

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #364 - Side B

Subject: Marcus Haines

Place: Burns, Oregon

Date: July 1, 1991

Interviewer: Edward Gray

Release Form: No

EDWARD GRAY: ... Oregon, on July 1st, 1991, talking about Wagonfire Mountain and Frank Dobkins, and whatever else comes up. First of all, Marcus, have you been involved with the Harney County Museum?

MARCUS HAINES: Yes, I was president for eleven years here.

EDWARD: And do you by chance know if they have a check in that building, someplace written by Bill Brown?

MARCUS: I've never seen it if it's there.

EDWARD: Everything I've read, it says, well, it's at the Burns Library, or not Library, Museum.

MARCUS: Well, it can be in there. You could spend a week up there and not find everything that's in there, you know.

EDWARD: Is there another building that houses ---

MARCUS: No, it's all right there.

EDWARD: It's all right there. I'm going to ask you some questions about Wagonfire Mountain, and hopefully it will work out. Do you know what Frank Dobkins was doing at Wagonfire Mountain?

MARCUS: Yes, he was in the cattle business, ranching.

EDWARD: He had cattle?

MARCUS: You bet he did.

EDWARD: Because Austa Carlon wasn't sure, she couldn't remember.

MARCUS: Well, he was, because he came over, that's where I got acquainted with Frank Dobkins. They would dry out over there in the Wagontire country, and they'd have to go someplace else. They'd generally come over to the lake. And Frank came over here in the early '30's and spent the winters here on Malheur Lake with my, with Ted Graves and my sister. Now that's where I got acquainted.

In 1931, it was prior to that time, why Frank Dobkins and my family traded bulls. We hauled our bulls out to his ranch at Wagontire, and he had his corralled there, and we loaded them on the truck. And there was one there that we could never do anything with, had to open the gate and let him go. And that's the only time I was ever to Frank Dobkins place. But anyway, we got two or three bulls and hauled them back, and we just made a trade with the bulls.

EDWARD: Where did Frank Dobkins come from, Silver Lake?

MARCUS: I think so, I'm not sure, but I would rather guess that he was in that area, somewhere.

EDWARD: He had his place at Wagontire in '31?

MARCUS: Well, he was there then in '31, and he was there prior to that, because we got acquainted with him before that, you see.

EDWARD: Where did he stay during the winters at Harney Lake, by the Narrows, or ---

MARCUS: Out on the lake there. My brother-in-law and sister was living in a place they rented out on the lake, and Frank stayed there with them. Right out in the middle of Malheur Lake now, where the water has been twenty feet deep. It was dry, was for many, many years.

EDWARD: So, he was at Wagontire to run cattle?

MARCUS: Well, yes, that was his business.

EDWARD: For summer grazing?

MARCUS: Yes. And winter too; he put up some rye hay or something around there. And in a normal year, he stayed out there and wintered. But when he got, he had to move in just like these other fellows did; they had to come someplace, too.

EDWARD: Do you know that he owned 2,400 acres there at Wagontire?

MARCUS: No, I didn't know what he owned.

EDWARD: It was kind of scattered. He somehow, and I'll try to find this out in the courthouse, purchased the old Samuel and Caroline Hutton homestead.

MARCUS: Oh.

EDWARD: He ended up with that, too. Did you ever see that house there on top of the hill where Peila's trailer house is now?

MARCUS: No, but the old Frank Dobkins house, as I saw it, has burned up, it's gone.

EDWARD: Right.

MARCUS: Yes.

EDWARD: Do you know where he got his money to start?

MARCUS: Oh no, no. He was a carpenter to begin with, and I guess a pretty good one. He was a finish carpenter. But anyway, he ended up out there. And Frank was pretty hotheaded, enough that he had a little trouble with his neighbors sometimes just for that reason. But you had to be pretty hotheaded to stay out there in that country about then.

EDWARD: I think I told you Marcus, I was out there. Boy, you could get mad pretty easy.

MARCUS: Oh yeah, you bet.

EDWARD: A lot of rattlesnakes out there too. Gee! Now you mention --- I know where Dobkins place was. There is some corrals still there.

MARCUS: Yes, he had some fine corrals, big stockade corrals.

EDWARD: Oh, by the way did he ever have any sheep?

MARCUS: Not to my knowledge, no.

EDWARD: Yeah, the corrals are still there. Now, let's get back to that, you went out there in '31?

MARCUS: Yes, spring of '31.

EDWARD: You were 24, yeah, 23 or 24. What was he living in then?

MARCUS: His big house. There was a big house had colored glass doors in it. It was a fancy house. But who built it, I don't know; maybe Frank did, I don't know. But there was ---

EDWARD: That was up on the hill?

MARCUS: Yes.

EDWARD: Oh, that was Sam Hutton's house.

MARCUS: Well, I don't know whose house it was, but that's where he lived, and he lived in that big house when we were out there because we stayed all night with him.

EDWARD: Okay, I'm not --- now I know where you are. He later lived down the road, or up the road, north. Yeah, that big house. I'll get back to that in a second. It had a blue glass door in it?

MARCUS: Yes, yes, it did.

EDWARD: He was living there in '31?

MARCUS: Yes.

EDWARD: Because in '34 the Carlon's lived in that house, and Dobkins moved up the road to his other place where the trees are, and the corrals are.

MARCUS: Well, that's the only time I was ever there.

EDWARD: Okay.

MARCUS: So I can't tell you any more about it, other than I was impressed with that blue door. I can remember that glass there.

EDWARD: So does Austa, that's what she remembers.

MARCUS: Yeah, you didn't see them very often. You did pretty good to see a door about that time.

EDWARD: Was Dobkins a friend to any of those people living there at the time, Sutherlands, Jackson?

MARCUS: Well, I think so; I think they neighbored, part of them anyway. But they all liked to fight, you know, over this and that. You never knew who was going to get what, you know. Just, you don't know how many people were killed out there. Five of them, four?

EDWARD: Four. Do you know anything? What do you know about Link Hutton?

MARCUS: I saw Link Hutton here in town; he was kind of a dignified looking gentleman, a big tall fellow as I remember him. That's all I know about Link Hutton. You say he was killed in '25, December of '25?

EDWARD: Link --- Robert Link Hutton shot Harold Bradley in 1925.

MARCUS: Yeah, that's what I meant to say, yeah.

EDWARD: December 27th. Did you know anything about the Bradley's?

MARCUS: I knew Hosmer, because he stuck me for a bum check back in the 1930's.

EDWARD: You remember that?

MARCUS: You bet. And he was married to Ted Graves's sister, so it was ---

EDWARD: Neva.

MARCUS: Yes. And he come over here, now this is another move now that was made. He and another, Bill Golden, I think, was the other fellow, helped on the --- oh, what the hell was his name, out at Weaver, they called him old T-Bo.

EDWARD: Oh, Harry Arnold.

MARCUS: Harry Arnold, moved cattle to the lake. And so he paid them off over here, and I brought them into town, these two boys.

EDWARD: Harold --- or Harry Arnold paid off Hosmer.

MARCUS: These two buckaroos, yeah, for moving these cattle. And we got in here, and the bank was closed, and we went down to the Ford Garage, and Hosmer cashed his check there. It was for fifteen, twenty, it wasn't very much, of course. But I got stuck with the check; old T-Bo's check wasn't any good. And old Hosmer, he left the country; I never saw him again. (Laughter)

EDWARD: Why did they call Harry Arnold T-Bo, do you know?

MARCUS: Oh, I don't know, I don't know.

EDWARD: Do you know who "Two-Gun Sue" was?

MARCUS: Well, I think that was his wife, wasn't it?

EDWARD: I don't know.

MARCUS: I think so.

EDWARD: Nobody seems to know.

MARCUS: Well, Bill Cramer, or Foster can tell you, I'm sure.

EDWARD: We don't know what happened to her. Did you ever meet her?

MARCUS: No, no. I never met him either, for that matter; I just met his bum check.

EDWARD: His bum check, right.

MARCUS: Yeah.

EDWARD: What kind of man, personality wise would you say, when you met Frank Dobkins and heard of him, what kind of a man was he?

MARCUS: He was a likeable man, he was a quiet man, he didn't talk much. You could set around, like here, and you'd never hear a word out of him.

EDWARD: Did he have a short temper?

MARCUS: Yes, he was supposed to have had; I never did see him exhibit it. But that was the reputation he had, was a short temper.

EDWARD: Was he a good rider, horse ---

MARCUS: Oh no, I think just average probably, just enough to do his work, you know.

EDWARD: How many cattle do you, if you recall Marcus, did he bring down to the lakes?

MARCUS: I never knew, I never knew, but there wasn't very many.

EDWARD: A hundred?

MARCUS: Yeah, a hundred or so head I guess.

EDWARD: Did you ever meet Thomas Hutton?

MARCUS: I saw him, because we sheared his sheep out there in 1932, in June.

EDWARD: At where, at Wagontire?

MARCUS: Out at his ranch, at Wagontire.

EDWARD: At Egli?

MARCUS: Yeah.

EDWARD: Egli, Egli?

MARCUS: Well, wherever his ranch was. This was getting back there a few days ago. We finished up there; we had started down in Nevada. I was sacking wool, we started in Nevada and sheared up through here, and went on --- we were in the ---

EDWARD: Washington?

MARCUS: No, no, we started in Nevada and came up through Oregon, here. And we went to Upper Valley, above Silver Creek; you know where that's at?

EDWARD: Yeah.

MARCUS: We sheared up there for the Williams' and oh, the old Irishman, whatever his name was. There was sheep all over the country at the time.

EDWARD: McIntosh?

MARCUS: No, no. And he had several Irishman that was; he was kind of partners with them there. Anyway, we sheared the sheep there. And then we went on out and they gave us a dance at the grange hall, and went on out to Hutton's and he just had --- and we sheared them, and that was our last shear. We had, hauled and come right back through the Double O country. Most of us was local fellows. Come right back through there, you couldn't get through there in a jeep now, I guess. Anyway, that's where --- we left the road there to the Petersen place.

EDWARD: Oh yeah. What did they pay you anyway, for shearing sheep in '32? How did that work?

MARCUS: Well, they paid the shearers seven cents.

EDWARD: A pound?

MARCUS: No, a fleece.

EDWARD: Okay, now explain that.

MARCUS: Well, you had pens here, you put these sheep in, and you had --- you've never seen sheep shearing?

EDWARD: No.

MARCUS: Well, I'll show you what sheep shearing is like. But anyway, you had a pen here that you put five sheep in, they had the alleys back here and you set out here with your machine. And you reached --- they had a canvas or gunny sack right here to keep these sheep in here. You reached in there and grabbed a sheep by the leg and yanked him out and shear him, and put him back in there. And when you sheared those five sheep, well the wrango come along ---

EDWARD: The who?

MARCUS: They called them the wrangos, the people that was putting the sheep in.

EDWARD: Wrangos?

MARCUS: Yeah. And they would turn out this five sheep and make you a tally, and you made yourself a tally too, and put in five more. And a good shearer could shear two hundred sheep a day.

EDWARD: I've heard that.

MARCUS: Yes, but he had to be damn good. Well, most of them, about a hundred and twenty-five, do that. As I remember, they got seven cents. And I got three dollars for a thousand, where the, sacking the wool. The wool tier pulled the wool away from the sheep shearer here, and he wrapped it up and tied a string around it. They were called a wool tier.

EDWARD: Big, in those big sacks.

MARCUS: Well, yes. It was his business, was to get that wool up to the top of that sack. And you were in there tromping this wool, and shaping it up there, we get around forty-five fleeces---

EDWARD: Now, what is a fleece, Marcus?

MARCUS: Well, it is, the wool that was sheared off of this sheep is a fleece.

EDWARD: Okay.

MARCUS: And you'd sack that, and they sewed the sack up. And what you had was a hole that was on this platform, which is about as high as this ceiling here, and so it didn't quite touch the ground, you see, those big woosacks. And you had a hole in the top of it here that was about, right around two feet, and you had a ring that just fit on the out, sets on the outside of this hole. Well, you take this sack and pull it up and pull the ends under it, and then set it down on this ring. And then somebody would have to get out, the wool tier had to do that, and raise up the bottom of the sack there with a pry pole. They'd weigh three hundred pounds.

EDWARD: Oh, three hundred pounds?

MARCUS: Yeah.

EDWARD: Oh, per sack?

MARCUS: Yes. And well, they'd shear eight or ten pounds off of a sheep, you see, and you put in ten pounds there, and forty fleeces, you see what you got there. And then you would pull this ring

out, and sew the sack with a sack needle, and then he would drop that, that would drop down, and they'd get some help and drag it out of the way, or roll it out of the way and put in another sack.

That's how ---

EDWARD: That's like an odd house hole.

MARCUS: Yeah.

EDWARD: You ---

MARCUS: That thing would be --- Our old radioman down here, I think he can fill it up all right.

EDWARD: Did you ever hear of a Link Woodard?

MARCUS: Nope.

EDWARD: Everett Emery?

MARCUS: Well, I've heard of the Emerys. Now I don't know any of them, but they were related to the, to Austa down here, I think some way or another. But I, no, I never knew any of them.

EDWARD: Frank Foster?

MARCUS: No, no.

EDWARD: Who Frank Foster is?

MARCUS: Well, Bill could tell you that.

EDWARD: Yeah.

MARCUS: That would be Bill's father. I don't know.

EDWARD: America Sutherland, did you ever meet her?

MARCUS: Yes, I've seen her. She was a little dried-up woman, with ---

EDWARD: Oh, really?

MARCUS: Yeah, ... She was an old, old woman then. She was driving stage; she drove stage from Wagontire into Burns here for years.

EDWARD: She did?

MARCUS: Yes.

EDWARD: I mean, with horses, or ---

MARCUS: Old car.

EDWARD: Car.

MARCUS: Maybe it was horses to begin with, I don't know.

EDWARD: She must have been one hell of a woman.

MARCUS: She was. Yeah, Bill can tell you all about her. I think Bill was raised with her, she raised Bill, I think. There was two brothers, Bill had a brother, and he was killed in a car accident here a few years ago.

EDWARD: Yeah, that's how Thomas was killed, Tom Hutton. Sutherlands, you know, they were in out there at Wagontire, too. Yeah, they had quite a bit; they had 2,000 some acres out there, too.

MARCUS: Well, they were big operators there, I think. Old Link was supposed to be pretty well off, but he spent most of it to keep from going to the pen for killing Bradley, you know.

EDWARD: Yeah. And maybe other people as well.

MARCUS: Could have been.

EDWARD: Who knows?

MARCUS: Well, the old man was killed out there, old man Bradley, you know, they found him beat to death out there.

EDWARD: Yeah, Ira, yeah.

MARCUS: Yeah.

EDWARD: Yeah, I know. I talked to Grace Bradley, his daughter.

MARCUS: That's a daughter, is it?

EDWARD: Did you ever hear of Bigfoot Thompson?

MARCUS: Yes sir. I never knew him, but he was out there. He was killed out there too, wasn't he?

EDWARD: I don't know. I don't know what happened to Thompson.

MARCUS: Called him old Slough Foot.

EDWARD: Bigfoot.

MARCUS: Yeah, and Slough Foot, too.

EDWARD: Don't know what happened to him. Do you have any ideas what happened to old---?

MARCUS: No, no, I don't. I just knew, heard the name, I never knew him.

EDWARD: Why do you think Dobkins was killed?

MARCUS: Huh?

EDWARD: Why do you think Frank Dobkins was murdered?

MARCUS: Well, gosh, those fellows that were there with him could tell you. You've already talked to some of them; they could tell you why and how it all happened. But the story that went around there after Frank was killed was that this fellow, this Burk, was kind of a wild west guy and he thought he was pretty tough and all, and he went out there --- and I've forgotten who he was working for now.

EDWARD: Harry Arnold.

MARCUS: He was working for Harry Arnold. And anyway, I don't know just what happened, but it happened at a gate, as I remember. And he shot Frank and --- Now when you go up to the museum today, you go to the gun case upstairs, you'll see it, there is thirty some guns in that, and there is an old 45 or 44 six-shooter up to the top of it, and that's the gun that he killed Frank Dobkins with.

EDWARD: I bet you Sharon will let me take a picture of that.

MARCUS: Oh yeah, she will, you bet she will. You can do whatever you want to up there.

EDWARD: Buck Burk, you know, in 1925, he shot a deputy sheriff?

MARCUS: No, no, I never heard anymore about him.

EDWARD: Down in Klamath County.

MARCUS: He killed him, did he?

EDWARD: No, blew his leg off.

MARCUS: Oh.

EDWARD: They sent him to the penitentiary for that. I don't know how he ended up at Wagonfire.

MARCUS: No, I don't either, other than the story I told you here, that he read too many western magazines, I think, and ---

EDWARD: Got a little dingy in the head.

MARCUS: Yeah, I think he was a little dingy to begin with.

EDWARD: Yeah, I was at the gate where Dobkins was shot. It was on the Couch Field, Charlie Couch. Ever see Charlie Couch?

MARCUS: Nope. Heard of him, but never seen him. Now, they had Wild Cat Jackson out there in that country, too. Did you ever hear of him?

EDWARD: Oh, yeah, that's R. B. Jackson.

MARCUS: Yeah. He went in the little cabin out there with a broom and beat the hell out of a bobcat. That's where he got the name, you know, old Bob Cat Johnson, or Jackson.

EDWARD: Jackson. You know he died.

MARCUS: Yeah, I suppose he did. He'd be a 150 years old now.

EDWARD: Oh no, he, in 1938 they found him in his bedroom in the Jackson house with his head blown off.

MARCUS: Oh, somebody shot him there, huh? I'd forgotten that.

EDWARD: Oh, my god.

MARCUS: You could hear him coming, when he come to town. I've seen him a time or two.

EDWARD: Oh really.

MARCUS: Yeah.

EDWARD: What did he have, an old beater truck or something?

MARCUS: I don't know what he was traveling in, you could just --- he was pretty mouthy anyway, lots of talking.

EDWARD: He was found in that bedroom, upstairs in the Jackson house, and they say it was suicide.

MARCUS: Oh.

EDWARD: Half the people, or most of the people say it wasn't suicide.

MARCUS: No, I don't think you commit --- you didn't have to out there. (Laughter)

EDWARD: And I asked Austa, I said, "How in the world" --- you see they bought the Jackson place, Carlon's. I said, "How in the world did you go up and sleep in that bedroom?" I'd be scared

to death.

MARCUS: Be afraid the ghosts would come back, yeah.

EDWARD: I know it. I was in that house Wednesday. I didn't put my gun on, but I was in there.

MARCUS: Yeah.

EDWARD: She said, "Well, I never thought about it." But she said her kids were a little bit afraid.

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

EDWARD: Oh, it was a mess out there. I don't know how many people are buried in a gopher hole out there someplace.

MARCUS: No, it was, like they used to say about Chicago, they said they called Chicago the windy city, it was a good place to get your head blowed off. That was the way with Wagonfire.

EDWARD: Oh, I want to get that ---

MARCUS: We had to go to the Gap Ranch ---

EDWARD: Oh, okay.

MARCUS: --- out on the highway to Bend, to the Gap Ranch, and then turn off and go through there. Now, they've changed that road, I haven't been through there since. There was just that one trip that I made through there. And I saw those places along, but you don't see them off the new road.

EDWARD: No, no.

EDNA HAINES: Would you boys like some coffee?

EDWARD: No, not for me. I've --- since five-thirty; I'll be in the bathroom ---

(END OF TAPE)

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