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HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #67 - Side B

Subject: Bill Lane

Place: Lakeview, Oregon

Date: June 24, 1992

Interviewer: Edward Gray

Release Form: No

EDWARD GRAY: This is Edward Gray with Bill Lane, June 24th, 1992, in Lakeview, Oregon. Bill, you were born in 1920.

BILL LANE: In Summer Lake, Oregon.

EDWARD: Summer Lake. And you --- who was your father?

BILL: James Lane.

EDWARD: And James was around Silver Lake, Summer Lake for a long time?

BILL: Yeah, he was, I think he was born at Springfield. And my grandmother, my grandfather settled Silver Lake in 1872.

EDWARD: And who was your grandfather?

BILL: Andrew V. Lane.

EDWARD: 1872?

BILL: Uh huh. And they had a fellow name of Yank Sullivan. And my grandfather, I think, passed away when he was about 44. And there were two boys, my dad James Lane, and my uncle William Lane, and my Aunt Bernice Rollins, her married name. I don't know what years they were born; they are on the tombstone. But then my dad was blind; he punctured his eye when he was about 5 years old. And then he ranched there at Summer Lake.

EDWARD: Was there a Payne?

BILL: There was a Frank Payne that was a cousin of my dad's and mom's.

EDWARD: Florence Payne married Frank Dobkins.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: And wasn't her father blind?

BILL: I don't know.

EDWARD: Or did I get them mixed up?

BILL: I don't know, I don't remember that.

EDWARD: Your mother, when was your mother born, Myrtle?

BILL: I think about, I think around, well my God I really don't know, Ed. I'd say about 19--- of course I think she died --- I think she was about 61 or 62 when she passed away.

EDWARD: What year was that do you know?

BILL: Oh, it would be in the '60's. She was living at Warrenton, Oregon when she passed away.

EDWARD: What in the heck did she go to Warrenton for?

BILL: Well, she got in the real estate business down around Astoria, and in there.

EDWARD: What was her maiden name?

BILL: Sorenson.

EDWARD: Myrtle Sorenson Lane Dobkins.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: Did she get married after Frank was ---

BILL: She was married about three or four times after Frank. Like I used to tell the kids, I didn't know what my name was. I used to tell my cousin at Silver Lake ---

EDWARD: Oops.

BILL: Yeah. But ---

EDWARD: She --- okay. She died in the 60's.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: In Warrenton.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: Is she buried in Warrenton?

BILL: No, she is buried in Portland.

EDWARD: In Portland. I'll try to find her obituary.

BILL: Yeah, okay.

EDWARD: Now she married Jim Lane, your father, about when, do you know?

BILL: God, I don't. I --- I'd say probably, well let's see my oldest brother was born in 1918, so probably along in '15, '16, along in there sometime.

EDWARD: What kind of lady was Myrtle?

BILL: My mother?

EDWARD: Yeah, your mom, yeah, your mother.

BILL: She was a remarkable person. She was --- we had, there was the three boys, my twin brother and I, and my older brother. And she was a remarkable person. The only thing is, when we got into that deal out in Wagontire, why I left with some hard feelings on the thing. Because I was supposed to take over, you know, work into the ranch and that didn't materialize. I worked my butt off there for about a year and a half. And then when she sold out why I just said the hell with it.

EDWARD: Did --- now when did your father pass away, Jim Lane?

BILL: He, God, in the '50's, I think.

EDWARD: '50's.

BILL: Yeah. God I was just up there at the, at Memorial Day too. Because I think I was running the ranch, I was running three ranches over in Nevada, I think, when he passed away.

EDWARD: So, Myrtle Sorenson Lane got divorced from Jim Lane?

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: Oh, I see, I see.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: Do you know approximately when that divorce was?

BILL: Well, let's see, I was about, it would be about 1935 or '36, I think.

EDWARD: Okay.

BILL: And I don't know --- see my dad, by education, why he was a lawyer, he was an attorney. And he graduated from law school at the University of Tennessee, I think in 19--- But anyway he wasn't --- when he came back to Oregon, he wasn't old --- he was only 19 or 20 years old. He had to wait until he was 21 to take his bar exam, see. And he was quite a remarkable person. Of course, like I say why ---

EDWARD: He must have been a pretty sharp guy.

BILL: He was, he had a mind that was just out of this world. And my older brother took after him, Donel Lane; he was into water resource. He wrote practically all the water laws in the State of Oregon.

EDWARD: Wow. Some families are like that, you know.

BILL: I was the dummy of the bunch.

EDWARD: Oh, I doubt it.

BILL: I got bucked off on my head, started in running ranches.

EDWARD: When --- okay Myrtle, your mom, got divorced from Jim Lane in '35, '36.

BILL: Yeah, '36 along in there.

EDWARD: When how did she meet Frank Dobkins, do you know?

BILL: Well, of course she, they lived out at Summer Lake for a number of years, and then they moved down to the valley. And so probably --- but how it came up in later years I don't know. Because, you know, a small community like that why everybody knew everybody in that part of the, around Silver Lake and Summer Lake. But I don't know, I don't know what the connection, how --- Hollie might know more about that than I would, Hollie Schroder.

EDWARD: Yeah, talked to him.

BILL: But I don't know, I don't know.

EDWARD: It's not real important, I just kind of wondered.

BILL: Yeah, I don't know.

EDWARD: Now when did Frank Dobkins --- he divorced Florence, oh I can't remember her maiden name.

BILL: Schroder.

EDWARD: Florence Schroder Dobkins. He divorced ---

BILL: I don't know when they got divorced.

EDWARD: Yeah, they broke up. Do you know when Frank and your mom, Myrtle, were married, and where?

BILL: Well, they, see they had only been married about a month when Frank got killed, or along, you know, six weeks or a month, something like that. And I don't know where they got married, whether it was Reno, or where they got married, Ed.

EDWARD: There is no record of it in Oregon.

BILL: Yeah, yeah.

EDWARD: I think they got married ---

BILL: In Reno.

EDWARD: Now getting down to the kind of, the tougher stuff, I guess. Well, first of all you mentioned you talked --- when did you go out to Wagontire?

BILL: Well, shortly after --- see I was at the Lane Ranch in Silver Lake, and my mother --- I was working there for my Uncle Bill Lane. And my mother came to see him about what she could do with that ranch, you know, and get some advice. And so, you know, I was, I don't know, 17, 18, I wasn't through high school yet. Maybe 19--- I forget what year it was. And he said, well give me a chance at it, see. And so that's how I, that's when I went out to Wagontire.

EDWARD: That was probably 1940?

BILL: '39 or '40.

EDWARD: Was it after Frank's death?

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: Frank was murdered May 20th, 1939.

BILL: Well, it was in the spring of '39.

EDWARD: Okay. Now you said in your letters to me that you talked to Link Hutton quite a bit.

BILL: Oh yeah, uh huh.

EDWARD: What did he tell you about the early days of Wagontire that you can recall?

BILL: Well, he was telling about, oh how they used to go from the Whitehouse, you know, and go towards Iron Mountain. And he was just a kidding me, said they'd come back there with ten or twelve cowboys and have all the wild horses they could handle, you know, and that sort of thing. You know I was kind of interested, you know, as a kid. But --- and he never mentioned anything about Frank, or animosity they had over the years, or their lawsuits or anything, you know. And we didn't, you know, didn't visit every day or every week, you know, but we'd run into them on the road or something like that. But he was pretty coyote, I mean you'd go by the house a horseback, like we'd go from the Whitehouse to the Burnt House, why you'd see the drapes pulled in, in that two-story house that they lived in.

EDWARD: You're the fourth person that has said that.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: They remember that.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: They'd go by that lane out there, that road, track, whatever you want to call it, two-rut road. And they'd say, pull back, always looking.

BILL: Yeah, yeah. But that's --- I probably had more conversations with Link than I ever did with Jim Sutherland. And, because I, you know, I was getting --- and he'd tell about the old days and what they did, and one thing and another. But ---

EDWARD: Did Link Hutton ever talk about Bill Brown?

BILL: Well, he talked about the horses they --- I guess the, I think they had, oh like any, you know,

open range like that, I think maybe some of their horses kind of intermingled or something. And I can't recall just exactly what it was. But maybe Brown would run some of their horses, or vice versa.

EDWARD: Did Link ever mention about hauling wool for Bill Brown?

BILL: No, huh uh, he never did talk about the sheep or anything.

EDWARD: Did he say anything about the old Whitehouse Ranch?

BILL: Not, not that I, not that I can recall. Only, you know, that --- well that he was there when he was, when he was a boy, you know. And how many years ago that was, I don't know.

EDWARD: He was, been 12 years old when they came there.

BILL: Yeah, uh huh. Because I know he said that he was, that he was pretty young. But how long they stayed there or owned it, I don't know.

EDWARD: Sam Hutton died in 1912, and Caroline in 1915 or '16.

BILL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: And that house, that big old white house, huge, was built in 1890.

BILL: Yeah. Was it?

EDWARD: 1889 and '90. What, you were in Link Hutton's house in 1939 probably.

BILL: No, I never did go in the house.

EDWARD: Oh, you never did go in the house.

BILL: No, didn't go in the house.

EDWARD: Oh. Did he ever point out to you where he shot Bradley?

BILL: Bradley, no, no. Only thing is that just from what Homer Carlon tells, you know, about general location and that's about all I can remember.

EDWARD: And when you were there at the Link Hutton place, he had his house. I've got a picture I'm going to show you of that. And he had a little barn, and a shed.

BILL: Yeah, I think there were some sheds or something.

EDWARD: And a shop.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: That's all gone now.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: The house is standing; it's in bad shape.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: What about Jim Sutherland?

BILL: I didn't, I didn't, oh once or twice why --- of course see about that time why it was pretty coyote out there, you know. And like we'd, Hollie and Burt and I'd be, we'd be out there riding or something, you'd see somebody up on the high point and around, and in fact is we --- Homer told us, he said, "Well, you guys better put your scabbards on." So, we packed rifles there for that one spring, you know. Because we didn't know what the hell the repercussion was going to be. And it was, you know, you'd see somebody off there in the distance, but, you know, nothing happened or anything.

EDWARD: That was the last, the end of the feuds on Wagontire.

BILL: Yeah, yeah.

EDWARD: Punk Robertson, you ever hear of him?

BILL: Yeah. I was trying to recall the name now. I've heard the name.

EDWARD: He must have been, he was put in the state pen two or three times. One time I know for sure, for larceny of a horse.

BILL: Yeah, I've heard the name. I don't, I can't --- I can't recall meeting him.

EDWARD: What about Harry Arnold?

BILL: Well, we'd run into Harry every once in awhile, you know, like when we'd be going over on the other side of the mountain or something like that. Of course, see we, our philosophy on the thing, with Hollie and Burt, was --- of course Homer was, he was real hotheaded, you know. And we said, "Well, by God until they do something to us, we're going to try to get along, see." I mean we're a new breed, and we didn't go around there with a chip on our shoulder trying to pick up,

because we knew it would just, it would hurt, just plumb asinine. The only things that made any money were the lawyers. Because Hutton and Dobkins didn't make any money. Every time they'd get a little money ahead, well then, they'd get into some kind of a range argument, or a water deal or something, and of course that water thing was blown clear out of proportion. But we went, were out there just to try to make a living and get along with everybody.

EDWARD: Link, do you think Link Hutton put James Burk up to shooting Dobkins?

BILL: I don't, I don't know. I don't, I really don't know the background on it. I know Frank was, from what I heard why he had a hell of a temper too. And what transpired, and why --- but I think Burk came in there to run some horses with Harry Arnold or something.

EDWARD: Yeah, yeah, and they got it. He came in from --- James Burk, he was 14 years old, and he stole some horses and was sent to the state reformatory. And he broke out of jail, shot at a deputy sheriff at 14 years old. They put him in for five years, got out. And in 1925 he shot a deputy sheriff in Klamath County. They put him back in the state pen for ten years. He got out in 1935, went to Arlington. Went to Wagontire because he knew Punk Robertson, and Harry Arnold somehow.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: And started running the remnants of Bill Brown's horses, the Horseshoe Bar, you know.

BILL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: And he leased the Addington place. And I guess he was a crazy guy.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: And him and Dobkins got into it, I guess, quite a bit.

BILL: Yeah. They, that's, that was my understanding. Of course, the only time I ever saw Burk was when he had that trial in Burns, you know. That's the only time I ever saw him.

EDWARD: You went to that trial?

BILL: Yeah, uh huh.

EDWARD: What was that like, Bill?

BILL: Oh, it was --- you know they brought out all this evidence, what the hell --- What I recall was that 22 of the previous 27 years he'd been in prison, or something, you know.

EDWARD: Yeah.

BILL: Some of those things that highlight. And then, oh the testimony of Homer and Harry Arnold, and how --- Of course Frank was packing that 38, or whatever it was on his, on the fork of his saddle, you know. And --- but if it hadn't been for mother hiring Herb Welch, why Burk would have got off. He'd of --- see he'd of proved self-defense.

EDWARD: Whatever happened to Herb Welch, do you know?

BILL: He died here in Lakeview; I think.

EDWARD: He did?

BILL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: I can't find any records of his; I wished I could.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: Because he dealt with Dobkins a lot.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: What do you think happened, the reason that Dobkins was shot, murdered, by old Burk? You got any theories on that, Bill?

BILL: Only thing I know is what Homer related, you know.

EDWARD: What did he tell you?

BILL: Well, it's when they went up there why, let's see there was somebody else, I think --- wasn't there somebody else with Harry Arnold?

EDWARD: Harry Arnold and James Burk, and Homer and Frank.

BILL: Yeah, that's right, Burk was there. Well, anyway I guess when they rode up there, according to Homer, why they were talking and I guess Frank accused him of running his horses, you know running his horses off of Egli Rim. Using Frank's horses to ... some wild horses, you know. So

anyway, why Homer said that --- I forget what the conversation was now. But anyway, Burk jumped his horse into Frank, and he thought he was going to romal him, you know.

EDWARD: Now what does that mean?

BILL: Well, that's a, on a bridle reins, there's a --- rawhide reins when they have what they call romal, it's about 3 feet long and usually has a bat about that wide, you know. And thought he was going to hit him. So Frank was riding a fairly young horse, and anyway why he thought he was going to romal him, and that's when Burk brought up the gun and shot him, and that's when he hit him down low. And Frank bent over like that, and --- But it was over the using of Frank's horses ... them.

EDWARD: Was Homer ever scared of Burk?

BILL: I don't think Homer was scared of anybody.

EDWARD: Pretty tough guy?

BILL: Yeah. But like we talked afterwards, why in the hell, why Burk didn't shoot Homer too, he didn't ---

EDWARD: Yeah.

BILL: --- you know that's what they can't, they couldn't figure out why in the hell he didn't shoot him.

EDWARD: Now Homer, I mean Frank was carrying a pistol.

BILL: Yeah, he had a pistol on his ---

EDWARD: Saddle?

BILL: --- on his saddle, right on, like the horns here, right on the fork of his saddle, tied down, and it was buckled down. And then of course the evidence came out that the scabbard was unbuckled, it just had a, you know, a tongue and groove, you know, just like a belt buckle. And they claimed that that was, that Frank was reaching for his gun, and that's why Burk shot him.

EDWARD: Did you ever know what happened to Frank Dobkins' gun he had on that saddle that day?

BILL: No, huh uh.

EDWARD: The gun that Burk shot Frank with is in the Harney County Museum.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: Yeah. Kind of strange.

BILL: I don't know what ever happened to it.

EDWARD: Be kind of interesting.

BILL: What happened to Frank's gun.

EDWARD: Did you mom ever talk, what did Myrtle say, your mother say about Frank Dobkins?

BILL: Not, I don't recall anything. You know, she seemed to be happy. We couldn't, I couldn't figure out what in the hell she was going out to the desert for, because she was raised down around Coburg, you know.

EDWARD: In Eugene?

BILL: Yeah, Harrisburg, in that area. And my Grandfather Sorenson had quite a bit of property down there, and they were from a large family. But I couldn't figure out what in the hell she was going out to the desert for, because that didn't typify --- because we had a nice home there in Corvallis. But whatever, you know, whatever her life was. I don't know whether Frank was going to --- he had sold quite a few cows and got out of debt, I'd heard. And whether they were going to stay on Wagontire, or travel, I don't know. I never did discuss it with Frank.

EDWARD: Did you, before I forget Bill, did you ever see Link Hutton's wife?

BILL: No.

EDWARD: Hattie May.

BILL: Not that I recall. I might have seen her in town or something like that.

EDWARD: But she wasn't out there?

BILL: I never saw her on the mountain.

EDWARD: I don't think she was either. That's what most people say.

BILL: No, I never saw her.

EDWARD: Link stayed out at Wagontire, and she stayed in town. Anything else about the Dobkins' murder that you can recall?

BILL: No, no. The only thing is, I think there was, I think what kind of started the thing --- why you probably heard about the conversation that he had, that he was going to --- if he ever caught Burk --- I don't know whether he told that to Burk at the store or not. But anyway, he was going to piss on a rawhide rope and whip him off of Wagontire, you know, if he ever caught him moving any of his horses again. Now whether that, whether Burk was there or not I --- I think he was, I think they ran into the store, ran into each other at the store.

EDWARD: Have you ever been over to Harry Arnold's place?

BILL: Went by it.

EDWARD: By it.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: You know the cabin is still standing.

BILL: Yeah, I've just been by it.

EDWARD: Still there. Yeah, and I got some stuff out of there I'll show you. What about America Sutherland, ever meet her?

BILL: I met her, uh huh.

EDWARD: Pretty hard woman?

BILL: Well, as I recall, no. I mean, you know, it wasn't, it was just, you know, just see them in town or when we went by, or something like that.

EDWARD: Well, why do you think --- back to Link Hutton, do you think people were scared of Link Hutton? Or what the ---

BILL: I don't know. We --- I wasn't scared of him. Of course, we didn't, when we were out there we'd see somebody we didn't know who it was, see. And we knew that Link wasn't out riding, and we didn't know whether they brought in some more, somebody else or something, or whether they were after Homer or what, we didn't know. But I mean we were --- and Jack St. Clair worked for

Carlton's, and he rode with us quite a bit. But we were leery, I mean, because we hadn't caused any trouble, and we didn't know what was going to happen, you know.

EDWARD: I think they were kind of just pooped out with it all by the time you ---

BILL: Yeah, yeah.

EDWARD: You know there were five murders on Wagontire.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: Well just a few other things. What about fencing on Wagontire? When you were there in '39 and '40, was there a lot of fences up?

BILL: Not too much, not too much. It was, I was just trying --- because they had that, where we had that stock driveway that went between that field that Burt and Harold, and then Harry Arnold's deal, and then Sutherland lived down, you know down along the ...

EDWARD: Yeah, down below.

BILL: But no, there wasn't a predominant of fences that they have in there now. Because the grazing system was, well in fact is in Burns I think there were two people. I think there was a district manager and one guy, and that was the BLM at that time.

EDWARD: So, there was, the fencing out there is just all over the place now.

BILL: Yeah, well they divided a lot of that, you know, up.

EDWARD: But there wasn't a lot of fences?

BILL: No, no, huh uh.

EDWARD: Do you know where the gate is that Dobkins was murdered?

BILL: I've been by it, yeah.

EDWARD: Yeah. That's that stock driveway.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: That was the old Couch Field.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: Charlie Couch.

BILL: Yeah, I've heard of him too.

EDWARD: Oh boy, what a cowboy.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: Buckaroo up to the max. Did you know that a hundred yards from that gate, downhill, is where Bill Brown shot and killed John Overstreet?

BILL: No, I'd never heard of that.

EDWARD: Yeah.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: A hundred yards from that gate.

BILL: I'll be damned.

EDWARD: Isn't that a mind boggler?

BILL: Yeah, I'll be darned.

EDWARD: April 9th, 1886, at 5 o'clock in the afternoon.

BILL: Yeah. Of course, I've never, you know, I've never --- about Bill Brown. But, you know, but the guys that worked for him and, you know, and the horses, and the sheep and that, like that. But I never, in fact is I never heard of that.

EDWARD: How many cattle do you think Dobkins had when he was murdered?

BILL: I think about 250, 300 head, something like that.

EDWARD: You're right on; you hit it.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: I got his probate record here.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: He had 75 head of range cattle, 43 head of range horses. I think somebody stole some of them. (Laughter) And he --- who did this. Homer Carlon, Jack St. Clair, and Hollie Schroder did this pro --- inventory and appraisal.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: 1939, that's Frank Dobkins, what he had when he died.

BILL: Yeah, uh huh.

EDWARD: Interesting. Okay. When you went to Wagontire, where was --- was Dobkins staying at the Burnt House place?

BILL: Yes, uh huh.

EDWARD: What was at the Burnt House place? Well before I ask that, do you know who built --- that was the Comegys' place; did you ever hear of that?

BILL: I've heard of them, uh huh.

EDWARD: Okay. There used to be a bigger house there, and it burnt down evidently.

BILL: Evidently, that's why they called it the Burnt House.

EDWARD: Yeah. And so, they --- and these beautiful apples trees right there, you know. I shot a porcupine in a tree last year, summer. Anyway, what was there when you went there, Bill?

BILL: Well, they had a cabin, and a woodshed, like this is the road and you came in --- and the cabin. And I think there was kind of a woodshed or a garage, and then like you say the apple trees. And then you went out and the spring was piped into the corrals there. And there was, there was, was it one or two sheds there, I forget which now, maybe one. Then there was kind of a horse-breaking corral there, kind of a stockade type corral. And then I think another smaller corral.

EDWARD: That little house in amongst the apple trees, is that where Frank Dobkins stayed?

BILL: Yeah, that little two-room, three-room cabin.

EDWARD: Cabin.

BILL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: That cabin, Austa Carlon said that Frank pulled that over from the Donovan place from down in the flat, down below.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: Because that other house had burnt down. Now he got this property, the Burnt House property, in 1919 from Comegys. Now when he went to Wagontire, I don't know.

BILL: I don't know either. Hollie would probably know because I don't know when he left Silver Lake. Because my uncle, I think, bought the property that he had there. Because the house that my cousin lived in awhile --- it was the Dobkins' house that just joined them, and they moved it over.

EDWARD: The William Dobkins?

BILL: Well, no, the Frank Dobkins' place.

EDWARD: Oh God. You know where the William Dobkins' place is in Paisley?

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: Oh no, where was Frank's place?

BILL: In Paisley?

EDWARD: Yeah.

BILL: I don't know.

EDWARD: Oh, oh.

BILL: I don't know. This was at Silver Lake.

EDWARD: Oh, Frank had a place at Silver Lake?

BILL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Do you know where that is?

BILL: Yeah, it's right; it would be about directly east of the Lane Ranch there. It was an adjoining field.

EDWARD: Oh, the house is probably gone.

BILL: Yeah, well they moved the house. He built a house there when he was married to ---

EDWARD: Florence?

BILL: --- to Florence, uh huh.

EDWARD: Shoot, I didn't know that.

BILL: Yeah, well Neva could tell you. She could tell you what, all about what year that Frank left Silver Lake.

EDWARD: God dang it. Here is a map, I don't know whether I sent that to you or not, Bill.

BILL: Yeah, yeah.

EDWARD: This is directly north --- was that pretty close when you were there?

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: There is the apple trees, the road, the little cabin, the sheds, and there was a horse chute there.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: And here comes that seasonal creek.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: Oh boy, I wished I would have known that. Doggone, I would have asked Neva about that, Frank Dobkins out there at Silver Lake. I didn't know that. Did your mother, or --- you met Frank didn't you?

BILL: No, no.

EDWARD: You never did?

BILL: I, only when I was a kid.

EDWARD: Oh.

BILL: Yeah, yeah. No, I never met; after I was grown, I never did meet Frank that I can recall.

EDWARD: Okay. Did your mom ever say that Frank was going to sell out and leave?

BILL: I don't know, I can't recall of anything like that. I just couldn't figure out what in the hell she was going out to Wagontire for.

EDWARD: I don't know either.

BILL: Yeah, that's what I ---

EDWARD: Well mom, what in the hell are you doing out there? (Laughter)

BILL: Yeah, yeah, you know, I mean because I mean she was raised in the valley, and like --- that's why --- Well, of course my dad went broke in the '20's, and that's why we moved back. And then he resumed his law practice and had a credit bureau there in Corvallis. And she figured that the three of us boys, why we could get a better education, went through part of our grade school, and I

graduated from high school in Corvallis. And my two brothers went to Oregon State.

EDWARD: Huh. I don't know what in gods name you guys ...

BILL: Well, I couldn't figure, I couldn't --- of course that's --- she just wasn't that type to, you know, I mean, you know, she wasn't a, she wasn't one to get on a horse or anything like that, you know. And she was a wonderful cook, and housekeeper, but ---

EDWARD: Here in a little puny cabin out in the middle of nowhere.

BILL: Yeah, yeah. And we had a hell of a nice home there on 9th street in Corvallis.

EDWARD: What was in that, what was in that cabin, Bill, the Burnt House place, Dobkins' place?

BILL: Well, there was a, I think they built kind of a lean-to on it, it was kind of the kitchen and had water, you know, piped into it.

EDWARD: Oh, it did?

BILL: In a sink, you know, I mean from the spring.

EDWARD: The spring was way up the hill.

BILL: Yeah, way up. Yeah, but it was piped in up there. In fact, this one time the damn spring quit so Hollie and I went up and started digging it up, you know, and by god we found a big old mouse in there plugged the pipe. He said Jesus Christ don't tell Bub that, he said, goddamn she'll be puking for a month.

EDWARD: Oh gee, oh yeah.

BILL: So, we never, we just told her that it had a bunch of weeds and stuff in there, in the spring.

EDWARD: I --- that spring is not even running out there.

BILL: Yeah, I wouldn't doubt it.

EDWARD: Okay, they had a little kitchen, one bedroom?

BILL: Yeah, one bedroom. Then there was kind of a little, kind of a, oh I think that is about all there was to the damn thing. There might have been a little, a small living room if I remember. I don't remember now. I think this kind of a kitchen and dining room were kind of combined, as I remember. Then the bedroom was off of it.

EDWARD: We're not talking very big either.

BILL: No, no, no, no, heck no, it wasn't very big.

EDWARD: About the size of your living room probably.

BILL: Yeah. So then when Hollie and Bub got married, why I told them to come on up there, because they were staying down at the Addington place, you know. Because we had water and everything there. But ---

EDWARD: Do you remember, recall that little shed out there in the corral? There was a shed, had a door and one window.

BILL: Yeah, I was just trying to think, because I know the shed. The reason I recall about the shed because we used to poach a couple, three antelope, you know. Homer and I, we'd split it, they'd give me a piece of it.

EDWARD: Oh yeah.

BILL: That's where I'd keep it. We had some hay in there, and a tarp, you know, and it was kind of, the only place to keep it cool.

EDWARD: God, Bill, I saw probably a 100 head of antelope there last summer.

BILL: Yeah, oh yeah.

EDWARD: Man, a million.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: And wild horses still there too. Another thing before I forgot, did you go to Dobkins' funeral at Paisley?

BILL: I don't know, I don't recall whether I did or not. I probably did, I probably did. I just assume that I did, because I was up at Silver Lake at the time, so I just assume that I did. I don't recall it.

EDWARD: Okay. You came, you came to Wagontire --- Frank Dobkins had in 1939, 2,400 acres. You came there after his death, right after ---

BILL: Right.

EDWARD: And Myrtle was still there.

BILL: She, she didn't stay there; she went back to the valley.

EDWARD: Okay.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: Myrtle went with Frank to Burns where he died.

BILL: Yeah, right. She was there. The fact is, yeah, she took him to the hospital.

EDWARD: Right.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: He wouldn't ride in Sutherland's car.

BILL: No, no, no.

EDWARD: He did for a short distance.

BILL: Yeah, I think they had something, and then --- And I think, if I recall, Ed, I think they had a new Mercury. And so, then she, and I think Homer went with them too, into Burns.

EDWARD: Dobkins had 2,400 acres, and you came there. Now then when you came after Frank's death, what did you do for a year?

BILL: Well, we put up the hay, and then I took the cattle down to, well after I put up --- he had some rye planted, and I put that hay up. And then the Schroder boys had a contract in at Paisley, at the ... brothers.

EDWARD: Uh huh.

BILL: And so, I broke some workhorses, and so I took, I think, twelve head of workhorses in to help Burt hay. Hollie was out there on the desert, and I went in there and helped Burt. And I got, what the hell was it I got, \$1.50 a day a team, I think, or something like that. And then Burt paid me \$2.50 because I'd do everything. This stacker would quit, why then I'd split wood for the cook, and --- But anyway I broke those, took those horses in, and then went back ... and we went back out and gathered the cattle, and then went down to The Narrows. We wintered down there at The Narrows.

EDWARD: Wintered the cattle?

BILL: Yeah, yeah, he had a field. Frank had been wintering down there on the bird reserve.

EDWARD: Yeah, with Haines.

BILL: Yeah, Myrtle Haines, Myrtle Caldwell.

EDWARD: Yeah, right, right. Oh, did Hutton have much; did Hutton have very many cattle out there?

BILL: Not at that time. I don't know whether he had any or not, Ed. I don't think they had. They might have had a few, but not very ---

EDWARD: Very few.

BILL: But I don't think they turned them out, I don't know.

EDWARD: What was Sutherland doing out there?

BILL: I don't recall now. I don't ---

EDWARD: America ---

BILL: Yeah. I don't know.

EDWARD: And then the Carlon's moved into the Jackson house.

BILL: Yeah. See they were out there before.

EDWARD: Right, 1935, I think.

BILL: Yeah, they had been out there before.

EDWARD: And that Whitehouse just sat up there all by itself.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: Nobody hardly ever used it.

BILL: No, no.

EDWARD: Austa stayed there in 1934.

BILL: Did she?

EDWARD: I don't know.

BILL: But Austa would know, you know, she would know firsthand on any, on Homer's thinking, and what ---

EDWARD: Yeah. Oh yeah, I've talked to Austa quite a few times. She's neat.

BILL: You bet; she is a remarkable person.

EDWARD: 86, or something like that.

BILL: Yeah, uh huh.

EDWARD: Let's see --- and then there is some, kind of funny stuff going on here. These are claims. You know Dobkins was leasing the Couch field, I found this in Harry Arnold's cabin. Josephine Couch to Frank Dobkins, leasing all that Couch field. Now this is 1938.

BILL: I'll be darned.

EDWARD: See, now those fields weren't a hell of a lot, Bill, most of them were damn sagebrush.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: But this is, this I found in Harry Arnold's cabin.

BILL: I'll be darned.

EDWARD: Okay, we'll try to straighten this out a little bit; maybe it will help. In 1919 Frank Dobkins bought that Comegys' place, that Burnt House place.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: When he went to Wagontire to actually live, I don't know.

BILL: Yeah, I don't know either.

EDWARD: Because I don't think this Florence was ever on Wagontire.

BILL: No, no I don't think so. Because I think, well Hollie --- I don't, I don't, I don't know. Because see I'd go to school in Corvallis, then I'd come out and spend my Christmas vacation and summer at Silver Lake.

EDWARD: Summer. Nobody has ever mentioned --- Florence and Frank got divorced in the early '30's, but she was never --- He may have just stayed in Silver Lake until --- until 1925, Slivers Emery and Clarence Woodard went together and bought the old Whitehouse Ranch. All this in black.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: Which amounted to 1,280 acres. That was the old Sam and Caroline Hutton place, the big two-story house. Well, Clarence Woodard fell in love with Leona Hutton. He was the one messing around with Leona. Harold Bradley didn't have nothing to do with it.

BILL: Yeah, that's what I heard. I mean I heard it.

EDWARD: Leona and Clarence got married in Arizona in 1927. She died in 1958, and he died in 1964. Anyway, after Harold Bradley's death, murdered by Link Hutton, December 29th, 1925. Clarence had run off with Leona.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: They fled Wagontire, I don't want; yeah, I don't want nothing to do with it. So, Slivers Emery was stuck with it. He sold it to Frank Dobkins, that's how Dobkins ended up with it ---

BILL: Oh.

EDWARD: --- in 1926. But Frank, wasn't Frank's money, it was his father's money.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: Did you ever meet Frank Dobkins' mother?

BILL: I, no I don't. I met his sister; she lived down at Lake City.

EDWARD: Right, Georgia.

BILL: Yeah, yeah, I met her. Of course, my wife was raised in Paisley.

EDWARD: Did you know that Dobkins had another sister, Emma?

BILL: I don't recall another one.

EDWARD: She was born in 1880, and died in Lane County, March 2nd, 1910.

BILL: No.

EDWARD: There isn't a damn thing about her in the paper. And I've been told she committed suicide because Ray B. Jackson had raped her.

BILL: Oh. If ... mother was alive, because see she lived to be 93, and she could, she was born in Paisley, she could have, she could tell all of it. She knew everything about Paisley.

EDWARD: So anyway, Dobkins ends up with these 1,280 acres. Now the Dobkins, Burnt House

place is --- oh, were Ray Jackson and Frank Dobkins friends, do you know?

BILL: I don't know, I don't know. You see, because you'd have to ask Austa, Austa would know the answer to that. Because see I had no connection to Wagontire whatsoever until, after Frank got killed.

EDWARD: Okay. This is the Burnt House place, and you can see Link Hutton's house is right --- this is Link Hutton's house right there. There is the Burnt House place.

BILL: Yeah, yeah.

EDWARD: And Frank Dobkins owned all this from Slivers Emery. Okay, but he never used the old Whitehouse.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: The house and the sheds and stuff were up there; I don't know why.

BILL: I don't know either, I don't know.

EDWARD: He preferred to stay down here in this little shack.

BILL: Yeah, I don't know, I don't know.

EDWARD: You can have that. Probably will make you mad.

BILL: Austa would probably, you know, would know the reason for that.

EDWARD: I don't know.

BILL: I don't know either.

EDWARD: Maybe the house was just too big for one guy.

BILL: Well, it could be, it could be. And then he didn't maybe want to be that close to Link ---

EDWARD: That's right.

BILL: --- you know. And then he was a little closer to Homer and Austa, you know, the Jackson place.

EDWARD: Yeah. Okay, so all this stuff goes on, and Frank ends up owning, I forgot, 2,400 acres. So, he gets killed. Well E. J. Dobkins, Mrs. E. J. Dobkins, this is going to break your heart Bill, I shouldn't bring up all this stuff, gave to your mom, Myrtle Lane Dobkins, that Whitehouse Ranch.

There was still money owed on it.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: For \$10.00. This was, this was --- look how quick this was, June 1st, 1939. My god, Frank was killed May 20th, 1939, so what are we talking, 12 days later or something.

BILL: My mother had a pretty analytical mind. Now I mean she, she had, she had, probably had her ducks in a row on that thing see. So, you know, I mean ---

EDWARD: Boy, boy, that was quick. Okay. Now E. J. Dobkins was Frank Dobkins' mom. William Dobkins, his dad, died in 1935.

BILL: Uh huh.

EDWARD: I don't know what happened to this E. J., Mrs. Dobkins, the mother, I don't know.

BILL: I don't know either.

EDWARD: I have no idea. Okay. Whoops. That's the Burnt House place in 1919. Anyway, then your mother sold all this to James Sutherland, whose wife is America Hutton.

BILL: Yeah.

EDWARD: In 1941, I think it was.

BILL: The '40's. Well, I don't know, they might --- no. Because I came in after we got through in '40. After we got through haying why I took the horses back out, and I came in here for the Labor Day rodeo. And Gordon Barrie, who was the field man for the bank, you know, the agriculture rep. for the bank, and he said, what the hell was it he said, "How long will it take you to gather those cows off of Wagontire?" And I said, "What cows?" Well, he said, "Your mother is going to sell those cows." And I said, "Well that's God damn news to me." ...

(END OF TAPE)

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