

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #78 - Side A

Subject: Martha Houston Sherman & Marva Sherman Walker

Place: Bend, Oregon

Date: March 19 & 20, 1991

Interviewer: Edward Gray

EDWARD GRAY: This is Edward Gray in Bend, Oregon, I'm interviewing Martha Sherman, and Marva Sherman Walker, her daughter, on 3-19-1991. Yeah, this is Ed Gray; this side of the tape is hard to understand because when I interviewed Martha Sherman she wasn't feeling well. And then I interrupted the middle of the tape with an interview the following day with Loyal Rhodes, who lived at Stauffer, Oregon.

MARTHA HOUSTON SHERMAN: ... Yes, I think I do.

MARVA SHERMAN WALKER: You went there when you got married, Mom.

MARTHA: Huh?

MARVA: What year did you get married?

MARTHA: What year?

MARVA: Uh huh.

MARTHA: I don't remember.

MARVA: 1930?

MARTHA: Yeah.

MARVA: I think it was 1930.

EDWARD: Where did you meet Calvin Sherman?

MARTHA: Oh, in Prineville.

EDWARD: In Prineville. Where were you born, Martha?

MARTHA: What year was I born?

EDWARD: Yeah.

MARTHA: Well, it was --- we went there, and ---

MARVA: 1906, I think, wasn't it?

MARTHA: No, I was born in '06.

MARVA: Uh huh.

EDWARD: In Prineville?

MARTHA: Yes.

MARVA: At Maury Mountain.

MARTHA: Maury Mountain.

MARVA: Uh huh, wasn't that where you were born, up at Maury?

EDWARD: This is Ed Gray interrupting this tape. Martha Sherman on 3-19 wasn't feeling very well, and I came back the following day to interview her, where she was real sharp.

Martha, what is your maiden name?

MARTHA: Martha Houston.

EDWARD: You're a Houston?

MARTHA: Yeah.

EDWARD: Oh, god.

MARVA: That opens a whole new kettle of worms, doesn't it?

EDWARD: I hope. Oh my god, there is a million of them.

MARVA: Yep, there still is.

EDWARD: What, is Ray Houston your brother?

MARTHA: What?

EDWARD: Is Ray Houston your brother?

...

EDWARD: ... Martha?

MARTHA: Well Fred, and Lem, and John.

EDWARD: And John Houston.

MARTHA: Uh huh.

EDWARD: What did they, did they ever tell you any stories about Bill Brown? Was he a nice guy, was he a mean guy, was he a --- what kind of a guy was Bill Brown?

MARTHA: They were good boys.

MARVA: How about Bill?

MARTHA: Bill?

MARVA: Uh huh, what did you hear about Bill?

MARTHA: Bill?

MARVA: Bill Brown.

MARTHA: Huh?

MARVA: About Bill Brown.

MARTHA: ... we were out at ---

...

MARVA: The summer pasture, they just let them go.

EDWARD: They just let them go.

MARVA: Yes.

EDWARD: Although now the Grindstone is basically cross-fenced, almost all of them.

MARVA: Well all of them cross-fenced and were soon after that.

EDWARD: After the '50's. After the '40's probably.

MARVA: Well yeah, through the '40's. That's June Swaggart and Buck. ...

EDWARD: (Looking at photographs.) Now would this be up in the Ochocos, more than likely?

MARVA: Uh huh. This would have been at Cow Camp ...

EDWARD: Wait, wait, wait. That's an old ---

MARVA: ... to the valley, you know, Crooked River.

EDWARD: Freezeout, where is Freezeout located?

MARVA: Okay, Freezeout is right out, let's see ---

EDWARD: On Long Hollow?

MARVA: Let's see, I always get those mixed up. If it was Long Hollow and --- there wasn't a dam on this.

EDWARD: That was one of Bill Brown's places at one time.

MARVA: Uh huh. I had some pictures of Freezeout.

EDWARD: You did?

MARVA: I don't know --- there was nothing there.

EDWARD: Oh.

MARVA: There was nothing there.

EDWARD: But that was one of Bill Brown's, because Ira told me that. I don't know if he was there at one time in the '20's, or '30's or what, I just don't know.

MARVA: Well I would be glad to ---

EDWARD: While we're sitting here looking through this, you were born in '38.

MARVA: '36.

EDWARD: '36. Did you spend most of your time at the Lower Sherman Ranch, even during the winters and so forth?

MARVA: I went to school there until I was in the 4th grade. Then after that we spent the summers at the ranch, and the winters we had to come up here to school.

EDWARD: In Prineville or Bend?

MARVA: Bend.

EDWARD: In Bend. Was there some --- did you live with relatives here or something?

MARVA: My folks --- my grandparents moved into town and kept a little place here in town.

EDWARD: That would be Charlie and Effie.

MARVA: Effie, uh huh. Here's a picture of the place in town.

EDWARD: Through the years, Charlie started out at the Shepard homestead, right?

MARVA: Well the Fife place first.

EDWARD: Fife place first. Then he bought the Shepard, where the Lower Sherman Ranch is. And he just kept adding, and adding, and adding acreage.

MARVA: ... yeah.

EDWARD: Yeah, okay.

MARVA: Here is Calvin and Martha, and that would have been in '32.

EDWARD: And this is ---

MARVA: That's Calvin and Martha. There's ... and Leroy.

EDWARD: Oh, that's Leroy, oh I see.

...

EDWARD: Well thank you Martha.

MARTHA: Well I didn't do much.

EDWARD: Oh, don't worry, don't worry.

MARVA: Another day Mom, you'll do better.

EDWARD: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, don't worry about it.

MARVA: This is the Lower Sherman.

EDWARD: How many people would work during branding season, branding season, and winter --- or not winter, fall round up? How many did Calvin Sherman have?

MARVA: He would have eight to ten. Didn't keep so many through the winter. My

Grandfather Sherman considered himself to be quite a hunter and fisherman.

EDWARD: That would be Charlie?

MARVA: Yeah. This is Charlie.

EDWARD: This is, that's not Calvin is it?

MARVA: No.

EDWARD: The original house is not there anymore?

MARVA: I don't know if it is or not.

EDWARD: I think --- see it was getting too dark for Earl and I to go down there to take pictures, see. And there was a Hardin Post Office from --- let's see, I'll get you some names here that might ring a bell. Was established 1882, with Cec Bixby, Bixby.

MARTHA: Mom would know that name, I don't.

EDWARD: Went from 1882 to 1890, then it was changed to Paulina. What did you hear about that, those particular buildings there, Marva?

MARVA: What building is that?

EDWARD: At Hardin.

MARVA: At Hardin, it was a stage stop. They used to come in there and change horses. And then the next one I think was the Gap Ranch. I think they went from Hardin to the Gap Ranch. And I believe that's where they changed horses.

EDWARD: That's the old Willamette Valley-Cascade Mountain wagon road, went right past there, see.

MARVA: I know where part of the old wagon road was. I know where it came up out of the valley; you could follow it for quite a little ways. And that was part, that was part of the old gold rush.

EDWARD: Right, Eureka Trail went through there, right. Yeah. Marva, what the heck was at Fife, Fife, what was there?

MARVA: Fife was where the Couch's lived when I first remember. And there was just a house, and a schoolhouse.

EDWARD: And a schoolhouse.

MARVA: And not much else.

EDWARD: No store? Never did have a store, did they?

MARVA: I don't know if there ever was or not. I don't know of any store that was there.

EDWARD: You know Bill Brown had a store.

MARVA: That was where the mail route turned around. It went from Prineville to Fife, turned around there and went back. So he would drive out there and stay the night, and go back.

EDWARD: Fife --- Balfour, Thomas Balfour died in 1938 in Redmond. Fife Post Office, I've got some letters, 1911.

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EDWARD: This is Ed Gray; I'm back with Martha Sherman on March 20th, 1991. Are we ready Martha?

MARTHA: Yeah.

EDWARD: Okay. Your memories of Bill Brown, what can you tell everybody?

MARTHA: Oh ---

EDWARD: Say anything you want.

MARTHA: Oh, I can't tell you a lot. But he was, walked all over the country.

EDWARD: Never, he never drove did he?

MARTHA: Nope.

EDWARD: A car? Just walked.

MARTHA: Yeah, walked. And he was up at Hardin quite a bit.

EDWARD: What did he --- what was at Hardin?

MARTHA: Huh?

EDWARD: What was at Hardin?

MARTHA: Just a little old ranch.

EDWARD: Just a little tiny ranch. He owned that, right?

MARTHA: And it fit, we owned it after that.

EDWARD: After he left.

MARTHA: I guess.

MARVA: Did we buy it from Bill Brown?

MARTHA: I don't know whether we did or not.

EDWARD: Did you ever hear anything about Hardin, what it was, and what it was there for?

MARTHA: Oh, it was just a little old ranch. And you see we come up over the hill there from down at the Lower Ranch. And Calvin had homesteaded part of that; he homesteaded it. Incidentally I homesteaded too.

EDWARD: Oh yeah. How many acres did you get, 160? Or was it 320?

MARTHA: I think it was 320, wasn't it Marva?

MARVA: I think so. What about Hardin? When --- Lila used to cook there, didn't she?

MARTHA: Yeah, she used to cook at Hardin.

EDWARD: Lila Houston?

MARTHA: Yeah.

MARVA: Lila Houston Keith.

EDWARD: Your sister?

MARTHA: Yeah.

EDWARD: She cooked for Bill's cowboys?

MARTHA: Yes. And out, clear out on the highway, the Bend-Burns Highway, I was

visiting her out there.

EDWARD: The Gap Ranch?

MARTHA: Yeah, the Gap Ranch.

MARVA: Tell him about that trip when you went to the Gap Ranch to visit Lila.

MARTHA: Oh well, I went out on the bus.

MARVA: Uh huh, what was the bus?

MARTHA: The bus went from Prineville.

MARVA: It was a stage that went through?

MARTHA: Yeah.

MARVA: Through Hardin?

MARTHA: Yeah.

MARVA: And then on to the Gap, is that right?

MARTHA: I don't know now whether it went through Hardin or not. But when I went, we went out to the Bend-Burns Highway, and come in that way.

MARVA: Okay.

EDWARD: Did you come out at Hampton, by Hampton?

MARTHA: Yeah.

EDWARD: And then went into the ranch?

MARTHA: Well we went to, Lila was at Hardin, and I went to Hardin. And that was when Lila and Charlie hadn't been married too awful long.

EDWARD: I see. Charlie, Charlie ---

MARTHA: Charlie Keith.

EDWARD: Keith. Is Lila; was Lila older than you, or younger?

MARTHA: Lila was older ---

EDWARD: Older.

MARTHA: --- than I.

EDWARD: You were born in 1906?

MARTHA: Yeah. And she was, she was right at 1900, I don't know just where in there. I've forgotten so much.

EDWARD: Anything else about Bill Brown, Martha, besides --- What did he say; you just said it?

MARTHA: Morally certain.

EDWARD: Morally certain, yeah.

MARTHA: He was morally certain of a lot of things.

EDWARD: Well why did he allow people to steal from him, do you know?

MARTHA: Huh?

EDWARD: Do you know why he kind of allowed people just to take things from him, and steal from him?

MARTHA: I don't know why. But he did allow people to help them-selves a lot.

EDWARD: Did you ever hear about his old store he had, the Horse-shoe Bar Store across from his house?

MARTHA: Oh, the Horseshoe Bar was Bill Brown's brand.

EDWARD: His brand. But do you remember him having a store?

MARTHA: No, I don't, I don't remember.

EDWARD: I think he got mad and tore it down, because they kept stealing from him all the time. And he just tore it down and said to heck with it. But he always walked, huh?

MARTHA: Well, as far as I know. I don't know but --- when he come into town he must have ridden.

EDWARD: Did he ever come over to the Lower Sherman Ranch and talk with you and Calvin?

MARTHA: No, not much.

EDWARD: Not much.

MARTHA: He'd been in there, and he'd come in and visit a little.

EDWARD: What kind of a --- don't know if you can remember this or not, Martha. What kind of shoes did he wear?

MARTHA: I don't know.

EDWARD: Don't know. There has always been a question about that. Did he ever tell you anything about shooting somebody?

MARTHA: I think he did shoot somebody, come to think of it. But I'm not sure who it was.

EDWARD: Johnny Overstreet.

MARTHA: Well I don't know. Because I hadn't been in that upper country, up around, you know the timber and ... I hadn't been there until after we moved there.

EDWARD: Did you like it up there at Lower Sherman Ranch, and Upper Sherman Ranch?

MARTHA: Yes.

EDWARD: You did?

MARTHA: You don't know people like home.

EDWARD: Yeah. Did you ever think about --- Calvin, let's move to Prineville or something, I don't want to live here anymore. Did you ever ---

MARTHA: No.

EDWARD: Or did you even have the right to say anything like that?

MARTHA: Did he have that right?

EDWARD: Did you?

MARTHA: Did you? Oh, I ... (Laughter)

EDWARD: You were ---

MARTHA: Calvin was really an understanding man. And he was an only child. They came out there to homestead, and they homesteaded up at the river, up at the GI, above that.

MARVA: Near Fife.

EDWARD: Near Fife.

MARTHA: And then when he was in school they finally moved down there. But he went to school at the ---

MARVA: At Fife.

MARTHA: Huh?

MARVA: At Fife.

MARTHA: Yeah, up in that area.

MARVA: To Mrs. Hall.

MARTHA: Yeah. I'd forgotten that. I'm glad you jumped my memory.

EDWARD: Jumped your memory. They must have had little schools all over the place.

MARTHA: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Yeah.

MARTHA: Well, they had to. They had no way of taking their children to school, it would take too much of the day.

EDWARD: Oh, yeah.

MARTHA: And the little schools is what they sent their kids to.

EDWARD: Did the kids actually go to school ---

MARTHA: What?

EDWARD: Did the kids, like Calvin, did he actually, and you --- did you guys go to school almost all year, or just during the summers?

MARTHA: Well I think --- no, they didn't go the year round.

EDWARD: The winters, did they go in the winter?

MARTHA: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Boy. There were a lot of homesteaders out there when you ---

MARTHA: There was an awful lot of homesteaders. And I was one of the last. Calvin wanted me to file before we were married, and I did. And I got just a kick out of my father-in-law. He wanted me to go out with him and --- where they was hunting. And I was with him, and --- we was going up the hill. You know how that road pulls up the hill?

EDWARD: I've been on it.

MARTHA: Huh?

EDWARD: Yeah, last summer.

MARTHA: Well we was going up there. I said, "Well Father Sherman," I says, "I filed on that piece right over there." (Laughter) ...

(END OF TAPE)

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