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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: 149-001
Interviewee: Gus Kroll
Interviewers: Ernest Kraft
Date of Interview: circa 1965
Project: National Bison Range Oral History Project

Ernest Kraft: This is an interview with Gus Kroll. Is that K-r-o-l-e?

Gus Kroll: No. It's K-r-o-l-l.

EK: K-r-o-l-l.

GK: Yes, [unintelligible].

EK: When were you born, Gus?

GK: I was born down south in Texas.

EK: What year?

GK: Well, 1876.

EK: 1876. Boy, you've seen a lot of this old world, haven't you?

GK: Yes.

EK: How did you happen to come to this country?

GK: Well, I worked on the ranch there, and there's another guy worked there. His name was George Gardner (?). Then, of course, he come down there...his father come down there and [unintelligible]. [unintelligible] up here, and he didn't like the Texas country, working there for 18 dollars a month and not very good wages, of course. He got up here, in Montana, 45 dollars a month. We got to talking about it then...then he was going back right up to Montana. Boy, he'd stay here. So I told him, I said, "I'd like to see Montana myself."

"Well, [unintelligible] I guess. Come along."

So I went along with him and come here. The first job I had, if I remember right, was out on the Smith River Ranch. I forget the guy's name, but it was a big ranch—sheep ranch. I, of course, fixed fence and done chores and everything that come along.

EK: How old were you then?

GK: I was 18 by then. Seventeen or eighteen.

EK: Was that in this part of the country, Gus?

GK: What?

EK: Was that ranch in this part of the country?

GK: Why, if I remember right, it was in Meagher County, and Meagher County [unintelligible]. The ranch, it was—if I remember right—the guy's name was Len Lewis (?) or some name like that. They had sheep and cattle, but I know it was a big outfit. The Smith River run right through the ranch.

EK: When did you first come to Moiese?

GK: I come to Moiese, by George, in...was that first of April, by George, 1911. See, we shipped the cows from Helena out here to Dixon, and had leased the state land, section [unintelligible] out there at Moiese.

EK: Near Steiner (?)?

GK: In Lake County is now what used to be Missoula County.

EK: Is that the same farm that was homesteaded by your—

GK: That's the same farm. By god, that fellow had a homestead there and had 40 acres. It was right on the foot of the hill. You can see the hills from here.

EK: I know it as the Steiner place. You sold it to Steiner?

GK: Yes, it was Steiner.

EK: That was your home when you came to this country?

GK: Yes, yes it was my home.

EK: Did you have a family at that time when you settled on that?

GK: No, I was married, but I never had a family.

EK: Then in 1912 I understand you got a job down here driving staples.

GK: Yes, I drive them right at the park [National Bison Range], you know, '12, '13, whatever it was. It was around that time.

EK: Andrew Hodges hired you, just hired you to—

GK: Andrew Hodges, yeah, he was the boss. He'd on the hire and everything like that.

EK: You received three dollars a day?

GK: Yeah. Three dollars a day.

EK: Did Andy pay you, or did the government pay you?

GK: No, the government paid.

EK: The government paid you?

GK: Yeah. Oh, he give you voucher by them, signed and then of course, in the [unintelligible] why, he paid you the three dollars or whatever you had coming.

EK: The first job you really remember though was the job that he assigned you to staple up all the exterior panels?

GK: Yeah, that's the first job I had was go around the fence and staple up the wires by that staple gun. There was—

EK: He believed that they were too straight up and down, that they should have been turned sideways?

GK: Yeah, should be kind of catty-cornered on [unintelligible] instead of across the wire.

EK: That was shortly after the fence was built all though, and it was in pretty good shape.

GK: It was four years after the fence was built. Four or five years by...That park was fenced, I think, in 1909 if I remember right [unintelligible].

EK: They finished it in 1909. 1908 they started it.

GK: [unintelligible].

EK: You'd accomplished this with a saddle horse. You led this saddle horse along and hauled your staples—

GK: I used to ride a saddle horse, and of course, while I was on the job working on the fence, I'd go [unintelligible] and get on and off every eight feet, by god. Although, I'd ride a horse from the [unintelligible] down to home.

EK: Let's see...Did you have to go into the headquarters there in the morning, or did you just go from Dixon? You didn't live in Dixon. You lived at Moiese.

GK: No, lived in Moiese.

EK: That's right.

GK: Oh yes, you had to wake up, load the horse—

EK: Eight o'clock, seven o'clock?

GK: Yeah, eight o'clock sharp.

EK: And you worked 'til?

GK: I worked 'til...worked your eight hours.

EK: It was eight hours then?

GK: Worked 'till five o'clock. Yes, that's right.

EK: Then you road back home.

GK: Yes. Home. Go home, of course, and once in a while, [unintelligible] the horse and drive down to Dixon, why, [unintelligible].

[Break in audio]

EK: Okay, you're on the air, Gus. You mentioned a loading shoot that was constructed down there on the railroad track where they turned out the buffalo that came from Polson...or Kalispell.

GK: No, they came from, I think, it was Conrad buffalo [unintelligible]. It was just a chute. They'd get it right up to the edge there, track there and fixed up some runway and they unloaded the buffalo there.

EK: They run them through the runway into the park?

GK: Yeah. I don't know if they tore down or not, but I haven't paid no attention to it.

EK: That's something I can ask Cy about. It was here when he came.

GK: Who?

EK: Cy. Cy Young. He might know something about it.

GK: Yeah, he might know something about it too.

EK: You thought there was about 30 head in that shipment?

GK: Yeah, I believe there was 30 head or something like that in the shipment.

EK: And that left...there was a herd of buffalo in here at that time of about 56.

GK: I think he...I remember right, I think there's either 68 or something like that. I wouldn't...you know when it's 50 years—

EK: Well, that's all right, Gus—

GK: —you forget.

EK: —I was just curious. What shape was the range in? The range was in real good shape?

GK: Oh yes, yes, you bet you...The range was extraordinary good you know.

EK: There was very few deer or—

GK: There was very few deer, and I think they keep the antelope in there.

EK: Oh. What about elk?

GK: There wast elk though there too bad if I remember right. I know there was.

EK: There was no sheep at that time I don't think.

GK: No. No sheep there.

EK: But there was a band of wild horses in there.

GK: Yeah.

EK: You had seen those?

GK: Oh, yes.

EK: Many times?

GK: [laughs] [unintelligible] half a mile or so.

EK: Did you ever ride with Andy to try to get them out of there? Did you work with Andy? Did you ever ride with Hodges to try to drive them out of there?

GK: No, no. Never tried it.

EK: But he did himself, didn't he?

GK: No, just as he said, "Jesus, it isn't worthwhile." It was only eight in there, and what's the use of running our horses down. The very minute those horses see you, really strike out for the highest hills, they could by them.

EK: But you figure that he probably shot the stallion?

GK: I think he shot the stallion, yes.

EK: Then they just gradually died off?

GK: Eventually died off, yes.

EK: They were pretty much mustangs, weren't they?

GK: Cayuses, as they call them. Just Indian stuff.

EK: You felt that the Indians resented the Bison Range.

GK: What?

EK: Did you feel that the Indians resented the Bison Range?

GK: Well, from what I heard they did resent having the range there. See, that cut them out quite a lot of pasture, and some of those Indians, by god, they had quite a few head of cattle at that time.

EK: You mentioned something about someone moving the agency. Where was it before it was moved here?

GK: Well, the agency was up above Arlee, what they call Jocko, and Fred Morgan [Fred C. Morgan] was agent at that time and he moved it from the Jocko down here to Dixon. He thought it was a more fit place.

EK: It was near a bigger town. Dixon at that time was a pretty good-sized little community, wasn't it?

GK: Yes, it was. It was a nice little town at that time.

EK: They shipped a lot of stock through there?

GK: Well, yes. You know the homesteaders used to unload here at Dixon then haul their stuff out to Moiese and D'Aste and all those places. Used to call the Irish [unintelligible]—the Butte Irish by it up to D'Aste.

EK: Do you remember anything anything about the town of Charlo at that time?

GK: There was no town of Charlo.

EK: There wasn't?

GK: No, that wasn't a thing then.

EK: How many fences were between here and Moiese? Was it pretty well populated then?

GK: Well, it was...Let's see, there was... [pauses] I think [unintelligible] had a place.

EK: There wasn't too many homesteaders yet, was there?

GK: No, there wasn't too many homesteaders. Oh, you know there was little, one or two bachelors like Travis (?). He was from Detroit. He was a drugstore man, and his health wasn't very good and he come out here for his health. He homesteaded 40 acres. Then there was another single man by the name of Erling (?). His parents lived there in Missoula by then. He was a home...another homesteader. Then across the road, they were...what was that? Four 80s Indian allotments that the Indian had taken over—allotted to the Indian by [unintelligible]. Of course, they wasn't put on the market 'til...I don't know how many years afterwards. I know he bought one was across the road.

EK: Was there a store at Moiese at that time?

GK: Oh, no, no.

EK: There wasn't anything?

GK: No, no. There wasn't no railroad, no store. We had to come from Moiese clear down here to Dixon—14 miles—to get our mail and whatever we needed. [laughs]

EK: What was there for buildings at the headquarter site there where Hodges lived?

GK: There was the building, by George, they lived in, and a barn and kind of a bunkhouse—a little house there was used for a bunkhouse. They had no such buildings as they are now, by god.

EK: You were up there last summer for roundup or butchering, I saw you.

GK: What?

EK: You were up there to watch the butchering or roundup, weren't you?

GK: I was up there, yes, but I wasn't interested in butchering them [unintelligible].

EK: You should come up to the roundup. I bet you'd enjoy that.

GK: I didn't see the roundup. I wasn't there.

EK: We'll try to get you up there. You'd probably enjoy that.

GK: I was...Let's see...Somebody, I rode up there. They hadn't—

EK: Charlie Kennedy (?) brought you up.

GK: I believe, by George, it was.

EK: I remember seeing you up there.

GK: You—

EK: Yeah, I remember seeing you. I was working up there, but I didn't know who you were at that time.

What kind of a fellow was Andy? Pretty easy to get along with?

GK: Oh, Andy was a good fellow to get along with. But he was awful strict. I don't know...some reason or other it was the first job I think he had from the government. Of course, everything hasn't be just so, by god, there wasn't no halfway about it.

EK: You mentioned something about a poacher over on the north fence when you were...Somebody come in there to fish?

GK: Somebody come in there. You know, those homesteaders, they are come from Butte, and it was wide open and they didn't think nothing of climbing over the fence and trying to fish there in the park.

EK: Andy, he kind of discouraged that.

GK: Oh, he discouraged...Oh, gosh, he wouldn't have them in there at all.

EK: He carried a 30-30, you say?

GK: What?

EK: He carried a 30-30 most of the time?

GK: Oh, he had a 30-30 right along, by George. He always carried it on the saddle behind him. Of course, if he happened to see a coyote, by god, he'd take a shot at a coyote. I don't know [unintelligible].

EK: Was there a lot of them in there at that time?

GK: What?

EK: Was there a lot of coyotes in there at that time?

GK: Well, there was once in a while two or three in a bunch there, by god. See, they were fenced in, and the only way they could get out, they dig under the fence. Of course, and I walked around the fence, and he told me, "Whenever you see a place that a coyote's dug under or dug out," I pile some rock in there. If I was anywhere near where the rock was, why, then I put some rocks in that hole there.

EK: You said that rattlesnakes were no great big problem.

GK: No, not so bad. Oh—

EK: Average?

GK: [laughs] Happened to run across them.

EK: Do you know of anyone to be bitten?

GK: No.

EK: Or horses?

GK: No, I don't believe there was ever a horse bit by one [unintelligible].

Of course, Andrew had this...what they call it? Anti-rattlesnake bite or some stuff there around that place.

EK: Serum.

GK: In case there was somebody got bit by them.

EK: Do you remember any of Andy's horses?

GK: Yeah, he had old Baldy. There was only three head of horses on the place there. His own horse, old Baldy, and then there was old Buck and Roanie. That was the team the government had there. There's a [unintelligible].

EK: [laughs] He didn't think much of that team in other words.

GK: No. Man by the name of James Kuhn (?) [unintelligible]. He worked there. He worked in there, and I worked. I got [unintelligible] of the blamed team, and couldn't do nothing with them but [unintelligible]. Every time you put the scraper in, I'd stop—

EK: Which road was this that you were fixing, do you remember?

GK: It come from Moiese there, from the store, and that's where they cut off.

EK: On into the headquarters.

GK: Yes.

EK: Oh, that was in 1912 then.

GK: That was an Indian allotment. And the story is that piece of the park is fenced in. It didn't run clear to where the store was. The way it was, I leased it or got some kind of agreement from old Ann [unintelligible]—old Indian woman lived there. He built a store—that was after the railroad built in there.

EK: About what year was that?

GK: God, I don't remember if that was before the war, or...it must have been before the war. I'm sure.

EK: You built the store down there, helped build the store?

GK: Yeah, then the neighborhood people from Moiese, a whole bunch, we went down there...No, it was after the railroad was built, that's right. Old man Sloane (?), they had...The railroad had a camp at Mission Creek where the bridge is now. He bought buildings, and then got the ground for them. Then they went down on a Sunday and built that building—just the main building.

EK: That was people around the community?

GK: Oh, there was...I don't know, quite a bunch there. The main guy was...I remember his name was Tom Scheffer (?). He was a homesteader, and he was an excellent carpenter. All we done—him and I we done the marking, and the rest of them they done the sawing and the nailing and fixed it up.

EK: That sounds real interesting. I never heard that before either.

GK: What?

EK: About building the store.

GK: You didn't?

EK: Who ran the store the first time?

GK: It was a man by the name of Mr. Sloane.

EK: Sloane?

GK: Yeah.

EK: He was the same one who had the one over there in Dublin Gulch as it's called now. Is that where it was before?

GK: No.

EK: Mission Creek though.

GK: I was down Mission Creek, by god. Moiese, by god. He was the first one that run the store.

EK: Then how long was he there, do you remember?

GK: Oh, he must have been there three, four years, by god, I think.

EK: Then who took it over after that?

GK: What?

EK: Who took it after that?

GK: There was a guy by the name of Freshour (?) took it over.

EK: Then who after that, do you know?

GK: Somebody took it over, I just now forget who it was.

EK: I can probably find that out from somebody.

GK: I guess you can.

EK: Well, that was the first building was a community project there at the store?

GK: Yeah, that was—

EK: They just wanted a place with supplies.

GK: Yeah, we wanted the place so we get our mail and buy some groceries. They put it up there just for a post office, by George, and had...Mr. Sloane appointed a postmaster.

EK: Who furnished the materials?

GK: Well, Mr. Sloane did. He took the...tore those railroad tracks down, and he built a place out of old boards there.

EK: Oh, I see. Then those coals sheds and that stuff were constructed there later?

GK: Yea, that was built later. All we built, we built the main building. I forget now how big it was. Something like 32 feet long...what the heck it was.

EK: Yeah, that's real interesting. That road then that you were working on was the road that went from about where the store is on into where Hodges lived.

GK: Well, yes. That was just a trail there, by George. It crossed the fences there. That was the Indian allotment all the way from, what they called, Harley's Corner (?). The first building on the...No, it was, by George, the schoolhouse. Yeah, that's right. We built the damn schoolhouse too.

EK: This was about the same time?

GK: A little afterward.

EK: A little afterward.

GK: Yeah. There was several people, I think the [unintelligible] family had drifted. They had some youngsters, and then the section boss, Peterson, he had a place. He had two youngsters and we build that building.

EK: [unintelligible] Clubhouse—the Moiese Clubhouse.

GK: The Moiese Clubhouse was just built, by George, and they hadn't finished on the inside. Oh, the back part of it was kind of a lean-to. I built that on then, and fixed that up for kitchen.

EK: That was in 1912 when you first came here?

GK: That was in 1912, '13 by then.

EK: How many years was it before you got mail service out to the ranch there?

GK: We got mail service out there about...[unintelligible] down from Dixon to Moiese before they granted a post office by then—14 miles. That was before the railroad was built there by...must have been around '13, '14, somewhere.

EK: Did you know Mrs. Bower?

GK: Yeah, Jimmy Bower's mother.

EK: She lives right next to me.

GK: Next to you?

EK: She's still living.

GK: Well, I'll be god-damned. [unintelligible].

EK: You should see her sometime. She'd really like to see you, I bet.

GK: Well, I'll be god-damned.

EK: She's really an old lady, but she's still bright and [unintelligible].

GK: Still on the old place by then?

EK: Her son is on the place. Jimmy.

GK: What?

EK: Jimmy.

GK: Jimmy lives on the place?

EK: Yeah.

GK: Oh, Jimmy live in Moiese!

EK: Oh yeah, he's never been gone from there.

GK: Well, I'll be god-damned.

EK: When did [unintelligible] Lott (?) come to that country?

GK: The Lotts? They come—

EK: Old Tom Lott.

GK: Yeah, Tom Lott. Oh, he come there...Let's see...[unintelligible] schoolhouse because he had two kids. Damned if I remember now.

EK: Well, it don't matter too much. I just thought if...you were probably neighbor to him.

GK: No, [unintelligible]. Tom Lott, he lived below the hill there next to Mission Creek. That's where he bought an old homestead—some homestead.

EK: I know the place. I forgot about that. That's where Buck Seeback (?) lives.

GK: Yeah, yeah, I guess it is.

EK: That's right. I heard [unintelligible] tell me that.

GK: Well, that's the place he had. Then he moved up there and bought that place there where Abby (?) lives now—state land.

EK: Abby's still there.

GK: Yeah, I guess he'll stay there until he dies.

EK: Yeah, I suppose. Did you know old Tom?

GK: Oh, you bet your life! Tom used to be our neighbor by [unintelligible]. We had lived there just a half a mile east of them.

EK: When did you leave the ranch out there? When did you sell it to [unintelligible]? What year?

GK: I think we sold out there...we lived on the darn place 38 years, by George.

EK: Oh, well, I can figures that out then.

GK: Then we moved.

EK: Did you ever have any trouble with that hill there behind the house with rattlesnakes?

GK: No...well, now, a few of them up there, I guess.

EK: Were you there when they found that den...That was afterwards?

GK: No, no. We had left by then.

[Break in audio]

EK: But you heard about it?

GK: Oh yes.

EK: Were you living in Dixon at the time when they had the...oh, no, you weren't here in the country then. They shipped a lot of cattle out of Dixon now, didn't they?

GK: Yeah.

EK: Earlier days when they...Is that where your stock was shipped from? If you raised the cattle you had to drive them to Dixon?

GK: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I brought them to Dixon by then.

EK: They had a big stockyard there—

GK: Well, the stockyard if I remember right, they were west of [unintelligible]. I guess they moved them up to the [unintelligible], across the—

EK: Was there any bridge across the river? When did they build the bridge across the river, do you know? Did you have to swim the river to across it when you first came?

GK: No, I'll tell you, by George, they built the bridge here...that must have been after the war by then. No, we went...We crossed the river up there right west about a mile and a half of some rapids there. That's where we crossed the river by. You had to kind of wind around there, you know, and stay on the crossing.

EK: Did you ever get wet?

GK: Oh, once in a while, yes.

EK: What about Elo Smith (?)?

GK: Elo Smith, he come here quite a bit afterwards. The Elo Smith outfit, they had homesteads here around Dixon by then and west of Dixon some of them were.

EK: What about—

GK: Elo Smith place, by Goerge, that's Ed Lozeau, the Indian, that sold him that. That was Ed Lozeau's allotment, and of course, Elo Smith traded him an old [unintelligible] and...I don't know what the hell it all was [unintelligible]. Elo Smith didn't have any money, but good trader. Elo was [unintelligible].

EK: He was a good trader, wasn't he?

GK: You bet your life he was. That's the way he got that place.

EK: Was Howell (?)...Did Howell live there. Jensen Howell (?)?

GK: No, no, he come afterwards.

EK: Well, let's see. Can we get back to Andy? Did he have any family when...Did Andy Hodges have a family when you worked there.

GK: Well, they had a little girl. She was about ten years old about that time. What was her name? Helen! That's the only one they had.

EK: Guess I'm running out of questions.

[long pause]

GK: It was quite a [unintelligible], and across the river there were quite a few homesteads here. [unintelligible] outfit and [unintelligible]—quite a few of them.

EK: You mentioned to men that worked here—two brothers that you said were dead. What—

GK: That was Bob and [unintelligible]. They lived there at Moiese, yeah. They homesteaded, the two of them did that.

EK: Which place, do you know?

GK: Well, if I remember right, [unintelligible] got the place now. Somebody took over that east side [unintelligible] for 50,000 dollars or whatever it was.

EK: He's in the veterans hospital over at—

GK: Helena.

EK: —in real bad shape.

GK: Why, you don't say so! [unintelligible], that was one man, by god, that I really liked. He was a good neighbor. It don't matter what he was a doing, if you needed any help, by George, he dropped it and helped. I always like Roy, and, oh, once in a while, he couldn't make the payment and come and get the money from us.

EK: You talk about this horse, Baldy, now can you tell me anymore about him—that belonged to Hodges? This Baldy horse. Was he a real good saddle horse?

GK: He was...no, he wasn't much of a saddle horse, but he was a real good looking horse. But as far as his being a saddle horse, he was a rough riding son-of-a-bitch. Trot and...Oh, once in a while, there'd be some guy from Washington, D.C. come out and look at the buffalo—want to see the buffalo and all this kind of stuff. Well, Baldy wasn't good, by George, he was slow, and he was damn lazy. There's one time that some old guy come out. He never been on a horse. I don't believe he ever seen a horse. Well, Hodges, by god, he used to borrow the saddle horse from me, and James Schoonover and I was a-working there. This old fellow wanted to get out in the park, and he thought all he had to do just go out and the buffalo just come right to him, by god, like a bunch of cattle. Well, old Hodges told him he had to go out maybe a mile or two. So

we put him on old Baldy [unintelligible] road down there. Then James Schoonover and I, right there where the barn is—the building—there's a park main gate [unintelligible]...Andrew Hodges daughter, Helen—she was about ten, twelve years old—Hodges come in and said, "Helen, go and open the gate." Helen, she take out, light out, and open the gate. Jim and I rode alongside the old guy, by god, to keep him on the saddle horse. After he got through the gate, he took and snugged old Baldy up to his horse and then the old fellow couldn't fall off. He was hanging on. That's the kind of a guy they wanted to look after the...What do they call [unintelligible]? Oh, some wildlife [unintelligible]. Parks Department or something. I forget what.

EK: I know what you're trying to say, and I can't say it myself.

GK: [unintelligible] that guy onto Baldy. Then we had him [unintelligible]. Baldy was so god-damn lazy and slow.

EK: Did Hodges do a lot of riding daily? Did he go out and—

GK: Oh yes. Hodges was very particular by then. Yeah, he was right on the job.

EK: He rode out, more or less, or checked the boundary fences or—

GK: He rode round the boundary fences, and he always had an eye, just knew exactly where the buffalo was. Oh yeah, that's—

EK: There was no trucks or any other equipment?

GK: No, no, no, no. They had that old team that I was telling you about. That god-damn outfit!

EK: Scraper.

GK: Scraper and an old plow—old walking plow.

EK: Did they plow any ground while you were there? Did they do any seeding of any kind?

GK: No, they didn't. Hodges put in a little bit of hay there around the house, if I remember right. Was a place there.

EK: Do you know anything about the accident when Jim Schoonover got hurt?

GK: No, I don't.

EK: That was after you left?

GK: After I left, yeah. Well, how did he get hurt, by god? Oh, course, Jim was awkward and clumsy and hard to get around. I take that back. I imagine he wasn't [unintelligible].

EK: Well, he fell off of a hay rack.

GK: Oh! I believe, by George, that team [unintelligible], dumped him. By gosh, I did.

EK: Was that the same team I wonder?

GK: No, that was another team. I think that was a team of bays they got at that time. They got rid of the old horses—that old team that they first had there. I think they had a bay team then.

EK: They were gathering some seed or something on the other side of the slaughterhouse.

GK: Well, I think they were. You know that...that was after Hodges left, then that was Rose, [Frank H. Rose] by god.

EK: Oh, that was Rose?

GK: Yeah, he was around the park by then.

EK: Well, did you get to know Rose?

GK: Well, I knew him, yes. But Rose and I...I didn't like the man, and I worked there a day or two, but I never [unintelligible] I never go back. I didn't go back. I didn't like him. He's a kind of a [unintelligible] man. He thought he was just somebody back then. James Schoonover, I worked for him and got along. No, Rose and I, we didn't [unintelligible].

EK: Did they ever buy anymore horse while you were there than those three?

GK: No, no. They never bought anymore horses. [laughs] Old Buck and Ronie (?) and Hodges' Baldy.

EK: About how many years did you say you worked there at different times during the summer and so forth? You worked there several different years?

GK: Well, I worked there until Rose come there, and boy George, I don't know what year that was.

EK: Oh yeah, well, I can find that out. Did you work every summer? Or once in a while?

GK: Oh, once in a while, you know, when they had a little haying. Cutting the hay and help stack it or something like that. Then they got around to fencing, and they got to improving the place.

Then they started to build a road there from the store over to the house, and that was the Reclamation Service built the ditch. That damn ditch breaking, we had to fix the road. The ditch run right above the road there, by some damn cliff.

EK: Still there.

GK: It is? Yeah, I remember the time, by god, that I had the road there, and Jim and I was fixing it. A little old cottonwood of Hodges' was still there. Then the lines get tangled up in that damn cottonwood every day I pull the scraper around. You know, between the horses. So one day, I looked at him and I said, "Jim, god damn it, we're going to go and cut that thing up." So I picked the ax up and cut the damn thing down. Got in the way. Hodges come around and noticed it, and he informed me not to cut anymore. He just want the park...leave it there just as it was. Not destroy anything. Made me a little sore, but I couldn't afford to say anything. I was getting four dollars a day for [unintelligible].

EK: [unintelligible] your own team on the scraper? Did they board your team?

GK: What?

EK: Did they board your team? Did you keep the team there?

GK: No, I had to take the team home every night and morning. No sir. By god, no! They wouldn't. [unintelligible] in the barn. [unintelligible]. They used to have a dog, by George, he'd stay at home if I went out with a horse, but if I took that team, that damn dog had to go with that team. It didn't matter, come hell or high water. By George, he had a go with that team. Oh, Hodges didn't want a dog in there. I said, "Well, that's all right," but he followed me in. By god, he says, "Just lock him in the barn." Then you know that barn had these little windows—one window. The damn windows were raised up, by George, and the damn dog got up in the manger and then cleared the window and then out he come. By George, clear out in through the Park where I was working. Oh, geez, Andrew, he was...Well, to make a long story short, by George, if you can see the dog, I'll [unintelligible]. He's just too damn good a dog. [unintelligible], and he was. I had him broke.

We got him from a pup, and he used to go with me when he was small and get the milk cows. Then he got so after a bit, why, six o'clock come—anything like that—why, he'd go on and get the milk cows for us. Or if the horses was out, I'd tell him to get the horses, why, he'd go and get the horses.

EK: Did they do any kind of development around the water holes or anything while you were there? Did they try to catch water? Did they do any work outside of the fence there other than the headquarters there?

GK: No, no. No.

EK: They just left her just like she was?

GK: Yeah. All it was...By god, I was the first one that went round the fence, I guess.

EK: But you don't have any idea who it was that contracted and built that fence?

GK: No, I haven't got no idea who built it. Seems to me I heard the [unintelligible], but I forgot it.

EK: Is Hodges living?

GK: No. He died. His daughter, I think, she is...I remember right, Helen is living up at Hamilton or something. That's the one you ought to look up, by god.

EK: Yeah, but I got to find her married name, but I can't find her married name.

GK: Her used to be Helen Bowers. I don't know, maybe I got it [unintelligible]. [moves away from microphone]

[long pause]

I moved him out. I moved him out up to the place he bought there below the mission, by god. Yeah, I moved him.

EK: Why did he move?

GK: Well, it was a case, either resign or retire, by George, or get canned.

EK: It was over what?

GK: Over... [laughs] I don't know just what it come to, but Hodges got so, by god, he kept cows in there. Then of course, Jim Schoonover, who worked over there and done the milking, and Mrs. Hodges sold the cream. That was one thing. Then there was something else, by god, it come over, I think, it was the voucher part. By god, he had some vouchers in there, took in, cleaned the [unintelligible]. I don't know what the hell was wrong, but there was something wrong.

EK: Well, wasn't it that time that he retired, wasn't there an awful lot of buffalo in there?

GK: Well, there was...I guess, they got over 200 head in there about that time. Yes, more than that probably. Was it 200, or was it 400 head? But it was quite a band in there at that time.

EK: He didn't want them shot, or he didn't want them controlled in any way, did he?

GK: Well, he really...I don't know. Damn buffalo, some way or another after they got loose in there, and they were handled, god damn, they was an ornery bunch to round up, by god.

EK: Did you ever get in on any of that?

GK: Well, no. All I got in on, there was a damn little old calf in there. Cow had a calf, and I don't know, I roped the darn thing...What the hell did he do? Put something in there and [unintelligible] Well, anyway, he treated it...something. That's the only time...and that god-damn, old cow, by god, she like to tore [unintelligible].

EK: You were riding your own horse?

GK: Oh, yes.

EK: Did you ever do any rodeoing or any...You like the cowboying?

GK: No. Of course, I was raised down there in Texas by [unintelligible]. It was natural for a kid to get to riding by then.

EK: You knew a little bit about horses.

GK: Well, yes, saddle horses. But as far as team work or anything like that, oh, I maybe know how to put a harness on a team, but I wasn't much of a driver. After I come up here to Montana, by god, I give that the highball and I went to the mine. Worked in the mine.

EK: You left here?

GK: No...Well, I worked around [unintelligible] and then [unintelligible], and I don't what the heck. There was a lot of mines those days.

EK: You said something about where Hodges came from.

GK: Oh, Hodges, he come from Ouray, Colorado, a little old burg there, by George, that's...I think it's a little burg there that they call... [unintelligible] big mine.

EK: After you left this [unintelligible] place, is that when you went to go mining?

GK: No.

EK: Before?

GK: Before, yeah. Or did I...Yeah, it was before. We left Missoula, by George. No, we didn't left Missoula, we left Helena. But we after we sold the place, we moved to Missoula and stayed there and, I don't know, I got kind of sick not being on the ranch and doing anything. So Dr. Will (?) told the wife, he says, "Get him out of town." He [unintelligible].

EK: What year did your wife pass away?

GK: [unintelligible]. That must have been in '40, somewhere in '41 or '42. We left Missoula and come out here and got this ranch right here. Just across the railroad and [unintelligible] on the right-hand side of the road. Oh, King (?), I think, owns it now. He bought that. Well, the way we come to get that...I don't know how they got it. The Land Bank in Spokane, they wrote to me, and they wanted me to come out here and appraise this place. So I come out here and appraised it. Was an old fellow by the name of Emile (?) that lived on it. They had it rented. His wife owned it, and she had a mortgage on it and took it away from her. So I appraised it at 3,500 dollars. Was nothing there but just ground. Emile, by god, he thought I was crazy. I told him I was doing it, so he didn't have much to say about it. I appraised that, they paid me 25 dollars. About six months got a letter from the darn bank wanted to know if I wouldn't buy it.

In the meantime, somebody got in there and offered them 6,000 dollars for it. It was 400 acres, I believe. I offered them 6,000 dollars [unintelligible].

EK: [unintelligible].

GK: What?

EK: [unintelligible].

GK: I lived on it maybe...I lived on it until after the wife died. [unintelligible]. '42, I think. Of course, I had to hire a housekeeper [unintelligible].

EK: Did you have any brothers in your own family? As a kid, were you from a big family or a small family?

GK: No, we didn't have any children at all. Just the wife and I.

EK: No, your parents.

GK: Oh, the parents?

EK: Your brothers and sisters.

GK: Oh, I think there was six of us. Yeah. They're all dead. Every darn one of them except myself.

EK: Are you the oldest?

GK: No, I'm the youngest. Yeah. Well, there's six or eight years difference between me and the next one. [unintelligible]. Oh, it's kind of [unintelligible]. I believe I was a complete failure by [unintelligible].

EK: Oh! You don't sound like a failure to me. Sounds like you had a pretty interesting life.

GK: After the wife died, by George, I don't know...some reason or other, it just knocked the—

EK: Yeah, it sure does. I can believe that. Well, I guess I've probably taken up all your time I should.

GK: Well, I don't care. I'm not doing anything.

EK: You think about this, and maybe I can talk to you again some time. If you think of something—

GK: Why, any time you feel like coming out here and talking about...why, fine and dandy by me.

EK: I've certainly enjoyed it. I really have. I think we've gotten some really good [unintelligible].

GK: Well, I kind of enjoyed this [unintelligible] as well as you do, by god.

EK: I'd like to bring Cy along some time. Maybe he could ask you—

GK: What?

EK: Maybe Cy could ask you some questions that I wouldn't know about, that he was curious about, and maybe you could tell him something about—

GK: Cy Young?

EK: Yes.

GK: Well, I guess—

EK: Do you remember Cy?

GK: Yes!

[Break in audio]

EK: —when they were shipping the elk out?

GK: No, I was not. No.

EK: Oh, well, that was afterwards then.

GK: Yeah. I worked very little there for Rose. It wasn't more than two or three days. I didn't like the man, and god damn, he was so important, by god! He just knew it all and that college, or whatever, that he come out—

[End of Interview]