

Oral History Number: 006-004

Interviewee: Glen A. Smith

Interviewer: N/A

Date of Interview: Unknown

Project: Glen A. Smith Reminiscences

Glen Smith: This telephone was of such a make that it interfered with our other phones. We wanted him to take the phone off the line but he paid no attention to us and finally we had the ranger, John Brooks, make the disconnection at the house, but the foxy old rascal, he got ahold of some of our emergency wire, which would be very small wire about the size of an ordinary string, and he run it down along the road on a rail fence about a quarter of a mile to two big fir trees standing on opposite sides of the road. He run it up the back of the tree and through the branches and over to the telephone line, which was across the road. The Libby telephone operator kept telling us that he was on the line but Ranger Brooks wasn't able to find where his connections were, so after several days of hunting, he finally found the connection and disconnected him and warned him again to stay off the line.

Well, the old rascal figured out another scheme. He took an ordinary piece of telephone wire and attached it onto a long pole and made a hook at the end of the line. When he wanted to talk to Libby or elsewhere, why, he carried it across the road and hooked it over the top of the telephone line. But we were fortunately informed by the Libby telephone operator that he was on the line again, so one day when we were freighting some supplies by his house by wagon-team and wagon, Ranger Brooks stopped the wagon in front of the house and he found the wire that had been taken across the road and hooked on.. It hadn't been hooked on but he had failed to make a disconnection so Ranger Brooks took the end of the wire and tied it onto the end of the wagon and started the team. This was nailed, or fastened pretty tight to side of the house and he tore off a board or two in pulling it out by the roots. Old Simon Snyder came running out and jumped onto Ranger Brooks but he was no match for Brooks because he was relatively old man at that time and Brooks was a young man, very active. So he got old man Snyder down in the ditch, sitting on top of him and cuffing his face a little bit. Mrs. Snyder came running out with a shotgun and the man, who had been driving the team, got down and took the shotgun away from Mrs. Snyder. Well, that at least ended the trouble we had with Mr. Snyder about the telephone.

I don't know how many letters he wrote to the president of the United States and the president's wife and the Secretary of Agriculture and the senator and congressman from Montana about the way we were treating him. At any rate he never tied onto the line until we gave him a permit in the fall again to have it during the winter time.

The following more or less chronologically, were my experiences on the Custer National Forest, which is located about 75 miles south of Miles City in southeastern Montana.

On October 13, 1908, I had instructions to proceed to Ashland, Montana, which was the headquarters of the Custer National Forest and take charge of the Custer National Forest. I was instructed to proceed by the way of Missoula where further instruction would be given me. The day I landed in Missoula preparations were being made for the establishment of a regional office. And I helped carry some of the furniture from the office of the inspector in the First National Bank Building across the street to the Hammond Block. Three floors had been leased by the government for the establishment of the regional office. We also spent one day in unpacking new furniture that had been shipped for the establishment of the regional office.

I then proceeded by train to Forsyth, Montana, which was the railhead for the Custer Forest. Ashland was around 78 miles south and east of Forsyth and the horse stage carried the mail and passengers. It took one day and a half to make the trip. At that time the little town of Ashland consisted of about ten families and three of them were named Smith. Shortly after I arrived, the youngsters of the community nicknamed all the Smith families. One man was named Raghouse Smith because he lived in a tent, another was called Glass-arm because he had a crooked arm and he carried it up along his side. I was called Treetop Smith because I was a forester. All the while I was there, the Treetop Smith stuck with me but the other families moved out shortly, oh, by the end of the year or so.

The Custer Forest, National Forest rather, consisted of about 500,000 acres, largely grazing interspersed with very good stands of Western Yellow Pine. This forest had been placed under administration in 1907, but no attempt had been made as yet to organize the grazing business. One sawmill that had been operating prior to the creation of the forest was put under permit and a small sale was made to the owner. The forest had been divided into four ranger districts. And three rangers were employed who had passed Civil Service examinations. Two old-time cowpunchers had been hired as forest guards. These prior two had a very limited education and were soon replaced by Civil Service Rangers. There had been two log cabins consisting of two rooms built at headquarters for ranger district ranger quarters. This was about the extent of the ranger station improvements. The three rangers consisted of James Shy, (S-h-y), an old cowpuncher and a man of sterling qualities, Andrew J. Jackson, a genius and a master of many trades, but quite well-educated and had considerable promise, if old John Barley Corn hadn't interfered. A young chap from Mississippi by the name of Hook was employed as a ranger and Hook had had considerable schooling and considered himself in line for a supervisor job and when I appeared on the scene, he was very much put out and shortly thereafter resigned.

The late A.C. McCain had been supervisor there and was then being transferred to Ogden, Utah, where a regional office was being set up. McCain was a very able man and had wide experience as a stockman and had gotten along well with the local public because the livestock industry was the mainstay of that particular territory. But no attempt had been made as of yet to determine who of the three had 200 or more of the stock. Ranchers were entitled to grazing privilege and for what numbers of livestock. This was one of my first jobs was to receive applications from those who considered themselves entitled to grazing on the national forest and to hold meetings and discuss the permits or applications and come to some conclusion as

to who was entitled to permits and for how much and for how many head of livestock. This was almost entirely cattle and horse country. As I recall it, there was only one sheep application for a small band of sheep. Quite a number of the stockman lived in or adjoining the Custer Forest and the pastures had been largely used year long. Very few were in the position to feed their cattle except in an emergency and for very short periods.

I soon realized that it was no small job to impartially set up the number of livestock that each permittee was entitled to on a basis of past use. This being almost the only guide that we had except the dependency on the national forest based upon the nearness or availability of other ranges to an applicant. I spent all of the fall and early winter in getting acquainted with the forest area, making an estimate of its carrying capacity and making appointments with the stockman, who were applying for the grazing privilege, holding meetings and otherwise organizing the business—the grazing business. I determined in round numbers that the forest itself was capable of carrying about 24,000 head of cattle and horses and proceeded to issue permits and divided the range to some 200 outfits on that basis. There was very little concern about the numbers granted each stockman and everything seemed to go off pretty good. But when the calf roundup was being conducted the next May, we checked quite a number of brands and found that in every case, they had only turned in a part of the actual number of stock that they owned and wished to graze. This came about by the fact that they had been doing this by the county assessor, and they thought that the same principle would apply as far as the national forest was concerned.

Another thing that showed up also was that quite a number of them failed to turn in all the stock that was carrying the brands that they owned. And especially when they have a family that had children and had a number of brands that belonged to the children and these were not included in their application. Thus, when we began to cut out what we called “strays,” the strays that were not included in the brands that were turned in why, quite a turmoil developed. We held a meeting one night on the roundup and I told these fellows, that as far as I was concerned, it was a natural thing. It was new to all of us and that I thought that we had better let the matter go until the applications were filed for next year’s grazing. Then we would expect them to list all of the brands that they owned, either by family or by the children.

At that time there were five roundup wagons that worked on the national forest and off the forest. It should be remembered that the national forest was not fenced and they were just cut out of the public domain and that there were thousands of acres of rangeland surrounding the National forest and to work out the proper numbers of stock that each permittee or applicant was entitled to was no child's job. In reality it took about two years to get the whole thing straightened out. In the meantime we had a number of interesting deals that added quite a little spice to the job of administration of the Custer Forest. I was advised early in my administration that the 3-Circle, or what they were called, the Brown outfit, who owned a very large ranch on Tongue River at or near the Birney, B-i-r-n-e-y, post office had been in the habit of crowding the range pretty heavily with a great deal more stock that they were entitled to. While they were given a very liberal permit for 500 head of horses and 2,000 head of cattle,

they pretty much controlled all the range between the divide of Otter Creek and Tongue River on this west slope. But they were not satisfied and they kept pushing their stock over onto the Otter Creek slope and because water was pretty scarce on the western slope—or at least they controlled the water along Tongue River for 14 miles—they were able to graze the range out on the Otter Creek slope pretty badly. And in the fall of the year, they would open up the water along Tongue River, bring the cattle back over onto the Tongue River slope and have the ideal winter range for their stock. Well, of course this thing had to be settled, straightened out.

And in addition to that they had a habit of bringing in 2 or 3,000 Texas steers each year and turn them loose generally either on the forest or the Cheyenne Indian Reservation. I think they had a permit on the Cheyenne Indian Reservation for 5,000 head of cattle anyhow. Well, in the spring of 1909, they brought in about 3,000 head of Texas steers and turned them loose just south of the forest boundary and in a few days a great many of them had drifted onto the national forest. Very soon the guard, a Mr. Humphry, had determined that they had a great many of these southern steers on the forest and since they weren't supposed to be covered by their permit, he came to Ashland to tell me, which was a ride of about 25 miles. I saddled up the very next day and went with him and we covered about one fourth the range that was allotted to the Brown outfit and counted over 2,000 head of cattle. I then returned to my office in Ashland and wrote the Browns a letter and had it delivered personally by a guard by the name of James Stanton, (S-t-a-n-t-o-n), who I'd just hired and who was a native of that country and was well acquainted with the general condition.

The very next day, Albert and Joe Brown, the two young heirs of the Brown estate, appeared in my office and seemed to be very much excited. Wanted to know who was turning in reports on their cattle having been exceeding their permit. I told them that I was the guy that had ridden the range up there and counted the cattle and therefore I knew exactly what I was talking about. I think this was about Thursday and I told him that I wanted to round up their entire district beginning of next Monday. And I'd like to have them send their outfit along and help round the cattle up. They pleaded inability to do so because they were on a calf roundup over on the Cheyenne Indian Reservation, which laid just to the west across the Tongue River from the Custer Forest. I informed them that the forest service would have an outfit out there beginning on the north end of the district on King Creek and expected to sweep the country clean and get an accurate count of all the Brown cattle, known as the 3-Circle outfit. They told me it would be impossible for them to be there but I was successful in getting together a roundup of about ten men and we pulled in and set up camp on the lower end of Hodell (?) Creek, which is the next large creek south of King Creek. I was prepared to start in the morning on King Creek and work progressively south until we had covered the entire district on which the Browns were permitted. Not an hour after we had set up our camp, the Browns pulled in with 14 men, set up camp within about a quarter of a mile of our, and came up and contacted us. We arranged to start the next morning at 4 o'clock on King Creek. Since the Browns had rounded up this country a great many of times, I told Albert Brown, the oldest one of the Brown boys, who seemed to be the manager of the outfit, that I would permit him to organize the roundup and turn his men off on the general circles wherever he desired. I took my men along

and turned them off, one man with every man that he had turned off, so that we could make sure that all the cattle were being brought in.

For myself, I rode rather loose without accompanying anybody, just to make sure that things were running along pretty well. Well, the first day seemed to be a pretty good day. Everybody brought in the cattle pretty well and we counted the brands and the Browns decided that they'd take all of their steer stuff put them over onto the Cheyenne Indian Reservation. And counted the rest of the livestock by brands. Everything seemed to be in order and it looked like everything would be finally wound up all right. But the next day, I was riding loose and I saw the two men that Brown had turned off. I was unable to furnish a Forest Service man to go with them as I was driving cattle back so they wouldn't get into the roundup. So when the roundup was finally brought together and Browns had cut out the steers that they wanted put on the reservation, Mr. Brown came to me and said, "Now, which way do you want to turn these cattle so you can count them?"

I said, "Brown, I think you could just as well turn them loose. I don't think your men were all playing square with me and I think we just as well turn them loose and we'll start back tomorrow morning where we did Monday morning." He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Well, I saw two of your men driving cattle back so they wouldn't get into this roundup." Therefore if this goes on, we'll never have a roundup that we can depend upon. So just turn them loose and we'll round them up again. I think you should understand that I want to play fair but I expect you to play fair also." Well, he seemed to be pretty much perturbed and said he'd be damned if he'd go back and round up cattle anymore. "Well," I said, "That's up to you." I said, "My outfit's going to go back and start up on King Creek where we started Monday morning."

We parted then and I rode up to my camp about a quarter of a mile away and had dinner and was sitting around there and was taking it pretty easy when Brown and the two Brown boys rode up there in a great rush and got off their horses and started talking to us and telling us how they'd like to agree with us as to the amount of cattle that had been turned back on some sort of an estimate. Well, I told Brown that that was very nice of him to be willing to agree with, but since we never knew where this case was liable to land, I think actual counts would be much more convincing to a court than just a mere estimate. So I thought as far as the forest service was concerned that we'd just have to go back and round up the country again. And I said, "Then if you'll see to it that your men don't do any more of that sort of stuff, why, I said, "we'll get along pretty well." Well, they were very much perturbed about it but rode away and the next morning, when our outfit rode by their camp, they were all ready to accompany us where we did the first day. And from that time on out why, we had no trouble with efforts to get their cattle counted.

Without consulting the records, I can only say that in the final analysis that we found quite a number of cattle in excess of their permit and that figuring that they had been there a certain length of time, and that the cost of the roundup was so much, I submitted a bill to them in the

sum of \$2,650. Mr. Brown told me that he would not pay it, that he didn't think it was right at all and I said, "Okay, then we'll leave it to the court."

He said, "Well, I'll go to Sheridan, Wyoming,"—that's where they did most of their business—"to see our attorney."

"Well," I said, "I don't have to go over and see to an attorney." I said, "We've got an attorney hired on the yearlong basis and I'll just leave it up to him to prosecute the case." Well, in about 10 or 15 days I got a bank draft for the full amount of the trespass, and thus the case was closed.

In all of those such deals there's always some little comical part of the transaction that sticks in your mind. I recall that because we were constantly on their heels to see that they were doing the job right, they finally called us the Heel-Fly Outfit, which name stuck with the forest service down there for a good many years. I recall that probably 20 years after, I was down there and met one of the old stockmen, and he was laughing then about my conducting the Heel-Fly Outfit.

As to what effect this outfit had, since the Brown outfit was one of the largest outfits in the country, why, people began to think that if the forest service could bring the Brown outfit to time that it was time for them to get in line, too. As one rode along on some of the higher ridges and could see over across the country, you could see little roundups going practically all over the forest, fellows that were picking up some of their stuff and shoving it off the forest, thinking that sooner or later we'd be rounding up their territory and they'd be found in trespass also. But at any rate, it served a very good purpose to get this one big outfit in line.

I recall that in the early spring a Mr. Perine—Wallace Perine, P-e-r-i-n-e—from the Missoula office had been down on the forest and I had told him that I thought I was going to have trouble with the Brown outfit and I was going to ask for some money to conduct a roundup. He didn't promise me anything but later on he came to my relief in this matter. When I decided it was necessary to conduct this roundup, I sent a wire to the regional office out in Missoula asking for \$1,000 to conduct this roundup. Course a thousand dollars in those days was a lot of money. And Mr. Silcox was regional forester at that time and C.H. Adams was the chief of range management. They held a conference in which Mr. Perine sat in on, and they decided that they couldn't give me this 1,000 dollars and wondered what I was up to anyhow, and Perine explained to them what I had told him and they still thought that there ought to be some way of handling the case without conducting the roundup and had the wire framed (?) and turned me down on it. Perine said, "You better figure out on sending another supervisor down there right away because this man Smith ain't going to stand for any monkey business, and if he can't handle this big outfit, why, all, these little trespassers will be aggravating and make trouble.

At any rate the final upshot was that they authorized me to spend \$1,000, but it came about five days after the round-up was started, so I had it pretty well spent before it got there. It was

rather to be expected that the Browns would be very cool towards me after that but these Brown boys had been educated in Mississippi where there folks came from, and they had learned something besides punching cows.

Albert Brown was especially interested in tennis and one time when he was in my office, he wanted to know if I played tennis. I told him that I had a few years back been quite an ardent tennis player, and at one time been champion in the state of Montana. So he suggested that we make some arrangement to get a tennis court fixed up. Well, adjacent to my home was a nice little piece of land, and I got the county grader to go in and just scratch the top of the grass off and we fixed up a rather crude tennis court. He used to come down quite often and we had some wonderful games of tennis, which very soon brought us very close together but, he never attempted to use my friendship to further his trespassing on the National Forest and we wound up very close friends. At this writing I am sorry to record that Mr. Brown, Albert Brown died of a heart attack about three years ago and that the Brown Cattle Co. has practically gone out of business.

In order to get proper control of the National Forest lands, it seemed very necessary to fence the boundary. The first job was a 38 mile strip along the south boundary that ran through, straight through for 32 miles, and after consulting the stockmen both off and on the National Forest, I got an agreement that if we would furnish the material in Sheridan, Wyoming, that is the wire and the staples, that they would cut the posts and build the fence. I therefore put the deal up to the regional forester and got permission to buy two carloads of wire on bid from the American Wire Co. at Waukegan, Illinois. I succeed in getting the best grade of galvanized wire laid down in Sheridan, Wyoming, for \$1.95 for an 80-rod spool which was about half the price that could have been bought for locally. One reason for this, however, was that we were able to ship the wire on the government bill ox loading over a land grant railroad at half the regular freight rate on similar commodity to the general public. This fence was erected and completed by July 1910 and served a very useful purpose because the entire country south of the forest was open range, open public range.

Another thing that was worrying the stockman that time was the Stock Driveway to get the cattle to the railroad. Going down any of the streams towards the Northern Pacific, they encountered a lot of private lands and were confined pretty largely to the highways, and since it was generally about a week's drive to take cattle to the Northern Pacific at either Miles City or Forsyth, it was almost out of the question to do this so under a recent law that had been passed for the establishment of stock driveways on the public domain. I assisted the permittees on the Custer Forest to establish a stock driveway from the south end of the forest to Gillette, Wyoming where we hit the Burlington Railroad. This was no small job either because it was necessary to examine the land office records both in Miles City and Sheridan Wyoming to determine the land status along the proposed right-of-way and therefore to swing it around any privately owned land and also to make sure that there was water for each day's drive. I spent many a day in the saddle with the committee that was working on this, and I think I was a real help to them in getting this stock way, stock driveway established. However, the land office

was not very careful in seeing to it that this driveway was properly honored, and they allowed several land entries to be made within the driveway, which caused the stockmen a considerable amount of trouble. For as soon as the party had established the claim within the driveway, they began to charge excessive driving privileges across their lands. We had several pretty heated lawsuits to clear up some of these cases, but in the end, the stockmen were pretty well whipped by the passage of the 640 Homestead Law, which began to close out the vacant public domain lands in large blocks so the stockman were forced, to this day, to truck their cattle to the nearest railroad point. However these things were pretty interesting and thought provoking.

There were a few men in the forest who seemed to take delight in running more stock than they had a permit for and one of them was the late Charles Thex, T-h-e-x, who was a grand old stockman and made a lot of money in the stock business. He ran the stock very cheaply, very seldom ever hiring any help except in the calf roundup. He had a number of children and as soon as they could saddle a horse, why, they were out on the range looking after the stock. He also had bought several sections of state land just south of the forest boundary, and whenever he had a hunch that the forest service was going to do any rounding up on his range to determine where he stood with reference to the permitted number, it was very easy for him to jump out there with his kids and push a bunch of cattle out south on these sections. When the round up reached him, why, he was all clear. This went on for a number of years and finally one time, I decided that we were going to have to teach this old chap a lesson. Always in the past if we were to do any rounding up, we hired many of the local people to help us so that word got to him in advance of the roundup, so that he was able to remove enough cattle and horses so that he was absolutely clear. So on this particular occasion I hired a bunch of cowpunchers over around Red Lodge, Montana and brought them across the Cheyenne Indian Reservation, and camped 'em at the Ranger station on the Tongue River Slope. Mr. Thex's range was all on the Otter Creek slope and to east of us and by a little careful riding, we had determined that all of his horses were on the range and we, therefore, jumped out the next morning after we landed there and rounded up all of his horses, which were pretty close to the divide between the two watersheds. We impounded these horses and set the old man afoot. He had one little old pony that the kids had been riding. When he heard that we were rounding up his horses and cattle, why, he rode frantically up and down the valley trying to borrow horses from the neighbors. But before he could get organized, why, we had his range pretty well rounded up and found that he had about 350 cattle more than he had a permit for, which at that time, with his permit, was about 600 head of cattle.

Under the Secretary of Agriculture's authority, regulations had been established authorizing the rounding up of any unpermitted stock on the National Forest and impounding it, and after three days public notice, it could be sold. So we proceeded to notify him about his horses we had impounded and allowed him to take the cattle and put them in the pasture south of the forest. We held a sale of his horses and he was there but...He could have redeemed them by bidding on them, but he was in that frame of mind that he was not going to be run over, so he didn't bid on them and they were sold and taken out of the country.

Well, after this sale, I had Mr. P J. O'Brien, one of our law enforcement officers with me, and we went up to his house to call on him. I told Mr. O'Brien that I wanted to handle it because I knew Mr. Thex pretty well and I thought I could handle the thing pretty well. So, we sat around and talked all evening and nothing was said about the trespass at all. But before I left that evening, I asked Mr. Thex if he could come down to the ranger station the next morning, and we would have a talk about the trespass. He said sure, he'd be down there. So the next morning before we'd had breakfast, he was down there. And after breakfast we gathered in the ranger office, supervisor and ranger and Mr. P.J. O'Brien and myself. So I started in talking to Mr. Thex, about grazing conditions and the condition of the range and so forth, and finally I told him that we had figured out that he owed us about \$950 trespass fees and about \$600, actual expense for conduction a roundup. It was quite a silence and he sat there with his hand under his left arm, fingering an automatic pistol. Finally he said to me, "Glen, you know the thing that makes me so mad about this, if you fellows had just notified me that you wanted this range roundup, I'd have been glad to help you." "Well, Charley," I said, "You know, that's been one of the troubles in the past. You've been too much help." A broad grin broke out over his face and he finally broke out in a laugh and he said, "I guess you win." So he said, "Well, I haven't, got my checkbook with me but I'll send a check in on that right away."

This ended that particular roundup and trespass case and from what I can hear, that's about 20 years ago now, he has been a good co-operator and honest in his dealing with the Forest Service. I never figured that Mr. Thex was dishonest, he just felt it was a game of life to get what you could out of it and on several other occasions, when a very small trespass was brought against him, he paid without a bit of argument. It also had a very solitary effect on other permittees on the national forest and I think the matter of trying to fudge a little bit on the number of stock run has been leave pretty well taken care of.

I can't leave this Mr. Thex without telling a little story that he told me on several occasions that gives you a kind of an idea of what kind of a character he is and some of his background. He was on two or three drives of cattle from Texas to Montana, and one winter down in Texas, he had spent quite a bit of the winter in his leisure time in braiding a rawhide lariat rope and flexing it so that it was the pride of his heart when he got it done, about 70 feet of very fine rawhide braided rope. As was a custom in Texas country, they tied their lariat rope fast to saddle horn and when they started out on bringing the herd up to Montana with a group of young cowboys, they agreed that the first buffalo they saw, they were going to rope him. So he said that about ten miles north and east of where Cheyenne now stands, they run into a three year old cow by herself, buffalo cow, and it happened to be over on his side. So he sailed in and roped this buffalo. He said, "Dad gum, she done acted like a steer tried to get away all the time." He said, "She went to the end of the rope and pretty near jerked my little 700-pound Texas horse off her feet. And then she came back at me and we just barely got away and she went to the other side of me, and she jerked my saddle horse down on his side and came back at me and we just barely got away. So I began to holler help for somebody to heel him. But the other cowboys just rode around and laughed at the predicament I was in. He said, "Finally I saw that I wasn't going

to get any help, and I couldn't turn that old cow loose because I had my rawhide lariat braid right onto the saddle horn. I figured I was going to try to save as much of that lariat as I possibly could. So I got my pocket knife and reached out on it and cut off just about as much as I dared to cut off and turned her loose to run away with about half of my lariat rope." He said, "I was just sweating beads of blood when I saw that rawhide rope of mine being dragged off by a darned old buffalo. And I decided right then and there and I would never put my twine on nary another buffalo.

Going on that, it had become somewhat of a custom in that territory to bring back a cow and a calf from other parts of the country when the local men were representing at some roundup some distance away. And that was to keep this cow and calf around, and since they had no record of any of the local people who owned them, the fellow who saw to it that they got on their range, branded her calf, thereby helped to build up his herd. Another way that some of the stockmen were able to build up some of their herds rather rapidly was to buy calves from the Cheyenne Indians. The federal government had bought quite a herd of good grade cattle for the Indians, and thinking that they would be able to use the range on the Cheyenne Indian Reservation and make the Indians more self-supporting. But in order to get a little cash, these Indians very often were willing to deliver you a four and a half month old calf for two and a half to five dollars. I know of several men that were able to increase their herds quite rapidly by this method.

There were a number of community experiences that occurred on these roundups. I recall one on which the roundup foreman tried to outwit Ranger Frank Sayer. I had instructed Frank to cut all strays off the National Forest which was determined on a basis of brands that were not recorded in the grazing permits. This particular foreman did all the cutting and separation any of the permittees wanted to do with reference to beef or other grazings and then rode off and left Frank with a herd all by himself. He thought this was rather a raw deal because without somebody to help hold the herd up, it was impossible to cut any stray stock out and to keep it out of the herd. Frank didn't say anything but the next day when they rounded up, he started in and began to cut the stray stock out and the foreman objected to him doing it, and Frank couldn't see any way out of the matter except to get him out of the herd and make hi, stay there sit on the side hill, which the foreman did; but he immediately reported the matter to Mr. Leroy Howe, who was sponsoring the roundup, and I happened to ride into House ranch about that time. Mr. Howe was very much concerned about his foreman being run out of the herd and complained to me about it. And I said, "Well, let's get those two fellows together and get the whole story." So I went up and got Ranger Sayer, who was at the roundup a couple of miles away, and brought him up and we had a little conference with Mr. Howe's foreman and Ranker Sayer and myself. The foreman relayed what happened and he related that Frank had driven him out of the herd at the point of a pistol. Then I asked Frank, "How come," and he said, "Yah that's what I did, but this was the reason I did it to him," so he told us about how the foreman had rode off and left him the day before to go over the herd all by himself. And that if he was to carry out my instructions about cutting out all the stray stock, he'd have to have the assistance of the roundup. Mr. Howe asked his foreman if that was true and he said "Yes, it was," so he

proceeded to give his foreman quite a lecture and told him that he wanted him to cooperate fully with the Forest Service in getting rid of any unpermitted stock in the forest.

So that ended that episode, but a few days later, the roundup made their circle and ended up or near the Dunning School house, and the cook had invited the two young schoolteachers to have dinner with them. And he had made a special effort to have a very fine dinner. That's not to say that they didn't have lots of good food and well cooked on the menu of the roundup. But this day he had a large pan of baking powder biscuits that were just delightful, and about three inches across and about an inch and a half thick. After filling my plate pretty high, I went over to a little grassy bank and set down on it. I had buttered up this biscuit and I was looking around for someplace to lay it, when one of the young school marms come over and sat beside of me, and all I could find was a dried out cow flop to lay it on. Why, when I placed it there, this school marm took one look at me and left me immediately.

A little after that, one of the fellows' saddle horses started off on a trot like he was headed for home, and Ranger Sayer went out and jumped on his horse and kicked him out pretty fast to get to run this horse down, and his horse proceeded to bow his head and threw Frank into the dust and in bucking around over him, he stepped on his jaw with one hind foot and tore a piece of hide off about two inches long. I or one of the school marms rushed over and sat down and took Franks head in her lap and began to bathe his head, the cook having brought some water. And I finally got Frank in that buggy I was driving and took him to Ashland. There being no doctor in the country that I knew of for 75 miles, I preceded to sew up his wound with some silk thread. This took a lot of nerve on the part of Sayer because his head was pretty tough and sticking the needle through him, why, I had to do a lot of punching and pulling. Well, at any rate after taking about seven or eight stitches, I bound up his wound and he went back and followed the roundup. Fortunately the wound healed and I never could detect any scar that showed up to any great extent. I had not known before that I had surgical ability.

One day Mrs. Smith and I rode up to see Mr. and Mrs. Baxter Pierce, who lived on Three Mile Creek. Baxter and I saddled up a couple of saddle horses and rode out towards the head of Three Mile, and we heard a lot of cattle bawling just over the divide. Pretty soon we heard a couple of shots and after a little pause, several more shots. So we rode up on the divide where we could see the roundup only about a half a mile down the end of the drain is Pumpkin Creek, so we rode down to find out what was the matter. It appears that Mr. Ray Tarbell, who was in partnership with Link Wilson at the upper end of Pumpkin Creek, run both cattle and sheep and that he had come down onto Mr. Mitchell's usual cow range and was conducting a roundup, having had quite a number of cattle of his own into that territory. It should be understood here that the land that Mr. Mitchell claimed as his range was public domain land and really belonged to no one or no one had any legal title to it. Mr. Mitchell had not known that the roundup was going to be there, or so it was that we were told, and when he heard that they were rounding up cattle on his range, he became very angry and buckled on a six-shooter and rode up to the roundup about five miles from the ranch and began to holler, "Where is this man Tarbell?" and waving a six-gun over his head. When he was told Tarbell was over on the other side of the

herd, why, he started right through the herd hollering for Tarbell to get off his range and waving this six shooter. Well, there didn't seem to be much for Tarbell to do but meet him with the same weapon so he drew his six shooter and shot Mr. Mitchell. A couple of Mitchell's boys, who were about 18 or 20 years of age, had come back to the ranch and found out that their father had gone up to run Tarbell off the range. They proceeded to follow up and got up there a very few minutes after Mr. Mitchell had been killed, and they tried to run Mr. Tarbell off the range but Tarbell didn't run. He had them scared out and they raced down the valley and then dropped off behind a rock and with a rifle, tried to stop Mr. Tarbell. He shot one hole through his hat, so it was said, and one bullet went into the forks of his saddle, but Tarbell escaped without any injury, and the two boys finally raced off to the ranch and gave up the chase.

What I am relating is largely, if not entirely, what we were told at the time. And from the records of the trial, it appeared that our information was quite correct. Anyhow, at the trial, some months later, Mr. Tarbell was exonerated on the basis of self-defense, largely and upon the basis of having a clean record and a good citizen. Later on, only a few weeks, however, it was learned that Mr. Tarbell had permitted some of his stock to run on the National Forest without any grazing privilege, and I wrote him a letter calling his attention to the fact and asking if his stock could be removed at once. A few days later he rode into town with a couple of six shooters strapped on him and came into my office. I took him into my private office and shut the door and had a very friendly and business-like conference. It was learned, however, that quite a number of the fellows around this little room were very much concerned what would happen in there because they had decided that Mr. Tarbell was a real bad man. It behooved Mr. Tarbell, however, to go armed because these young sons of Mr. Mitchell had sworn vengeance on sight, therefore, Mr. Tarbell, in self-defense, was justified in going prepared.

This fellow, Baxter Pierce, was a very jolly sort of fellow and liked to play pranks on various people and was always seeming to be very happy and jovial. I remember shortly after I had issued all of the permits in the spring of 1909, he came into my office one day and said, "Mr. Supervisor, since we are on a reservation now I expected the power of thee to furnish plenty of rain." He said, "It's getting dry up my way and I'd like to have some rain." "Well," I said, "Mr. Pierce, since most of you fellows patronize the Montgomery Ward catalogue, you generally expect delivery at least a week or ten days after your order has been sent in." I said, "I'll take another order and I think you'll have rain in a short time." About four days after that, they had a very satisfactory, soaking rain, and Pierce was very much elated over it and he used to like to tell the story of Glen Smith, the rainmaker.

Another time, he was on the roundup on the lower end of Otter Creek and after we had branded out all the calves and had dinner, he went out in the shade of a bed wagon and sat down and was leaning up against the front wheel of the wagon. Mr. Joe Molicker, who lived up at the head of a creek that put in pretty close to where the wagon was camped, decided he wanted a fresh saddle horse so he thought he'd ride up to the ranch and get one and have it available the next morning. He got on his horse and kicked him out a little bit too fast, I think, and the horse threw him out right on the dust in front of Baxter Pierce. Mr. Molicker must have

been about 55 or 60 years old then, but Pierce thought this was quite a joke, so he laughed right aloud and Molicker got up out of the dust and brushed himself off a little bit, looked over at Baxter Pierce rather angry and he said, "You couldn't ride him." "Well," Baxter said, "I wouldn't expect to ride him." He said, "God almighty never done for me what he done for you...made me a pair of legs like Concord Haynes" Everybody sitting around there got quite a laugh out of that because Molicker was about the bowleggingest man that I've run into in a long time.

One of the stable citizens of Ashland was Mr. Batey, James A. Batey, who was the local store keeper and post office keeper. He had traded with the Cheyenne and Crow Indians for a great many years and talked their sign language. He also had a very good ranch immediately adjacent to the town of Ashland and run 75 or 100 head of cattle. In the spring of 1909, Mr. Wallace Perine, P-e-r-i-n-e, from the regional office in Missoula, was making an inspection of the Custer Forest and I took him on a roundup out of Ashland about 8 or 10 miles where they rounded out the cattle and branded the calves. It was a very hot day in the latter part of May, and after wrestling cattle or calves for about 3 hours, Mr. Batey was reeking wet with perspiration and likewise was Perine and myself. Mr. Batey said, "Golly, I've gotta have a drink." So we started up towards where the cook wagon was and found out that they had pulled out. Down in that country they had to melt ice for drinking water and they carried a big barrel of ice on the side of the wagon to furnish drinking water for the cowboys. Since there was no other drinking water handy, Mr. Batey said, "Well, I'll go down and take a drink out of Otter Creek, I have to have something to drink." Otter Creek was very badly polluted with alkali and was a dangerous water to drink, but Mr. Batey had lived there in that country for many years, and had probably become (to) immune to alkali effects.

Mr. Perine said, "Well, I've gotta have a drink too."

I said to him, "Mister, you stay away from that Otter Creek water though. We'll go to Ashland which was only about eight miles away and I'll give you a good drink of water."

He said, "Well, if that old fellow can stand it, I can too."

I said, "Darn it, I'm giving you fair warning. You better stay away from that water." But he didn't pay attention to me and went down to the creek, and I don't know how much water he drank. When he came back we mounted our horses and loped down to Ashland. By the time we got to Ashland about eight miles away, why this water was beginning to take effect and he was in terrible pain. He got off his horse and laid by the side of the barn in the shade was groaning and holding his stomach. And I took his horse in the barn and unsaddled it and unsaddled my own horse and fed him and came out, and he was still groaning, in terrible pain he said, and his eyes were rolling around in his head. He looked like a sick dog to me. I said to him, "Man if you're going to die, why, go around by the manure pile so I can cover you up."

He said, "You haven't got any pity on anybody have you?"

I said, "No. Not when I've advised them to stay away from polluted water and they insist on drinking it." I said, "I haven't got any sympathy for you." But I finally took him in the house and gave him a big dose of castor oil, which seemed to work pretty good, practically the only thing I had for anything of that sort. In a short time he was all right again.

One peculiar thing I learned about that colic, it might have been common knowledge to a lot of people, but most of the streams, including Tongue River, which is quite a large stream was very heavily infested with alkali, but when they was frozen, they'd freeze the alkali out of it. So everybody in that country would put up great quantities of ice, for use for domestic and drinking water. I know that at the house that I had rented from Mr. Batey had a big ice house, and we used to put up about 20 tons of ice to last through the summer. It was quite a chore every third day to get out a chunk of ice and wash the sawdust off from it, clean it all up, put it in a big barrel with faucets on the bottom of the barrel to draw off water. But it was much better than any attempt to use any of the local water although there was an artesian well in the town and it was badly infested with soda so it didn't taste good.

In the summer of 1909 there was a big crop of wild plums and in riding along over the forest, I located some exceptionally fine plums and one Sunday, I said to Mrs. Smith, "Let's go over and get some plums." I had a team and buggy with a long box on the buggy, and I put three washtubs and a boiler in the back of the car and a big tarp.

Mother said, "What on earth do you want all that stuff for?"

"Oh," I said, "to get a few plums." We drove out about 4 or 5 miles to this plum patch. There were several trees that kinda stood apart that were just loaded down with ripe plums. I stretched the tarp out below the trees and got a long pole about 10-12 feet long and 5-6 inches in diameter, put it on my shoulder and ran at the tree and hit it, a terrific jar at the end of the pole and run out from under it. A shower of plums came down. In less than 30 minutes I had 3 tubs and a wash bowl full of plums. We rode back to Ashland and delivered plums to anybody that wanted any in the town.

In those days, so far from the railroad and only horse transportation, it was very important to those people to have wild fruit of that sort. And it was one of the cherished fruits of that community. The local residents of that country had learned to use them very effectively, of course they made plum jelly but one of the things that seemed the best of all to me was their plum preserves. They would take a stone jar, say 10 gallons or so, lay down a layer of about 3 inches of plums and cover it with sugar. Then they would lay down another layer and cover that with sugar till they got to the top of the jar and seal it over with a cloth and let it set. They never cooked them or anything of that sort, but they were about the most delicious fruit I had ever tasted, and great quantities of wild plums were used in that manner. Taking a leaf out of their experience, we did the same thing and we did enjoy those wild plums. And every year, for

a number of years afterwards when I went down to that country, I always brought back some wild plums.

One of the rangers on that forest was Frank Sayer, S-a-y-e-r, who was a very excellent stockman, rider and an exceptionally good rifle shot. He used to go to turkey shoots in that territory, and I remember one time that he won the first ten turkeys. Then they finally barred him. Frank was a good-hearted sort of chap so this turkey shoot I understood was for some charitable organization, and he gave the turkeys all back. And when the turkeys were all won by the various participants, they put up several geese. Well, Frank told me when they put up these geese, he happened to think that he'd better take some kind of a bird home to his family because Mrs. Sayer knew that if he went to the turkey shot, why, certainly he'd have turkeys to bring home. He proceeded to win the first goose, which was a very fine male goose, and he came bringing it in to Ashland, where my office was located, and wanted to store it until after the dance that evening. So I told him to put it in the storeroom, where a number of compartments had been built for various articles. The goose was in a sack and its head stuck out of the sack. Well, that evening just about dark I started down to the dance hall myself. And I had to pass across the street from my office and I noticed the door of my office was open. I wondered why it was open at that time of night so I walked over and just as I got to the door, young Simon Kelson, who was my clerk, came running out and very near knocked me over. I asked him what was going on and he said he thought there was a snake in the storeroom. He had gone in there without lighting any light and feeling around for some instrument, and he run his hand onto the neck of this goose who made a noise and it scared him about half to death.

This fellow Sayer was soon recognized in that country as an expert shot. I remember on one occasion that he and Walt Snider, who had been a wolfer for the OW Cattle Company, was considered a very excellent shot also. Charles Thex and I were riding the divide between Otter Creek and Tongue River to determine the location of a fence to divide the ranges. A jack rabbit jumped up and run off a little ways and set up and Mr. Snider said that would make a good shot, and started to get off his horse to pull his rifle, and Frank said, "It would make a better shot if he was running." So he was riding a bronc at this time, and he kicked this bronc out, and he went down across the flat fast as he could go, and the bronc was bucking and finally he got the jack rabbit running as tight as he could go, and he just reached over and pulled his 30-30 carbine and used it just like a pistol, knocked this rabbit end over end and twirled his horse around and come swinging back to where we were. Snider said, "Can you do that every time Frank?"

Frank said, "I did it that time, didn't I?"

He was very unconcerned about his shooting, and one time when they had a country dance out there, long about two o'clock in the morning when things were quieting down, Frank took a big piece of cardboard set it up back of his wife and cut her silhouette with a .22 rifle in this cardboard. Everybody held their breath because they thought sooner or later he was going to hit Mrs. Sayer. Then everybody congratulated her upon her nerve and her husband Frank upon

his shooting. But nevertheless there was no question about his ability to shoot where he wanted to. I've seen him have his little daughter, about eight years old, hold .22 cartridges between her thumb and her first finger and then head step off fifteen paces and shoot them out from between her fingers. I always thought this was kind of foolhardy, but both the little girl and he seemed to get quite a kick out of it.

Another case we had down in that country there as a forest officer for a short time was a fellow by the name of Fletcher, F-l-e-t-c-h-e-r. I'm thinking of his first name right now. He was nicknamed Skinny Fletcher and I hired him first as a wolfer, and this was prior to the time that the Bureau of Survey handled all predatory animal work. That spring of 1909 he caught 12 old wolves and dug out eight or 10 dens and got 38 pups, which was considered an exceptionally good job. It created somewhat of a stir, however in the community, because the local stockman through an association they had, had offered a reward on, or a bounty on wolves, and at one of the meetings held that spring, why they wanted to consider paying Mr. Fletcher for his destruction of the wolves in that territory. I raised objection which was in accordance with the policy of the Park Service and the Federal Government that they would not pay a bounty, but would hire men to do the job. At any rate it was finally settled by giving Mr. Fletcher a present consisting of a rifle and a number of shells.

Mr. Fletcher's wife who was only recently a bride had been left in Forsyth where she was employed and Fletcher had been out in that country about 4 or 5 months before she had an opportunity to get out to see him or for him to go to Forsyth to see her. So when I was requested to come to Missoula, I wrote and told her that I would be glad to bring her out from Forsyth on my return from Missoula. I had a team and buggy and we left Forsyth, Montana about 6 o'clock in the morning and at six o'clock that evening we were in Ashland, Montana sixty-five miles away. It had been raining quite a bit and the roads from there up to the Poker Jim Ranger Station were very muddy and so she stayed over with Mrs. Smith and I for three or four days. Finally when it cleared up and dried up a little bit, I took her up to the Poker Jim Ranger Station which was a two room log cabin. When it was originally built it had the crudest kind of furniture and as a matter of fact there was nothing but a cook stove and a table and a few cupboards and very few dishes. Mr. Fletcher had been making that as his headquarters though and when we arrived at the station late in the evening Mrs. Fletcher was a little bit concerned about the fact that Mr. Fletcher wasn't there to meet her. She wanted to know for sure if that was where Mr. Fletcher lived and I said, "Yes." But she, although I tied up the team and went in the house, and I said Fletcher's been here all right because his bed is in there on the floor. She said, "Well when will he be back."

I said, "I have no idea when he'll be back, but he should be back this evening without any question." But she continued to sit in the buggy and she wanted to know how far it was to the next ranch. I told her about four miles, and she finally got out of the buggy and went in and saw Skinny's bed, his rifle and one or two other things that she recognized. She finally decided maybe Skinny did live there. I unhitched the horses and put them away and about this time, Mr.

Fletcher arrived which relieved Mrs. Fletcher very much, but I think she had in mind that I was going a put up job on her.

Mr. Fletcher did not stay with the Forest Service very long, but bought out a little homestead in a very isolated part of the forest and he and Mrs. Fletcher proceeded to make that their home, for approximately forty years, living there without any children and about 10 miles to the nearest neighbor. He ran a little bunch of cattle and although I visited them once or twice in the next forty years they seemed to get along pretty well but I could never understand why two people would want to hibernate like they did.

When I was in Missoula in 1909, I made a strong play for some stenographic help. Since the town of Ashland was so isolated, it seemed impractical to get any lady stenographers and there was no civil service eligible list of men stenographers. So I was told to go over to the Missoula Business College and see if I could hire one of the students there. I called up and made arrangements to interview several prospective stenos and after explaining the conditions to these three men, they said they weren't interested. A young Swede, who was about ten months in this country by the name of Simon Nelson, S-i-m-o-n N-e-l-s-o-n, agreed to take the job. Simon turned out to be a diamond-in-the-rough, but he had some difficulty with his spelling. He evidently had had good schooling in Sweden and he picked up the English language quite readily, but he had difficulty with his spelling of English words. He was a little slow in taking dictation, but he was about as neat a steno as I ever had. He was an excellent penman also. Simon was with me then all the time that I was on the Custer. I recall that he came down there and the only hotel there was in town had burned down and they threw up some board cabins. About ten of them to take care of the transient travelers and Simon was assigned to one of them.

Soon after he landed there, he wanted to know of me where he could take a bath. I said there's 14 miles of the Tongue River down there, you can take your choice. Is that the only place I can get a bath here? He was very much surprised that it was necessary to go down to the river and take a bath.

[End of audio]