

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #356 - Sides A/B

Subject: Edward Gray - Author - On Bill Brown Book

Place: Harney County Library - Burns, Oregon

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Interviewers: Barbara Lofgren & Dorothea Purdy

Release Form: Yes

DOROTHEA PURDY: ... and Barbara Lofgren, and we're at the Harney County Library, the date is March 23rd, 1994. And we're going to be talking with Edward Gray, who has just recently got a book published of William Brown. So, first I want to talk to you and find out --- we'll go ahead and ask you your name, and when you were born. And what you're doing, and what got you to studying Bill Brown.

EDWARD GRAY: My name is Edward Arnold Gray, single, born December 14, 1941, Portland, Oregon. My interest in history developed from buying ten acres in Northern Klamath County in 1972. And I've always liked the outdoors, although I'm not a hunter, I fish.

So the boys and my brothers --- my sons, brothers --- sons and I were fishing on a little Deschutes River, and there were remnants of cabins and such, and it kind of intrigued me. What were these doing here? And it ended up being my first book, printed in 1986. And then living, I caretake a ranch in Northern Klamath County, 235 acres. The people that own it --- the Oregon Central Military Road came through it, you can still see the tracks, too. And the 1853 Emigrant Road goes through the ranch. And the lady that, at that time, Leah Menefee had written, along with Lowell Tiller, "The Terrible," no, no, excuse me ---

DOROTHEA: Do you want to pause for a moment? (Microphone trouble)

EDWARD: Oh yeah, right. Oh, the Menefee's, Leah Collins Menefee, where the Oregon Central Military Road, and the 1853 Road through, well went south of Malheur Lake. Elliott, Elijah Elliott

wagon train, yeah there we go. Anyway Leah wrote the, "Cutoff Fever", six issues of the Oregon Historical Quarterly, which I don't like Oregon ... with Lowell Tiller wrote that, the history of the 1853 road. And she used to tell me all about the stories of such, and such, and such. I think that was 1976 to 1978. So anyway, she got me really interested.

So then, I wrote the book about the history of Northern Klamath County, that came out in 1989. I used to get --- I always say 1800, 1900 --- In 1990, I got bored, and so a friend of mine, we went to search Central Oregon for something to write about. And we happened to go up to Buck Creek, because I had heard about Bill Brown, and saw this house. And I go, holly cow, man who built this, I mean, this is crazy. And then that's how that Bill Brown started. And I started reading up on him, like I think I mentioned in the meeting a while ago, Brogan, Scharff, and Jackman, the Steens Mountain, they had some stuff about Bill Brown. Reub Long and Jackman, I forgot the other book. But a lot of it, as I look at it now, was about fifty percent not true.

BARBARA LOFGREN: We get a lot of "not trues" in our interviews, too.

EDWARD: Yeah.

BARBARA: Contradictions.

EDWARD: Yeah, and I understand that.

BARBARA: It's just the way people remember.

EDWARD: Yeah, and they didn't look that hard either, for one thing. So anyway ---

BARBARA: So, your background, you say you teach school, do you teach English, do you teach history, or what is your ---

EDWARD: I am a certified art teacher.

BARBARA: Art, okay.

EDWARD: But I've always been wanting to do something. Life is pretty boring if you don't keep active, so to speak.

DOROTHEA: And I understand that you were a coach.

EDWARD: Yeah, I coached, well with three sons, and they're all jocks, and I wasn't forced on them, it just happened to end up that way. I coached sixth-grade boys' basketball for ten years in

Eugene. And fifth and sixth-grade boys flag football for ten years. And we went to Autzen, whatever, we always won. But my knees blew out on me, so I had to quit. I couldn't do it anymore.

In 1981, I had to quit, or '82.

BARBARA: So you continue to teach now, and you're just on spring break, is that right?

EDWARD: Oh yeah, yes, love teaching.

BARBARA: Okay. And so, you spend most of your summers then researching your books, and then a little bit during the school year?

EDWARD: Yeah. Most during the school year, you spend a lot of time in the University of Oregon newspaper collection going through newspapers, writing, and calling. You know, old timers don't like to write.

BARBARA: They like to visit.

EDWARD: They would rather visit. And my god, if you, for future writers you let them talk, will you? Keep your mouth shut. They know what they're talking about. You don't have to --- I've seen too many people interrupt them all the time, and it is sad. I think because they lose their train of thought sometimes. If they would just let them talk --- and edit out whatever works.

DOROTHEA: And, okay, so how did you get associated with, say, Harold Gibson, so that you could do some of this traveling in the different areas?

EDWARD: I, in writing the Bill Brown book, I think I ended up interviewing; it's all in there. I've forgotten, but I think it was 64 people. Now, some of the tapes you guys are getting, some I taped over because it really wasn't that important. But I think I interviewed 64 people, actually sat down and talked to them. And I corresponded with at least 50 others. So, by word of mouth, you get, well, you know ---

Oh another thing, I always forget about this, I had practically every telephone book in the State of Oregon. So if you get a name like Gibson, first of all you go to Prineville. Well, who is Tin Gibson, well grandson of --- well --- and you make one heck of a lot of phone calls by using telephone books. Like Couch, I remember that Mahlon Couch, oh god, please let this be the uncle, or grandfather of Charlie Couch who was quite a character in Harney County. But no, it was the

only Couch in Bend. So, that's how you get to know people.

DOROTHEA: Now who is Charlie Couch?

EDWARD: Charlie Couch was probably the best bronco rider ever possibly, possibly, ever in the State of Oregon. He come from Colorado, went to work for, oh boy, Miller and Lux I think, in Harney County. Went to work for Bill Brown in the early 1900's. Could ride anything. I've got a "bazillion" stories on this guy. Because when you're good, people remember that. And they remember when you're bad too, but I mean if you're in between you just as well chalk it up as a loss in most cases. But Charlie Couch was good, he could ride anything. And all these old timers remembered him.

Well, the big deal about him was that everybody said he had stolen some of Brown's horses, and therefore Bill took him to court and got him in the state pen. Well, that was not true, because court records don't lie, and it was Bill Brown's nephew. And they put him in the pen in 1910, he was only there five months and his little boy drank some lye here in Burns, and died. So, Governor Bowerman paroled Charlie Couch from the state pen to come to the funeral in Burns. That's one of the stories. Charlie Couch was Bill's buckaroo boss. What years, 1914 maybe, no that was Johnny Mosier. Well, it is in the book, I can't remember, but he was a buckaroo boss. But Charlie Couch also stole many of Bill Brown's horses.

Lyle Woods told me he saw some down in Klamath Falls in 1923 that Charlie was selling, horseshoe bar brand on them. (Laughter) But that ---

BARBARA: Did they actually brand all their horses?

EDWARD: Yes.

BARBARA: Do you think they did?

EDWARD: Yes, no doubt about it. Fred Houston in his interview with Wanda Clark, which is approximately 76 pages, single typed, in 1976, and Ray Houston, Lyle Woods, Loyal Rhodes, oh god, I can't remember all the names, told me, yeah, they branded all of Bill's horses on the jaw. One or both jaws.

BARBARA: That must have taken a tremendous amount of help to do that.

EDWARD: It was, to me, I think I mentioned something about that in the meeting, unbelievable. That terrain, you fly over it in a helicopter and it would scare you, you know. And these guys are running these horses at a fast gallop, so to speak, and wild horses at that time would bunch up. If you get a, you know, the mare always leads, and the stallion follows at the rear. And they bunch up, and they'd have up to two hundred to --- now Ray said five hundred once, but he might be pushing it a little bit. Well, just average it out and say 250 horses in one bunch. And here is these buckaroos out there. Those wild horses know where they're going, these guys chasing them, and on the sides, and leaving them, they have to know that terrain pretty well. And it is rough. I don't know how they survived. I only know one: George Williams was killed on a horse.

BARBARA: That's what I was going to ask you, if they mentioned about accidents that had taken place.

EDWARD: Yeah, only one. Tin Gibson, which was Blanche Gibson Houston's father, who was at that meeting, she got a little off there in a few places probably, I would guess. But Tin was thrown from his horse on lava rock in 1904.

BARBARA: Oh, ouch.

EDWARD: And Bill did pay his way here in Burns for three --- Tin was in the hospital three months. Now, I know these want-to-be cowboys, and I think there is real good, real cowboys over here. But these jokes from the Valley, you know, I really ripped into them. They don't know what all that's like, you know.

BARBARA: But just living out in the open like that and tending these herds and stuff, it had to be a tremendously hard life. And to keep people for any length of time ---

EDWARD: Well, one thing, I hate to tell you this, but they didn't know any better. That's all they did. And it's like a logger today, what's the difference; it's the same thing.

BARBARA: Well, I know on some of Dick Cowan's tapes, he would mention that they would just pick up drifters as they came through, and it was just constantly in and out all the time with people.

EDWARD: There was, there were drifters. And then it is kind of how these, some of these guys lived, these single --- Well, first of all, buckaroo to me is somebody that works basically with

horses. And a cowboy is a guy that could work with either, basically cattle though. But yeah, these guys came in and out, they had freedom. You ask these real cowboys from the past, you ask them what did they like about it. One was the pleasure of riding a horse. Well, okay. And then the next thing is the freedom part. Baths, like things like that, whew ---

BARBARA: Never bothered.

EDWARD: Who cared, you know. They slept in their own bedroll. Very seldom they had tents, although Bill had tents scattered here and there throughout the desert, they would hide them. He did have some cabins, too, actually. But that was a little later, that was 1910, I guess. Yeah, it was a cold bitch, no doubt about it. But they didn't have wives. If they did settle down with some beautiful young thing, then they would leave and try to start their own ranch in a lot of cases. But women were kind of unheard of. Although there were later in the 1920s, I think that's the earliest, there were some camp cooks, ladies.

BARBARA: Oh really?

EDWARD: Goldie Mills was one of them. In fact, there is a picture of some lady camp cooks. And they didn't worry about it; they were left alone. Now today you might get --- whew --- you don't know what kind of bozos ---

BARBARA: Right. And then in the sheep camps, then too, pretty much the same thing, then you found out?

EDWARD: Sheep camps were a little different. Bill Brown did have, at one time, an ark, which sheepherders stayed in. It's like a covered wagon with wood, a little stove and stuff like that. But I can't recall when that was. It seems to me that it was the late 1890's, I'm not positive.

He had very few, Bill Brown had very few sheepherders. He hired, well I guess every sheep man did, he, they hired crews during the lambing and shearing season. But those crews would go from one ranch to another, you know. They'd start clear up in Washington and go right down through Oregon, into Nevada, and California. What would that be, April, January, February, March--- March, April, May, June in some cases for shearing.

DOROTHEA: Now see Daddy hauled hay to his sheep, and I don't know where. And he also

helped at this special place, which I understood was near Crane. They did dipping, and they ---

EDWARD: Dipping came in a little later.

DOROTHEA: --- they did with crews. Daddy worked with them.

EDWARD: There is a dip tank over on Buck Creek that Abe Brickman showed me. Now you would never find it if you were just digging around, you could never see it, that Bill Brown had, what's left of it. But that came in after the feuding was all kind of straightened out, when the Forest Service came in and started allotting sheep and cattle range.

Bill's sheep, he would take --- he had them marked too for age, you believe that? He used to mark their ears. Bill's sheep, most of his sheep, believe it or not, run out on the desert during the winter, Glass Buttes. And he couldn't keep sheepherders, because nobody could keep up with Bill Brown. I mean, some of the stories, like Bill Brown, he'd take the slowest sheep and run them right over the top of the fastest ones. (Laughter) He'd probably throw rocks at them. He did have dogs, but Bill's sheep dogs would leave him half the time because he never fed them. Yeah. He didn't think much about that for some reason.

But his sheep were --- and wintered out there on the desert. Now, to me, he would have learned in the winter of '89 and 1890, because he lost, oh my god, six thousand sheep, something like that.

But Bill Brown didn't start getting acreage, in terms of ten thousand acres or more, until the 1910's. You know, you take guys like old Budhead Hanley, and Ding Dong, what's his face, oh I can never --- Pete French, they had much more acreage than Bill Brown had, thousands of acres more. Most of them gotten illegally of course.

DOROTHEA: But they were at the other end of the ---

EDWARD: Yeah, they were separated actually.

DOROTHEA: --- county, yeah.

EDWARD: Yeah. Nobody really came on Bill Brown's desert. Maybe, well ZX did though, yeah I guess the ZX actually did. ZX has been there for a long time; they control almost all of that. Today the GI Ranch --- I could tell you a story about the GI Ranch, this just happened in '92, it's unbelievable. And ZX owned all, oh excuse me, Jack Peila owns all of Bill Brown's old lands. Bill

had 22,000 acres in Southeastern Crook County, bordering Harney County, 22,000 acres. He got most of that from --- Willamette Valley Cascade Mountain, no that's not right, Willamette Valley and Cascade Mountain Wagon Road.

BARBARA: That's a mouthful.

EDWARD: Yeah. Which was a rip-off.

BARBARA: Can you tell us some of the information that you found out about Bill Brown's sister, and the time that she spent out at the store? Did you find any good stories on her?

EDWARD: Yeah, Ira Brown, who Sarah Brown Rodkey Belding --- Sarah Brown is of course, excuse me, back up, Sarah Brown Rodkey Belding is Bill Brown's sister, one of his sisters. She used to come out to the ranch at Buck Creek and help Bill out with that store.

Now, Ira Brown, how do I get this in perspective, Ira Brown is the son, the only living son of George Brown, who is Bill's brother. Now Ira Brown is 86 now, 87, lives in Woodburn, Oregon. And he helped immensely with the family, the Brown family. And fortunately, I found some stuff that they didn't know either, through newspaper records and all that stuff, censuses and things. Anyway, Ira Brown told me a few stories about Aunt Sarah.

Aunt Sarah would go out to the Buck Creek Ranch and take care of the store because Bill was never there. Bill would be at that big old ranch house; he was lucky if you could find him, I would guess, five days out of a month. He had, Bill had housekeepers, Lena Street was one of them, and he had other people take care of the house. And people would just come in there and clean him out, just eat everything. Lena would get so damn mad. One time she cooked for 24 guys, and they don't know where they came from, they just come.

BARBARA: She never knew how many she was going to have to feed?

EDWARD: No. So Bill was gone, so somebody had to take care of the store. And it seems like Bill and Sarah had a pretty good relationship, they understood one another. So one time, Sarah was out there, I think it was about 1918, because Ira had went there with his dad George Brown. And Sarah was getting fed up, she kept telling Bill, "People aren't paying, people aren't paying for the supplies." And this store was stocked. Bill always felt that he had the best store anywhere,

Portland, wherever. He would have just as good of a store, and it was a huge building, about thirty feet by sixty feet, and two stories.

BARBARA: Oh, my.

EDWARD: Oh, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Is it still ---

EDWARD: No.

DOROTHEA: --- standing?

EDWARD: It's gone. It was torn down in 1941 by Dominique Verges, 1942. Part of it is over at Hardin Corrals now. There is a little cabin, what's left of it.

Well anyway, so Sarah really tried hard to keep that store, to get some profit or break even. Well, forget it, if you're not there --- and she'd stay two weeks at a time and then get fed up and go back to Portland. Bill wouldn't listen to her. And I don't know whether, just brother and sister or what, who knows.

But one time Ira told me, he said, "Sarah, Aunt Sarah went up there and they were pulling lambs," you know, so it had to be what, January, February, March --- March, April. And Sarah went along for the ride on a buckboard. It was up to Freezeout, which is about twelve miles from Buck Creek Ranch. And they had a cook there for the crew. Well, Bill is helping pull lambs, they call them lamb lickers. It takes some young kid, 15, well, that's the first job they have, they have to help the sheep, you know, give birth, if that's the word. And literally pull the lambs and take care of them, because the mother doesn't lick bumper lambs, maybe they don't want them, so whatever. So Bill goes in there and helps, and the cook is in there helping. And Sarah is sitting on the buckboard watching this whole gory mess. And they get done, and Bill asks Sarah if they want anything to eat.

And she did, so they didn't even wash their hands; they started making biscuits. (Laughter)

And oh --- And another story in Portland, Bill and Sarah were walking across the street, now downtown Portland in 1910 was a pretty good-sized town. They probably had electricity too, you know. And Bill actually, when a puddle was wet, and Bill --- and this isn't in the book, but Bill actually carried his sister. See, I don't know what happens there, you know, it's strange.

But Bill wasn't one noted for manners either. But, you know, if something, get your hands kind of "groddy" and making biscuits, I don't know, kind of does bother somebody I suppose, maybe not.

DOROTHEA: I suppose it depends on how you are raised, and how you think about that kind of thing.

BARBARA: You don't bathe for a month, so it probably doesn't occur to you.

EDWARD: Bill may have not bathed once a month. He would take his, and this has been told by I don't know how many, and even Van Houston who slept with Bill, used to eat raisins and spit them inside the tent. You know, sometimes they get seedy if that's the word, and he would spit them out and they'd stick on the tent, and they'd fall down on Van. And he finally couldn't handle it anymore and left him, sleep by yourself. Nobody wanted to sleep with Bill.

BARBARA: Well, I understand too that he didn't really like to sleep by himself. Did you find this out in some stories that he always wanted to share ---

EDWARD: He would hog, well, no, he would hog his way into somebody else's bed. But they didn't like that, but I don't know of any stories that, where he would want somebody to sleep with him. I mean, I've even been asked whether Bill was a homosexual. (Laughter)

BARBARA: Oh my.

EDWARD: I don't think so. But I don't --- I doubt if he ever had intercourse with a lady in his life, seriously.

BARBARA: No, but I just wondered if it was, he just didn't like to be in a bed by himself, or warmth from someone else, or, you know, or wasting bed space or, you know, whatever.

EDWARD: Well, I think where that comes from, Lena Street said once, and somebody else I don't recall who, that he had so many, darn many guys in that house on Buck Creek that he couldn't even sleep in his own damn bed, you know, there would be somebody in there. He had a big crew. I mean, if you look at the census of 1900, 1910, 1920, for whatever month, was generally May, they take census counts, old Bill Brown's Buck Creek Ranch out here would be 15 people, at least 10 people that were living there at the time. You know, this just goes on and on. What do you think the summers would be like, you know?

Of course, the buckaroos are out in the desert most of the time. They had a program, they'd go from Hardin, to Freezeout, to Buck Creek Ranch, to Rhubarb Spring, Gap Ranch, blah, blah, blah, then out in the desert. So, they had a routine so to speak. And then they'd come back to Buck Creek Ranch house in about four months. So, they were out on the desert, that's where all the horses were any way.

BARBARA: Did you hear any of the stories about the slaughtering of sheep?

EDWARD: Oh yeah. The guy that wrote Thunder Over the Mountain, or something like that, Gill. I can't say his last name, O N T O K O. He is supposedly, I've helped him on this, going to write about the sheep wars. Which is --- well, I don't know, it's not that tough, it's just finding people, and they're gone, if they're not already gone, that know about that stuff. You'd be lucky if you could find anybody.

Yeah, Bill stayed out of that. One reason, I think one thing that helped Bill stay out of that sheep war stuff, and believe me there were sheep wars.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Geeze, Grindstone Rim, they drove off 2,000 sheep off that thing, with the herder. Now that's the story, can't prove it. Bill had, I think I mentioned that, 487 sheep were killed, shot by probably the Paulina Sheep Shooters Association. Now, believe me, they were around.

DOROTHEA: Was this because of what they did to the grass, or why was this?

EDWARD: I've talked to a few old people about that. There are so many stories about that, what sheep do. For example, sheep will go, they're quick, they move, transient if that's the word. They cover a lot of range, and they eat it pretty good. And some of the cattlemen will say, well, once a sheep's gone through our cattle range, the cattle won't feed off of that for that year. I don't know whether that's true or not.

DOROTHEA: Well, a lot of the problem is, is once a sheep, like you say, they do go through and they do bare the ground. So, a cow has to eat with their tongue, and so if they can't grab the grass with their tongue, they can't eat off of the same ground.

EDWARD: Well, a lot of them said because of the smell.

DOROTHEA: Well, I doubt if that's true, but it could be.

EDWARD: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: You know, I mean, cows are kind of particular.

EDWARD: Yeah, there was a lot of problems. Bill only had that problem once, and I think the reason being was that he had horses too, and that might have saved his butt from getting all the sheep. Because he probably had at that time, 1904, I would guess, it's in the book, but I would guess 10,000 sheep. He lost 487, which is good for him, you know, I mean, it is unbelievable. Some of those guys lost their butt, everything. Benjamin Lakes, even down by Adel, Warner Valley, oh geeze. And there were some sheep men killed, you bet. Yeah, cattlemen and sheep men don't get along, we know that. It's like loggers and environmentalists --- what's the difference, same thing. But they used to kill people in those days; we don't do that. Well, maybe we don't.

DOROTHEA: Maybe we don't, I was going to say, I don't know what it might come to.

EDWARD: Yeah, who knows? It's the same thing, I mean, you can relate to what happened then to now. If they steal your horse, they steal your car. You go out and try to get in your car, and it is gone, well it ... you off, you know. But in those days, look at Wagontire Mountain, there was no law. You just handle it yourself, we'll shoot the son-of-a-bitch, you know. (Laughter)

BARBARA: How many murders did you run across in your interviewing and investigation?

EDWARD: That's, I didn't talk about that much. To be honest, with this tape recorder, it was --- half the stuff is in that book, it was much worse than that. They literally hated one another. There was the Dobkins side and the Huttons. I don't --- you can't choose sides when you write about this, you just write. But in the back of my mind, I know whose side I'd have been on; it wouldn't be Hutton. Downright murderer if you want to know the truth. Well, I don't care who sees this, who cares, what are they going to do? There were five. Now, there were three people that disappeared. Now, that is newspaper stuff. But there were three that, one was Bullin, the other one was a worker for Hutton, what was that other guy's name --- well, whoever it was, I've forgot it. But three other people that just basically, it's like Ed Oliver, who shot Pete French, just kind of disappeared off the face of the earth. Could be eight, but there is five for sure.

Now, I brought up something in that meeting about R. B. Jackson, I was going to call it R. B.

Houston, R. B. Jackson, he was found dead, that's a true story too about that stupid camera. I never will forget that. Boy!

DOROTHEA: Did you ever think that maybe you weren't supposed to get that picture?

EDWARD: Oh yeah!

DOROTHEA: No wonder you didn't want to go back by yourself.

BARBARA: Maybe his spirit is still there.

EDWARD: Well, how in the hell did Austa Carlon live, sleep in that --- no she slept downstairs.

BARBARA: Maybe Doris or Betty had to sleep there.

EDWARD: Her kids, yes. That's true.

BARBARA: I'll ask Doris, she's a good friend.

EDWARD: Oh yeah, I've got all that stuff. Betty, how in the hell did you guys sleep in that house?

Wow.

DOROTHEA: Well, who owns it now?

EDWARD: Peila.

DOROTHEA: Peila's own that?

EDWARD: Yeah. But yeah, there were five murders. I think R. B. Jackson was murdered by Link Hutton. Thank you. I --- yeah, what are they going to do, sue me, go for it.

BARBARA: It's just your opinion.

EDWARD: Yeah, it's my opinion, for various reasons, many reasons, one is owning land. The Hutton's wanted --- see in 1932 America Hutton bought, I don't care what people think of her around here, they all think she is a little, probably a little gentle lady. I question that. I had too many people tell me she was a treacherous little bitch. You want some stuff --- you're going to see some of that in those tapes.

BARBARA: Well, maybe you had to be to survive.

DOROTHEA: As she got older, maybe she got a little mellow.

EDWARD: Mellowed. In fact, one old lady said she was the leader behind the whole Hutton clan.

DOROTHEA: Well, she was Bill Foster's grandmother.

EDWARD: I talked to Bill Foster. In fact, he may have been one of them. Link Hutton, the Hutton's weren't little gentle people, I'll guarantee you.

But after America Hutton bought Bill, all of Bill's remaining 900 acres on Wagontire, and she sold to Silver Creek properties and such. See, when did she marry Sutherland, 1924 I think, maybe '26. They wanted to control all of Wagontire, and actually they ended up, they did.

DOROTHEA: Well, she was quite a wealthy woman, really, wasn't she?

EDWARD: I could tell you exactly. I have her probate record; it might be in there. Not that wealthy.

DOROTHEA: Not really?

EDWARD: I'll tell you who was wealthy, Link Hutton wasn't. In fact, he left old Tyler, Hattie, Hattie May --- you guys are going huh. You know Mary and Lyle Tyler? Well, it was Lyle's mother that Link Hutton married the last time.

DOROTHEA: Lyle's mother's mother.

EDWARD: Mother, grandmother.

DOROTHEA: Grandmother, right.

EDWARD: Yeah, there we go. I could tell you some stories about that, too, what they thought of Hutton. Well, whatever, I won't say.

DOROTHEA: Now those are funny stories too, because somebody was mentioning the fact that they were, that Lyle's mother, Lola, was a Hutton. And I didn't know that, and I've known Lyle for many, many years. Never heard him talk about it. So, it was kind of strange that all this was being said, and I'd never ever heard it.

EDWARD: I don't know whether their tapes are in there or not. Some of that I re-taped because they were real short. I interviewed Lyle and Mary. That's where the Hutton pictures, well, some of the Hutton pictures came from. Link Hutton was a miserable little scumbag. He was five foot ten; I know he murdered Harold Bradley, no doubt about it. Shot him once in the chest, and turned around and shot him in the head. He thought that Harold Bradley was messing around with Leona

Neasham Miller Hutton Woodard.

BARBARA: How do you remember all these names?

EDWARD: I don't know. Yeah, it was a mess out there. And they did hate one another, the Dobkins side and the Hutton side, and it was over land and water. See Hutton's had all the good stuff, they had all the springs, they had all that good stuff. Particularly, after they bought Bill Brown out, or America did. But what difference does it make? She's a Hutton too, you know. And they ended up owning 9,000 some acres on Wagontire Mountain. And they didn't want anybody else there. And one way to keep them out was, well, get rid of them, see you later.

And again, the Hutton's came in right after, two years after Bill Brown. So Bill Brown, George and Robert Brown, and Hutton --- goddamn, what's her father's name? Josephine and --- forgot their father's --- Samuel Hutton, with Link and America, and Tom came there in 1884. So, Brown's were on one side of the mountain, Hutton's on the other. And Hutton's ended up owning it all. That's the whole Peila Ranch; darn near, now is all Hutton property. And they, I think didn't America Hutton die in 1964, in Burns?

DOROTHEA: Yeah.

EDWARD: Link died from a heart attack. He was, I personally feel, and I could probably prove it if I had all my stuff here with me, was personally involved with maybe three of those deaths. Personally! You'll see some of that through those tapes. Some of those tapes are going to boggle you. I mean, Vera Wagner, Vera Addington Wagner --- Addington's were on Wagontire from 1913 until 1936. Their place, they leased the Daniel, James Daniel Burk who killed Frank Dobkins, who murdered Frank Dobkins. So, they were there quite a long spell.

DOROTHEA: Well, now are the Addington's some relation to the Hutton's?

EDWARD: No.

DOROTHEA: They weren't?

EDWARD: No, none.

DOROTHEA: Because this is what I had also heard, that the Hutton's and the Addington's were related.

EDWARD: No. In fact, Luther Addington got along with Link Hutton whenever they need be, and didn't when he need be. Link, oh boy, those --- well anyway Vera Addington, when I brought up the Bradley death, just cried. I mean she knew what went on; she was there, for one thing. There weren't too many people there.

DOROTHEA: Did it bother a lot of the older people to talk about this?

EDWARD: Tough question. A few. If they hated one of the parties enough, no. Now, there were a few parties --- well, Austa Carlon was basically a Dobkins person. In fact, Austa Carlon is the first one that told me, I'll tell you out front who Leona Hutton was running around with, it was Clarence Woodard. Well, I found Clarence Woodard's son in Norwalk, Connecticut, and Leona Woodward's granddaughter in Laguna Beach, California, and they were fine to talk about that mess on Wagontire. It is strange, isn't it?

DOROTHEA: What is really strange to me is to know these people, talk about such, because my dad grew up in that area and worked with, like I say with Bill Brown a little bit. And I never knew anything about it until later, when he was about ready to, you know, meet his demise. And ---

EDWARD: I guess it's like, I interviewed Neva Schroder Warner who is 96, and Vivian Stratton this week who is 90, and Austa Carlon who is 87, about their women's viewpoint, you know. And I asked them such questions as how did you learn about boys, and then sex and stuff? It was never brought up; they didn't talk about that stuff.

BARBARA: When you got married, you found out.

EDWARD: Yeah. Or Mom would lay a medical book out and hint. But boy, they wouldn't talk about it. Just like you were saying about your dad. George Brown never talked about his brother shooting Overstreet, very little, he just said a few things to Ira Brown and that was it. I guess they didn't talk a lot.

BARBARA: No communication. They were too tired by the time they came in to eat, and went to bed.

EDWARD: Oh well something, I mean ---

DOROTHEA: Well Daddy see, was just a kid, like in the 1914's and things like this is when he

was in here first. So, he was working with, through his dad. But he never talked about that. Daddy ran whiskey too, and he didn't talk about that.

EDWARD: Oh no, they wouldn't talk about that.

DOROTHEA: So, you know, I mean it's kind of funny. And my husband's dad worked with Bill Brown getting the horses, and I imagine branding. He was a buckaroo for Bill Brown. Never ever heard about it.

EDWARD: What was his name?

DOROTHEA: Ray Purdy, he is gone.

EDWARD: Was there a good bronc rider named Purdy?

DOROTHEA: Don't ask me.

EDWARD: One of the well-known guys?

DOROTHEA: I don't know much about the Purdy's, really.

EDWARD: Or was it Dollarhyde?

BARBARA: So did you find, talking with them, we were talking about women, find out much about how the women felt during that time in your interviews with these people? Did they have much to say?

EDWARD: No, we didn't really talk about that kind of stuff, the woman's --- for this book, Bill Brown. No, never brought that kind of --- well how did you feel about --- We talked more about husbands.

BARBARA: Did you ever feel that they had a life of their own, or it all went through their husband mostly?

EDWARD: I think everything went through their husband. One thing, when I wrote the book on, basically, the homesteaders in Northern Klamath County, you've got to understand that they lived with what they got, and they didn't care about anything else. You ask about money; money don't mean nothing in those days. Wished it didn't now.

BARBARA: Unfortunately ---

EDWARD: It's, you do things, and just do them, and be lucky you do what you do, with what you

got. I remember one old timer said, "Well, we came here with" --- oh forget it. "Came here with clothes and left with rags," something to that affect, which is so true. How those people lived out there, I'll never know.

DOROTHEA: A lot of people, I heard talked about, this one lady was in love with Bill Brown only she never ever let him know it. And I don't know who that was.

EDWARD: There was a schoolteacher. I'm just thinking, I've heard so many stories about him. There was, I don't remember if it was Ira or not, I doubt it; I think it was Audrey Brennan. I remember the story of a schoolteacher out there was in love with Bill. But he just flat told poor ladies what he felt of life, and his life goals. God damn, we're going to have seven kids, if you don't like it --- well, you know, I can just see that. And the ladies go, holy cow, let me out of here. He scared one teacher to death out there, she left.

DOROTHEA: Well, I think that's the one that I heard about. And it was, I think that Helen Moon that was talking to Dick Cowan or somebody, and it was on that.

EDWARD: I don't remember. Most of the time, I footnote that stuff, so I can't remember. Oh yeah, he, Bill Brown, was just hell on women.

DOROTHEA: Scared her to death. I mean, she was madly in love with him, but --- We've got to pause for a moment while we turn this tape over.

SIDE B

BARBARA: How many women were there that he referred to that you found out about, that he was interested in?

EDWARD: Five, I think, five.

DOROTHEA: Do you suppose the woman that he supposedly was in love with in the Valley ---

EDWARD: Oh, Myra Shields, oh, oh yeah.

DOROTHEA: --- kind of scared him. You said he was more or less afraid of women. Do you suppose that was the reason?

EDWARD: I think so. And I think Ira Brown backed that up. And I think that came from Fred

Lockley. Fred Lockley, you've heard of Fred Lockley? Huh. Fred Lockley worked for the Oregon Journal and went around interviewing hundreds and hundreds of people about --- in the '30's. Oh, excuse me, '10's, '20's, and '30's, about the old days, they're fantastic. "Observations of a Journal Man", that was what they were called. He interviewed Bill Brown in 1936 at the Salem Old Folk's Home where Bill was staying. It seems to me that was in there, too. Can't remember for sure, about the Willamette Valley deal.

He was chopping wood during the summer to get money to go back to college every summer. Because he went to San Jose Normal School, that's where he graduated from; in fact, four of his brothers graduated from there. Why he didn't go to the University of Oregon, or something, I don't --- Well, wait a minute, that was 1870, well whatever. But that, for some reason, they went there, and two of them became doctors, and Mary became a doctor, whatever. But he chopped wood, and he fell in love with this girl, and I believe it, I know it was on the Willamette River, and I think it was in Eugene. And she rejected him, and it broke his heart, and all that stuff. So, he decided to come over here. Actually, it wasn't Bill's decision to come east, it was brother George Brown's decision. Because George ---

BARBARA: Didn't they come first, and then went back, and then they came over together?

EDWARD: Yeah. All three of the brothers looked for land. They wanted to settle in Mitchell, but that didn't work out. And Bill worked with (J. W.) Meldrum, who is a well-known surveyor, when they were surveying Malheur County, so evidently saw Wagonfire. And brother George also surveyed at Christmas Valley, so I assume that's when they kind of, hey, this Wagonfire looks pretty good, you know, and there is a road leading to it, let's go there. Which there was, not much of one, but there was. Actually, they drove cattle from Jackson County to Wagonfire, too.

The Bannock Indians did kill all of Reub Long's father's cattle, 52 head I think. This is from Bill Hanley and Jim [Tom] Allen, early dudes in Harney County. Fifty-two head at Bone ... Springs, which is just above Link Hutton's house on the southeast end of Wagonfire Mountain, 1878. Hence the name ---

BARBARA: I know we don't have too much more time, but can you tell us just a little bit about

what Bill, what his life was like towards the end, and when he ended up going to the Salem Nursing Home. What was it like then?

EDWARD: Kind of like my father's --- do all this work and get nothing. I'm the father (son) of a minister. It was horrible. Ira Brown, his nephew, Boyd Brown, who remembers Bill quite well in 1935, he was --- now Blanche kind of got out of whackey there, he was foreclosed on June 1st, 1935, they cut him off, the Pacific Wool Growers took all of his property, it's just bogus.

Anyway, Bill left, walked from the Buck Creek Ranch house out to the, what we know as Highway 20. Picked up a stage, ended up in Canby, and went to live with Ira's brother, Bills other nephew, Waldo Brown, in Hubbard, Oregon. He was desolate. There is a picture of him, the last known picture, he looks, you know, like ---

He actually wanted to come back to Eastern Oregon and start over again. He went to Davey Jones, Davey talked him out of it, said you're crazy. Nobody would lend him the money anyway. And here, what is he, he's 80, he's 80 when he lost all that. He goes, him and his relatives take him to the Salem Old Folk's Home, Methodist Old People's Home in Salem. Who he, who Bill through actual documentation gave \$10,000 to, in 1910, I believe. They didn't, they wouldn't allow him in.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Bill, it just blew Bill away. Bill said, and this is from Ira Brown, because Ira was with him. Bill said, "I got my card." Says, "I can come here any time I want to." They had to go, fight three months to get Bill in this peace of shit old people's home. Who, if you look at the papers, I didn't put that in there, if you fill out those papers for that Methodist Old People's Home, first thing --- and in 1935, first thing they ask you is how much money do you have? What property do you have? So they can snag it.

BARBARA: They want it all.

EDWARD: It's sickening. Well, whatever. Now, how much money Bill actually gave to that Methodist Old People's Home, I don't know. But I know he gave \$10,000, that's recorded. They didn't have all the records, okay. Finally, they allowed him in. So he gets in there, bored to death, he wants to plant potatoes in their lawn. He wants to do all this stuff. He wants to get these old

folks, buy them milk. Oh, by the way, he went in there with \$3.10. Never will forget that, Ira told me, I never will forget that. "You know how much money Bill had?" "A thousand, two thousand?"

"\$3.10." I go, woo. Slept in the basement. That was horrible; they treated him horribly. And they still --- what's the difference between that and going to some of these nursing homes now? Pretty sad.

DOROTHEA: Do they have any records now of what kind of a person he was, or ---

EDWARD: The only thing I can tell you about that was, he was doing the best with what he had. This is from Ira Brown; this is from Sammy Boyce with Richard Cowan. Lena Street went up there, just was totally aghast. And those are the only records. Boyd never, Boyd Brown, it would be his great nephew, never saw him at the old people's home. So the only word, actual word, person to person, is Ira Brown. And ---

DOROTHEA: But you would think that there would be some record of this person, was a philanthropist, and he gave to so many things. There is nothing about him in their records at all?

EDWARD: The only thing in their records is what's in that book. Because their records are at Waller Hall, Willamette University, in the Methodist --- it's upstairs. This old lady --- (Laughter) That's okay honey. ... Oh, boy. And she knows every record in that place. What's that, oh that's, you know. And she dug, and dug and dug, she was really sweet. And that's upstairs in Waller Hall, which Bill helped build, and gave money to build that music hall.

BARBARA: Do you have any records of all the contributions that he made for schools, and museums, and whatever?

EDWARD: Impossible. For example, I went to the University of Oregon, they don't tell you that stuff. And some of these donors want their names quiet anyway, I guess.

BARBARA: Right.

EDWARD: Bill, god only knows how much money, I would say \$500,000, easily. He just gave. Harney County, I don't recall Harney County. I don't think he gave anything to Harney County. He did to Crook County, churches, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Everything that he probably had in Harney County has been destroyed, except

maybe his house. And I don't know how in the world it has survived.

EDWARD: Oh, god only knows, I don't know either. Look at Silver Lake, geeze, ain't nothing left, and it was a huge town. In fact, that was where Austa Carlon was raised. There ain't nothing ---

DOROTHEA: And Jo Schroder, and a lot of them from here, yeah.

EDWARD: Oh, Schroder, oh god, yes. I can't think of any other donations. I looked; I gave up looking on that because it is endless. You've got to stop somewhere. But, and Ira told me, I've forgotten, maybe it's on one of those tapes about how much he gave away. But they don't really know for sure.

BARBARA: So, how do you feel about, after you've finished this, do you feel totally engrossed in; do you feel like you're living all this? Or how do you feel when you write?

EDWARD: Well, first of all, I don't think one has the right, even the right, to write some of this bull shit that has been written unless, I think, you've got to go out there. How can you write about that high desert unless you go out there and spend a night, or weeks, and on my case, weeks, going holy shit, I don't want to live here. (Laughter) And to find these places in which these guys were, that's number one. I think you've got to experience it, try to experience what they experienced. Now, I haven't been on a horse out there chasing a rat through the sagebrush, you know.

By the way, there are a few more, there are a few wild horses out there still. I ain't going to tell those butt heads from the government that. Except the damn ranchers shoot them, though, that's the sad part. Anyway, you've got to experience what you're writing about, I guess, is what I'm trying to say. And it is different out there. Get stuck out there in a pickup, in a thunderstorm --- Now a horse, I guess you wouldn't have to worry about. But some flat lander, you can't write about --- I've seen some stories that makes you sick. And so, I think you got to experience that. And second of all, you've got to talk to the people. And the people, and the people get so happy, I see some lady that is ninety-some years old, and her face just lights up, that's what it's all about. You don't make any money doing this. Who cares anyway?

DOROTHEA: But do you enjoy it?

EDWARD: Oh, I love it. I could get away from ... girls. And the other thing too, I'm an artist, and

I enjoy sketching and getting away from people. You've got to have your own space, you know. I do at home, I mean, I built a studio, would be, it's not that kind of thing, it's different. It's funny, I get out there twenty miles off of a highway in some god forsaken road, if you want to call it that, cow track, whatever, and here comes somebody. You want to see some disgust?

BARBARA: Get out of my space.

EDWARD: I know it, it's horrible. What the hell are you doing here? (Laughter)

DOROTHEA: Well, now you say you're an artist, and that's what you do in your teaching.

EDWARD: Oh yeah, look, smell, touch, you use all your senses, and that's what that does, it's awesome.

DOROTHEA: Do you do paintings and sell them?

EDWARD: Uh huh. Well, actually, I generally give them away. But I'm getting older, so I built a studio last summer. When I don't remember when I did it --- well, whatever. I don't remember doing it; I was writing this book all the time. Well, I did. And so I'm kind of getting into that. Yeah, I've done three paintings in the last two months, not counting the watercolors. "Bazillion" watercolors, yeah.

DOROTHEA: Did you see our paintings out on the wall?

EDWARD: Oh yeah. I'll tell you, that art teacher there at Burns High, it starts with a T.

BARBARA: Frank Tuning.

DOROTHEA: Tuning.

EDWARD: That is good stuff.

BARBARA: He's been here forever.

EDWARD: Oh yeah, yeah, I know. But that is good stuff.

DOROTHEA: But these out on the museum, oh, over here on the museum ---

EDWARD: Oh, no.

BARBARA: The murals?

DOROTHEA: You might not have seen them, the murals.

EDWARD: Oh yeah, I was going to take pictures and take back home.

DOROTHEA: These are all local artists, which we are real proud of.

EDWARD: Oh yeah, you guys got something. Keep the damn Californians out; you'll be all right. Lose all your culture; you won't have any culture left. Become want-to-be cowboys. But yeah, this is --- it's the people. Like you see the people in that meeting? That's cool, you know. They don't ask stupid questions like, how much money you going to make?

BARBARA: I know when we go out and visit with people, and of course most of them are older, and they love just to have you come and talk to them.

EDWARD: Sure.

BARBARA: And they'll just get going, and they just really don't want you to leave, really.

DOROTHEA: We did one with Florence Scharff the other day, and we were there almost four hours.

EDWARD: Wow, that is a lot of ---

DOROTHEA: Well, it was really, well, we got interrupted, and then she had a spell that we had to kind of let her settle down. That's the problem with, you know, these older people.

EDWARD: But there is something about these older people, too. I think that you have to know some of their history before you get to talking to them, and you better know what the hell you're talking about, or you are in deep dodo.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh.

EDWARD: And they pick that up so quick. You don't know what the hell you're talking about, you know. I've never had that happen. But I'll say, "Well, your sister said" --- "Oh yeah?" So, if you know it, they really like that.

DOROTHEA: Well, we don't talk about that. I mean we --- ours mostly is just telling about what they've done, why they came to Harney County. So that's what ---

EDWARD: Yeah, totally different. I'm generally after something, writers are specific, or within some range.

BARBARA: And we just want to know about their life.

EDWARD: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Uh huh, that's all we ---

EDWARD: I ain't going to tell you about mine. (Laughter) Wow.

DOROTHEA: Well, I think that, well we could cover a lot more I know, but our hour is about up. And if you're going to get to that second hand store --- it's twenty minutes, twenty-five minutes till four.

EDWARD: Oh, geeze.

DOROTHEA: So, and then you have another appointment at four-thirty, and another one at seven, and so I think that maybe we had better cut this off and thank you for the afternoon.

BARBARA: We truly appreciate you taking time out and visiting with us.

EDWARD: Well, I appreciate that.

DOROTHEA: Oh, you knocked your --- (microphone).

BARBARA: Must be time to quit, huh?

DOROTHEA: Lost your speaker.

EDWARD: Speak. Yeah, oh, that's the speaker, holy cow.

BARBARA: So, thank you again.

EDWARD: Oh, sure.

BARBARA: And have a good stay while you're over here.

EDWARD: Yeah, I'll be back in June, late June.

(END OF TAPE)

(Edward Gray is the author of "William "Bill" W. Brown 1855-1941:

Legend of Oregon's High Desert", Including a History of the "Wagontire Mountain Range Feud" - 1993)

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