

Voices from the Past

The Battle of Camas Meadow in Clark County, Idaho

Interviewee: Elvin W. Henninger

August 8, 1970

Tape #13b

Oral Interview conducted by Harold Forbush

Transcribed by: Luke Kirkham July 2003
Edited by: Jacob Abbott February 2010

Brigham Young University: Idaho

Through the facilities of the Upper Snake River Valley Historical Society, the interview which follows originally on reel to reel tape is now transferred onto C-60 cassette this 3rd day of April 1984.

HF: It's my privilege today to be in the home of Mr. Elvin Henninger, who resides here in Dubois, Clark County Idaho where he has been pretty much since, what, 1919?

EH: Yes, that's right.

HF: And I know from the experiences that, from what I've heard, that this man has made it a practice and a genuine interest of his to learn something of the historical background of some of the important events of this area of Idaho and of Clark County. Today is the 8th day of August 1970. I have come here with the purpose and for the purpose of interviewing this man. We haven't had an opportunity to chat with each other as to the materials that will be stated, so we are doing this very impromptively. Mr. Henninger I'd like to ask you your full name and the date and place where you were born and if you will spell your name.

EH: Elvin W. Henninger and did you want the...

HF: The spelling.

EH: ...date of birth? Or the date...

HF: Yes.

EH: Date of birth was September 25, 1882.

HF: And how do you spell that last name, your last name?

EH: H E N N I N G E R. First name is Elvin, E L V I N, and W for the middle name.

HF: I see. Now what were the factors that brought you out here into Idaho? What circumstances brought you out here to Dubois?

EH: I was working in Yakima, Washington in the road department, and we came west on a vacation and ran into the good grazing up in Alaska Basin of Idaho. And got attracted by the grass and the opportunity to homestead, and we stayed and homesteaded the Dry Creek Valley of Clark County.

HF: Where is the Dry Creek area? Where is it located?

EH: It's seven miles east of Kilgore.

HF: Now when you talk about the Alaska Basin, where is that?

EH: Alaska Basin joins the Dry Creek valley to the east, between Dry Creek and Sheridan Creek, is Alaska Basin.

HF: Is that high country area for grazing?

EH: About 6,400 feet elevation.

HF: And it is good cattle grazing country, I guess?

EH: Long stormy winters and lots of snow, and that's what makes the good grazing.

HF: What is your occupation? What has it been through the years?

EH: Oh, I've been a farmer in Illinois and a school teacher there for seven years. And then I was appointed, after examination, to a day school in Washington on the Callville Reservation. I studied a civil engineering course, and graduated international correspondence civil engineering complete course, and have the diploma too.

HF: Since coming to Clark County, have you earned your livelihood pretty much through engineering and ranching?

EH: Mostly, I [inaudible] all the time with the surveying and highway work, and irrigation work.

HF: Now when you taught on the reservation, I'm assuming this was an Indian Reservation in Washington?

EH: I didn't get that...

HF: Was that an Indian Reservation in Washington?

EH: Yes, on the Callville, up in the elbow bend of the Columbia River and then we had an appointment as an engineer down on the Yakima Reservation, too, and worked there.

HF: What Indian groups are involved in those two reservations?

EH: The Callville Indians and that takes in, there was a settlement of the Nez Perces on the Callville after the battle of Camas Meadows. Chief Joseph was taken as a prisoner to the Indian Territory and the climate was so hostile to them that they begged to be brought back to the west. They were settled then on the Callville with the Callville Indians, with Chief Joseph's, or with Chief Moses' band.

HF: That is in Washington, the state of Washington?

EH: The state of Washington.

HF: The eastern part is it?

EH: Yes, in the loop of the Columbia River where it comes in from Canada and runs south and then turns west. It's called the elbow bend country and it was in that location.

HF: What years were you on the reservation?

EH: We went there in 1909 and we were there until about 1917.

HF: Did you ever have an occasion to know any of the descendents of Chief Joseph?

EH: Yes we did, but it didn't mean so much to me then. As their traveling and their hardships that they suffered after the Nez Perce War, Chief Joseph had died before we went in to the Callville. We went in 1909 and he had died much earlier in the early 1900's.

HF: Do you know as to whether he left quite a posterity? Did he have quite a family?

EH: No, he didn't. His family suffered casualties during the war, the Nez Perce War, and it rather broke up his family group. But he had descendants there and very nice ones too, intelligent and peace loving too.

HF: This band that had settled and been placed on the reservation, were they considered quite an intelligent group of Indians?

EH: They were an intelligent group. They weren't too popular though with a certain band of Indians, the Sculuscins, an Indian chief's tribe who were hostile to them and caused them to have to move from the elbow bend over to the Nez Perce settlement of Chief Moses. He more or less sponsored them and protected them on the Callville.

HF: Was that reservation adapted pretty well to farming and agricultural pursuits?

EH: It was good. There were a lot of mountains, but the valleys and the benches along the rivers and streams in the Columbia were pretty good farming lands, some excellent land, where it was free from blizzards and climate was nice.

HF: Now from this reservation, you moved to Clark County.

EH: From the reservation we moved down to Yakima, and from Yakima out to Clark County.

HF: Now what was the nature of your experiences of your work over in Yakima?

EH: I worked first on the Indian irrigation project, the Wapital project. It's quite a large Indian irrigation project and then I worked for the Yakima County on the highways and surveys.

HF: Well, now with your experience working with these two reservations, have you come to have quite an appreciation of the Indian people? What are your feelings about the Indian tribes that you've worked with?

EH: Well teaching, I liked the Indian service opportunities in teaching and for what you can accomplish in progressing the Indian way of life. For instance when we went in there, all they did was thresh out a bit of grain with the horses. Tramp it out, flail it out, and then we got a threshing machine. A small sterling separator and about an eight horse gasoline engine, and encouraged farming and got quite a buildup in farming in the years we were there. Instead of packing sacks of flour over with a poor Indian squaw dragging it through, they would take a good big wagon load of grain out and bring back flour for the winter each time and that built up fast and well too.

HF: Well now, when you and your wife settled at Dry Creek, is that what it's called, Dry Creek?

EH: That's right.

HF: Dry Creek.

EH: Uh huh.

HF: What were conditions like? I mean were you near settlements or were you out there all by your lonesome?

EH: Well, we were on our lonesome. The nearest homestead was Mrs. Hunt, a widow, three miles east and a stock rancher Alice Fronstrum six miles east. The other way was six miles to Kilgore by the road and we were on our own. It was a nice little valley, beautiful scenery, and Dry Creek was an intermittent stream that went dry most all year, but ran quite a torrent in the spring. But the upper reaches ran continually, and our ambition was to get a ditch down, which we accomplished in five years we got the ditch down, a seven mile ditch.

HF: Did you bring cattle in with you?

EH: We bought cattle when we came here. We had about a fifty head bunch of cattle.

HF: Was the ranch all ready...?

EH: No, it was just raw land, no building; no one had ever lived on it.

HF: And therefore you first constructed a dwelling I suppose?

EH: Yes, a cabin.

HF: A cabin. Did you enlarge this to a ranch home?

EH: Yes, we enlarged and built further until we had comfortable habitations.

HF: Now where would you do your trading? Where would you go?

EH: To Kilgore.

HF: To Kilgore. Mr. Hershey was out there at that time, wasn't he?

EH: That's right.

HF: Dave Hershey. And there was a little post office?

EH: Post office at Kilgore. He carried the mail from Spencer to Kilgore on twenty-seven miles from Kilgore's array, on the river, at the Trude Ranch.

HF: Now did you have a family of children that had to have schooling?

EH: Yes, I had 4 children.

HF: And how did they obtain schooling?

EH: Well, it was pretty sketchy going to school. What they got at home and what they get when they would move out [inaudible] was rather sketchy.

HF: Now during these years, Mr. Henninger, did you practice your civil engineering profession?

EH: I grew up straight to the outfit all the time with the work that I did. Land surveying, there was lots of that and ditches.

HF: Now was this for private persons or for the government, or for both?

EH: I worked for both. I even went clear to Crater Lake Park on a transit survey, Coeur D'Alene country, as well as down on Fort Hall and Bonneville County, Clark County.

HF: Of course all of the survey work, as far as a determining the meats and bounds of the county had been pretty well done hadn't it before?

EH: Yes, but it required resurveys like splitting up sections. The country was rough and very rarely did a homestead conform to legal subdivisions. Often it was well cut up, and it required surveying.

HF: Now for example which township had range?

EH: Township 13 North.

HF: Township 13 North, and what range are we in here?

EH: Range 40.

HF: In 40. Going from west to east, how many ranges are there in the county, in Clark County?

EH: How was that?

HF: On the ranges, how many ranges are there in Clark County going west to east?

EH: There are several.

HF: How many townships?

EH: I don't know how many. It's a good many though.

HF: Was your homestead in township 13 north?

EH: Yes.

HF: Your ranch was located in township 13...

EH: North.

HF: North Range 40.

EH: That's right.

HF: EBM?

EH: East Boise Meridian.

HF: East Boise Meridian. Do you know which section?

EH: Yes.

HF: Do you remember which section?

EH: 29 and 30.

HF: 29 and 30. What did you have a hundred and sixty?

EH: No, we entered a 320 and immediately I got more information and figured I could get it classified as stock-raising. And there was a 320 adjoining me, so we petitioned and entered the 320 making a 640.

HF: I see. You had a whole section then?

EH: Yes, but not in a section, it was in two sections.

HF: Yes, two parts, 29 and 30. Now you mentioned Elvin, E:L:V:I:N, isn't that right?

EH: Check, that's right.

HF: You mentioned Elvin that it wasn't too long after you had homesteaded there that you commenced to locate and find artifacts of what must have been quite a battle. Why don't you detail some of this information?

EH: We found 45 70 cartridges, bullets over the field as we cultivated the land and built a dam in the creek to get water out to here to irrigate, and found loaded cartridges well worn by the water where the soldiers had been infiltrated by hostile Indians, the Nez Perces, on each side and held up in front by 40 youths behind their horses, shooting over the horses. And we found out the battle had been fought all over the homestead and to the south of the homestead.

HF: Now what are you referring to when you say the battle?

EH: Referring to the loss of the General Howard's horse herd, mostly pack animals, though they did get some horses, and their recovery the next morning with the troopers rushing after them and overtaking them at the homestead during that vicinity first and then fighting over the homestead.

HF: Now, this was the location then of an engagement between General Howard of the United States Forces with Chief Joseph and the Nez Pierce Indian group, is this correct?

EH: Evidently the three pursuers, Norwood and Jackson and Carr, overtook the Indians down in the school section, a big flat just below the homestead. It was state land 36. They recovered part of the horse herd there, but the horses got away and the mules kept following a packed bell mare and they continued fighting until they came to the big tree over on the north side of the homestead and found a line of Indians lined up and shooting at them and they went behind a lava ridge just east of the house and sheltered and fought from there. Until the Indians came up on each side and pulled in a crossfire. Then Norwood went back and they ran across about 1,800 feet to the aspen grove where Norwood made his stand with about 45 men. Where the Indians concentrated on Norwood and would have wiped him out hadn't Howard come along in the afternoon with his infantry. And the Indians left then and went to their camp a mile east of the crossing on Sheridan. That would have been seven miles from the homestead and from the engagement.

HF: Now is this engagement referred to in history, or given any name?

EH: Battle of Camas Meadows.

HF: And the date was approximately?

EH: The date was August the 20th 1877.

HF: Now this Norwood, was he one of Howard's lieutenants or...?

EH: Yes, he came in from Fort Ellis in Montana and evidently was a part of General Gibbon's men.

HF: He was...

EH: And he wanted to make, evidently he was looking for glory too.

HF: I see.

EH: When they got the order to fall back, he admitted he got the order to fall back when the Indians infiltrated them, but he said he would have been wiped out if he had obeyed the order, so he found this aspen glade and it was naturally a strong position and the men speedily made it stronger with rock rifle pits and these were there just like they were today.

HF: Now can you describe what a rock rifle pit is?

EH: Yes, south of the Henninger homestead is marked now too about 1,800 feet. The aspen grove is gone though; the fires and the drought have killed the aspens. When we were there though, there were trees yet there and logs lying on the ground.

HF: Well was a rock pit, did they do some excavating and building a kind of a shelter with rocks or a barrier or something?

EH: They just built around to protect a man lying down. Some of them hold two men, but most of them are just one man pits. Sergeant McCafferty climbed one of the aspen trees and he could tell the men which way the Indians were coming from. The Indians would crawl up through the sage brush and the men then would run to that side to fight the Indians off. The Indians did come up to within a few steps. Shot one man through the pockets of his overalls of his uniform. He came up within a few steps.

HF: How many white men or soldiers were killed at this battle?

EH: There were about twelve casualties altogether, but not many killed. Bugler Brooks was the only one killed there, but Sam Glass who is buried in Pleasant Valley was shot through the bladder and he died, he killed himself. Trevor was shot, and Glass was shot.

HF: Were there quite a few of the men of Chief Joseph killed in that skirmish?

EH: They didn't find any dead men. The one that crawled up and shot the soldier stood up to look and one of Norwood's men shot him, and he went tumbling down. They thought they killed him, but when they got possession of the battle field they didn't find any man there. The Indians say there was no one killed. He was able to crawl away and evidently did.

HF: Then it was actually General Howard came coming up with his infantry in the afternoon that saved the day then for Norwood.

EH: That is right. Howard waited to get breakfast; the other men started as soon as they could see, just soon as it was light enough, but Howard waited for breakfast and then marched out with his conglomeration or collection of various detachments that had come in and it was infantry and a foot.

HF: Now was his encampment quite a few miles away?

EH: Eight miles.

HF: Eight miles, to which direction?

EH: Southwest between Spring Creek and Camas Creek, between the two.

HF: Now is there a monument there, at or near your ranch that marks the battle front?

EH: No, there is no monument. There is a sign though put up on Norwood's battle ground that tells some details of the engagement.

HF: Do you know who was responsible for putting that up?

EH: The Forest Service, and the county highway too, they cooperated.

HF: Well now, after this Battle of Camas Meadows, was that what it was called?

EH: The Battle of Camas Meadows.

HF: The Battle of Camas Meadows, did Chief Joseph take his group on towards the park, Yellowstone Park?

EH: That's right.

HF: And he was pursued by General Howard?

EH: By General Howard, that's right. Howard went along camping about where the Indians did. The Camas Meadows camp, the Indians had camped there the 18th of August; Howard camped there the 19th of August and they described great stacks of hay on the ground went through that battle undisturbed too. Evidently the stage stations had gone in, the contractors and stacked hay for the stage stations. It wasn't molested, which was rather strange.

HF: Now, at that time in 1877 the formal stage town in this area was down at Market Lake. That would be the large one wouldn't it in this area?

EH: Market Lake and then coming north...

HF: And then coming north which one...?

EH: You came to...

HF: Camas?

EH: Not first, Sandhole Lake, there was a swing station there, but just a little ways on there was a Camas station on this bend of Camas Creek. That was an all year station. That was built in 1864 when the Holidays took over the mail route. Then coming on they come by Dry Creek right here on up to Holding Rock and that was an established station. There was a little Dry Creek canyon ranch at little Dry Creek, beyond a little ways. Then the next big station was Pleasant Valley, Fort Hartness.

HF: Now we're going north?

EH: Going north, going consecutively, all of them required hay.

HF: Now this Pleasant Valley, is that the same place as Centennial Valley?

EH: No.

HF: Oh, where would it be?

EH: Centennial is over the divide and east, it wasn't on the route. There was Junction was the next stage station.

HF: Now then would that be about the same as Spencer is now today? Are we in that same area as Spencer?

EH: Spencer wasn't in existence then. It went right through what is now Spencer. Spencer was established when Wood's livestock came into the country and took over and built Spencer.

HF: What other important monuments are there in our historical sites and spots in Clark County that should be mentioned?

EH: Are you commencing with the Birch Creek Massacre?

HF: Yes, now can you tell me a little something about the background of that? Was that...?

HF: The interview will be completed on side two.

END OF SIDE 1 TAPE 1

START OF SIDE 2 TAPE 1

HF: The interview with Mr. Henninger will be concluded on this tape.

EH: Oh, are you commencing with the Birch Creek Massacre?

HF: Yes, now can you tell me a little something about the background of that? Was that, did that involve settlers or what?

EH: That involved Chief Joseph and the freighters. They had three big outfits and they met where this marker is of the Birch Creek Massacre. That's the official title of that, too.

HF: Now is that over on Highway 22?

EH: No it's up on highway, what is that highway? 88?

HF: I don't know.

EH: Darn it I ought to know that.

HF: Is that west of here, west of Dubois?

EH: Yes, that's west on Birch Creek.

HF: On, but on Birch Creek.

EH: And on the highway.

HF: We want to go over there this afternoon.

EH: Oh, do you?

HF: Uh huh. Go ahead and tell me a little something about the background of this massacre if you will please.

EH: The freighters were winding along the plain there with their 3 outfits. I ought to consult on that. Anyway, they met and all morning Joseph's scouts had been coming in reporting that the freighters were coming and Joseph was coming down Birch Creek and freighters were going up to Salmon town and Leesburg. Well when they got close, Joseph gave orders for them to bring the freighters in and take what they wanted in ways of sustenance for they were hard up for food, the Indians were, but not to harm the freighters. That White Bird was a vicious guy evidently, took things very seriously, but anyway the freighters had stopped for dinner at noon. The first thing they knew the Indian scouts were all around them, so there wasn't anything to do but just submit. They had a lot of whiskey in the load of goods, it was a winter supply for Salmon and for Leesburg. And the Indians soon broached the whiskey and became intoxicated and violent and the freighters weren't very submissive so they had a big fight and the men were shot and one tried to get away and was shot off the horse and Al Lions, the only survivor, except two China men. Lions got under a ditch under the creek bank and hid in the roots and got unobserved and escaped with his life and was able to tell what he saw, what happened to him.

HF: The two China men escaped?

EH: Yes, they practiced riding them like they were horses and rather treated them rough.

HF: About how many men were killed in that battle or that massacre? Do we know how many?

EH: Yes, I should know. Three men were killed. Combs and Hayden and let's see, I could refresh my memory pretty easily but I think we haven't got time.

HF: These were all freighters I suppose weren't they? These were freighters?

EH: They were freighters, there were two unknown. Al Lions had been hunting horses and that morning the 15th he was just riding along. He had been out three days and was hungry too and tired. He had been tracking the horses that had got away from the stage station. Well, he saw the dust from these freight wagons and meandered over to them and they told him to tie his horse on behind the wagon and then get on the wagon and rest. And when noon came, they cooked and he was welcome to eat of course, so he did. While he was riding along, two prospectors came and meandered by, stopped and talked as prospectors would. All of them knew the Indians were up ahead and coming. But the freighters told them what they were running into and they said they were used to Indians and they weren't afraid. They had always gotten along with Indians. But when the Indian scouts came in they had the two prospectors prisoners too. So, they were in the meeting and they were killed.

HF: The two prospectors?

EH: The two prospectors. They are the two unknown.

HF: Unknown.

EH: And there is a monument in Salmon now. They took two bodies back, one they didn't get and they marked two unknown. One they didn't have.

HF: What date was this?

EH: It was August 15th, 1877.

HF: In other words that was just a few days after the Battle of...

EH: Before.

HF: Just a few days before the Battle of Camas Meadow?

EH: That was August 20th at the Camas Meadows. That's how long it took them to get through.

HF: I see. Do we have any idea Mr. Henninger, as to about how many men Chief Joseph had, fighting men?

EH: There are disputes over that; fighting men I would say 150 likely, but that is just an estimate.

HF: Of course they had the women and children with them in the group too, didn't they?

EH: They did and it was a terrible impediment too. But the Indian children were shot too, up at the Big Hole. They shot anything that moved.

HF: Now that is up towards Salmon?

EH: No, that was way beyond in Montana.

HF: Oh, up at the Big Hole, oh yes, I remember. There had been quite a battle up around Salmon too, when all were coming down through there hadn't there? Hadn't there been a battle up in there?

EH: Big Hole then there were just skirmishes as they came along, big scares. They flocked into Bannock, the settlers did, and they did raid the horse herds, they needed horses all the time. They took horses wherever they could find them, beasts too.

HF: Now, within the county of Clark and incidentally do you know who this Clark was after whom the county was named?

EH: I didn't get that.

HF: Who, after whom was the county named?

HF: After Sam Clark.

HF: Who was he?

EH: He was a politician and stockman. One of the early ones that came in about 1882, when the first stockman came in after the railroad came through in 1879.

HF: When did the county, when did the area become an independent county?

EH: In 1919.

HF: In 1919. And it had been the part, I guess, of Jefferson hadn't it?

EH: It was taken off of Fremont County.

HF: It was taken off of Fremont County, oh I see.

EH: It was a part of Fremont and Clark had been a politician while the county was a part of Fremont County and he brought his standing and prestige into backing the new county and that is why it was named after him. He was the only one working to get an independent county.

HF: What would you say the economy is of Clark County? It's based on what? What is the economy based on in Clark County?

EH: I would say on stock, mainly.

HF: Both cattle and sheep I would suppose?

EH: Yes. The dry farmers made out, it wasn't feasible on account of lack of rainfall. The county varies so much that the excellent grass in the highlands is such a contrast to the lowlands that burn out. Now with the potato growing and the impetus to the irrigated lands it balances up the stock raising much better.

HF: Has there been any mining in Clark County over the years?

EH: The mining is feasible but not on a large scale, it's mostly small scale mining.

HF: Didn't they have a lot of Chinese in here at one time mining something?

EH: No, the China men worked over at Salmon and they also reworked the [inaudible] at Virginia City and Bannock. That is about the closest to China men workings we had.

HF: Weren't there some oil pits or something like that? What were they?

EH: I didn't get that.

HF: Kind of oil pits or asphalt pits or something in the county?

EH: I don't know of any.

HF: It runs in my mind that in the county there was at one time an employment of a number of Chinese in the smelter or something. Isn't there some smelting? Wasn't there some smelting going on?

EH: In Clark County I think not. You take Nickolia, they had a small smelter there that worked out that big deposit. They used wood, but I think that is in Lemhi County isn't it?

HF: Just across, is it near the line?

EH: Nickolia.

HF: Nickolia.

EH: Isn't it in Lemhi?

HF: It could be.

EH: I think so, that was the nearest smelter, but it was wood burning smelters.

HF: What were they smelting out?

EH: Silver ore. That was in the '80's so '82 and on to '86 or '87 when it played out.

HF: Did they employ a number of Chinese in that operation or were they just...?

EH: Not on a large scale.

HF: I see. Now Elvin, what can you tell me about these rock formations up Birch Creek where the Indians apparently made their writings, Indian writings on these rocks?

EH: Pictographs, yes.

HF: What can you tell me about that?

EH: They are, these pictographs are very ancient workings. They would have been maybe painted partly by a man on a horse or they might have scaffold up and they tell a story that these modern Indians have no knowledge of nor in my opinion no one has ever deciphered them, but it must be events of ancient history and of importance to the Indians that lived here at that time. They are painted on rocks that are slanted away from the weather. It is a smooth portion and they use pigments of some kind on those Birch Creek writings, extensive and voluminous.

HF: Hasn't the University of, the Idaho State University done some excavating of recent years?

EH: Yes, they have.

HF: Mr. Swanson?

EH: Swanson, yes, and his outfit.

HF: What have they discovered if anything?

EH: I don't know. They just don't confide in me.

HF: Has their exploratory work been in conjunction with these picture graphs or are they trying to find artifacts in the area, what?

EH: They looked for artifacts. (Knocking) Someone's knocking.

HF: We were talking about some of the mining interests and wealth in Clark County. We talked, are there any other mines that we should mention?

EH: There is an opal deposit east of Spencer three miles. And there are silver and copper deposits in the western part of the county and a bounteous supply of iron ore and gypsum in Lemhi country that's being worked commercially too.

HF: Now in Clark County itself, are there any mines in operation at the present day?

EH: The opal mine is being worked extensively and other mines in the Birch Creek country are developed occasionally and more or less constantly.

HF: What type of mining do they do for these opals, is that the open pit type?

EH: Yes, an open pit mine.

HF: They use bulldozers I guess to excavate.

EH: I think so, any way to strip it economically.

HF: A little while ago we were talking about stock raising, sheep and cattle industry. I know that over the years they have had quite a thing with the sheep here in Dubois the experiment station. What is the nature of that? When was it established and what is its purpose?

EH: Well it has been operating ever since I've been here in 1919 and they made a study of sheep. They built up a new breed of sheep and studied fleeces and methods of economical production and feeds and handling and it seemed to be a very valuable contribution to the husbandry of the United States.

HF: Is that pretty much supported by the University of Idaho?

EH: Yes, but I don't know what proportion is supported by the University, but they manage and they are prominent in the affairs of the experiment station.

HF: Is that located at or near Dubois here?

EH: Six miles north of Dubois.

HF: Can you recall some of the early, as you understand, some of the very big ranchers of both the cattle and the sheep in Clark County? Give some of their names, some of their big operations over the history of the county.

EH: Well, the Millers were early ranchers on Birch Creek and successful ranchers. With the livestock raised in and through the county for summer forage. Denning and Clark were big ranchers, the Smalls. Those cover part of the west side, the east side was settled by hay growers mostly that raised timothy hay for the deep mines of Butte to feed the underground workers, the mules and animals that dragged the ore cars, and that was for a long time, a nice steady market until 1919. Then as the year had faded out they motorized the mines.

HF: I see.

EH: Those ranchers then went into stock, like the Rasmussens and the Vadnais'.

HF: This would be mainly cattle I guess wouldn't it?

EH: Yes it was mainly cattle, not sheep. That's right.

HF: Now the railroad came up here, the narrow gauge Utah northern came up through here in 1879 didn't it?

EH: That's right.

HF: Was that pretty much laid out by local help, white people, or did they have a lot of Chinese workers?

EH: No, that was white man and teams mostly from the river came up to work. Ricks can give you the story on that.

HF: Yes.

EH: Because...

HF: I know it came, it had its beginning from Utah of course, but I don't know, and I guess they went clear to Butte didn't they, with this road?

EH: Yes, they did. They had a hard time up through Beaver Creek too, that canyon. They got to old beaver in the fall of '79 and all winter there they were fighting. It was a bad winter. Any way they could get that road up through that canyon, they took the means to do it. Big sawed timbers crossed the stream, lengthways of the stream and built up in the stream, any way to get those engines and cars through and they got them through.

HF: Have they had to change their route since that time?

EH: Yes, they changed, but not the location. They cut out bends, loops, and curves all they could, anything to straighten and make a substantial road bed. There wasn't much dirt to make it out of either.

HF: That was kind of, that was the most difficult part of the route I guess.

EH: I think so, the most difficult of all.

HF: Is that right Mr. Henninger.

EH: Yeah, absolutely right.

HF: Now this Beaver Creek we talk about, does it have its beginning up around Monida, up in that country?

EH: That's right.

HF: And it runs south I guess, pretty much south and southwest?

EH: Yes, nearly a thousand feet of fall from Spencer to Dubois. Not quite, but nearly.

HF: Where does Beaver Creek end up?

EH: Where does it end up?

HF: Yeah, where does the mouth...?

EH: In Camas Creek.

HF: In Camas Creek.

EH: When there is enough water.

HF: Now Camas Creek has its source in what mountains? Where does it come from?

EH: It comes from the high mountains and gathers up a lot of little streams, Rocky Mountains.

HF: It moves what, south westerly across the county? Does it provide irrigation water at all to stockmen?

EH: Yes.

HF: Are they able to use any of these waters for agricultural?

EH: Yes, they use it all for agriculture.

HF: In other words to grow potatoes maybe or hay, or both?

EH: They like to irrigate alfalfa hay with it as well as timothy and I doubt if there is any potatoes irrigated from it until it gets into Mud Lake. That is where it ends up and surplus waters that come through are utilized in Mud Lake.

HF: I guess the other principle stream in the county would be Birch Creek wouldn't it? Where does it have its origin?

EH: It has its sources in the mountains, a head wash, Rocky Mountains.

HF: And it flows which direction?

EH: It flows south.

HF: In other words, all three of these, do they kind of parallel each other?

EH: There's more than three.

HF: There's Medicine Lodge, too, isn't there?

EH: There is Camas Creek, there is Birch Creek, there's Lost Rivers, and isn't there another one?

HF: Medicine Lodge?

EH: Medicine Lodge, yes that's right. Is that five?

HF: About five.

EH: Five that don't have outlets. It's a strange thing.

HF: When you say they don't have outlets...?

EH: What?

HF: What do you mean by that, don't have outlets?

EH: It doesn't put the water into streams that take it to the ocean. It sinks, they sink.

HF: They sink. And they all have their origin, their source, in the same mountains? Same range, I guess, isn't it?

EH: I'm just not sure that that range [indecipherable] over there, it's the continental divide isn't it?

HF: How about it, Mr. Granger is that right?

?: Yeah, it's over on that side of Lost River and then the [indecipherable] River and, the Birch Creek, they head somewhere in the Lemhi range. On the south or east side of the Lemhi Range and they come down to the edge of the desert, just get out to where it's flat country and they're gone. But they used a lot of water for natural irrigation and they, over on the Little Lost River they have lost of spots, different plots kind of big place over there and some of the falls. And they, they irrigate [indecipherable] farming operation: alfalfa hay and potatoes in rotation. And the natural meadows, of course, are all irrigated as much as they can and so on. The old timers put the water out on the grass, they had most their horses at that time over there and they wanted lots of hay.

HF: Have you fellows heard of the Northwest Cattlemen's Association of the Northwest Resources Development?

EH: I didn't get that.

HF: The Northwest Resources Development?

EH: I never knew of it.

HF: It's quite a new one here, it's a corporation that has...

EH: Where does it operate?

HF: It's out around Kilgore.

EH: Oh is it?

HF: Northwest Cattle or Northwest Resources Development or something like that.

EH: What land do they run on?

HF: I'm not sure.

EH: It wouldn't be way out on the east end of the county would it?

HF: I'm not sure.

EH: Would it be some of the woods livestock lands?

HF: It could be, I don't know.

EH: But I've never heard of them.

?: I doubt it. I don't know...

HF: Now in the county, what forest is it that is mainly here? Targhee, this isn't the Targhee is it?

?: Yes.

HF: Is this all Targhee country?

EH: Targhee Forest, uh huh.

HF: That would be what, the east side of the valley, the east side of the county? Northeast?

EH: Yes.

HF: It'd be north, I guess, wouldn't it?

?: North or Northeast.

HF: Now, Mr. Henninger, before we close this interview, we have talked about a lot of things today. What would be your comment about Clark County as a place in which to live, where you have lived the last 50 years? You've lived here what, fifty one years, I guess. What do you think about the country? Do you think it has got a great future ahead or has it been a nice place for you to live?

EH: I think Clark County is as delightful place to live. There is more leisure, more people.

End of interview