. Cut that lamb right back out of there. And when she did that time, I shot her. But them other sheep now, when she went back in there, and that coyote trotting right along behind her. Them other sheep never paid no more attention to that coyote than they would another sheep, because it was so close to that sheep, they thought that was a sheep too, I guess. But they never paid no attention to it, and she just cut that lamb out and took it back out of there.

BARBARA: It's funny they wouldn't smell the difference.

STEVE: Yeah, you'd think they would, you know. But she was just trotting so close to that other sheep that they just thought it was a sheep, I guess, or never paid no attention to it.

DOROTHEA: That's probably why they get caught so much.

STEVE: Oh, yeah.

DOROTHEA: It's because they don't really pay that much attention to them.

STEVE: But them old coyotes are pretty slick. I looked around there, and that lamb, she picked out about as big a lamb as there was in the bunch. She knowed what she was a doing.

DOROTHEA: She was hungry.

BARBARA: You talked about the Irish herders. Were there Scotch herders around there, too?

STEVE: Not too many. Once in a while you'd get one, but most of them was Irish.

BARBARA: Is that why the O'Toole's came in?

STEVE: Yeah, mainly.

BARBARA: Were they mainly with the sheep to begin with?

STEVE: Yeah.

BARBARA: And what about Bascos, did you have any ---

STEVE: Oh, there was lots of Bascos.

BARBARA: Did you work any with them?

STEVE: Not with them, I worked along side of them and went around quite a bit. One time, we was up there and I had a herder, and I was tending camp, and this herder was right along the driveway. They used to have a driveway come through the country, and went back into Strawberry where the Bascos went to the mountains on this driveway. But anyway, we was over by Stinkingwater, and camped up there on the mountain, and these Bascos was a coming through. And we had a band of sheep, and a herder seen these sheep a coming, but he didn't see them quick enough, and they cut our bunch off and they lost 25 or 30 head, mixed with the Bascos. So I come up there, and he told me these sheep was in with the Bascos. And they went down to the Pine Creek lane over there, and held them sheep up in the lane. And I went in there, and no way to get them out, you had to just go in there and catch them, you know. And I just rode in there a horseback, and I roped one of them sheep and led him out down there, and they'd turn him loose and start him back up where our sheep was. And them Bascos, they thought that was the funniest thing in the world, me catching them sheep out of there. They'd never seen that done before, I guess.

But I could see them brands on them sheep from up there better than you could a standing down in there, you know. Had an old gentle horse, he wouldn't kick one of them sheep anyway, so I'd just go in there and catch one and drag him out there, and they'd throw the rope off and turn him loose, and get him up on the hill. Them Bascos ---

BARBARA: How did they mark their sheep so that they knew who belonged to ---

STEVE: Paint, paint brand on them. They paint branded them, and then when they run them through and sheared them, well, they re-branded everything, you know, with the paint. I guess most of them was stamped right on the back with whatever iron they was a using.

DOROTHEA: Where were you, and what were you doing when you met Elsie?

STEVE: Well, I don't know what I was doing at that time. I was a moving to Baker.

DOROTHEA: And Elsie lived in Baker?

STEVE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: When did you get married?

STEVE: What the hell year was it?

ELSIE: '49.

STEVE: Don't ask me, it's been a day or two ago.

DOROTHEA: Do you remember what date it was?

ELSIE: January the 7th.

DOROTHEA: 1949. And 1949, so you have been married for a while then.

STEVE: A day or two.

ELSIE: Forty-one years, I think, or forty-two years.

BARBARA: Forty-five years.

ELSIE: No, I mean forty-five years.

DOROTHEA: Forty-five years.

ELSIE: Forty-five years, can't even figure.

DOROTHEA: It's been a while.

STEVE: That's too damn long. She pretty near got rid of me this year.

ELSIE: Well, I told him I was just hanging on to him to make our fiftieth.

BARBARA: After that, it's anybody, huh?

ELSIE: Yeah.

BARBARA: And do you have any children?

STEVE: One.

BARBARA: One. A boy or a girl?

STEVE: A girl, stepdaughter.

DOROTHEA: And her name is?

STEVE: Fran, you know her.

DOROTHEA: I know her, yeah, but I have to have her name down here.

STEVE: Oh.

ELSIE: Fran Van Cleave.

DOROTHEA: Van Cleave. And you have, she has two children, and their names are?

ELSIE: Del-Mar Crawford and Annette Howard.

DOROTHEA: And do they have any children?

ELSIE: She does, she's got three little children, three kids, two boys and a girl.

DOROTHEA: So, you're great-grandparents then?

ELSIE: Uh huh.

STEVE: Yeah, that's what makes all this white hair on my head.

DOROTHEA: Well, then, if you met in Baker and were married in Baker?

ELSIE: No.

DOROTHEA: Where were you married?

ELSIE: Winnemucca.

DOROTHEA: In Winnemucca. When did you come back to the valley?

ELSIE: '48.

STEVE: Yeah, we was down on the river down there, below Mount Vernon.

ELSIE: You worked at the mill, there at John Day.

STEVE: Yeah, I worked at the mill in John Day for a while.

ELSIE: You worked at the state highway, too.

STEVE: Yeah, I worked on the state highway. Then went to work for Oxbow up at Prairie City.

Worked for them up there at the Oxbow when they was, when Guthridge's sold out that outfit. I worked there then when they sold out. And then I went down below Mount Vernon and worked for

ELSIE: Frank Slover.

STEVE: No, Joe Green first.

ELSIE: Oh yeah.

STEVE: Worked for Joe Green, which was Bennett and Lee. Bennett is from Burns, and Lee owned that ranch, and Joe Green run it for them. And we worked there. And then I went down, on down to Mount Vernon and went to work for Frank Slover. Stanley Hopgood was the ranch boss at

that time. I worked for him until they sold out, and they sold to Bob Koble, and then I went on a working for him for several years until they sold out here ---

ELSIE: Bridge Creek.

STEVE: --- at Bridge Creek.

DOROTHEA: Now did Mears have that then, or did he just buy out here, or ---

STEVE: Well, let's see.

DOROTHEA: Koble bought from Mears?

ELSIE: No, he bought from Slover didn't he?

STEVE: Who?

ELSIE: Slover. Bob and ... Slover.

STEVE: Yeah, they bought from Frank Slover. And then they sold out to ---

ELSIE: Jack Mears.

STEVE: Jack Mears, which owned the Silvies Valley.

DOROTHEA: Okay. Let's pause for a moment and maybe rest and catch our breath while we turn the tape.

SIDE B

STEVE: Yes. Then Slover was the first one I worked for there, and then Kobles, and then they sold to Jack Mears, which had the Silvies Valley Ranch at that time. And they bought that over there, and that's how come I went to work out here. I went to work for Mears when he bought Koble out, I was working for Koble, so I just went on for him.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

STEVE: Dave Clines was the foreman out here to Bridge Creek at that time.

DOROTHEA: Fred Fine was working at that time?

STEVE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Who were some of the ---

STEVE: Well, Fine and Stringer owned that ranch. Mears bought that ranch from Fine and

Stringer.

DOROTHEA: Okay, and that's Joe Fine, and Fred is just working for his dad.

STEVE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

BARBARA: When you were working all these places, did you have your own horse, or did you get the horses from the ranches?

STEVE: Most of the time, I had my own horses.

BARBARA: Okay, that you rode all the time.

STEVE: Oh, yeah.

BARBARA: That you were familiar with.

STEVE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: So, you came out here to work, and went to work with Dave Clines then, or ---

STEVE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: And how long did you work for them?

STEVE: Oh hell, I don't know how long it was. But must have been a year or two I worked for him.

DOROTHEA: And then what, did Pon buy from ---

STEVE: Mears.

DOROTHEA: --- Mears.

STEVE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

STEVE: And then when Pon bought, why, I just went on for him.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And at that time, had Mears bought Frank Triska's place, or did Pon buy that?

STEVE: Pon bought that.

DOROTHEA: Pon bought that.

STEVE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Are you going to have some coffee?

STEVE: You don't get my coffee. Will you pull that door open?

BARBARA: Sure.

STEVE: Just reach there, you can reach it. Just pull on it. Now just push it, that's good. (Dog wants out.) She'll push it open when she comes back.

DOROTHEA: Okay, so we get into, Pon has finally bought this ranch. What kind of an experience did you have working on this ranch?

STEVE: (Laughter) Well, I got a lot of education the hard way. It was quite different. Mr. Pon was a nice fellow to work for and with.

DOROTHEA: And Mr. Pon's name was Harry.

STEVE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: And where did he originally come from?

STEVE: Well, I think California, maybe.

DOROTHEA: Now, how much of the property at that time did Mears have? Did they have the company place, or share ---

STEVE: No, they had the Craddock part of the ranch, but they didn't have the Scheckel's place or the Schetky place in the south end of the valley. They just had the Craddock place when Mears had it.

DOROTHEA: Okay, so what did he come with here first? Did he come here to ranch the cattle, or did he come with his exotic animals at this time?

STEVE: No, he come with cattle to start with.

DOROTHEA: And then he acquired the Scheckel's place and the Schetky place.

STEVE: Schetky place and the Scheckel's place, he bought.

DOROTHEA: Okay. Now, at some time or other, he also moved down to Burns and bought what was Bob Smith's place.

STEVE: Triska Place.

DOROTHEA: Triska. And also on the Sand Hill was Bob Smith's place. That's when he started

with the exotic animals, isn't it?

STEVE: Yeah, he started in with, I think the exotic animals there. Of course, he had buffalo here and down there, too. But we had all kinds of animals; there is one up there. That's exotic sheep, crossbred. He had mouflon sheep and Hawaiian sheep. A Hawaiian sheep is a dark colored sheep; they are both hair sheep. But the mouflon sheep has nice curled horns, makes a good mount for hunters. And then the Hawaiian sheep was a bigger sheep, but he didn't have no curl, didn't make a nice mount. So I crossbred them, mouflon with a Hawaiian. And some of them, the second cross come out, didn't have no ears, they just had a hole in their head. This one has got ears here, like a cottontail rabbit.

DOROTHEA: Kind of long and pointy.

STEVE: Huh? Yeah, but they're only this long.

DOROTHEA: Oh, oh.

STEVE: See that antelope's ears, that's the kind of ears that they ought to have, but they just got a, he just got a little short ears, and some of them never had nothing but a hole in their head.

DOROTHEA: So that wasn't a good cross.

STEVE: Yes, it was a good cross for the simple reason you see how wide that spread of horns is, it made an awful good mount. Hunters liked them because they had a big curl to the horns, you know, and made a good mount.

DOROTHEA: Okay, with this, we're talking about hunters; you also had a hunting, kind of a what he called ---

STEVE: Had a wildlife field, 5000 acres fenced in, and a nine and a half foot fence. We put exotic sheep, deer, elk, buffalo in there for these hunters, and they paid so much for a hunt, which included an antelope, and an elk, and a deer, and so on, whatever they choose, and these exotic sheep. And they paid so much for a hunt. And they'd get a buffalo, or elk, or deer, or two or three of them if they wanted them for a price.

BARBARA: Just kind of a preserve that you had especially for this.

STEVE: Yeah it was, it was 5000 acres fenced in. Of course, we had all these exotic animals on

the outside too, but they didn't hunt them. And every year we would take out so many and put in that hunting field and wildlife field.

DOROTHEA: Okay, and I know some of the experiences that you had during this. Tell us about a buffalo. What kind of an animal is a buffalo?

STEVE: Well, a buffalo is all right, I like buffalo really. But they're an animal that is hard to handle if you don't know them. And even if you do know them, you can do anything with a buffalo that he wants to do. But you've got to figure some way to make him want to do it. But they are good meat, and their skins is good, make good leather. And they're the only animal I know of will ration his food according to his needs, and the amount of food he has. If he has a lot of food, he eats more. And if he's got a small amount of food, he gets by on it just as well. And the only animal I know of you can feed wheat, barley, or any grain, free choice, and he won't hurt his self. We put 20 ton, or 22 ton of grain out in self-feeders, two or three hundred head of buffalo running there, and they'd run up there and get a mouthful of grain and run on about their business and graze around. But they never had a sick one. And if it would have been cattle, there would have been half of them dead, maybe more.

DOROTHEA: Okay, talking about a sick one, what happens when a buffalo gets sick?

STEVE: Well, if he gets in a herd and he's sick in the herd, and he don't get out to his self and hide someplace, he's dead.

DOROTHEA: That's, I suppose, called preservation.

STEVE: Nature's way of keeping disease out of them. I had one run across the ice in the river one time, and he fell through the ice, and it was cold, and I got down there with the pickup and drug him out of there and got him up on the bank. And of course, when I got him up all he wanted to do was kill me. And I finally drove off and left him, which was the wrong thing to do, because here come the other buffalo and they killed him right there, just nothing flat.

BARBARA: They'll just attack them?

STEVE: Oh yeah, they just drive a horn right through him.

BARBARA: And do they, after they kill them do they just go off and leave them then?

STEVE: Well, yeah, after a certain length of time, they'll horn them around there, and push them this way and that away until they have practically got no hair left on them. And they punch holes in them until they look like a screen door. But we shot one over there in a field one time, a hunter killed one, and they didn't get to it right there and let the buffalo get up to it. And the buffalo got up there and got a whiff of that blood, and they liked to tore that Farmhand up a trying to get it out of there. Them buffalo fighting a Farmhand. They just all piled on that carcass and went to horning it. They tried to get in there with a Farm hand, and they just about tore the Farmhand up.

DOROTHEA: What were they like to work?

STEVE: Well, everything they do, they do in a hurry. One heads for the gate, you better get out of the way. (Laughter) Well, they're just like stopping a runaway train. Oh, you can bend them a little, and I learned over the years a handling them, if you took them like you wanted to corral them out of a pasture down here, and you took them up here and through a gate and out that away, the next time you took them, you want to took them the same way. Just take them up there and put them through the same gate, and take them back the same way you did before. Because if you didn't, if you went to try and change the direction of them, huh uh, they just run over you and go back. And you could take them over there when we was a testing them, they'd get close to the corral and chute, and running them through the chute and everything, you know, and they'd get on top of the hill close to that corral, and huh uh, they just wouldn't go. You had to just force them to go.

BARBARA: Did they get along with elk or deer adjacent to one another, or ---

STEVE: Well, up to a point. Yeah, they wasn't too bad.

BARBARA: They wouldn't run them off or anything like that?

STEVE: Oh no, they wouldn't run them off or anything. But they just didn't get in there with them, you know.

BARBARA: Try to attack them or anything?

STEVE: The elk wouldn't get in with the buffalo, but close to them, you know, around the feeding and everything. But they never got mixed up with them or among them or anything. And they was kind of that way with a horse. You could handle them a horseback up to a point, but don't crowd

them too much.

BARBARA: Would the horses get a little nervous and skittish around them?

STEVE: Well, they did after they handled them a time or two. I had one horse he didn't move fast enough; one of them old cows stuck a horn in him about four inches. After that he moved when they was turning. You didn't have to tell him anymore. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: About how many crewmembers did it take to work these buffalo?

STEVE: That depended on how many you had. Well, if you had lots of help, it was fine, and you could get along with a minimum, that's according to what you wanted to do with them. Like working them in the corral or something, you had to have two or three on the gates, and so forth. And preferably a handling them a horseback, I myself would rather have a couple of fellows that knowed what they was a doing than a dozen, you know, because you had to know what you was doing. Because if you jumped in front of one of them at the wrong place, you was had.

DOROTHEA: What happens when they start calving? Are they pretty protective of their young?

STEVE: You bet you. I had a sign down along the road there, and I had a bunch of cattle, or buffalo in there like cattle along the highway, you know. And I had signs up between all the posts; keep out, and so on.

And I'm a going down the road one day, and I looked over there in the field, and just over the ditch bank, an old cow had dropped a little calf, a buffalo cow. And she was there with that calf. And I get down to where I can see, and there is an old man and an old lady that stopped on the highway, climbed over the fence, and started over there to that cow. And I hollered at this old man, I said, "Say, have you got your insurance paid up?" He said, "Well, now, you know, as far as I know I have." I said, "Well, you just keep going the way you're heading and you're going to get a chance to find out pretty quick because that old cow is going to throw you right back over this fence." And he hummed and hawed a little but he was a coming back toward the fence all the time. Hell, that old cow would have killed him so quick he wouldn't have knowed what hit, you know. They're awful protective that way.

DOROTHEA: Did you have much problems with people getting in fields and wanting to drive

through them?

STEVE: Oh yeah, you always had somebody wanting to get out and take a picture of one or something, you know. But I never did have too much problem, I kind of reasoned with them. But like that old man now, he didn't know what the hell he was doing. But like I told him, I said, "Look at all these signs along here, they was put up there for a purpose."

DOROTHEA: What, how did you acquire the one that you raised in your house, in other words?

STEVE: Well, we had a bunch of buffalo shipped in over there to the corrals and unloaded them. And there was three of them dropped calves that night they was unloading. And there was so much milling, and running, and a grunting, and a fighting, and trying to get out and one thing and another in there, that they never claimed them calves. So, I had to do something with them, so I brought them up here, and she raised them on the bottle.

DOROTHEA: All three of them?

STEVE: Yeah, two bulls and a heifer.

DOROTHEA: Which one did you keep?

ELSIE: I had the heifer longer than I had the two bulls.

DOROTHEA: The two bulls.

ELSIE: Yeah.

STEVE: She was two, wasn't she, when she took her back?

ELSIE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: I know that the sound of a buffalo is different than you would expect.

STEVE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Kind of describe what it sounds like.

STEVE: Well, it's according; they make a lot of different sounds. One of them sounds like a lion that is starting to roar, when they're growling, you know.

That buffalo she had here, she'd go out here, and she would be a following along aside of her, you know. A dog come up out there, a cat, or a chicken, or a horse or something, and that buffalo would just get between her and whatever it was, and just walk them away from her. And me, she'd

run by me and kick at me when she went by.

BARBARA: Be real protective of her.

STEVE: Yeah.

ELSIE: I was her mother.

BARBARA: Uh huh.

ELSIE: She belonged to me, and I belonged to her.

STEVE: And she was the damnedest thing to mother anything. We had a little colt here, and she was a trying to mother it. And she went over the fence out there and stole one of Jack Southworth's calves off a cow. Whipped the cow and run her off. And I had to go over to Seneca and get her; she took that calf and went plumb over the other side of Seneca with it. And the cow, the old cow, mother of it was a following her a bawling along. But she took that calf and went over there. And I went over there and she had a halter on, and hell, she'd catch her anyplace. And I couldn't catch her. I finally come back and got my horse, and I went over there and roped her, and I just as well roped a wild one. But anyway, I got her in the trailer and hauled her back here, and tied her up out here. But she'd see one of them cows over there with a little calf, hell, she'd just grunt and over the fence she'd go and whip that cow and run her plumb off.

DOROTHEA: Well, I know sometimes ---

STEVE: Claim the calf too, she'd let the calf suck, but hell, she never had no milk or nothing, you know, never had had a calf.

DOROTHEA: Starve it to death, yeah. Sometimes they sound like a pig.

STEVE: Oh, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Is that when they're grunting?

STEVE: Weaning their calves.

DOROTHEA: Weaning their calves.

STEVE: You'd go over there in that buffalo corral, and out of sight, you know, if you was to drop down in there out of an airplane or something, you'd swear to Christ you'd lit in the middle of a hog farm. Sounds just like a bunch of hogs in there.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

STEVE: But they could bawl. But we had that one over there, a bull, that was crossed with a polled Hereford and a buffalo, and he was bald headed, didn't have no horns or nothing, bald faced and had a goatee. And sometimes he'd grunt like a buffalo, and other times he'd bawl like a bull.

DOROTHEA: You also had some experience with the movie people. Can you tell us something about that?

STEVE: Yeah, yeah. Seven hundred head of buffalo come down over the hill and by the wagon, and they wanted me to stop them so they could take pictures. (Laughter)

BARBARA: Yeah, right!

STEVE: I told them when they come over the hill with them buffalo, I said, "Now you have them wagons ready and be a going." The thing of it was, the theme of the thing was that these wagons, these buffalo, they was supposed to be a traveling, these wagons was supposed to be a traveling with the buffalo in order to put their tracks out so the Indians couldn't see them, that was the theme of the thing. So, they had these guys over there a feeding them buffalo out of covered wagons for about two months before they made this picture.

But anyway, they got the wagons all lined up over there beside the buffalo corrals where they wanted them. And I had the buffalo over the hill out of sight of them. And I wanted to bring the buffalo up around the fence, and they had to come down by them wagons, and when the buffalo went by the wagons, they would go with them, you know. And of course, you know how that worked out, and half of them wasn't ready to go by the time the buffalo was, and they wasn't a waiting on nobody. And this one guy lost the doubletree pin out of his wagon, and he was down between the front end and the team, putting the pin in the doubletrees to hold it on. And one of them old cows went through between them horses and the front end of that wagon, and doing about sixty, went right over top of him, harness and everything, went plumb over there. That's when they wanted me to stop them.

DOROTHEA: Sure.

STEVE: And we went over to gather them that day, though to bring them over there, and one of

these wise apples, he was around there, and over in the corner one of these buffalo cows had had a calf over there in the corner, way out in the sagebrush alone. And I just drove on by, Frank and I, and went on a bringing them buffalo around and come up there. And this guy come a galloping over there, and he says, "You left one back there." And I says, "Yeah, I know it." He said, "Are you going to go get her?" And I said, "No." He said, "I'll go get her." And I said, "Alright, you go get her." I figured he'd be ahead of that buffalo when he come back. But he got over there pretty close and that old buffalo "woofed" about three times, and he turned around and come back, he didn't get her.

DOROTHEA: Okay, you mentioned Frank, and that's Frank Jones?

STEVE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: What was, we'd better mention the name of that movie, because it is kind of important.

STEVE: "The Way West."

DOROTHEA: And also ---

STEVE: Part of it was made in Bend, and part of it over in the McKenzie River someplace.

DOROTHEA: And is that when you got rid of all your hats?

STEVE: Yeah, that's when them Hollywood producers took all of our hats and our old boots, and everything else.

DOROTHEA: Anything that was slouch and greasy?

STEVE: Took the pattern off of my ox shoe bridle. And they went to Hollywood and made one, and they had it, and a picture of it in the Western Horseman. Didn't say nothing about mine.

(Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Okay. Also, weren't you a Marlboro man, or was that somebody else?

STEVE: Yeah, they made a Marlboro picture, using a buffalo. But after they made the picture, they stopped the cigarette advertisement on the TV, and we never did get to see it. But they are showing it in Portland, not as a commercial, but just a picture. I never did see it. But they was actually supposed to send me a copy of the film, but they never did.

DOROTHEA: They never did do that?

STEVE: That buffalo rider, they was supposed to give me a copy of the film of it too, and they never did. But I shot the buffalo in that picture. I never did get to see the picture, but I shot one buffalo in there, and it looked like I killed a dozen. Different cameras.

DOROTHEA: Different scenes.

BARBARA: I was going to ask you, they brought all these buffalo in, was it, was his idea just to have a reserve for hunters to come in and do that?

STEVE: That was the main idea, just a wildlife preserve for these animals.

BARBARA: Preserve for them. Did they want to sell buffalo meat later on, or ---

STEVE: Oh, they did all the time.

BARBARA: They did that, too.

STEVE: Yeah.

BARBARA: Okay.

STEVE: Yeah, they sold buffalo meat all the time.

DOROTHEA: Had buffalo feeds and things, elks ---

STEVE: Oh yeah. Did you ever eat buffalo meat? Damn, I liked that hump. You get that hump cooked good, and damn it was good, all the fat was marbled right down through it, you know. You'd think it was all gristle, but it isn't.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

STEVE: But I like that buffalo meat. But of all the meat, all the animals, that sheep up there produced the best meat of any of them.

DOROTHEA: That sheep?

STEVE: That sheep, that breed of sheep, I mean.

DOROTHEA: I don't think we ever got any of that. We got lots of ---

STEVE: We ate several of them here. In fact, it is when I killed this one to mount, they were running up around the hillside on a trail going around there, and there is a big juniper there. And just before they got to this big juniper, I shot at this one. And he went behind the juniper, and the

trail come out on the other side over there, and I pumped in another one, and when he come out the other side I shot again. And I went up there and I had killed one a going in, and one a coming out. So, I just eat one of them. Well, I eat them both, but I had the head mounted on that one.

DOROTHEA: You also had some experience with moose. Can you tell us something about that?

STEVE: Moose, well, we raised moose here, had a pair of moose, we raised one of them. But they'd get full of parasites, awful bad from worms and things, you know, and they didn't do too good. And the tapir, the South American tapir, which it looks like a big overgrown hog with an elephant snout.

DOROTHEA: Okay then, we ---

BARBARA: You had zonies, was that a cross between a zebra and Welsh pony?

STEVE: A pony, yeah. Yeah, we had them crossed, oh, with ponies, Welsh ponies, and Shetland ponies. And then I crossed some with a quarter horse, which was a pretty good cross. But them zebras, they had two of them, they took to Arizona to that big dude outfit. And they had a big stable there, and they cleaned that stable every day with a manure spreader. And they worked these zonies on that manure spreader, and they worked them for two years every day, they hooked them on there and cleaned the stables with them and hauled it out. And the last day they worked them, they had just as much trouble hooking them up as they did the first time. Just had to hog tie them to get them hooked up.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, zebras are pretty ornery, aren't they?

STEVE: That old zebra here, I had him in the field with a bunch of mares down there in the wintertime, always brought him in and put him in a box stall, you know, and the heat lamps. And I went down there, and he'd walk up and let me pet him, you know, and if you wasn't a watching him, he'd take a step or two ahead on you and he got you lined up just right, he'd kick the buttons off of your shirt pocket.

But anyway, I went down there to catch him, and he'd walk up and let me pet him, but he wouldn't let me put the halter on him. So I went on, I'd go down there one day, and they had tried him again, and it was colder, and he wouldn't let me put the halter on him. And I drove down there

one morning at about twenty, twenty-five below zero, he walked up and stuck his head in the halter and jumped up in the pickup. (Laughter) I brought him to the barn; he wasn't a fooling him any.

BARBARA: What was the ---

STEVE: He broke my arm out there when I was branding him out there at the Sand Hill, and I had him squeezed up behind the gates, you know. And I had Harry Mill holding the gate, I stuck that branding iron on him, and he jumped on top of that gate and Harry turned the gate loose and caught my arm between the post and the gate, and broke it right in the elbow.

So, I went up to the doctor's office, and the nurse was in there, and she was a filling out the accident report. "How did this accident happen?" I said, "Well, I was branding a zebra." "Oh, come off of it, I ain't got time for foolishness." (Laughter) And she never did put it down. Said put it down a branding an animal. Hell --- Oh, I had a lot of experience around that place.

BARBARA: Who was it that decided to try all these different crossings?

STEVE: Harry Pon.

BARBARA: Was that kind of an afterthought after he got this started, or did he, he wanted to do this basically to begin with?

STEVE: Oh yeah, he had this in mind. The only reason he didn't continue with it, really, I think, he got set up with them buffalo and got brucellosis among them and lost a lot of them.

And the old man was a getting old, and by the time he got through that, we had to put them through the chute about every thirty days and test them, you know, until we got them cleaned up. And it amounted to such a death loss, putting them through the chute that often, that it kind of took everything out of him, he just kind of give up.

BARBARA: Lost interest in it, yeah.

STEVE: And finally decided to just sell it and get out of it. His age was a bothering him, and I think cancer working on him, too. He finally just decided to sell it all and get out of it.

BARBARA: What was the hardest animal to work with, did you find?

STEVE: Well, it would be hard to say. That yak, those yaks was, the old yak was mean for the simple reason they had him in moving pictures, and they teased him so much that he was

dangerous. But the buffalo, really, handling that many of them, I would consider more dangerous than anything else we had.

DOROTHEA: Now the buffalo get pretty nervous and high strung, that's why ---

STEVE: Oh yeah, they was flighty as hell.

DOROTHEA: --- had the high death ---

STEVE: If they get used to you, a certain thing, you know, they're not bad. I've been around among them and everything. And we had one buffalo come out of Canada that would charge you all the time, every time you went to move them, you know. And she'd come back maybe a quarter after you a horseback. And she might run you a hundred yards or so out there, and then turn around and go back, and maybe go on a little ways and then back she'd come again. She kept a doing that until I finally shot her down through the nose with a 22 Magnum, and that took it out of her, she never come back anymore. But ---

BARBARA: Are the bulls in charge like studs, horse studs with the ---

STEVE: Oh yeah, they kind of herd. Yeah, they kind of herd a little, not as bad, you know. And they do quite a lot of fighting, and bellowing, and squalling. But that old yak, when he throwed his head up and popped his tail, them buffalo scattered. Had an old man a working over there to the buffalo corral and he was staying in a trailer over there. I told him one day, had that, that yak was out there in that front forty, you know, and I told him I said to open that gate down there and let that yak go down by the buffalo lake. Well, he went down there and opened the gate, and he had that old Ford pickup, you know, and he was a going to get it all done quick. And I told him to just open the gate and let the buffalo, or the yak, go out, but he was going to drive him out. Went down there and was going to drive him, and that old yak walked over there and stuck his head under the fender of that pickup and just picked it up and shook it like this. That old man wouldn't get within a quarter of a mile of him anymore. (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: During this time, you also didn't, Harry also built that pond and stocked it with fish?

STEVE: Oh yeah. Yeah, he built that lake over there and drilled a big well there, and put in a big pump and a pipeline up to the lake. Pumped water in there for fish, and planted it in Kamloops.

And then he put on a Huckleberry Finn Day for the kids. And the kid that was the best dressed to his imagination what Huckleberry Finn would look like, he give a Charolais calf. And he brought them up there, and a China cook, and baited their hooks and everything. These little kids all around that lake, and had them up there a fishing and they had a big fish fry and everything for them. And give the ---

BARBARA: He was kind of a generous man then.

STEVE: Yeah. And it was an every year thing, you know, he was a going to have a Huckleberry Finn Day for these kids. I go over there one day, and here is a couple fellows, three fellows in there, had a gunny sack full of fish. And it made me so damn mad, I wouldn't give a damn if they'd of just had a couple fish apiece, you know, but they had so damn many that they couldn't use them. And I told them, I said, "Listen," I said, "you fellows ain't a damn one of you here that have a kid in that fishing bee up there. And now to come in here, that old man went to a lot of expense, he went in and hauled them fish in here his self, and dumped them in this lake, and here you fellows had more than all them kids would have caught." But I said, "You didn't appreciate what the old man was a doing for them kids, evidently."

And one of them Jap kids down there, he kept a going over there a fishing every time. And I finally caught him over there one day, and I told him, I said, "I don't want to catch you in here no more." So, I go over there one day and here he is down under the bank a fishing. I told him, I said, "Listen, I'm going to tell you something," I said, "I asked you once not to come in here, and I'm going to tell you this time, the next time I catch you in here I'm going to put you in that lake out there and you ain't a going to come out." And I, damn, I never did catch him back there anymore, he stayed the hell out of there. I would have throwed him in that lake if I could.

BARBARA: How many people were working on this ranch during the time that you had the big numbers of animals out there? And what kind of a setup was it?

STEVE: Oh, there was probably --- well I couldn't hardly tell you how many. We had a contractor here that was building fence, and maintaining fence. And he had two or three men a working for him all summer long, as long as they could work, you know. And then there was probably six or

seven of us around the ranch all the time. And down to Burns and up here, and the whole deal, there was probably twenty men altogether.

BARBARA: Was there a main ranch house, and a bunkhouse, and a cook, or did people just come in for the day and back to town?

STEVE: Well, both, both.

BARBARA: I see.

STEVE: Most of them was, boarded their selves, and one thing and another, you know.

DOROTHEA: Well, most of them had families.

STEVE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: So ---

STEVE: Had a place to live.

BARBARA: So they just came in for the day and worked, and then went back to their own homes.

STEVE: Yeah. Well, some of them, some of them lived on the ranch in trailers and houses, and whatnot.

DOROTHEA: There was Leao Pierce and his wife; they lived over here on the Bridge Creek place.

STEVE: Yeah, Craddock.

DOROTHEA: And Frank Jones, and Gale Starbuck --- he lived down at the Frank Triska place though, didn't he?

STEVE: Yeah. Yeah, he lived in Burns. Harry Mill lived down there, too.

DOROTHEA: Harry Mill, he lived in Burns. His wife was a what, a schoolteacher?

STEVE: Schoolteacher.

DOROTHEA: And ---

STEVE: Tex Epley, he lived over to the buffalo corral, his family.

DOROTHEA: And Lindsay Hall worked for you a little bit.

STEVE: Yeah. Well, you kind of said that ---

DOROTHEA: Yeah, see I said it right, I said it right, worked for you a little bit, I said. (Laughter)

STEVE: Oh. Yeah, there was quite a few, a lot of fellows worked here, you know. John and

Lavern Starbuck.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, and they were Gale's kids, so they had --- Clint worked there for ---

STEVE: Clinton worked here.

DOROTHEA: For what, two years or so.

STEVE: Two or three years.

DOROTHEA: The Pettyjohn's, some of them, didn't they work --- Pete ---

STEVE: Ray did.

DOROTHEA: Ray.

STEVE: Yeah, he lived in Burns, but he worked here too.

DOROTHEA: And then ---

BARBARA: How many years did you work for Mr. Pon, and work on the ranch here?

STEVE: Well, I went to work there about, I went to work on that ranch at Mount Vernon in '51, I think. And from then on, I was on this ranch, and associated with it until, damn '70 I guess. No, let's see, '83. Yeah, about '83, I guess, when I had my heart operation.

BARBARA: So from '51 to '83 you worked?

STEVE: Yeah.

BARBARA: Pretty much for Mr. Pon?

STEVE: Well, not only for Pon, but the owners of this outfit.

BARBARA: Of this outfit.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, because after Pon sold it to ---

STEVE: Wolfswinkle, Cliff Wolfswinkle from Arizona.

DOROTHEA: I don't know how to spell that.

BARBARA: Wolfswinkle?

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

STEVE: I got a checkbook there in that drawer that's got his name in it, on it, his checkbook.

DOROTHEA: And from Wolfswinkle it went to ---

STEVE: Let's see ---

DOROTHEA: I'm trying to think of that man's name that had the store there for a while, didn't they have it?

STEVE: No.

DOROTHEA: That was just the store, Silvie's Store?

STEVE: Yeah, yeah just the store, and that little place across the river.

DOROTHEA: Oh yeah, it was.

STEVE: That next one was the Co-op.

DOROTHEA: Oh right, went there to the Co-op. So, but you've continued branding and working summertime's and things until you had your heart attack.

STEVE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: And then from there what have you done? Kind of branded and ---

STEVE: Oh yeah, I've branded and rode for Sproul's and Southworth's, and just day riding since then here and there.

DOROTHEA: Used to have some brandings, talk about brandings, you used to have some brandings, or what they would call brandings, of the deer and elk because they fought so much. And so you would get some ropers together and cut their horns off.

STEVE: Sort them out, yeah. Well, we sawed the horns off of them elk, you know. It was about, oh god, I think there is over a hundred head of them elk, bulls, and we roped all of them and sawed their horns off. And they sold the horns to the Koreans, they was over here, and they had a quick freeze. The elk's horns was in the velvet, and they sent that quick freeze outfit up here and they was here, weighed the horns. Fifty bucks a pound for the horns, and quick-froze them right there while we was a getting them off the elk. We'd catch them elk and saw them off, and they'd weigh them and put them in a quick freeze. Clint was a helping us on that.

DOROTHEA: Yeah. I think Jack Drinkwater helped a little bit on that, too.

STEVE: Yeah. Yeah, there was several of them there. But of all the animals in my life that I've roped, elk is the hardest to heel of any animal I ever throwed at. You can't hardly heel one of them throwing like you would at a cow, or a calf, or something. And when that rope starts under there,

he'll kick it back around your neck, or throw it out there someplace.

DOROTHEA: We probably ought to put a name on that too, and it's, we mentioned Clinton, and that's Clinton Purdy. Were there any other of the animals that you dehorned?

STEVE: Well, we dehorned of course the Hereford cattle.

DOROTHEA: Oh yeah, you had quite a ---

STEVE: We had longhorns, you know, that we didn't dehorn, straight longhorn cattle. They was registered cattle. But the Hereford, we dehorned all of them, the steers. But, well, let's see, I don't think we dehorned any of the --- but there had been some buffalo dehorned before we got them, but we didn't dehorn any of them after we got them. They bought some that had been dehorned.

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

BARBARA: Does it affect the animal? Do they act different after you cut their horns off? The elk, did you notice that they behaved differently?

STEVE: Well, not a great deal. They wasn't so aggressive with the others, you know. We had one Roosevelt elk that come out of the zoo at Klamath Falls, and at one time we had him in about an acre lot, fenced with a big high board fence around it. And we'd get so many in there, and then we'd cut out some and haul them up here and dump them in the wildlife field for hunting.

But anyway, I had this Roosevelt bull in there, and I had two or three Rocky Mountain elk in there that was four or five points. But this old Roosevelt bull was a big six point, and he was mean. That's how come we got him; he got to fighting them in the zoo down there so bad that they was afraid to keep him.

And I walked up there one day and leaned against a big post there, and he just hauled off and hit that post, and pretty near knocked me down, and I was plumb on the other side of the post. But anyway, he got to fighting these other bulls. And Frank and I went down there; Frank Jones and I went down there, to dehorn him. And he run up in the corner there, and he had to come back by me, and when he did, I caught him right out on the end of his beam on one side, plumb the last fork, and I throwed the rope so he'd go over it with his front feet. And when he went over it with his front feet, I went the other way, and I throwed him about as high as I'm a thinking about, and

when he hit it kind of knocked the air out of him. I figured Frank could get him by the hind foot before he got on his feet, or he'd tear me and the horse both up, and he caught him all right.

We stretched him out there, sawed his horns off, and when I let him up this other bull, Rocky Mountain elk, he was standing there squealing all the time we was sawing his horns off. And when I let him up, and he didn't have no horns, that other bull took him across that lot, and I thought he was going to ram him out through the fence. I finally had to rope him and saw his horns off before he'd quit. But we had to dehorn both of them before they'd quit fighting him after he lost his horns.

DOROTHEA: And that was the purpose of the dehorning the elk in the first place, wasn't it, because of the fighting?

STEVE: Yeah, to keep them from fighting. Yeah, they'd kill one another, you know, in a small area where they couldn't get away.

DOROTHEA: We're coming to the end of this side of this tape. Do we want to stop now and do the video, or have we got some more questions that we could do another side of a tape?

STEVE: Well, that's getting about the end, I think.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, well, I was going to say you're probably getting tired. We've just about covered to the point where we want to get on tape. I will have to change tapes. So let's ---

STEVE: I used to help everybody brand, like all over the country, you know, over to John Day and up and down the river and everywhere, and Fox Valley and Long Creek.

BARBARA: Well, we can pause here for a minute and ---

DOROTHEA: Kind of refresh our memories and change tapes.

TAPE 2 - SIDE C

DOROTHEA: You have some sheep in that corral with the elk and things, can you tell us something about them?

STEVE: Yeah. Well, we had two or three different kinds of sheep; we had mouflon sheep, barberry sheep, Hawaiian sheep, domestic sheep, all kinds of sheep in there. And later, we took the sheep out and put them up in the wildlife field with the buffalo, and the elk, and deer and

everything else. But the barberry sheep, which is a desert sheep, and they're a big sheep, we had one of them there that weighed about 300 pounds, and the buffalo killed him. He was fighting with the buffalo and one come into the side and hit him, and knocked him down, and when he went over and they stepped in his belly and busted his stomach and killed him. But that was about the how of the sheep.

And the hunters liked those sheep, the Hawaiian sheep for the wide horns. But the mouflon sheep had the wider horns, and the Hawaiian sheep's horns come down next to his head. But we crossbred them to the mouflon to get the horns pulled away from the head and make a better head mount. And the barberry sheep, they never did turn out too good. I thought they'd cross with the other sheep but they wouldn't cross with the sheep. They're the goat family, I learned later.

DOROTHEA: Did you have goats also?

STEVE: Oh yeah. And then the European red deer, we got a European red deer, we was going to cross with the mule deer in order to get a bigger deer and a bigger set of horns, but they wouldn't cross. They'd cross with elk; they did cross with the elk. We had some of them cross with the elk in the wildlife field.

DOROTHEA: Now, I thought they were little?

STEVE: No, no they're big deer, European red deer is like big ... elk, or pretty near that big. Look like a scroungy elk really. And they got, yeah them sika deer, and the, and there was another deer there. Them little sika deer was about the size of a jackrabbit in there.

DOROTHEA: Now were you going to cross them with something also?

STEVE: No, huh uh.

DOROTHEA: It was just a ---

STEVE: But the European red deer, I wanted to cross with the mule deer, because they had such a big set of horns. And they had a crown head in a red deer. He has a crown and the points of his horns was a crown up here. And that's a royal head, you know. But he wouldn't cross.

DOROTHEA: Did you ever get an elk and a red deer crossed?

STEVE: Oh yeah, several of them, we had several of them. But they just made a kind of a

scroungy elk.

DOROTHEA: What did you do with all of these animals when Harry finally decided to sell?

STEVE: Well, he sold them off here and there and every place. Sold the buffalo and everything else.

BARBARA: The main purpose of the crossing and getting different kinds of animals out, was for the hunter's trophy, the mounting. That was his main purpose was to do that.

STEVE: Was to get a better trophy head.

BARBARA: I see.

DOROTHEA: What kind of experiences did you have with certain hunters?

STEVE: Well ---

BARBARA: Greenhorns?

STEVE: I had three fellows, or two fellows come up here one time and wanted to go bow hunting up in the wildlife field. And here they come up to the barn early in the morning, get out of their pickup, and they was all painted up in war paint and one thing and another on, you know. I went to laughing, and I was a guying them about it, I said, "God damn," I said, "Indian, he is smarter than that," I said, "when he got one of them old black powder guns he throwed that damn bow in the river." (Laughter) They turned around and went back to Burns and got their rifles and come back. And I took them up there and they each killed a six-point bull, and then they was a thanking me all over the place for razzing them so much about that bow hunt, you know. They said they never would have killed one with a bow.

BARBARA: Did they have hunting just during special seasons, or did he do it all during the year?

STEVE: Oh, anytime they wanted to hunt.

BARBARA: I see.

DOROTHEA: About how many hunters did you finally end up having?

STEVE: Oh, good god, I wouldn't have the least idea. We had quite a bunch of them over the ---

DOROTHEA: Did you have to take them like on a tour, or a guide, did you have to guide their hunts?

STEVE: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I guided the buffalo hunters. Frank, he guided the elk hunters. Yeah, we'd take them out and they'd pay so much for so many animals, you know. And we usually knew about where they was at.

I had a nigger cop from Chicago up here, wanted to kill a buffalo. And I took him up on the mountain, and the bull got --- Jump Creek Reservoir up there, and that road goes right up like this, it's pretty near straight up, you know. And up on top, we run on to this buffalo, and I told him that was about as good a trophy as he was going to find. So he jumped out and shot it, and he knocked it down. But hell, them buffalo jumped right up and started running, and I didn't want it to get in that other buffalo because we lost one a week or so before that. Got into buffalo, other bunch, and I couldn't track him, you know. And he just went on, and they finally killed him over the hill and someplace. I never did, I found him afterwards. But anyway, when this bull got up that the cop had shot, and started down the hill, I killed him. And I told him I hated to butt in on his hunt, but oh, he was a thanking me all over the place for killing it. So we went down there and had a wench on the front of that old pickup, you know, and I run it up over there and drug that bull up in the back end of it, and I started off of that hill just like this. And I said to that cop I said, "I hope this damn thing don't jump out of gear, or we'd put a road across that reservoir down there and halfway up that other hill." And he was just setting up there, hanging --- (Laughter) He was pretty near standing up on the dashboard, you know. He was sure setting on the edge of that seat with the door handle. Tickled me. But, oh, he was well pleased with his bull.

BARBARA: Did you have people mostly from out of state, or were there ---

STEVE: Oh, from everywhere. Mostly buffalo hunters, well most of them was local, not local here, you know, but in the state.

BARBARA: From Oregon.

STEVE: Yeah, we had a few out of state, like that feller, he was wanting a buffalo. Doctors and lawyers and whatnot. But oh, it was quite interesting, you know, we had one fellow come up here to kill a buffalo bull, and they had him in a lot, with a bow. My god, I don't know, I finally told him, I said, "You got one more shot and you better kill him because if you don't I'm a going to kill

him." And he got him that time. But hell, he had five arrows a sticking in that bull.

BARBARA: Oh dear.

DOROTHEA: What kind of animals do you suppose are still wandering around? Do you think that there is still some descendants of the elk? Because I know, as the years progressed, there got to be a point where you couldn't keep the elk in the field.

STEVE: Since this Co-op took over down there --- and they finally sold them elk that was left there to Mike Kilpatrick. I went over there to help Mike get them elk trapped. I'm a coming down around the fence with about twenty, thirty head of elk. Come to a fence corner, and when I get to the fence corner, no corner there, and the elk just went out and headed for Gold Hill. So, I know there is that many out there someplace. But I couldn't say that they was all domestic elk or wild elk, because the fence had been down for a period of time in that corner.

DOROTHEA: So Mike never got his elk?

STEVE: Well, he finally wound up; he got all of them out of there.

DOROTHEA: Did he?

STEVE: They went in there and trapped the last of them with a helicopter and a net, and they got the last of them out of there. But there is more elk in there now, hell, they go in and out through the fence; they don't keep the fence up. Terrible. I don't know how they're going to prove what, who owns what. But they ain't supposed to own any of them elk now.

DOROTHEA: And who owns it now?

STEVE: Fleming.

ELSIE: Ben Fleming.

DOROTHEA: Ben Fleming.

ELSIE: From California. His son-in-law is running it. "Izzy" Oren.

DOROTHEA: Okay.

ELSIE: Isaac Oren is his name, from Bend.

DOROTHEA: And they've also started this ---

ELSIE: Dude ranch.

DOROTHEA: --- Ponderosa Dude Ranch, isn't that what it's called?

ELSIE: Guest ranch.

DOROTHEA: Guest ranch. And they have quite a lodge up there, I understand. I haven't been there yet.

ELSIE: I haven't either.

STEVE: Well "Izzy" told me that they figured they would have a million dollars in that lodge when they got it built. And later, he told me the next time that he figured it would cost him better than two million by the time they got it done.

DOROTHEA: It's quite a digging up there.

STEVE: Yeah, I hope it works out, but I'm awful afraid it's ---

DOROTHEA: Have you been up close to it?

STEVE: Yeah, I've been up there.

DOROTHEA: Have you?

ELSIE: You ate dinner over there.

STEVE: Yeah. Yeah, I went over there and ate dinner one day.

DOROTHEA: Who are the cooks?

STEVE: I don't know who was a cooking then. Some lady from up here to Seneca I think, was a cooking then.

BARBARA: Aren't they supposed to bring people in from, I heard that they were going to bring a lot of Japanese people over here to ---

STEVE: Supposed to, China, and Japan, and Russia.

BARBARA: Uh-huh, that wanted the western experience, or whatever.

STEVE: He's a Russian, that "Izzy" is a Russian.

ELSIE: He made a trip to ... and he went over there promoting this deal. He said to heck with these local people. He said it's the foreigners got the money. I don't think they got all that much money either.

STEVE: Well, I don't know, you know, I kind of hate to see it myself in a way, because if that

thing don't work, and don't pay, they've ruined a good ranch for a cow ranch for sure. Because no way could you run cattle enough on that ranch to support that kind of business.

DOROTHEA: No.

STEVE: Nothing else, the interest on that kind of money would eat you up more than you could pay with that many cattle. Don't make sense to me. Of course, it's a change of business in the country, might make a million dollars, you never know. But it don't suit me.

DOROTHEA: Of all the experiences that you've had with these different animals, can you recall some funny experiences, and the fun times that maybe you've had with working with them?

STEVE: Oh, I've had a lot of fun branding calves, and branding buffalo, and everything else. But over the years, I've roped pretty near everything that runs from bobcats to coyotes.

ELSIE: Tell them about branding the zebras.

STEVE: I did.

DOROTHEA: We did.

STEVE: Yeah, that lady thought that was funny. Thought I was a pulling her leg.

DOROTHEA: Talk about some of your saddles. What kind of a saddle did you work with first, and what kind of a saddle did you have to have to rope an elk?

STEVE: Well, I roped them off of all kinds. My first saddle, a long time ago when I was a kid, I told you I worked for Mike Acton over there, well, I had an old Rosebud saddle that was made in Vale years and years ago. And it would eat a wagon tongue up overnight if you didn't have two blankets on it. But anyway, there was a kid worked there from Texas, and he had a big swell fork, high cantle, square skirted saddle on an old Bull Moose tree they called it. But anyway, I was a talking to him and he kept wanting to trade me this saddle for that one, and I watched it quite awhile and he never heard anything back with it. I could see his horses wasn't sore backed, and this one of mine was a eating the horses up, so I traded with him. So I had rode it quite awhile, and old Mike Acton, he was always kind of funny, and always picked out the horses for us, you know. I went out there one morning and he give me a big white horse to ride. And the barn was there, and the corral went right around here, you know, and I just led him out there to the barn door and

saddled him up right there at the barn door and cinched him up. I had this old square skirted saddle, and bull moose tree on him, and started to turn him around to lead him away from there. And he just reared up that way and slid right down them poles, and he just shut that cantle board right up over the horn on that thing. And that old man just fell over laughing.

And I was a kid, you know, and a kid then didn't get a saddle very often. And he was a laughing, and he said, "I always wondered what that god damn thing would look like with a roof on it." He said, "I can tell now." And here I am about to die with a heart attack, thinking how in the hell am I going to get another saddle? But anyway, he laughed, and he just fell over and rolled in the dirt and laughed. And every time he'd look up at the thing, he'd laugh again. Pretty soon, he never said a word, he just pulled it off the horse, threw it on his shoulder, and went up to the house. And up below the house, he had a big shed there. And I seen him going in that shed a packing this saddle on his shoulder, and I didn't know what the hell he was going to do, nail it together or something maybe. But anyway, he took it up there and pretty quick he come out of there packing an old Walker saddle, an old saddle of his, over his shoulder, and he throwed it down there. And he said, "Here, take this one." He said, "I always wondered what that thing would look like with a roof on it."

DOROTHEA: So did you get a new saddle?

STEVE: Hell, he give me that saddle.

ELSIE: Tell them about the pigs, and the horses that you broke.

STEVE: Huh?

ELSIE: About the horses that you broke for him.

STEVE: Oh.

ELSIE: And about the pigs.

STEVE: Yeah. He was a funny old fellow, you know, and I was a working for him on that Pine Creek Ranch over there. And by god, he come in there one fall and he had about five or six head of colts, two and three year olds. And among them was an old nine year old gelding that had got away from him, and got down in the Riverside country, and run down there for several years. And some

of them guys got him in down there, and eventually got him back home and brought him up there. He was nine years old, and had them in a corral, and I come in. And him and another fellow was in there, in the house eating dinner. I went in and asked him, I said, "What are you going to do with them horses, Mike?" "Well," he said, "I thought I would leave them here." And you're going to feed down to Robbins Ranch, which is about five miles down there. And I had to ride back and forth every night, and morning, a horseback. And he said, "I thought you would ride them colts back and forth and have them going by spring." And I said, "Well, that's alright," but I said, "what are you going to do?" "Well," he said, "I'll be over here once in awhile and help you." And I said, "That's what I figured." I said, "I'll ride them back and forth, but I'm going to ride them my way, not your way, but my way. Either that, or I ain't a going to ride them."

Made him mad and he took them all home but that old nine year old gelding, and left him there. So I got, I took that old horse and tied him up to a post and got him halter broke. I tied a hind foot up and put my saddle on him one day, and I got on him and went down to the field with a foot tied up. I rode him three days with that foot tied up before I ever let it down. Finally, I let it down and rode him, and I went on a riding him, and I packed everything on him. I'd get ready to get on him; I just come up on either side, or wherever. And I just wanted to show him the difference in breaking one. Anyhow, I rode him all winter there. If I wanted to rope something, I just roped it, whatever it was. God damn, he --- oh, he thought that was funny, you know, next spring he had left that old nine year old gelding for me to break, and took the rest of them home, them young horses. Anyway, the next spring he come over there and he said, "Well, you better get your horses shod up and come over," he said, "going to start riding and branding the calves."

Well, I went over, and the first morning I went out and caught this old nine year old gelding and led him up there and just threw the bridle reins down in front of the shed, and grabbed my saddle. And I come up to him on the wrong side, and I just threw it on him. And went around and cinched it up, you know, and I got ready to go. I just walked up on the offside and got on. And he was a looking at me all the time, you know. And I got up there and we rode near a bunch of cattle on the fence corner, going to brand the calves. Just rode in and roped a calf, drug it up to the

fire, and everything. A day or two later, he come around, he said, "By god, you know," he said, "I got a horse crippled the other day and I'm kind of short of horses, and you got plenty." He said, "Why don't you let me have that bay horse?" And I said, "Well, he ain't mine, he's your horse, if you want him, take him." I said, "There ain't a damn thing I can do about it." And by damn, he took him and I never did get him back either. I think that's the only horse he got out of that bunch.

ELSIE: That was the one that he had ... down there.

STEVE: Oh, that was Lenny Birds. He come up there and I had this bay horse there, and he was hair triggered as hell. And Lenny come up and he had some cows that was in the field mixed with Mike's cattle there. And I told him I said, "I'll saddle this horse and go down and help you." And he was kind of a hair triggered son-of-a-gun, but anyway I saddled him up and got on him and started out. And he was pretty tight.

I went out the gate, and I looked back and they had a pig there, and that damn pig was a coming, a woof, woofing down there. I knew if he run under him, I was gone. I turned around and looked back to see where the hog was, and goddamn, he come uncorked. He had me right on top of the cante board, and I had a snaffle bit rein in each hand, and just getting higher all the time. And finally, Ann seen him, and she run in and hit him over the head with a romal, and he threwed his head up, and I got caught up with him. And then old Lenny was there, and he said, "My god, I wonder what made him do that, you know." And I looked down there and that son-of-a-bitch had a spur track and my throat latch pretty near to the cinch where old Lenny had spurred him when I looked the other way. He'd just hacked him up in the shoulders. (Laughter)

ELSIE: That wasn't the one I was telling about. It was old Mike that had that horse down in there in those bushes.

STEVE: Well --- huh?

ELSIE: Teaching that horse to ...

STEVE: Oh, that sorrel horse of mine, I had a poor old horse I was riding there one spring. Mike said to me, he said, "I got a lot of horses, we'll ride some of them older horses, and don't put that colt up in the rocks, and ride the hell out of him." He said, "Leave him here and I'll ride him around

here on the ranch irrigating, and get the milk cows and stuff." So I said, "Alright." And one day I come in there and Mike, it was Saturday, and Mike said to me, he said, "Neighbor over there has got a cow, and a calf, and a yearling heifer in over there, wonder if you would take a horse and go over there Sunday and bring them over." I said, "Yeah."

And this horse was in the corral there, and I caught him and saddled him up and went over to Lillard's over there and got this cow, and a calf, and a yearling. And I had to cross that bridge right there, and you know what happened when the yearling got there. And that yearling come back at me, and that horse was all over that yearling.

Now, how in the hell did that old man learn that horse to look at a cow irrigating? And he was plumb green horse when he took him, you know. But that yearling started back, and that horse would look at that yearling right in the face, and fooled me so bad that I damn near fell off of him. But anyway, I got back and I never said nothing.

A day or two later, I am going up the hill and down in the rose briars and willows down there. He had two or three old sow pigs in there, and they had little ones out in them willows. And I'm a going up over the hill there, and I'm looking back. I seen Mike going up through the field packing a shovel on his shoulder, on this sorrel horse. Pretty quick, I seen him ride out there and stab that shovel in the dirt. And I looked down there and there was one of them old sows was out there in that meadow, and he was a holding that old sow out of them willows on that sorrel horse. Of course, that sorrel horse was afraid of that pig, and he was just staying back away from it, and he was a holding it out of them willows. And I said, "Uh-huh, I know how you learned him now." For a long time, I couldn't figure out how he got that horse a watching anything, irrigating on him, you know, it didn't make sense to me.

ELSIE: Okay, now tell her about the hay that you bucked up out in the field where they was all a sleeping.

STEVE: Oh, that was down to Bell A. We was a haying down there to the Bell A, and had two haying crews there. And one outfit was a cutting and a raking the hay, and we was a bunching and yarding the hay. And another outfit was stacking. And I was working with this stacking crew.

But anyhow, right down there at the Bell A, and there was no trees or nothing down in that lower field. And we just bucked up a big pile of hay out there, two or three buck loads of hay in a pile. And fifteen or twenty of us had our beds made in that hay. By god, old Archie Cross, had the Cross place down here, he went out to Withers and bought a Percheron stud from Harry Withers out there and brought it down there. And Christ, there was a hundred and fifty head of horses, hay horses, all haying with horses, a four-horse rudder bucks and everything. And he just pulled the halter off of that stud horse and turned him loose.

Well along in the night, I could hear these horses a coming, hear them a running, kicking and fighting, you know, and that old stud had about thirty, forty head of them gathered up and was a coming right down through camp with them. And I hollered and everybody run this way, and run that away, and went right through camp. And there was beds and clothes scattered all over the flat.

But anyway, we got it all gathered up.

I was wrangoing, and I had to leave real early in the morning in order to get it in, and breakfast at 6 o'clock, you know, and you had to have your teams ready by six. But anyway, I left real early in the morning. But this morning I got up, and it was still fresh in my mind about this horse a coming through camp, you know. And I got up and I saddled my wrango horse and tied him to the wagon, and god damn, I grabbed a set of harness, and I went down through them beds, rattle, bang, and hollering wow. And everybody just jumped up and left. (Laughter) Frank Baker was a going across the field in his shirttail, and me right after him with a set of harness. And he was just a picking them up and laying them down out across there. I don't know, he run a hundred yards out there before he ever looked back. And I was a going the other way from my horse. If I hadn't of got my horse, they would have killed me.

ELSIE: All in their long underwear.

STEVE: Yeah, god damn that was funny. Still fresh in their minds, you know.

ELSIE: That's ...

DOROTHEA: I don't either, I don't either.

STEVE: Down there at the sawmill one time, and I went to work on the green chain, them fellows

changed stations every two hours, you know. Hell, I didn't know it. I went down there and they was running railroad ties, and they was running them down to the end of the chain and pulling them off. And they put me down in that station. Well, hell I didn't know it, and I pulled them damn railroad ties for eight hours down there off of that green chain. By god, I couldn't hardly walk out of there, they're heavy.

But anyway, I never said nothing, and they was all a laughing and a snickering about it, you know me, a working me around there and getting me to pull all them heavy railroad ties. This went on for several nights. And one day when the whistle would blow, they'd pull their aprons off, and their mittens and lay them on them upright posts, you know, and run down to the pond house and get in there to get a good seat to eat their lunch.

So I waited, and the whistle blowed and they all run out of there, you know, and I had a pocket full of spikes and a hammer, and I just went up there and I nailed every damn pair of gloves, mitts, and aprons right down through the tops of them posts. Every one of them, and I never said a word, you know. And we come back out after dinner, and I put my apron on, and I was standing around there, and the chain started. And god damn, everybody went trying to get their gloves on. And they finally had to shut the chain down and call the millwright up there to get their gloves. (Laughter) God damn them, I learned them better than to pull that.

BARBARA: You'll teach them.

STEVE: Yeah, tickled me.

DOROTHEA: Well, let's get on to what you've done since you've retired. Now, I understand that you are known as the hubcap man. Can you tell us something about that?

STEVE: Well, that hubcap business started when I got home from open-heart surgery, and I had five bypasses. And they told me to walk every day. And this road hadn't been resurfaced, and it was full of potholes. So, I'd go down the road, every one of them potholes I'd come to, I'd go out in the field and pick up a hubcap or two. And that's how the hubcap business started.

DOROTHEA: About how many hubcaps do you have, or do you know?

STEVE: Oh I don't know, probably a hundred, maybe more than that, I don't know. I don't think

so, though. And people come along here, and they need a hubcap, and they get one. And maybe they got one that they can't use, and they throw it off here, and that's the way it's went. A fellow the other day come by here and wanted a hubcap for a motor home, and I had one, one of them big ones. Said, "What do you want for it?" "Oh," I said, "I've been a selling them for five bucks." He said, "I'll take that one." He said, "I went down to the wrecking yard to get one the other day." and he said, "They had one there, and you know what they wanted for it?" I said, "No." Said, "\$85." So, he was pretty well pleased.

DOROTHEA: It was \$80 cheaper.

STEVE: Yeah, yeah.

DOROTHEA: So, what else have you done in your retired years?

STEVE: Just as little as possible.

DOROTHEA: Do you do any braiding or anything of ---

STEVE: Oh, I make a lot of leatherwork. Headstalls and quirts, and I call them quirts a jump starter for a bronco horse, you know. You don't want to use it until afternoon. You use it early in the morning; they may jump out from under you. And I make, oh a lot of foot scrapers, and hangers, horseshoe hangers and whatnot, out in the shop. Yeah, and boot jacks, I make book jacks, and foot scrapers with brushes on them. And I got them made out of antiques, plates off of the Oregon-Northwestern Railroad, and out of horseshoes, and brushes.

DOROTHEA: How many years have you lived here in this house?

ELSIE: We've lived here ever since 1960.

DOROTHEA: '60. About 33, 34 years. How did you ever settle --- was there a house here?

ELSIE: That was this house; it never was supposed to be lived in this long, it's an old lumberman's shack. No air space, no, nothing for insulation. A piece of tarpaper between two boards.

DOROTHEA: So, when you found this house, you decided this is where you wanted to live.

ELSIE: No, I'm the one that found this.

DOROTHEA: Oh, you are?

ELSIE: Yeah. When he was working for everybody down here, I said, "If they happen to sell out

and you didn't have a job, then I would have to move, and you'd have to move." So, I come along here and found out this was for sale, so we bought it. He growled his head off, but I bought it anyway.

BARBARA: So you had a place to stay.

ELSIE: You bet, we didn't have ---

STEVE: Couldn't come along and tell us to move anyhow.

BARBARA: Right.

ELSIE: That's right, they couldn't tell us to move.

STEVE: I got the only round shop in Harney or Grant County.

DOROTHEA: A round shop?

BARBARA: A little round barn, is it?

STEVE: No, no, it's a shop.

ELSIE: A blacksmith shop.

STEVE: I think my dad cut that center pole for that round barn over there at Barton Lake.

DOROTHEA: Oh, he did?

STEVE: Worked for Pete French.

DOROTHEA: Pete French.

STEVE: I don't know that he did, but I always thought he did.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

STEVE: Because he was always a working with timber.

DOROTHEA: We often wondered where they got all that juniper posts.

STEVE: And juniper especially.

DOROTHEA: There is juniper poles or posts or whatever you want to call them in there that's huge, huge things.

STEVE: Yeah. Well, he was always a cutting that juniper. He used to haul logs into Drewsey, you know. People would get them logs and then they'd saw them in two and make four-foot wood out of them and buzz it with a buzz saw. That's about the only power saw they had then, would be to

run off an old Model-T Ford or something, you know. Or maybe a stationary motor, or pump engine, or something.

DOROTHEA: Talking about Model-T Fords, what was your first experience, since you were a horseman, with an automobile?

STEVE: Model-T.

DOROTHEA: And how did you acquire it?

STEVE: I traded a new saddle for it, for a Model-T Ford.

DOROTHEA: Did you know how to drive already? Or how did you ---

STEVE: Well, yeah, I'd drove some, not a hell of a lot. But I had lots of country to learn in, so I just got in and took off. (Laughter) No, I traded a new saddle for it.

ELSIE: He wasn't like Mike Acton.

STEVE: No.

ELSIE: He put it in the corral so he could turn.

DOROTHEA: Was he the one that didn't know that you had to put gas in it? He just drove it, and drove it, and drove it until it stopped.

STEVE: I bought a new saddle from old Sandy Anderson in Burns, and you couldn't guess what I had to pay for it, a brand new saddle. I paid \$68 for it. I rode it for about a year, and I traded it for a Model-T Ford. I don't know how long I drove it.

DOROTHEA: What did you do for a saddle then? Did you have ---

STEVE: I had another saddle.

DOROTHEA: You had another one.

STEVE: Yeah, I had that old Walker saddle Mike give me.

DOROTHEA: Tell me something about these Walker saddles. Are they something special?

STEVE: Well, they was an old saddle that used to be in the country. Walker Visalia saddle was about the only saddle you seen, and they was a mail order catalog saddle. I think they was made in California. And that's about the first saddle I knew anything about.

And then they had a Rosebud saddle was made in Vale. And I had one of them, but it would eat a

wagon tung up overnight, if you didn't have it padded pretty good. I don't know, it had a warped tree or something in it, or wrinkle in the rawhide. I didn't know enough about a saddle then to took it out. But I traded it off to that Texan.

And that Texan, he was a funny, about seven feet tall, and we had a big bay horse there, and they called this Texan Slim. We had this bay horse, they called him Slim, and he was a little hair-triggered. Them horses there had never been rode with a double rigged saddle, you know. And that Texan, I told him as he saddled his horse up in front of the barn, double rigged saddle, and I told him, I said, "Tex, if I was you I would pull that back cinch up on that horse a little. He had never been rode with a back cinch, so he knows it's on him." "Oh," he said, "I guess I'm old enough to know what I'm a doing." And I said, "Well, alright." We was working a bunch of cattle down in the field, and there was an irrigating ditch there about two feet wide, pretty close, and pretty soon this calf broke out of there and old Tex took after him. And when he went out there, old Slim he run out there on this old bay horse and jumped that irrigating ditch, and when he did that cinch hit him in the belly, and he throwed that Texan about nine feet high. I rode by him, and I said, "I guess I'm old enough to know what I'm a doing." And that old horse was a bucking, a going towards the barn. I just let him go and made him walk up there and get him. He was so damn smart, he knowed what he was a doing. He didn't know so much when that old horse planted his head in that sod.

BARBARA: Well, since you've been retired, have you been able to do any traveling, or ---

STEVE: No.

BARBARA: Just stay right here in Harney and Grant County?

STEVE: Oh, yeah.

BARBARA: Ever had any desire to go look at other country?

STEVE: Nope. Went up to British Columbia moose hunting once; that's the furthest I've ever been. I think that's the only time I've been out of Oregon.

BARBARA: Is that right?

ELSIE: Well, one time, one year, we had a week's vacation, and we couldn't get money enough to

get out of Grant County. So we took it on horseback, tell her about that.

STEVE: Yeah, we packed up a horse or two here and took to the mountains. Went up back of Strawberry and all around a fishing. Over to the High Lake, and Slide Lake, and Mud Lake, and down the Malheur River. Thunder and lightning everyplace, and never a drop of water on us. We got to the lower end of the field, and from down here to the lower end of the house, liked to drown us. Everything was soaked.

ELSIE: Neither one of us would stop to put our coats on; we said we'd been this far; we'd just take a bath right here.

STEVE: Boy, did it ever pour down. You looked across that railroad track over there, and it looked like somebody welding on it with a welder, the lightning running up them rails.

BARBARA: So you've been just pretty happy with staying right around this area, and doing your own thing on your horse, and being happy then?

STEVE: Yeah. I never did live out of the state, I don't think.

DOROTHEA: And how many surgeries have you had now on your heart, and different ones? Tell us about your last experience here.

STEVE: Well, I just told them I'm damn glad it wasn't a big nigger that had a hold of that knife.

(Laughter)

ELSIE: They cut him from here, clear to here.

DOROTHEA: All the way around.

ELSIE: Thirty-five staples in his belly.

DOROTHEA: And you went three weeks without eating anything, you just drank a lot of liquid, huh?

STEVE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Through the veins.

STEVE: Yeah. Well, I had two operations there. They took that aneurysm out and then took my gall bladder out, too.

ELSIE: They didn't take your aneurysm out; they fixed it, repaired it with a Dacron graft. They cut

that vein right down like that, and put that Dacron graft in there and sewed that thing on each end.

DOROTHEA: Boy, they can do a lot anymore.

ELSIE: And that was the aortic aneurysm, right at the aortic valve, I mean, the artery that comes out of his heart, that was what it was on.

STEVE: They told me that if that busted, I wouldn't last fifteen minutes.

BARBARA: Have you felt pretty good since you've had your surgery?

STEVE: Oh, yeah.

ELSIE: Just now getting ...

STEVE: On top of that, I had two surgeries before that.

ELSIE: Two ... surgeries.

DOROTHEA: A five way, what do you call them, a five-way pass, or a five pass ---

STEVE: Five bypasses.

DOROTHEA: By-pass heart surgeries.

STEVE: Yeah, I've been split down this way, and split across this way.

BARBARA: Well, you've got the cross now, you're okay.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, you're --- or you could play tic-tac-toe, one of the two.

STEVE: They told me I wasn't liable to make it, you know, and I crawled out to the edge of that rim and looked down there, and there was the devil shaking them grates. Lenny Burgess standing there with a shovel full of coal, and I just turned around and went the other way.

DOROTHEA: (Laughter)

STEVE: Don't tell Clinton that.

DOROTHEA: I already did.

ELSIE: ... telling me. ... about his surgery, and he said, "I don't know, Mom," he said, "I'm just about to come to the end of my rope." And I knew he was real discouraged and disheartened, you know. And I said, "Well, you know what Brown says, when you get to the end of your rope, tie a knot in it and hang on." I said, "That's what you got to do."

DOROTHEA: Because you want to make that fifty years.

ELSIE: Uh huh.

STEVE: Well, I don't know, I was just about to the end of the rope, and there wasn't much rope to tie a knot in. No, if it hadn't of been for family, I'd of, hell with it, I'd wouldn't never went for that operation.

DOROTHEA: Well, that's kind of like Jack Drinkwater. They told him if he hadn't of been so strong and so healthy, he'd of never made it. So, I guess ---

STEVE: That's what that doctor told me over there, them Harney County cowboys, you can't kill them.

DOROTHEA: That's what I was going to say; you old cowboys are tough guys.

STEVE: That's what that doctor said. God damn them Harney County cowboys, you can't kill them. Oh, it's been quite a life really, but if it hadn't of been for the family, I'd of just, my age, I'd of said to hell with it. Just stayed until the old man called me.

BARBARA: Well, have you been happy with your way of life? Do you think you would have ever wanted to try to do anything else, or just happy being a buckaroo and working outside?

STEVE: Yeah, that's as good a life as you could have, I think. Probably ain't anymore, things have changed so damn much.

ELSIE: It's a hard life.

STEVE: Yeah. When I started out, I was pretty young, and them buckaroos they learned a kid pretty fast then, you know. Didn't wise off to them like you do, a lot of kids do nowadays, I should say. Did you --- you probably didn't know him, Johnny Vaile? You knowed Stub Currey that was around Burns for years?

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

STEVE: And Johnny Vaile and Stub was a buckaroo outfit when I was there. And I was bashful as hell, just a big dumb kid you know, and bashful as hell. All the Pacific Livestock Company, all their dishes was granite. And they had those granite bowls, they was about this wide and so deep, you know. And all them ranchers had these granite utensils, and pretty near all the big spoons had a hook bent on the end of the handle so they wouldn't slide down in them bowls.

But anyway, old Johnny Vaile --- I was bashful as hell, you know, and old Johnny Vaile every time he would pass me the butter, I'd reach for the butter and he'd tip the dish and stick my thumb in the butter. And it would embarrass the hell out of me, you know. But, anyway this went on for several ranches we went to, and one time we went to this ranch and they had this granite bowl full of gravy. And one of these big spoons didn't have a hook on the handle, and it slid down damn near into the gravy. And Johnny was sitting next to me and he was reaching down daintily to get this spoon, you know, and I just punched his elbow. And he run his hand in that gravy right up to there. And he stuttered anyway, and he was so god damn mad he couldn't say nothing. Blah, blah, blah. (Laughter) If he'd of thought he'd of dared, he would have killed me. But he never stuck my thumb in the butter anymore. Oh hell ---

DOROTHEA: Here we come to this blinking light again, and our time is --- really, we've spent a lot of time up here. So, I think we'll close and call this quits for this time.

STEVE: Well, that will be fine. I'm going to take you out and show you that round ---

DOROTHEA: That round shop.

STEVE: --- shop, and stuff I've made there.

DOROTHEA: Okay. Let's first get a video. And we'd like to thank you for the afternoon, we've enjoyed it.

STEVE: Well, you're entirely welcome.

DOROTHEA: Thank you again.

STEVE: What part of this did I pull off here? (Microphone)

DOROTHEA: You're fine.

(END OF TAPE)

bl