

Maureen and Mike

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This transcript represents the nearly verbatim record of an unrehearsed interview. Please bear in mind that you are reading the spoken word rather than the written word.

**Oral History Number: 005-001**  
**Interviewee: Alicia Conrad Campbell**  
**Interviewer: Larry Barsness**  
**Date of Interview: November 28, 1973**

Alicia Campbell: Shall I start right in?

Larry Barsness: Yeah, sure. [interference from microphone] Go right ahead.

AC: Or would you rather ask me another question first as...You have asked me one now [unintelligible].

LB: [unintelligible] yeah, sure. [microphone interference]

AC: Let me say, first, that my first knowledge that there were buffalo that we had when I was a very small child, and I don't know when they were brought in from east of the range or how. But they were...they swam them over to Wild Horse Island, which you're familiar with [unintelligible]. And there were no habitations at that time. It was leased from the government. And for many, many years, they were there and completely happy and did beautifully well. I know they could have left it easily anytime they wanted [unintelligible].

LB: They didn't ever leave?

AC: Never. And—

LB: Pablo evidently had some trouble with them...his animals leaving there. That would be later though.

AC: Well, I think it was pretty much at the same time. And then Allard—

LB: And the Allards were there too.

AC: But they ran them with cattle.

LB: Right.

AC: And ours were never with anything but themselves at any time. So I don't know what that might have produced. And at that time, of course, there was grave danger that they would be extinct.

LB: Right. Yes, very definitely.

AC: And so we would go often to the island. We didn't roam about among them, of course, but we could...And they stayed pretty well away from anyone coming. So they were tremendously interesting, and the main thing was to have the best possible environment so they would increase. I don't know how many were brought over, but after they began...Then my father died in 1902. He was only 52 years old. And it became necessary then a few years later—and this I don't know just how long ago it was—the lease expired and couldn't be renewed by the estate. Being still in probate, I think, was the reason. It became a problem to see whether they would be moved and what trouble it would be. But it wasn't any apparently. They were encouraged...they were all handled in absolute quiet, not at all the way cattle. No voices raised, nothing noisy, nothing hurried. Always.

So I wasn't there when they left the island, but they say...reported no delay or no trouble. They stayed pretty much together when they found that some were at the beach and headed out. And when they reached the mainland and headed north, there seemed to be no trouble, and they went up the road. Now this was very surprising to the very capable men who handled it, and they were employees that...at our home that were well known as careful handlers of horses and cattle. But were instructed to...well, they always were quiet. Always [unintelligible] with all animals. And they...The place prepared for them was in Smith Valley.

Do you know the upper Flathead country?

LB: Somewhat.

AC: Do you know...The names have changed? Smith Lake, I think they call it now. It's the valley that lies west, and there's a lake there. Well, on the east side of the lake, so that before it reaches...as soon as they entered the valley, they were turned south, and there were wide gates open in the place that had been, hopefully, fenced for them. And they gave no trouble at all and went int. And that was a very good environment for them because it was a hillside. Again, there was a lot of land leased up on the hilltop. Now the tops of the hills were above Foy's Lake. Do you know Foy's Lake? That's a lake 3 miles west of Kalispell, and this was the leased land was along the top of fairly open, hilly country with groups of trees where they looked down on Foy's Lake and down on Smith Lake and then all over the valley. And there was a great big, beautiful spring near the top which flowed down [unintelligible] and a pasture at the base. They did very, very well. The only flat land on the entrance side for them, which [unintelligible] was a [unintelligible] of wheat fields. So you know, about the acreage. Just level country with the hills off to the east for them. And two very capable stockmen whose pictures will have been somewhere—that may not be interesting, but they were very interesting men because they were so capable and so successful.

LB: Was one of them a Grasher or Grisham or—

AC: No. One was I. M. Cole, C-O-L-E, and the other was Ferzum (?).

LB: I ran into something on a letter or someplace where a Ray Grasher, who was a herder. It says, "Conrad herder and ranger in June 1919." I just wondered about that.

AC: You know, I think that must be an error because 1919 I would know very well what was happening, and I never—we never had an employee by that name.

LB: Graker, Gracker? I just...I guess I couldn't read it very well. That's—

AC: Well, I'm sure that the only handlers were Cole and Ferzum and Robert Hume. H-U-M-E. At all times.

LB: That could be [unintelligible].

AC: No, I think [unintelligible].

LB: [unintelligible] labeled on the back. Oh, sorry. "Robert Hume and son Bob," yes. Yes.

AC: Son Bob, yes.

LB: These are good pictures. Very good pictures.

[long pause]

AC: Well, the nature—now this we had to learn this—the nature was to move twice a year, if not three times. And, of course, if they want to move, they move. That's all. And the governing—very distinctly—the person who set the time of moving and the direction they'd go in was Old Frizzletop, a cow. And they minded her very well. And the herd was held to about 100 head. And the rest...It sometimes went over but didn't go under that. And the...My mother was managing this at that time throughout, and her ideas prevailed. They were sold either singly or in pairs to museums...or to zoos all over the country and were crated, as you no doubt have seen some of the pictures.

LB: Yes.

AC: In very stout special wood with special bolts and nuts and padded inside with linen burlap with a thick padding of straw. They could...The buffalo never turns on its side as you know, so there was room to lie down, but not room to...and room to stand. And the feeding and watering place would be like a stall at the end of the box, but there wasn't room for them to spring up, which they do, so we [unintelligible], nor to rise as that. And we never had a scratch on any of them or a bruise or a broken horn. So the crating was completely successful.

Well, they headed east, which was toward Kalispell, and the word came, "Buffalo are out. Buffalo are out." And the place they wanted to stop was the spring, which is now below the golf

course—country club—and fortunately my family owned the hill, but the water was what they were going for and that was the...I don't know how that is now...It was a beautiful rain [unintelligible] bubbling spring and a river flowing which was, later, dammed a little bit below. I think the dam may not be there any longer, but that was outside the...They weren't interested in any but water. Then they were quite contented fortunately to turn and go back up where the grass was good on the hill. So then there wasn't any fence. So then it became hoping that they would like it well enough to stay while the fence was put up, which was accomplished. And they were very comfortable and happy then until the next time they wanted to move, and they still wanted to go east. And I don't think you could very easily have turned them. It wasn't tried because wanted to see what they would do.

And my family had ranches in the Creston area—quite a large acreage for this side of the mountains and [unintelligible] great acreage on the east of the mountains. And they were encouraged to turn toward that—a little encouragement, just a rider standing at the fork in the road. Or mounted, of course. So that was another place where water took them then. It was forest and open country and all on the level and beautiful springs, large and small, throughout. So that's where they liked to be. And they never waited until the pasture got short before they moved because it would have been easy to have fed them, you know. They didn't wait for that. At the second time, this cow said let's go back to the first place, they left and went all the way back to Smith Valley. They didn't stop at the Buffalo Hill. And all that the handlers—it was just go along to see if [unintelligible; laughs]. So it was very successful.

LB: And they did this quite often? Did they make this move?

AC: Three times a year.

LB: Three times a year.

AC: It was always the same. And having located those places, they had definitely approved them because they headed and where they wanted to.

Now to get to the calving time. That was...they...very successful [unintelligible] calves. There was trouble a number of years later by the K.M.—shipped in the grains that were fed them. Of course, through the winter, They were fed and got some ergot-infected grain, and they lost calves that year. But that was the only time that was ever any trouble.

Incidentally, if I may break off, will you stop me if I'm talking too much, too long about something?

LB: No, it is very interesting.

AC: One little cow raised—it was a calf—they left the Wild Horse Island, and her name was Victory. She was inclined to be rather gentle and rather...and a very pretty creature, really a

beauty. And so for her calf—they brought her calf in and she came along to the corral on the stable property on the edge of Kalispell. And the little calf was put in one of the large square stalls that were for the riding horses and Victory wasn't worried. She was in the big corral right back of it; she didn't fret. So I, being at that time about 13 and a husky youngster, wanted to go see. I hadn't been close to a newborn calf, and I had taken two girls with me because they were calling that afternoon. [unintelligible]. And I got the door open expecting the little thing, a little quiet and tiny, on its feet and not to be frightened. It wasn't frightened, but it came out the door and I threw myself on it with my arms around its neck. And it dragged me with my feet hanging the length of the stable and out through the gates to its mother. She wasn't worried. She didn't mind that I was trying to hold it. I couldn't possibly have held it, and it was only a few hours old. And I...That could have possibly such strength is incredible. It didn't mind the burden of dragging me at all. Didn't seem aware. You know [unintelligible].

LB: I've read...Well, I have read [unintelligible], but I've read that these young calves will...did in the wild very quickly after birth run with the herd—

AC: Right.

LB: —if necessary.

AC: I'd understand that.

LB: Very strong, very agile. Mm hmm, but then they had to be.

AC: Then they had to be. The wonderful coat of the newborn buffalo calf—are you familiar with that?

LB: I've seen them, yes, yes.

AC: It's just incredibly soft.

LB: [unintelligible; laughs]

AC: Well, this is so wonderful to me. The covering on the little body, I would think, would be about 2 and a half inches and was as soft as the down on a new-hatched chicken. And the first fur was slightly lighter than the other, ah, it was a fawn—a delicate fawn color such as one of this...the curtains. Very like that. And just incredibly soft! Lovely! I hope that I never knew of the young calves being killed for their coats. I hope it never was—

LB: None in my—

AC: It wouldn't have been in those days.

LB: —accidently or something like this, but—

AC: We never lost one, so.

LB: In...In fact, at the end of the slaughter in Texas, people ran on to entire herds of calves. Old enough...old enough to survive, see, but they had not...They didn't kill them. They were very little value as hides, so these young animals were left.

AC: Well! Isn't that interesting.

LB: Yes, that's very strange. They disappeared. [unintelligible].

AC: But they didn't...They were left without the older ones with them...Was it because the older ones were being killed?

LB: Right, the older ones all had been killed for their hides.

AC: [unintelligible]. Well—

LB: Groups of young ones were left.

AC: I don't know how long they nursed. Do you?

LB: Well, I don't, except that they seemed to nurse about as long as the mother will allow it. In fact, they seem...sometimes in a wild herd, where they have been seen followed by a 2-year-old, a 1-year-old, and a newborn, and evidently at least the year-old was still nursing and the 2-year-old was still dependent to some extent.

AC: Well! So that's the answer. [unintelligible].

LB: [unintelligible] But a strong relationship, and that yet the young animal really didn't go on his own. [unintelligible] the young bull really, not until he was 4, did he try to finally kind of leave the matriarchal herd, you might say, and move with the bulls.

AC: Yes.

LB: And finally take up with the males.

AC: Oh, isn't that interesting? I would never had a chance to know this.

LB: Well, I don't, I think it'd be...it wouldn't be apparent really in a herd...in a small...you know, I think these were just people who had noticed this in large—

AC: Yes, in the vast herds.

LB: —areas. Yeah, Lewis and Clark, for instance, reported seeing—

AC: Yes.

LB: —nothing but male herds. And a herd of males and a herd of cows.

AC: Yes, I remember that.

LB: [unintelligible].

AC: You then know the awfulness of the fighting when the...when the chief head of the herd—male—is being...the understudy coming up to attack and start a string (?).

LB: Mmm. I've seen a little of this, but not—

AC: Well, I've watched several times in the Smith Valley area because I was old enough then, and I was fascinated by them and I could...would go off on. The sound they make is so strangely reverberating—deep, deep rumbling. Nothing like the little noise that they make when...Nothing like it. More like the roaring of lions, maybe, if there were lots of them attacking or making the same sound. Carried very far. It was...it was a tremendous sort of a dreadful thing. And then worse—and this I witnessed several times—when, of course, they fight to the death, or to the beating of the young ones—whichever. And in a case—the only chance I had to ever see it was the younger one that didn't survive. The cows quickly gather in a big circle to watch the fight, and when the victor leaves and the other one's down, they come in—the cows come in—and obliterate [unintelligible] until the ground is hardly [unintelligible] and you can't see hide or bones. I say, that seems like an extreme statement; I wasn't close enough to see hide or bones, but the [sighs]...And the savagery of the cows—awful! I suppose it's to be sure that the one that wasn't strong enough to survive wouldn't breed. Would that be?

LB: Selection.

AC: Selection.

LB: [unintelligible] selection of the species.

AC: But how dreadful!

LB: I understand too from accounts that they did this, you know, when one would be shot and bleeding or sick or something like this, and that sometimes the rest of the herd would gore it.

AC: Is that so? We never had any killed, so that that [unintelligible] so I hadn't noticed.

LB: Accounts that I've read. There seemed to be some sort of a thing that goes on with them anyway that they do [unintelligible] want to get rid of the sick or injured ones.

AC: The interesting...They're so individual. The herd is small enough so you can learn to know some of them apart, and they stand out. And that was particularly interesting in watching when they were sold to a...for the nucleus of a herd at the valley. The three men who came and spent the whole summer, coming and going but as house guests of my parents—my mother. Father was gone. Doctor Hornaday [William Temple Hornaday], who was the curator at the Bronx [Zoo], and a Mr. Kennard of Boston [Frederick H. Kennard, Boston Society of Natural History], and a Mr. Lawrence (?) of Canada, who was then the Commissioner of Canadian Parks. Three wonderful men and the most delightful house guests you could possibly dream of, and became—with their mutual interest—became such close friends and seemed to enjoy each other so much. Of course, they carried on busy lives, but they came back and were...For 3 months, they studied the herd that was in Smith Valley to select the ones they wanted. And—

LB: For the Moise herd?

AC: Mm hmm. And the Banff herd was the result of Mr. Lawrence's selections, and I think that—

LB: Then he previously had been there, I think, to get the Pablo herd too, had he not?

AC: That I don't know. What was the name?

BB Lawrence. The Pablo herd—the Pablo-Allard. Yeah, wasn't that right, from Canada?

AC: Yes.

LB: He was one of the men. Douglas [Howard Douglas] and Lawrence—I think some of these were [unintelligible].

AC: And I didn't know that. I didn't know that they—

LB: I'm not positive, but I think there's some...some relationship in there.

AC: The...Seeing the Banff herd later, I thought that they must have thrived very wonderfully in that climate—that much further north was good for them. I think they were in magnificent condition, and that time...the only times that I was familiar with the way they looked was after we didn't have the herd—the best. They took the best of the...of our herd to the Moise group, but seeing them from the road coming down to Missoula—went past there—they didn't seem to have the same perfection of health that the Canadian buffalo did, I thought. But then my

chance of seeing them wouldn't be often enough or constant enough for that to be reliable, but it struck me quite forcibly.

LB: I think there's something to that, you know, that the farther north...that their pelt was better farther north. Much better, for instance, than the Texas buffalo.

AC: And the color was deeper.

LB: The color is darker and—

AC: I thought even this [unintelligible]. And now, isn't it good to know, or is it, that there are so many?

LB: Oh yes.

AC: I think it's wonderful.

LB: Really a lot of [unintelligible]...A lot of people raising them now.

AC: I know.

LB: A lot of ranchers.

AC: And I suppose I should be glad that they are...I'm finding that it's worthwhile and that they can be in [unintelligible]. But loving them, I hate to think it happening to noble creatures like that. By the way, I witnessed part of something that Mr. Lawrence saw all of, and that...This was so interesting to me because I didn't know that he had gotten the Pablo or Allard animals. I'd lost track then. But he saw...and it was...it must have been right there—right at that time—because he spoke about the handling of them on the...on the reservation being so different from the easy handling that they'd encountered farther north. That they were handled like cowboys handled cattle with the shouts and—

LB: Yes. I'm sure that was true.

AC: And they were shipping, evidently—had crossed the river somewhere. Where would it be? Ought to know. Not too far from Ravalli...from Ravalli. Where is that? Well—

LB: Yes, they were up on the Flathead River there close to Ravalli, 9, 10 miles.

AC: Yes. Yes, in the enclosure. I know that, but I was wondering where this stream was that Mr. Lawrence told this thing that he had witnessed. And yet I was there so I had ridden horseback and I...we were staying...We stayed during that time at—went with my brother—at Ravalli. When it was just a station—a railway station and one log house—two-story inn. This fine grey

bull was a [unintelligible] Mr. Lawrence. And they got...they were going to swim the buffalo to the opposite side of the river, and it's funny—that was a big stream...I'm confused as to where I came to watch that, but I rode with other riders from Ravalli, so, and saw the end of this. This grey bull went into the water first after a fight—didn't want to go. And swam the stream and got out on the other side, and there was the corral—the only place he could go was into a corral, the opening of it. It was an enclosure. He tried...he swam back. Now, this I didn't see. And four times Mr. Lawrence—they swum the river, and they wouldn't let him land on the side that they forced him into. And he became fatigued from the swim, you see. Quite a current there [unintelligible]. And he went back to the far side—corral side—and tired and walked to water about knee deep and looked back. Now, the other buffalo had not come in yet. They were holding them—whether he was to be sent somewhere for something—that seemed to be the idea. He looked...He stood and thought a long time, and he knew he couldn't take the stream again and he wouldn't go into the corral, so he put his head down in the water and drowned.

LB: I'll be darned.

AC: So, [unintelligible]. And they hadn't wanted to lose him, and that [unintelligible]. Never forget it. Just...A heartbreaking thing. He was so great. [pauses] Well—

LB: The, you said the Pablo...did you...do you know of any other pictures of the Pablo herd?

AC: I really know very little about the Pablo herd or the Allard herd. Were they...They weren't the same, were they?

LB: They were for a while, and then after Allard died, the herd...Allard's half of the herd was sold. Part of it went east of the mountains, I believe, on the Blackfoot range and Howard Eaton bought some of them. Eaton must have been there.

AC: Eaton bought—

LB: He must have been there that summer that Hornaday was there too, I would imagine. Was he around at that time?

AC: Well, I don't remember. He wasn't a house guest. But I remember that he...that some...that some of the animals crated were sent to him on his order.

LB: Were sent to him?

AC: Sent to him, yeah.

LB: Yeah. He had...well, I think eventually it was a dude ranch in Wyoming, but he was one of the early lovers of buffalo—

AC: Yes.

LB: —and kept always a few at least.

AC: Well, I remember that they were always crated. They were...they were never ever driven any...Those we had, never driven anywhere, except on their own...well, the three times a year moving. But otherwise, they...when they left...they...except when they...of course, those were crated that went to the Moiese for the [unintelligible]. All of them crated. There was a young bull—I was telling Mr. Johnson, I think, about this. The only one that there was ever any trouble with when they were shipped—first crated—as a group after they had been selected. They had three corrals near the railroad. One large one with very wide gates and the next smaller, and then the smaller one from which they were sent up into a chute and the crate was at the end of the chute, and it was on the boxcar already. So just had to have the door drop—it was a drop door—and bolted. And the first one to be crated was the king—Chief. He was a splendid animal.

LB: I've seen pictures of him.

AC: And he put up a long hard fight, but it was very intelligent. He didn't...he wasn't afraid of the handling and the driving, because he was familiar with the men. He didn't mind the first corral. He wasn't too much worried about the smaller one, but he didn't want to go into the really small one at the end of the chute so that's where it took 3 hours to get him to go in, but there wasn't any hurry—there wasn't hurry. No one said anything to him or urged him on. He made the decision, and...well, they did...he did have to be urged into the chute, but it was a very polite sort of urging. It was amazing. It was something that he seemed to accept.

And the next one was the next bull in age and size. He hadn't yet ever questioned the leadership of the king, but he took 3 hours and he fought terrible. And, however, he didn't...they didn't hurt themselves. There weren't...there was never any blood. But he tried to come...get out very hard, and when he got into the crate, he was still fighting. None of the others would; when they got into the crate, they were perfectly fine. Just as if they were entirely satisfied and not worried, but he didn't give up. And he...and the snorting and the...He didn't roar like fighting, but it was noisy. And he—after the crate was moved...the crates were chained to position on the box...in the boxcar—has to be [unintelligible] of course—and he, in some way, managed to get the leaping up which was...He'd a little too much room allotted for him, I guess, and he broke one of the timbers. And they had to chain his crate—bind it in in logging chains—and he arrived at Ravalli in the same box, but it was...it wasn't held in the same. Chains had been on him.

But he was...When he left the crate...The crates were hauled to the fence. So they didn't want them taken out to the road at all. He first got out and ran. None of the others—the others

strolled out; came out willingly and looked around and began [unintelligible]. But he came out running and ran up the hill and just scared.

LB: They just...They were moved about, what, 50 miles I guess, or something like that. Maybe a little more.

AC: I think that was—

LB: Seventy?

AC: Yeah. Perhaps 70.

LB: They went right on the train then from Kalispell to Ravalli, and the crates were on the—

AC: Crates were—

LB: —on the wagon.

AC: —on the wagon and taken to the enclosure for them and—

LB: Was the...was the headquarters about where it is now? Is that where they were unloaded, or did they unloaded at someplace else?

AC: Well, is there a station at the railroad still standing?

LB: Now, that I don't know. I haven't seen it.

AC: Well, I've passed it a good many times, and I'm not sure in coming through now. It seems to me that the same station isn't there. It wasn't—

LB: I believe it's a new station.

AC: It was...it was one of the old standard stations like they, you saw everywhere, you know, at that time. But...with the loading platform. But I don't think that building is there. I think if there is a place for trains to stop—if they ever stop there anymore—then it must be just passengers, [unintelligible].

LB: But then I was thinking they hauled it up the hill or did they just go there...or did they just go to the corner of the—

AC: To the corner—

LB: To the nearest corner?

AC: The nearest.

LB: The nearest corner and just [unintelligible].

AC: And hauled in, and the platform put up for them to come down for the wagon [unintelligible]. And the crate would be pushed down. Then when they got out, they would...they didn't...The crates were left there because they were—I think they were going to be used perhaps by—I don't know—by the government. But anyway the crates, they took them down. I don't think ever were returned, because they were made new, and then were sold to go to different [unintelligible] over there. [pauses] And I never knew when they—the herd—was sold to the Gibson family after my...to the Gibson Brothers. And I don't know how they were [unintelligible]. I wasn't even in Kalispell then.

LB: Well, they were moved by railroad to Yakima.

AC: Yes. Yes, Yakima. But how were they moved? Were they crated? Or—

LB: I don't...I don't know.

AC: I don't know.

LB: I've never run into any information whether they were crated or just put into boxcars.

AC: At that time...I can't imagine them—

LB: It would seem awfully difficult to put them in the boxcar.

AC: Awfully difficult, and I think that they would perhaps if they were at all worried would hurt each other.

LB: Yeah, I think so too. I think pretty much usually when they were moved, they were in crates. I've only run into one reference where a man, who had a circus, said he had moved buffalo all over the country just sitting in boxcars and had never crated them and had had no trouble.

AC: Well!

LB: But I don't know how many he had or [laughs] if he had them trained so well or if he had stalls. Now, I think sometimes they built...they built stalls right in the boxcar, and then somehow arranged to get them in there and [unintelligible].

AC: And keep them there?

LB: Yeah, and then the stall itself essentially became a crate.

AC: Yes.

LB: I think big timbers went right over the top—

AC: That would make sense, wouldn't it?

LB: —so they couldn't raise up. But the only thing I...that I remember—and I believe it must be your herd—as they left the Yakima stockyards, they were being driven to the range that they were going on to. And coming across a bridge in narrow spot, they met two or three automobiles and evidently got frightened and charged. And I don't think they themselves knocked the automobiles around, but the people got frightened and went into the ditch and around them and all sort of things. [laughs] So they had a little...a little difficulty evidently at the other end of the line.

AC: But no one was—

LB: But no one was hurt. It was in the, a clipping I had from the *Spokesman Review*. I must still have that, and I just didn't discover it today when I went to look for it. I thought you find that interesting.

AC: Well, I'm so interested to know about this because I've wondered so much. It was a [pauses]...that whole association with them was a privilege.

LB: Fascinating animals really. I think you can't be around them very enough...much without just sort of coming to love them, you know, and they really are—

AC: Oh, I'm so glad to hear you say that. That is a real truth. I feel it deeply.

[Break in audio]

LB: —who hasn't had much to do with. And last year I sent questionnaires to 175 owners of buffalo around the United States asking them, oh, various questions about [unintelligible] longevity and fertility and all kinds of things. And I left a little space for them to write what they liked. I had so many of them said, " We love our buffalo, and it's a treat to have buffalo on the place," and all kinds of just really attachment for the animal.

AC: Oh, isn't that great?

LB: Yeah. It was very nice.

AC: Oh, it means so much to me to hear you say that.

LB: [unintelligible] to have these relationship...Everyone has a real affection for them, I think.

AC: Now when we hear of a buffalo herds today where on the plains and where they would be driven over a bank and how their eyesight was and what they did—this or this or this. I haven't known any way to understand so many of the statements that are made about them, how poor their eyesight is. I don't know that. Is their eyesight poor? I was never aware of that.

LB: See, I think you are very...you are typical of people who have been around them who really haven't...and that's my only evidence, I would say...and this question...that's one of the questions I ask people because, see, you hear so many stories about their eyesight being poor.

AC: Yes! And if they don't know that they're going to be driven over a bank, because they [unintelligible].

LB: Yeah, I think...One thing that I think, and as you know, that when they do run in dry weather, they manage to raise tremendous clouds of dust, and I think this was one reasons. They just absolutely in this tremendous herd, they couldn't see where they were going.

AC: Of course!

LB: In fact, many of the accounts of hunters—I can remember Fremont for instance, saying...I mean, he didn't see any animal until he was 15 feet from them in the midst of this chase. So, I have this feeling, but I would say about 50 percent—oh, more than that—of the owners today have no feeling that the animal was nearsighted. In fact, one of the little comments was, "Well, I know he can see an open gate easily enough." [laughs] I was really tickled with that! [laughs]

AC: [laughs] Isn't it also interesting that anything that they can get their front feet on, in the way of a fence—they can get that weight on—goes down.

LB: This is what they do then? Rear up?

AC: Mm hmm.

LB: Well, a tremendous weight of course.

AC: And it's no trouble at all to them [laughs] to get rid of fences so it became quite a problem as to what kind of a fence they...would hold them. And we...and we were really...it was difficult to imagine how to do it, and I think we were only successful because the buffalo liked that we didn't bother them. [laughs] We just went along with what they wanted to do.

LB: And they evidently liked the range. It was good and—

AC: And they choose it themselves, you see. We didn't...and it was very fortunate for us that the place that they chose that we...happened to be...happened to be theirs.

LB: I think it's very interesting that your...that you moved them so quietly, because it really seems to be the best way.

AC: Oh, I think so.

LB: You know, of all the attempts I can...

AC: You can—

LB: Yes, that they...They are very susceptible even to foot herdings—people showing themselves. They dislike being driven, you know, doing [unintelligible] this way.

Did you...Did the old character, Buffalo Jones, ever visit your herd? Did he ever hear of him?

AC: I know of...I've read of him, but I think not. If he did, I don't know. I didn't meet him [unintelligible]. Those were my...through my teen years, and I [pauses]...No, I don't know of him being there. And I don't know of...At one time there was a movie outfit came in and wanted to get some pictures of them charging, and that was within the Smith Valley enclosure. And that was...They managed that very skillfully by build...digging in a deep area, which they could have safety in with an incline coming and getting the shots when the buffalo, of course, when over. But they had to wait for days and hours. Not only hours, but days, until the buffalo felt like running [laughs] because nobody was going to go in there and start them off. They would have...Just wasn't allowed. They were precious. They were people. [laughs] And I think they did get some good shots. I never saw the finished movie, but I saw some of the film that appeared to be very...to be very successful. We didn't have any though. I didn't get any, or at least I never saw one.

LB: I just noticed it must have been 1922. And some 300 feet of film was taken by the Fox Film Company. Oh, no! This was during the loading procedures of...during the Gibson [unintelligible] to be used as a news story. So those evidently at different times when they took pictures as they loaded [unintelligible].

AC: What finally became of the Gibson herd?

LB: This I wish I really knew more about. And I really can't tell you. There are still buffalo around over in that country, but I...What has really happened, I really don't know.

AC: Because as they became more numerous, then they were not as easy to keep track of.

LB: Yes. And I think...I know that Gibson himself, they sold out to someone else.

AC: They did.

LB: Oh, in the '30s but that's about the last real reference that I've run into or found out.

AC: My mother passed away on...in 1923, and from then on the buffalo had been sold [unintelligible]. I never heard anything about [unintelligible] so [unintelligible] about other things. But I always, always will feel a real joy in the chance to see what I did. My mother came up the Missouri River—she was a Halifax girl—with her mother and her youngest brother. Came by boat from down the Ohio and witnessed some of the great herds swimming the river and where the boats had to wait. Sometimes took some...always took hours and sometimes That would have been [unintelligible]. She came in '70 [1870]. My father came in '68 [1868] from Virginia.

LB: You don't remember when the herd was first established, I'm not sure?

AC: That, I'm so sorry that I don't know.

LB: I had it some place, but I [unintelligible].

AC: And why I...and why I didn't...why in the world I didn't find that out. I must have been very stupid when I was so interested in them. But I...but they just...it seemed to me they just always been on Wild Horse Island. [laughs]

LB: [laughs] Sure. Well, I know, I notice a note here where the Professor Hornaday said the Conrad herd is one of the best herds in the country.

AC: Oh, I'm glad to hear that.

LB: Yeah. I think [unintelligible]. know that...Well, Goodnight. Colonel Goodnight, he...I know he sent a couple of buffalo up to your ranch to go to Moise, and [unintelligible]. He sent quite a few of them—

AC: I don't remember that at all.

LB: a—Texas.

AC: No, I didn't know it.

LB: His were the only...the only bunch. He sent two, and I think one of them died. So his was the only breed outside of your herd that made it to Moise.

AC: Is that so?

LB: And there's one of his animals from Texas. Because he had captured on the Texas plains, [unintelligible] in '72 or '73. Maybe three or four of those also went in with the Yellowstone herd, but otherwise, they were northern buffalo.

AC: Is...are the southern...were the ones out on the southern plains as fully as large as the—

LB: I would say just kind of slightly smaller. And their hide, or even the robes that the Indians made from the southern herds, were not as valuable nor as luxurious as the ones from the northern Montana herds [unintelligible].

AC: Again, the climate [unintelligible].

LB: Yes, and then of course even farther north, there's the big wood buffalo, which is a slightly different species, you know, and it's even bigger and darker.

AC: Yes.

LB: Really.

AC: Very impressive.

LB: Yes.

AC: I wonder if you would like some coffee. May I bring you some?

LB: [unintelligible]

[End of Interview]