

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #40 - Side B

Subject: Howard Anderson

Place:

Date: December 12, 1975

Interviewer: Pauline Braymen

HOWARD ANDERSON: ...

ARLIE OSTER: Have you got a map you're looking at?

HOWARD: Yeah, that's a map all right. Can you find my ranch?

ARLIE: No, but I'd like to.

HOWARD: Well it ain't mine no more. We accumulated a lot of land in Harney County.

ARLIE: Did you tell me you had the Home Creek Ranch at one time?

HOWARD: I had the Home Creek Ranch, not the Company Ranch, the big ranch. My place was on the uphill side there.

ARLIE: Oh, oh across the road there.

HOWARD: Yeah.

ARLIE: Oh yeah, okay.

HOWARD: Yeah, right, the road used to go right along by my place.

ARLIE: Yeah.

HOWARD: And then they'd have to make a big ... and go in, and come out the other way to go on south from the Company Ranch. That's the Home Creek Ranch.

ARLIE: Oh yeah.

HOWARD: See we was just above the Home Creek Ranch.

ARLIE: Well see there is a schoolhouse that sits down under the road isn't there?

HOWARD: That's on the way, on down south.

ARLIE: Oh, that's at Three Mile, huh?

HOWARD: It's below that, below HL.

ARLIE: Oh yeah.

HOWARD: It was then. Newton Gray and two of the boys that we had --- are you taking that down?

PAULINE BRAYMEN: Uh huh.

HOWARD: Two of the boys they had, they went to school there, Newton Gray and his brother Floyd Gray. Floyd was the oldest.

ARLIE: Uh huh.

HOWARD: He is the one that ... And then Newton Gray, they was awful good kids when they was with us. They is my wife's relation, see. They went to school in Mrs. --- oh what was her name. I believe it was Henry. I don't remember, but anyhow they went to school down in the South End. And the oldest boy, he would get there and --- and let's see where is he at now. I don't remember just where he is. But Newton Gray, he's in Vernonia, Oregon. He's been married several times, and I think, I think he followed maybe the footsteps of his father as far as women is concerned. But I know he had some great girls. But you'd never know just who --- but I can't say that I had the hard luck with my wives, but I only had one, and no replacement.

PAULINE: As I understand it now, you were from Nebraska originally.

HOWARD: Early days maybe. No, not --- Illinois.

PAULINE: You were born in Illinois?

HOWARD: I was born in the State of Illinois. But I've been all over the United States. I've been one end of it to the other in the early days. Just on the go. I followed the rail

some, a little bit of railroad work too in the early days. But I ---

(... Knock at door)

I was married --- I went World War I, I went to war from Seattle, Washington. And when I come back from war I had a little money, I made some money in the army. You didn't very often get very much, you know. But anyhow I had a little money, and I sent to the girl that I figured on marrying, and I told her I said, "We're coming home." And I said, "I'll send this money, and I want you to have that wedding gown by the time I get there." And she had it! And we was married in Seattle.

PAULINE: How did you meet your wife?

HOWARD: I met my wife a good many years ago. I don't know, oh a good many years ago, in --- oh let's see, it wasn't in Seattle; it was in --- around Ellensburg, or in that location, Washington. It was in Washington all right. It wasn't Ellensburg either; I forget the name of that town.

PAULINE: But it was in Washington State.

HOWARD: It was in Washington State, east of the mountains. Yakima, Yakima, that ... its all right. Yeah, it was in Yakima. My folks was over there too, that's how I got there.

Then I met my wife. And then my folks --- I went to war, and then my folks moved to Seattle. And then she moved to Seattle, and when I came back she was in Seattle during the war. And I guess that's about as far as I can go that way.

PAULINE: You said you were born in Illinois. Well what is your birthday?

HOWARD: June 2nd. And how old?

PAULINE: Uh huh.

HOWARD: That's the fifty-four dollar question. I refuse to answer the question.

PAULINE: I know you're 80 something, because that's pretty easy to figure out.

HOWARD: I'm in my 80's, about 81 or 82. I'll be 82; I think it is, on my next birthday. I

think I was 81, it could have been 82, I don't know. My wife had passed away, and she kept track of my birthday. I don't keep track of them.

PAULINE: Well that's probably a good way to be.

ARLIE: I've got your birth certificate, I know what your ---

HOWARD: Oh, I'm in the doghouse now.

PAULINE: You can't get away with anything.

ARLIE: 39.

HOWARD: Huh?

ARLIE: 39.

PAULINE: 39.

HOWARD: How old is that?

ARLIE: 39.

HOWARD: I'm 39?

ARLIE: Yeah.

HOWARD: Oh fiddle sticks. (Laughter) Somebody ain't, they're falsifying, they ain't telling the truth right. 39, that's the year though, ain't it? You ain't giving the number of years. They tell what you ask me, the number of years. Well why don't you ask that question, you got all the books. (Laughter)

ARLIE: I think you already told her, I think you're 81, going 82.

HOWARD: I think so too.

PAULINE: You said you worked on the railroad, was this before you went into the army?

HOWARD: I was up in Canada, and ... all over the United States for ... in the earlier days. Maybe I didn't stay in one place too long either. But I've been all over, over a great bit of the country, and the world too. You can put it down, there is no place any better in this world than Harney County. And there are good people that live in it. Huh?

ARLIE: I said I was just telling Ken that I knew you a lot longer than you know me.

HOWARD: Yeah, I don't doubt it. How long ago was it?

ARLIE: Well I met you about, oh it's been 30 years ago, I guess. Well it isn't that long I guess, but ---

HOWARD: Thirty years ago. Did you get that down now too?

PAULINE: ...

HOWARD: Put it down there, because I'm going to have a partner here in this here thing.

PAULINE: ... to blackmail everybody in the room before we get through.

HOWARD: Well you put that down too. We've got another thing back there, that ... You know him, don't you; well you know who he is. And he is really a friend, and his wife is too. She is a very grand person. I kinda get mad at her, I can't --- I have means, and there is no use of her coming here and doing my washing. And I want to donate something to her, or the church, or something else. But then I want them the beneficiary.

I go to their church, but I conscientiously don't think I'm good enough. I haven't been going to that church. I used to go to church when I was a little fellow. And ... and I had to go to the church with my folks. And when I got old enough why I went to the Christian Science Church, I was originally a Christian Science by heart. And I believe it is the finest religion there is. But I don't --- I go if I can to church on Sunday. And he comes and gets me, that's the best part of it. If it wasn't for that, maybe I wouldn't be.

I don't care to drive a car anymore. I do drive a car if it's essential, but I don't care anything about a car. I have no pleasure, my wife isn't here, I can't take her, so I stay at home. PAULINE: Now you and your wife were married then in Seattle. And did you come to Harney County then immediately after you were married?

HOWARD: Oh no, we was in Yakima, and we was around awhile. And we eventually ---

she had been in this country, and I had too. There was a --- out of Seattle, you know, I had been all over. And that's where I met her, in Yakima first, I guess. And then when the folks --- and I went to war, well my folks --- she went to Seattle, and she was with my folks. And when I knowed I was coming back I wrote and told her to get that wedding gown, because I was coming home. We had an awful good life together.

PAULINE: And then you came to Harney County in about 1918?

HOWARD: I think it was before that, I wouldn't say for sure. But it might have ---

ARLIE: It would have been the First World War.

HOWARD: Yeah, when was the First World War?

MAN: About 1918.

HOWARD: 1918, well that would be it, that would be about right.

REVEREND KEN COIL: Because they got married just right after.

HOWARD: Yeah, we got married right after.

PAULINE: Did you homestead then; your first place was a homestead?

HOWARD: I homesteaded in Catlow Valley, right close to the Home Creek Ranch. I was up on the other side of the road. We got a photograph of it, but it ain't a very good photograph. It don't show properly. We had, I think, 640 acres there. And then I accumulated an awful lot of land. I went into the cattle business. That's one thing my wife loved, and she loved horses. And ride, she sure could ride too. Once in awhile would put her foot in the pocket, tear her coat. But I was always in the cow business game.

PAULINE: Well can you tell us about what it was like in Catlow Valley when you first started out? There were a lot of people living out there at that time, weren't there?

HOWARD: No, no.

PAULINE: No.

HOWARD: There was quite a few come in and homesteaded, but they never made a go.

But they was going to farm in Catlow Valley. If you didn't put down wells, why you didn't get no crop, you didn't get enough rain, see. And --- but I put in wells, and I got in close to where the creeks was, and I went to ... to get water there too. Of course the big Company had, maybe had the water rights over --- But at that time there wasn't no such things as water rights in the early days, you know. There was no such thing as water rights. Now there is water rights and limitations that a common man can't hardly get into anymore. And I suspect maybe you realize that too.

I think everywhere ... got a right to live. As long as they are morally decent in every way, and honest. I don't hold people that is dishonest at all. And that's why these two gentlemen are here today. ... fellows.

KEN: Sure is, whatever you said was right.

HOWARD: Well that's what the banker told me today, so I'm pretty proud of it anyhow. I'm pretty proud of it.

PAULINE: And how long did you live in Catlow Valley?

HOWARD: Oh, that's a hard question to answer, I really don't know. I really don't, can't hardly answer that question. I'd have to go back --- I don't know whether I have --- I have some records some-where, but I would have to go through maybe some of the wife's papers, you know. We owned lots of land. The town of Blitzen, and all the old land all over in that county there.

PAULINE: Was there still ---

HOWARD: Huh?

PAULINE: Was the town of Blitzen still a going concern when, at the time that you owned it? Was the post office still active, or was it later?

HOWARD: I was postmaster for a while, but I didn't care for the job. Bradeen, Billy Bradeen --- no Billy was just a little bitty fellow. In the early days when Jess Bradeen ---

And then the Duvals had the post office. And then I bought the Duvals, all of Duval's property, and I took over the post office. But I didn't keep it, because I had enough cattle and one thing and another, it was just too much. My cattle come first, because that was my living, it wasn't the post office.

ARLIE: You know Howard, we were out there last summer, and there was an old sign up on the front of the store there, that was Duvals Garage and General Store or something. It had fallen down.

HOWARD: Oh everything, all ---

ARLIE: So we took it up, and we put it up in the museum.

HOWARD: Oh, did you?

ARLIE: Yeah.

HOWARD: Well I'm glad. And it's a shame the way they did. I went out there, but I'm never going again, I'm never going again. Actually it hurt me; it hurt me to think that people would destroy things like that. I'm ashamed even to call myself an American when we got people like that in America. It's an indebtedness to the, to our country, for people to go ahead and do things like that.

ARLIE: Well when you're not there to take care of it, old buildings tear down.

HOWARD: But I want to tell you, they laughed, couldn't raise cattle. Well I raised some of the finest cattle, and I was proud of my cattle. And I was proud of my wife, because she loved them too.

ARLIE: Howard, did you ever have sheep out there?

HOWARD: Sure I did. Oh, you know where those pictures are? They're in my bedroom. Go look in my bedroom.

ARLIE: How about these?

KEN: Here are some pictures.

HOWARD: Well --- Give these to the girls. And yes --- I can't remember all of these names.

ARLIE: He's got a picture here I'd dearly love to have someday.

KEN: What's that?

HOWARD: Oh, that's the Roaring Springs ---

ARLIE: P Ranch.

HOWARD: P Ranch.

KEN: Oh, is that right?

HOWARD: P Ranch, yeah. That's Home Creek, P Ranch there.

ARLIE: We lived there when that old house burned down. We lived at the P Ranch when the house burned down the last time.

KEN: Oh, this is the P Ranch.

ARLIE: This is the Home Creek one, I'll bet you.

HOWARD: That's the first one. It burned down too.

ARLIE: That's the first P Ranch house, huh?

HOWARD: I think so, yeah. I could be the last one, I don't know. But that looks like ---

ARLIE: No, this is the last one I'm sure.

HOWARD: Yeah, is that the last one? It might be.

ARLIE: No, this would be --- that's the last one there I'm sure. We lived there one time.

HOWARD: Oh, you lived there?

ARLIE: Yeah.

HOWARD: Well that's when it burned down then. Oh gosh, I used to know them all. But I can't ---

KEN: Here is some sheep.

HOWARD: Yeah, that's lambs.

ARLIE: Howard, I understand Blitzen was quite a place for the sheepherders to come when they were trailing them ---

HOWARD: Yes, yes they was. And I run many of them, I run the sheep, and I run them too.

ARLIE: Did you?

HOWARD: They was on my own private owned land. But I had to fence it to keep the --- They was all foreigners, pretty near all of them was Basco foreigners, and a lot of them had made their money out there in Catlow Valley. And today they're home in their own country rich men.

ARLIE: Yeah.

HOWARD: And I can't tolerate it at all. I don't have respect for them because if they'd stayed in the country, in this country, and saved their money, and spent their money in the country. Because otherwise I didn't --- Anymore than they had no right to get on private owned land.

And you'd have to fence it, and it --- for sheep it took wire net to keep them out. Sometimes wire netting didn't do it either. So when you put that down, why you can make that too. That was my idea, because I'm not ashamed. But I say I believe in, and I'll stand by it if I have to fight the devil.

PAULINE: Well did you run your sheep up in the Steens, or your cattle up in the Steens?

HOWARD: No, I did not. No, no I --- sometimes they'd get up over the hill where there would be no fences. And then I would have to --- they wasn't very far away from home. But I accumulated enough land, I built wells, I built wells to irrigate. And there was some places where there would always be water from them creeks that comes down. And in the spring of the year you used to have floods. And pretty near all the cattle ... in big heavy rains, and snow you know, we would have plenty of water. But in the summertime

that's when it hurt. But you can always find wells, and sometimes they was pretty deep. But we had wells for drinking water all the time. ARLIE: Yeah.

HOWARD: We never drank that creek water. (Laughter)

PAULINE: At that time how did you go about drilling a well? Did you have someone come in and do it, or did you do it yourself?

HOWARD: Yes, a lot of times you done it yourself. Later in years, why when they got well drills coming in, why yes we used the drills. But mostly it was all hand made. Put a pole up and forks over it, and you would keep a pounding, and a pounding, and a pounding until you hit bedrock, and that's about the end of your pounding. And you hit that hard rock, why you didn't go much farther.

But water --- we always had enough water. A lot of people condemned, oh dry. But I want to tell you, when I brought my cattle in to put them on the railroad, why they was well respected, and I loved them too.

PAULINE: Did you drive them into Burns to put them on the railroad?

HOWARD: No, you didn't. Very seldom I ever drove cattle too far. When they get fat, to keep them fat, that's what you are feeding them for is to get them fat. And they weighed just as much as they will when you put them, sell them to that cow buyer, and some of them are pretty tough, I'll tell you that, them cow buyers. But they had the devil to argue with, because I sure knew my cattle. And my wife she was even better for the cattle maybe than I was. I got to give her credit.

PAULINE: Then you would usually put them on a truck and bring them in.

HOWARD: Mostly yes, mostly.

PAULINE: Did you bring them to the railroad here in Burns, or did you take them to Crane, or ---

HOWARD: Different places. Mostly to the railroad here in Burns. It all depends on the

buyer, where they was from. I had a different class of cattle in the later years than I had when I first started in, because I bought better breeds of cattle. And as the money come, I put it right back into something else that done some good. ARLIE: Who did you sell that Home Creek place to? Who bought it from you? Was that from Morgan's, they buy it from you?

HOWARD: Morgan's, Morgan's bought practically all my land, yeah, practically all of it. I don't know how many thousand acres.

ARLIE: You owned the, you owned the old Blitzen side ... too, but did they buy it too?

HOWARD: They got it; I think they got everything I had.

ARLIE: Or did Rex Clemens, he owns some of that now.

HOWARD: Clemens might, I don't know. I don't know, I don't know as I sold any to Clemens. He is at Diamond, ain't he?

ARLIE: No.

HOWARD: Well no, I didn't sell any. He tried, and he even tried to buy this place from me at one time. But I, as long as I had the cattle why I still was buying land. And then I had to fence it too.

ARLIE: How many acres do you think you had?

HOWARD: Oh gosh, I couldn't begin to tell you now. I got the, we got it somewhere around here. And I don't know how --- isn't it on record?

ARLIE: Probably in that contract to Mosers, but I bet you owned more than that.

HOWARD: Oh, that contract to Mosers. Well I might have sold some of it; I might have sold some of it. But there was quite a few people at one time there.

ARLIE: Oh yeah.

HOWARD: Quite a few people. But they went in, the only thing you can make a go of it would be sheep and cattle. And I never went for the sheep. I did have a few sheep,

because they made a change of eating beef, and the sheep meat too, you see.

And there was a lot of times we didn't get into Burns. We had to always come to Burns to pay our taxes. And that is one thing that we never missed. And we don't miss them yet.

ARLIE: No. Now you moved to Diamond didn't you, for a while?

HOWARD: Yeah, we moved to Diamond. Yeah, but we still had the Home Creek property. You see I moved to Diamond, and I got on the refuge too. And John Scharff --- and there was a man that was awful good to stockmen. He was an awful good man to the stockmen. But they ain't allowed I guess no more. I don't know how it is.

ARLIE: Well they are cutting them off.

HOWARD: They're cutting them off. Oh, they got some of them. Of course we owned land too in their land. And that's why --- but oh I had an awful time to get my homestead. And I'm a World War veteran. And you girls ---

ARLIE: Look at his pictures in there. He's got one particularly

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HOWARD: Well you take them in and show them. I'll go with you. ... There was Catlow Valley, and then there was Blitzen, that was a town. Bradeens and Duvals run the store. Bradeens had it first, and then Duvals had it too. Then Bradeens moved theirs, and I think I got the house, the old house, and some of them other ones. But when I went back here a year or so ago, it was disheartening to go back and see everything all destroyed, you know. And everywhere along the line, and of course the Company's --- it didn't seem like they was kept up either.

ARLIE: Yeah, over at Roaring Springs and ---

HOWARD: I didn't want to go as far as Home Creek. Then we cut across from Blitzen to Home Creek. It wasn't natural at all. Newton Gray and his wife was with us.

And Newton Gray, he went to school in Mrs. Bailey's --- you might put that down. Mrs. Bailey, he went to school. And I was on the board, and the election boards and all.

ARLIE: That was Tom Bailey's wife, wasn't it?

HOWARD: No, no.

ARLIE: Tom Bailey's wife?

HOWARD: No, that wasn't Tom Bailey's, that was another Bailey.

PAULINE: Which school, was this the Blitzen School?

HOWARD: No, no, that was at Home Creek.

PAULINE: At Home Creek School.

HOWARD: That was, it wasn't Home Creek, it was --- I think we called it the HL or Spangleburg. It was further south along the road, next to the hill, that school, where the ...

PAULINE: I never heard that term before. And Spangle ---

ARLIE: Spangleburg.

PAULINE: Spangleburg, never heard that one before.

HOWARD: Well I don't know just what they did call it. Maybe Katie Harris can tell you what ---

ARLIE: She can tell you about it.

HOWARD: Yes.

ARLIE: And that school was moved from someplace. That school was moved in there from someplace.

HOWARD: Yeah, and ... I might have helped move it.

ARLIE: Probably did.

HOWARD: I don't remember, it's been too many years ago.

PAULINE: Do you remember the first car you owned? Did you have a car before you came to Harney County?

HOWARD: Why sure I did, sure I did.

PAULINE: Do you remember what kind of a car it was?

HOWARD: Ten chances to one it was a Ford. I've had, late years I've had nothing but Chryslers. I've had --- this is I guess maybe the third or fourth one I've had. The cars, and that equipment, I had ...

Then I owned the Diamond Ranch, and my trucks would run from Diamond to Catlow Valley. I always had --- after I bought the Diamond property I had to ---

I want to tell you, and put it down, I had the most lovely wife that a man could ever have. She loved cattle, she loved horses, and above all she loved me.

ARLIE: How far was Home Creek from Frenchglen, thirty miles, thirty-five miles?

HOWARD: You have to get the scales on that map. I presume, I think it was maybe six, eight miles up that hill, wasn't it to the first Company Ranch? And then it was so many ---

ARLIE: Oh about twenty-five miles I guess. Yeah.

HOWARD: From Frenchglen?

ARLIE: Yeah, to Home Creek. Uh huh.

HOWARD: Well it was that all right, I think, between twenty-five and thirty miles. I don't remember how many --- Huh?

ARLIE: Blitzen is nothing but a ghost town now.

HOWARD: It ain't nothing else but ghost towns over there. On the main road ---

ARLIE: Howard tell me something, there is a little building there that, somebody said was at one time an old hotel building. And then there was two ladies lived in that ... Who are they?

HOWARD: Old Razz Lewis --- hotel, yeah they run the hotel. And they kept little shacks around there, and that's where they kept there --- nobody claimed them. And they, if they had a crowd they used it. But they had a two-story house. Razz Lewis, and there was

Florence and ---

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