

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #87 - Side B & #88 - Sides A/B

Subject: Joe Echanis

Place: Ontario, Oregon

Date: March 25, 1974

Interviewer: Pauline Braymen

Release Form: No

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HELEN DAVIS: Well, what year did you come, Joe?

JOE ECHANIS: Huh?

HELEN: What year did you come here?

JOE: 1912.

PAULINE BRAYMEN: You came in 1912?

JOE: Yeah.

PAULINE: Yeah. And where did you come from? What part of ---

JOE: Well, Spain. Guipuzcoa.

PAULINE: From Spain.

JOE: Yeah.

PAULINE: Guipuzcoa.

JOE: Guipuzcoa state, the land of Guipuzcoa.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

JOE: Yeah.

HELEN: What was your town?

JOE: Then the town was Motrico.

PAULINE: And you come by a boat, of course, to New York City?

JOE: Well, we come on a train to France, then we took it to France for the ... we took it to the boat. We come to New York, then New York we come on the train. Make it twenty days, home to Boise.

PAULINE: Just twenty days?

JOE: Twenty days.

PAULINE: From your home to Boise, Idaho.

JOE: To Boise.

PAULINE: I would have thought it would have taken longer.

JOE: We left the 5th in the March, home. And I hit the Boise, 25th. Just twenty days.

PAULINE: Uh huh. Now the reason, the reason you came, you had brothers that were already here.

JOE: Yeah, three of them.

PAULINE: Three brothers. Do you remember them ever saying why they decided to come to America, and to Harney County in particular? Or to ---

JOE: No. Well, I don't know sure was Harney County, I know was Oregon, you see.

PAULINE: To Oregon.

JOE: Brothers, but I don't know it was Harney County.

PAULINE: Well, that's all right. I ---

JOE: Malheur County, well ... Harney County summertime, and coming down the desert, Malheur County in the wintertime.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

JOE: That's the way, I ... done that myself too, you know, back and forth.

PAULINE: Well, how did they happen to find out about Oregon, or how did they happen to decide to come to here?

JOE: Well, my oldest boy (brother) here, they come in first, about five or six years before I did. Then next one come on again, next one come on again, so I was ready about two hours before I

want to come, you know. Oh, I was 19 years old; I write to one of them brothers, a letter, I wanted to come. They answered, by golly; you're too young yet. No. Wait for another year. Boy, I was mad. So, I was 18, I come over here.

PAULINE: You were 18 years old?

JOE: Yeah. Then the brother, then he needed more men, so he had somebody call or something, to Boise. Finally, we get together there, the five boys, Boise. Oh, you're coming, Boise and to Vale. And my brother's brother-in-law, he was a farmhand, he come with two-horse team. Just one halters, and loaded with all groceries, Vale. ... All took a day up ... and loaded it all, loaded up wagon. And the poor horses got enough load, so we follow the team clear over to Venator.

HELEN: Kinda long.

JOE: We could make it up day and a half, but horses can't go fast enough, so we make it three days and a half.

PAULINE: Three and a half days to go?

JOE: Uh huh.

PAULINE: And you followed --- you walked along with the --- behind the team?

JOE: Yeah, we follow the team. Then night coming, by that time some restrictions over there, you know. Lot of freight trains back and forth, you know. So we just stayed there ... the stage was for overnight, you know. You eat. Used to be back and forth, over again, clear up to Denio, the teams, you know. So all the stations ... That's how they started anyhow. Then we help with the lamb, brothers and the farmers. And after lamb, you got too many men, and me and one brother we go to Grant Thompson, he was the sheep ...

PAULINE: Grant Thompson?

JOE: Grant Thompson, but it still that ranch yet, six miles south of Crane.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

JOE: And two brothers got sheep ... Orrin Thompson. Orrin Thompson passed away not too long ago.

PAULINE: Right. Uh huh.

JOE: Yeah. But we work; I work three years for Grant Thompson. Then --- no, three years and a half. Then brother, then he sold his sheep ... myself, and another three brothers, and another --- and two brothers we buy the sheep again. I ... fifteen then, and fifteen in the fall. I was sheep man.

HELEN: That's when you became the sheep man.

PAULINE: Well, you bought fifteen?

JOE: Huh?

PAULINE: Fifteen head.

JOE: Fifteen in the fall. No, three years and a half working --- yeah, fifteen. Then the prices start to come up then. Then we got seventeen, eighteen, or nineteen; we got a lot of sheep, around 14,000. In fact, he give you all the money. ... how much you want, he ask ... 'cause sheep just come up. 1919, it's up, down. 1920, 1921, was nothing, we lost every cent, '22. Ten years of work, nothing. I lost only fifteen days for ten years, taking my layoff.

PAULINE: Yeah.

JOE: Fifteen days, I mean ten years for fifteen days, I lost everything. So I go right back, tending camp again.

HELEN: Who did you tend for then?

JOE: It's a --- was Basco. Big Mike we call --- Mike Abreu. Then one herder, out tending camp, he was working for Bob ... \$4,000. So I stayed out there for a year, and I tell him I ... I like to get into sheep again. I got to find a place to make mine. We going to buy sheep. They got 4,000. I make \$600 that year. And used to be the ... over here in Crane. Crane, because he owned that P Ranch out there too, you know, working the Swede --- Swift outfit. And they get a little back --- the Crane. And he was pressing in the bank to Crane --- he got pressing in the bank to Nampa too. So I know quite a while that Craven, so I know that we put up \$4,600. I know we sheep outfit. 'Course a lot of guys they got the mortgage too deep, you know. And the backers here they say you never going to get the money. So, I go over there and I ask one day, Craven the banker. Boy, he

was glad. Jim Paul, still daughters over there yet.

PAULINE: Jim Paul?

JOE: Yeah, Jim Paul

HELEN: Jim. His --- Dorothy Jenkins' folks. Jim Paul.

JOE: Yeah. And he was too deep, I guess, and taking off the deep hole, and getting out, the sheep. Twenty-six hundred sheep, and sixteen hundred lambs, ain't got any lambing at all ... That was '23. And by god it start right in, the sheep start coming up again. In 1918 --- uh, 1928, we got 7,000, 8,000 sheep again. You keep ewe lambs; keep ewe lambs --- lamb buy coming. In fall, I sold one lamb, eleven cents a pound. The white face, you know. They tell me that --- you want to sell them ewe lambs ... I give you \$10 a head. By god, I didn't sell them. '29, just dropped to nothing.

HELEN: Oh dear, again.

JOE: I took it --- little lambs, September --- April lambs. Twenty-first ... ewe lamb, weighted 81 pounds. Took it ... loaded it over there, feed it over here, feed it ... and took it clear over there, and they weighed 81 pounds, \$103. Then '29, and '34, all down. No price on it at all. Then time that Roosevelt get in it, he said you want to kill all the ewes, they give you \$2 for hides. We killed 800 sheep. Cut the throat, skin it, delivered the hides, and take the meat to the sagebrush, 800 sheep. Boy, them hard times!

HELEN: When the meat had to be just disposed of, that was real bad too. People could really have used the meat in those days. But I guess you couldn't, could you, because it was a government deal you couldn't use the meat.

PAULINE: Well, that's some, it was ---

JOE: You can't give ---

HELEN: Just like they killed the pigs, or something that one time.

JOE: You can't give you one mutton; you can't give you one mutton, nobody.

HELEN: Yeah.

JOE: Was the law. And I come over here, 400, I got a bunch of ewes here, I got to kill 400, at

Crane. And I know all the people up there, like Burns, and Crane. I know a bunch over here ... he asked me. ... Crane. I says, right to the bunch in the corral, you guys go, take it home, skin it, but you don't tell I give it to him. Yeah, I don't know how many I want to take it over home, for the hide. Yeah. Wood for the fire ... for the house. I not a citizen yet, and my partner either. And after ... you got to have a ewe lamb to run your sheep.

PAULINE: Yeah.

JOE: Then you got to have sheep. We got 12,000 sheep, and no ewe lamb. We rented all on Steens Mountain, you know, rented all that. But we get our lamb. And ... he want to get into lamb business. And I run the visit to the Vale Bank that time. And that banker says, "Well, let's go over here, see if any lambs for sale for taxes." So we go over there, and by god, we filed one forty. I don't know who they are right today, either. Over there Dog Creek, you know, Dog Creek beside Folly Farm, quite a ways. Dog Creek, a little creek, but it was little side of it someplace. I think it was a little spring too. So we find, for taxes, to sell for taxes, \$50. So I bought that.

HELEN: ... with the lambs.

JOE: That's with --- next day, we have the meeting, you know, at the courthouse. And that means, that started my land, you know. And by god he give me the right. And then he want to lease the land. He want to take it right, just have lease for three years, three years lease. That give it right too. I got Crowley Ranch, it was leased for three or four years, or anytime, you know. I got about thirteen thousand acres, that helped a lot. Then I stayed around and I leased the land. That's when I make a deal. That's when I start; I farm my land I bought. First year, I bought the six-sixty, that ... country. That's when I started ... that's when I started my ...

Then I made application my citizen papers. So that when --- then finally I want to quit. That's the trouble again. Well, I sold half the sheep. We make a deal. Sheep wasn't worth nothing. There was a lot of sheep. Tell me, give me \$25,000 ... All right, I make a sell, and bank ... sold half the sheep, and paid \$25,000 on it, and I start a loan.

PAULINE: About what year was this when you went on your own then? About what year?

JOE: You mean the summer I bought out the farmers?

PAULINE: Yes.

JOE: Well, I can't tell you for sure maybe, but '36 or '37, something like that.

PAULINE: Who was your partner?

JOE: I bet you can't spell it.

PAULINE: Probably not.

JOE: Joe first name, Salimonandia (sp.?).

PAULINE: Oh dear.

JOE: Oh, it's Spain now. He ---

PAULINE: He went back to Spain.

JOE: Yeah. We was about 13 years, partners.

HELEN: When did you get your land up on McCoy? Is that what --- did you --- well that, that you just sold to Wilson's? Now where did ---

JOE: No, I sold ---

HELEN: --- that was up on the backside.

JOE: I sold, I sold ... they got a name for that Mormon was that, owned the Alvord, you know.

Fact they bought my place. Then that guy sold to Wilson.

HELEN: Well, I thought it was Coco that bought from you.

JOE: No, Wilson bought from me.

HELEN: I thought it was Wilson.

JOE: Yeah, Wilson, got the land, but another guy bought it ---

HELEN: From you, oh. That was what Otleys was wanting ---

JOE: 'Cause one man, lawyer called me that he was Canyon City one day, and I was at the ranch, and ... night. And Timotea says this lawyer want to buy my ranch. Heck, I don't want to sell at all. I get rent for the \$9,000. I got \$8,000 for the Alvord. And Julian and Irvin he leased up to six in the McCoy, a \$1,000. I never in my mind to sell ranch at all, you know. So, I tell Timotea, hey I

don't figure to sell it. Well, he says, he call. So, we call one night, and tell me he want to buy my ranch up there. Well, I don't figure on selling my ranch. "Oh," he says, "I want to talk to you anyhow, I want to talk to you anyhow. When am I going to catch you?" I says, "Well, I'll be at the ranch." So, myself and brother-in-law, I got working up there, we just eating lunch, here comes a big Cadillac. So, we start talking, and I tell him heck, I don't figure on selling. Then another thing I says, I don't need money right now, and I don't know where I'd put the money if I sell that ranch. I don't want it. Well, maybe we find a place to put the money. Tell me, how much money? Hell that time, no price like that, you know, I thought ... I tell him \$25 an acre. Well, he says ... I want to call my boss. So he take off. And by god, in a half an hour he come back. And well he says, "The price is all right. And we give you 6% interest." ... difference as long as you want to keep all the money, or anytime you want the money, they know ... so he give you, pay you any amount of money. ...that's coming to more than \$9,000 for the interest.

So, Otley always tell me to give me the first chance. But Otley never offered me over \$10 an acre. So, I know Otley won't pay that much. But I tell them, well, tell them Otley tell me to give him first chance. So, I got to see him first. But I says you make a note what you figure on ... So Tony always, my lawyer, you know, I took it over there. I tell Tony; well I figure I sell that Steens Mountain Ranch. "You crazy!" So, I showed the note. And by god, the next day I go to Diamond to see Otleys. And I tell him, I sold the ranch, but you want to pay that price, by golly you're the first I sell it to. But I took --- boy, Henry was mad. ... right home ... Boy, Otley was mad, he don't want to lost it, but he says he can't pay it.

So, I sell it to him. Do you want to pay the cash? Well, so I took a little down payment. I don't know how many years, I never get nothing. The family sold to Wilson. He want to pay Otley again. Settle up Wilson, you know. I go to Tony, and I says, "I was figuring on maybe get \$10,000 a year, you see." If something happen to me, you was right there, you was renting, and you was going to pay everything, you see. So I tell him, who will write the letter that --- tell Tony, and Tony write the letter, you want to do it, \$10,000 a year with interest. So that's what time the Wilson got

the land, that's where they started, \$10,000 a year. Last year, it was last payment.

HELEN: Oh, you got it, huh?

JOE: Yeah, got paid now, got nothing to do now. I'm through with Harney County.

PAULINE: You're all through over there, huh? Your place was up on McCoy Creek?

JOE: Well, one section.

PAULINE: One section.

JOE: The others, the Pass Creek, Pass Creek and Mud Creek. Mud Creek, a section and a half.

Jimmy Owen got a section, he homesteaded. And he got half a school section. Mud Creek I got a section and a half. Then he got, I don't know ... section, and ... boy, he got homestead up to the Pass Creek. And another half section, I don't know if you've ever been to that ---

HELEN: No, Glen I think has.

JOE: --- another half a school section. Jimmy ... got all that, six sections. So that's what I bought first, six sections. This McCoy, that section ---

PAULINE: Uh huh.

JOE: --- belonged --- he changed that three times. One guy homestead it, and lost it. He never work, you know. Another guy homestead again, he lost it. Finally, Louie Seaward, you know, used to be...

HELEN: Yeah.

JOE: He got it, so I bought it from...

HELEN: You got it from them.

JOE: Yeah. Then Steve Seaward ... section. And Steve ... for himself. And Ham [Robert H] Brown got that. And Ham Brown and Fred Smyth, he don't get together, so Fred Smyth got the ... Kiger ... the one section. And they tell me he buy that section right ... you know. You buy that section, Ham Brown; we're going to make a trade. So, I bought from Len Brown and I give it to Fred Smyth, and I took the other six, east side of Kiger, you know. That way I make me all the ... country all one block.

PAULINE: Well, you said you wintered on the Steens, I mean summered on the Steens, and then you'd come back to Malheur County for the summer, or for the winter.

JOE: Yeah.

PAULINE: Whereabouts in Malheur County did you, were your headquarters?

JOE: Well, Folly Farm.

PAULINE: Folly Farm.

JOE: Yeah. Used to be a store there. ... first the old man already, then was three boys. We go around the Sheephead, then Sheephead around the Owyhee, then one butte called Saddle Butte, right around there. So we take it --- Then I leased the Crowley Ranch. I think I leased the Crowley, I don't know for sure, 17, 18 years. And the Crowley Ranch got the, right through the desert, you know. So I bought the hay from Crowley. Idea was I use any hay, \$10 a ton. I know I use the hay enough, come and they grow the green grass, I wouldn't ever use it. And finally I got, Crowley got the more hay there.

And I finally make a lambing shed, brought their outfit, grazing all that, 'course I got right. And oh he says, Crowley give the right, just go right through the Grants, the land there, and go right out. You can't feed around at all. I got no lot of rights, you see; give you the rights for me then. ... lease that ranch. He's got 13,000 some acre land, Crowley, Stanfield, and another lady. Got a lot of children. I leased all that. Then we lambing over there, Crowley, shear right there. ...

PAULINE: Did you have a shearing crew come in to help shear?

JOE: Yeah.

PAULINE: Yeah. What --- can you tell me about the shearing crews, how they worked, and what they did?

JOE: Well, at that time, they big outfit, you know.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

JOE: And of course that time a lot of sheep. And a lot of times there were about twenty shearers, sometimes twenty-two too. That time they was over here at Riverside, and McEwen got, I mean

Crowley, I got that shear corral. And McEwen got about two miles over that, and Riverside, and Dick ... over there Jenkins, you know. Harney County we shear once, go right by there, and Jenkins had a shearing corral, you know. But that time, big crews, shearing. A lot of crews.

PAULINE: They just go from one place to the next.

JOE: Huh?

PAULINE: They would just go and shear your sheep and then they'd move on, and shear someone else's sheep and move on?

JOE: Yeah. Well, they through mine, just like at ... I be over your place, and then after you through then another one, and another one, and another one. You know, must be the Lloyd Hill, shear for years and years, Lloyd run the crew, you know. Lloyd and a brother Hal, he was shearer too. But Lloyd was, run the crew. And I got the, make it one time the shear crew right up the Steens Mountain. And one time, we lambing over there, Brown's place above the Diamond. One time, they come up four shearers, no --- come with six. They start shear, and shear half of it, start raining. And it was a week, raining and raining, and can't shear sheep. Finally, two shearers they quit to go someplace else. Was Lloyd himself, and another three guys wait, it finally cleared off. Eight hundred sheep left. They said, tell them in the morning, by god, we going to shear two hundred apiece. And the Lloyd, he was good shearer himself. Started morning, and Lloyd shear a hundred half an hour before the other buys, before the noon, before the noon, so he quit. Let them shear the two hundred, the other guys. Start afternoon again, same thing, he through a half an hour before the other guys, a hundred. He quit. He let ---

PAULINE: Let them shear their hundred.

JOE: So our shearers, shear eight hundred. Then year after, I think, we shear again. And I lost a man there. But Lloyd was there then too. And you know, I don't know you ever seen them shearers got the big wood pulley on them. Pull the ... Just the wood pulleys, just like that. And me and this, another worked for me, was wrangled, put the sheep for the shearers. And the first band, just the last bunch, we put the shearer, and we start walking out. See, I was over here keeping sheep to the

shearers, over the pen, you know. So we started walking, and that pulley, it break. RRRR, making noises. Hit right in front of me ... hit right there, right straight heart. Got to get big iron washers, you know, fall out. And I don't know, we find half of it right there. I don't know, the other half go inside. It fall down right in front of me, so I grab it. I thought he scared first, I grab it and turn and just --- he die. So I call the shearers, boy, man we got down here. So he come over here, we start shaking a little bit. ... that's all. Die right there.

PAULINE: The force of that thing, if the pulley was going when it broke, it would hit pretty hard.

JOE: Then the get the ... the corral, and they get two shearers. One I want to ... both shearers just like that. I don't know, nobody work afterward, but I don't know, half of it go down, we find the half underneath ... Maybe that one hit --- just hit like a bullet. Yeah Lloyd Hill sheared years and years, my sheep.

PAULINE: And then how did you get the wool to market? Did you put it on the train at Crane, or did you ---

JOE: What?

PAULINE: The wool ---

JOE: The wool.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

JOE: Oh, yeah.

PAULINE: What did you do with the wool after you sheared it?

JOE: We were shearing up there from Crane, and we loaded the train, you know. Well, you sold right there so much, maybe the buyer loaded. The other ... we sometimes signed ... see make it, contract ... then get so much down, you know. Maybe take a year for it to sale. Now even this year, talking about the dollar, I don't know, run the sheep. It was fifteen in '43. The highest wool I sold was forty-three cents. Sometimes at thirteen, fifteen.

PAULINE: Yeah, up and down. Mostly down.

JOE: Then taxes, you come to Malheur County, they let you in all of Malheur County, when you

coming down. Then we go back to Harney there, spring or summer. You tell the Harney, they got to let you know the Harney, when you go through the Harney County. Then he ... you know. First, we got trouble. We coming down here, and we never let them know ... the March, pay the taxes. So Malheur County charge all. So Harney County get mad.

PAULINE: Yeah, they want their share. Yeah.

JOE: Yeah. Finally, they get the law, we tell them when and how many we come into Malheur, then they fix themselves, you know.

PAULINE: Well, how long have you lived in Ontario?

JOE: Well, we come ... I think 39 years. Before that I got brother to get motel here, once in awhile coming down here to that. I live most the time in Crane, Burns, you know ... In the wintertime, we come down to Crowley. Then I get groceries over here. Back and forth here. I think 1912, and '43, every summer, Steens Mountain. First three years, up the other side ... in the snow bank there.

That's where Mike had the place. Snow bank where they camp, and camp living one man; and one horse, my camp. No wood there. I got to go way down to bridge camp, pack my wood. Take the --- I got on horses, and loaded. First fill up the horses, and a load of sagebrush. Then tie the pack rope and pull my --- I got a big load, and they got balance like that. ... That's how I pack my wood for that three summers, sagebrush.

PAULINE: Well, you'd have to pack quite a bit of sagebrush too, to keep a fire going.

JOE: Yeah, the sheep would come above the ... I eat that myself, you see. I'd packed a bed and take a coffee pot, and a frying pan, all that inside the bed. I'd pack it all up. Sometimes I go down, clear down to Blitzen, take sheep. That time you had to stay with the sheep. Yeah, the coyote's bad, you know. I'd go to dinner; I'd eat an early supper in the camp, back to sheep. ... crossed the canyon, and by god we packed up our bed where the sheep go, every day. Yes ... I got the camp right to the Little ... head of the Blitzen. And brother, another brother got below. And another brother, Alvord side. And one evening, boy come thunder, sure thunder, and I know it coming down. Sheep, I got way up the hillside. Before it come that shower, by god, I just make a little

flap, and I get into bed. That time, heavy canvas, you know. You put it right there, you never get wet inside. I put that canvas in there; get in there, boy --- just like somebody throw it like a rock, you know. And the dog was there, poor son-of-a-gun, by golly he go to camp, and ... take it all the camp. All of a sudden they got, tied up four trees, and the next morning I hear dog howling, howling ... by god my groceries, my dishes, all gone. All except tent, was just like that, all fill up the

--- dirt and stuff, the dog was right top of the tent. Then I go out to the other brother's camp, same thing. The other brothers ... kill fourteen sheep ... we sleep, like the sheep. Three brothers happen like that. ... and the other one kill fourteen sheep, 1913.

PAULINE: Did you buy most of your groceries and supplies at Crane? Or at ---

JOE: No, we was Steens Mountain, we get at Diamond.

PAULINE: At Diamond.

JOE: Yeah. Or the other side, way up on the top, or maybe sometimes go to Andrews.

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... the car need the gas. So about twelve miles before the Folly Farm, out. So I walk to Folly Farm. And three boys, you know, three boys got the truck and everything there, and they says, "What happen? Well, it went putt, putt, putt, it quit. These guys laugh. So they get gas ... By golly after that, I get my pack empty in the hills, as long as I got chance, boy I fill up. (Laughter)

PAULINE: You run on the top half from now on, huh?

JOE: Oh, I walk many, many times, 25, 30 miles on top of the hills. Boy that Crowley road hit with the spring rain like that, you can't through it. A lot of times I start in early in the morning ... rainy weather like that, and I say to myself, I'll never make it. Then up this side of Crowley, about 15 miles alkali flat, you now, no gravel, nothing. Boy I tell you, how many time, 15 miles, I walk that son-of-a-gun. Now, now, maybe quite a while, but last time I was Crowley, they all in a spot, kind of gravel, so heck, you can go through now, anytime. One year, I can't get through, nothing. I

signed the lambing man plane, and he charged me \$15 a trip. I think 6 or 7 men. I send the plane into Crowley. Lambing already started, I got men over here; I can't go pickup or nothing. So ... before they start over here, by golly they find out ... what kind of weather ...

PAULINE: Yeah, that's quite a difference in driving over, or even walking over, to go over in a plane.

JOE: Finally that ... everybody load of gravel, and take a bunch of sheep to ... somebody hit the rock and lost all flock, and by golly he ... Then I trade for the one that I won ... And the farmer over to Crowley, and by golly I trade one my ---

PAULINE: I understand your wife was born down around McDermitt.

JOE: Who?

PAULINE: Your wife.

JOE: Yeah.

PAULINE: Yeah.

JOE: Just a little ways from Whitehorse, about 6 mile I think.

PAULINE: Well, where did her, when did her parents come, and where did they come from?

JOE: Who?

PAULINE: You wife's parents.

JOE: Vizcaya. That's a, like a ... you know. And Pascua next state, and next state there Vizcaya, just a little ways. Maybe my place, their place, maybe ten mile, but different state.

PAULINE: Do you know when they came over?

JOE: Huh?

PAULINE: Do you know about what year they came over? They came before you did? Or about the same time?

JOE: Yeah, my wife's daddy, I don't know when, but I hear a lot of times my mother-in-law says '09.

PAULINE: Uh huh. 1909.

JOE: He was over here four or 5 years ... and married, you know. Then come in '09 again, back, second time. I don't know first time when he come. Must be first, maybe 4 or 5 years before that, I guess. I hear the watch. I betcha that watch, first time before ... I bet he put that watch ... He passed away he gave me that.

HELEN: Was that your dad's watch?

JOE: Yeah.

HELEN: Do you know what year your dad came the first time? The first time?

JOE: Mother says '09, but Daddy, I don't know. Mother asked...

TIMOTEA ?: Yeah, well Daddy was here 4 years before Mother.

PAULINE: So he came about ---

TIMOTEA: He came here about 4 years earlier, and he worked and he got enough money, and he went back and married her. And then he came, brought her to Crowley, and that's where they worked first. And then from Crowley, they went to McDermitt. And that's where he started running sheep.

JOE: Mother says lot of time '09, but Daddy, I don't know first time. Daddy and another guy went to help him work. His daddy run the Whitehorse.

TIMOTEA: Not Whitehorse.

JOE: Huh?

TIMOTEA: Antelope Ranch. He was never in Whitehorse. They named him Whitehorse ---

JOE: Now, now, wait a minute, wait a minute. Worked for the Turnbull.

TIMOTEA: Oh.

JOE: Your daddy, another guy. Yeah Daddy ... tended camp. Your daddy at Whitehorse. The other guy, I don't know, what kind they call it ... his name Whitehorse Joe. That's where they get name. Whitehorse Joe. But they work for the Turnbolls.

PAULINE: Well, can you think of anything else about your early days in Oregon?

JOE: I don't know a thing. I don't know what ---

TIMOTEA: He always says he can write a book on that, everything he did.

PAULINE: Yeah. Well you ought to do it.

JOE: What I did. What I did, she don't know what I did in the sheep camps. ... I was reading a long time. I'm going to tell you a story. They can't believe it. I can't believe it myself. Here's a mark.

PAULINE: Yeah, I see.

JOE: I get the horse in the morning, and come into camp. I stop ... and the coyote come ... The coyote, he was sick coyotes, he got just a little bunch of hair on the back, that's all. He had no more at all. Boy, I see the sheep just left when they heard it. Boy, I see that coyote, and I just climb in my saddle, and I try to get on a run. And he was a little hill there, so before I get to top I just ride ... on the horse. But the other side, it was big steep hill, go down. So coyote and I just started going, and I just follow.

I don't know horse catch the hind shoes, or the front shoes or something, but poor horse go like that. Horse mark their head and broke the saddle horn and everything, and I hit the rock or something. He throw me out. So we was rolling down. And I was sitting there, and I see the horse and by god I was all the --- The herder come, was big guy. Basco says, "You still alive?" He seen me, rolling all over my face and --- So finally we go to camp. They cleaned me ... around an hour to camp, and 25 miles was that ... the ranch ... But right to the south of that quite a while, quite a ways ... over 25 mile anyhow to Crane. And I ride that horse all the way to Crane.

And vet doctor, for the Crane there, Crane that was horse doctor, and he give several stitches on my --- no medicine, nothing.

PAULINE: Just sewed you up.

JOE: And next morning I get up, well take the horse and go back to camp. I never go back to see the doctor no more.

Week or so after that, I move that camp. Little canyon there called Lambing Canyon. I going up that canyon, and by god I see come coyotes. Boy, I leave that pack train and I start up

again, but he was give up. He was all in. I got the six-shooter, the herders are gone, and ... The horse was kind of a green, and I didn't want to shoot over top the horse. Horse maybe little scared. But little ways was a clean place on top the hill. So I says, I'm gong to try it right there, and I jumped down and I'm going to kill it. And we get on the top, and two little junipers were right in the trunk, so he took one side juniper, I jumped the horse, I was taking the other one, that's the end of it. I never seen it. And no rope, nothing, no hole, nothing ... that junipers. It not behind there. He can't walk, he can't go, he was give up. Never find him.

Then after sold the sheep, lot of deers in Steens Mountain then. All over Kiger Gorge, just like a band of sheep. And I took it every year, 4 years I think, 14, 15 guys over here hunting and all that. So, we put the camp right the top the rim rock, just right straight up the head of the McCoy. Trail there that went a little bit high ... around the canyon. Put it right atop the rim rock, camp, put the camp. First morning season opens, we go down the canyon, before 10 o'clock we get limit. But them guys town, they start drinking, and making one trip, one time come to camp. Me and my brother were packing, we got to pack all that deers, all them deers for them. Then somehow they go down the canyon and go the other side, the trail way high, you know.

One time, this Frank, my nephew and another guy that married to my niece from California, they killed big buck up there. So, we give them a gentle horse, go up there and get that deer. They go over there, and kinda slide rocks there, you know. But that guy he don't know how to handle a horse, so they loaded the deer, and they started across with it, and then ... slide the rocks, you know. Old poor horse fall down, started rolling down, and by god he goes over a quarter a mile. Then he said ... But they go down there, and boy skinned himself, they cut the knife ... cut the rope, and bring the horse to camp. And the poor horse, by god, his jaw all swole up, and the next day he die.

PAULINE: I can imagine!

HELEN: The poor horse had had it.

PAULINE: I'm surprised he waited till the next day. The weather

--- the weather up there on the Steens in the summertime can be kinda bad. You can get a

thunderstorm come up just out of nowhere, can't you?

JOE: Yeah. The last time we was there, pretty lot of years ago now, had a lot of thunderstorms coming. Me and another --- two guys, three guys, and one of them coming to Eugene. Boy, that night it started thundering, and boy; I thought he would ... boy! And then just --- he was hailing, the hail hit the rock, roaring down to the canyon, you know.

And I think the last time we was taking a bunch over here, at Poison Hat. Working all the deers and ... was the --- and we put right out of the rim rock in the shade, but packing down the canyon ... put tight. And by god, one young cop coming. We all deers ... Arrested all! He gave me the fine, everybody.

PAULINE: How many deer did you have?

JOE: I know we got 12, 14.

PAULINE: 12 or 14.

JOE: 14 deer there. Only 2 guys left.

PAULINE: Yeah.

JOE: Just before the cop --- coming cop, but we figured on putting the tag --- trying to put in the pickup, you know.

PAULINE: Yeah.

JOE: So, we got the lawyer here. So he goes to Burns before we did, and we got to see the judge. Every one of them had to go see the judge, before the fine, all they fine, all. This lawyer go on, judge asked, "You already got the ... for tag?" This lawyer says, "Yeah." Got nothing done. But we got the ticket ---

PAULINE: But you didn't have it tied on the deer, so the fellow gave you the ticket anyway.

JOE: Then he called Frenchglen; we stopped there and tell them to call the best lawyer first.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

JOE: So brother was there, the brother called. Well, tell them, we'll see the judge. Tell them he already got tag, hold the tag. So, we come on out pretty good.

PAULINE: I understand you're going to go to Spain here in --- sometime in a few weeks.

JOE: Yeah.

PAULINE: Yeah.

JOE: Yeah, about 14 I think, we start to Boise.

PAULINE: Have you been back before or is this the first time that you've been ---

JOE: Yeah, I was twice.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

JOE: I was alone first, 46 years. And I be there, I was 46 years first time I go there.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

JOE: Then, I go there one year and stayed three months. And then I take the wife and sister and another widow in California, and we go together. That's I think, 14 years ago, 14 years now, last time I was there. Oh, I got a bunch of nephews and niece, or whatever, I see. I got ... brother and sister, but they pass away.

PAULINE: If you had it to do all over again, would you come ---

JOE: Huh?

PAULINE: If you had it to do all over again, would you still come to America?

JOE: Yeah. My younger daughter never been over there yet.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

JOE: So that's why we go. I tell them, I took it after through the school.

PAULINE: You still have a girl in school?

JOE: Yeah, still in school.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

JOE: In Ashland.

PAULINE: Oh, uh huh. Uh huh.

JOE: Yeah, we got to go over there, graduate the first of the month.

PAULINE: Uh huh. Well, who are some of the other people that I should talk to while I'm here,

that were sheep men, or who lived over, run sheep ---

JOE: Well, my brother over here, but he don't feel like it.

PAULINE: Yeah. What is your brother's name?

JOE: Huh?

PAULINE: What is your brother's name?

JOE: We call him Jack.

PAULINE: Jack.

JOE: Enasio (sp.?) for Jack. And another one Ben, but both of them sick, and I don't think they feel like ---

PAULINE: No, if they're not felling well, why ---

JOE: No --- then the oldest one, he kind of blind too. He's past 88.

PAULINE: Yeah. What's his name?

JOE: That's a ---

PAULINE: That's Ben.

JOE: Jack.

PAULINE: Or Jack.

JOE: Yeah.

PAULINE: Well, didn't you say you had three brothers that came over before you did, or just the two?

JOE: Well, the other one come over here, and finally go to Mexico.

PAULINE: Oh.

JOE: He got family over there. He passed away the ... the second one. Then the other one over here, a year and a half older than I am. And the other one 88, past.

HELEN: That other man that we were speaking of, he is in Spain right now?

PAULINE: Oh, uh huh.

HELEN: Timotea said he'd be back in August. Timotea, what was his name again?

TIMOTEA: Who is that?

HELEN: Oh, that one we were talking about.

TIMOTEA: Oh, Juan Egurrola.

JOE: Oh.

HELEN: Yes.

TIMOTEA: Yes, Juan. He worked with Joe.

JOE: Well, Juan, he come 5 years later than I. Then started working with us. He was, I don't know how many years working with us. Then he buy sheep himself, with brother. He sheep man for quite a while. But he roamed in Malheur County, sheep, he never go to the mountains, Harney County.

PAULINE: Well, when did you say you sold out your ranch? And did you say that was about 1943?

JOE: Yeah, sold the sheep.

PAULINE: Yeah, sold your sheep.

JOE: Yeah. Then later on sold the land off the Steens Mountain. I don't know, I think --- what the year was? Do you remember?

TIMOTEA: No, I don't.

JOE: Must be around '55, something like that.

TIMOTEA: Yeah.

JOE: No, I never was figuring to sell that ranch. And finally this guy ---

PAULINE: He just gave you an offer you couldn't resist. Well, did --- how did you get your lambs to market? Like say back in 1920, '21, oh --- 1918? When it come time to sell lambs, how did you --- where did you sell them, and how did you get them there?

JOE: Well, he could ... sold \$6,000.

PAULINE: Yeah.

JOE: ... time the Alvord. That was --- first I bought the six sections, one guy. That's the pay,

highest one, \$14,000. Then that's the McCoy section, that's another highest one, \$2,250. And Louie Seaward that's \$2,000. But rest of it I bought around a \$1,000, quite a few. Then we got \$50,000 for the Steens Mountain, now they got a million there.

PAULINE: Yeah.

JOE: Yeah. But that time, even then, nobody got the money, so that's the trouble.

TIMOTEA: Ask him again about that ---

PAULINE: I will.

TIMOTEA: Because sometimes he doesn't hear ---

PAULINE: Yeah.

JOE: What?

TIMOTEA: She asked you a question.

PAULINE: Yeah, I was wondering about the sheep. In --- when you got ready to sell your lambs, how did you go about selling them? Did you drive them someplace to market?

JOE: Well, the buyers come around.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

JOE: Or you come in town, or if buyer no come around, we got to ship it clear down to Denver or Omaha. Take it down south to sell the market.

PAULINE: Yeah.

JOE: Sometimes the buyers come around, and we make a deal right here. Deliver in Crane, or deliver in Burns, or deliver outside it. But not coming any buyers around, we got to take it clear out to Omaha or Denver. Then later on the market was Ogden too, you know. But at that time it was ... markets at all, at all.

PAULINE: Well, did you ship them then on the train, or ---

JOE: Yeah.

PAULINE: Yeah.

JOE: We bring to Crane from Denio side. We feed them a little hay, and load it all day; all train,

all day. Take it ... coming down ... while they load it. Well, feed it again. Then load it, stay about a day there, then load it, next day is Ogden. Next they keeping ... Next then Laramie, same thing. Next day the Denver, you took it Denver to market over there. Or you took it to Omaha, the next day we make it over there and sell Omaha. Sometimes I took it to Omaha, sometimes Denver ... You take it to Denver or take it to Omaha or ---

PAULINE: Well, then did you go along with the sheep then?

JOE: Yeah, like old cowboys. Just ... like that.

PAULINE: Well, this is interesting. Because, you know, they talk about cattle drives, and taking the cattle to market, driving them to market, and it would be a little bit difficult to drive sheep that far to market, wouldn't it?

JOE: ... to Crane or Burns.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

JOE: I got the burro. Four, five big wethers, break it to follow the burro. I put on the bell, with the wethers, and the burro, the leader. Then I bet we got two mile long train ... then wethers follow the burro, you know, the lamb just follow the wethers. We make it three full days clean up, hundred miles, clean up the Steens Mountain, Crane or Denio side.

PAULINE: In three or four days you could travel a hundred miles.

JOE: Yeah. We were making it a lot of time twenty mile a day.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

JOE: One time, I think one day, past year for the Fred Smyth, Diamond, we left there too hot weather, and we left over there about oh, 4:30 or 5 o'clock. It was moonlight all night. We thought by golly, we'll make it to Crane, 38 miles. We're traveling all night, the highway. And just about daylight we make it to Princeton, and the burro ... We thought by golly, we stop a little bit and make the breakfast. Then about Princeton, and Crane about 12 miles, so early in the morning we thought we make it easy. Poor lambs, all night we drive them, tired, and lay down. After we eat breakfast we start in, they can't move. So we got to stay till noon right there.

PAULINE: Let the lambs rest.

JOE: Got to have rest, themselves. Yeah. I never think, by golly they get tired, they don't want to move at all.

PAULINE: Well, that's been an interesting life.

JOE: Oh, yeah. And I got one guy herding sheep for trailing camp; I don't know for sure, 17, 18 years. Never take a lay-off or nothing. They stay right in the sheep camp.

PAULINE: That's a long time. He must have really liked the life; he must have really enjoyed it.

JOE: Yeah. He don't care to come to town. He stay right there. Finally, I sold the sheep and he go with them, the sheep.

PAULINE: He went with the sheep.

JOE: Yeah. I sold a guy over here in Homedale ... So he go with the sheep. I don't know how many years was there. Finally, the poor son-of-a-gun get sick. They come over here in Ontario and pass away. Yeah ... yet.

PAULINE: Was he a Basque too? Or was he --- was he Basco too?

JOE: Yeah.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

JOE: I don't know, maybe he was around 50 or so, like that when he pass away. Time we get to the desert over here, that's the worst part of it. No water. Ain't got melted water for camp and they got, always feed grain all the time, the horses, pack grain. We got melted water for the horses too.

PAULINE: Melted snow water.

JOE: Snow water. Sometimes by god, snow on the desert, hell there's no, maybe not inches snow. He can hardly get the snow; take it to make it the sagebrush bloom. Some lake and stuff, just bloom, that ... melted that water for the horses.

PAULINE: Now that's interesting, I never heard anyone tell about that before.

JOE: Oh yeah, lot of times. We got big top, you know, and put the --- before top the rocks, built a fire under, and fill up that top with snow. Oh, that sheep is country, all that ... no water at all then.

Can't go as long with no ... 'course the sheep got to have water, and the horses has got ---

PAULINE: So you would move them in early spring while there was still snow on the ground, just so that you could have water.

JOE: Well, we were moving camps all the time in the desert, not the Steens though. Steens Mountain ... 'cause ... maybe week at time, we moving camp all the time. Yeah, that's quite a life. But after used to it, never think about it.

PAULINE: Yeah.

JOE: Never think about it. Then now, I come the boys home with us, two men with one camp. One band of sheep. Yeah, I was tending camp with three bands all the time. Now, now them boys are saying, "Boy hard work." Not now, nothing to it.

PAULINE: Yeah. Well, a band of sheep was what, 7,000 or 8,000 in a band?

JOE: No, around 2,000.

PAULINE: Around 2,000 in a band.

JOE: Maybe a 1,000 ewes, and maybe you got more lambing. Maybe 2,200, 2,300.

PAULINE: Yeah.

JOE: But now I think ... is a little higher, then the sheep men now they put a little bigger too, maybe 2,500 or 2,700, along in there. 'Cause now they can make it lot more lambing than used to be. See the trouble with lambing you can make it to a 150%.

PAULINE: Uh huh.

JOE: They leave a 1,000 ewes, well you got 2,500 in the band, you know. We always lamb in the hills in April.

PAULINE: Well, I really appreciate your taking time to talk to me. It's really been interesting.

Would you tell me the story about your first Model-T Ford again?

TIMOTEA: She missed it.

PAULINE: I missed it, and I didn't get it on the tape. Now you'd gone into, went into Crane ---

...

JOE: ... why don't you buy this Model-T Ford? I said, "Heck, I don't know how they drive. I never touch a car or a wheel." He said, "I'll ... right now." And we started, he put me the wheel, and showed me how. We make a few rounds of the street. I decided, boy, 'cause I got to go 80 miles south the next day to buy the hay.

PAULINE: So you had to get a license first though?

JOE: No, no. And then I buy the car. Well, I said, before I buy the car, I says --- no I think I buy the car first. Then where I get license? Well, let's go over to the store. He said the guy the store in there, Crane, we go out there, and he give us another license. And that's the license I keep right there yet.

PAULINE: Uh huh. Same license. Yeah.

JOE: ... Then that night, 88 miles from Crane into Folly Farm. So I drive there. Next morning, I truck it, and I got into right by Owyhee, gas station there. But I never think about gas. Then I go to ranch, got my wallet, well it's 15 miles north side ... buy 700 ton of hay. And I stayed overnight, I think two nights. Then take off again. Pass the gas station again. Never fill up. Before the Folly Farm, about 4 mile, we out of gas. So I walked 4 miles to Folly Farm. And they seen me walking, the boys, and what happened, what happened? I says, "Car make a pop, pop and stop." And the guys laugh! So the boys, we take a gas and go over there and fill up. When the Model-T Ford home, I mean the Folly Farm, that's where the --- Then I keep over there all the time ... you know. I think I keep it about 2 years is all. Then boys, we lambing, you know, somebody took it to sell a bunch of sheep and everybody start lambing so --- somebody had to run I think, and they lost the oil block, that run part of the motor. And I trade one there ... That's how the story was.

PAULINE: Well, that's a good story though. When did you have your first car ride? I mean, not that belonged to you, but what was the first time you ever rode in a car at all, do you remember?

JOE: That's the first.

PAULINE: That was the first time?

JOE: That's the first, that I touch the wheel.

PAULINE: Yeah.

JOE: Yeah. I ride in a car, but I never ---

PAULINE: Had never driven before.

JOE: --- never driven myself. Then I sold that. That was a lot of sheep, so I bought ... truck, ton truck.

PAULINE: Well, tell about having beans for breakfast, that story you told me, I had the tape recorder off when you told that.

JOE: Well, I eat two orders beans, every morning. Beans at breakfast. I like, maybe you know, Frank ... Well, he was herding in Nevada. So, he was at Burns, so I took a herd --- but we always eat bacon and eggs, and ham and eggs, but he don't want it. He starting eating breakfast with the beans. So okay, he eat beans, heck I start too, by god we eat all winter.

HELEN: Beans for breakfast.

JOE: And he do at night, frying pan there quite a bit, and he'd put a little onion or bacon first, fry the bacon and put a little onion and he keep it a little while frying, like the frying pan. Next morning he warm it up.

And another year me and ... we started. By god, we were the only ones. That's two winters. ... that time, that's all, beans.

HELEN: Didn't Frank go back to Spain?

JOE: Yeah. I don't know how many years.

HELEN: It's been quite a few now since I have --- like I say, I haven't seen him for so long.

JOE: No, I don't know how many years.

HELEN: It's been several years. He stayed there at The Star.

JOE: Huh?

HELEN: I say he stayed at The Star Hotel.

JOE: Yeah.

HELEN: How long did he work with you?

JOE: Huh?

HELEN: How long did he work with you?

JOE: I don't know, 3 or 4 years, I think. We got ... my god, I don't know, 17, 18. He never come to town eating. He would come

SIDE B

... (Buzz on tape very, very loud, very difficult to understand.)

PAULINE: Venator?

JOE: Well, that's the ... we call Basco Ranch, you know. Maybe Basco Ranch. And my oldest brother there and dad and four guys at our ranch, then we lost our ranch. Hard time there, hard time, you know, '24.

Then ... put the Mexican, making moonshine. The house was like that, and I ... back the house, there was a little basin outside basin, you know. And that's where they making moonshine. And then ... we go after groceries to Crane. So, we go right by. We know this Mexican were there, and he wanted we stay for an hour there. He got the fire, already the moonshine going, you know, the still. So, he got over to the Venator Ranch, he got a girlfriend, and he wanted to go see that girl. He wanted we to stay there to keep up the fire going, the still. So we ... tents right by the road. Where you going? See the girlfriend. And we wait, and wait, and wait, and by god coming the Harney County Sheriff, and the state cop. And I know the Harney County Sheriff for years, you know, that Goodman, that little guy. ... he killed ... Folly Farm, one guy. So, that's my cabin, we was over there the basement ... Oh, them guys start talking to me and the other guy, by god he go over there ... camp. Some big guy just ... And that cop, and by god, sheriff break everything and we was in, take one-gallon moonshine. ... So we notice the Harney County Sheriff ... who making moonshine, you know ... So he asked who the boss there. So, state cop, by god, he wanted to take ... But sheriff said, "Hey, I know the guys a long time." We show ... we tell them we go after the

groceries at Crane. ... And they finally took that Mexican. So, we go. They got inside the house, whole room, and more moonshine there. So we packed that home brew, and packed all the moonshine, and we take it to Crane.

PAULINE: They didn't find that!

JOE: They finally got ... My gosh! ...

PAULINE: Oh dear.

JOE: Most the time three guys, two guys take the ... pull right out, and cut the tail, and you make the ... mark ...

PAULINE: You did the whole thing by yourself?

JOE: Yeah, yeah. We three guys, two guys give you the lamb ... cut the tail, and brand them, everything, earmark and everything. ... And blood all over them.

PAULINE: Yeah, yeah, Buck Miller was telling me about marking lambs.

JOE: But now they do it different, you know.

PAULINE: Well, more sophisticated.

JOE: Now we got pinchers ... cut the tail, you know...

HELEN: How much were ... and Harry and all ... whereabouts was he at? Wasn't he up on the Steens?

JOE: Well, he was ... in Fish Creek...

HELEN: Oh, in Fish Creek.

JOE: Yeah. ...

HELEN: Well, I think he had just been gone a year or so when we first came, because I don't think he had --- I don't think there were sheep up there then.

JOE: Of course, he sold the sheep and then...

HELEN: ... been there in the '60's then ... late '50's. Because we came up '59, that's right. So he would have been there in the early part of the '50's, or something, or kind of in the middle, evidently. ... Pauline, do you want some beans?

PAULINE: Oh, sure.

TIMOTEA: Go along with our story. What time is it...?

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