

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #52 - Side A

Subject: Ira & Boyd Brown

Place: Woodburn, Oregon

Date: December 28, 1992

Interviewer: Edward Gray

BOYD BROWN: ... give you a \$150 a month, that's the going --- "Oh no, no, I won't work for any \$150 a month." "Well what do you want?" He said, "I want seventy-five cents a head." "Well alright." So --- and Sammy told me, he says, "Naturally," he says, "I went and got a fellow to help me, and we picked up the ones that were closest to the corral." In a couple of days Bill come, he says, and I had seventy-five head in there. "Oh my, my, my," he says, "I can't do that. No, no, no," he says, "we're going to go back to a \$150 a month." Sammy says, "Well then you go and get somebody else." And he said, "He paid me off and I quit." So he says after he got them out of the round-up, I saw him several months after that, he says, "Hey Bill, you keep pretty good records in that little notebook you carry, how much did it cost you per head to round up those horses?" "About two and a half." (Laughter)

EDWARD GRAY: I'm going to put a chapter in there someplace on stories.

BOYD: Oh yes. Can you cover it in one chapter?

EDWARD: Well some of them will be scattered throughout the book too.

BOYD: That's a good idea too, because otherwise if you read them all at once then ---

EDWARD: Oh, yeah.

BOYD: --- that won't work.

EDWARD: Oh, I've got --- Like this right here, these are just stories on Bill Brown. These are by Audra Brennan, there is about six pages, and these are just stories.

BOYD: Oh shoot, that's ... isn't it?

EDWARD: Yeah, Audra Brennan. They lived at Bill's Buck Creek Ranch, 1937 to 1941, just after he had left. And she drew me a floor plan of that old Buck Creek house. Well she already had it drawn, and she just collected all this stuff on Bill Brown. She really, they knew one another of course. And her husband, Claude Brennan, worked for Bill for years over there in Crook County. But anyway, she is the only one that had a picture of Bill's original house. Huge.

BOYD: Oh yes, it was.

EDWARD: My god ---

BOYD: Even a nursery.

EDWARD: Oh yeah. Now the nursery is gone, they tore all that off. I wished I would have had pictures of the inside of that; but I'm sure I'll never, never find anything like that.

BOYD: Oh no, I don't think you would either, have it originally, you know.

EDWARD: I doubt if anybody ever took a picture.

BOYD: Not to amount to anything.

EDWARD: What surprises me about that place, Ira --- you were there once weren't you?

IRA BROWN: Uh huh.

EDWARD: And Waldo was over there.

IRA: He worked for him all summer.

EDWARD: Yeah.

IRA: Can you imagine, I know I told you this before, but when fall came, why he says, "Now I'll pay you for the summer's work, or you can have your pick of fifteen head of horses down there at the Willows Corral." "Oh," he says, "I'll take the horses." So he

went down, let him take his pick. And he picked up fifteen head of chestnut sorrels, all alike, same color. And he had a little pony of his own that he had bought while he was there, and he put a saddle on that thing. I don't know which horse he put a bell on. Came right across, and he crossed right at the base of Mount Hood. Driving oh ---

EDWARD: Barlow Trail maybe?

IRA: Well, probably pretty much.

EDWARD: Probably.

IRA: But imagine driving, coming down through --- he crossed the Sandy River, pretty well up east of Portland, the Portland area. Can you imagine bringing that all alone, nobody helped him. And we had a big stock ... when I was a kid. My dad just put ... We had about, between fifteen and twenty head. We could have four, four-horse teams. My dad drove one, hired man drove one, he drove one, and I drove one. And we'd get into a field for instance and we'd put it in, in a hurry, each with a four-horse team. Well, those horses, none of them would even have a, most of them didn't even have a headstall on them, little own anything else. So they broke those horses out there by the barn. And if that wasn't a three ring circus. (Laughter) Because he got one that he had had a harness on several times, and my dad wanted to load up cement. And he had ---

EDWARD: Want me to get that Ira?

IRA: Nope, I've ---

...

EDWARD: Not Sarah.

IRA: She had two boys. No, not Sarah, Mary is the one.

EDWARD: Mary.

IRA: Yeah, she had these two boys, and the little one got into her satchel with the pills, and he ate them all, killed him deader than a doornail.

EDWARD: Oh yeah.

BOYD: Sure.

IRA: And when Harvey got up a little ways, oh I think, I don't know if he was ten years old or not, she couldn't handle him. So she sent him up to Bill, and Bill raised him.

(Laughter)

EDWARD: They just let him run out there in that desert all over the place.

BOYD: God yeah. How old was he, his name?

IRA: I'm just guessing, he was about, a little over ten years old, he was up there all that time.

EDWARD: Oh, years.

IRA: Yeah, he was. Because I know Bill would include, oh comment about Harvey. He would write my dad probably twice a year.

EDWARD: I think that Harve Winslow was up in that country, from at least early 1900's to the 1930's.

IRA: Yeah.

EDWARD: About '36 or '37, because he had some of Bill's sheep. He borrowed, so to speak.

BOYD: More or less.

EDWARD: More or less.

IRA: One herder ran off with 2,000 head ... And they traced him clear up to Lakeview before they lost the trail. ... ran right into that Irish settlement, and you couldn't get "sickem" out of those fellows. And you'd go into ---

BOYD: ...

EDWARD: Barry, Barry O'Connor's?

IRA: Yes.

EDWARD: Can't think of the other one. I talked to Helen Winslow, who is the daughter of Harve Winslow.

IRA: Yes.

EDWARD: Boy, she's getting up there too.

IRA: Must be, because she would be a cousin of mine actually.

EDWARD: She lives over there, she still lives on the Moon Ranch out of Silver Lake, over there in Harney County.

IRA: Well I know where it is, because Pearl and I went up there. And she was out deer hunting, so we didn't get to talk to her.

BOYD: How old was she at the time?

IRA: Oh, she was probably in her 60's.

BOYD: Yeah.

EDWARD: I think she might be over 90.

IRA: Wouldn't wonder. Say was her mother ever a good looker.

BOYD: You bet.

EDWARD: Now that would be Mary?

BOYD: Well her mother would have been Mary, yeah.

EDWARD: Oh no, no, no, that would be her grandmother, would be Mary.

IRA: Yeah, I don't remember what her mother's name was.

EDWARD: Harve Winslow married, I don't know who he married. But he --- that's how Charlie Couch got in the state pen, because he stole one of his horses, crazy. They were all stealing from one another anyway. It wasn't no big deal. Oh poor Bill, he didn't really have any idea how many horses, it's impossible to count them, you know.

BOYD: So he ended up in the pen for stealing one horse.

EDWARD: One horse.

IRA: He even had his foreman put in the pen, Bill did.

EDWARD: Yeah, that's Charlie Couch.

IRA: Oh, is that it?

EDWARD: Yeah.

IRA: And he says, "Confound it," he says, "he doesn't like to be sitting there doing nothing." And Bill went up and got him, he'd only been there a month. And he talked them into letting him have him back.

EDWARD: Oh, that's crazy. Bill just would not press charges. I know his second buckaroo boss, Robert Baker, quit because Bill wouldn't press charges against this Moss guy for stealing his horses. I mean he just --- he finally did eventually, but it took an act of god to get him to do anything.

IRA: Sammy Boyce told me, he says, or I guess it was Shields, one of the two, because I talked to him about --- he came across a corral that was north of, yes it would be north of Lakeview quite a little ways. But in another words a long ways from Bill's headquarters, and they had fifty head of Bill's horses in the corral. And they took a pocket knife and cut the brand that, of that, off of that, and then took a buckskin string and poked four holes in it and pulled them all together and left it on until it rotted out. That way, you see, they couldn't make any ... they could see there was a brand on there but they --- And Sammy Boyce tried to, he said, "I knew better than to make any ruckus there, they'd have shot him right there."

EDWARD: That was probably Moss, W. Z. Moss. See Bill's brand, we branded it on a piece of cardboard, and god that thing is small, you know, it's not very big.

IRA: Well it had to be to go on the jaw.

EDWARD: Right. It wouldn't take much to cover it up. They used to take hot potatoes and they could put that on there and that would somehow kind of suck the brand out, so

to speak, and it would grow back over. Oh he lost horse after horse. I want to--- ...

IRA: ... to ask where it was, he says, "It is right up that road there." He says, "It would be about two miles up there, the road." I couldn't see any road. There was a couple wagon tracks right through the sagebrush.

EDWARD: Oh yeah.

IRA: You ran over there. And I didn't know if I was going in the right direction or what. Pretty soon, there I was. And he said, "You'll find President McKinley's picture still on the wall."

EDWARD: I know where that is, do you believe that?

IRA: The picture?

EDWARD: Yeah. Jim Tackman has it. I tried to get that McKinley picture off of him. Still has the frame, he says he hasn't touched nothing. That old fart wouldn't part with that thing.

IRA: Is that right?

EDWARD: That's right Ira; Jim Tackman in Burns has that McKinley picture. Geese. Now when was that that you were in Bill Brown's house there at Buck Creek?

IRA: Oh, it would be about in the '60's.

EDWARD: Was it pretty well torn up?

IRA: Yeah.

EDWARD: Windows were broken out?

IRA: Oh yeah. And then there was just that one-piece standing. And it didn't look anything like that.

BOYD: No.

IRA: Right out in the sagebrush.

EDWARD: Oh yeah.

IRA: Roads built around it.

BOYD: Yeah.

EDWARD: That's a Street cabin on, in Gilchrist Valley on the South Fork of the Crooked River. You can see Bill's place is way up over here.

BOYD: Way up in here.

EDWARD: Yeah. Bill's place was up a draw, up --- that creek kind of made a little canyon up through there. There is Sammy Boyce's place out on the desert in Dry Valley. That's one of his places, Ira.

IRA: It would have to be. Because the house that I saw when he was there was a good house.

BOYD: Yeah.

EDWARD: Was it right on the highway?

IRA: No, no.

EDWARD: No.

IRA: Coming from Lakeview to Riley ---

EDWARD: Yeah.

IRA: I turned off, Verna ... had told me where to turn off at, and went, I went toward Christmas Valley. See which would be almost due west.

EDWARD: Yeah.

IRA: But I couldn't tell. I'd come to a fork in the road ---

...

EDWARD: I was telling Ira, this thing is so old, it's been out in the pummy, and I can't even see --- Oh yeah, it always works.

This is Edward Gray with Ira Brown, son of George Brown, brother of Bill. And with Boyd Brown, the son of Waldo Brown, which George is his granddad.

BOYS: Right.

EDWARD: Okay. And this is 12-28-92, in Woodburn, Oregon, in Ira Brown's house. And by the way I told Ira that I went to high school here in '55, '56, '57. Played basketball in Woodburn, the basketball team. And this was, it was a long time ago, wasn't it? A few questions Ira that I think I need some help on. We were just talking a bit ago about the smoking in the Brown family. And George ---

IRA: Yeah, and that was really a no, no.

EDWARD: Didn't like it. Well what --- my father was a minister. Of course all sons don't always follow in their father's footsteps, you know. But I learned a lot about conviction, and right and wrong, and don't lie, cheat, and steal, things of that nature, which has paid off. But anyway, what was it with Bill Brown, William Waldo Brown, that you can say that made him so, not religious, but ---

IRA: Oh yes, it came from their mother.

EDWARD: Their mom.

IRA: My grandmother.

EDWARD: Which is?

IRA: She was the predominant one of that family. In other words she trained the boys, and taught them what she wanted. And the father more or less, which was my grandfather of course, kept in the background. He never had much to say. And he had to work on the roads in those days with a team of horses to raise the money to pay the taxes with. You could work out your taxes on the farm, which is what he did. And he'd be gone for as much as a month at a time, away from the farm. And she would a lot the boys, to do various jobs around.

EDWARD: Bill, George, Bob, Ellis ---

IRA: Yes, yes, all the time that they were growing up.

EDWARD: Sam.

IRA: Because that's where the statement came from, that Bill made at one time, that he had always earned his own money from the time he was four years old.

EDWARD: Yeah, I put that in that ---

IRA: Yeah. Because he said, "Well it could be impossible." "No," he said, "I fed my mother's chickens, and then we sold the eggs." Which in those days, they traded them for groceries.

EDWARD: That's what he told Fred Lockley, Bill told Fred Lockley.

IRA: I remember this story so well. When my grandpa had been gone say for a month, whatever, he always bought himself a clay pipe and a package of tobacco. And when he'd come home she'd go through his clothes and wash them up. She'd take both the pack of tobacco and the clay pipe, take the lid off the stove and dump the whole thing in. He didn't smoke when he was home.

EDWARD: My memory, I've lost it here. I can't even remember Bill's father and mother's name.

IRA: Her, I think it was Sam and Sarah. That's as near as I can come to the ---

EDWARD: I think your right, it's all in there, we got it all.

BOYD: What's the last name; it was just, what was the last name, McArthur? What are you talking about?

EDWARD: No, no, Bill's real mom and dad.

BOYD: Yeah, that's what I mean.

IRA: They would be Browns too.

BOYD: Okay.

EDWARD: It was ---

IRA: You're like I am, you get lost in the family.

EDWARD: It was Sarah Ellis, I can't remember her --- that was her maiden name, that's it, it was Ellis.

IRA: Yes.

EDWARD: Sarah Ellis Brown. So that's where Ellis's name, Ellis Brown's name.

IRA: See her name was Ellis in the beginning.

EDWARD: Right, there we go, in England.

IRA: Uh huh.

BOYD: Okay, that's the Ellis name, okay.

EDWARD: 1826 I think they were born.

IRA: Yeah.

BOYD: What year?

EDWARD: 1826.

IRA: I don't know how they, of course they got over here, or when.

EDWARD: That's all in there, in that one thing I wrote. But this religious thing, because Bill was a, everybody that I've talked to that knew Bill personally said he was very religious.

IRA: He wouldn't think of swearing.

EDWARD: No.

IRA: Huh uh.

EDWARD: But he was very convicted to the religious thought.

IRA: Yeah, they kind of ---

EDWARD: You do things by the Bible, is that what I'm trying to say. And I wondered where that came from.

IRA: From his mother.

EDWARD: His mom was, okay.

IRA: Because she would, for instance, I don't know how often, but she would read the family sketches of an evening, little pieces out of the Bible. And that was almost a daily routine.

EDWARD: Did Bill ever say that, or do you know if Bill --- I know that he went to the San Jose Normal School, graduated, taught school.

IRA: I think about a year, one year or so.

EDWARD: One year I believe.

BOYD: Yeah, just about one year.

EDWARD: Do you know if that was in California, or was that in Oregon?

IRA: No, I think it was --- I'm guessing at this though. I've heard them talk about it, but I think it was California.

BOYD: Of course grade school.

EDWARD: Grade school. Do you know if your father, George Brown, George H. --- what did the H. stand for?

IRA: Henry.

EDWARD: Henry. George Henry Brown, or William Waldo Brown, do you know if either one of them ever, ever surveyed?

IRA: No, my father didn't at all, huh uh. But of course Bill did that, it was one of his long suits. They said, even you know, talked to some of those people you've talked to, that he was one of the best surveyors in the country.

EDWARD: By sight. Yeah, he could figure out things ---

IRA: For instance, to go, he told me, what was it four and a half miles of the ditch that led into that lake on the Gap Ranch. And he, all he did was just take that transit level. Otherwise you're going to have to go uphill at some point. He didn't. They brought that water in from; it ran off that mountain range up there.

BOYD: Did he have a transit?

IRA: Yeah, he must have had.

EDWARD: I don't know.

IRA: I don't know about that.

EDWARD: I think he went by eyesight, Ira. Just, yeah, that looks ---

IRA: You could be farther, more right that I. I never thought about that until here just awhile back.

BOYD: Of course they can do it with an ordinary level too, because he had a level ...

IRA: Yeah, he could put a board on it.

BOYD: Board on it.

IRA: Board on it to see to do that.

EDWARD: But you never heard in your family whether Bill was, ever worked for a surveying crew?

IRA: No, I'm pretty sure he didn't do that, huh uh.

EDWARD: Let me finish up --- okay religious --- just found some things. Don't think we'll ever say anything about --- All right. You mentioned that the three boys, before they went to Wagontire, they settled on Wagontire, I know they went to Mitchell, looked around didn't like it.

BOYD: It was too dry.

EDWARD: Too dry. Do you know if they went to Northern California by any chance?

IRA: Oh no, I don't think --- wait a minute. I can't pin enough of that down to make sure.

EDWARD: Okay. But Fred Lockley said that they did.

IRA: I think he could have a point there, but Father never mentioned it to us.

EDWARD: Of course now Fred Lockley, when he wrote about Bill Brown, he was interviewing Bill Brown. So I guess, probably did. Because Fred Lockley is pretty, you

could trust him, he was a trustworthy writer. He interviewed hundreds of old timers. He interviewed Bill in 1935. Okay.

Now you guys remember, Bill came from Eastern Oregon and stayed with Waldo Brown, which is Boyd Brown's father.

BOYD: Right, uh huh.

EDWARD: I got it right? At Hubbard, or near Hubbard.

BOYD: Near Hubbard.

EDWARD: Near Hubbard.

IRA: Well you see, the reason that they did that, he was tied in with this, how would you explain it, the reason that they stayed

--- the place where he had given them ten thousand dollars to take him, when he was old age, ended up they wouldn't take him.

EDWARD: The Methodist Old Folk's Home, Old People's Home.

IRA: See he had given, he was so proud of that card that they gave him, that he could retire there.

EDWARD: I will show you that.

IRA: It was a let down to him when they turned him down. Naturally would be. I don't know who was involved in taking that bunch to court, but they did. They got an attorney and, after, when the court got through the home took him. Because they claimed that the person that had granted him that card, had no authority to do so.

EDWARD: To get into the retirement home?

IRA: Yes, they said, so they cancelled it.

EDWARD: He came, do you remember Ira or Boyd, when Bill Brown, as close as you can, came to your, Waldo Brown's house?

IRA: You can probably notch it.

EDWARD: In 19 --- I'm not going to say.

IRA: I'm going to say it was in; it had to be in '35.

EDWARD: 1935.

IRA: That's my recollection.

BOYD: Yeah, that's about ---

IRA: About '35. And I don't recall how long he was there.

BOYD: Oh, he must have been there all winter.

IRA: Well he did, because I do remember, you know, he preached to us boys, you know. You're supposed to work your most physical ability from the cradle to the grave. That was his saying.

BOYD: Yeah, six days a week.

EDWARD: Got that one, yeah.

IRA: And he would, my mother would fix him a lunch. He would go out in that west forty; you know, there was ---

BOYD: Yeah, there was some ground to clear yet.

IRA: He'd go out there and work all day long and come back in the evening. And it had to be, there is a spring involved because, my folks, you know, always had, you know, sweet corn. And he didn't have any teeth, and he would gum this corn off the cob. And of course us kids were quite impressed that he could do that.

BOYD: They thought that was funny.

IRA: Yeah.

EDWARD: He was 80 years old then. Because he was born January, no, that's when he died.

IRA: He must have been older, about 83 years I thought.

EDWARD: Oh lord, he was 80, he was 85 when he died, that was in 1941. Is there

anything else --- now, okay what we're saying is maybe the spring of 1935, somewhere, he was there?

IRA: It had to be. Because I remember, you know, fresh corn out of the garden, so he had to be there. He probably went through the winter and through that spring and summer on the ranch, on our farm.

EDWARD: Anything else, Boyd, that --- well first of all, how old were you in 1935?

BOYD: Well I had to be 18. I had to be, I was probably a junior or a senior in high school.

EDWARD: Anything else about Bill Brown you remember at your dad's farm?

BOYD: Well I just remember some of his philosophy he was talking about all the time.

EDWARD: I mean, did he talk about it all the time?

BOYD: Oh yeah, he was always talking. Things that I remembered.

EDWARD: He talked, did he talk a lot when he was in the house, or did he just sit at a table?

BOYD: Yes, no he would talk to us boys, yeah, and sister.

EDWARD: Did he ever tell you anything about Eastern Oregon, or Central Oregon?

BOYD: No, he never talked about Eastern Oregon. He just, his philosophy of the Bible. And he talked some about this marriage, you know.

IRA: Oh boy.

EDWARD: Marriage?

BOYD: Yeah.

EDWARD: About him marrying?

BOYD: Well I mean the philosophy.

EDWARD: Oh.

BOYD: In other words his, oh as far as sex life and whatnot.

IRA: Yeah, he got that --- I think he's got that, where he believed that, just like that's what

scared the Shields woman. He would have a youngster every year, and just like a horse or a cow.

BOYD: Yeah.

IRA: And he was going to put together seven sons. And he had the water holes picked out, and he was going to put one, each one of the boys at the water hole, and he would have control of a big section of Eastern Oregon.

EDWARD: Well he controlled a hundred thousand acres, probably. What did this philosophy, this ---

IRA: Well this, this religion, that he would --- he wasn't too much on the Bible. He said it was a very good history; he referred to it more as a history book. And he said man, or man was pretty rotten, and anything like this was good. The Bible was great, because it would have the good part of, or the thoughts, the good thoughts of what man should be like.

EDWARD: Did Bill ever go to church when he was in Hubbard?

IRA: Not that I know.

BOYD: I don't think his hearing was good enough.

IRA: No, I don't think he, no.

EDWARD: Oh, was his hearing getting bad, you mean, is that what you said Ira?

IRA: It wasn't too good.

BOYD: Wasn't it?

IRA: Just like mine. I think of that now. Hearing, things interfere with them.

BOYD: Just like Grandmother.

IRA: And it just, it makes it all garbled up.

EDWARD: Well what religion was, I'm not going to say a lot about religion, but these little things just drive me nuts. What religion was Sarah Brown, Bill's mom? I know she wasn't

Catholic.

IRA: Oh no.

EDWARD: No way.

IRA: In fact they were dead set against the Catholics.

BOYD: Boy, I'll say.

IRA: They were quite set --- yeah.

BOYD: I remember that.

IRA: There were quite some stories in relation to the --- just like your dad. See the Catholic Church, and the little house with the priest lived in, was right directly across our front gate as we went out to the road, where we lived.

BOYD: Uh huh.

IRA: And the priest come down to the, every once in awhile, out to the road and leaned on one of those fence posts and talked to us kids when we, oh go to a store. And Waldo went by one day and he said, "Well how are you getting along in high school?" Waldo says, "Not so good." And this is a true story, I remember my dad telling it. He said, "Well what's the trouble?" He said, "I'm not making it in Latin, I'm going to flunk it."

EDWARD: Yeah.

IRA: Why he says, "That's no problem at all. Tell you what you do, you come down to my place in evening after you get home from school and I'll teach you Latin and I'll guarantee you you'll get an "A" on it." So he come home and told my dad. I was just a little kid then, and he come home and, got this Latin problem all straightened out. Gee, did my dad ever break loose.

BOYD: Is that right?

IRA: He says, yeah, he says, as he turned to Mom, and he says, "You know what will happen to this boy if we do that?" He says, "He'll make a Catholic out of him regardless."

And he says, "And I'm not going to have that, go ahead and flunk the Latin." (Laughter)

EDWARD: Yeah, I can see that, very easily.

IRA: They would too.

EDWARD: At least give it a shot.

IRA: An old fellow worked for me later on, and he says, "You know, the job that I had, I worked for your grandparents," they had, it's about, it's over 200 acres, about 250 acre farm east of where we lived. It's ... I guess you'd call it; it's closer to Oregon City than any place else. He said, "I worked there," and he said, "every day after I'd get through," they called it dinner, whereas we call it lunch now. He said, "I remember when I got through with dinner, my next job then when I got up and left the table was to go out to the barn and hitch that horse that was there up to that cart." And he says, "Your grandmother would get in that horse and drive around and see what each of the boys was doing and a lot the new job to them."

EDWARD: That was Sarah Brown doing that?

IRA: Uh huh. Now that's quite a --- oh he hated that.

EDWARD: Well there was something about the Brown family that they all succeeded. It's like my three kids, they all graduated from college, they'll all be successful. You know, you try to figure out what goes on. Because my god they had Ellis and Sam were doctors, and Mary was a doctor. And Bill was successful, I mean, you know. I mean they all were. And then you guys have done great. There is something ---

IRA: That's where it comes from.

EDWARD: Desire to not to lose, and do the best you can, and all that. And I don't know, well you know religion must have played some role in it here someplace.

BOYD: And I think the parents, I look and my parents said a lot to, they set the mold when we were small, get out and accomplish something. I can't say that made my ---

Wallace probably didn't turn out so well, but Eddie did.

EDWARD: I mean to have three doctors out of eight in one family, that's quite a fete, you know.

IRA: Yeah, I remember the story that came from her, she went out to the mailbox one day. She said I was going to have my grandmother ---

EDWARD: Sarah.

IRA: Yeah, and was going to have to write to Ellis, the oldest one, he was back in that college.

EDWARD: Michigan State.

IRA: She said, "I haven't got any more money, I'm going to have to have you come home." And there was a check in the mailbox that solved the whole problem. She sent him the money and he stayed.

EDWARD: Did Bill ever send any money to your father, George Henry Brown, or any?

IRA: No, because he paid them off, I don't know how.

BOYD: My father and Bob came back, and Bob went over and bought that ---

IRA: It was 640 acres, on the road to Oregon City and Molalla.

EDWARD: That would have been in 1890 range.

BOYD: My father used to kind of josh him about that. He said, "Well you bought nothing but a pile of rock."

EDWARD: Yeah.

BOYD: It was, you couldn't hardly plow it.

EDWARD: They sold it for a golf course or something didn't they?

IRA: Three million dollars. (Laughter) Yeah, a bunch of Japs bought it.

EDWARD: Yeah, yeah, we won't get into that.

BOYD: Yeah.

EDWARD: Back to old Bill here. Did --- well what do I want to hit the easiest here? Okay, did Bill ever say anything to the family, your family, about the Wagontire Mountain range feud?

BOYD: Oh my father wouldn't let him talk about it.

IRA: He told me the story once about that, about this couple riding in there and shooting. And Shields was the one that told me most about that.

EDWARD: Okay, but ---

IRA: But my father says; "Now I don't want to talk about it again." I was just a kid, you know, I was curious.

BOYD: Sure.

EDWARD: I got all of that, Ira, about Overstreet. But what about the later range feuds in the '20's and '30's? Did he ever ---

IRA: No, never mentioned it. Because you see, I don't think Bill even mentioned it in his letters. And when he did come to visit my father or talk to him, he would only stay about an hour or two and then go on. He made his headquarters with his brothers in Portland.

BOYD: Yeah.

IRA: Yeah. And then he'd take off from there, take the train home.

EDWARD: Now Ira, you were born when, 19 ---

IRA: 1906.

EDWARD: '06, I was going to say '05, 1906. 1906, so you're 80---

IRA: I'll be 87 next month.

EDWARD: 87. Did Bill, oh back up, these letters, are there any letters, Bill Brown letters?

IRA: No.

EDWARD: Oh shoot, shoot, shoot. That's the only thing I've got.

IRA: I don't think that, Veda would have been the one that would have them, and she

didn't have them either.

BOYD: Yeah, Veda might have.

IRA: Her boy gave me everything that pertained to her.

BOYD: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Nothing. Okay. How often do you think Bill left his properties in Central Oregon on the desert country, and came to Portland a year?

IRA: Once a year.

EDWARD: Once a year.

IRA: That was a ritual. No particular time.

EDWARD: Christmas time?

IRA: No particular part of the season. Naturally it would have to be spring or summer.

EDWARD: Did Sam or Ellis, Mary ever go over to see him?

IRA: No. None of them went over there ... Sam particularly.

BOYD: And he couldn't take his wife.

IRA: If you, because she would tell me, she says, "He has no manners," I guess you'd call it.

EDWARD: Oh, Bill?

IRA: No, her husband, Sam.

EDWARD: Sam.

IRA: She says, "I had to learn to teach him, and how I did it," for instance she says, "Sam open that door for me," she says, "I don't want to get my white gloves dirty." And that's the way she taught him manners. So she says, we, Portland was being built, quite often they'd go for walks. And she said, "We'd come to a ditch." He'd take over there, "Well come on, hurry up." She said, "I had to break him of that, I went first." And she told me; I don't remember how she told me how she did it. But no, after awhile she went, got to go

across. She said it would be a narrow plank, going across this ditch that she taught him.

Because I told my father, stopped there for lunch, we always went to see Ellis first, then we went up to Sam's place. He'd always be home, because he was retired ever since I can remember.

EDWARD: Were they, did they live close to each other, Sam and Ellis?

IRA: They lived together. Ellis furnished the house, and groceries, paid the expenses, and Mary ran the house. They hired a cook, she didn't do anything. And it always impressed me when we were eating lunch; they had a little bell about that big with a handle on top. Ring a bell, and here would come the maid. And the maid had a little, you know, one of those little white things on their head. And she'd come in to see what they wanted. And that went on all the time; they used to go back and forth.

BOYD: Now there is two houses right there together.

IRA: No, no, there was, but they rented one out. They looked alike.

BOYD: I know, yes.

EDWARD: Are they still there?

BOYD: Yes.

IRA: I think they're still there.

BOYD: Oh yes, I've seen them.

IRA: Right straight across the street from the library on 10th and Yamhill.

BOYD: City library. Their homes are still there.

IRA: Gee, did you see where the ---

...

IRA: ... \$85,000 in a coalmine.

BOYD: Coalmine?

IRA: A coalmine. I was trying to think where ---

BOYD: Around Molalla or something?

IRA: Oh well ---

EDWARD: Probably Coos Bay.

IRA: I don't remember where it is. Gee whiz, of course it just ... out.

BOYD: But I remember, well Ellis he went and gave a big wad to, was it the University of Oregon?

IRA: Yeah. No, that was Bill. I mean Bill gave \$50,000, \$25,000, \$25,000 when my sister Veda was going there to see Father ---

BOYD: That was at Willamette.

IRA: Bill mentioned in one of his letters, he was always writing back and forth.

BOYD: It was either Gerlinger Hall or ---

IRA: Gerlinger Hall.

BOYD: Was that it, yeah.

IRA: But Father would write back, and he mentioned to Bill that Veda was going to school there.

BOYD: I see.

IRA: And when he did that, Bill found out about that, he sent the school, the college, \$25,000. Well gee whiz, that was quite a --- and that really woke things up. Well one day in class some professor that she had made a remark, "Now if we could just get that old sheepherder up in Eastern Oregon to send us another \$25,000 we'd get this thing accomplished."

BOYD: Yeah.

IRA: And she spoke up, she says, "That sheepherder was my father." She, I guess she could have bought that professor for twenty-five cents ... (Laughter) That would ...

BOYD: Well now Ellis gave a big chunk of money, about a half a million dollars to the

University of Oregon fund of some kind.

IRA: Oh, I'll tell you that was the talk of, more than that, his estate at, when was it about the '30's was it?

EDWARD: Ellis, 1939.

IRA: Yeah, see he was a nut on social diseases. And he told me one time, he said, "Twenty-five percent of my eye problems that I treat are attributed to syphilis."

BOYD: Uh huh.

IRA: And he said, "It is exceedingly bad in the children." And he says that's always, some of them went blind with it.

BOYD: Sure.

IRA: And he said, "I just wanted to do something about this." So what he did, he left his entire estate, all of it, it was to be liquidated and the Bank of California was to administrate it, be the administrator and distribute it. And they turned it over to an attorney by the name of Veesa, Veeseey (sp.?). And he, you might say, did the law work on it. Now he ended up, Ellis did, in that hospital, and stayed there until he died. I think he, it seems to me it was Emanuel, but I'm not too sure of that. Well anyway ---

EDWARD: He was 86.

IRA: 86, yeah. I mean that they distributed that estate?

EDWARD: No, he was 86 when he died.

IRA: Oh yes, that's true. But what happened, I later found out, the fellow that I was in the same living unit at University of Oregon, married the nurse that Uncle Ellis had. Now that, it's getting kind of complicated here in a way.

EDWARD: Yeah.

IRA: He married that nurse. And she came to us one day, because we got to know her. And she said, "You know it's a shame the way they're treating your uncle." Well we

wondered what she was talking about. She said when they allotted the room that he was to have; it was the poorest room in the hospital. Because the bank already had his estate.

BOYD: Oh sure.

IRA: And she said they were to, agreed to keep him in pretty comfortable quarters. Now she said, "I, they don't bring up an instrument here and leave it for him to read," she says, "he can't read it, so I read it to him. And then they'll come back and get it tomorrow." And he says, "They hold his hand to sign his signature." And she said, "Do you realize what those people are doing?" She said, "They're stealing him blind."

BOYD: Oh, for goodness sakes.

IRA: The bank was doing it.

BOYD: The Bank of California?

IRA: Bank of California. She says, "Now listen," she says, "I've got that all in diary form." She says, "If you boys want to sue the bank, I'll turn you my diary over for what's in it." And she says, "It's absolutely wrong." I got to thinking about it, and it would be true, we didn't have any money to put into a lawsuit. Because they just scare you poor people ---

EDWARD: Oh they would ---

IRA: And fighting with his own money.

EDWARD: Appeal it, and appeal it.

BOYD: Yeah.

IRA: Yeah. So we didn't do a thing about it. And it made my brother Ellis so mad. Veeseey was selected to be the administrator of my, advisor to the bank. Right away he declared him president of that trust fund. And his initial salary was \$25,000 a year for that one thing.

EDWARD: He must have left a million, Ellis Brown?

IRA: He left a million dollars. When I was just a little boy, I walked home with him from the office. My father went to buy something, and would come later. And I walked home with him to lunch, and we went by, gee I looked up there, and oh stories high. ... he called it his Taylor Street property. And a fellow offered him a \$150,000 for it, on the street, which was a huge sum, and he turned him down. And later, he says, you know, he says, "I met that fellow on the street years later." He says, "Say, do you remember my offering you a \$150,000 for this Taylor Street property?" He says, "Well sure I do." "Two fools met on the street that day," he says, "you for not taking it, and me for being crazy enough to offer that for it." (Laughter) So that's the way they settled it.

EDWARD: Well this Ellis, then he lived, he lived right downtown Portland.

IRA: Oh yeah, 10th and Yamhill is.

EDWARD: Yeah.

IRA: Because it is just a ways, it would be two blocks on the --- there would be Taylor and Morrison between that and Washington Street. Well Washington Street in Portland to this day is the most prominent street down there.

EDWARD: Did Bill, and then you said that Bill spent time when he came ---

IRA: That was his headquarters.

EDWARD: He would stay with Ellis and Sam.

IRA: Yeah.

EDWARD: Because Sam was single.

Ira: Yeah.

EDWARD: Excuse me, Ellis was single.

IRA: Oh yeah.

EDWARD: Sam married Mary.

IRA: He married a straight English woman. She had been elite.

EDWARD: Did Bill ever have a house in the Willamette Valley?

IRA: None that I remember.

EDWARD: None.

IRA: Well see he went there when all three of the boys went up to Eastern Oregon, then he stayed there.

EDWARD: He stayed out there. Why do you think he stayed out there? Why was he the only one out of all those eight kids ----

IRA: Well I can tell you, when he was up there, see my mother, my father had been going with my mother before he went up there.

EDWARD: McArthur.

IRA: He would write back and forth. I would assume this, and I'm sure it's right, ... so she told him in no uncertain terms that she would not live in Eastern Oregon, no. In other words if he was interested in her he was going to have to come back to the valley, which he did.

EDWARD: Which he did.

IRA: He brought this \$12,500 back with him, and he built that house that's there today, you know where that is.

EDWARD: Do you know, Ira, your dad married McArthur, Maggie.

IRA: Yes. Her true name was Margaret.

EDWARD: Margaret I mean, in 19 ---, 1891.

IRA: Yes.

EDWARD: Was that house, that big house, your father's house ---

IRA: He took twenty, I say \$12,500, he give \$2,500 of that and built that house.

BOYD: \$2,500.

IRA: He built that house for \$2,500. And if you will notice, right across the road, a little

south ---

EDWARD: 1892 he married Margaret.

IRA: --- about five hundred yards is a duplicate of it, the same house.

BOYD: Is that right?

IRA: Yeah, those people name of Bradle (sp.?).

BOYD: Oh Bradles, I knew the Bradles.

IRA: Well that's, if you look at that house when you go by, look at it, and it's the same house.

BOYD: That's still there.

IRA: Yeah, they came across the road to see, and saw it, and they built.

EDWARD: Do you know for sure when your father, George Brown, built that house there north of Canby that we're talking about?

IRA: No, I don't know the year, no.

EDWARD: He did marry Margaret, your mom, in 1892. He came --- I think that George and Bob left Eastern Oregon, left Bill out there, in 1890.

IRA: At the same time, I don't remember what they did.

EDWARD: Because that winter of '89 and '90 ---

(END OF TAPE)]

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