

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #71 - Side A

Subject: Larry Woodell

Place: Harney County Historical Society Luncheon

Date: 1969

Interviewer:

LARRY WOODSELL: ... title for the presentation, really should have been titled, is a report on an unfinished idea. But, anyway we'll go through some of these things here with you today. It sort of all got started when the bank remodeled, when the U. S. Bank remodeled. Part of the interior decoration was the brand boards that you see hanging there. And so I got into this project of trying to research the brands in Harney County. The word brand goes back quite a few years. It's Greek for burn, and they found brands or marks on goods that were produced back in the Babylonian times. And of course on through the years it somehow --- a trademark --- denotes ownership. And so there is a lot of pride built up in a brand, a trademark of ownership. And that's held true on through into the open range days of the west where the --- it would be used extensively on livestock. We know it here today --- And when we were remodeling the bank it sort of became my job to stain and varnish and put the names on those boards, and hang them up. And then I began to hear lots of stories as to who had the first brand, such things as that. So I decided to find out who did have the first brand. So that's basically how this got started. And I might confess; that's about as far as it' s gotten too. Maybe the main thing that will come out of this meeting is I can get some help from some of you people with the way that I did finally decide to try to put together a few early brands.

First thing I found out was that if brands were recorded here, first, it would have been in Grant County. Because we were Grant County. I went to Canyon City and found out that the courthouse burnt. So if there was an early recording, that meant the first idea was shot down the drain already. You can't find out.

So then I went to the county here and got these records, and tried to start from there. The --- Harney County was split from Grant County the 25th of February 1889. And so the first recording of these brands happened four months later after they officially became a county. And June the 19th, 1889, and this book was the first one that they started recording in, and these were earmarks. They have recordings over here just --- I guess the recordings are just hand written, there isn't any names or anything to begin with on here as to who is doing the recording. But anyway this is the first volume that they started.

So this whole project of mine then --- I tried to go through here and start with the first brands that were recorded that are still being used, and are still recorded that are being used in the county. I couldn't go back and find out which ones that happened first. You read through some of the history books, and well they mentioned an A. T. Clark, which was done at the Whitehorse. Camp Smith uses a C, that was Devine, ended up with that. And I read another book where his first brand was the F Branch, as we knew it. And that brand isn't recorded for quite some time. And the P brand, of course, has been mentioned in the book ... belonging to a man named Porter, and French got that. And the dollar --- the dollar brand was Catlow's that he gave or sold to the Shirks over in Home Creek and Three Mile. And so all those things that you read about the early ones, there isn't any trace of them here.

When they first came in, I don't know who wrote this or whether it was a clerk or what, because it is just written like this. And this is the first page of it. It goes on over

here a few pages before finally somebody signs their name, a clerk or a deputy or whatever. Anyhow, the first one on this page was WH Bars a stock brand P on the left jaw of sheep, earmarks, and so on --- And he didn't sign it, or they didn't sign it, and it isn't dated. It goes down to the next one it was G. J. Parker, claims a brand known as JP, horses branded on the lower part of the left shoulder, cattle branded both hips. The next one is Willie Altnow, claims the brand known as wine glass. So the third one on this list, that's the first one of course you can track down, because that brand goes on through the State of Oregon. I just brought this because I happen to have it --- because we have it there on the ranch, but that's the wine glass. A lot of these have quite descriptive names too, in here. But that's the first one in this project that tracking down early brands still used today, that's listed in here, and that was dated the 19th day of June 1889. I assume these first two were the same date. Because the next one also has the date out quarter circle 55 by John Gavoni, or something like that. ...

Finally, you get over here and you have W. E. Grace, and finally came over, and all these are not dated and signed, just in order. Finally you got over to here to ... 11-22-89.

Anyway, they finally got a recorder, and it was recorded by W. E. Grace was the first that's mentioned in here, the County Clerk. And I'm sure I've got it --- the fall, yeah, 11-22 of 1889. So they began to get more descriptive. It only took him --- I guess I didn't write that down right. It only took him about six months to --- or so after that to get it --- a deputy. It was a year, I guess it took just a year --- even in those days you can see how to fill this up. You got a deputy, and he started doing the writing.

Scheidler was the next County Clerk in here. So anyway, some of the things that you find in here are the --- that kind of gets away from the brand part, but the spelling of the Steens Mountains is written in here, is S T E I N S, is how it is written in here. And they had a post office at Springer, Oregon. That must be up here as near as I can tell

from the range.

MARCUS HAINES: Sod House Springs.

LARRY: Is that where that is?

MARCUS: Uh huh.

LARRY: Springer post office is the way that they list their address in here.

MARCUS: Moved to The Narrows in '92.

LARRY: To The Narrows, from Sod House.

MARCUS: Yes.

LARRY: They have a Shirk post office, this address on one of them. Rockford post office is listed in here. Mr. Range being of North Harney Valley. They might list it as, can't think of all of them, but the Currey area, or some such things as that. And then I can't read the dates, this handwriting is really, gets to be ... on some of this, it's all scroll. Here is some of it. This one fellow from Kenyon Road, I don't know whether he didn't have anything to do, but then for several pages he has written it out here --- C. E. Kenyon, Deputy.

MARCUS: Charlie Kenyon.

LARRY: Is that --- but he really had excellent penmanship, and besides that, I don't know whether he went back and colored those or shaded those in or whether he did it all at once. It was really interesting to --- he gets fancier as he goes along. Then he either got lazy or somebody told him to quit, because he went back to writing.

MARCUS: Did they charge a fee in those days?

LARRY: No. It went from just writing down to these first writings. Says that Altnow claim was my brand. There wasn't any signatures or anything.

YVONNE WOODSELL: Has paid the necessary ---

LARRY: Yeah, then over there --- yeah, it does. Has paid the necessary fee. I've never seen it in here what it was.

YVONNE: When they started out, each one was written differently. Said so and so came in and claimed. So and so the undersigned says, so and so has paid. Then they apparently established a format, and the rest of them are written on the same format.

LARRY: Start going to notice in here --- and then they --- in the fall of the year then they went to notice by a clerk or deputy. Write them that way.

YVONNE: Finally they even started to drawing a seal. It has just gotten a little scribble on the seal written on it. Apparently to facsimile the ---

LARRY: Just might mention here that this brand, this one that I thought maybe was --- some book I read had this attributed to Devine. Actually though it was finally recorded, it was actually recorded more like that on the animal. Then today's brand book it is recorded --- put on there like that. I had heard the story that this was Devine's brand, the way it was devised that ... California Stage Coach Company. This was the California Stage Coach Company is how that S Branch brand was originally ... It's not, I don't know whether that's true or not because it isn't the first brand that he recorded. He's got a --- the first one that he recorded is John Devine was a 7 with a lazy S across it. Is the one that is actually recorded in here?

YVONNE: That's ... the PLS Company brand.

LARRY: This is the first recording of this, I'm just telling you

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ILDA MAY HAYES: They got it from John Devine.

LARRY: The first recording that I could find of this brand was recorded by the Pacific Livestock Company, 28th of November 1894, by C. W. Jones.

ILDA MAY: Charlie Jones. That's Allen Jones father.

LARRY: We went through these by the days, trying to take these books and see if they are still recorded today. And then the project was to try and track down how they got

where they are today. How the people got them today. And as near as I can figure out, there was only 12,958 brands in that book that are cattle and horses, 251 for sheep, and 1 for swine. So it's kind of a project that can flip from page to page here, because there are --- well so many marks in the brand book that you can't believe it. And their method of putting them in --- they might call them A or something, and the way you know her is a different name, or it's not the same area as the way it is drawn here either. But that's what all this project is set out to do, was like the wine glass --- track down. The next one that was recorded in here was the reversed S, by Swartz or Smarts; I couldn't read the --- does that name ring a bell? By Swartz and Miller --- Smarts and Miller. Anyway, that was recorded in 1889. And Ralph Opie has it now; I don't know the connection. The H brand was by E. W. Hurlburt in 1889. You can track that one through, sure enough. These are in chronological order as you go through these pages. And the ones that are left out; are left out because I couldn't track them to the new brand. And the 16 was recorded by Gibson, Al Thomas, and Elmer Howard. 36 by Samuel McKenzie, now Dick Arnold. 35 by Michael Mallen, now Fred Mace. S7 by Samuel King, now Frank King. Soon you could connect the --- some of these people could sure connect these for me, I'm sure, if I had this thing going. 44 was by William Hayes in 1891. It's now Charles Coffey.

Lampshire had a backward KB, Stephen Lampshire is now Allen Turner. I don't know how --- progressed through the years. That's the part that is unfinished, is the new part. The --- one brand is the 7 Bar, was recorded by George Presley --- George and Presley Smith. And then to Fred and George, and now Otley Brothers are using that brand. Another purpose of this meeting should be that --- that's the 7 Bar that was the Smith brand that is now passed, purchased by the Otley Brothers.

There's a lot of these boards out that I didn't get back, we're going to provide more space in the bank, and we'd like to get some of these --- especially maybe some of these

older ones in this summer. Have a section of some of the older ones. So that is another purpose of this meeting. I think John, you might have a couple of boards there someplace that ---

JOHN SCHARFF: I still have them.

LARRY: Then the ---

YVONNE: Gene asked me a minute ago why they only used half a book, when I was picking these up. Don Filteau told me that they only figured they needed one book; because they didn't figure there would ever be more than five hundred people in Harney County. And it's only 75, well about 80 pages.

LARRY: And then in September of 1894, they got a different book, a full page for each person. Both sides of horses, and both sides of cattle, and the full legal, pretty looking outfit here to fill in, so they could draw the mark, and then the earmarks. They got a nice -- newer type book. And then for some reason, I didn't bring it in, there is about five more of these, and they switched back to this one again. But they did go in 1894, to this one.

One thing that is rather odd, or interesting in this, is that this T brand was recorded in this --- I'll bet I didn't bring that book in. I didn't bring that other book in, but anyway, I can basically tell you that when you went through this book in this next volume after this -- the third book, okay this --- Oh, here it is here, on, okay here on this P brand, on the 22nd of July of 1895, Pete French recorded this mark, this brand. If you go back a page over here, these are all in chronological order, the 30th of --- here's the 29th of June, the 30th of July, 7th of August, 22nd of July, the 9th of August. It was the only one that we found that was out of order. But this one jumped backwards for some reason. But anyway, Pet French recorded in 1895 ... so it was just a couple years before he died.

YVONNE: December 22nd, 1897.

LARRY: '97. So it's just a couple years before he died that he ever got to the county

courthouse. Now whether he did in Grant County, I don't know. But it --- now this is in '95. But this book started in '94, but they had typewritten on these pages in ... typewritten with some pictures drawn, is quite a dissertation by the estate. And it was dated in 1900. Why it didn't go on in the chronological order through the books, to put this in, but for some reason, dated 1900, it got put back over here. It got in the middle of the '94's, and it is kind of interesting ---

YVONNE: ... several pages though.

LARRY: Yeah, not only the French mark, but they've got the --- they've got the ZX, was in here. Three of them by the Frenchglen. The ZX ... Land and Cattle, Lakeview Land and Cattle. But on this French, I just wanted to see if I could find this right quick. The French - -- this was dated September 15, 1900. The Frenchglen Live-stock Company, a private corporation, organized under the laws of the State of California, and so on --- does hereby declare that a certain brand for horses, and a certain brand and marks for cattle, and in the County of Harney, to wit for a horse that the --- and where it goes and all that. Were recorded on the office of the county clerk of Harney County, State of Oregon, July 22, 1895, was when he recorded it. By a certain Peter French, as his marks and brands, and were in reality at said time the marks and brands of said Frenchglen Livestock Company. That the said Peter French was at the time the president and general manager of said company, and did business as its agent and representative in his own name.

And a note --- they go on through here, and they're claiming that back to this date, that that was never Pete French's brand, it was the company brand. And that all this dissertation that was signed by Chas. H. Glenn, president; J. D. Sproul, secretary; F. C. Lusk, executor of the last will and testament of Pete French; witness John G. South, administrator of the estate. Those --- why they are, I don't know, it was just kinda

interesting.

JOHN: Now was that the FG iron, or the P iron?

LARRY: This was the P brand. Then they go on --- well this one I --- they call the pigtail nine. And the T, I can't tell you right offhand where --- if I did run across that FG when it was recorded.

JOHN: ... FG came into being.

LARRY: Pardon.

JOHN: It was during the, most of the time that the FG came into being. And I ... after Pete was killed.

LARRY: Yeah, I don't remember that, well; I quit at 1890, when I was trying to track these down.

YVONNE: Johnson, he's quite interesting, Larry ---

LARRY: 1896, I think.

YVONNE: --- looking through his old notes. I was hoping Joe would be here today so I could kid him about it. He had written down with his brand --- followed through. He had written down that it now belongs to the Malheur National Livestock Refuge.

MARCUS: That's like Joe. Yeah, with his old notes.

JOHN: Well, it's now registered to the refuge.

LARRY: Well, anyway that, like I say, you can see this is a report of an unfinished project. But there are several interesting things like the post offices and one thing and another, to read through these ... Here is an early index if somebody wants to look up a particular name or brand. And also just another book that they had up here for a few years was a stallion and jack record. Well, it didn't last very long, but they had evidently registered these studs here in the county, or maybe the state. And some are registered --- oh; some are registered as purebreds of the shire, or whatever they were. Some are registered as

mongrels, they didn't have a pedigree. But his one didn't get used too much either, that's about as far as it went right there. They did start that out one time, and a ---

YVONNE: I don't think they had any committees taking care of poor mistreated people. Because one of the jacks was named a colored gentleman. Another was named Brigham Young. I don't think they had ...

MARCUS: There was a fellow up here on Poison Creek by the name of Stewart that had registered Percheron horses. My mother bought a stallion from him when I was a little fellow. I think I saw his name --- we were looking up something like that ... I think I found his name the other day, I had forgotten his ---

LARRY: William Stewart.

MARCUS: Yeah.

LARRY: Let's see what it says. He should --- great stallion Percheron.

MARCUS: Yeah, he was a Percheron raiser.

LARRY: Owned by M. L. Harkey, that was the stud of this one that they registered. It was the dad of the one they were registered, foaled in 1903. This is the one that wasn't -- - it wasn't a pure bred. It was a gray. They did get to call them pure bred --- over here they call them mongrels.

MARCUS: The mongrels were better horses ...

LARRY: Anyway, that's about all I can tell you today. I'd like to mention again that if anybody does have any information to help me out, go ahead and get kind of a story of how some of these brands passed with the original recordings to where they are, I would certainly appreciate it.

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