

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #89 - Sides A/B

Subject: Van Houston

Place: Prineville, Oregon

Date: September 27, 1991

Interviewer: Edward Gray

(Note: Van Houston is too far from microphone and his conversation cannot always be heard.)

EDWARD GRAY: ... This is Ed Gray with Van Houston in Prineville on 9-27-91. And you're Helen? That's right? And Helen Houston. What was your maiden name, Helen?

HELEN HOUSTON: Bennett.

EDWARD: Bennett. You related to Shirley Bennett?

HELEN: Who?

EDWARD: Shirley Bennett, lives here in Prineville?

HELEN: No.

EDWARD: She's got Bill Brown's store ledger. Yeah, Audra give it to her.

VAN HOUSTON: Is that right, Audra Bennett?

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: Quite a book.

HELEN: What book was that?

VAN: Bill Brown's store book.

EDWARD: Yeah, his store ledger.

HELEN: Oh well that's Audra, that has that.

VAN: She gave it ---

EDWARD: She gave it to Shirley Bennett.

VAN: ... a little hard of hearing.

EDWARD: Oh.

VAN: She hasn't got her ear plugged in.

HELEN: Oh I'm not either; he just thinks I am.

EDWARD: How long you guys been married?

VAN: ... years.

EDWARD: This is totally off the subject, but who cares. How ---

HELEN: We've been married 60, no 59 years.

EDWARD: Because old Emery just celebrated his 65th. Geeze, that's a long time. We won't get into that. (Laughter) You guys have had your share of disagreements; we won't bring that stuff up. Anyway, Van, now Charlie Houston is your uncle?

VAN: No, he was my dad at one time.

EDWARD: Okay, excuse me, was your dad.

VAN: And my uncles was Albert and Floyd and Tom, all Houston's.

EDWARD: And ---

VAN: And Mrs. Harvey Saunders and Mrs. Hattie ... are aunts. You don't need all that?

EDWARD: No. We were talking a while ago about --- over on Lost Creek, when you were there when you were 13 or 14 years old, that was 1915 or 1916. What was there then, what buildings and corrals and ---

VAN: Well I don't know, there were homesteads all the way down that valley, that Chicago Valley, is what it used to be called. There was homesteads all the way down through there. And there was a schoolhouse down there. That's the reason I turned down there, because there was a schoolhouse, I found out after ---

EDWARD: I know where the location of the schoolhouse was.

VAN: I ate my lunch under the shade of that thing, went out there when I was trapping coyotes, and the bell was up in it, and I didn't have brains enough to steal it then, and somebody else beat me to it. Somebody got ... I missed out on all them big school bells.

EDWARD: Somebody got it. But what did Bill have down there?

VAN: Had horses all over that country, gobs of them, everywhere.

EDWARD: Did he --- where were his corrals, how far from the schoolhouse would you say, five miles?

VAN: That Lost Creek, you mean?

EDWARD: Yeah, at Lost Creek.

VAN: Oh, I guess pretty close to it.

EDWARD: And that would be the northern end of the Sinks.

VAN: The corrals would be just about straight east from --- the corrals were actually right square in the end of Chicago Valley.

EDWARD: Right on the end.

VAN: Right at the foot of Wagontire Mountain.

EDWARD: Okay. Because I was there this last summer, and there was a water trough --- you know where that big steel water tower, not tower, water --- you know it holds water.

VAN: Tank.

EDWARD: Tank. You know where that is? Ah, shoot. Did he have a bunkhouse or anything there at Lost Creek when you were there?

VAN: No, he, I don't think --- there was homesteads all the way around there, but I don't know which ones was Bill --- wasn't at that time.

EDWARD: Okay.

VAN: But when we went on old Wagontire them people lived up on the head of Lost

Creek, was later on was ---

EDWARD: Bradley?

VAN: Bradley. Yeah, all them kids ... Later on after summer ... we stayed there at Bradley's and used their corrals.

EDWARD: I got it --- That's at Bradley Spring.

VAN: But that's actually the head of Lost Creek. ...

EDWARD: Egli homesteaded that.

VAN: Egli?

EDWARD: Yeah. There was Harold Bradley stayed there a lot, and Ira Bradley. And of course both of them were murdered.

VAN: His dad was killed.

EDWARD: Yeah, I've got a picture of them all.

VAN: Well when I went with Dad, at the time we went on over to Egli's, but they lived clear over on the east side of Wagontire. And I think there was a post office over there by the name of it.

EDWARD: That's right, yes, yes. Now you said you went to Egli's. Now you know where Harry Arnold's cabin is today? It wasn't there then, I don't believe. There is a big spring there. When you went to Egli's, was that where Egli Reservoir is today?

VAN: On the other side?

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: I don't know. ... But I presume it's pretty close.

EDWARD: Do you recall, what was at Egli's place, Van? I know these are hard questions, it's a long time ago.

VAN: Well I don't know whether Egli, mother was his relative or just what, but they had it down there where the post office was at Egli. I really don't know, but Ed Egli was there ...

EDWARD: Okay, Ed Egli was there, okay. Because Sophia and Antone had left by that time. Well you went right through Bill Brown's original homestead. That's just below Harry Arnold's place where those corrals are, on the east side, that was Bill Brown's, and George Brown, his brother. If you looked out in that flat out there beyond Egli's, that was George Brown's. Then you go --- do you know where the old Dobkins place was?

VAN: I wouldn't know where to find it now, but ---

EDWARD: Okay, Bill had property; he had 160 acres up there. And his brother had, you know, goes on and on and on. Now your father, Charlie Houston, when was he born? Or do you got all that stuff, Helen?

HELEN: Oh, I don't know, around 1870 or something, I'll look it up for sure.

EDWARD: Okay. He worked for Bill Brown.

VAN: He run his outfit the year I went out there to work.

EDWARD: He was running --- was he the buckaroo boss? And we're talking like 1915, 1916.

VAN: You got all that stuff down there Mama, I don't remember. Well anyway that's when I went up there, to ride up there, when Dad was boss up there ...

EDWARD: What was his responsibilities, Van?

VAN: Oh, just to go out every day and round up a bunch of horses and brand the colts, and castrate the stallions. And I don't think they were taking horses in for the army, were they at that time?

EDWARD: Yes.

VAN: They were?

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: I guess they were. Well anyway they were getting the best geldings and taking them and selling. But I know they were when Sumner started in, running it after Dad run it

a couple years. And I know they were selling geldings then, because they took thousands of them clear over --- well they took them clear into Idaho ...

EDWARD: Did they drive them there?

VAN: ...

EDWARD: Did your dad ever, or Sumner ever relate to you what that was like? Or what would it be like?

VAN: Well it was just a lot of men driving a bunch of horses, that's all, all it amounted to. Well for one to two men in the lead of the horses, and the horses follow them all the way. Be men on both sides.

EDWARD: On both sides. And then there were trail riders --- or what do you call the guys at the end that get all the dust?

VAN: Tail enders. (Laughter)

EDWARD: If --- go ahead, Helen.

HELEN: Well Charles was born on March 2nd, 1871.

EDWARD: 1871. In North Carolina?

HELEN: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: ...

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: That's the reason I can't speak English.

EDWARD: I don't do a very good job either. If you had a 1000 horses and you were going to take them to, whatever, Washington, how many men would that require?

VAN: A 1000 head?

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: Oh I expect ten or twenty. A 1000 horses, well they would cover quite an area.

You take a hundred head and you've got quite a bunch of horses. Then usually out there on that desert riding, well we were from 8 to 10 men riding every day, round them up and brand the colts and ---

EDWARD: Were there that many wild horses out there?

VAN: Yes. We corralled, I can't say for sure, but over South Creek we corralled over 600 head in one day.

EDWARD: How do you keep them together when they're like that?

VAN: Well you just do your best to bring them into the corrals, and then you separate --- there they had a pasture on down --- I was wrangling for Dad at that time. That was the first year I went out there. And it started raining and we had to quit riding for a while there. And the South Creek corrals was about, oh I guess two miles and a half down the ---

EDWARD: Oh ---

VAN: Not far from Wagontire Post Office. And so I --- of course that's a different story, you don't have to listen to it --- It was pouring down rain and an old guy who lived at Buck Creek and he said here, you take my gun, the coyotes ... I was glad to get that gun and hang it on. So I went down and I pulled off the saddle, left it down there, and walked back up the canyon. Of course there was hundreds of horses watered in that canyon. Every time the horses nickered and run them someplace I was hoping there wouldn't be any rattlesnakes ...

EDWARD: Oh don't mention rattlesnakes. I killed five of them over there this summer.

VAN: Oh you did?

EDWARD: At Wagontire, yeah. Okay, go ahead Van.

VAN: But anyway we went back to camp and we didn't ride there for a week, just waited for it to quit raining.

EDWARD: Now you said, I know where South Creek Spring is. That was George

Brown's home. He bought that in 1889.

VAN: I know, his homestead.

EDWARD: Yeah. Actually the Brown's never homesteaded, they bought everything. They bought from the government.

VAN: Was George Bill's brother?

EDWARD: Yeah. I talked to George's son, his only last remaining child. Anyway, I've been to South Creek Spring; I went there two months ago, whatever it was. There is about four --- I've got a picture of it, but anyway --- there is about four posts, and you said that the South Creek Corral was below, downstream.

VAN: Just about a quarter of a mile is all, just right close.

EDWARD: Oh man. Doggone it.

VAN: I suppose there is nothing left, maybe but a fence post or something.

EDWARD: There could be, because ---

VAN: They was all made of juniper there.

EDWARD: Oh yeah. Oh, they last forever. And it went below the spring a quarter of a mile, and then it comes into a real deep canyon. They used that too?

VAN: The canyon is right up and down, we take the horses down to the pasture, down towards ---

EDWARD: Wagontire?

VAN: ...

EDWARD: Shoot. That ticks me off. I'm going to have to go --- I'm going to be back over there October 11th.

VAN: I suspect, just guessing that that's probably is about, the creek is about two or three miles long.

EDWARD: Yeah I think you're probably --- yeah. Yeah, kind of peters out, you know.

VAN: Yeah, it runs out ---

EDWARD: But that old spring is still going.

VAN: That's a good spring. That used to have a lot of troughs, and the horses went for miles ---

EDWARD: Now you had what there Van?

VAN: Troughs, watering troughs.

EDWARD: A lot of water troughs. You know that's the spring that raised all the hell over there, you know.

VAN: It was?

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: It was ...

EDWARD: What a zoo! Five murders over there! Both the Bradley, the ones I just mentioned were killed, murdered. Of course Link Hutton, I get into him later. South Creek Corrals were below South Creek Spring. I mean ---

VAN: Well they're just very, right close you might say. It's just very close ---

EDWARD: A little meadow in there, you know, not much.

VAN: Well that meadow took in the corrals.

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: ... that probably wasn't even there ...

EDWARD: Now you also mentioned Bradley Spring. You were there.

VAN: That was back up on ---

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: --- going over the hill ...

EDWARD: Yeah. You mentioned, you stayed there in 19---

VAN: Later on, when somebody else ... we come back around through there ... we stayed

there at Bradley --- We'd get the girls out there to sing and dance for us every night.

EDWARD: Get what, Van?

VAN: The Bradley girls, the ---

EDWARD: Oh. You want to step outside now? (Laughter)

HELEN: I've heard all these stories many a time.

VAN: There is one of them, I think, living over at Bend yet.

EDWARD: Yes, Grace, I've talked to her. There is Grace, Iris, and Lena are still alive. I've got a picture of them in 1916, or some-thing like that.

VAN: Another little episode, while I'm thinking about it, we were camped at Lost Creek, I believe, maybe not, it's really not that far. But anyway we rode clear to Christmas Lake one day, Christmas Valley, and who is that wild bunch out there ...

EDWARD: Thompson's?

VAN: What's the girl that's got the hound dogs ...

HELEN: ...

VAN: Anyway, it was her folks that lived there, and we rode clear down there and stayed all night with them, and then rode back to Wagontire the next day, to Lost Creek the next day. It's a long ways.

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: And --- but that night, we didn't know them Bradley's were ... But anyway everything was quiet around there, and they had us all in for dinner. And about the time we come out for lunch, here come a bunch of kids running around the house, and all of them had stilts on, so their front legs was ... There was five or six of them come around there, just screaming, liked to scared us to death, wondering what the devil it was. We didn't know there was any kids around there. So then we entertained --- they entertained us, they'd have to give a quarter once in awhile to get them to keep on a running a race

on them stilts. On their hands, their hind legs was just as long as their front legs was that way. And how they would run. But they lived right close to Christmas Lake.

EDWARD: That was ---

VAN: ...

EDWARD: I'm trying to think of who --- that's all the Bradley kids except two. Grace isn't on there, and I don't think Lena is in there.

VAN: This wasn't the one ...

EDWARD: Now were you at Bradley Spring?

VAN: No, we were at --- I don't think that ... is there, it was just a well. It was pretty close to Christmas Lake, Christmas Valley I mean.

EDWARD: I should know that.

VAN: Anyway, one of them got some dogs over here at Mitchell. She's the one that had all the trouble raising them god dang dogs over --- maybe you heard about them.

HELEN: Them racing dogs.

EDWARD: Oh, greyhounds?

HELEN: No, with sleds.

EDWARD: Oh, yeah, yeah. Alaska huskies? Yeah.

HELEN: ...

VAN: She got arrested last year, but she got out of it all right.

EDWARD: I know a lot of people they should have arrested.

VAN: ...

EDWARD: Now when you were ---

HELEN: I'll call Ardyce up and ask her ...

EDWARD: When you were at Bradley Meadows, that's a beautiful little place in there, you know that, it's really nice. Ira Bradley was murdered there in April 1930.

VAN: Well Bigfoot Thompson lived over the hill.

EDWARD: Right, right. What did you hear about old Bradley and Thompson?

VAN: I didn't pay much attention to it. I was busy all the time, and actually didn't pay much attention to it.

EDWARD: You sure, Van?

VAN: Yeah.

EDWARD: Okay.

VAN: I really ...

EDWARD: You know they were making moonshine? A lot of people did that, big deal, you know. A lot of people.

HELEN: Oney Thompson made moonshine?

EDWARD: Oh yeah. Look at that Helen; you learned something today, didn't you?

VAN: He come over here and carried the mail for me for quite a few years.

EDWARD: Bigfoot?

VAN: Oh yeah. Best man I ever had.

EDWARD: You know what, people asked me --- I've talked to 52 people, and some of them won't --- You know Jess Pennington?

VAN: I've heard of it, but I wouldn't know him.

EDWARD: He's told me, he said, "You wouldn't get me to talk about that hell hole, you'd have to get me on a witness stand." He won't talk about it, because he was with Hosmer Bradley, and they found their dad, you know, Ira Bradley. I don't know what I'm going to say about that, probably nothing. But anyway --- Bigfoot Thompson, people have asked me, what happened to him? I said, "I don't know."

VAN: I can tell you, he died at Lakeview ...

HELEN: Lakeview or Paisley, I don't know which.

VAN: No, it was Lakeview.

HELEN: ...

VAN: ...

HELEN: He was a good friend of ...

EDWARD: He died, Raymond --- oh, Houston. Is that your brother down in Paisley? Oh my god.

VAN: You should have been down there to the big deal they had a while back.

EDWARD: I know it, at Fort Rock?

VAN: No, no at Paisley.

EDWARD: Oh.

HELEN: Fourth of July.

VAN: Raymond's wife's mother was a 100 years old. They come from all over the United States and Alaska, come to visit.

EDWARD: Oh, I wished I would have known that.

VAN: ... All over Oregon ...

EDWARD: And then Russell Emery told me they had a big get together at Fort Rock about two weeks ago.

VAN: Did they?

EDWARD: All these old homesteaders came back, and I didn't know that either.

HELEN: I read about that too, I thought that was quite interesting.

EDWARD: Well this Bigfoot ---

VAN: Oney was his name, Oney Thompson.

EDWARD: Oney.

VAN: Oney.

EDWARD: It wasn't Harry?

VAN: Not that I know of, they called him Oney; Oney Thompson is the only name I ever heard.

EDWARD: Okay, let's back up a second here. Harry L. Thompson had a, homesteaded right next to Bradley Spring, okay. And he had a son named Oren.

VAN: Maybe that's where the Oney come from.

EDWARD: I bet --- it has to be.

VAN: But Oney's homestead was over, on down over the hill, clear on down the other side towards Egli.

EDWARD: Yeah, yeah. He had --- that was Oney's, huh? I bet you his dad was Harry.

VAN: Could have been.

EDWARD: I bet you. Has to be.

VAN: Could have been.

EDWARD: In fact I now it is, because it listed him in the census as the son. Yeah, that's right. Huh. How old was this Oney?

VAN: Oh, golly, he wasn't too old; he carried the mail for 42 years.

HELEN: Yeah. That was about the time that Glen was just a little fellow.

EDWARD: That's interesting. Now Van, you're telling me that this Oney, I think his real name was Oren, O R E N Thompson, because there was an Oren Thompson in Paisley in 18---, 18---, 1986, but now there isn't. So he has probably passed away I would guess.

VAN: I don't know whether Bigfoot ever went there or not. He went to Lakeview, but I don't think he ever stayed at Paisley very long.

EDWARD: Okay, but you're saying that Oren Thompson was Bigfoot.

VAN: They called him Oney all the time, but it was probably Oren, but they called him Oney, I don't know why.

EDWARD: But would Bigfoot be his dad Harry?

VAN: It could have been.

EDWARD: Okay.

HELEN: But they called this one Bigfoot.

VAN: They called him Bigfoot.

EDWARD: They called him Bigfoot too. Oh, brother!

HELEN: If you want to find out about him, why you just go down and ask Irma about it, they were real good friends.

EDWARD: ... Oh.

VAN: I think you got yourself too much ...

EDWARD: I couldn't get down to Paisley this summer; I couldn't believe it. And old Wayne Negus died too, I heard.

VAN: Yeah ...

EDWARD: Yeah. Back to old Van here. When did you start working for Bill Brown?

VAN: Oh, when I was about 12.

EDWARD: So you were born in 1900?

VAN: 1905.

EDWARD: 1905. Oh, 1917, okay. And how long did you work for Bill?

VAN: Off and on for quite awhile. But mostly I was at lambing time; I'd go up and work for him lambing in the spring.

EDWARD: And where did he lamb at, Freezeout?

VAN: Well one time it would be Freezeout, and someplace next ... but mostly it was Freezeout, in that country. One time he lambed over at the Gap Ranch.

EDWARD: Did Bill --- well first of all, what does it take to be

--- what did they call you, a lamber? (Laughter) I don't know. Or many other names?

VAN: Lamb licker.

EDWARD: A what?

VAN: A lamb licker.

EDWARD: A lamb licker?

VAN: That was what they called us guys that helped lamb, lamb licker. You know they always needed licking, the old ewe didn't do it, you had to do something about it. You used to use a gunny sack, or something like that to ... Well that's the name ... Anybody that ain't got any more sense to herd sheep ... lamb licker. Don't put all that crap in your book. (Laughter)

EDWARD: I like that though, lamb licker. Van Houston was a damn lamb licker. (Laughter) What did that, what was that job, what's a lamb licker do?

VAN: Well over at the Gap Ranch, now I can't think of that guys ... but anyway these two guys graduated from college in Idaho, and they had the bright idea they was going to buy old Bill Brown out. Educated men, both had a college education. And they come out to the Gap Ranch and wanted a job of herding sheep. And I didn't know for four or five years after ... But anyway he put one of them night hawking, and the other one ---

EDWARD: Now wait, what's night hawking?

VAN: That was watching at night.

EDWARD: Okay.

VAN: And I had the job of helping him out there, and I learned quite a little bit from him ... And he ended up over here in the courthouse in Prineville, and he was the county clerk's assistant here for a long time.

HELEN: He was what?

VAN: County clerk's assistant, agriculture part of it.

EDWARD: But you --- what did you do? I mean you helped ---

VAN: Well when a ewe is going to have a lamb, she generally starts bawling, and you'd

get her in the pen where she would get away from the rest of the bunch, until you could take care of her. Lots of them had to be pulled. Lots of them come with their heads out, and lots of them come backwards, everything else. Well they did! But he was a professional hand, about all I done was kept them in coffee and one thing and another. Of course I took care of ... But he was a professional, he certainly knew his sheep. He intended to buy old Bill out, is the reason he come over there and took up that job.

EDWARD: You mean, is there a certain, like a certain time of year that sheep give birth, like, kind of like cows? But cows can go

VAN: Well it all depends on when you want them to lamb. If you want them to lamb a certain time, you turn the bucks in a certain time.

EDWARD: And you've got to keep track of that.

VAN: Sure ...

EDWARD: I don't know squat about sheep.

VAN: Well you don't like the bucks around the sheep all year; you'd be having lambs all the time.

EDWARD: So some --- have you ever tended sheep bands? What's that like?

VAN: You mean herding sheep?

EDWARD: Yeah, herding sheep I mean.

VAN: Well it's just a hell of a job. No, my dad run sheep practically all his life ... horses. I grew up following shepherders. That's how I ...

EDWARD: Right, yeah.

VAN: ...

EDWARD: Could you, Van, could you give a --- let's say, when were you a lamb licker?

VAN: What time of year?

EDWARD: What year, yeah about '20?

VAN: Oh, I was born in 1905, and I probably wasn't 10 years old when I was going around with them to help take care of the sheep.

EDWARD: How many sheep do you think Bill had then, how many bands let's say?

VAN: Well I wouldn't have ... until after I was ...

EDWARD: How many did he have then, that would be '23, 1923.

VAN: The year I was up there he, I think he sheared out 11,000 head in one bunch. He had them all in once bunch.

EDWARD: 11,000?

VAN: Yeah.

EDWARD: This is real important, because the figures just go --- 40,000 sheep, nah, no way.

VAN: He never had ... But he had, he had right close to 11,000. They sheared out right close to 11,000 when they sheared them ...

EDWARD: Now that would be 1923? Eighteen and --- yeah.

VAN: Yeah, right about then.

EDWARD: And where did they shear these sheep?

VAN: They had corrals at --- oh first over at, I think first year I was lambing was --- head of Buck Creek. And he took them to some corrals on down Long Hollow, either that year or the next year, and then sheared them out at Buck Creek.

EDWARD: At Buck Creek, above the big white house?

VAN: Right at the Buck Creek, just below the ---

EDWARD: Right below the ---

VAN: Yeah, just right below ... quarter of a mile.

EDWARD: Okay, Belfour, there is nothing there now, but the house.

VAN: Yeah, they had lots of corrals and sheds and everything else.

EDWARD: Yeah, that's all gone. Belfour's house I believe is still standing, yeah. Huh. You say 11,000, now that is just sheared sheep.

VAN: Yeah, and he lost quite a bunch of them shearing. Oh we could do, when we started to pick up lambs, the three of us, my brother Sumner ... all we would do is just follow the sheep around during the day, and round them up in little piles and flag them out so the coyotes wouldn't bother them.

EDWARD: Now what is that, what's this flagging?

VAN: Put a flat out, put them in little bunches and put a flag out there to keep the coyotes away. Just a stick in the ground with a flag a waving.

EDWARD: Really?

VAN: Might hang a hat on it, or a coat or anything else you happened to have.

EDWARD: And that will keep a ---

VAN: To a certain extent. The smell of it will keep them away.

EDWARD: I'll be darned. See I've heard that, but I wasn't quite sure.

VAN: Yeah, well with that many sheep we could only travel about, oh they wouldn't travel over two miles a day, usually in one direction.

EDWARD: Did Bill run his sheep mostly in Crook County?

VAN: Pretty much, not many in Harney County. In the wintertime he'd go out on the desert, way out ... what's Lake County now.

EDWARD: Out below Lost Creek?

VAN: Down, clear out on the, back of Glass Buttes.

EDWARD: Oh, okay.

VAN: Out around Benjamin Lake, and in through that country.

EDWARD: During the winter.

VAN: ...

EDWARD: And what did he sleep in? It gets cold guys ---

VAN: Well I'll tell you what Bill Brown did. When it turned winter he'd put on another pair of underclothes, just ... Come spring he'd start pulling them off. And I imagine at one time he had as much as four or five sets of underwear on.

EDWARD: Now you've seen that?

VAN: I've seen that.

EDWARD: Okay. Because this is another one of these, you know, stories ---

VAN: And I've also been in the tent sleeping with him, when he'd lay in bed and spit his raisin seeds up against the tent, would ... half the night. He was a character! I always liked that old cuss. I went to see him after he was down at the hospital, nursing home, in Salem.

EDWARD: I've got a picture of that too. Yeah.

VAN: Yeah, we stopped to see him, not long before he died. He remembered me.

EDWARD: What --- you said you slept with old Bill.

VAN: In the same tent, not with him.

EDWARD: (Laughter) Yeah. I don't think I'd want to ---

VAN: And another thing he did in the fall of the year, he'd buy, oh I don't know how many wool blankets. And he'd pile them all on his bed, and somebody wanted one he'd take one off his bed. That's what he had them for ... And of course the ... and ate the raisins, never pulled off his overalls. He filled his pockets full of raisins, and lay there and eat them raisins, and spit them against the tent ... half the night. But I still liked the old devil. What a character.

EDWARD: He was a good man.

VAN: He was.

EDWARD: He wasn't Rube Long, or ---

VAN: He was so damn good that everybody stole from him. That was just the substance of it.

EDWARD: Stole. He wasn't that lousy stinking Hanley guy, and Pete French type, you know.

VAN: Nope, he was ---

EDWARD: They were robbers and thieves.

VAN: No, Bill would have been a very religious man. Of course he did have a brother that was a preacher.

HELEN: They found a songbook up there with his name in it, where they had the church up there. I don't know where it was, but ---

EDWARD: He donated all of those. Martha Sherman told me that. Yeah. He --- were you ever in --- well let's back up here a little bit. When --- was he ever involved at all with actual chasing down wild horses? He stayed away from that? He let his buckaroos do that.

VAN: He might have before my time out there, but I doubt if he ever did. Because even when he was just riding around over the range, he'd pull off his shoes, or unlace them, in case his horse would fall. I never did see him with a pair of cowboy boots. No, he wasn't a buckaroo ...

EDWARD: He --- was he involved with selling the horses?

VAN: Oh yeah.

EDWARD: He did that.

VAN: Oh yes.

EDWARD: Did you ever hear of Virge Newman, Van?

VAN: No, I've heard of him, but I don't ---

EDWARD: Blackie Newman?

VAN: I didn't know him ...

EDWARD: When did you quit working for Bill Brown, approximately?

VAN: I don't know, I just worked for him --- when did --- I worked for him four different springs ...

EDWARD: What did he pay you, you recall?

VAN: Oh, I think \$60 a month.

EDWARD: That was good money.

VAN: ...

EDWARD: I've got a list of Bill Brown's employees, and it's about 110 that I know of. Did you ever see this interview that Wanda Clark did? Now wait a minute, Fred Houston is not your brother.

VAN: Cousin.

EDWARD: That she did with Fred Houston? It's fantastic.

VAN: Fred worked for him for quite a while.

EDWARD: Oh yeah.

VAN: Frank was, or Fred was the first guy went out to ride. Well not the first year, the second year. Sumner was running the outfits with his dad. And we stayed at the Gap Ranch and we had a bunch of damn old bucking horses, they was all trained to buck anyway. ... with Sourdough, and I rode him out in the corral, the night before ... I managed to stay on top of him. Next morning I was going to go out to ride, and we had the corrals about, oh from the Gap Ranch, it went way up the canyon where the highway runs now, the canyon ... and the corrals up there. There was a big canyon; we used it for our horses.

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: And we got about half way up there, I guess, and this god damn Sourdough, the name of the horse, give a right quick whirl and I just lit on my head. I wasn't even expecting it. He swirled around so doggone quick I just went right square on my head ... And I broke, damn near broke my neck. I could hardly lift my head up. But anyway I traded horses with Fred that day, and he rode Sourdough the rest of the time, and he never did buck with him.

EDWARD: I think he said that in here.

VAN: He might have.

EDWARD: Yeah, I think so. I remember the Sourdough.

VAN: Well he did, he never did buck with Fred ... But he was a bucking horse, he was trained to buck. Pretty good saddle horse too.

EDWARD: That Gap Ranch, did he ever, did Bill ever have a barn there?

VAN: Yeah, there was a long shed, it wasn't much of a barn. There was quite a long shed there.

EDWARD: A long sheep shed.

VAN: There might have been a horse barn there before my time. Seemed to me like there was two or three sheds around.

EDWARD: You know the --- the cabin is still standing, sort of.

VAN: Is it?

EDWARD: Sort of. The porch is falling down. But the cabin basics --- not very big, you know, little tiny cabin. Is that what was there then? Little tiny thing, two rooms, three rooms I think.

VAN: We had a guy go insane there; did I tell you about it? He went insane there at the Gap Ranch.

EDWARD: Oh --- go ahead.

VAN: A sheepherder, he come out there, he screamed ... kill everybody. So they got a --- held him up, got the police up there and took him to Burns. He ended up in the bughouse, he really did.

EDWARD: Well I imagine some of those guys couldn't handle that out there. Where are the women, where are the women. Sorry guys, there are none.

VAN: It's a real nice road to travel on, going from Buck Creek across through the mountains there on that old road, the old horse used to travel on.

EDWARD: I have.

VAN: Have you been on that old rocky road? That's quite a road.

EDWARD: That comes out at where we were just talking, Egli place, and so forth. Oh that road --- hasn't been --- See Jack Peila owns all that now.

VAN: No this one, this is from Buck Creek.

EDWARD: Oh, oh, I see.

VAN: Straight east --- the old ranch ... back over there to Wagon-tire.

EDWARD: I haven't really been on that one.

VAN: Well it's just a ...

EDWARD: We --- I spent three days on the GI Ranch, on old Bill's places this summer. We had a big four-wheel drive. Some of those roads are bad.

VAN: How is that fellow to get along with on the GI? ...

EDWARD: He is a ...

VAN: Is he, that's what I've heard before.

EDWARD: ... did you hear that? It is Bob Williams. I won't even get into it.

VAN: We ended up buying Fife.

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: ...

EDWARD: Yeah. Oh, the GI Ranch, don't even --- they bought, they just bought the Grindstone. Beautiful ranch, you know. That's the one we were just ... I was at Earl's last summer when he took me up to see Alice Delore, I interviewed her. And I got a hold of the guy, Darrell Walker; Darrell Walker is the guy that shot her peacock. That guy is still alive.

VAN: He is?

EDWARD: He lives in Idaho. And I wrote him a letter, and he kept writing me, what a ...

VAN: Maybe he was afraid you'd put something in ...

EDWARD: He's something else. Here's what Fred said about --- and this is like 42 pages all on Bill Brown and him, Fred, working for Bill.

VAN: Well Fred knew it all.

EDWARD: He says that the first buckaroo boss was Charlie Parrish, and that's true, 1892 to about 1894. Second was Bob Baker. And then, oh come on, Virge Newman, and then Charlie Couch, you remember him?

VAN: Not very well. He was the guy that could ride just as good bareback as he could in a saddle.

EDWARD: Got a picture of him in there someplace. And then Johnny Mosier.

VAN: Sumner rode for Couch and Mosier both out there when he was a kid.

EDWARD: Okay, that makes sense, because Charlie Couch was buckaroo boss, I think 1913 to 1916, or something like that. Johnny Mosier, and then Sumner Houston.

VAN: Dad run it one year before Sumner.

EDWARD: Fred. And then Charlie Houston, and then Fred Houston. And Fred I think was '28 to '31, I believe. I think that's about what it --- I got it all written out, out there. You think that's pretty close?

VAN: I think so.

EDWARD: But you're saying, Van, that Charlie was before Sumner. Okay. I'm not sure of the years of Charlie or Sumner. I just got to take some kind of a wild guesses. It was in the '20's, does that make sense?

VAN: ...

EDWARD: Anyway Fred says a lot, and this is very interesting. When did you last see Bill Brown?

VAN: I visited him in his room down at Salem.

EDWARD: And was his room in the basement?

VAN: Nope.

EDWARD: It wasn't?

VAN: No.

EDWARD: That would have been, he died January 1941.

VAN: ... her folks lived in ...

EDWARD: Oh, I see.

HELEN: Do I have any idea of what?

VAN: When we stopped to see old Bill down there. I don't think you went up to see him.

HELEN: No, I don't think I was ever in that. I remember we thought maybe that that was the same place that Alice Taylor had been. But it was before that, that he was there. You know Alice Taylor was Mom's friend that lived over there, and she lived around --- I think she lived in the same home he had ...

VAN: ...

HELEN: Oh yeah, she didn't go there until 1950's or something.

EDWARD: What --- Bill lived where, Van? Up, just in an upper floor, or ---

VAN: Yeah, he was up some stairs anyway, the first or second floor ...

EDWARD: What kind of condition was he then, do you recall at all?

VAN: Well he was very normal, I thought. He knew who I was. He was normal ...

EDWARD: Did he seem to enjoy it?

VAN: Well, I don't think he did. I think he would have preferred to been anywhere, just ...
See he actually paid for that place years in advance ...

EDWARD: I have the, I went through Willamette University, the Methodist Archives, and I found the receipt that he paid \$10,000 in 19--- oh boy, now that I can't remember.

VAN: Well it doesn't make any difference.

EDWARD: No. About 1910 or something.

VAN: Well I knew that he paid for it a long time ago. And he had, I don't know whether his brothers stayed in that place or not. ... Yeah, I think he had two brothers, at least one I know about.

EDWARD: Oh yeah, he had four brothers. Yeah, two were doctors. And his sister was a doctor, Sarah Brown, she became a doctor.

VAN: Sister Sarah.

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: She was out at the ranch for a while.

EDWARD: Right. What type of lady was she?

HELEN: We took her cow to her one time ...

VAN: ... first trip out there, stayed all night at Fife. I suppose I was about 10 years old.

EDWARD: Were you ever in Bill Brown's big house?

VAN: I should say so.

EDWARD: Did you ever sleep there?

VAN: Sure.

EDWARD: Did he --- I've been in what's left. You know they tore the back half down.

VAN: Well they tore half of the top off of it too. It had a great big kid's room upstairs.

EDWARD: Right, and that's all gone. Did he allow cowboys, or buckaroos, or lamb lickers to stay --- there was four bedrooms upstairs. Did he allow them to stay, sleep in there?

VAN: Well I don't know whether he did when he was alive or not. I know afterwards we all stayed there for a long time.

EDWARD: You know Audra Brennan stayed in that house, and Claude, from '37 to '42, I think it was. And she fortunately had a picture of it. And floor plans, I've got all that. I didn't know it was that big. I think most people thought it was the size it is now.

VAN: No, it was a big house. Well he was going to raise 11, or his children ...

HELEN: ...

VAN: ...

HELEN: We stayed all night there one time. The kids were --- I don't know it was during hunting season or something; we stayed there all night. We stayed upstairs, and it seems like there were wood rats running around.

EDWARD: Oh yeah, I imagine.

HELEN: And I stopped there that time when I came from ... springs.

VAN: We stayed when Brennans --- we stayed out there.

HELEN: Who?

VAN: Brennans, we mentioned ... we stayed ...

HELEN: Oh yeah, I think we did. We stopped up there and ---

EDWARD: Well did you guys live out there --- I know where the latter post office was, the later post office. Is that where you guys ---

VAN: At Fife, you mean?

EDWARD: Yeah. Is that where you guys lived?

VAN: I bought the place finally. No that story in the paper about me buying Fife was ---

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: There was a hunk of land from Streets on down there about the mouth of Buck Creek.

EDWARD: Okay.

VAN: Run out in the ...

EDWARD: Right.

VAN: And that's the piece of land I bought. But at one time the post office, I guess, moved down into that ...

EDWARD: Oh yeah, it was in six different locations.

VAN: Yeah, I know it was. And another time it was over ... the foot of the hill over there. Then it finally ended up down where Carl and Molly lived ...

EDWARD: Oh yeah, yeah, okay. I see.

VAN: I carried the mail out there 43 years at Fife.

EDWARD: 43 years? When was the last time you carried the mail there, drove it there?

VAN: 20 years ago, I guess. How long has it ---

HELEN: Was it in '75, along in there when you quit driving.

EDWARD: How in the world did you run a --- didn't you have a ranch too?

VAN: Not at that time.

EDWARD: 43 years.

HELEN: We bought the ranch in 1948, bought Molly and Carl out. And that's when ---

VAN: See that was Fife later on. That post office at Fife was moved one, two, three, four times I think, that I know of.

EDWARD: Yeah, I've got all that information. It was --- oh, where was Streets, not Joseph Street --- James Street's place?

VAN: Well I think one of the Street places was clear at the head of the creek.

EDWARD: Right.

VAN: I don't know which one it was. Then Bill Brown's, and then some other homestead, and then ... the other Street place.

EDWARD: Okay, ... okay. Yeah, James Street's place, that's where we camped, and it's gone. The Buck Creek Ranch, they've remodeled it for these rich guys, you know. They ... I don't want to get into it.

VAN: I haven't been up there for 10 years.

EDWARD: And then it's Belfour's and then Joseph Street. Lena Street's dad. You know that Paul Wilson is still alive?

VAN: I don't know.

EDWARD: Yeah, he is.

VAN: Is he?

EDWARD: He is 97 years old. I interviewed him early this summer.

HELEN: Who was he?

EDWARD: Lena Street's husband, second husband. Boy, what ---

VAN: Where did he live?

EDWARD: Anderson, California.

VAN: 97.

EDWARD: Yeah. Gee, smart, sharp, oh man, I can't believe it. I don't know what you guys eat. Mickie Sutherland, what do you know about her? She delivered mail too, you know. But --- well no, it's not even close. That was from Wagontire to Riley and so forth. Link Hutton, know anything about him?

VAN: I heard a lot about him. Did he kill a man one time?

EDWARD: He killed; he murdered Harold Bradley, outright murder, no doubt about it. Because he thought that Harold Bradley was messing around with his wife, and he

wasn't. It was Clarence Woodard. I got a hold of Clarence Woodard's son in Norwalk, Connecticut. Took me four, five, six phone calls, and he most generous. He sent me a picture, because Clark Woodard run off with Leona --- Hutton would have killed her. In fact he would have killed Woodard too. He was a mean S.O.B. He may have killed Ray Jackson, I don't know. It's hard to say, I can't say that.

VAN: Well there was, certain pretty tough customers all over in that damn ...

EDWARD: Were you ever over there on that east side of Wagontire in the '30's?

VAN: No, but --- well I guess I was too. Because they had me running that outfit all --- No, I haven't been out there since we ...

HELEN: We weren't out there in that country --- I came here in 1929, and ...

EDWARD: What did you like about working for Bill Brown?

VAN: Well I don't know; he just was a damn nice old guy. And he took all kinds of tormenting, ribbing, and everything else.

EDWARD: What do you think, your personal opinion, do you think he knew that he was getting stolen from?

VAN: Well he couldn't help it.

EDWARD: Did he ever say anything, to any dad or ---

VAN: I never heard him mention ...

EDWARD: That's one thing I don't understand.

VAN: Well he trusted everybody, and he just left the groceries there, and they'd come. Half of them didn't write their name down, I don't think. And he caught them all over the desert; good lord Wagontire and everyplace else would come to old Bill's.

HELEN: Well he felt they were hungry, if they wanted it, why if they needed it, he'd let them have it.

SIDE B

EDWARD: Lace top shoes, right? And when he rode a horse he unlaced them. Let me throw some --- let me come off the top of my head here. The store, it evidently was torn down in about '41 or '42 by Dominique Verges. And then he built a little cabin, bunk-house over there at Hardin, which is still standing, because I can tell by the wood, I know it is the old store wood. Were you ever in that store, Van?

VAN: In that store? Sure.

EDWARD: What was the store like inside?

VAN: I think we got a picture of it.

EDWARD: You do?

HELEN: We have a picture of us outside of it, but ...

EDWARD: You do?

HELEN: Well probably Audra gave me one.

EDWARD: Oh, okay, I've got that one.

HELEN: Yeah, I think you have that. But she gave me the pictures of the big house.

EDWARD: Right.

VAN: And somebody, can't think of his name, somebody painted Horseshoe Bar on his garage. Later on Dominique, I guess, built a new garage down there ... But it had a Horseshoe Bar on the door right there. When they, I don't know, Brennan might have moved that all up the canyon up there. The door is still up there ... a bunch of us. I took a picture of the door up there with that big Horseshoe Bar on it. The canyon is just right up -

--

EDWARD: Oh, yeah where the garbage dump thing is.

VAN: Uh huh.

EDWARD: Yeah. You wouldn't believe that place now. That --- rich people make me

sick, some of them. These two millionaires from New York own all that, they own 300,000 acres, locked gates, fenced to the max, and they fenced up along --- this is totally off the subject, I got to get it off my chest. They fenced it up the creek, right along the Buck Creek house, all these rich guys, wherever they live, can --- \$5,000 a week to stay in that Buck Creek house. And they damn near, excuse my language, but it is maddening. They darn near made them a pasture for deer, you know.

VAN: Well is that the one that still got the GI Ranch ... got all that, or different?

EDWARD: It is two guys from New York, and Bill Smith out of Bend. And he is a ...

VAN: I've heard he's a ... yeah.

EDWARD: Now they've bought the Grindstone. They bought the Lister Ranch up here, and that house, that beautiful stone house, it is empty. It has been since they bought it two years ago, or three years ago.

VAN: Well have they got the Mills Ranch too?

EDWARD: Yeah, 55 miles.

VAN: ...

EDWARD: Oh, it's --- well Earl McConnell's had the Grindstone, you know, that was '47, but he sold out. He says, "I've had it, I can't deal with this government anymore." So he sold out. His ranch was a part of the Mills and Sherman, beautiful. Gee beautiful. Well it's Long Hollow, Norcross, out there. That reminds me, McIntosh Ranch, you remember that?

VAN: Old Bill sent me over there one day to cut willows, because he wanted me, to keep me from going up to shear sheep. He wanted me to tie wool ... But anyway the one time ... So one day he says, "Van," he says, "I need some willows cut over to the McIntosh place. I wished you'd go over there and cut them willows." ... I did slash down a few out there.

EDWARD: Along that little creek? What were you cutting willows for?

VAN: Oh he wanted to get them out of the way so he could get way up ... He didn't want it cut, he just wanted me to do something while he was waiting for shearing, that's all he wanted.

EDWARD: Don't do any good, unless you dynamite them out. (Laughter)

VAN: You remember when I got that picture, when Art and Florence ... and us went up the canyon up there and we took our lunch, under that pine tree, we got a picture of it. Well that's the McIntosh place.

EDWARD: Do you have a picture of the McIntosh place?

VAN: I got a picture ...

HELEN: ...

VAN: Art and Florence ...

EDWARD: How in the world, now I've got it calculated because I've got the Pacific Wool Growers, real nice bunch of people --- Bill borrowed \$44,000, he paid it back in three weeks. Then he turned around and borrowed \$47,000 in 1934. He couldn't pay that --- he paid back, I think \$18,000 of that mortgage. A day after that loan was due, they foreclosed on him. On that foreclosure, which I got out of the courthouse here, it lists all his properties except for the properties he sold at Lost Creek to Mickie Sutherland in 1932. That was 900 and some acres. I mapped out every one of those properties in Lake, Deschutes, blah, blah, blah, blah, Harney County, and Crook County. 32,600 and I think and 40 acres is what he owned. 22,000 acres in Southeastern Crook County, that area you know. How in the god's name did he know ---

VAN: What he had.

EDWARD: Yeah, what's going on?

VAN: Well I don't know, he just wanted to take his sheep any place he wanted to go, and

he didn't want somebody --- Now on Long Hollow over there, Bradley, a fellow by the name of Bradley had a homestead right in the middle of it, he took it there just so he could sell it to old Bill.

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: But it is just, oh, you know where it is, coming down Long Hollow just after you come over Buck Creek, coming over the hill from Buck Creek, going down Long Hollow.

EDWARD: Oh, Mackey Butte.

VAN: Yeah, right close to Mackey Butte.

EDWARD: Yeah, okay.

VAN: And, but anyway Bradley lived down there, and Bill paid him wages just to sit there along his fence and keep his sheep, keep Bill's sheep out of his meadow, Bradley ... He paid him all spring just to keep them sheep out of ...

EDWARD: Did you ever hear of Rickman's?

VAN: Oh yeah. Rickman was some relation to Bradley, I think.

EDWARD: Rickman's house and corrals are still there. The house is still standing. I started to go upstairs and the stairway broke, about broke my neck. (Laughter) Yeah, that house --- well standing, I mean there is nothing left of it, but it is standing out there. Beautiful meadow right there.

VAN: Did you find any rattlesnakes in that country?

EDWARD: No.

VAN: There is a few of them.

EDWARD: Boy, oh that Wagontire.

VAN: We spent our honeymoon up on Bradley Flat, we stayed at ... forest service, and we camped at ...

EDWARD: Now where --- Bradley Flats ---

VAN: That is the flat back of Rickman's, pretty well in the timber.

EDWARD: Right. Now what is that ---

VAN: On Snow Mountain.

EDWARD: I'm kind of lost here. Bradley Flats, we went right by it, and then we come down to the McIntosh place. Is that --- that's not Long Hollow, that's Norcross.

VAN: No, Norcross. Long Hollows ...

EDWARD: That's the old military road or --- went through Long Hollow.

VAN: Yeah, Long Hollow went from Twelvemile over to Buck Creek.

EDWARD: Freezeout is on Long Hollow.

VAN: Yeah.

EDWARD: Nothing at Freezeout anymore, all gone. There is a few boards on the ground, that's all.

VAN: We lambed at Freezeout one year.

HELEN: That's just the picture of that tree ...

VAN: ... That's on the creek above there.

EDWARD: Do you have, while Helen's got it out, Van and Helen, do you guys have any photos of any of that county that we've been talking about, old, you know?

VAN: Not in view of the area, as far as that's concerned. I don't know whether ... we probably have it on slides. I've got quite a lot of slide pictures.

EDWARD: I have yet to be able to find old photos of say Bill Brown on a horse, or Bill Brown's Gap Ranch when it was going.

HELEN: Nobody had cameras in those days.

EDWARD: Yeah. Oh yeah, far and few between, yes. Audra, thank heavens, had a picture of the house what it originally looked like, and the store. Only ones I've ever seen. Or the McIntosh Ranch, or Lost Creek buildings, I --- you happen to know of anybody that

might have that, that worked for Bill Brown? They're going, you know, there are not too many of them around anymore, unfortunately. I'm a picture freak. There is 250 photos in that ---

VAN: I've got a few slides ...

EDWARD: Of some of the buildings?

VAN: No, I might have some ...

EDWARD: Yeah, Buck Creek is all right, because I've got pictures of it.

HELEN: I don't know, you've got that one of all the old houses up there in the country.

VAN: Well, that's up Bear Creek and ...

EDWARD: Oh. Did, do you know when or who tore down that back part of Bill Brown's Buck Creek house? I don't know either.

HELEN: Oh what's that man's name that bought it?

EDWARD: Verges?

HELEN: Dominique Verges, I thought he did ... that's what I understand. I always thought that he was the one that tore it down.

VAN: He might have been.

EDWARD: Who was, Columbus Johnson, you know I've read about him, but he homesteaded that Buck Creek Ranch, 160 acres, 1890, he got his homestead patent. Then he sold it to, did you ever hear of this guy, Creighton (sp.?) Smith? Creighton Smith then sold it to Bill Brown in 1900. And the house was built; Paul Wilson told me this, now I've forgot the guy's name that built the house. I've got that too, but --- The house was built in 1910. Do you have any idea when that store was put in?

VAN: I doubt it was very long afterward, because there was 10,000 sand lappers out on that desert that come there to get their groceries. And he'd give to them. And I doubt ---

EDWARD: Sand lappers. (Laughter)

VAN: You never heard that?

EDWARD: Well I guess --- it sounds like these flat landers in Eugene. They're all coming up here to hunt deer and kill every-body. Crazy bunch of people.

VAN: Haven't I got a picture of, those slides, maybe not, oh the guy that bought that Crooked River Ranch up there. When he worked for Dominique, he went up there one day and we was sitting ...

HELEN: I suppose you have on those slides, but I don't know. He's got so many slides; it's hard to remember.

EDWARD: Oh yeah.

VAN: We had a tour, maybe I told you; we went up to Paulina ...

EDWARD: That Irene, she does a heck of a job. I think she is great.

VAN: Yeah, she is a pretty good hand.

EDWARD: Yeah. Yeah, they've got an amazing historical society.

VAN: Her husband has still got the mail line ...

HELEN: They've got everything on computer now.

EDWARD: Do they? She wasn't there today. I wanted to see her.

HELEN: Yeah, there is some man that had a computer, and I guess he was selling them here in town, trying to teach people how to use them or something. Anyway, he took his computer over there and worked --- Irene says I sure like my card index a lot better.

EDWARD: I still write on a typewriter, folks. Those computers all scare me or something. Let's see, what else. Lordy, lordy, what did Sumner ever say about Bill Brown, did he mention anything to you about working for him?

HELEN: Did you show him that ... that I found, about taking the horses in?

EDWARD: I don't think I --- yeah, I've got that. Yeah, I've got that one.

HELEN: What Sumner said there?

EDWARD: Oh, right here?

HELEN: Yeah.

EDWARD: Oh, I didn't see that. Yeah, I've got that one.

HELEN: Sumner said, "Every May before school was out Houston would take off to the desert to herd horses. He would ride with about 20 men and they would travel from place to place in the desert with a cook wagon working the horses. That was when Bill Brown was going strong. He had gobs and gobs of horses all over. Brown would sell his horses at Crane, a railroad about 30 miles east of Burns. The horses were sold to a Montana outfit, which in turn would sell them to the army after breaking them. I brought back one check for a \$100,000 Houston says."

EDWARD: Now Houston, Helen?

HELEN: Sumner, Van's brother.

EDWARD: Sumner Houston.

VAN: One-armed guy. He's the one that had his arm cut off ...

EDWARD: Yeah, Fred mentions that in here. Sumner is your brother. Fred is your cousin.

VAN: There was a lot of Houston's ... than jackrabbits ... for ears.

EDWARD: Yeah, didn't know who was going to win. (Laughter) What else did he say, Helen?

HELEN: That's all he said about Bill Brown.

EDWARD: He took --- that's interesting, see that's the first time I've heard that. He took horses, wild horses, trailed them to Montana and they broke them there.

HELEN: No, he took them to Crane.

EDWARD: Crane, excuse me.

HELEN: At the railroad, about 30 miles east of Burns.

VAN: They shipped them.

EDWARD: Right.

HELEN: And from there they were sold to a Montana outfit.

EDWARD: See I've never heard that before. That makes a lot of sense. Why break them here, let them break them.

VAN: Yeah, that's what we was doing when Sumner run the outfit, was getting the geldings in, because he had them all sold.

EDWARD: A \$100,000 check.

HELEN: I imagine Sumner could tell a lot of stuff if he were still alive.

EDWARD: Who was his wife?

VAN: ... Smith.

EDWARD: Is she still around?

HELEN: ...

EDWARD: Oh, great. A year too late, 20 years too late.

VAN: Yeah, Sumner was quite a character. You didn't know when he told you ... you'd pretty near have to look at him right straight to see whether he was telling you the truth. He'd grin.

HELEN: Oh, he made up stories like mad.

VAN: ...

EDWARD: I'll tell you another storyteller, that's Jess Gibson.

VAN: Yeah, I guess he is. I don't know him too well.

EDWARD: I just threw out ---

VAN: You know his sister, Fred's wife.

EDWARD: Yeah, yeah.

VAN: She is a pretty good talker.

EDWARD: Leona?

HELEN: No.

EDWARD: Blanche.

VAN: Blanche.

EDWARD: Blanche. Okay, Jess knew a lot. A lot of it was correct. A lot was B.S., that's fun, you know.

VAN: They were old timers too.

EDWARD: Oh yeah. Tin Gibson, good lord. Anyway, Leona, yeah, Eggers, Leona Houston Eggers, Fred's daughter, and Jess Gibson. And we all sat down, but we couldn't, Leona could not get Blanche there, I don't know why. She said she just didn't want to --- she'd start crying. I said, "Well that's fine." So she didn't want to talk about ---

HELEN: Leona?

EDWARD: Is it Leona? We call her Lee Eggers.

HELEN: ... names.

VAN: Wasn't that what they called ...

HELEN: I haven't got them; it's just the --- Charlie Houston family in here. What's her name, she's a schoolteacher down here, she's the one we know.

EDWARD: Yeah, that's the one.

HELEN: Yeah, but her name isn't Leona.

EDWARD: I call her Lee Houston Eggers, Eggers.

HELEN: Egger was her husband.

EDWARD: Yeah. I think it is Leona.

VAN: I think it is too.

HELEN: I think ---

EDWARD: Pretty sure it is.

VAN: I got a new book ---

EDWARD: What else, Van, do you recall about old Bill, maybe we ought to talk about? Anything?

VAN: I don't know. I've heard lots and lots of ... No, he was a wonderful old cuss. I helped him castrate lambs up there one day, we was clear up on the flat up there. Oh, but anyway, Bill had a corral up there. He always, instead of castrating lambs like most people did, just pull them out with his teeth; he always used his thumb. Once in awhile one would fly off, and of course I was holding the lamb ... I'd always give Bill hell for ... get to telling stories and let me have to hold that lamb ... Old Bill would just ...

EDWARD: He, I've been told, and even when he was in Salem, he said, "Why don't you let me dig up this ground out here, at least we can do is plant some potatoes." But was he like that, I mean, worked. Just work?

VAN: Oh yeah.

EDWARD: Did you ever know of a day in the four years you were around him, five years - --

VAN: That he was sick?

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: ... My brother next to me, younger, he said old Bill offered him a bunch of sheep if he'd just come up and run them. He said he'd give them to him, if he'd run them for two years. That was about the time he was going broke, and I guess he figured he was going to lose them anyway. He would have had the lambs ... any-ways.

EDWARD: Do you know, did you ever know Lyle Woods?

VAN: ... Just before I was trying to think, we rode our horses down there, stayed all night at the Woods, down to Christmas Valley.

EDWARD: Oh.

VAN: Then we rode back the next day. That's when all them kids was coming around there with stilts on.

EDWARD: That was Lyle Woods?

VAN: That was Lyle Woods and all his kids. All his brothers and sisters.

EDWARD: I'm going to try to see him tomorrow in Redmond.

VAN: You are? ...

EDWARD: Okay. He told me he worked for the Pacific Wool Growers in '36 and '37, to round up for them the remains, remnants of Bill's Horseshoe Bar horses. And he wasn't having much luck. He said Rube Long --- he didn't say it, some other people said Rube Long got a bunch of them. Yeah. And Frank Morgan was there at the end too. Some of these guys --- Harry Arnold, just off the top of my head --- oh I need to ask, did you know Harry Arnold at all, very much, Van?

VAN: No, not, no. I knew of him, I hardly --- everybody talked about him, but I didn't know him.

EDWARD: Two-Gun Sue.

VAN: She the one Bigfoot Thompson shot or some ... Harry Arnold, was it? Who was ---

EDWARD: He got himself, they were --- all those guys were shooting at one another, I swear.

VAN: Well Bigfoot lived over there on Wagontire.

EDWARD: Yeah, yeah.

VAN: Bigfoot come over and lived with us for us a couple years; carried the mail ... Finally died in Lakeview. Put her outside, Mama, she's ---

EDWARD: I think she has got to go potty.

VAN: No, she just wants to ---

HELEN: This was, that woman's name was Leora.

EDWARD: Leora, there you go, Leora, that's it.

VAN: They had quite a raft of kids too.

HELEN: Leora was, yeah she teaches school yet.

EDWARD: Yeah. Just wrote her a letter. Tell her --- I was gone all summer, so --- Oh yes, okay, Buck Creek. Not Buck Creek, old folk's home. McIntosh, blah, blah, blah, Hardin, Overstreet, Hutton's. Just a couple more Van. Okay, got that. We're doing pretty good here. Got to have a memory to do this stuff. When you saw Bill there, Van, in Salem, you said it was pretty near the end of his time, time on earth.

VAN: Yeah, I don't remember how long he lived down there after-wards. It wasn't very long I don't think.

HELEN: ... when he died.

VAN: I don't know ... We might have it down there.

HELEN: No, I didn't keep a diary in those days.

EDWARD: That's all right. But, did he, in your memory, say anything about wanting to get out of there, or just was there?

VAN: Seemed like he was actually content. He didn't seem unhappy at least.

EDWARD: He could have lived with, let's see it would be a nephew, Waldo Brown in Hubbard. But for some reason he chose to stay there.

VAN: Well he paid for it years ago, and so I guess he thought he --- that's what he bought it for I guess, to live his own life.

EDWARD: He had a hell of a time getting in there.

VAN: Did he?

EDWARD: It was sad.

VAN: Well that's too bad. They probably didn't want him in there, because they knew they wouldn't get anything paid for.

EDWARD: Yeah, it was unbelievable. It was just crazy. His family was very, very upset with them. And it was a big hassle to get him in there. He went in, in October 1935. Felt sorry for him. I don't even know the guy, but I felt sorry for him, because they just cheated him out of whatever he had left, you know.

VAN: Well he was stole from all his life. People just stole everything they could from the poor old devil. Like there at his store, I guess they just went in there and loaded up their wagons and drove off.

EDWARD: Just cleaned it out. Now this Shirley Bennett has this ledger, and supposedly there is quite a bit of names written down and so forth and so on. But I know the homesteaders were out there for, well to what, you say to '25, '26, and they started leaving pretty fast, or they were already gone maybe, out there in the Fife area. They came in what, 1910 basically I suppose?

VAN: Well they come from Chicago Valley all over the desert. They come there to his store there.

EDWARD: At Stauffer, old Royal Rhodes told me that when he was --- well he is about your age, maybe a little older, at night he counted 75 lights at Stauffer. About every 320 acres, you know.

VAN: Well, that's a big valley.

EDWARD: Oh yeah, yeah.

VAN: Chicago Valley is what they called it. Everybody from Chicago I guess moved there, the reason it got that name.

EDWARD: Yeah, probably.

VAN: Yeah, I bet they did, a lot of them ---

EDWARD: Well Sammy Boyce got that information too, from Sammy Boyce. Did you know Richard Cowan?

VAN: Dick Cowan?

EDWARD: Yeah. Okay, I got all of his interviews. He interviewed Sammy Boyce and Grant Barney together, Lena Street, Frank Morgan, Jessie Williams --- one more, on Bill Brown. Very valuable information.

HELEN: Cowan, is he the one that was ---

EDWARD: Killed.

HELEN: In an auto accident?

EDWARD: Yeah, not too long ago.

HELEN: We stopped at their place and visited with them just after that, was killed.

EDWARD: Beautiful house. Isn't that place a beautiful place? Boy, boy, that valley down through there. Okay, just one more thing. Did you ever hear of Joseph or Martha Foster?

VAN: Yeah, I heard of them, but I don't think --- they live at Paulina or ---

EDWARD: I have no idea. It was Joseph and Martha Foster's sheep that Overstreet was herding when Joseph Foster and Johnny Overstreet got into this little tussle, and he ended up being killed by Bill, shot. It wasn't murder, it was just self-defense. I don't know who Joseph Foster --- it wasn't Ike Foster.

VAN: No ...

EDWARD: Okay, I have no idea what happened to these guys. And they are not on the original homestead maps. They never filed, this Foster, never filed. I don't know who he was. That bugs me; I don't know how to find out. I guess I won't, it wasn't on the census either in Grant County in 1880. And the 1890 census burnt up, the whole thing, for the whole United States, burnt up.

HELEN: I know it. I tried to get that too for some of my relatives.

EDWARD: Oh, that's maddening. That's all I can think of Van. We got some good stuff here.

VAN: I don't know what.

EDWARD: Oh, that Montana deal. How Bill spitting raisins in the

--- (Laughter) I can see that! Oh, what did --- by the way, when he was out like that, when let's say he was at the McIntosh place and they had a cabin there didn't they, or a house?

VAN: Wasn't very big, a small cabin.

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: I think at one time probably had quite a few corrals around there, but they were all dilapidated ...

EDWARD: Did Bill eat with the workers?

VAN: Oh yes.

EDWARD: Okay. And did they have a lady cook most of the time?

VAN: I never did see a lady cook around the sheep camps at all.

EDWARD: All men. And then you guys take turns, or ---

VAN: No, no they usually had a cook there.

EDWARD: Oh, you had a camp cook. I see, okay.

VAN: Yeah.

EDWARD: Was Charlie Keith one?

VAN: No, he didn't, he was too damn dirty to cook.

EDWARD: (Laughter)

VAN: He was married to Lila.

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: He was a dirty old devil, old Charlie was. When he first come here, well he worked for Dad for a while chasing horses out here. Charlie was quite a tough old devil, get bucked off ... He was pretty hard to buck off. Sink his spurs in pretty deep ---

EDWARD: Oh, I got a couple other things too. What about Harve Winslow?

VAN: Why, Sumner was a good friend of Harve's. And he finally moved out close to Millican I think, out there someplace ...

EDWARD: Just died out there someplace. He had married, god, was it one of the Brown girls? Yeah. No, no, wait; no, no it was the son of one of Bill's sisters.

VAN: It was, huh?

EDWARD: Yeah, that's what it was, yeah.

VAN: I didn't know him actually, but I guess he rode out there along about the time I ...

EDWARD: Did Charlie, wait a minute --- Charlie is your dad, okay. Did Charlie ever borrow from Bill some horses? Steal them, or whatever you want to call it?

VAN: No, one thing Dad never did.

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: Sumner he might have tried a few of them, him and Frank both. But Dad never ---

EDWARD: Frank --- Did Frank Houston work for Bill too?

VAN: Oh yeah. Yeah, Raymond worked for him; I worked for him, all of them Houston's used to.

EDWARD: How old is Raymond?

VAN: Oh he's just younger than I am, four year. He lives at Paisley.

EDWARD: Where were all you guys born, up there ---

VAN: Up on Bear Creek.

EDWARD: Oh, your poor mom.

VAN: Yeah, the two brothers died of diphtheria; they're buried up on the hill from the old ranch. You know where McCormick's live up there?

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: Well we lived on that old ranch above it, they got it tore down; you can't even tell

where the corrals were. That's where I was born. Just a mile from Bill McCormick's place.

EDWARD: Well I think Martha Sherman was born up in there someplace too.

VAN: Yeah, she was born, I think, on up there someplace on Camp Creek.

EDWARD: Yeah, yeah that's it.

VAN: They lived ... All them Houston's, they just --- like Sumner said, many years ago they didn't know whether the jackrabbits or Houston's were going to take the country.

EDWARD: (Laughter) Oh good god.

VAN: All the ... moved out here.

EDWARD: Let's see ---

HELEN: ... and maybe he never went back again.

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: I used to pick out the oldest ... I could find ... set some coyote traps right in the middle of the road, and I caught many a coyote right in the middle of the road.

EDWARD: You know that road from; we were talking about from Buck --- or Gap Ranch to Wagontire, the old road right across from Gap Ranch where the rock buildings, the CCC's I think built those. You can see those rocks that these guys have thrown out of that road; they're just lined. And that's not a road grader, it's --- they were throwing them out.

VAN: From the Gap Ranch up there about a mile and a half, then you get that road that goes to Buck Creek, and that's nothing but a pile or rocks, and it has been for years.

EDWARD: I started to go up that road, and I gave up.

VAN: I took my tractor ...

EDWARD: Below McIntosh, McIntosh's place --- now Bill bought out McIntosh. They got in a fight one day.

VAN: Did they?

EDWARD: Oh yeah, big brawl. And old Bill said something, this is what Fred, I think it was Fred, said that Bill was telling them. He said there isn't enough space on top of the ground for both of us here. One of us is going to be put underneath or something to that affect. But anyway, oh that's another thing; did Bill have a temper?

VAN: I never saw him get mad. I never in my life, he might of, but if he did he never said a word. I never did see him; I never did see him give another person hell. He'd say shucks, confound it, you don't know what you're talking about, or something like that.

EDWARD: Why he always said, shucks, confound it, or morally certain.

VAN: Morally certain you don't know nothing.

EDWARD: Where he got that --- because Ira Brown, his nephew said, "None of the other family ever talked like that." That's interesting.

VAN: Well I didn't know any others, except his sister.

EDWARD: Oh yeah, he had a pile of them. There were seven of them all together. But anyway, below the McIntosh place, you go down on the side where the road is now, and there is just like --- not levees, dams sort of.

VAN: Well they were levees in the first place, actually.

EDWARD: Just --- they were at an angle, and they are about every half a mile.

VAN: Well old Bill had a lot of that done.

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: Yeah, he had a lot of that done with scrapers, hired a lot of men up there.

EDWARD: That's what I thought.

VAN: And he had Twelvemile Creek down there, and then he had that damned up a lot, along up through the canyon.

EDWARD: And at Lost Creek, you can tell where he, at one time, had kind of not damned

it, but kind of a dike thing. It would be on the west side of it.

VAN: Well he put it up ... There was quite a meadow ... quite a big flat up there.

EDWARD: Well there is a big flat out there all right.

VAN: Yeah. But they don't get the water there.

EDWARD: There ain't nothing out there.

VAN: I know it.

EDWARD: It is drier than a --- oh my god.

VAN: My son-in-law was out in there three or four years ago, he was fooling around hunting coyotes. He found an old mowing machine, right out there on Lost Creek. It was in pretty good shape yet, but it was out in some high sage, and nobody even knowed it was there. He hauled it to town, he's got it on --- what did he do with that thing? He got it down to the shop, but what is he going to do with it?

HELEN: ...

VAN: Yeah, he went out there with a trailer, I think he borrowed my trailer and went out there and hauled that old ... mowing machine ... Pretty good shape, setting out there in the high sage.

EDWARD: I tell you, that road into Lost Creek is rutted; I can't take that pickup over it. It's that deep, you know, no way. You need a big jeep or something.

HELEN: I sort of like this little deal here about this Martin, Denzel Martin, did you read this?

EDWARD: Oh, I just got that today, Helen.

HELEN: Did you?

EDWARD: I bought that today, yeah.

HELEN: Yeah. Well anyway, he was one of the last chuck wagon drivers for ... Bill Brown. And Charlie Houston was a buckaroo for the outfit then. In those days buckaroo

meant you worked horses ... They had already taken the chuck wagon to the Gap Ranch between Burns and Bend. Charlie and I was at Buck Creek, and so we headed across the desert in his Model-T. Now I can just imagine that, no road between Buck Creek and the Gap Ranch. At least not the way Charlie went. I kept saying, "Charlie, do you know where you're going?" "Yeah," he'd say, "we made it, yes sir we crossed the desert in a Model-T, around junipers, and over rocks, and sage-brush."

VAN: I guess that's quite a road.

HELEN: Later Martin had to drive the chuck wagon, four-horses tandem all the way from the Gap Ranch to Wagontire, along the --- with the horse wrango. Anyway, it's in here, there, this Denzel Martin, it's a good story.

EDWARD: Okay. I haven't gone through that yet.

HELEN: Oh yeah, that's quite a little ... It has a real good story of Bill Brown, but nothing new in it.

EDWARD: No, huh uh. Yeah. Go --- Mills.

HELEN: Wrote that, and I thought she did a real good job of it.

EDWARD: Yeah, Mills bought out a lot of Bill Brown's property up there.

HELEN: Well she probably knew him, I guess, as well as Audra Brennan did.

EDWARD: Uh huh. Audra actually didn't know him too well. Because they came in there a little later, I believe it was.

HELEN: Who?

EDWARD: Brennan's.

HELEN: Yeah.

EDWARD: And then Sherman's ---

VAN: Well Brennan lived up above Paulina there for a long time.

EDWARD: Yeah, right, that's it too, right.

VAN: There where that stone house is. It's still there, standing.

EDWARD: Yeah, it's still there. I think it is gutted though, isn't it?

VAN: I imagine. We took a tour up there a few years ago, and they advised anybody to stay out of it.

HELEN: They put hay in it, and all kinds of stuff.

EDWARD: Yeah. Oh shoot.

VAN: You've read; you've seen all this stuff in this book of Bill Brown.

EDWARD: Yeah, I've got that, Van. Oh, now I forgot what it was, it was important too. Doggone it.

VAN: I should keep my mouth shut when you're thinking.

EDWARD: Oh, Charlie, yeah, yeah. Charlie, your father, when did he pass away, what year approximately?

HELEN: '50 ---

EDWARD: In the '50's?

HELEN: Well I'll tell you in a minute.

EDWARD: Because I'm just trying --- If he was born in 1870, so he was about ---

VAN: He was 81 when he died.

EDWARD: 81.

VAN: Been hunting elk all day up in the mountains. He was in a hurry to get to town, and he ... track of a cow elk with blood in it.

HELEN: He died in 1952, that's when Eisenhower was elected. He was rushing home to vote for Eisenhower that night. He had been elk hunting all day, and he never made it. He was an awful good Republican ...

VAN: Well he was --- been going up, he went up one side of Lookout Mountain, there was a couple guys hunting up there, and they told them they had a better road around the

other ... which he did. So they said, "Just follow us." And apparently he met another car right on a turn, where they ... the dust, and he went right straight over and hit a log, and tipped the jeep completely over. Lit on its feet on the other side, and broke Dad's neck. He died quick. But if he'd of got to vote for Eisenhower he'd have been happier.

EDWARD: (Laughter) A good Republican, huh?

VAN: Oh he was, I'll tell you. They ... Republicans.

EDWARD: There was a lot of hell raised over that ---

VAN: That's what they wanted the worst, them geldings. I tried to turn them, they was going the wrong direction. I guess I galloped along side of them, rockier than the devil off of that, that mountain anyway, and a little scared my horse ---

EDWARD: Very rocky.

VAN: I bet I galloped along side of them for about 3 miles, but they would not turn. So finally I knew I couldn't turn them, because they had the downhill, and they was going right square towards Millican. So I turned around and went, well I turned around first, my horse was going to give out anyway, so I pulled my saddle off and let him rest. No, rode him with a hackamore, that's the horse I traded with Fred Houston, when I got bucked off and traded horses. And he is standing on one foot, then the other foot, and pretty soon he backed up and his halter, or hackamore come off on the end of his nose and was just hanging on one ear. I was; I guess I was 15 miles from camp, at least. Boy I walked up to him was mighty gentle, right there. Got a hold of him, and got my rope around him, because he might of walked off awful easy. He was no gentle ...

EDWARD: Oh lord, 15 miles through that stuff, oh!

VAN: Oh ... But I finally got my saddle back on him after he got his wind. Started back, and I met Sumner and another buckaroo coming to meet me. They didn't know what the hell, they thought my horse had fell with me I guess. But I didn't chase one gelding, or

two geldings in that bunch again. To hell with them, it wasn't worth it.

EDWARD: How --- that ground out there, my god, my pickup can barely go over it. I don't see how in the world --- was there as much sagebrush there then?

VAN: No, no.

EDWARD: Oh, there wasn't?

VAN: Wagontire was just --- and junipers were scarce. Now I suppose there are junipers all over the yard.

EDWARD: Not too much. But ---

VAN: No, the sagebrush was in the valleys, of course down there where the springs, the springs and one thing and another. But the bare --- most part of Wagontire was pretty damn bare.

EDWARD: All that is there now is sagebrush. You can't go two feet without stumbling over sagebrush. I, you know, between Wagontire and let's say Benjamin Lakes, was that all covered with sagebrush where you guys chased horses?

VAN: Oh yeah, yeah. It wasn't heavy; it wasn't big sagebrush down in there. Just in the valleys where the moisture stood in the spring, is where sagebrush got high. But lots of it was just short stuff.

EDWARD: How many, how many cowboys did poor old Bill get killed out there in that stuff anyway?

VAN: I don't know. None while I was there. You remember when, I don't suppose you remember, doubt if you was old enough, when they had that sun went out of sight in the middle of the afternoon.

HELEN: Eclipse.

VAN: Eclipse of the sun.

EDWARD: Eclipse. Oh, I've seen a couple of them. They had one here not too long ago,

well partial.

VAN: Well the day we rode from, left Lost Creek and come back to, or left South Creek and come back to Lost Creek we had one of them. And it just got real, real, damn near dark. We had our wild horses along with the saddle horses bringing them through there, and we was a little bit afraid we'd lose some of them. We'd just got that darn late. But that's the only time; I remember that eclipse in the summer. It really got pretty damn dark.

HELEN: 1918.

EDWARD: 1918?

VAN: Well that's when it was.

EDWARD: How many, I mean from South Creek to Lost Creek, where Bradley Springs is, is about 6 miles.

VAN: Right straight over the hill.

EDWARD: Yeah.

VAN: That's ...

EDWARD: Was there anybody up there besides Bradley and ---

VAN: Well I don't know.

EDWARD: Do you remember anybody?

VAN: Yeah, there were homesteads around in there. Whether they was living on them or not, I don't know.

EDWARD: Yeah. All those cabins are laying on the ground. Only one that is really standing is Harry Arnold's, and Link Hutton's house, and part of Frank Dobkins sheds. And his, part of his cabin and garage. And there was a Bunyard up there.

VAN: That's a big country, that's all I can say for it.

EDWARD: Oh yeah. Why Bill chose to go over there --- I think I know why, because his brother helped Henry Milbrum survey that country, and they ended up there.

VAN: Well old Bill was smart; he got all the water holes he could in the country.

EDWARD: Oh yeah.

VAN: And of course that's all it took.

EDWARD: I drove to half of them this summer, and I'm going why? I got there; they're all dried up, there is nothing. Brown's Well, nothing. Lost Creek, nothing.

VAN: I guess Bill used to winter sheep out at Benjamin Lake in the wintertime ... and I guess that one winter when they had --- he had thousands of sheep piled up there deader than a doornail.

EDWARD: Yeah, and I finally --- I think it was the winter of '88 and '89, 1888, and '89. Because his brothers left him in 1890, because that was part of the reason they left him. They said this is a bunch of bunk; we're not going to live out here like this.

VAN: It was a gamble.

EDWARD: Yeah. Well guys, I got to ---

VAN: And every time, every time old Bedell, he had a dog there, every time he wanted his dog to wake up, he'd said, "Hello out there, get off and come in." And the dog would just take off out there, and just bark his head off. Old Bill would do that, just laugh his silly head off, because that dog would go out and bark at somebody that wasn't there.

EDWARD: Bill Brown would laugh?

VAN: Billy Bedell.

EDWARD: Oh.

VAN: He was working for Bill Brown, herding sheep.

EDWARD: He took a couple of shots at Bill Brown one day.

VAN: Is that right?

EDWARD: Because he got drunk. Was he a pretty heavy drinker?

VAN: I don't know, he wasn't when I was around him, because he only had one leg

anyway, the other was off at his knee. He could get on that horse. Quite a character.

EDWARD: Now there was a Bedell that had a saloon in Burns in 1912.

VAN: Some of his relatives.

EDWARD: Yeah, there was a lot of Bedell's around. And his brother, well may have been him, killed his ex-wife's --- oh geeze --- it's crazy. Just went over to Idaho and shot her and killed her.

VAN: Maybe she needed it.

EDWARD: I don't know. You go through ---

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