

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #5 (No Tape)

Subject: Harry Clark

Place: Drewsey, Oregon

Date: April 20, 1972

Interviewer: Pauline Braymen

Release Form: No

(This is the first of three interviews with Harry Clark. The tape quality is too poor for intelligible listening. The following is a mixture of direct and indirect quotes.)

Harry Clark was born in Drewsey in 1887. He says he was the first child born in Drewsey and Cass Drinkwater was the second one.

"I was born in a little house just down the street there --- just a one room shack, and Mrs. Johnson acted as mid-wife for my mother, and the following year my mother acted as mid-wife for her in the same house."

"The winter of '89 and '90 was the year of the hard winter. It was really an equalizer. Nobody had any food at that time, you know, and along in February everything was nice and it looked like winter was over. But late in February another foot and a half of snow came, and that really fixed everybody. A lot of horses and cattle died."

Harry listed some of the early settlers of Drewsey:

Joe Lamb came in 1879.

AV-ORAL HISTORY #5; HARRY CLARK

William Moffet, called Grandpa Moffet, came in 1881. He settled where the Riley place is now.

The place was very swampy and boggy.

Jess Davis

Nettie Gearhart

Bill Ward (Ida Howard's father)

Charlie, Bob and Hank Ward

Criph Hepenstadt came in 1882 and settled at Van.

Kingsberry

Abner Robbins came in 1882 and he and Perrington established the store at Drewsey.

In reference to the story that Drewsey was at one time called Gouge Eye, Harry Clark feels that this was only a nickname as it was Drewsey at the time that he was born, and his parents considered naming him Drewsey. This was in 1887. Drewsey was supposedly the name of a sweetheart of Perrington. He said the gossip among the kids was that when Burns went to Harney and stole the county records, the people in Drewsey did not approve and had a few hard things to say about it. The Burns fellows decided to come over to Drewsey and teach them a lesson. The Drewsey cowboys really whipped the Burns fellows good, and when they went home (in rather bedraggled condition) they referred to Drewsey as Gouge Eye.

Gabe Rush, who came to Drewsey with Gearharts, is supposed to have put up the first shack in Drewsey. It was located across the corner from the store, and later it was converted to an oil house and it stood there for a long, long time.

Joe Altnow

O. J. Dorrist came in 1883.

Tom Howard

AV-ORAL HISTORY #5; HARRY CLARK

H. S. McGowan

Rudolph Muller came in 1883.

Ed Muller came in 1884.

August Muller came in 1884. His wife came in 1885. They were Harry Clark's wife's parents. The Mullers had sheep. Harry is particular that the umlaut over the "u" is used when spelling Muller.

Joe Sturtevant came in 1883 and settled on Pine Creek, on what is known as the Vanderveer place.

Tom Delany settled on the hill across from the Tom Howards.

William Fredericks settled in Otis Valley.

Bud Howard's folks lived by the Pine Creek Schoolhouse. There was a hot springs where people used to come to bathe and wash. The smaller brother of Bud Howard was bitten by a rattlesnake. Harry says they poured about a quart of whiskey down him and he probably died of the whiskey rather than the snakebite.

Joe Altnow's grandfather, while branding one day, was bitten on the finger. He stuck his finger in the branding fire and seared it off.

An Indian man, the grandfather of the Teeman's that live in Burns now, was bitten on the finger by a rattlesnake up by the Howard Place. He tied a string around his finger right where it fastened on to his hand and again at the wrist. He showed Harry the finger some time later and Harry says it was a terrible color. He had tied the strings and never loosened them. He didn't know whether the finger fell off or not, but supposed that this is what would have happened eventually.

Bud Howard went to races at Burns. He got into an argument with a fellow by the name of Til Glaze over a horse race. Later they were in a bar along with a fellow named Ed Parker. Glaze

AV-ORAL HISTORY #5; HARRY CLARK

shot and killed Howard, and so Parker killed Glaze. Glaze and Howard are buried at the Drewsey cemetery.

Some more old pioneers, Turkey Johnson and Truthful Johnson, came in 1884. The Johnson family was very colorful with their nicknames, and later there was a "Stuttering" Johnson and "Cordwood" Johnson.

Cordwood Johnson was out chopping cordwood. When he came in for supper he reported that there was a cougar in the area. When asked if he saw it he said no, but he heard it. "What did it sound like?" they asked. "Well, it sounded just like a woman in disgrace."

McDowell was one of the first people to run a saloon. It was on the corner across from the store.

Del Overton settled on Stinkingwater.

Jim Anderson settled on what is now known as the Larson Place.

Ed Keeney

Kimballs settled on what is known as the Miler Place. Kimball Flat was named for them.

I. M. Hamilton settled near the Pine Creek Schoolhouse and later ran a livery stable in Drewsey.

Morgan and Potts settled on the Upper Calamity.

Mitchell on his way from Silvie's Valley to Drewsey, decided to stay all night with Potts. When he got there, the house was all shut up and inside were Potts dog and Potts sitting in the chair dead. He had shot himself. Evidence later showed that he had used up all his ammunition target practicing from the porch front steps. Tracks in the snow showed where he had walked out to the tree he was shooting at to see where he hit. Empty shells were laying all around. When all the ammunition was gone but one bullet, he went into the house and shot himself.

AV-ORAL HISTORY #5; HARRY CLARK

A fellow by the name of Daley run the Drewsey store. It was really hard times and no one had any money. Daley gave ranchers and homesteader's credit, taking a mortgage to cover the debts. A fellow by the name of Heath run the newspaper and he printed the following story about Daley:

Heath said he had dreamed that he had died and gone to hell. When he met the devil he noticed a big tub turned upside down on the floor. He asked the devil what was under the tub, and the devil said, "Don't turn that over, you'll let Daley out and he'll have a mortgage on all hell in ten minutes time."

Heath's newspaper was called "The Western Ways". He went to Burns for a while. When he came back he started "The Pioneer Sun". Later Ed Beede became the editor of this newspaper. (Roy Beede's father.)

Another story about Heath is: Heath took his children and went to Vale to see the train come in. When the train opened up its whistle the kids scattered everywhere. It took a week to round them all up out of the sagebrush, Heath told. "They scattered like a bunch of young quail."

Sam, Dave and Henen Miller settled in the Pine Creek neighborhood. They killed the last grizzly bear in the Drewsey area. The dogs had the bear cornered in the brush. The bear crawled out of the thick brush and saw the men. He charged at them, but they were good shots and shot and killed the bear. This happened sometime in the 1890's.

The last Cinnamon bear killed around Drewsey was killed by Gene Dripps' dad about 1910 or 1912.

Ned Duncan settled where Lee Williams now lives.

Jack and John McMullens settled in the neighborhood where Glenn Sitz now lives.

Burt Dunten

AV-ORAL HISTORY #5; HARRY CLARK

Yarnold Gulch was named for some people by this name who settled in the area.

Another story of a settler: There was a widow who lived on a place that was some real good bottomland. This place was known as "The widow's bottom".

Clark thinks a man by the name of Rutherford was the first postmaster of Drewsey, although this is in conflict with other information.

Harry's mother was the postmaster of Drewsey for 25 or 30 years.

Harry's father was Moses Richard Clark and his mother was Hannah Jane Davis Clark. They were separated when Harry was about three years old, and he doesn't remember too much about his father. His mother lived with some friends at Van for a while, and was postmaster of the Van post office before she came to Drewsey.

Fred Bliss was the first postmaster of Van. He lived by the "big rock" by the river. Harry thinks Van may have been named for a settler by the name of Van Middlesworth.

Harry's mother's family, the Davis family, came from Missouri in 1883. She met Harry's father in California. The Davis family settled in Lakeview. Harry's parents came to Drewsey. Harry's sister was born on Duck Creek. Ida Howard was born on Duck Creek.

FREIGHTER KILLED ON SAGEBRUSH FLAT.

Someone laid for the freighter on Sagebrush Flat. He killed the freighter named Bright and drug him with his horse and threw him over a rimrock. Brodie Johnson was the deputy sheriff from Grant County. He arrested an Indian by the name of Buckaroo Jim for the killing. Buckaroo Jim and his parents were living at Juntura. Brodie went into the home and the bulldog that belonged to the Indians grabbed him by the leg. The father tried to get the bulldog away, and Brodie shot and killed both the bulldog and the father.

At the trial, evidence showed that the freighter was killed by a left-handed person.

AV-ORAL HISTORY #5; HARRY CLARK

Buckaroo Jim was not left handed and could not have done the killing, and was released. Although the real killer was suspected and known to the community, no one was ever convicted for the murder.

Another story: A fellow by the name of March came into town to get his mail. This was when Rutherford was postmaster. One of the Rutherford girls asked him what his name was, and it took him by surprise and he said, "I'll --- I'll have to go down town and find out."

Humphrey Ward lived by the Grange Hall --- this is where Harry Clark lives now.

McDonald and Altnow run saloons in Drewsey.

Some interesting names in the Drewsey area: Dead Horse Basin; Pierpoint Springs --- used to be called Tamarack Springs; Blue Bucket Creek, used to be called Sagehen. The Forest Service changed these names.

John Ott Mill was a sawmill in the area, and there was also a mill on the other side of Altnows.

Bob Moffet and Elmer Drewitt had a mill above Drewsey. They dug a ditch, still there today, to get water from the river to run the mill, but they never got water through to the mill. But they did run the mill for a short while with a motor.

Sam Jenkins had the first thresher.

Some doctors in Drewsey were Dr. Loggan, and Dr. Marsden before he moved into Burns, Dr. Stanley, and ...

Cora Bartlett run the hotel --- her son Curt became a doctor.

Several people were killed in horse accidents. A fellow by the name of Pauten was killed when a horse fell with him. Lou Olsen, Dave Miller, and Babe Arnold were all killed when horses bucked them off. Lou Olsen was out riding alone. When they found him he was still alive. He

AV-ORAL HISTORY #5; HARRY CLARK

said, "Horse bucked me off," and then he died.

Harry's sister is Maude Ethel and she married Curt Bartlett. Harry worked at the Drewsey store in about 1909. He was married to Emma Muller, and they had two children, Norma Miler and George (Laddie) Clark. Emma was a registered nurse. She became ill and spent many years in the hospital before her death.

Harry says that things have developed a long way during his lifetime. Take haying: First they used the scythe; then a mowing machine; then binder with two men to follow and tie; then steam came to run the thresher; then came the header combine; then the swather. The first haystacks were made by bunching the hay, hauling it and stacking it by hand. Then came the demick, the slide and net, the baler and now the hay compressor (cuber).

When Harry was a young man he had a narrow escape with death. He was working for Drewitt's sawmill. They were bringing logs down the middle fork of the Malheur River. There was a dam to back the water into a pond. The logs piled up there and caused a jam. They were afraid to use powder to break the jam. For some reason Harry started across the dam to the other side just as the logs broke through the dam, and Harry was dumped into the water. Hundred of logs washed over him, and the men on the bank thought he was a goner for sure. But after the logs passed on down the river, Harry was still afloat and they fished him out of the water with great relief. That night around the campfire things were pretty quiet. All the men, including Harry had been badly frightened. One of the fellows told Harry, "A man's born to hang'll never drown."

Harry remembers hearing of another time they decided to run logs down the river. The river is treacherous and swift and it is quite a chore to do this. This was in 1885 when Jimmy Capps dad and uncle, C. F. McKinney at Milldale, decided to run logs down the river two miles. The Capps boys cut the logs loose and the logs jammed up and stayed there for years. Every so often a log

AV-ORAL HISTORY #5; HARRY CLARK

would break loose and come on down the river. Logs are scattered all over the fields and haven't disappeared yet. Harry remembers fishing there as a boy.

A buckaroo story: The buckaroo boss, a rather rude and noisy man, enjoyed the cooks beans and then decided he would feel a whole lot better if he relieved himself of some gas. The cook, after feeding the rest of the crew, had just sat down to eat when the Boss let go. "I don't think too much of a man that would do such a thing when someone else is eating," the cook said. "I think even less of a man that would eat when someone else did such a thing," the boss retorted.

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