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Oral History Number: 149-003

Interviewee: Clarence "Cy" Young

Interviewer: Ernest Kraft

Date of Interview: circa 1965

Project: National Bison Range Oral History Project

Ernest Kraft: Last time we did this, Cy, I guess, we started to talk about Old Blue, and you just started to tell the story about him being whip-broke.

Clarence "Cy" Young: When I first come on the job we had to furnish our own horses here. In fact, we had to furnish all your riding gear up until about around 1940, I think it was that the government bought...or in the middle '30s, they bought two horses to saddle horses for the government. One of these horses that I got, I bought him as a bronc from a guy that owned him over in Ravalli, and he undertook to whip-break this horse. He kind of made a man-eater out of him. He'd be down in the corral with him and beat on him until the horse finally just laid back his ears and come right at him with a mouth wide open like he was going to eat him up. He would have, probably, if the guy hadn't climbed the fence and got out of the corral when he did. After that, every time the horse would hear his voice, he'd just go plumb nuts. So then this fellow was going to give me 20 dollars to break the horse for him, and I took the horse and rode him a couple of times. He was so dog gentle, he'd run around the streets of the mission and around that he was just as gentle as a dog. I told him he just as well save his 20 dollars and ride the horse himself. He thought that would be all right. So he went to get the horse again and said something, and of course, the horse went wild and come right after him again.

So I went out and caught the horse, saddled him up, and told him to keep his mouth shut. I said, "Maybe the horse won't know who you are, and you can get along with him." He did. He got on him and rode him home. He was living here where I'm living now, temporarily. The next morning he got on the horse to ride back up to headquarters, and got right out the east end of the west end of the meadow and the horse spooked at a Chink or something.

This guy said, "Look out you so-and-so," and about that time the horse bobbed his head, and Frank went up like a balloon and spread out and come down like a blanket right in the middle of the gravel road. [laughs] The horse come running on to the barn, which at that time sit where the office is now. I just stood at the door until the horse come up and he run right up, and I walked out and caught him and led him to the barn. Then saddled him.

This fellow come on up to the barn and wanted to borrow another horse. Said he was going to take him over to the fish hatchery and sell him. Fish hatchery, which was at Ravalli at that time. I said, "Well, if that's what you're going do with him, you might as well sell him to me. I'll give you ten dollars for him."

He said, "No. I'm going to take him to the fish hatchery."

I said, "Well, I don't get the connection. You're going lead him ten miles and sell him for five dollars when I'm offering you ten dollars right here at the place, and no questions asked."

He hum-hoed around for quite a while, and I finally—the horse was worth more than ten.

I finally told him I'd give him...I didn't want to cheat him, so I says, "I'll give you 20 dollars for the horse." I took the horse in, and broke him out, and he was one that turned out to be one of the best horses that's ever been on the Bison Range. Or just as good anyway. I had one other one here that belonged to the government, a little gray horse called Rusty that I thought just as much of him as I did Blue. Old Blue was one of those that could take you there and bring you back, and never ask nothing in return. He was an all-day horse, a good one, could run all day without raising a sweat on him. He was just an outstanding horse.

EK: He was one of the few that you could go in on the shoulder of the buffalo.

CY: Oh yes. He knew buffalo better than I did. He had a knack of getting in against them, and turned them around when they was bound they were headed for the creek and didn't want to turn. He could get in against them and push them aroun, and head them in the right direction. Then get away from them—jump away from them—without getting hooked. He's one of the few that I've ever rode that could do that. Back in those days, they was a lot of buffalo that would come after you, and do their best to kill you if they could've caught up with you and got you cornered. I've had several awful good horses, but he was one of the outstanding horses that I've ever had here or anyplace else for that matter.

EK: He was still living when I came here, Cy. He must have died—

CY: Yes. He died while I was over in Seattle in the hospital. Somebody, maybe you, wrote me and told me that's when he died.

EK: Rusty died while I was here.

CY: He died while I was here, too. I think just before I got hurt.

EK: We went up to ride to bring down the [unintelligible] herd or something when we found him against the upper gate here, remember?

CY: That's right. That's where he died—right at the gate.

EK: Could he go in on a buffalo?

CY: Yes. He'd go in on them. He wasn't a bit afraid of them. When they started to break him, they was wrangling mules. Tried to break him in the corral to wrangle mules with. He was used

to getting out of those mule heels—were pretty handy with their heels—and he was used to jumping away from them. He knew how to get away from a buffalo just real good. What he didn't know, it didn't take long to learn it...teach him, because he was one of those that you could show him something once and he remembered it. He would have been an outstanding—

Unidentified Speaker: I'm [unintelligible] somebody—

CY: —cut horse.

US: [unintelligible] about this place. I don't think they do. Now, what's the shortest way to say what this is? It's a Bison Range, that doesn't tell anybody anything.

EK: It's a national park.

CY: It's a National Wildlife Park.

US: National Wildlife Park.

CY: Big-game refuge, is what it is.

US: Yes, but there's so many of them—

CY: There's only three others in the United States.

US: Only three of them?

EK: Big-game. The rest are bird sanctuaries, most of them.

US: Oh.

CY: Well, let's see, where was I? We were talking about horses

EK: Yes. We were talking about Rusty. You never said too much about Rusty. You told me that he was bought when he was just being first broke.

CY: Yes. He was a two-year-old, coming three-year-old, when we bought him. I finished breaking him out here. He had just been rode a few times when we bought him for the Bison Range. We got him, and another nice bay-horse we called Bitterroot. Bitterroot was supposed to be broke, but he was a little bit on the spoiled side and they got him to bucking. Course, he finally got to where he quit his bucking, after he got used in here quite a little. I broke several horses here for the Bison Range. They had one here we called Hiram. Then they sent in one that they'd bought over at Turnbull, and he bucked a few guys over there. In fact, he bucked Schwartz [John Schwartz] off into a big stump.

EK: We got that story. Cy, did you ever hear of a horse called Baldy, that was here when Hodges was here?

CY: I've heard of him. I didn't ever seen him.

EK: He wasn't here when you came?

CY: No, we had one we called Old Bill that was here after I come in. In fact, I rode him quite a little. It was an awful good horse. Outstanding horse, good buffalo horse too. He was getting old, but just the same; he could go out and really do a horse's work. He belonged to Andy, and when Andy left and he left him here with Rose [Frank H. Rose]. Or Rose bought it from him, I believe is the way it was. He was here then for quite a long while, and he finally...Somebody left the granary open up at the slaughter house—where the slaughter house is now—and there was just a little corral there that we had to keep the horses. He got into this grain box and got grain foundered. After that, then his front feet went kind of haywire, and he wasn't much good right after that. We kept him around for the kids and to wrangle the milk cow with and stuff like that.

EK: This was the time of about...what year?

CY: That would have been in '26 or '27, along in there.

EK: When you first picked up Blue and Rusty?

CY: Yes. Well, Rusyt, we didn't get Rusty until 1941. That was the first government...That was the second bunch of horses that we bought. Those two we got in the middle '30s, we had one we called Old Thunder we got from Ike Melton [William J.B "Ike" Melton], and we got Old Red from as Swede up here on the flat two or three miles north of here. They stayed here until we got the next bunch. Then these others were pensioned off. They wasn't much good to ride so we sold them. We got five more then that Rusty was one of them. Had one we called Jughead. He was a kind of a dude horse. We got him especially for dudes. Then Hiram. Then this Midnight horse, they sent him from Turnbull, or from Colville—what's the name of that refuge up there? Little Pend d'Oreille.

EK: Pend d'Oreille?

CY: Yes.

EK: Well, we heard that story—

CY: Yes.

EK: You don't remember the rest of them. There'd be two left.

CY: Well, there's Bitterroot. Bitterroot horse. Did I mention him?

EK: Now, what color was he [unintelligible].

CY: He was a dark bay about like Popcorn. He was a regular flying machine. He could really go. He was all Thoroughbred. He was just about the size of Popcorn, except that he was maybe just a little bit longer, and he could really get out and go. He got a bad habit there. The guy that was riding him—Snyder [Leon Snyder] from Ninepipe—rode him a few times during the roundup, and he'd hold him too tight and he got him to fighting his head all the time. Nobody liked to ride him after that. Had to use a tie-down on him to stop it.

We had them, and then they began to get a little lazy and we couldn't go out, hardly, and buy a good horse. It was getting a lot of trouble to buy them, and you couldn't find what you wanted. That's when we decided to start raising our own. We went the [unintelligible] then, got two brood mares and brought them up, and started raising our own horses. That continued until we got to where we didn't have time to ride them. A lot like it is now, didn't take time to ride them. So we decided to discontinue the horse-breeding program and try to buy them, because they were getting a few more horses in the country, and you could go out and pick up one here and there a lot easier than you could then.

EK: What about the story of Whitey. What's your first recollection of Old Whitey?

CY: Well, I was off riding one day up in the high country, and I come over the...from Trisky [Creek] up over the ridge, and when I looked down into the head of Elk Creek and I seen this little white spot down there. There was not a thing in sight, just this white spot. I stopped and looked at him for a little while, and I finally put the glasses on him. I could see that whatever it was was breathing. The first thing I thought of was maybe a mountain that got in here. There was a herd of goats along with Jocko, and a lot of them were white, and I figured maybe it was one of those white goats that got in. I kept walking and leading the horse on down the hill, until finally I got down within 100 yards of Whitey. About that time, his mother had been down in the draw, taking a drink. There's a little spring right close by, and the water is running down this draw, right down in the lower end of the real extreme head of the Elk Creek, where there's a couple of concrete tanks up there now. This was down on the flat below that, where that one little reservoir is. She come walking over to him, and he got up and nursed. Of course, I knew then what he was.

I had a Kodak with me, and I got off and took a couple of pictures of him to prove what I'd seen. But I told them when I got in that I had a big secret, but I couldn't divulge it until I got my pictures back. Everybody was guessing everything in the world, but a white buffalo was what it was. When the pictures come back, I showed it to them and told them what it was. Colonel Sheldon happened to be here at that time. He wanted to see him, so we took up took him up and looked all over the Bison Range, but no Whitey. So he didn't get see him that time.

We left him out all that summer until he was about a two-year-old. Then we brought him in and put him in the exhibition pasture here at headquarters, and he stayed in there just about...no, he was three-year-old. We put him in the sheep pasture. They wanted some more, and put him up in the sheep pasture with, I think, about 15 three-year-old heifers that had never had calves. The next spring there was no white calves, and then the following spring and fall...no, the following spring, we put him back up there with the same heifers and his mother. The mother kind of got in there by accident, when we were cutting out the heifers. She's the only one that ever had another white calf. So she had a second white calf then. It was the one that went down to Washington, but as far as we could tell, it was totally blind. It stayed down there then, until 1949, [unintelligible]. It was born in '37, and he went down to Washington and stayed there until '49. I seen him in '48, by the way when I was down there. He was as big, if not bigger than his father...or Whitey [unintelligible].

EK: I saw him in '46 out there.

CY: In Washington?

EK: I was stationed in the Army then.

CY: I think, probably—I don't know what happened to him—but from what they described to me. I think he must've gone haywire, because I've known a few horses down at the Remount Station and a few mares that acted exactly the same as he did after [unintelligible]. They [unintelligible] him, and found that he'd been haywire, because he said he died...[unintelligible] told me he died in very extreme agony. Why they didn't [unintelligible] him, I don't know. Apparently, they didn't.

EK: If we get back to Whitey, was he particularly aggressive?

CY: Well, yeah, he was in a way. He was nice and docile anytime, but except in breeding season. Then he didn't back down from nobody. He went to Yellowstone once, after he was put in the exhibition pasture during breeding season, and then they had another big battle a little later in Yellowstone and finally whipped Whitey. Yellowstone, he was a lot...two or three, 400 pounds bigger than Whitey. He was a—

EK: I've heard stories about when they used to feed him, and you used to have to go out and take a saddle horse and keep them from getting up in the racks or [unintelligible]. Is that true?

CY: You mean when they fed the whole herd?

EK: Yes.

CY: Well, once in a while, they wanted, maybe, to make a run at the team or something, but it didn't happen very often.

EK: [unintelligible] saddle horse [unintelligible]

CY: Usually, I had one around, yes, but I didn't always have him handy. I didn't saddle him up much. Some of them showed signs of being [unintelligible]. Usually, after we got going, we kept two [unintelligible] out ahead all the time. To start with, we had to show them the gates or to try to move them back and forth through the gates, so we could get them used to going through the gates. After that, we got them so we could drive them a little bit. They quit being so much trouble after they'd been fed a year or two.

EK: What year was it that he was [unintelligible] in the exhibition pasture, and then he came back?

CY: Whitey? Oh, that was about '34. It was about '37 '038, when he was put in there [unintelligible].

EK: He was put back...Somebody said he was put back up to High Point [unintelligible] sometimes?

CY: No.

EK: In the winter?

EK: No, we didn't...After he'd get through these heifers in the exhibition, yes, we did keep him in there with those heifers there. We bred him two years. So he must have been in there from the spring of the first summer that we bred those heifers—'36 I guess—until...He'd been in there about two years, but he bred the heifers twice. What we intended to do there was we were starting a breeding experiment. We're going to breed him to these heifers, and then breed him to his daughters and then to his granddaughters. If any albinism showed up [unintelligible], that's where it's supposed to show up—about the third generation. Second or third. The National Bison Society got a hold of the tactics of the experimenting, and they prevailed on the biological survey to stop any breeding experiments. They said that they thought that they were directly responsible for any living buffalo in the United States today, or even the world, for that matter, and if they were not interested in starting any freak herds. They wanted to keep them true to the old national...this is the old original buffalo as they could. They didn't want no half-breeds or quarter-breeds and mixed up breeds. They wanted this the old buffalo strain as it was. So the biological survey [unintelligible] and said to discontinue the breeding experiments, and that was the end of that.

Later then, after [unintelligible] got to be chief back there, got to be chief of big-game refuges later then he wanted to start the experiment again. He was a little late, because Whitey's

mother was getting too old, and at that time she hadn't had a calf in three or four years. It was very evident she that wasn't going to have anymore.

EK: How old was she when she died?

CY: We figured she was in the neighborhood of 25, 30, but she had a hock broke or something. She was lame on that leg for a long time.

EK: [unintelligible]?

CY: We done that in the corral. We was working a bunch through the corrals, and he happened to be in there. I tried to cut him back outside, but he hit a horn on the side of the fence, and knocked it back a little bit. We were afraid to put him in the chute to try to straighten it up. So we just left it that way and hoped it would straighten up, which it did a lot, because it was knocked loose on one side and clear back there for a while. It finally got straightened up. It was a little bit a lot better than we ever hoped it would be, because it looked to me like, when we first looked at it, it was going to be...he was going lose the shell entirely. We're afraid to do anything with him, because we're afraid he might even knock off the other horn, which would have been disastrous.

EK: How old was he at that time?

CY: Eleven. [unintelligible]. But it did straighten up. Then after we got him out of there, we never did put him back into the corrals if we could help it. We always cut him out back in the big corral or get him clear out of the pen. Two or three, times we were lucky enough to get him cut off without even bringing him in the corral.

EK: When you take him back to the High Point, did you just cut him out by himself, or did you run—

CY: No.

EK: —with him?

CY: No. We'd leave his heifers with him. We left them up there.

EK: Year-round?

CY: Yes, but that was only for two years.

EK: Two years. [unintelligible]?

CY: Well, no—

EK: You just left them up there?

CY: We just left him there with his heifers. They had to run to the lane clear down to the buffalo corral. It so happened [unintelligible], their windows were open, and they didn't have any snow problem.

EK: [unintelligible] tourist, after [unintelligible] at the fence. When somebody turned their back on him, he let out a big *whoosh* and made a jump at them.

CY: That usually happened. That was like old Tommy there, the elk herd, just happened during their breeding season. Rest of the time he was docile. You could go out, and pretty near have to kick him to get him out of the road. He was very docile. Always was, in that respect.

EK: [unintelligible].

CY: [laughs] Yes. During breeding season, if you just happened to be up close to the fence, he'd make you think he was coming right through the fence. Once in a while, he would kind of hit it a little bit—not hard enough go through—but he would he'd make it squeak.

EK: We had [unintelligible] in there cleaning that ditch. Did I ever tell you about that? The guy from [unintelligible] reclamation. They were sitting in a pickup eating lunch, out there on the ditch bank. Whitey was really old. It was just through a year before he died. [unintelligible] he said, "Go down there and pet him. He's real gentle." So this guy, he gets out of his pickup and climbs down into the bank. Old Whitey was asleep there. One of his [unintelligible]. He walked up there, and he put his hand right on his fore-top. Boy, when he did that, old Whitey just when *whoosh*. Went up on his feet and [unintelligible] a big cloud of dust all over that guy. The next thing he knew, he was [unintelligible], and old Whitey was standing there looking around.

CY: Did he make any effort to [unintelligible]?

EK: No. He just jumped up, and he was right on his feet before the guy—

CY: He was probably was laying there sleeping, maybe.

EK: He was, and [unintelligible].

CY: That's about the size of it because over on Wild Horse one day, I rode up to him. He's laying stretched out sound asleep in the sunshine. I hollered at him a time or two, and he just made no effort to wake up. I thought probably, maybe, something was the matter with him. I got down off the horse and kicked him in the butt, and oh boy, he was on all fours. It just seemed like he just shot right straight in air. You couldn't see his feet moving at all. Just like he shot right up out of a hole of a gun.

EK: One time out here, I was bringing a herd of horses in over on the east side over on Antelope Ridge. I come over the ridge, and the horses were running around this thing on the ground there and there'd been a bunch of buffalo. So I didn't think anything of it, and I got over there close and I see it was a calf laying out there, all stretched out sound asleep. I could see frost on him on his hide. So I didn't think he was dead, but then I thought, well, maybe something's happened to him. I stepped down off of this horse and got behind his back, and I reached over and opened his eyelids. Boy, you don't think he didn't [unintelligible] out of there. He apparently hadn't heard a thing. He was just plumb asleep until I touched him.

CY: They're pretty sound sleepers, because I've rode up to lots of them and sat on the horse and hollered at them two or three times before they'd finally wake up, or maybe smell the horse or something. Maybe me too.

EK: The can really come out of there.

CY: Boy, they can come alive when they find out there's something wrong though.

EK: Yes. I almost had to walk home. My horse hit the end of them reins, and I just about had to walk. [laughs]

When he was down here in the exhibition pasture, he was getting quite a bit of grain and stuff before he died. He must have been getting 12, 15 quarts of grain a day, wasn't he?

CY: I don't know. See, I was gone at that time.

EK: That's right. We build a shelter for him there and put a...with the roof on it and put hay in it. Bought him good alfalfa hay, and then we were feeding him rolled barley.

CY: He would have, I think, would have lived five years longer if he'd been on good pasture there. Around the exhibition pasture, you remember how dusty it used to be around there, and always the wind was coming from the west. It blew the dust right across the pasture, and of course, it was kind of short there, except for what little irrigated stuff is there. The poor old bugger wore his teeth out—

EK: Did you ever see his jaw?

CY: —eating that dust. No, I never seen his jaw.

EK: I've got his jaw down there. I'll show it to you sometime.

CY: I seen his teeth lots of times when he'd be eating, and they look to me like they were—

EK: On one side he's got about an inch and a half notch in his teeth in the back there—in the grinders. Just goes way up and way back down. We've got it sitting down there someplace. I'll look it up.

When you found this second buffalo, what'd they ever name him?

CY: I don't think he had a name. He left here, you see, when he was six months old, or four months old—

EK: Why don't you tell about that? You were up in the lower end of the sheep pasture, or right at the head of Elk Creek, at that time.

CY: Yes. I was riding, I was just out on patrol, looking for sheep more than anything else, and rode up the creek. I found the mother and three or four more young ones right close to where the first one was born—Big Medicine was born. She looked like she was about ready to have a calf. So I come on into headquarters and tried to get a bet out of the boys as to whether it would be another white one or not. Dr. Norton [Robert C. Norton], he said, "Well, I'll bet a case of beer that it isn't a white one."

Paul Streit (?), who was the blacksmith, he said, "Well, I'll bet another case of beer that it isn't a white one too."

So I called their bets. I went back up there about two days later, and the calf had been born close to that narrow ravine right below where the other one was born. It was right down the ravine below where the little reservoir is on the flat there, the head of Elk Creek. He had fell down in this narrow ditch, and of course, he couldn't get out. It's straight up. So I helped him out. The old cow she stayed up on the bank and was jumping up and down and acting like was going to come right down in and get me, but she let me get the calf out. I watched him for a couple hours, and I could see that he didn't seem to be able to see. Couldn't seem to find where he was supposed to eat. After watching him for quite a while, getting late, so I come on in.

The next day I went back up there and watched him, and apparently he had never found where to eat yet because the cow's bag was all swelled up. I come back in, and I told Dr. Norton I didn't think that calf was able to nurse. So he and I went back up there, and we watched him all day, and decided he hadn't nursed or couldn't nurse. Was staggering around and sticking his nose in the air and going every which way. He didn't act like he was able to see. So we brought him down, brought him up through the elk corrals and on down to the slaughterhouse, and we observed him for another day or two. We decided that he definitely never had nursed. So we brought him in to headquarters then and put him on a bottle, and I raised him on a bottle until he was about six months old. They decided to send him down to the Rock Creek Gardens in Washington DC.

EK: He could hear.

CY: That we don't know, because at times he didn't act like he could and sometimes we thought maybe he could but—

EK: When you'd go to feed him, he wouldn't know when you were coming then?

CY: Not until he got close enough smell me, and then when he could smell me or the milk, which he could ten, fifteen feet away and a lot farther if the wind happened to be in his direction, he'd just come on a dead run. We had another orphan in there with him about like the one that we got here now, whose mother died and was about the same age as the white one. I raised them together there, and he seemed to depend on the other one to take him to where the food was. He'd hang right with the other one as a rule. If he didn't, then I'd walk over close enough for him to smell me or touch him, and he knew what was coming then. He just—

EK: Was he friendly, or—

CY: Oh, yes. He was real friendly. We put him on a cow for a while, after I got him going there, and we got a cow and she raised him as long as she was giving milk enough for the two of them. Then when she quit giving milk enough for the two, why, I had to go back to feeding him on the bucket again, because I didn't have this artificial Calf-Manna and stuff they got now.

EK: Was he shipped out of here, or did they come and get him, or do just...How'd he—

CY: No. We crated them. Put them in individual crates. Padded the crates.

EK: They both went?

CY: Yes, they both went.

EK: They weren't together when I saw them.

CY: Well, they took Whitey away and put him in a pen by himself when I was down there. But they left here together, and they kept them together for a while down there but I don't know why they separated them. The guy that I talked to didn't know why they separated them. I presume, though, he got big enough to where he could maybe get that cow in the corner once in a while, and probably work her over if he—

EK: It was a heifer.

CY: —took a notion. Yes. The brown one was a heifer. That might be why they separated them. Either that, or they didn't want to take a chance on Whitey getting hooked maybe.

EK: I used to go down there in the morning when they'd feed—6 o'clock or so—go into town the night before. I had a pair of taps on my shoes, and there was a cement walk right in front of his pin. I come down there, and I walked right...getting front of his cage and here he'd come. He run down from shed that was in the back there, and he plowed right smack into that pen...that big, about inch bars.

CY: He probably smelled, winded you.

EK: He just plowed into that thing like...I thought he must be able to hear. I've always thought it was those taps on my shoes, but he must have winded me then.

CY: Probably winded you, yes.

EK: He just plowed right into that like he knew where he was going. It startled me, and I'd never even heard of a white buffalo at that time. [pauses] Next thing I knew, I was standing clear out in the middle of the street.

CY: I don't much think he could hear, because if he could he would have acted a lot different when I was raising him. I'd just call him...They'd be standing over there in the corner looking, and I'd call him and then he didn't make no effort to come to me. Where if he could smell me, usually he'd just come on the dead run.

EK: He was a true albino. He had pink eyes and—

CY: Oh, yes. He had everything. White feet and pink eyes, and wasn't a brown hair on him no place.

EK: That's quite a story.

CY: But the officials in Washington, you couldn't get them excited about him at all. They just thought, well, so what? That seemed to be the attitude.

EK: Do you believe that buffalo have poor eyesight?

CY: I think they can see pretty damn good, because I've had them be a mile away from me and me riding towards them on a horse, and boy, they'd just be on their feet right now and take off. So they can they can see pretty damn good at that distance. To tell you from another buffalo at a mile away—

EK: A lot of these old book, these old guys—scientists or whatever you want to call them—they claim they couldn't see.

CY: Well, I don't agree with there, because—

EK: I've certainly don't either.

CY: —I've had too many buffalo see me a-coming at a mile, and some of them probably a lot further, and take off—

EK: About the time you see them, they're standing there looking at you.

CY: They're standing there looking at you, and if they were laying down, they'd be on their feet right now. If they decide you were coming to their direction, why, they'd take off.

EK: What do you think about a buffalo's rolling habits? He rolls for more reasons than one, don't he? I mean—

CY: Well, lots of time, yes, I think they roll for more than just to be a-dusting. In the summertime, when the flies are bad, of course, you naturally suppose that they're trying to get dust on there to help keep those flies off of their back, but heck I've seen them lay down right in the snow and roll and just—

EK: From my observations, I felt that whenever you interrupt them or disturb them—you'll see them just clear across the whole field—they'll just all start dusting. You can just see them go right across there. They'll all start dusting—

CY: Yes, I've noticed that they'll do that when they see you're coming.

EK: Irritated them or—

CY: Yes. Especially the bulls. They'll get down on their knees, and they'll rub their whiskers in the grass and get up and throw dirt over his back with his front foot and act belligerent, like he was daring you to come up and get close enough for him to get at you. They do that invariably when you're just riding out and among. So, I don't think that they roll just on the count of flies, altogether.

EK: Have you ever heard of a buffalo rolling clear over?

CY: [laughs] No. I have to see my first buffalo roll over.

EK: [laughs] I just wondered.

CY: I've heard of twins quite a lot, but we've only butchered one cow here that had twins in her. We never have had a pair of calves that we knew definitely belonged to one cow. To be born, I mean. Neither have I ever seen a pair of twin elk, but you read about them here and there. Whether they are authentic or not, I don't know. You can believe what you read, maybe they

are, but if they're not, somebody just talking when they don't know whereby they speak.
[pauses] Anyway, they don't have twins very often if at all.

EK: What about the bulls that were brought in here from Niobrara [Nebraska]? How many were there, and—

CY: There were three. Three bulls and two longhorn steers that were brought in here brought in here the first time. They seemed a lot more belligerent than our bulls here. You'd get them in the corral, and they would just try to take the corral apart and a-hooking, and a-fighting. A lot worse than our bulls usually do.

EK: I wondered if it was their travel or what? If it was their...because you can tell bulls today. You can tell them right in herd, the three that are left or two...I think there's three left—

CY: No. There'd only be two, because we butchered one accidentally.

EK: Yes. That's right. Sorry. I was thinking it was five, but there was only three to begin with and then we butchered that one. [laughs] I was up there when that was butchered. Found his ear tag after we'd shot him.

CY: I branded him up on the hip.

EK: Yes. Left hip, I think, it's a circle.

CY: Left hip, up on the...I forget what I put on him, but I put a brand up on his hip so that we could tell him anyways.

EK: A *N* or something, I know. You can—

CY: Yes. I think it was a *N*.

EK: I think it was an *N*, if I remember right. How were they brought in here?

CY: Truck.

EK: Did you go after them?

CY: No. Conners brought them up, the manager from down there. He brought them up and took a load back.

EK: Of buffalo? Bulls?

CY: We just traded with him, yes. Except he took a full load of bulls back, and—

EK: He took five?

CY: Yes. Anyway, that many yearlings. They were yearlings, and yeah, he must have took a dozen or ten anyway.

EK: Did you get these yearlings?

CY: No. They were two-year-olds. Coming two-year-olds.

EK: They're darker. They seem to be darker and smaller.

CY: They was dark all right.

EK: The ones we have left up there are definitely smaller than our general run of our bulls, and they're darker maned and darker caped. But they're sure ornery.

CY: Oh boy, they was mean right from the start.

EK: Have you thought anything about this discussion on the plains buffalo and the woods buffalo?

CY: I've thought about it quite a lot, wondering if there was actually a difference in them, but after reading some articles about it from the Wainwright, Alberta, up there. They said they were absolutely no difference. In fact, that at those they called woods buffalo run up there in those willow brush and they didn't see much sunshine, and they decided that that accounted for there being darker, because they weren't out in the sunshine like ours were down here. When these that they raised at Wainwright that they took up there and turned loose at Great Slave Lake with these others, that just a few years you couldn't tell one from the other, and that's why they decided that they were one and the same buffalo. That these woods buffalo were just descendants that had got back in the brush, away from the hide-hunters, and that a few had survived, see. Between the wolves and the poaching, why, they just—instead of holding their own or increasing—they were gradually going down all the time. So, they took their surplus from Wainwright three or four different years—all their yearlings. They'd take them down by barge up the rivers there, and then turn them loose and let that herd increase up there. They just gradually built up to a big herd. I think they claim about 20,000 now, the last report I saw.

EK: You think there's any white buffalo up there?

CY: I don't know. I've never heard of any around Great Slave Lake occurred. The only ones I know of is what they claimed to have had in Alaska, but I guess they did finally mount one that the army run over and killed him there in the highway.

EK: They have? I hadn't heard that.

CY: They were supposed to have him in the museum at Fairbanks—mounted life-size. It looked like a yearling. I seen the picture in some paper. They've claimed to have had three or four more, but when they go out to look for them or find them, why, they're not there. So I don't know if they had any more than just one or not, actually.

EK: Were there any specific years in here, Cy, when you had a big calf loss from brucellosis.

CY: Yeah. When we first started feeding, that was when we noticed that...when we had them all in the corral, that's when we noticed the big loss. We did find probably 25 percent, maybe higher than that, calf loss there.

EK: What year was that?

CY: That would have been in the early '30s, along in that neck of the woods.

EK: When was the big fire, Cy?

CY: The big one that took two thirds of the Range, was in '34. [coughs]

EK: Why don't you tell a little about that? I never heard that too much explained.

CY: Well, to get back to the start of it, Dr. Norton wasn't in very good standing here with the general community. He was kind of belligerent, and about half the people that come in to look at things, he'd insult them with some of his sarcastic remarks. This fire come up a thunder storm about four o'clock in the morning. It hit a big tall, dead fir tree right down on the west side of Elk Pass. That four o'clock train that comes through here, they seen it, and the conductor stopped at Ravalli and called the agency and reported it. The agency come down and looked at it and seen where it was, so they just went back home and went to bed. [laughs] They didn't bother about calling it in, because they none of them had any use for Norton, because they had a CC [Civilian Conservation Corps] camp...or we had a CC camp here, and the Indian Service was having a lot of fire troubles. Norton wouldn't let these CC boys go out on any of these fires. That made them all mad at him, so they just thought, well, to hell with him. We didn't have a CC camp at the time of this fire here. They didn't bother about reporting it, and the lookout slept in that morning—he happened to sleep in late or something. The fire, when the sun come up, this fire took off—and I mean took off. It just really started out, and before we could get any help up there—enough help to corral it—it had spread so bad that by noon we had 300 men on it. They couldn't make no headway, because when the fire would start up the hill, you couldn't run fast enough to get out of the road of it. Especially down, when it started up Sheep Mountain it just kind of exploded, just roared like a hurricane. It went over

those hills in nothing flat, and by three o'clock in the afternoon, why, the whole two-thirds of the Range was burnt off.

EK: Just where would that north line have been now, Cy? Starting over here by the snake pit someplace. Did it go that way?

CY: No. It went the other way. It started at Elk Pass, but it was burning against the wind down. It burnt down—

EK: To the bottom?

CY: —to the west side of Elk Creek, over to Firehole Canyon and up to the road. We did have that road punched up to Number Two tower, and the road stopped there. It burned all that section from the Number Two Tower Road east, and then it went over the top and jumped the road on the high point.

EK: What did it do to the lane on Elk Lane? Burned around it?

CY: It burned around it. Yes.

EK: I mean, it burned right through it?

EK: It would burn up to those real thick thickets, and then if there was no wind or [unintelligible] against, you had a chance to get in there and could kind of beat it down before it would get into the thickets. But that big thicket down at the head of Elk Creek there, it went up to them. Boy, I mean, it thinned them down a lot.

EK: That's in the west part there, right at where the elk pens are?

CY: No. It would be—

EK: Did it get up that high?

CY: Yes. It got up that high, but down in the Elk Creek proper on the east side where they done that thinning, there. All that all that new growth—that has come since the fire.

EK: Did it burn clear to High Point?

CY: Oh hell, yes. Burnt all that country from there down from about at Alexander Springs way up where those highest tanks are there, it got down into the basin that far. Then about where that contour fence goes through there then, that's about where it stopped and then took all the south pasture.

EK: Clear to Ravalli?

CY: Clear to Ravalli, yes.

EK: What did the buffalo do during that situation?

CY: It just happened that they were down along Mission Creek.

EK: What about deer and elk? Was there any loss? Known game loss, or—

CY: No we didn't have any loss. The elk all piled up right in the extreme southeast corner, and when the fire got down to those potholes there, then we had a chance to—it was thin just like it is now through there—and we beat it out. These elk, they were all piled up in that corner. We thought for a while that they were going to go through the fence, and they probably would have, except that there was 1,000 cars lined up along the road there watching the fire.

EK: How many elk was in that bunch at that time?

CY: There was 200 or 300 of them.

EK: The sheep got out of it.

CY: Yes. The sheep were over there with the buffalo.

EK: They all were on the north side, then, accidentally?

CY: No, the sheep and the elk, they were in the southeast corner there on top of Ravalli hill.

EK: The sheep where with the elk?

CY: The deer, they'd find places where they could run through it, and they'd run to these open spots. A lot of the sheep did too. They'd be thin places—spots here and there where the fire would burn around—and these animals would run back into those thin spots and go through the fire line.

EK: Did the fire crew have any snake trouble because of that? It went too fast, you—

CY: Went too fast, probably, and I think put all the snakes in the holes.

EK: You say it started at 3:30 in the night?

CY: Morning. Yes.

EK: By four o'clock the next afternoon, it had burned pretty much out?

CY: Three o'clock that same afternoon, it had burnt over all the grass, but it was over in the timber, burning needles and stuff over in there. It took two weeks to...In fact it was a month, there was smoldering going on for a month where it would burn down in there on the ground in those rocks.

EK: Duff?

CY: Duff, yes.

EK: You put crews in there on that?

CY: Yes.

EK: How much did that fire cost us?

CY: At that time, they wasn't making much money. Three dollars a day, 50 cents an hour would be about all they were getting, and it didn't run up like it did now. Of course they—

EK: Three hundred men was at most, you figured?

CY: Yes. About 300, 350.

EK: What branches of other services came in to assist on that?

CY: We finally got a Forest Service crew that was coming back from a fire at Plains, of about 50 men, and we grabbed them. In fact, they stopped...We'd phoned in to the Forest Service for help. This crew then, they phoned down to plains, and had this crew stop and helped us that was coming in. But by that time, the fire was pretty well burned out so far as grass was concerned. We kept probably 50, 60 men on patrol there for about a week after the fire was all out just trying to put out the hotspots.

EK: That put your buffalo in a pretty tough situation for grass, didn't it?

CY: Oh yes, we just—

EK: That's when you instigated this haying program?

CY: No, we'd been feeding—spring feeding. The spring feeding program had been going on for quite a while because the range was so badly over-grazed that the grass never got a chance to go to seed. So we penned these buffalo up around on the 1st of April, or whenever the green

grass started—sometimes it was 1st of April, sometimes 1st or middle of May, before the green grass would start—but when it did start that's when we would pen them up, and—

EK: That was in '26 that started?

CY: Yes.

EK: Or was it going before that?

CY: No. I think that was the first year—'26. '26 or '27. We penned them up then, as I said, when the grass started getting green, and we kept them penned up until the grass went to seed and matured. Which was usually around 1st to the middle of July.

EK: Then in the 1934, when the fire was, you were still doing that program?

CY: Yes. We were still doing that program, except that we had to start a little earlier that year, because there wasn't enough grass to keep them going to spring. So we—

EK: As a result of that fire, what kind of a comeback did you get on the Range?

CY: We got a lot of noxious weeds come in. Mustard come in thicker than ever, and cheat [grass] coming in thicker than ever, and—

EK: Did they do any seeding?

CY: Yes. We've done a lot of sort of...a lot of crested wheatgrass seed, but we never got to sowing it until the CC camp was established, which was too late in the summer. We sowed this seed just with hand-seeders on top of the ground, and it didn't have no moisture, no nothing. The ground was getting dry by that time, and it had no moisture, no nothing, to help it start. I never did see over a dozen bunches of it that whole Alexander Basin.

EK: Did you have any post-damage, now, on that fire? Did you have to go replace quite a bit of posts?

CY: Oh, quite a few, but usually we could get there with those back pumps and put them out before it would burn the post down. But we lost probably couple of hundred posts. With that wind, it took it through so fast that it didn't have time to really get those posts hot. Just in places where the fire would burn down to it, where it had lots of time and lots of heavy cheatgrass around close by, it would set them afire.

EK: Did you have more trees then than you have now? Did you get a lot of tree damage?

CY: Not too much from the fire.

EK: It went right through them, didn't it?

CY: Just went right through them. After the fire a few years, we had an awful lot of bug damage. There was just thousands of trees died over on that Jocko side that they said was from bugs of various kinds. So far as fire damage—loss from fire damage—it didn't hurt enough to worth mentioning so far as trees—those big trees. It just went right through them

EK: You had to take your feeding program—your spring feeding program—and drag it out. How long did you go on that [unintelligible]?

CY: I think the last year we fed was about 1937, but we did, in the meantime, we cut down...We already had the buffalo herd cut down pretty well before the fire. We cut them down to, well, under 500. In fact, one spring there, we cut them down from about 800, we cut them down to...I think about 350 was the lowest they ever was, since I've been here until Schwartz come. Then we finally cut them down to 300.

EK: Let's go back to that disposal program. Start from the beginning—your first recollection of them taking buffalo out of here.

CY: I never knew of Mr. Hodges killing any because...Yes, he did too. He killed a few. That was when they had this man imported—he wouldn't kill them himself—but he did agree to have somebody do it.

EK: Trisky.

CY: So, they imported this buffalo-killer from South Dakota by name of Trisky.

EK: Yes. We got that story.

CY: That's when they started. So they got a few—I don't know how many—but not very many—dozen maybe—that year. Then after Mr. Rose come on a job about 1923, he took a dozen or 15 that fall he was first-come. Then 25 or 30 the next fall.

EK: How did Rose get them?

CY: They just went out and shot them.

EK: Shoot them out of a bunch, or did they kind of "cowboy and Indian" them or how did they—

CY: Just about where he'd find them. Maybe he'd find two bulls and three here in one spot, and wherever they could...The closest they could find them, that's what they'd kill.

EK: He was shooting them with a 30-30, or what was he using?

CY: He was using the 30-40 Krag, I think. That went on for a while, and we had an old pen out here...It was right in the extreme east and south of where the elk pens are there now. We had about a ten-acre...That used to be an antelope pasture in there—that old slough back to where it headquarters—that the fence is about where it used to be, except it went from the horn pile, it went right through the middle of the field. That was cut in two and used it for an antelope pasture. Then we built on it, or they did. I wasn't here. They built on another ten-acre...three- or four-acre plot on the east end there. They trapped a few in there and would butcher them.

EK: Let's see, that would have been how long ago?

CY: About the middle '20s.

EK: '20s. They carried how many head at that time?

CY: They was around 700 or 800 buffalo when I—

EK: They were shooting 10 or 15 heads?

CY: Yes. That was just when they were trying to get some—

EK: Where did that meat go?

CY: To anybody they would buy it. Mostly the butcher shops.

EK: Then what took place next? What was the next step to—

CY: After they begin to...we got rid of the elk.

EK: That was a car load that went back east?

CY: Trainload that went back east. Then we started using the elk pens. Of course, these elk pens we had started...I mean the buffalo corrals we had started then had a few wire pens around there. We used it for getting the elk out of the road. After that then, we set up a row of big high poles down there right where the horse barn is.

US: Would you fellows like some coffee and cookies?

EK: You want some coffee?

CY: You want something? No, I don't want any.

EK: I'll have a—

CY: Ernie will have some.

EK: —you got some tea?

CY: Hey, hey. Tea, if you got some tea.

US: Sure, I have.

EK: You put the poles up, and then—

CY: Set up a row of poles, and we put a log along the top of these poles.

EK: What year did Heiney [Heiney Helgerson] start?

CY: He started in the fall of '26, and I started in the spring. That was the first year Heiney done any butchering. Charlie McLaughlin done the butchering to start with on these—

EK: I saw Charlie in Dixon today—

CY: Did you?

EK: —and I didn't know him. I went up and asked...I was thinking Charlie McLaughlin and I went down there, and I was going to look for Charlie Kennedy to try to find out where what's his name was. I went in the store, and I said, "Where's old Charlie McLaughlin?"

He said, "He just went by here with a shovel on his shoulder."

So, I go marching down there and says, "Where's old Charlie McLaughlin."

He says, "I'm Charlie McLaughlin. I could've fell in a hole.

He should be able to tell us a few things—

CY: He had a few experiences.

EK: [laughs] It sounds like a simple operation, just the way you're talking about it. But I know it couldn't have been, because I know those are big animals and I know what a hell of a job it is trying to handle one of them.

CY: Yes, they were big, all the ones we killed. We were trying to get rid of some of them big old bulls, because we had Rose's idea—which I agree with him—was that one of them big old bulls

will eat it as much grass as two or three yearlings. We were trying to get them cut down to start with. That's why the first 200 or 300 animals killed were big old bulls, mostly.

EK: Did you ever hear of a team named Ronie (?) and Brownie.

CY: Yes I think there was somebody here that had a team that name. I don't know if it is—

EK: Gus [Gus Kroll], he tells about. They belonged to the refuge here. They were the first horses that they bought.

CY: I've heard of them, but I never did know who belonged to them.

EK: They went up there with the stone boat in most instances, and they rolled this carcass on to the stone boat. Is that the way? Am I right?

CY: Yes. That's usually the way.

EK: Then they had a team, or what did it take? Two teams?

CY: Usually only one team—

EK: Downhill.

CY: —downhill. If you get them down to where you could hog dress them, down off of the mountain, why—

EK: Hog dressed and throwed the meat on?

CY: Put it on the stone boat and then drag it into the corral if they were close enough, or wherever you could...Had something to pull them up with a block and tackle to get under them with a wagon, see. Drop them on a wagon, and then they'd haul them down to the station here on a wagon. We had a big loading-dock there—big flat dock about 20 feet square. We'd get them up on this dock, and then pull the car up along the side of the dock and scoot them in. It was on the level of the door of the car, and then we'd scoot them in the car.

EK: How did you work it? How big a crew worked on these now? Was there three or four of you working on—

CY: Depended on how ever many you needed. If you needed a dozen, if you had a bunch to get out, of course, the more you wanted to get out, the bigger your crew.

EK: Well, I mean, where did the crew come from?

CY: Well, just go out here and hire. Just old Charlie was the butcher, and just anybody could act as a helper because that's about all they do anyways.

EK: You'd hire a team at the...Did you hire teams for that?

CY: Yes. Old Jess Evans over here had a big team, and there was a guy lived over where Red McDaniels (?) is that had a great big 1,600-pound team.

EK: Is Jess a big tall man? Is he the one that the bull got after? That they stuck the bull up there, and he run him around the rock? Is that Jess Evans? Is that somebody else?

CY: No. I think that was old Rude Nesse if I'm not mistaken.

EK: Tell that story. I like that story.

EK: Roy Larsen (?) had a great, big, black team at that time. Everybody, of course, had teams, but there was Coleman (?), Rude Nesse, and Jess Evans. They were main standbys, because they had big, good, teams. They were the good ones.

CY: What was Ike [Ike Melton] doing at that? Ike was in here on a lot of that too, wasn't he?

CY: Yes. Old Ike, he'd usually do the shooting. They had a comical guy by the name of Ethel (?) from Ravalli that and he thought he was quite a butcher. He would shoot one once in a while, when you'd get him in the pen. One day, old Ike shot one out here in this pen, where the elk pens are, and he run about a hundred yards and turned to complete somersault, just like a man doing a handspring.

Tom Ethel, he laughed. He said, "Ike, if you knew he was going to do that, he'd probably broke his neck." He said, "You wouldn't have wasted that shell." [laughs] Such crap as that was going on all the time. Ike then, he usually would go out...The year Ike was here, a year ahead of me, [unintelligible] for just a little bit. He done most of the shooting, and he'd have the stone boats—Charlie and the stone boat then—they would come and maybe hog dress him out up on the hill or roll him on the stone boat and take him.

EK: How many a day could they get? Say there was three of them.

EK: Just depend on where your buffalo were. If you didn't have that too far out...if you could catch them out here—

EK: If you got them on this side of High Point, say, up in there anywhere? Could they do a one in a half a day?

CY: One and a half buffalo?

EK: Bring a buffalo in in a half a day, the three of them, clear to where the slaughterhouse is, or—

CY: As a rule, yes. Maybe sometimes, two—bring in two if you had time to go get them.

EK: That was hog-dressed or was that skinned?

CY: That's hog-dressed. We didn't skin very many of them then. We didn't start skinning them until we got the slaughterhouse started. Then down there, usually we'd just hog-dress them.

EK: Did you just go out with wagons once you'd get them down on the flat? Then you'd head out there with a wagon and pick up the meat.

CY: Yeah. We'd have to skid them into where you could either set up a tripod high enough to drive your wagon under or drag them and take them into the corral. We usually tried to take them into the corrals where we had them hoisted up there.

EK: You didn't shoot many in Alexander Basin then?

CY: That's where we tried to shoot most of them, was on that side. We never...didn't go up over the top—

EK: The south side?

CY: —into Pauline, or no place, because hell, you couldn't get there hardly with a stone boat then.

EK: Even that's quite a little old hill.

EK: [coughs] That's quite a hill to pull up.

EK: That coulee's quite a hill.

EK: Yes. The bulk of them were killed in the Alexander Basin, between here in headquarters there...between here and the slaughterhouse. At that time, there was lots of them, and they were milling around and traveling lots.

EK: Was this division fence in?

CY: Oh, no. There wasn't a thing in no place.

EK: Between here and High Point there was nothing?

CY: Noting. They never had the elk lane until the '20s. They started it in '25 and 26. That was the only thing that you had...the only fencing in here, besides the outside fence.

EK: How did this story go about this big tall man and the little short man running around a rock up there with that bull? Somebody shot a bull...Was two guys. It was two skinnners—a big tall guy—

CY: I've heard that story. I wasn't here. I don't think.

EK: Who is that? The little guy couldn't get up on the rock, and the big guy finally got up on the rock. He was a running around there on his hands and knees, and—

CY: One guy—

EK: —grabbed him by the hair and jerked him up on top. That's the story I've heard from somebody. I don't know if it was Ike, or who.

CY: One of these guys, a guy by the name of Sergeant (?) from Kalispell, I think, he was one of the two. I just don't know who the hell the other one was. Maybe Ike might know. We can take a run up there someday if you want.

EK: Yes. I'm going to write him a postcard. I told Gladys to bring me his address so I could write and ask him when I could speak to him.

CY: Dayton's his address.

EK: Dayton? Does he have a number or anything?

CY: I don't think so.

EK: [unintelligible] Dayton.

CY: Dayton. D-a-y-t-o-n.

EK: I'll write him a card tomorrow. Get it out tomorrow, and then maybe next week sometime we can run up there.

CY: Yes. Just ask him when he's going to be home.

EK: I'll tell him I'll bring you along, and we'll go up to spend the day up there, because I got permission from C.J. to do it. I think that he would be able to tell us an awful lot.

CY: Yes. Ike, he can tell you a lot all right, because he worked here off and on especially there's not many roundups that he ever missed. Because when Norton come, they got into it right away over something. Ike, he just saddled his horse and went home, and then he never come back as long as Norton was here. But after that then, he'd come down every fall and help us wrangle. When Mushbach [George E. Mushbach] come, then Ike would come back. He said he'd never spend another minute on the Range as long as old Norton was here.

EK: Did Neil work for Norton?

CY: Yes. Neil and his boy were here at the time Ike blowed up, and they all went home.

EK: Oh, they didn't work either? They didn't stay either?

CY: No.

EK: I never knew Neil.

CY: He was an entirely different type of guy than Neil...or Ike. He was kind of serious and—

EK: By god, that don't describe Ike. [laughs]

CY: And old Ike, he was just the extreme opposite.

EK: I laughed at that man more. I just love to hear him talk.

CY: Yes. They were just the opposites so far as personality goes. Old Neil, he was a hell of a fine fellow and the nice fellow, but he was quiet. You didn't hardly know he was around, unless you'd just get him in a conversation.

EK: When did old Buster start riding in here?

CY: Buster started when we had the big movie deal going on here, about 1930s when he started.

EK: That was in the '30s that took place.

CY: That took place in '30. 1930. Summer of '30.

EK: Just what's that all about?

CY: What?

EK: That whole story on that movie deal. Who was it? What company?

CY: Fox, it was the Fox.

EK: Twentieth Century?

CY: That was one of them, and that one with Gary Cooper. I think he was a Paramount man.

EK: That's when Hodges was here or—

CY: No. Rose was here. All that took place, all the movie deals...There hasn't been a movie made sense since Rose.

EK: They came in here, and then they hired a bunch of trucks and stuff?

CY: Yes. They brought the crew in on the train—all the actors—in there.

EK: Dixon?

EK: No they—

EK: The spur was up?

CY: Oh yeah. The railroad was here then.

EK: How many cars came in, would you guess?

CY: There was probably 30 or 40 cars. They was from—

EK: They lived in them cars?

CY: —from Pauline Gate to crossing up here, anyway, that far. They had—

EK: A little money?

CY: They had about 600, 700 actors and stage-hands and so forth—technicians and everything—on the train. They hired all their motor equipment right here, local. They just got Rose to go out and be their agent so far as hiring these cars and trucks was concerned. So they got all the motor equipment here. They would load their stuff on trucks in the morning, and they'd go out to the location, wherever it happened to be. They'd be a shooting here today and Pauline tomorrow and down on someplace else the next day and Alexander Basin. They were shooting someplace different every day, and they had to get all this equipment out there and get set up. Then—

EK: That consisted of lights and cameras?

CY: Everything. Consisted of everything that they, pretty near, that they got, except they didn't have talkies then.

EK: It was a silent film?

CY: Yes, it was until they finally put talkies to it. I mean, they connected them with it.

EK: I thought it was a voice. That was called *The Oregon Trail*?

CY: No, *The Big Trail* (1930).

EK: *The Big Trail*?

CY: Yes.

EK: Wasn't there two?

CY: Yes, there was two. *The Plainsman* (1936) was Gary Cooper's.

EK: *The Plainsman* was filmed in here.

CY: Yes. Not as much as *The Big Trail*. Gary didn't have a—

US: Do you take anything? Sugar or something in it? Nothing?

CY: —they didn't have as big a crew here with Gary as they did with the—

EK: Were they both in the '30s?

CY: Yeah, yeah. They were pretty close together, just be about a year part. Maybe two years.

EK: What did they have to give for a vehicle—like you're talking about a truck—they was always available? The '30s, there wasn't too many trucks around at that time.

CY: There were lots of trucks, but they were small trucks. It took a lot of them to...They were mostly ton-trucks and three-quarter-tons and pickups and stuff like that.

EK: Did they hire any local horsemen, or where did they get their horses?

CY: Well, we hired horses from all over the reservation, and they didn't have too many locals. We had probably 25 or 30 riders locals— but the rest of them they brought—

US: Here you go. You got a place to put it there. Don't you want something Cy?

CY: —30 or 40 good cowboys from California with them.

No, I don't.

CY: I don't know what he lives on.

EK: Love.

CY: You should see. You should see me when I do eat.

EK: What were some of these names? Do you know any of these other fellows?

CY: I used to know half of them, but I've kind of forgot all of them now. Especially their last names.

EK: Old John Wayne he was one of them.

CY: I remember a few of the stars, yes. I thought you meant the wranglers and the riders.

EK: They probably been a lot more fun? I bet it was a hairy outfit.

CY: Yes, they were all hairy, because there was a kind of a centennial deal, see. This was supposed to be about back in the 1800s. Everybody had whiskers down to his belly button and stuff like that. What it was was a wagon train coming from St. Joe, Missouri, through California.

EK: That's the story?

CY: That was the story.

EK: That's with John Wayne?

CY: Yes. He was in and Marguerite Churchill was the leading lady.

EK: How old was John at that time?

CY: He wasn't very old, probably 22, three maybe. That was his first picture, but Marguerite, she had starred in a few pictures before. She was anyway, and Cooper, they were regulars, but Wayne, he kind of went to his head right away.

EK: Still has.

CY: He tried to be temperamental, like some of them are right off the bat. He wasn't too well liked, but old Cooper, everybody liked him. Marguerite Churchill, hell, she'd come riding out there to the corrals one day, and said, "Hey cowboy." She says, "Could you find me a horse? I'd like to go out with you.

I said, "Just take mine. You can ride this one, and I'll get another one. I let her write that little sorrel tony-horse. He was a sorrel, except he was marked just like Blue. He had three white socks and a strip on his face—nice little gentle horse. Regular ladies-horse. Just gentle as a kitten. More like Ranger. She crawled on him, and hell, she went right along with us out there, rode all afternoon, just right along with us. Talked common as anybody else.

EK: What did this consist of? What did they hire you for specifically? They wanted them moved?

CY: Mostly, the wranglers, they just wanted the buffalo moved here and there. Then when I was doing stunts for them, we had moved them up in the upper lane up towards the...Put them back up above the aluminum gate, and they had a big platform right at the lower aluminum gate. Part of it's still on a post there yet. Had a big platform setting up there, and then we lined the fence with trees—those small fir trees. We got them back up there. I got to run along ahead of them, and then when I got right almost under the cameras, why, kind of tripped the horse, and—

US: My sister [unintelligible].

CY: —the whole herd then, they went over us. There was supposed to be a woman in there. I was dressed up like a woman, and I was supposed to be a woman. She was riding with this wagon train, and she'd rode out to one side someplace to look around and this buffalo herd stampeded and run over and buggered her up. Then part of the wagon train had to...the scouts they all had to go back and hunt her up and see what had happened to her, and found her all skinned up and so forth and rescued her out of this—

EK: Were you riding one of their horses?

CY: —buffalo herd. No. I was riding a horse that belonged to old Dick Beller, and I had some of my own that I wrote part-time. But when you're riding so hard there, you had to have about three horses for a change every day, because there was a lot of riding going on. Those buffalo, we had to go out and hunt them him up and bunch them up and move them to the location every day, because there was no place to hold them and it just took one heck of a lot of riding to do that.

EK: The lane would have been all you had then.

CY: That would have been all we had.

EK: There was 800 head in there?

CY: Seven, or 800, along that neck of the woods. It was a heck of a bunch of buffalo.

CY: They'd run them by lots of times, in other words, and say, they're trying to get to 10,000 or something, was what they were trying to represent or—

CY: No. They wasn't trying to represent any particular number of buffalo. It was just—

EK: I mean, big herds.

CY: It was just a big herd of buffalo that they'd encounter going across the plains. As they would come to them, maybe today they'd ride to a herd, and tomorrow, or the next day, they'd do something else. The next day this wagon train would have to go through another herd of buffalo, and that—

EK: How many wagons and teams was in that wagon train? They had to be out there to film them.

CY: No. They didn't bring their ox teams with them.

EK: They were oxen?

CY: They had them all right, but they had them and they took a lot of stuff down in Jackson Hole, getting those mountains. They had that Teton Range for a backdrop. After they got through down there, then they come up here and got their buffalo, and then they kind of filled in.

EK: Wasn't that a little spooky, throwing that old pony in front of that bunch?

CY: Yeah, pretty spooky all right.

EK: Didn't get scratched?

CY: Fifty dollars, them days, it looked as big as that television over there to me then.

EK: What'd you do? Just lay behind him?

CY: Yes. I just, kind of, rode him with his back down the hill, back towards the camera, and I just got in under him as close as I could and didn't...held the end of my...I put a running W on him, and I just kept that tight so he couldn't get up, and—

EK: You took both front feet in other words?

CY: Yes. I just stayed in there and then held him down.

EK: Did they get close?

CY: Oh brother, did they get close. They went around us. They didn't have no room to get around. I mean, the first leaders they went and split and went around, but after they got to coming so thick and the dust got to boiling and nothing could see, and hell, they was all going right over us. That old horse, he got not a hair knocked off of him.

EK: You didn't get hurt?

CY: No.

EK: How many times did you have to do it?

CY: I done that once. Then out in the flat there north of the corral, I had to do it again. That's the only that's the only times that the buffalo run over us, but I did have to throw the horse two or three different times, because for some reason they wanted a picture of the horse of a-falling. Then they'd fill in behind with the buffalo, but the first time the buffalo all went right over both of us. I wouldn't do that again for 10,000 dollars.

EK: You're pretty lucky.

CY: You ain't a-kidding. A man just don't know how crazy he was. Their own stunt man wouldn't do it. They brought three or four stunt men right from Hollywood with them that supposed to do that throwing horses and stuff, and they wouldn't do it. I was fool enough to do it. Imagine how crazy can a man get.

Do you want some more cookies? There's a whole can-ful of them out there.

EK: I have plenty, Cy.

He made a little extra on the side on that deal didn't he? Rose?

CY: Rose? Well, the investigation claimed that he did. I didn't see any of it. I mean, I didn't actually know. All I know is what I've heard, but the—

EK: You worked a lot of overtime and stuff for them, or was—

CY: Well, daylight until dark, overtime didn't count.

EK: If you were doing that, was there anybody else doing the other things that was supposed to be done? How was that worked out?

CY: Well, all these cowboys, all these riders—the Hollywood riders—they were getting ten dollars a day, and that's what they paid me unless I was doing these stunts were extra. See, I got 50 dollars for two different stunts each, in addition to my ten dollars a day, but the rest of the riders were getting five dollars a day.

EK: Then you where you on the payroll here too?

CY: No, no. No, no. I never was on...Anytime there was anything done, like somebody bought buffalo or ten buffalo or two elk or two deer.

EK: That's the thing I wanted to bring up.

CY: We were taken off of the government payroll and put on the payroll of the guy that was getting the animals, because everything was that was bought, was bought F.O.B. out on the range. He was supposed to pay for any—

EK: When did Laurence Driscoll, and that other [unintelligible] start hunting in here?

CY: That didn't happen until Schwartz come here, I don't think. Boy, he might have hunted a little.

EK: They were for the agency?

CY: The agency. Well, there was two or three years there that we give the elk—and all the surplus elk and all the surplus deer—to the needy Indians. So, the agency, they were supposed to get them out on the Range. So they hired this [unintelligible] and Laurence and whoever happened to be to get them. They were on the Indian payroll, but they didn't have much luck of getting them, so they finally got two fellows from over on the Ninemile. One of them was named Dan Longpre and Ben Hebert (?) that used to run a lodge up on Fish Creek, right at the mouth of the south fork of the Fish Creek. They come over here, and they done the hunting the rest of the time. They really...they were hunters. Those boys can go out and kill a truckload of deer or elk in just nothing flat. Of course, we had lots of them then, too.

EK: When did Schwartz come?

CY: '50.

EK: '50.

CY: Mushbach come in '38, fall of '38.

EK: Then Rose was—

CY: Rose was here from '23 until '30—spring of '31.

EK: Then he kind of got shook out on a count of this movie deal?

CY: Yeah he got kind of let out on a count of the movie deal then and a bunch of other stuff. They said insubordination, but he denied that. Nevertheless, a conglomeration between that and the movie deal, he got let out. Norton was here from '32 until '38. He come here the fall of '31, actually.

EK: Then Norton, he went down to—

CY: He went to Sheldon Refuge, in Nevada.

EK: On the antelope study.

CY: Yes. Then Mushbach come. Well, Mushbach come for Norton left, but anyway, that's where Norton went. He stayed there until the war started, and then he got called...He was a reserve, and he got called to the Army and he was in during the war. When he got out, he went back to Sheldon and up to mile here, and he retired there.

EK: That was Norton?

CY: Yes. Mushbach, then, when he come—

EK: Was Mushbach always sickly?

CY: Always what?

EK: Sickly.

CY: No. Never was that I ever knew. She never got sick until they left here. After they left here—well about the time they left here—she began to get something the matter with her.

EK: Did Norton do any riding?

CY: Oh, once the while he'd go out for short ride.

EK: He wasn't no cowboy.

CY: He thought he was. I mean, he'd tell you all day all the cowboying he's ever done.

EK: What about Mushbach?

CY: Well, he had in his early days, done quite a little cowboying.

EK: He had quite a little pony, I understand.

CY: Yes. That that was really a pony. He was a funny-looking little thing. Kind of short—he wasn't very tall.

EK: I saw him.

EK: I'm telling you that was a horse—

[Break in audio]

EK: This Mushbach's old horse's name was—

CY: Slick.

EK: —Slick wasn't it?

CY: Yes.

EK: Yes, I remember him. First time I knew anything about old Slick was the time that Sam bucked Dean off out here, and so after...He kind of got hurt that day. He got punched in the belly with the saddle horn or something there, and he really took a dirty header off old Sam.

CY: It's a wonder he hadn't broke his neck on the hard ground. That was a dirty fall.

EK: So then, we caught all then we caught old Slick, and he rode Slick that day. Then John had him come down in the truck, because, hell, he was so sick he couldn't even get up to eat lunch up there at Saddle Club ride. I never could quite understand why they condemned Sam. I rode him that whole first year.

CY: He's the best, toughest horse that there is on the place now. He could really take them hills.

EK: God, he was rough riding.

CY: Yes.

EK: I sure didn't like the way he went.

CY: Well, he was a little rough all right.

EK: Is that what they condemned him on?

CY: No, they just thought he was a little bronc-y, like Hitler, and Keppling. There was nothing the matter with any of them horses, except that they just you kind of had to know how to get along with them all right.

EK: I never did have Sam ever offer to buck with me, and I rode him in the corrals. I cut up there the first year I rode in here.

CY: Dean is the only time that I ever know of him a-bucking. He tried to hog around a little with Grant one time, but Grant got off of him without him bucking and that's the only times that I ever knew of him—

EK: The first year I rode in here I didn't ride my own horse. I rode Sam, and I cut with him in the corrals that first year. He was pretty good reining horse. He'd keep his old nose down on the ground where I belonged, and but gee, he hit the ground hard. Like riding a bumper wagon.

CY: Well, old Earl Darlington broke him, and he used him all summer. He said that he was just a plumb good, tough horse.

EK: We put Earl on him when he came back that next year, and he come off of that ridge there that goes up to Tower Two off of that...just west of the lane?

CY: Yes.

EK: He come down off of that hill with him, and boy he got off him and he says, "That's all for me." He says, "I won't ride him again." I know he did, he just about tore me in two out there—

CY: Well, Grant said he was pretty rough. I never did wrangle buffalo with him. I rode him a few times, but just didn't happen to...I usually ride him on the fence-patrol or something like that—run him, go clear around the range or something—but—

EK: We should get back to Slick, I guess, and finish that story.

CY: Yes.

EK: Slick, he wasn't very tall. He couldn't have weighed much more than 800 pounds or 900 at the most, did he?

CY: I'd say, probably nine- or ten-hundred, right along in there, but he was the biggest little horse that you just never saw.

EK: Mushbach was pretty good sized.

CY: Oh yes, he weighed more than I did. He weighed about 190 pounds. That horse would with that big saddle he used, why, that horse would go out in the early morning and come in at night with his head up and was raring for more.

EK: Did you say he was a Hamiltonian?

CY: Yes.

EK: He had a real long hair.

CY: Well, he didn't get that long...Just after we quit using him he got that long hair.

EK: Yes. He looked, I'd say—

CY: Slick, he was just the color of Popcorn, or maybe a little darker. Of course, he had black legs. His back legs were black just like Popcorn. He was—

EK: He didn't have any color in his face—no marks, I don't think, at all.

CY: No. He didn't have a white hair on him.

EK: Not a hair on him.

CY: He always carried his head up—way up. Never stumbled in his life.

EK: The thing I always remember about that, after Dean got hurt that day, well, he rode Slick, and I was going to go on the Saddle Club ride. I don't remember what horse I rode, but I was down to the gate, and they were going in down here next to McLeod's. John Schwartz was riding Cactus, and Dean come riding down the road alongside of John on old Slick, and Slick must've been 30 years old and John on Cactus. If that wasn't just [unintelligible] a pair, I'm telling you.

CY: I can just see them right now.

EK: Dean was hurt. No kidding about it. He took a dirty fall out there. It's a wonder he didn't break his neck.

CY: When he hit the ground he just, like a kind of calf a-bellering when you're roping the calf and slap him on the ground, slapping them—

EK: The first time he went up, he went up, and he come right back down in the saddle crossways with his stomach or something. He didn't throw him clear, and then the second time he went up, he really put him up in the air.

CY: I never should have ever let him ride him, because hell, in the first place, he was so short-legged, awful hard for him to get on, even on a...Corse, old Sam, he was he was up there all right. I should have got Slick in the first place. Old Dean, he kept telling me about all the horses he used to break for Buster Freddy (?), and I thought probably he was a rider. But hell, he was anything but.

EK: I think too, I think he made one mistake, and I think that was he turned the stirrup and he stuck his boot clear through to the hilt—

CY: Yes. Goosed him a little bit.

EK: —and when he turned that...stepped up with all that weight, and jabbed that toe on old Sam's ribs, that's all it took. Old Sam was—

CY: Feeling good, and—

EK: —let loose. Just turned loose on him, and really—

CY: Just had enough good green grass in him to really looking for something.

EK: That's a bad time of the year.

EK: Yes, it is.

EK: I had more horse wrecks out in that pasture out there, then of all the riding I've done in here. I've gone out there, and I'm been throwed off and saddle turned over and beat off on trees and lost my glasses, out there trying to wrangle that bunch of saddle-horses on something that's feeling too full of oats.

CY: That's right.

EK: Well, I guess we'd better quit for another night, Cy.

CY: Okay.

EK: I got to go.

[End of Interview]