OH-3037, Gene Hardy, 6-12-14, WY In Flight

HARDY: [00:00:00] --political offices held, political affiliation, religious (inaudible), that's all right. Current organizational memberships, God, I'm in a bunch of them.

JUNGE: Are you still? Pretty active?

HARDY: Yes. I'm in two state boards now.

JUNGE: Really? Which ones?

HARDY: Well, the one that takes the most involvement is what they called ADMB Board, which is Animal Damage Management Board and we work with state money through the Department of Ag, per biennium we usually come, dole out somewhere towards $6 million every biennium to go to these predator management districts over the state, which each county has one, where they do their best to [00:01:00] control predation of all kinds, for the benefit of public health, livestock organizations and sportsman wild game and all this.

JUNGE: This is through the State Department of Agriculture?

HARDY: Yes.

JUNGE: OK. You know, some of the people I've talked to said, "I'm looking for a helicopter pilot or a fixed wing pilot who hunts coyotes, so he can tell me some stories about

some of that," but anyway, let me put something on the front of this tape, so we get ourselves identified. Today is the 12th of June, 2014, God, it doesn't seem like it's 2014.

HARDY: Oh, I know it.

JUNGE: (laughs) And I'm in the home of Gene Hardy here at 78 --

HARDY: Seventy-eight, now what the hell do they call this?

JUNGE: Well, we're just south of the golf course in Douglas. Anyway, we're --

HARDY: You're right, 78 Fairway.

JUNGE: Seventy-eight Fairway, obviously. [00:02:00] Anyway, I'm looking out here through his picture window in his dining room and I can see the interstate, I can see the fairway and a nice garden out there, Gene. But today's a beautiful day. It's coming down from Cheyenne, I thought uh-oh, I don't know if it's going to storm or not, because it was just a little gray, you know, a little steely gray and then it warmed up and by the time I got to Orin Junction the sun was shining.

HARDY: Oh, yeah. They're talking now later this afternoon some thunderstorm build-ups.

JUNGE: Here?

HARDY: Yeah.

JUNGE: OK. Well, would that hit the ranch, too?

HARDY: Fifty miles away, maybe, maybe not. A lot of these storms come in from the west and they travel down the Flat River Valley quite a bit and if you get 30, 40 miles away from that, to the north especially, you might miss a lot of these storms. They might go north of us, they might come down through, off the Rocky, or the Big Horns and Sheridan Country and as far south [00:03:00] as Buffalo and --

JUNGE: Do you mainly get the Sheridan weather then? Or the Big Horn?

HARDY: Mainly well, we get weather out of Casper is what we depend on more, but don't count on the accuracy of that weather.

JUNGE: (laughs) So your ranch is about 40 miles north of here.

HARDY: Fifty miles.

JUNGE: Fifty miles.

HARDY: Northwest.

JUNGE: Northwest.

HARDY: Yeah.

JUNGE: And that's owned by your son, your daughter and son-in-law, the [Musselmans?].

HARDY: My daughter and son-in-law, yeah.

JUNGE: [Shaun Musselman?].

HARDY: It’s in their name now. I’ve turned the operation over to him.

JUNGE: But as you said outside, you’re not done with that ranch.

HARDY: I’ve still got to go out there today or tomorrow and help out with some issues that --

JUNGE: [Lambing?].

HARDY: Yeah.

JUNGE: Yeah. Is right now lambing season?

HARDY: We’re getting to the tail end of it right now. Most people lambing, it’s almost done or is done and a lot of them are going to [00:04:00] start docking lambs probably Monday. And we’ll be a little later than that, but not a whole lot.

JUNGE: You lamb a little late normally?

HARDY: Well, some of the people start a little earlier than we do, maybe a week and we figure we’ll start lambing the 15th of May. And some of them, figure they start, well, the 10th of May and, but sometimes you get caught in some late spring storms. So a lot of people now, they’re getting back more about 15th of May, especially in these rain slamming operations. Now the, quite a few people still shed lamb and a few of them do yet, they’ll start early because their situation and sometimes it’s a lot

different. Take for example, some of the producers up in the Buffalo Country, they get their lambing done earlier because they go to the mountain permits. They have to be ready to move [00:05:00] by a certain date to go to the mountains. So they lamb a little earlier and dock earlier, of course, because the lambs are a little older. But that, that's one of the reasons that people do lamb earlier, where they have to go to Forest Service permits in the mountain country.

JUNGE: So you call that "shed lambing." As opposed to what? Open range?

HARDY: Range lambing, the way we do it, most everybody does it similarly out here, but we run all of our sheep operations under fence, with no herders. They're turned loose. The sheep are just put in a pasture, on their own, leave them along during the lambing season. You lose a few, naturally, but then that can happen to you if you're running everything through a shed and you might say "hand lambing" and your percentages will be a little bigger, [00:06:00] shed lambing. Because normally you're going to save most all of your lambs. Ranging lambing, where they're on their own, it's up to you to mother the lambs and you know, if there's any kind of problems, well then,

you've got a dead lamb. So in theory, at least, the shed lambing will produce the bigger percentage of a lamb crop.

JUNGE: Why don't you do it that way?

HARDY: Because of the labor. I mean, if you've got, if you've got 2000 head of sheep and you're running them all through a shed as they lamb, mother and lambs up with you, see that they suck and, and feed and water. You've got them penned up for several days in the there, they've got to be watered every day, pens cleaned. Feed put out for them. The labor is intense. [00:07:00]

JUNGE: Well, you have to, when you say you let these lambs go ahead and run around in the pasture and I'm just curious about this, that's why I asked -- don't you also, when you lamb, you actually have to go out and assist and do thing -- you don't do anything anyway? It's just --

HARDY: Very little. You might go out, if you want to go out and fly, that's the best way to do it. You see a ewe that obviously is in trouble, with a stuck lamb, she can't have it -- once in a while you can go out there and maybe save, save the ewe. You rarely ever save the lamb because it's, if there's difficulty, that you have difficulty lambing and she can't have the lamb normally, usually by the time you find her, the lamb's dead and the likelihood of losing the ewe is very high as well.

JUNGE: Now you say you use the airplanes in this operation?

HARDY: Here we go. [00:08:00]

JUNGE: How long have you done that?

HARDY: Well, I've been flying since 1956. And my son-in-law, now he's doing all the flying. I haven't flown any now for the last year, but we had three airplanes at one time. I've owned three different ones in my career of flying. And then I sold the last one I had and we bought, my son-in-law and I together bought another one, which is an experimental get built plane.

JUNGE: What's it called?

HARDY: RANS 7-S

JUNGE: How do you spell that?

HARDY: R-A-N-S.

JUNGE: And that's an experimental plane?

HARDY: They call it "experimental category."

JUNGE: Is that made by Aviat? In the Star Valley?

HARDY: Nah, Huskies are built over there. Yeah, the Husky is built over there and Super Cubs, now they're built by [00:09:00] an outfit in Oregon that's building, they bought the rights to the Super Cub and they're building new, what they call "Super Cubs," see, a lot of these single-engine airplanes were out of production for quite a period of time. There were so many federal regulations from a

liability standpoint that the manufacturers no longer felt it was a viable business situation for them to build these smaller single-engine aircraft because of some of the government rules relating to liability.

A plane might have been 20 years old and a part fails and the liability still went back to the manufacturer. Some of that has been changed now, on these experimental types have come on, the home built, the kit built, oh, there's dozens and dozens of them out there. Different companies are [00:10:00] producing those. The difference being they're not certified to government standards, so that does mean that they have as much testing to be done, although some of these companies now, they own Super Cub, they're still building them under old techniques pretty much, but they've upgraded everything and they're still a certified aircraft. But now you take this RANS 7-S, that's licensed as an experimental type, although quality-wise and performance-wise, they have features that will surpass a lot of the certified type aircraft.

JUNGE: Well, tell me what, how exactly you would use a plane in your operation.

HARDY: Surveillance work with your livestock, checking fences, checking water, checking the livestock, [coyote?] hunting. [00:11:00] My son-in-law's done some of it, I did

years ago but as I got older I gave that up, it's -- (laughs) doesn't lend itself to longevity at times. (laughter) Yeah, there's been quite a few people killed hunting coyotes, didn't have the expertise or the experience that they needed. But --

JUNGE: Let's go back a step, OK, and I want to know a little bit about your background. Is that OK?

HARDY: Yep.

JUNGE: OK. And that's what that biog form was from. When and where were you born?

HARDY: I was born in Douglas, February 19th, 1930.

JUNGE: So you are now, just turned 84.

HARDY: Yeah, back in February.

JUNGE: You don't look 84.

HARDY: Well, thanks.

JUNGE: Yeah, you look pretty, like a pretty young 84.

HARDY: People, people tell me that, that I look pretty good. Well, I've slowed down a lot, though, let me tell you.

JUNGE: [00:12:00] Have you? You still have a firm handshake.

HARDY: Well, you know, I don't, I don't get around as well, up and down the stairs and so on, you know, as you get older your equilibrium doesn't improve any and -- I try to be careful.

JUNGE: Is that why you quit flying?

HARDY: Not so much there. The reason I quite flying, you know, I don't have equilibrium problems, like I'm not walking down the stairs bothers me more than it does to get in an airplane and fly it. If I don't have a handrail to use going down. Going up, that's not bad but downhill for me is, I see a difference in my equilibrium. But to fly an airplane, no that isn't really the reason I quit flying. The main reason is the plane is hangared at the ranch 50 miles away and I'm living in town, so -- [00:13:00]

JUNGE: You could still fly it.

HARDY: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

JUNGE: And do you still fly?

HARDY: Well, I haven't for about a year. My son-in-law's been doing all the flying.

JUNGE: Do you miss it?

HARDY: Yeah. I do. I do. But not to the extent that I would have 20 years ago.

JUNGE: Why do you miss it?

HARDY: Oh, it's just the, to get up and see the country and look, you know, you get a bird's eye view of everything down there. And my type of flying was never to much extent cross-country type work. It was on the ranch. Like I say, surveillance work right on the ranch and checking on

livestock and fences and water and trespassers and anything that might come along.

JUNGE: And so if you're flying out there and you see a trespasser or you see a lamb, you know, a ewe having trouble with a lamb, [00:14:00] can you just land anywhere on that property?

HARDY: Well, the type of aircraft we're flying, you damn well can land anywhere you want.

JUNGE: How long a runway do you have to have?

HARDY: Mm -- it's comfortable to have 500 feet. It can be done on two or three hundred. (laughter) With that plane.

JUNGE: Yeah, with that experimental plane.

HARDY: Yeah.

JUNGE: Yeah, that RANS.

HARDY: Yeah, and we've got 30-inch Tundra tires under it, big donut tires. So you could, it doesn't have to be too smooth a country to land.

JUNGE: So you, (laughs) you can land right where the action is, if you want.

HARDY: Pretty much so, if you want.

JUNGE: Is that rolling country out there, Gene?

HARDY: Yeah, it's rolling country, it's a lot similar to what you're seeing right here. There's no mountains or anything. It's just grasslands, rolling grasslands.

JUNGE: [00:15:00] Go back in time for me now. We were talking about that prisoner of war camp. You were raised in Douglas, did you go to school in Douglas?

HARDY: I went, well, when I went to the first grade, we didn’t have kindergarten in those days -- folks boarded me out in Douglas here and I went to the old South Grade School for about a month and I was a six-year-old bashful country kid -- that just didn’t work out very good. So after the first month they changed their plan and rented an apartment and my grandmother came in and took care of me, that was my mother’s mother. And went through the first grade. And when I changed from boarding [00:16:00] with the people here in town and the folks rented the apartment, I had to change schools. Because they used to have what they called South Grade School and North Grade School. So it was closer for me to go to North Grade. So then the next year we had a country school located out there then. In those days there were quite a few rural schools.

JUNGE: Where? Out at the ranch?

HARDY: Yeah, it was four miles away. They had a lot of homesteaders yet, in the early ’30s out there with kids. So they set up these rural schools, usually just a one-room building and the teacher maybe lived with one of the neighbors or maybe lived, we had a teacher that lived in

the sheep wagon during the school year, right there by the school and there was numerous homesteader kids, [00:17:00] me being one of them, that went to that school and I went through the sixth grade there. And then by that time quite a few of the homesteaders had left the country and the kids went with them and ones, another family that was there and had three kids and the oldest one was ready for high school and there was another family there that still had one, he was ready for high school. So they discontinued that school, so that, that made me come, back to Douglas for the seventh, eighth and high school. And went to school here and then...

JUNGE: How many kids were in that rural school?

HARDY: Oh, at one time there was about eight and it got down to where there was five and then finally it would have been three. That's when they dropped the school.

JUNGE: This kind of, you know, going to a rural school like you did, was it a one-room schoolhouse?

HARDY: One room. [00:18:00]

JUNGE: That's almost typical of the previous generation. You know.

HARDY: Yeah, oh yeah. And you see, those teachers in those rural schools taught all the grades that were there, maybe from first grade through eighth. And then they didn't

teach high school at those. Those were, a few of them, maybe, that taught one or two years of high school, but those usually were bigger schools with a few more kids in them.

JUNGE: How far was the school from the ranch?

HARDY: Four miles.

JUNGE: How did you get there?

HARDY: Horseback.

JUNGE: (laughs) This is like a, this is like a western novel, you know. (laughs) So what about the wintertime?

HARDY: Rode most of the time, unless it was real tough and then Dad took me in, of course, they only had one vehicle in those days. I don't remember what it was, probably an old pickup. And he'd haul me occasionally [00:19:00] if it got real tough.

JUNGE: Were you on a road to school? Or did --

HARDY: No, no, hell no. Just cross-country and had a gate to open and rigged it up so I didn't have to get off my horse. I could reach down and unlatch it and swing a little gate open and ride through and latch it up again and go on. Had a shed over at the schoolhouse that I put the horse in. And there was a couple other kids that rode horses quite a bit.

JUNGE: I know in the old days, I'm talking about before you were born, they used to have the kids do certain jobs. Did you have any chores to do?

HARDY: Oh yeah, yeah, we had a milk cow and we had chickens and eggs to gather and at one time we used to feed out a hog to butcher and --

JUNGE: How about at school? Did you have to --?

HARDY: No. There wasn't anything there, (inaudible) maybe help the teacher, had coal out in a coal shed, you might have to go get a bucket [00:20:00] of coal for her. But --

JUNGE: Yeah. Did you have running water?

HARDY: No.

JUNGE: What did you do for water?

HARDY: We had two outhouses out there and then the teacher, I forget now, I think that they brought water in a barrel, so they had water there that was drinkable.

JUNGE: (laughs) What did you do for lunch?

HARDY: Carried it with us.

JUNGE: Your mom make your lunch?

HARDY: Oh yeah. Yeah, I had a little lunch pail and I had two saddlebags on the saddle, stick your books, if you had any in one and the lunch bucket in the other one and --

JUNGE: Yeah. How many kids were in the family?

HARDY: My family?

JUNGE: Yeah.

HARDY: No, I'm the only one.

JUNGE: Now what are your parents, what were your parents' names?

HARDY: My dad was, went by Mick Hardy. His real name was [Marion Glen?] which he didn't like [00:21:00] and all his life that I knew him, he always went by either M.G. or Mick. And my mother was Grace Virginia Elbourne Hardy.

JUNGE: How do you spell Elbourne?

HARDY: E-L-B-O-U-R-N-E.

JUNGE: Where's that from? What --?

HARDY: Her family came originally back in the general area of Omaha, Nebraska.

JUNGE: Did your folks ever tell you, Gene, how they met? You know how they met?

HARDY: Oh yeah, I know how they, pretty much how they met. (cough) My dad originally, his family was out of southwestern Kansas. And there were six boys and one girl in that family. And both of those, both of their parents, that would be my grandfather and grandmother on the other side, were both blind and they met at a school [00:22:00] for the blind somewhere back east, I don't know just where it was. But then those six boys, as they got older, they all migrated into Wyoming. The oldest of them went to

Powell and he was, his trade was a carpenter when he first got there, but then in later years he kept honeybees and produced honey. And then my dad came to Wyoming first in about 1915 and the town of Glenrock was the big muddy field, just west of Glenrock, was just developing and the town was just developing then.

So he worked as a carpenter's helper there -- he'd come out here with the idea of taking a homestead. But in those days you had to be 21 and he was a year short of when he got [00:23:00] here of being of age to take a homestead.

JUNGE: Wasn't it like the army, where you could just lie about your age?

HARDY: Oh well, I think they were a little more careful on these homesteads probably. But it turned out, he was here in '15 and then, see, the US went into World War I --

JUNGE: Nineteen-seventeen.

HARDY: Seventeen, I guess it was. But Dad went back to Kansas and joined the Kansas National Guard and the Guard all went to France. So he was in France (cough) when the Armistice was signed. And by the time he got back stateside here, which was late 1919, or maybe early 1920, and that's when he came on out and took a homestead. He had an older brother that [00:24:00] had already taken a homestead down by Wheatland and he brought back into the

states, I think there in the winter of 1919 and the state with a brother and the brother relinquished that homestead and they both came out north and took homesteads in about ’20 or ’21.

JUNGE: Did you tell me why they came to Wyoming instead of Montana or Nebraska or?

HARDY: Well, there was a lot of available land here and I don’t know how that compared with -- Nebraska was probably pretty well all homesteaded up earlier than that, you see. And Nebra-, or Montana, I can’t really tell you what a difference there made him look at Wyoming and stay --

JUNGE: Now this is on your dad’s side, you’re talking about.

HARDY: Yeah, I’m talking about my dad’s.

JUNGE: Now what about your mom’s side?

HARDY: They came out of Nebraska and they settled, [00:25:00] they took a job, her dad took a job out here, at that time it was [Mortonsen?] Incorporated, which was one of the bigger ranches, just out of Douglas here, about 10 miles. And worked there for a while and then I got a job working for the county and blading roads with a horse-drawn grader, because it’s all dirt roads that he was in charge of the roads from Douglas to Glenrock, that he’s supposed to keep smoothed out with a horse-drawn grader.

And then later, sometime later then they divorced, the grandfather and grandmother and they both remarried and my, well, they're both buried up here on the Douglas cemetery now, along with my parents, too, but anyway, that's kind of just a thumbnail history of how these families got together. And then my mother graduated [00:26:00] high school and she started, she had a degree to teach school. And they were pretty lenient in those days, so they gave her that North Point School, which is the same one that I went to in later years. And she and her mother homesteaded, took a homestead out there and it just happened that my dad had taken a homestead over the hill a mile. They got acquainted and eventually got married. So that's kind of the way that, and that would have been in about 1927, I think when --

JUNGE: Did they actually explain when they met, or they?

HARDY: No. (laughs)

JUNGE: They were probably just neighboring, as they say.

HARDY: Well, they did, you know. They are two homestead shacks over the hill from one another and of course, Mother had to ride her horseback about five miles to where that school was, [00:27:00] from where she and her mother's homestead was and now they didn't have somewhere to keep the horse, so they kept her horse over at dad's corral,

over the hill a mile. So I'm sure there was a lot of back and forth neighboring and so on there over the years, before they got married.

JUNGE: Did she, she taught.

HARDY: Yeah.

JUNGE: So did she continue to teach after she got married?

HARDY: No, no. She only taught, I think, a year out there.

JUNGE: Did they combine their homesteads?

HARDY: We still got all of it. No, they -- not really then, but in later years, why it's all combined together.

JUNGE: Yeah. So this was the seed, these two little ranches were the seeds of what you have now.

HARDY: Yep.

JUNGE: OK, is this a big ranch, considered a bit ranch now?

HARDY: No, we're, we're on the smaller end of some of the ranches out there.

JUNGE: What does that mean?

HARDY: Oh, [00:28:00] some of the big outfits that got in there early, they probably had 100,000 acres. One outfit out there had, well, in his heyday, he controlled better than a million acres on five different ranches.

JUNGE: Who was this?

HARDY: Herman Werner. You probably heard --

JUNGE: Eagle killer.

HARDY: Yep, yep.

JUNGE: (laughs) Yeah, I've heard of --

HARDY: A neighbor of mine.

JUNGE: Did you know him pretty well?

HARDY: Oh, I knew him real well.

JUNGE: What kind of a guy was he?

HARDY: Very outgoing, pleasant sort of a person, as far as I was concerned. Some people hated him, but no, we always got along very well with Herman.

JUNGE: Was that, now that wasn't the Bolton Ranch, that's over by Saratoga.

HARDY: No, Bolton is down in Saratoga. The Spearhead that Frank Moore has now, it used to be Eddie Moore at that time, [00:29:00] in 1972 Herman decided to start disposing of some of his ranch properties and the Spearhead was the first one that he sold and he offered that to [John Dales?], Eddie Moore, [Raymond Alamand?], Buck Alamand and myself. So we split that ranch up five ways. And so we got that one sold and he had planned to sell the 55 Ranch, which laid more to the south of the that in, closer to Glenrock. Then he was working on that deal when he got killed in a car wreck over at Rollins.

JUNGE: Herman.

HARDY: Herman did. So then his executors and administrators eventually sold that and his other properties. He had those two [00:30:00] out here that joined, practically. They didn't quite because Raymond Alamand, or it was Jack Alamand at that time, he kind of laid in between them. But the Spearhead was here and then Alamand's and then the 55 and then down here was Glenrock.

JUNGE: Was the 55 a pretty famous ranch? Or am I thinking of the 59?

HARDY: You're thinking of the 88.

JUNGE: OK. (laughs) Who ran the 88?

HARDY: Well, the family has still got it, the Henry family.

JUNGE: That's right, that's right.

HARDY: Yeah, it's about fifth generation now that's running it, the two boys.

JUNGE: Did you know any of the old timers in that family?

HARDY: Oh, I knew, yeah, the only one I didn't know at all would have been the Mike Henry that founded it in 1887, so he was long gone, but he had, he had three boys, Will and John and Ed, I believe it was. Ed was killed, some sheepherder shot him out there right on the 88 ranch. [00:31:00] Will stayed on the ranch. John Henry came to Douglas and built a motel and run and motel and so the story, is this on recording?

JUNGE: Yeah, but go ahead. (laughter) We're not going to be using this for the project, (laughs) believe me.

HARDY: Well, I was going to say that the story always was that John ran the gambling hall in the basement and his wife run the Red Lion upstairs. (laughter)

JUNGE: These are the respectable Henry family.

HARDY: Oh yeah. Yeah, that's --

JUNGE: Well, that's life, you know.

HARDY: Well, that was a way to make a living in those days.

JUNGE: Yeah, exactly. You know, I got to tell you a little story. Herman Werner and my boss, Ned Frost, who was an outfitter from Cody, you know the Frost family?

HARDY: I didn't know them. I've heard that name but --

JUNGE: Yeah, he was a very famous outfitter, one of the world's most [00:32:00] famous big horn sheep guys and he was in the, oh, what do you call that? Mountain Division, the mountain groups, the ski troops.

HARDY: OK, I know what you're talking about.

JUNGE: Yeah, he was in that during the war and he was my boss. When I first moved to Cheyenne in '71, I was under him until '78 when he died, but Ned was working, I remember, working on trying to get Fort Steele into state hands so they could restore it, interpret it, get visitors to stop there.

HARDY: Let's see, Fort Steele, that's down here east of Rollins, isn't it? Yeah.

JUNGE: Yeah, right where the road crosses the Platte River, the North Platte River, yeah. And there wasn't much there but there was owned, the property was owned by Charlie [Vivian?] and Herman Werner.

HARDY: Well see, I never, I knew [Verne Vivian?] real well.

JUNGE: You didn't know Charlie?

HARDY: I didn't know Charlie. He would have been maybe the generation before. [00:33:00]

JUNGE: Yeah, he was.

HARDY: Verne just died here recently.

JUNGE: Yeah, yeah. It was Verne's dad, I believe. Anyway, Vivian and Werner, my boss and the head of our outfit at that time, it was the Recreation Commission, I think Paul [Westead?] were all gathered together and we were having a meeting to determine if they were going to donate their lands so that the state could do its job, which was to preserve that historic property. And I remember them being over in the, because I went along, being in the Golden Spike in Rollins, and before the presentation was made and Ned had made these great, this tri-cornered or tri, tripod set of maps and diagrams that he had an artist draw from, so he could explain where the property was, what they were

trying to do and so forth and he had taken all these notes on a yellow sheet, a legal pad and he had this memorized and he even went out, this was unusual [00:34:00] for Ned -- he bought a pointer, a rubber-tipped pointer, so he could point to that map. He was prepared.

And Ned normally was prepared, but he was really prepared for this one. The problem was, he got into the bar and met Herman Werner. (laughter) So here, Herman and Ned are bellied up to the bar, right, and they're talking and drinking and talking and drinking and before you know it, it's time for the presentation and Ned just blew it. He just blew it. And his boss was holding his head going, "Oh my God," (laughter) and he thought the whole deal was, what they say, "queered" you know he thought the whole deal was under. But it wasn't. Both those guys gave their property to the state. But I'll never forget that.

HARDY: (laughter) Yeah. Yeah, well, Herman was pretty famous in our country, all right and then of course, down on the boat and he had all that, the guy flying a helicopter for him and shooting eagles, [00:35:00] and of course, Herman's philosophy was, by God, they're killing my livestock; I got a right to shoot them. And he always said, you know, if you talk to him about it personally, he always said, "I'm going to beat that lawsuit," but he didn't even get to go

to court because he got run into at Rollins and died three days later.

JUNGE: In town?

HARDY: He was on the main street going through Rollins with, and I don’t remember just how it out lays, but there was a Ramada Inn and he was going to pull over and have a cup of coffee or a breakfast, one of the two and he was in the, he was in the right-hand lane, it was four lane where he was at. He was over in the right-hand lane and he wanted to go across and he cut right across traffic and the guy in the inner lane nailed him.

JUNGE: Was his wife killed, too?

HARDY: No, she died later years, Grace. [00:36:00]

JUNGE: Grace. Yeah, right. Well, OK. So this is one of your neighbors, on the 55.

HARDY: Ah, it would have been on the Spearhead.

JUNGE: The Spearhead. It’s different from the 55.

HARDY: Yeah, those two ranches were separate. And Herman’s Spearhead land joined us, 55 joined the ones like Henry and [Hornbuckle?] and Joe Patterson, that was further to the south. But the land that joined me was on the Spearhead.

JUNGE: They say good fences make good neighbors. Was that true? Or is that just a saying?

HARDY: Well you know, there's a lot of truth to that, too, really. And you know, Herman and, when he was out there on the Spearhead, he had a fence builder that worked for him for so many years, the guy finally committed suicide, but he put up miles and miles of [00:37:00] pretty good fence.

JUNGE: Woven wire? Barbed wire?

HARDY: A lot of woven wire, yeah. Only he spaced his posts too far apart, so you know, it was a good fence in its day and a lot of it's been rebuilt now, years later.

JUNGE: Did you guys cooperate on your lambing operation or your operations at all?

HARDY: No.

JUNGE: No?

HARDY: No. You mean with the neighbors?

JUNGE: Yeah.

HARDY: No, no. You did your own thing, probably. Well, brandings. People always cooperated on brandings and like docking lambs, the neighbors would come in and help and so on. Other than that, everybody was on their own and you know, Herman never had enough crew to run one ranch, let alone five. And his management left very much to be desired in a lot of ways. You know, in today's economy, Herman would have gone [00:38:00] broke overnight, the way he run livestock. In those day, you know, like back in the

’40s, ’50s, ’60s, along in there, he’d get a little money ahead, he’d go buy more land and borrow and borrow money on his land and he owned about, well, he owed Metropolitan Life several million dollars when he sold. It didn’t make any difference to his lifestyle, it was just as good as, he drank good whiskey, he made trips to Africa and (laughs) --

JUNGE: And he had a million acres of land.

HARDY: Yeah, he did. He controlled a million acres of land, when he died. He’d go to the [ram sale?] and in those days it was up in Casper, the state ram sale, and of course, there was a lot more sheep in the country then. And he’d always but the top-selling pen of [00:39:00] ram blade bucks up there and get his name in the paper and throw those bucks in the back of an old pickup with a stock rack on it, take it out to north country, take them out and never see them again and they’d die. And then he’d go buy cheap bucks that was tough livers, you know, (laughs) they’d survive. But --

JUNGE: That wasn’t too smart, was it?

HARDY: Well, that was just his mode of operation.

JUNGE: He liked the little publicity.

HARDY: Oh yeah. Yeah, yeah. Herman, Herman liked publicity.

JUNGE: Yeah, and I assume he liked his whiskey. (laughter)

HARDY: Yeah, I think he probably drank his share of it.

JUNGE: Well, why did, he's gone now, he's long gone and Grace is, too, but why did people not like him? What was his personality like?

HARDY: Because smaller operations felt he encroached upon them and treated them like peons, you know, and I think he did in some instances. [00:40:00] The winter of '49, the blizzard of '49, Herman only had the two ranches, then, the Spearhead and the 55. And he went into the winter and he told me this, this is direct from what information Herman told me over the years, he said, "I went into that winter with 18,500 head of sheep," and he had herders with him then, run them in several bands. And he had one band, then just a couple miles west of our branch headquarters, that was land that we go now that he owned then. And that blizzard hit and that band of sheep blew out. We had the sheep down that came toward us, we had sheep everywhere you could think of, where they could get out of shelter.

We helped the herder as soon as the storm broke and in a couple days helped the herder get them back up [00:41:00] on where they came from on bed ground and it blew again the next night and they drifted in the, they never did get them gathered. The live, what was alive get wound up 40, 50 miles east, they just kept drifting. And they got into everybody else's, you know the smaller operators had a

little bunch of sheep and here comes a flock of Herman's in there and mixes with them and nobody could do anything about it then and issues like that kind of turned a lot of people against Herman. They said, "Well, you're too damn big and you don't take care of anything," and there was some truth to that.

JUNGE: Did you get along with him?

HARDY: Oh, we got along with him OK. We did.

JUNGE: So did he lose all of his sheep that year?

HARDY: (laughs) Eighteen thousand five hundred and he come out with 8,000. He had 4,000 head of cattle, [00:42:00] he come out with half of them alive.

JUNGE: How did you do?

HARDY: We didn't lose, we didn't lose, we didn't have sheep in '49. My dad had gotten out of sheep. He went into sheep, well, he started out, when he homesteaded straight cattle and then he went into sheep in 1934 he bought a band of sheep from another guy and the guy that they bought them from agreed to stay on as a herder and a ranch hand for years and then he left. Of course, dad had the sheep and he kept them until, till '42, he sold them when the war, World War II was going and he couldn't get help, so he cleaned the sheep out and kept the cattle and then my wife and I didn't go back into sheep until 1965.

JUNGE: Why did you go back into sheep?

HARDY: Because in a lot of ways sheep are easier to handle and manage and that [00:43:00] country is, is more ideal sheep country than it is cow country. Just the type of country, the grass, all of that, it fits better for sheep operation than it does for a cow operation.

JUNGE: See, I don't understand that. Because I'm not a rancher. But I worked on a ranch one time, but I don't understand that, why would the land be better for sheep than cattle?

HARDY: Oh, the vegetation, the water supply, cows, a cow's got to have water all winter. Sheep can live on snow. Without water. It's better if they got open water, but there are just things that make them easier to manage and there are people that say, "Oh, those damn dumb sheep, you know, who in the world would want to work with them? They've got to be dumber than the sheep is," but (laughs) that, that's just not always the case. Sheep, you get two crops, you've got a wool crop and a lamb crop. [00:44:00] More cow, if she doesn't have a calf and she's open, she's just dead weight until next year, eating grass.

And of course, there's been bad years with the sheep, you know, with prices at different times have been very poor. Wool prices have been not good at all. But you

know, in today's economy, you can make money, I think with good management, of course, you can make money quicker with sheep than you can with cattle.

JUNGE: Mainly on the wool? Or on the meat?

HARDY: Well, you've got two crops. You've got the wool and, and the lamb crop, which goes for meat, of course.

JUNGE: Is the meat market pretty good now?

HARDY: Yeah, it's pretty good. The wool market is, is very good and you know, if you go out and buy a good sheep, you're paying pretty big money. Of course, cows are that way right now, [00:45:00] too. But there, you know, for years one would be up and the other would be down, then it would go the other way.

JUNGE: Now why did sheepmen and cattlemen have such a tough time with each other, Gene? I mean --

HARDY: The old time cowboys resented the sheep coming in because in their opinion, why if a sheep walked across the ground the cow wouldn't eat it. Well, that's not true. And in later years it's been proven and people realize that you can run both species, sheep and cattle on the same range as long as you manage and don't over-graze, because they eat different type of forage. A cow will eat one type, sheep will eat another type so you utilize all of your ground better than you do with either single species.

JUNGE: One eats [forbes?] the other one eats grass or?

HARDY: Yeah. A cow will eat, a cow's got to have grass. And the sheep can eat it when it's [00:46:00] that high. Of course, you can over-graze, too, real easy if you don't manage it and that's the detrimental to --

JUNGE: Yeah. But you were careful, I assume. And not --

HARDY: Well, yeah, over the years we've learned more and more and we tried to be careful and we didn't always do the best, but I guess we did good enough to survive and still be there and that's different from what a lot of them did going back to the homestead days. Because those people came out here from the east that were farmers. Government gave them a, started out with a half-section of ground and then decided they couldn't live on that so they got, gave them another half section, they had a full section and they still couldn't live on it. They were all trying to farm it. They were plowing it up, plowing up native grass, planting and they'd get dry years and then the Dust Bowl of the '30s and the last of the, [00:47:00] of the homesteaders left in about '37.

JUNGE: You don't remember the Dust Bowl, do you?

HARDY: Yeah.

JUNGE: You do?

HARDY: Not the real severe part of it, I don't. But yeah, I can remember kind of the tail end of, when we were still having dust storms and -- but see, being born in '30 and then hell, that Depression and Dust Bowl days kind of hung on into the, oh, '33, '34, along in there. My dad always said '34 was the driest year he ever saw and then the next year he said the grass was as high as his stirrups when he was sitting on his saddle horse. In '35.

JUNGE: That changed that radically.

HARDY: Mm-hmm. Just by getting rain.

JUNGE: Now when you're on a ranch, you don't suffer like an urban person would, right? You've got everything you need?

HARDY: Well, people made do with what they had. Everybody -- usually plan out some kind of a garden. [00:48:00] And you know, they had potatoes and whatever and maybe sweet corn or whatever they could plant and grow and they probably lived on maybe raise a pig and most of the time they shot antelope, lived on antelope. Maybe if they were in deer country, why it was, they shot a deer instead.

JUNGE: Was yours deer country?

HARDY: It wasn't then. We got deer now, but in those days there weren't too many antelope out there. Antelope population is a lot more now than it was going back into the '30s and '40s. And then in the later '40s we got

overpopulated with antelope for a while and that can be just as detrimental -- you know, wild game can be every bit as detrimental to range conditions if you've got too many of them. Because they eat grass just like anything else does. So we had way too many antelope. And then blizzard of '49 [00:49:00] took care of a lot of that and they just haven't come back in the biggest numbers and I think that there'd been a little bit more management by the Game and Fish in later years, too.

JUNGE: Well, you're working with these people.

HARDY: Yeah.

JUNGE: Yeah. Well, through the Department of Agriculture.

HARDY: Well, yeah, through this animal [ADMD?] board that I'm on and --

JUNGE: Did that winter of '49 change the way you, your family operated?

HARDY: No, I don't think it did. I don't think we've, we've made improvements over the years and since now my son-in-law is running it, he's made a lot more improvements, even than what I had done. But the important thing is to not overgraze your ground and have it fenced so you can rotational graze, you know, pasture to pasture to pasture and a lot of people never did that.

JUNGE: Well, isn't that kind of a, that's a holistic approach. Isn't that the more of a new, a new approach? [00:50:00]

HARDY: Well, it's been around for a long time, but a lot of people didn't do much about it, didn't use it too much.

JUNGE: What did you do for entertainment in those days?

HARDY: We had a battery-powered radio and there's -- (laughs) you didn't have TV, you didn't have telephone, didn't have electricity.

JUNGE: You didn't have any of those, when you were growing up.

HARDY: We didn't have the -- Pacific Power & Light built the first power line through our country out there in 1960. I was 30 years old, before we got TV [TBNL?]. We generated our own power for years with a 32-volt wind charger, had 32-volt appliances and then -- we did that for probably 18 years. And then we put in a diesel electric plant and powered diesel electric had [00:51:00] 110/220.

JUNGE: Wasn't it a little cheaper to let Mother Nature power you?

HARDY: With wind? No. Christ, no. I had to start buying batteries. (laughter) See, you had the storage batteries.

JUNGE: Yeah, Delcos or something like that, right?

HARDY: Yeah, they were big glass cell batteries. There was a glass cell about that square and about that high, each one of them put out two volts, took 16 of those, you had 32-volt power. And you know, you had lights and a few things like that, but that's basically what you had.

JUNGE: Gene, take me back, though. This is interesting to talk to a guy like you because like I say, a lot of the things that you experienced were experienced by people in a totally, in a totally different generation. But you didn't get electricity until 1960.

HARDY: No, and telephone in '62. And that was an eight-party line. (laughter) [00:52:00] And a couple old women would tie it up all die. (laughter)

JUNGE: Well, what was, what was it like? I mean, what did you do? Did you read at night?

HARDY: Yeah. I'd sit with the battery-powered radios and there's, you know, in those old days there was a lot of programs on that we'd think was ridiculous today, but they had kids' programs, you know, *Jack Armstrong* and *Little Orphan Annie* and (laughs) I'd hurry home from school, then tune the radio in, you know, (laughs) listen in. And it was all static and scratchy. (laughs)

JUNGE: What station did you have? Out of Douglas? Was it out of Douglas?

HARDY: I think it was out of Casper.

JUNGE: And you probably got better reception at night.

HARDY: In some instances you did. Others not. There was a -- years ago there was a Mexican station, what the hell did they call that? It was 50,000 [00:53:00] watts and --

JUNGE: Oh yeah, down I Texas.

HARDY: Yeah, the Del Rio, Texas --

JUNGE: Del Rio, Texas.

HARDY: And good God, you could get that thing anywhere in the United States, I think.

JUNGE: (laughs) Was it anything you wanted to listen to?

HARDY: Oh, no, it was Mexican music and (laughs) --

JUNGE: Preachers?

HARDY: Yeah, you'd get preachers and salesmen and (laughter) --

JUNGE: So what, did you, was it early to bed, early to rise and so forth, on the range?

HARDY: Well, I'll tell you, when it got dark you went to bed, because you, the kerosene lamps, we had gas, gasoline lanterns, you know. You'd use white gas, pump up the pressure and they had a mantle on them. You used those for years. When it was time to go to bed you turned the lamp out and you went to bed in the dark.

JUNGE: But do you go back to those days in your mind [00:54:00] at all and think about how quiet and peaceful it was? Or how tough it was?

HARDY: I don't remember. You know, I don't think I ever went to bed hungry in my growing up years, ever. You know, we managed and Mother canned a lot of stuff, in the glass jars. And they even bought a machine that had the tin cans and lid and then turned the crank and it sealed it and so she canned meat and vegetables and a lot of that stuff. And then potatoes you could put down in a root cellar and keep potatoes all winter.

JUNGE: I was going to ask you, what did you do for refrigeration? Especially in the summer.

HARDY: Well, we put up ice in the winter. Go up to the lake, or go to [Roseborn?] and if your ice got about a foot thick you'd thaw out chunks of it and truck it into what we called [00:55:00] "an ice house," that was down below ground and put those blocks of ice in there and pack them with straw and sawdust and cover them good and then usually had ice pretty well late into fall if you put up a good supply of ice, it would stay cool enough down there that ice wouldn't melt very fast. If you wanted a chunk, you'd go chop out a chunk and clean the sawdust and the cold slack or whatever that you had that you sealed it with.

JUNGE: What did you, what did you do with your meat then? Just lay it on top of the ice or hang it or?

HARDY: Well, meat, you know what they did then, they tried not to butcher anything in the real heat of the day and then what they did, they cover it with tarp or something in the daytime and at night they'd pull it up a meat pole, up in the cool air and [00:56:00] it would kind of dry out on you, but it kept.

JUNGE: Who did the butchering?

HARDY: Oh, I've done it and my dad did it. You know, sometimes it was a community project, you'd get a neighbor or two and -- but you already have butchered a beef or anything like that. That was too much meat to take care of in the summertime.

JUNGE: So what did you butcher mainly? A hog? A sheep?

HARDY: Maybe a hog, yeah, sheep, if you had it. Antelope, like I say. We used to kill a few sage hens, young sage hens. God, they were good. If you got a young one. Now the older one you can't boil it long enough. (laughs) You couldn't chew it. (laughter) But that's the days when we had a lot of sage chickens. We haven't got them anymore. Predators. Too much predators.

JUNGE: Did you eat a lot of pork, or lamp chops?

HARDY: Oh yeah, quite a bit.

JUNGE: Do you still like lamb? [00:57:00]

HARDY: Oh yeah, I like lamb.

JUNGE: Yeah, I do, too.

HARDY: Lamb is a meat, though, that if you don't prepare it right, a lot of people don't like it, you know.

JUNGE: It's expensive right now.

HARDY: Oh, it's terrible. Expensive.

JUNGE: So from this ranch now, how did you transport your wool and your meat? How did -- well, I suppose you weren't really in, big into the meat, it was more wool, right?

HARDY: Well, the meat, of course, you just sold the weather lambs, or [older lambs?], what you didn't want to keep. You know, you kept some of your ewe lambs as replacements every year. And then cull the older sheep out, the sick, the crippled, the aged and so on and they got sold as culls and of course, that kind of meat went into dog food and they always used to say a lot of it went into Gerber's [00:58:00] baby food, (laughs) they'd ground up the (inaudible) (laughter) -- I don't know if they did or not. And your lamb crop, I sold those. They went into the feed lot and fatten them up and then eventually slaughtered them. See, that's where your lamb came from.

JUNGE: In the old days they used to have, I've seen pictures of these wagons pulled by horses with huge bails of wool on them. Do you, you lived beyond that period, though. No?

HARDY: Nope. When I was growing up and Dad, all I can say, he went into sheep in '34 and kept them until '42 and they sheared later, they didn't try to shear early like we do now. They lambed prior to the time that they sheared and then they'd, usually about now, June, they'd come in and shear them and in those days it was all, what they called [00:59:00] "blade shearers," by hand, with just shearing blades. And then they sacked the wool in those big burlap bags. You had a stand that you hung that bag in and somebody got in the bag and tromped wool, tromped it so it was tight in the bag and then you'd sew the top of the bag shut. Then, oh, probably a full bag of wool would weigh 300, 350, something like that. And then you'd, like you say, in the old days they rolled them on wagons and pulled them, those 20-horse teams, I've got a picture at the ranch of just that, it was taken up somewhere around Casper, with a -- it's either an 18 or 20-horse team and three wagons behind loaded with wool bales.

JUNGE: Why did they make the bales so big? Weren't they tougher to handle?

HARDY: Well, you wouldn't want a bunch of [01:00:00] little bags. That's --

JUNGE: Too much work?

HARDY: Too much work, yeah. And then went to a wool warehouse somewhere, Casper used to have a wool warehouse. Rollins had one. And there's very few wool buyers left anymore. Stayed a while, I mean right now we've got basically two wool buyers, all there is. They buy for different companies.

JUNGE: They come out to the ranch, do they? Or do you deliver?

HARDY: Well, they usually, the buyer that usually buys our wool, there's two of them, one is Bruce Barker up at Buffalo and the other one is Larry [Prager?] at [Belle Fourche?], or yeah, Belle Fourche, South Dakota. And he, Larry's usually the one that buys our wool and he's bought it so long now, he knows what it's going to be for quality. He usually comes and looks and Barker does sometimes, [01:01:00] but he hasn't been as strong a bidder in the last two years. And the Barker wants you to deliver it to, he's got a warehouse in Gillette. Well, so you've got to get a truck, load it up and take it up there and unload it and -- Prager, he'll, if he buys it he'll furnish the truck and say, "We're going to be there such and such a day and

we’re going to load wool,” and of course, we’ll load it any more with the Skid Steer with a special head on it to -- the round bag is gone now. That is, has not been in use for 10 years or more. They’re a nylon pack that’s, I don’t know, roughly about three-foot square and almost four foot tall. And they’ll weigh 400 to 450. [01:02:00] Because they’re packed solid, it’s packed with a machine now.

JUNGE: So then they lift them with a forklift?

HARDY: Well, yeah, we got a, we got a Skid Steer tractor, people do it different ways and so on a forklift he has, run up and then this, I built a squeeze head that I can pick two of those up at once. Set one on top of the other and then squeeze them and pick it up and you can pick up about 900 pounds that way, on a dime.

JUNGE: You built this?

HARDY: Mm-hmm.

JUNGE: By yourself?

HARDY: Yeah. Yeah.

JUNGE: You didn’t have to go down to the implement dealer and?

HARDY: Mm, mm, mm. Well, I had to go down and buy the Skid Steer from him, but head, they go, you know, Skid Steer’s got a fast change system for different implements on the front end. You just drive up to it and flip a lever and

you’re hooked up and going and [01:03:00] then of course, they’ve got hydraulics on this squeeze and hook that into your hydraulics and that’s all there is to it. You don’t have to hardly handle, hand labor. Oh, you might have to roll out of the way and when they’re shearing, you know, to get it away from the girls that’s running the sacking machine.

JUNGE: Yeah, they have girls doing that, tromping, don’t they?

HARDY: Yeah, they, the girls run those sackers entirely.

JUNGE: Now who does your shearing for you?

HARDY: There’s a crew at [KFC?] that’s the only good crew left in this part of the state, and you get over to the western side of the state and they get some crews out of Salt Lake and in that area in there, but Dave Foley is the crew boss here and he brings in [01:04:00] New Zealanders, New Zealand shearers. Runs usually two crews and well, usually when they come to us they bring seven-man crew and a shearing trailer and they shear inside of this trailer and those are usually an old wore out frame of a trailer house and they build it up so they got a floor in there and roof over their head and, and when they shear the wool it goes out one side on the deck, that’s part of the, it’s a fold-down deck and that keeps the wool off the ground and

then the sacker is setting just beyond that and those girls grab a huge big armload of this wool and throw it in the sacker and then it's all hydraulic.

JUNGE: And then they stitch it up?

HARDY: Yeah, when they get it full.

JUNGE: You've got a stitching, hand stitch?

HARDY: No, they use metal clips. They got flaps on it and they'll fold the flaps [01:05:00] over both ways and hook it with a metal clip to hold it.

JUNGE: Have you ever sheared sheep?

HARDY: A few. I'm not a sheep shearer. (laughter)

JUNGE: Why not?

HARDY: No, God, that's hard work.

JUNGE: (laughs) I know it is. I watch people do this. There's no way I could lift that sheep and shear it. And to think that they used to use hand shearers.

HARDY: Oh, they used hand clippers. Yeah, I, I remember in the early days when Dad had sheep it was all blade crews and a lot of people then, it was local -- ranchers maybe that didn't have enough work to keep them busy and they'd get five or six of them together and maybe shearing crew and they'd go around and shear as a crew.

JUNGE: And some of them were better than others, I suppose.

HARDY: Oh yeah, yeah, but --

JUNGE: I watched, well, maybe I told you this over the phone, but you know, Bill and Frankie Moore, I was up on their place to, [01:06:00] I wanted to interview some sheep shearers and they told me about these Aussies that came up and, well actually, they were New Zealanders --

HARDY: Both. Some of them, a few of them come out of Australia, but most of these that Foley brings in are all Kiwis. New Zealanders. And he's a Kiwi himself, this Dave Foley. He came over here years ago as a shearer and he wound up married to an American girl. She is a [Kruchit?], is the family name up there on the Kaycee country.

JUNGE: Kruchit?

HARDY: Kruchit. Yeah, [Jeannine?] Kruchit. And --

JUNGE: These people know sheep, don't they? I mean, they know how to shear a sheep.

HARDY: Oh, yeah. A good New Zealand shearer and this country produces pretty good size sheep, you know, big, well-muscled, heavy [01:07:00] ewes that will weigh 160, 180 pounds in their prime and then 10, 15 pounds of wool on them, too. But one of those guys that's good, he can roll out 180 head in an eight-hour day.

JUNGE: And then they've got to, I've watched them, then after they're done they've got to go to the shed or someplace where they can sharpen their blades for the next day.

HARDY: Yeah, they do. They have to, they've got grinders to sharpen those combs and cutters on these machine tools.

JUNGE: I don't know how they do it.

HARDY: And then the old blade man that used the hand tools, they -- (cough) they didn't shear out of trailers -- (cough) excuse me, they didn't shear out of trailers in those days. Usually they had a bullpen in a, what they called "a bullpen in a shed," and maybe there was [01:08:00] two guys that set up, one in each corner of this pen. (cough) And they might run 20 head of sheep in there and then they'd have a, half of the pen would have a wood shearing floor so that the wool wasn't in the dirt. The sheep would stand over here on the other half of it maybe that didn't have a wood floor, they'd have to leg one out, drag it over to the, where they did their shearing.

(cough) And set it up and then they sharpened their tools, they set what they called, the terminology they used then, they said, "Well, that's where we put up our rock," well, their rock was a stone, you know and they, they sharpened those every sheep or two they'd run it across that stone and pour a little oil on the stone and run the blade across there. [01:09:00] They were as sharp as a razor. Really. Oh, blades that long, you know. And you could almost push it through the wool, if your blades

weren’t completely closed, it would almost shear that wool without even much gripping, they were so sharp.

JUNGE: And if a lamb or a sheep is sheared properly they won’t have a lot of cuts in it?

HARDY: No. No, you hate to see many cuts, whether they’re blade men or they’re machine men, either one, (inaudible) you can see some nasty cuts. But most of these guys, you know, were pretty fussy about, they start nicking them and so on.

JUNGE: Well, what does wool sell for now? Do they sell it by the pound, the bag? How does that go?

HARDY: You core up, yeah, you know I have to watch myself trying to explain because it’s so common [01:10:00] to me. But once it’s in the nylon pack, then you’ve got a tool that you push in there, it’s a tube with a, it’s a tube about the size of your finger, a little bigger, well, like that, five-eighths maybe. It’s got a round blade on the front end and you can push it right into the bag and it cuts a wool sample that goes up into that tube. You get a tube, you push it in and you know, pick up a sample right in that tube. Then you got a little plastic bag that you put those samples in, you’ve got a rod, just a dowel that you can push that sample out into the bag and you’d take about, no, about four or five samples per bag of wool, that

goes into a laboratory in Denver, Yocom-McColl is the name of the guy that runs that down there and [01:11:00] they do an analysis of the wool. They give you -- you see, your core that you send down is a grease core.

It's got dirt, vegetable matter, the lanolin, that's all in that, well, they clean all that out and they weigh what it was originally, the raw wool against the clean wool, and that gives you a yield in a percentage. And good [ramble?] wool that isn't carrying too much dirt, you'll get a -- 55 to 60% yield of clean wool. Then they do another analysis of it that gives you a micron grade of wool, the fineness or the coarseness [01:12:00] of think wool. And of course, the finer the micron the more valuable the wool is, you know, for fine apparel and stuff like that. Coarse wool is worth a lot less money and it goes into carpet, rugs, that kind of stuff.

JUNGE: So how do you sell it then? By the pound?

HARDY: Yeah. Yeah. You get this core analysis and you know, you know how many pounds of grease wool you've got. And then the buyer will quote you a price if you want to sell it in the grease, you don't bother taking the core sample. He just buys it at a grease price. We take the core sample and find out what that is and then the buyer will quote you a clean price. And if you've got 60% yield in your wool,

that’s pretty clean [01:13:00] and it doesn’t take the grease and the dirt and the little vegetable matter out of it and so on, if you get 60% yield and they’ll quote you maybe five something as a clean price.

JUNGE: Five something, five dollars and something a pound?

HARDY: Yeah, a pound.

JUNGE: What’s it going for today?

HARDY: Well, that’s about what it is.

JUNGE: For the clean stuff.

HARDY: Yeah, on a clean basis. And then they’ll take something out of there for freight. You’ve got to pay the freight.

JUNGE: Sure, sure. So this sounds very, what time is it? I don’t --

HARDY: Noon.

JUNGE: What time, do you want to quit? Take a break?

HARDY: No, I don’t care. I’m --

JUNGE: Are you OK?

HARDY: I’m good if you are.

JUNGE: Oh, I’m good. Yeah. I don’t want to get too personal here, but I’m kind of trying to think of how much a person can make shearing their sheep once a year, right? Isn’t that when you shear?

HARDY: Mm-hmm. [01:14:00] Oh yeah, you just get one clip a year.

JUNGE: OK. So how many pounds come off of your sheep?

HARDY: Well, a good ramble A fleece, probably run 9 to 11 pounds.

JUNGE: OK, so each one of your sheep's going to produce about --

HARDY: That's grease, grease weight, as it comes off.

JUNGE: OK, but that's not the five-dollar-a-pound stuff.

HARDY: No.

JUNGE: OK. All right. So each sheep's going to bring you every year 50, 60 bucks. Is that a wrong estimate?

HARDY: No, that's, that's in the ballpark. It's probably, that estimate's on the high end maybe, depending on the quality of your wool, the grade that it is, the micron grade and so on.

JUNGE: How did you feel about the quality of your wool?

HARDY: Oh, ours has been good. There's a lot of good wool coming out of this country here. Now the people that run Blackface sheep and so on, they're not worried about the [01:15:00] quality of the wool because that's -- they're devoting things more to -- the weight of lambs that they're selling. Because the wool isn't worth a whole lot off of a Blackface breed. Now, there's probably areas where they

got smaller flocks. You go back in the mid east and the eastern states and you know, the average sheep flock back there might be five or 10 head or 50 head, that's about as big as you ever see. You take out in the western states here, this is what they call "territory wool" and the reason that name has stuck with it is because back in the early days of the sheep industry, prior to the time that a lot of these states were just territories. That name kind of stuck. You see, at one time there was [01:16:00] right here in Wyoming, it was damn near five million head of sheep at one time, in the early days. And of course, today there's less than 400,000.

JUNGE: Hm. Is that because the land has become constricted?

HARDY: No, it's -- a lot of it is due to government regulations that affect these people and have to run on public lands, you know, Forest Service and so on. Part of it has brought the numbers down, predation is a huge issue that has to be dealt with and a lot of people just said, "It ain't worth it, I'm out of the sheep business," so they have. And you know, the old time sheep producers, maybe their family didn't want to take on the operations so they sold out. And it just kept bringing the numbers down [01:17:00] and down and down a little bit to where it is today.

JUNGE: So it’s a paying operation still, if you run it right.

HARDY: Mm-hmm. Oh yeah.

JUNGE: Did you, did you have, use public lands to graze your sheep?

HARDY: Yes, we did and then do to some extent yet. These eastern half of Wyoming, if you take the state of Wyoming and you draw a line right north/south down through the middle and take the east half and the west half, over on that side the land is predominantly privately owned.

JUNGE: The east side.

HARDY: And there’s still some Forest Service ground, there’s still some BLM, Bureau of Land Management. You know, the BLM has got two sections in every township that, that are designated BLM and then that, well no, I’m saying that wrong. The state has got --

JUNGE: The state has it.

HARDY: -- two sections and then the amount of BLM [01:18:00] can vary. It can be from very little or none to a considerable amount. There’s a ranch or two out in my country there that’s got a pretty sizeable block of state land, or BLM land I mean and state land both. So.

JUNGE: Didn’t you have, I know in the Big Horns, the southern Big Horns, they had what they call “drive lanes” -- is that what they call them?

HARDY: Stock driveways.

JUNGE: Stock driveways. Did you guys have such a thing down here?

HARDY: Yeah. In the early days all of this country usually, well, there was a public road or anything, it was designated as a stock driveway, too. Because they trailed livestock, whether it was sheep or cattle, they trailed them to the railroad, to ship. So most of those areas that were originally designated as stock driveways still exist, even though they, [01:19:00] they don't use them as much today because they're doing more trucking and so on. But in the old days everything was trailed down those stock driveways.

JUNGE: Do you trail at all?

HARDY: Oh, we don't anymore but we used to. Yeah. Yeah, I've trailed the yearling cattle into railroad out here [north of?] and then up at Careyhurst, there's yards, or there used to be. Now those are all gone. Hell, there's railroads don't haul livestock anymore, period.

JUNGE: There used to be some, what they call "Australian-style sheep shearing sheds" over by, there was one over by Waltman, remember that one?

HARDY: Yeah. Herman Werner had one out there on the, I think it's on 55. And yeah, I know what they are.

JUNGE: Why did those go out of operation?

HARDY: Well, because the shearing crews started traveling with their -- [01:20:00] pulling these trailer deals that they shear in and a lot of the sheep, big sheep producers like Herman Werner's gone. He had more sheep then than there is in the county now, even the Converse County here is, is the number one county in sheep numbers at this point in time. But used to be Johnson County up there at Buffalo was number one and Campbell County was ahead of us, but now all due to industry coming in, you know, this has pushed some people out. It's been a difficult thing to run the livestock and sheep in particular, around an area that's alive with trucks and traffic and disturbance all around the clock, you know, day in/day out.

JUNGE: But the advantage for the rancher, I would assume, is that [01:21:00] OK, so there's coal mines in Converse County, maybe even a little uranium, but there's oil wells and gas, I mean, he's got to look optimistically at what he has in the way below, below ground resources.

HARDY: But don't be confused there, not everybody has mineral rights. See, a lot of this land that was government land at one time and then still is quite a bit of it over here is what they call the Thunder Basin Grasslands, administered by the Forest Service. And our ranch is right

on the extreme southwest corner of that Thunder Basin Grasslands area. You go north and east clear to the top quarter of the state, you might say. A lot of that is, is national, or Thunder Basin Grasslands. And there you've got to comply with the government regulations, when you can go on, [01:22:00] when you have to come off, how many. Those are all issues that in later years have developed, that have helped decrease the number of sheep, and cattle, too, in some circumstances.

JUNGE: So isn't it true -- I have oil under our land and I just have eight acres on the north edge of Cheyenne.

HARDY: But you've got the mineral rights.

JUNGE: I do. And so do the neighbors, which surprised some of the neighbors and it surprised us. Who would think that right on the edge of Cheyenne, you buy a little acreage, you want a little room, so you buy a little acreage and you've got the mineral rights. Most people don't have the mineral rights, I assume.

HARDY: And that has come about because of the lack of knowledge of people over the years, you know. In the old days, or well you know, I keep talking "old days," well, that's going back in '30s and '40s and earlier, people never thought much about the value [01:23:00] of minerals. They had the grass. They didn't know what was down there.

Didn’t care. Never thought about it. So when they sold to whoever they might have sold to, usually the mineral rights went with it, if they weren’t specifically designated to be retained. See it both ways. But in later, later years then, people started wising up and they thought, well you know, there might be some value down there. So they started selling properties and retaining mineral rights.

And that can be, that can get ugly and it has. Minerals have jurisdiction over surface. As far as development. So if you own beautiful pasture out there and covered with grass and somebody else owns the mineral rights, [01:24:00] that person kind hire an oil company to come in there or maybe the oil company owns the rights, who knows who’s going to -- they can move in and, hell, they can sue you and develop minerals.

JUNGE: What do you think about that?

HARDY: It can be a problem and it is a problem. I would like to see surface and minerals stay more in the same ownership. And I bought ground from Herman Werner, out there when he sold the Spearhead. Herman kept the minerals for 10 years and it turned out, you know, in 10 years there was not any real development. After 10 years I got half of them. And he still kept half. After 20 years I got them

all. And that's fair. Eventually the minerals go back to the land [01:25:00] and stay with the land.

But there's many, many cases, you know, that the minerals have been retained by whoever owned the land to begin with, sold to another party, retain mineral ownership and then whoever retained the minerals, he probably had 10 kids and when he died, those mineral rights got divided up to all the heirs. You'd think that isn't a can of worms, because the companies won't even come in anymore and lease that kind of ground, with that fragmentation of ownership of the minerals. Because they have to get everybody's signature before they got a valid lease. Well, who knows where 10 kids have gone in over a generation? And probably (inaudible) they hadn't gone and their heirs still got it. And I know I've been told about [01:26:00] situations where those minerals had been retained and then divided up into heirs, from the original owners and they said, "My God, there's a hundred heirs out there," companies won't even look at it.

JUNGE: Well, on the other hand, though, we got a, there's another problem I think, Gene, and if somebody wants to develop the oil or suck the oil out of the ground, just north of us there's a 20-acre tract owned by a guy that I know and workout with him at the YMCA and I see him all the

time and he refuses to sell. I said, well, we're always kidding each other about this, "Well, they started drilling on your property yet?" he said he is not going to sell. He's going to let the kids fight it out. But what I'm getting to is that if some company wanted to drill 350 feet away, or whatever the minimum is that you...

HARDY: To the property line.

JUNGE: Yeah. If they want to drill [01:27:00] on my property, they could do it. They could just come in, establish their rig right on my property, pay a trespass fee and they can just suck out all the oil they want.

HARDY: I know, I know exactly where you're coming from there and of course, now the technology is developed to the point where there's horizontal drilling. And you know, I'm talking --

JUNGE: Oblique dr-...

HARDY: Well, they got their mile and they got that situation right here at Douglas, here a while back, it's surfaced in the news, on the local paper that a lot of these lots in the town of Douglas own mineral rights. Well, you know they're not going to go out here and drill in the middle of the golf course or so on. (laughter) But they can go horizontal. (laughs) And I don't know how they sort all that stuff out. It can get pretty damned confusing.

JUNGE: Yeah. But the trespass fee, it just seems to me like there's a parallel [01:28:00] there in the old days, they had what they called the "Fence Outlaw," right?

HARDY: For cattle.

JUNGE: For cattle. Not for sheep.

HARDY: No, not for sheep. And that's another issue (laughs) that has raised its ugly head.

JUNGE: What's that?

HARDY: Well, there was a move in the legislature, somebody introduced a bill down there, they wanted to change the Fence Outlaw to Fence Inlaw, on cows. (laughter) It didn't get very far but, well, it's happening up -- a friend of mine, Peter John [Camino?], Buffalo, he's a pretty big sheep operations. And he's had subdivision developments right up against his property lines and you know, sheep, he owns sheep. So the laws applies to him is that he's got to fence those sheep in. [01:29:00] Well, if somebody buys a house and plants vegetation like this, right up against his property line and there's only a three or four wire fence there, his sheep, (laughs) they're going to be out on the neighbors, so (cough) it can create problems both ways. And it's a real delicate thing to deal with because you talk to one person, they want everything either fence in or the other guy wants everything fence out and we've got two,

two things right now, you fence out the cattle but you've got to fence in your sheep. (laughs)

JUNGE: What do you think about that? You're a sheep owner.

HARDY: I would rather see them leave it alone. Because we do, we fence in our sheep anyway.

JUNGE: Yeah, I mean it seems like you would.

HARDY: Why, sure. We run in pastures and we want fence that will hold our sheep on our ground. We don't want to be looking over in the neighbor's herd and so on. [01:30:00]

JUNGE: So the fence outlaw doesn't matter much to you.

HARDY: No, not really.

JUNGE: Doesn't affect you.

HARDY: Not really, no. Especially when we're not running cows on this operation now. See, we still got a calf operation that's, we got a manager running them for us in Iowa, on a cost/share basis. And they're clear down in south central Iowa. That's a whole different world, when you get down in that country.

JUNGE: Yeah. Well, we drifted away from aviation, didn't we?

HARDY: Well, pretty much we have.

JUNGE: You know I was, I have to be honest. I was hoping we would do it because I know you're a rancher, a lifelong rancher and I wanted to get some information that I didn't have before. And this is all a revelation to me. Well,

some of it is, anyway. Well, all right, let's talk about aviation, then. What was your first experience in your aviation [01:31:00] avocation? Let's put it that way.

HARDY: Well, I guess I'd say that even back when I just a kid growing up I liked model airplanes and watched planes fly over and always dreamed maybe someday I could get up there and do it. And then I went to the service and when I came out I decided I was going to take flying lessons under the G.I. Bill of Rights. I didn't fly in the service or anything like that at all, but I started taking lessons at Casper and that was in '56, when I went up there and started flying and, and then I got my license, private license in '57 and bought the first airplane I owned, the Super Cub and flew it for about 10 years and then I bought a 170 Cessna and I flew it a few years, [01:32:00] traded that off. Bought a rebuilt Cessna 182 and I kept that one in till I sold it here, well, this might have been about three years ago. And then started flying that RANS 7-S, which Shaun and I kind of bought, Shaun, that's my son-in-law, kind of bought it together. And she was built right here at Douglas. See, Bruce Reed has got an aircraft manufacturing plant right here in the town of Douglas.

JUNGE: Really?

HARDY: Oh yeah, he's building experimentals.

JUNGE: I thought the only manufacturer was in Star Valley.

HARDY: Mm-mm.

JUNGE: What's this, this guy's name is Bruce Reed?

HARDY: Bruce Reed.

JUNGE: What's the name of his outfit?

HARDY: What's he call it? Back Country Cubs, I think. Because he's building Cub replicas, basically, Super Cub replicas.

JUNGE: Does he have a factory?

HARDY: Got a big shop and he -- [01:33:00] yeah, kind of a factory. I don't know how well he's doing with it, but he's sold a bunch of planes and --

JUNGE: Now, your son-in-law, Shaun Musselman, how do you spell Shaun, S-H-A-U-N? Or S--

HARDY: Yeah, that's S-H-A-U-N, is the way he spells it.

JUNGE: Didn't you tell me that he built his own plane?

HARDY: Down here at Bruce's shop.

JUNGE: He built it.

HARDY: Yeah, pretty much. He had some of Bruce's people in there helping him with this and that and so on, but see, if you build 51% of it, why there's, I forget just how the rulings go on the, whether you categorize it as an experimental or certified or however you do it, you know, but he, if you build 51% of it you qualify as the builder.

And then that lets you do a lot of your maintenance work. That's one of the advantages [01:34:00] to that. Actually Shaun has built, well, he's really built two planes down there and he sold the first one and just finished the second one and damned if he didn't sell it. To a neighbor out there.

JUNGE: Does he teach people how to fly, too?

HARDY: Nah, he tries to shy away from that, but he's, he's a damn good pilot and he started, he used to get in with me in the 182, this was not too long after he and my daughter Michelle got married and Shaun said, "God damn," he said, "Every time I get in this thing I get sick," he said, "I don't think I can ever fly," well then he made up his mind he was going to fly and he started getting his own plane. Now he's gung ho to --

JUNGE: Do you fly with him?

HARDY: Oh yeah, I've flown with him.

JUNGE: Yeah, he's a good pilot?

HARDY: At night. His boy, Hardy, got named Hardy because he got [01:35:00] born at the ranch by accident, so he acquired the given name of Hardy. (laughs) He was, my wife and I helped deliver him, in the morning. We docked lambs all day the day before and of course, Michelle was nine months pregnant and knew it and she was going to go to

Casper that morning, she got up, got early and said, “Oh, oh,” said, “I don’t believe I can make it,” so -- (laughs)

JUNGE: You delivered it, you and your wife delivered it?

HARDY: Yeah. My wife was an RN. But she was kind of shook. (laughter)

JUNGE: Even after working on sheep and lambing.

HARDY: Oh yeah. [Gonna do it?]

JUNGE: This was different.

HARDY: Yeah, it’s different. But anyway, Hardy flies with him and Hardy’s a hell of a gunner. They, they, they’ve shot a few coyotes, quite a few coyotes. Out of this one plane. But Shaun kind of, oh he said, “Dad, you know,” [01:36:00] said, “I shouldn’t be doing this,” he said, “I’ve got a family and if I screw up I’m dead,” and he said, “Now we’ve got so much activity going on out there with the oil and gas development,” and so you can’t do anything that somebody doesn’t, isn’t sitting out there watching what’s going on, so there are people, you know, who don’t agree with this at all on this predator management and using aircraft in particular and --

JUNGE: What’s your point of view on this?

HARDY: Oh, it’s the only way to go. Really. The only, the only good tool we have left in predator control programs is aircraft, either [fixed wing?] and helicopter in a lot of

situations, where you get into mountain country. And of course, now we're dealing with the gray wolf, which has been de-listed but they're a predator in three-fourths of the state and a trophy game animal up in [01:37:00] Yellowstone Park in the Jackson area and over as far as Cody and so on. That corner of the state, they're still designated as a trophy game and we had a hell of a fight and it's online yet, you know, the environmental groups that are still trying to sue us to get the wolf re-listed as a threatened and endangered species.

JUNGE: I didn't know that three-quarters of the state had wolves.

HARDY: (laughs) Usually we don't have them very long, (laughs) they seem to disappear. (laughs) Well, we don't. We know there's a few wolves south of Douglas, out here. There's been wolves on the Big Horns that have gotten in trouble with the livestock and they've been eradicated. And south of Douglas I don't know, there have been reports out there, [01:38:00] I don't know if anything has actually been killed, but --

JUNGE: Why is an airplane such a good tool for eradicating coyotes or wolves? Or maybe you didn't say "wolves" but --

HARDY: Well, they use helicopters, too, in the rough country, they have better luck with helicopters. For coyotes and

wolves. Because you know, the characteristics of a fixed wing as versus a helicopter in rough country, you've got, you can slow down and stop and back up and drift sideways with a helicopter, you don't do that with a fixed wing. You'd make a pass and, and if you get lined up you can shoot him. We use 12-gauge shotgun, so it's heavy buckshot loads in.

JUNGE: Have you ever shot your prop off?

HARDY: It's been done. I haven't, but it's been done. (laughs) And tires. (laughs)

JUNGE: And tires, too? [01:39:00] (laughs)

HARDY: Yeah. (laughs)

JUNGE: I can imagine, those tires are big. Those Tundra tires, you call them.

HARDY: Yeah, Tundra tires. Yeah, props have been shot off, hell yes.

JUNGE: In your operation.

HARDY: No.

JUNGE: No?

HARDY: Not in my operation. But there's been props shot off of planes, oh yes. Yeah, I know of some situations where got the prop.

JUNGE: Well, why doesn't everybody in this country where you're at here, this rolling grassland country, why doesn't everybody have a population?

HARDY: You don't want everybody out there flying. I mean, that would be a disaster. The people that do the flying here, see, we, we work through the Department of Ag, and every pilot, every plane, every gunner is certified, licensed through the State Department of Ag.

JUNGE: You have to be licensed to be a gunner?

HARDY: Yep. You have to [01:40:00] be recognized as qualified.

JUNGE: Wait a minute. This is a 12-gauge shotgun that's stuck out a window to shoot at something, what does that require?

HARDY: I don't think that the certification really applies to your level of experience. They just want to know who's out there doing it and that way we can keep it legal and we got a problem right now, right here in Converse County, this Bruce Reed that I just said was building airplanes, well, he's also flying for us, for our County Board for predator management and he's killing a bunch of coyotes. But now we're dealing with Forest Service. Because Bruce landed out on some of that Thunder Basin Grassland one day waiting on his, waiting on a ground crew to come and help him

locate [01:41:00] a den of coyotes. And he was sitting there waiting and had his gunner with him, the shotgun and one of these little green government pickups pulled up and, “What are you doing here, Bruce?” well, he couldn’t lie.

He said, “Oh, I’m hunting coyotes,” they said, “You can’t do that on, you can’t hunt coyotes over federal land,” said, “You haven’t got the authority to do that. The only ones theoretically that’s got the authority to do is Wildlife Services,” that’s (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

JUNGE: Yeah, that’s Fish & Wildlife.

HARDY: Yeah, well, USDA Fish & Wildlife, yes. So we’re fighting that problem right now and I don’t know, you know, he’s completely legal over private land, but the government land, there’s too many regulations that he’s not supposed to, he can fly over the land, but he isn’t supposed to shoot coyotes.

JUNGE: Does he get fined if he does?

HARDY: No, he didn’t get fined. But they advised us that [01:42:00] they just couldn’t, he couldn’t do it legally.

JUNGE: So there is a law that says you can’t do it on federal land, but you can, is this a state law that says you can shoot coyotes on private land?

HARDY: With the owner's permission. With the landowner's permission.

JUNGE: So the game and, in other words I'm thinking, the Game & Fish doesn't have any regulation that says no you can't --

HARDY: No, no, no, they don't and all of our, even with Wildlife Services, they can't shoot coyotes over private land unless they had permission from the landowner. Written permission. (cough) And we've got a few landowners, got one or two around here that don't want to kill coyotes.

JUNGE: Why not?

HARDY: (cough) I don't know. You tell me what their --

JUNGE: Are they involved in sheep? Sheep ranching or sheep raising?

HARDY: (cough) Excuse me. One guy up north here inherited ranch property that [01:43:00] was a sheep operation and his, his dad had died and his dad's second wife died and then the estate, ranch estate went to this individual and he had grown up in Australia and I don't know what his philosophy is, he comes over here, he inherits the big ranch, you might say, and doesn't know beans about how to run a ranch anyway. I was told he's fencing the whole damn part of it or all of it and I don't know, coyote [tight?]

so, I don’t know what he’s going to do with the one he fences in, (laughs) the smallest one he fences -- he’s kind of a disaster, but we got people like that, that just don’t believe we should be doing predator management.

JUNGE: You’re very articulate when it comes to talking about ranching and predator control and we want to talk a little bit more about aviation, but [01:44:00] where do you think, and I’m sure you’ve thought of this, right, where do you think we’re going to be 100 years from now with this? Do you think we’re even going to have ranches like this? So.

HARDY: You know, I don’t think anybody can give you a legitimate answer on that because those of us in the ranching business that are still able to say that we’re keeping our head above water, there’s so many regulations now that we’re dealing with, the environmental groups, the tree huggers, the bunny huggers, the coyote lovers, the wolf, you just can’t imagine how much static we have heard over the years with this gray wolf deal.

JUNGE: And that’s why I’m asking you, do you think this is inevitable, that you’ll get squeezed out?

HARDY: Well, maybe. But look at it the other way, [01:45:00] too, what are these people going to eat if all that’s left out there is coyotes and wolves? If agriculture goes out of business, you know, the food supply in the grocery

store, three days, it's gone. What are they going to do then?

JUNGE: Probably come out and take your sheep.

HARDY: Well, that'll be the next issue. It will. There are going to be riots. Hopefully someday our government will develop a little bit of common sense about some issues that they're impossible about right now.

JUNGE: Well, you know there's pressure on them from --

HARDY: From everywhere.

JUNGE: Everywhere.

HARDY: I know that. Yeah. There really is. And trouble is, most people, well, maybe not most, but a lot of people here in the United States have never been cold and hungry in their life. [01:46:00] And when that day comes, it's going to be one hell of a wreck. And just how that will turn out, I don't know, but yeah, it -- people don't understand. You know, there's people out there that say, "What do we need agriculture for? We buy our milk and our meat down at the grocery store. Why do we need cows? Why do we need sheep?"

JUNGE: Well, somebody might come along and say, "Why do we need sheep? We'll get them from Australia or New Zealand."

HARDY: Or New Zealand. True. And of course, hell, South America would love to ship in more food products to us and

Brazil applied quite recently to bring in fresh beef, but they've got hoof and mouth disease down there. So it's been denied. So far.

JUNGE: OK, here we are drifting again, Gene.

HARDY: Yeah. Go ahead. [01:47:00]

JUNGE: So what -- how did you learn how to fly? I mean you always dreamed about this, but --

HARDY: There was a school, instruction school in Casper, the airport, Trona Air Service, see. They had instructors, some trainer planes.

JUNGE: Who taught you how to fly?

HARDY: Oh God, I can't, I've had several instructors over the years. Without going back to my log books, I couldn't even tell you all the names now.

JUNGE: Well, you didn't fly for economic reasons, saying, "This is something I need to do to manage my operation."

HARDY: No, I did it because I had always wanted to and then when I got into it and got started, I could see that it was a tool that was usable in a ranch operation and there used to be a lot of us. We had a huge Flying Farmers organization here at one time and they're all gone now. But you take the state of Nebraska, that's another state that [01:48:00] had an airplane in every cow barn down there. And they still have a lot of pilots and a lot of

planes. Alaska's another one. You know that's, that's the only usable tool to get around the state and Wyoming has got the same circumstances in a lot of ways.

JUNGE: So tell me about this flying farmers organization. What was it called?

HARDY: Wyoming Flying Farmers. Now they go by the name of International Flying Farmers and they've merged most of the state chapters have merged into maybe a couple or three states and Canada has got a big Flying Farmer organization up there in their Canadian provinces and they're all merged into the International Flying Farmers now and I'm still a member, I've kept my membership even though there's probably only one or two of us in the state of Wyoming [01:49:00] that's still kept our membership when all this is merged into the international association.

JUNGE: Why did you keep your membership?

HARDY: Oh, I just used to, used to be real active and we had a lot of fly-ins and get-togethers, pancake breakfasts someplace on some Sunday morning, why we'd all get together and fly into an airport and have a competition, a cross-country racing and flour sack bombing and spot landings and all that sort of stuff.

JUNGE: Tell me about these things. What's a spot landing?

HARDY: Well, you've got an airport, a strip and you mark off a spot right here, or a line. The idea is to land as close as you can on that line across the runway, without using power. You pull your power when you're out here on your downwind approach and then turn the base leg, which is across [01:50:00] and then final, when you're lined up with the runway. And you pull your power out here and when you're opposite your point, see, the approach is downwind, cross and final. And it can be from the right or the left. Normally it's always from the left. But the object is to land as close as you can to that spot without going too short or floating over it. But you can't add power. You've got to do it with just idle power.

JUNGE: Just cut the power and glide in?

HARDY: Glide in. Flour sack bombing, that's got a little bag, just a sack, a paper sack with flour in it, stapled shut and then a circle on the runway down here and fly over it at 500 feet and try to hit in the middle of the circle. [01:51:00] And then another nice -- I never did do it, we didn't have it when I was flying all the time but now they call it "balloon busting" and they turn loose a balloon and filled with...

JUNGE: Helium?

HARDY: Helium. And try to hit it with your prop and break that balloon. (laughter) It's not as easy as it sounds.

JUNGE: (laughs) I can't imagine. I can't imagine doing it. What's the other one? Cross-country races or something?

HARDY: You'd cross-country race, oh, we used to do them, I think a three-sided race. You'd take off the airport, fly to the next point, turn, and back and you estimated your time en route, you had to estimate that and write that down before you left. It's going to take me so long and I'm going to burn so much fuel. Well, the one that guess the closest to the exact [01:52:00] time and their fuel burn won the race. It wasn't a competition with planes side-by-side or anything or anything like that, but it was just, you're still in determining your time en route and your fuel consumption.

JUNGE: How did you do in these competitions?

HARDY: Oh, I won it a time or two.

JUNGE: Which one? Which competition? All of them?

HARDY: Yeah. (laughs)

JUNGE: The bombing and the spot land?

HARDY: Yeah, I won that, I won that once or twice and the cross-country I won it a couple times and spot landing, I can't remember now if I ever did win that, but that can get interesting.

JUNGE: How many people would show up in a meeting?

HARDY: Oh, there's a lot of those fly-in things. You'd have 15 or 20 airplanes show up and --

JUNGE: Would they all be on a ranch or an airport or?

HARDY: From all over the state. And yeah, we'd have a fly in. [01:53:00] Used to, the Douglas Airport years ago was right over here, just the other side of the golf course between here and the highway. They use it now, they've got drag racing in there. Yeah, that was the old Douglas Airport.

JUNGE: So that's where everybody would fly in.

HARDY: Yeah, we'd fly in there and, and they'd have the breakfast cook in there in one of the hangars and everybody'd get organized and pitch in. Have a nice big day and a lot of fun. The last one I was at was two years ago we went up to Wright, Wyoming and the guy up there, Dale Wright, he got a ranch and a strip and just, well, the town Wright used to be his land and then they, they built the town there, but he was right on the edge of it and he's dead now, he died here about a year ago. But we flew in up there and had a big, big get together, I suppose there must have been, [01:54:00] oh, I suppose a dozen or more planes.

JUNGE: When did you join this organization?

HARDY: About 1958.

JUNGE: And they were much bigger at that time, right?

HARDY: Yeah, everybody was, all the ranchers, or not all of them, but there was a lot of ranchers flying then and, and then, oh, they've gotten older and the kids did something different and Rob Orchard, you talk to him, he was one and John [Dales?] right here at Douglas, he's another one. John's still with us, he's around, he's about 90 now. Bud [Dernervous?] still living here.

JUNGE: Is he a member, too?

HARDY: He was. At one time. Same with John Dales, he was a member at one time. But I don't know, the last, I did know at one time that John had still kept his membership and he and I are the only ones that I knew had kept their membership over the years.

JUNGE: Why do you keep your membership?

HARDY: Oh, just get a newsletter that comes out and [01:55:00] hear about, but all the people have all changed now, I don't know any of the names anymore. You know, the ones that I knew so well, they're, about all of them gone.

JUNGE: So when were you really active in this?

HARDY: Oh, joined it in '58, got pretty active, stayed active, let's see, I got married in 1960 and my wife enjoyed going to these get-togethers and so on. We'd have

a convention once a year and everybody'd fly into a town, pick a town, you know. We'd have a convention there.

JUNGE: A Wyoming convention or a regional convention?

HARDY: Wyoming. Then. And there would be people come in like out of Colorado, maybe on Nebraska, a few of them. And of course, like I said, the organization is international now, they've got an international president and a [01:56:00] secretary and treasurer and they have a pretty big fly-in activities and an IFF convention someplace either in Canada or the states. I think this year it's coming up in Loveland. So it will be kind of local, but I haven't been active in it now for quite a few years because a lot of the people that I knew so well were dead or quit flying or whatever and --

JUNGE: I'm curious as to what the attraction was for people in this organization. Was it because they were, well, in your case you weren't a farmer, you were a rancher -- was it the cordiality that you guys shared as ranchers? Or was it a love of flying? Or what's the attraction?

HARDY: I'd say those were both good examples of why people joined. But you know, originally you had to be a farmer or a rancher. They called it Flying Farmer Organization and you know, you go [01:57:00] back further east and so on and there's more farming than there is ranching, but they just

didn’t change the name or anything, but that’s what brought a lot of people into it was the cordiality and the fact that they loved to fly.

JUNGE: What is it about flying that you love so much?

HARDY: What is it like for the guy that rides a motorcycle all the time? What puts him on that damn, (laughs) stupid motorcycle? (laughter)

JUNGE: What -- can you tell me about your best experience in a plane?

HARDY: (laughs) Good or bad?

JUNGE: Well, I want to hear both. (laughter)

HARDY: Oh, I probably scared myself a time or two flying in weather that I shouldn’t have been in. I got, got caught under a cloud deck once and [01:58:00] country was coming up under me faster than, that I could climb because the clouds right over me. I had to fly through that cloud deck. It was [three-in?]. It was a mistake, I didn’t do it twice. It’s a good way to get killed, what they call “scud-running.” You’re under a cloud deck and you’re sneaking along, trying to dodge hills and so on and that’s, that’s probably one of the issues that kills, used to kill more pilots. Of course, the technology has advanced so much in the years since I started flying, you know, you’ve

got all kinds of instrumentation that's dependable and navigational type of equipment that we didn't have.

You did your navigation in those days on a map and draw a line and pick out checkpoints and so on. Now it's all GPS and everything's automated, [01:59:00] but you still get pilots killed every once in a while, too.

JUNGE: Everything was line of sight. Right?

HARDY: Well, in those days they still had IRF flights, you know, instrument regulation. But you had to have a plane that was equipped for it and the pilot had to be trained for it. So I never did. I'm just a [VFR - Visual Flight Rule?] pilot. And if you're an instrument-rated pilot you've got to fly instruments regularly to keep current. Otherwise you're not, you're not legal.

JUNGE: What does it take to be a good pilot?

HARDY: A lot of caution and common sense. Really. Even yet today, if you, you know, I've got magazines here, I get here still involved with flying and so on and they, they give you a lot of information [02:00:00] on some of these wrecks and accidents that happen. Lack of judgment is still one of the biggest issues. It's not necessarily mechanical failure or anything wrong with the airplane, it's the guy flying it that's --

JUNGE: So you would have what you'd call a lot of common sense.

HARDY: Well, I'd like to think I did anyway.

JUNGE: Well, you've been alive this long.

HARDY: Yeah, yeah and I've had a few episodes that --

JUNGE: Well, tell me about, I want to hear about some of these (laughs) episodes.

HARDY: I was flying a Super Cub, I flew in our own den and my neighbor west of me, Raymond Alamand, asked me to come up and look for some cattle that he was short, couldn't get them located. They were gathered in the pasture and wanted somebody to spot some cattle for him. So I flew up, and it was only 10 miles away, straight [02:01:00] across from my ranch up where his headquarters were and he had a landing strip there and so I went up there and he had a hired man that went with me, Hector Bernard, he's been a good friend for many, many years now but we went up and the wind got terrible. I mean you know, there's a limit to how much wind you can handle in a light plane like a Super Cub.

So we weren't doing any good in that. It was getting so bumpy and Hector was starting to get sick and so we said, "OK, let's go in and see if the wind will go down," so we landed and tied it down so the wind wouldn't blow it away. Went over to the house, drank a cup of coffee and

fooled around a little while and it acted like the wind was dropping off a little bit so I said, [02:02:00] “Well, come on, we’ll go try this again,” well, we ain’t no more than got airborne for a little while and the wind picked up again and it was rough and Hector was trying to get sick on me again. So I landed and got along fine and I imagine the wind was 40, 45, 50 knots. And so I landed into the wind and I, the Super Cub is a tail dragger. You know what I mean by a “tail dragger.”

JUNGE: Go ahead and explain it.

HARDY: Well, you got your main gear on the front end of the airplane, basically under the cabin. And the tail wheel is back behind you. So it’s like a tricycle running the wrong way. Anyway, there’s things about a tail dragger that’s a little more critical in, [02:03:00] in handling, especially on the ground when the wind is bad. (music ring tone) Hello. Yes. [I just wonder what your timeline is.] Well, I’m going to be later than I thought, so I tell you what I’ll do, Amy. How long will you be gone out of the office? [I’m hoping not very long... last time I went to the doctor...] OK, well, I’ll come up and figure on getting in touch with you or leaving those there with Kelly, one of the two. So I’ll get it to you one way or another. [OK...] OK. I’ll get them there. [02:04:00] [OK, thanks.]

You bet, Amy. Yeah, bye. Executive secretary of Wyoming Wool Growers.

JUNGE: Oh, who is that?

HARDY: Amy Hendrickson. She went to work for us a year ago. We had had an executive secretary that had been with us for 20 years, Bryce Reese, I don't know, you might know him.

JUNGE: Mm, I think I heard, I'm familiar with the last name.

HARDY: You've heard the name, he used to lobby for us at Cheyenne at the legislature and everything and things got out of hand. Bryce just started doing things without getting approval from the board of directors and money disappeared and it was mismanaged and it wasn't necessarily stolen, but it was just totally mismanaged and we had to ask for his resignation. So then we advertised for [02:05:00] a new executive secretary and we had, oh I guess five or six, seven applications. It was all women except one and that guy, we knew him too well. (laughs) We couldn't consider him.

JUNGE: Who was that lady out of Casper that had it for so long? I remember her.

HARDY: [Carolyn Pasanaw?].

JUNGE: Carolyn Pasanaw.

HARDY: Yeah, Carolyn Pasanaw. She's still in Cheyenne, someplace, I don't --

JUNGE: Is she?

HARDY: Yeah, I don't know what she's doing now. She's got some government job down there. I forget what it is, but yeah, Carolyn's down there yet.

JUNGE: OK. So we're back in the plane now. It's really rough.

HARDY: Yeah, so I landed. And I couldn't turn around because a tail dragger in particular is like a weather vane. You know, your rudder is behind you. Well, you start trying to turn and that wind is pushing against the rudder and you can't, [02:06:00] you can't get turned around. So I told Hector, I said, "Hector, I just can't turn, get this around," I said, "You jump out, get on the tail and help get me tailed around," so we're going, once you get turned around, so the wind's behind you, you can manage. And I said, "We get turned around and you jump back in and I'll drive down till we're on the runway," and I said, "I'm going to kick around into the wind again and you get out, I'm not going to shut it off," I said, "I'm going home."

OK, so that was the plan. Well, just as, you know, you drive down the runway here and come around into the wind like this, and I'm going to take off again. Well, just as I come around, there's a big gust caught me and of course, we were sitting there in three-point attitude, with

a tail dragger your attitude of airplane is nose high and [02:07:00] there was a big gust caught me in, lift me off the ground, main gear and everything, and I spilled the lift, out of the way, you control with a stick in a Super Cub, shoved the stick, I had to get the tail up and I overdid it just a little bit and I nosed in and caught the prop and killed the engine. Well, without power I couldn't hold it with the brakes at all. And this runway we were on, there was a crick right back here off the end of it and you dropped off, oh, 20, 30 feet off, off the tail end of the runway, well, the wind pushed me back and we went over the edge. (laughs) And so then there we were sitting right there with the wings flapped to the wind almost and it's a wonder it didn't turn us over. But it didn't.

And Hector got out and got on a wing strut on one side and there was another kid that had driven [02:08:00] out there with a pickup to meet us on the strip and he, he got on the other wing strut so their weight, they held it down. And he had a saddle rope in the pickup, so I got the saddle rope out, tied it on the gear, the main gear, the other end on the trailer hitch and we pulled it back up out of there and got along flat ground again and finally managed to, wind and all, managed to work it over to where the tie downs were and tied it down there. This was in the

wintertime, long in December. The weather got bad and hell, it was two weeks before I had decent weather to get back up there and fly it out of there. I'd broken one wing tip bow, which is wood, on the -- just cracked it.

Dinged the prop a little bit, I had to take the prop off and change props. I borrowed one from the [02:09:00] [Six Base?] operator here at Douglas. Incidentally, it had a bullet hole in it, it had been one that (laughs) had been shot through. Had a big nick out of it. (laughter) But changed props and flew it back, flew it into Douglas and got it repaired. You know, just (laughs) another day in paradise.

JUNGE: Another day in the life of Gene Hardy, yeah.

HARDY: This Raymond Alamand, he flew, or he bought, him and his cousin, they bought two airplanes. They had a two-place and a four-place, a four-place mall and then a -- Scout was the other one they had and Raymond turned, turned that Scout over in some rough country one day. He landed and everything went good until he got ready to take off and run out of room and it, he flipped it upside down. (cough) [02:10:00] You know, you're wearing a seatbelt. (laughs) So he hadn't buckled his seatbelt and falls on his head, (laughs) because he's --

JUNGE: Topsy-turvy.

HARDY: Yeah. (laughs) So, well, I don't know, I haven't had any great experiences --

JUNGE: That was your worst one, when you were --

HARDY: That was one of those, one that got the most exciting at the time.

JUNGE: Yeah, I can't imagine trying to fight the wind in a plane, you know.

HARDY: Well, it can get to the point where you'd better be on the ground and have it tied down, that's the best approach. But if you're going to fly in one of them, then you're going to have to deal with wind. It's just a fact of life.

JUNGE: Was that your biggest problem?

HARDY: Over the years wind has been one of the biggest problems. I've never had an engine failure or anything like that. I found a, [02:11:00] I wreck one time. Years ago there were two ranchers that were out in the Bill, Wyoming or [Gulf?] Center, a father and son. Son was a pilot and the father [along?], they were checking cattle and had their shotgun with them. They thought maybe they were going to get coyote. But anyway, they crashed and burned.

JUNGE: Killed them both?

HARDY: Oh yeah. I found that wreck.

JUNGE: You found that wreck?

HARDY: Yeah.

JUNGE: Were you on a search and rescue team?

HARDY: Yeah, the sheriff called me in and said they need anybody that's got a plane, well, not anybody, but they called me and there was a couple other planes. John [Delce?] was one. He was out flying and one other, Jack Moore, I guess it was, that was flying that day. But it just happened that I was the one that found the wreck.

JUNGE: You knew, [02:12:00] they all knew it was down some --

HARDY: Yeah, they'd all be contacted by the sheriff's department and said, "We know it's down and they're overdue and we need somebody to go search for it."

JUNGE: What do you think happened?

HARDY: Well, I've gotten, my opinion and I felt for years, but of course, the investigators were actually, you know, the National Safety Committee that's with the Aeronautical --

JUNGE: National Transportation Safety Board or something like?

HARDY: NRT or NTRS or whatever it is but they looked at it and they came up basically and they said, well, pilot error, he was flying too low and that's trouble sometimes. A lot of these wrecks, they really don't come up with an example [02:13:00] or a cause. They'll say, "Well, it

looks like pilot error,” well, pilot error can mean a lot of things. What I think they did, they had flown over a bunch of their cattle and pasture and I could say, they had a shotgun with them. Which was normal. They figured they might see a coyote. I don’t think that was what caused the crash, though, because in the wreck the shotgun was still racked up right here alongside of the, the father was in the backseat and the son was flying it and the shotgun was still in the rack, so had they been on a coyote, he’d had the gun out and he didn’t.

But I think there was a, the Cheyenne River had quite a bit of timber on it, in that area they were flying and they had cattle right on the north side of the [02:14:00] river and they’d flown down over those cattle, looked like, because they were on a southerly heading where the wreck was. Flew over that tree line and there was a little dried lakebed out here, not more than quarter of a mile away and that’s where he crashed. It looked like to me that he was trying to put it down in that dry lakebed and it wasn’t much of a depression, but it had, it had had water in it, you know, but it was all dry then. And when the plane went in, (cough) and he, he went in right wing low and caught a wing tip, (clears throat) that’s right wing tip.

The plane cart-wheeled and slued sideways and when it, and slid and the prop came [02:15:00] off, you could see where the prop had gouged the ground several time and tore it, broke it off the engine, the prop just laying there. And one they had hit, they'd slammed down hard on the, on the right landing gear. And you see, their fuel tanks are in the wings, right above you. And it ruptured the right fuel tank and of course, it hit a hot manifold on the engine and poof. So they burnt right there in it and burnt the entire plane. The only thing left was the framework of the airplane, the metal frame, the tube, see, tube and fabric is what, the fabric, of course, is all gone, off the wings and everything.

But on the wing, the leading edge of the wing is a rounded leading edge and it's aluminum and outboard of the prop arc, [02:16:00] see you've got your prop here, turning a certain arc and just outside of that on the leading edge of the left wing, see, the right wing, it kind of peeled it off and it was pulled back, kind of along the fuselage. The left wing was still strutting everything and the framework of the wing was solid. It hadn't been in the dirt, hadn't hit the ground or anything, because it was high, you see, when it went in. But in the leading edge of

that aluminum there, there was a dent as big as, at least as big as a basketball, where that was crushed in.

Well, that didn't make any sense. Like I say, it hadn't hit the ground. But that big crushed in area. I think he hit a bird.

JUNGE: Really?

HARDY: I do. I think he hit an owl [02:17:00] or an eagle or something and they looked but they never found anything. But that was the only thing that made sense to me was that he hit something and he was not a pilot that had too many hours. He might have had 300 hours, you know, a fairly new pilot. He had wing flaps pulled in, half-flaps. You've got a flap lever there that you pull in these flaps, which helps you slow down. And gives you more lift. So he had half-flaps pulled in. I think he was trying to land in that lake bed and it got away from him and like I said, it caught that wing tip and cart-wheeled over and slammed down hard and ruptured that fuel tank and of course, then they burnt. But they never could determine why that dent was out there in the wing. That's why I think they hit a bird of some kind. [02:18:00]

JUNGE: Knocked him off kilter and he didn't have enough control?

HARDY: He lost control of it. And what could have happened there, it's hard to say but I knew an old spray pilot that used to be down here at Wheatland, John [Fryback?] was his name and he'd flown probably everything from God knows when but he said he had a deal happen to him one time with an old spray plane. He said there was an aluminum [bearing?] strip that [fared?] the gap in where the wings attach onto the fuselage and put in the screws. He said screws come out of those bearing strips and it cocked up into the wind and that disrupts your air flow back over your control services, the elevator rudder, and he said that plane got so squirrelly that he damn near didn't make it back to the ground with it in one piece. He said it, [02:19:00] his elevator control just went, said you could rattle the stick back and forth and he didn't have any control over the plane. It could have done that same thing with that big dent up here on the leading edge because it was just for that would have disrupted the airflow going back to the elevators. Now, on the tail.

JUNGE: Did you land at the site?

HARDY: No, I didn't then. We went back up to the site.

JUNGE: The bodies were still there?

HARDY: Oh yeah, yeah.

JUNGE: What, what's it like to come up on something like that?

HARDY: Not much fun. It, (cough) it bothered me a long time. Thinking about that. Yeah, John Delce was another one flying. I think he landed there, if I remember right. God, that's been years ago and that had to be back in the early '60s sometime.

JUNGE: Early '60s? Yeah. [02:20:00] Well, you haven't had any accidents, other than what you, the one you described, right?

HARDY: A couple props. I've got, I've had, had to replace a couple props. Wind got under my tail. Up, right on the Casper Airport there once, put me on the nose. Of course, I dinged up the prop, so I had to put a new prop on there and then, and then that one up on (inaudible) [downwind?] I had to change props there. No, I haven't had any severe accidents.

JUNGE: Do you maintain your own plane?

HARDY: To a degree. But to be legal, on a certified aircraft, you have to have a certified A&E mechanic, aircraft engine mechanic, to sign off in your log books. Otherwise you're not legal if you don't have your 100-hour inspections or your annual inspections at least. Now if you're flying commercially you have to have a plane

inspected every 100 hours and signed off by a licensed mechanic.

JUNGE: A&E means aircraft [02:21:00] and?

HARDY: Aircraft and engine, A&E, aircraft and engine.

JUNGE: OK. So how many hours total do you think you have in your...

HARDY: Oh, three grand, 3000.

JUNGE: Is that a lot?

HARDY: No. We got pilots flying for Wildlife Services right now that, both of them, and I know, know these two pilots fairly well, each one of them's got about 23,000 hours.

JUNGE: So how do you log that many hours in the air? You're mainly out flying for pleasure? Or you're flying for work?

HARDY: Work. This, this one pilot I'm thinking of, he, he did a lot of bush flying in Alaska. The other one, I'm not too sure where he picked up his hours, but they both, they're both flying Super Cubs right for Wildlife Services, cutting coyotes and wolves.

JUNGE: Well tell me, Gene, before we quit here, what, and we've been going at it, you know, two hours and 21 minutes.

HARDY: Have we? [02:22:00] (laughter)

JUNGE: And your voice hasn't even gotten hoarse.

HARDY: I cough a little now and then. (laughter)

JUNGE: Yeah, that's true. Well, so what's the best experience you've had in an airplane?

HARDY: Oh, I think some of the best experiences with some of the events we used to fly to, you know, the fly-ins, the breakfasts and things like that, you know, it just, to generalize a little bit, I'd say that's been some of the most fun situations that I've done in my flying career.

JUNGE: What about up in the air?

HARDY: Well -- I can't think of anything outstanding there right now that I'd say that I've done except that I've seen a lot of beautiful country and there's a lot of things you can see from the air that you, [02:23:00] you know, short period of time that you never see from the ground at all.

JUNGE: This would be a good time of the year to fly, wouldn't it?

HARDY: Yeah. Daylight today, of course, it's a little windy. It'll be, it'll be a little rough out there. You know, you get turbulence and --

JUNGE: But I mean the green grass.

HARDY: Oh yeah. This country is beautiful. And I've flown into Jackson, Wyoming a time or two. We went up there to (inaudible) convention one year and my wife and I flew in to see the Tetons out there in front of you. Then it snowed six inches while we were in there, (laughter) so the

two of us had flown in, two planes, (laughs) we were both weathered in for about three days, (laughs) till the weather --

JUNGE: Well, if you ski it's OK. Did your wife like flying?

HARDY: To a degree. [02:24:00] She didn't like rough air and (laughs) I've seen her a time or two flying for sheep, looking on the ranch there, she was with me and I landed and she just got out and laid down on the grass. (laughs) She said, "Oh my God, I'm safe." (laughs)

JUNGE: Did she worry about you, you think?

HARDY: Oh, I suppose she did. Not too much, but she did some.

JUNGE: Now how many kids do you have?

HARDY: Just my daughter.

JUNGE: Just your daughter. So you were an only child, she was an only child.

HARDY: Yeah.

JUNGE: And you've got one, she doesn't fly? Her husband Shaun flies.

HARDY: Shaun does all the flying, no, Michelle doesn't fly.

JUNGE: She never had any interest?

HARDY: Not to learn. You know, she'll crawl in an airplane and go, but she hasn't got any desire to learn to be a pilot.

JUNGE: How long do you think you're going to be able to fly?

HARDY: [02:25:00] Well, I've known guys in their 90's, a few of them that are still flying. That's somewhat unusual but I could do it now, but I just don't have the get up and go that, you know, get out, pre-flight the plane, push it out of the hangar, especially in cold weather. You know, in the summertime it's not like that, it's not bad, but in the wintertime you've got to preheat that engine and --

JUNGE: Wait a minute, Gene, you're a rancher. You're used to this tough weather. You've seen some hellacious storms, right?

HARDY: Yeah, I've seen some dandies. And been in a bunch of them.

JUNGE: Any have any close calls that way?

HARDY: Oh no, not really. But I've sure put in some damn tough days out there, digging livestock out. We had a (inaudible) [CAT?] that we used to use to break roads [02:26:00] open and so on. Well, didn't have it in '49. We got it shortly after the storm broke. Why, it got into the dealership and, but over the years I used it a bunch, too, on bad weather and opening roads and things like that.

JUNGE: It came just a little late for the winter --

HARDY: A little bit late for the '49 blizzard.

JUNGE: Yeah, wow. Well, gosh, it's you know, you've got a lot more to tell about ranching and your life. And I'm sure I could stay here for another four hours.

HARDY: Oh, we could probably talk all day as far as that goes. You know, I can give you a bunch of names that, I wrote a few down this morning. Let me go get that --

JUNGE: Wait a minute. Let me take your microphone off here.

HARDY: Oh, that's right. I forgot I'm tied in here.

JUNGE: Yep, gotcha, OK.

HARDY: (off mike) Like I say, I've slowed down a lot over the years. There's one of these magazines that -- [02:27:00] interesting reading if you like to fly.

JUNGE: *Aviation Safety: The Monthly Journal of Risk Management and Accident Prevention*. Hm. Well, here's an article called "The Art of Crashing." (laughs)

HARDY: Oh, there's information in there that -- look at that. Fred Gibbs, [Annamae?], they're both dead, they were from Rock River. He was flying, former president for a year or two. I was, too, I was president for a while.

JUNGE: Oh, really? When was that?

HARDY: Oh, it had been back in '62 or '63, long in there.

JUNGE: What did that amount to? What did you have to do?

HARDY: Well, as an organization, president, why he wrote newsletters and went to [02:28:00] fly-ins and --

JUNGE: Did you like to write?

HARDY: No.

JUNGE: Here. Let me put this back on you here. You didn't like to write.

HARDY: I'm not, I'm not great at, at writing essays and so on.

JUNGE: Well, maybe your wife did that part for you, did she?

HARDY: Oh, no.

JUNGE: No?

HARDY: I had to do it myself. [Cactus McCleary?].

JUNGE: I heard about that guy.

HARDY: He's at Casper, he's dead now. The ranch is still in the family, he's got a boy up there, I think his boy's name is Mike. And they go by the Flag Ranch.

JUNGE: Mike McCleary?

HARDY: Yeah, I'm pretty sure his first name is Mike.

JUNGE: And he flies?

HARDY: Well, I don't think the boy does, but Cactus, there again, he was president of the Flying Farmers and Eddie Moore, he's dead now, (clears throat) he lived right here when he was on the [02:29:00] ranch, their Moore Ranch was north of us out there. Bob [Straw?] was at Wheatland, he's dead. (clears throat) OK, he's Frank Moore, Verne Moore. They're Eddie's boys.

JUNGE: I know Jim Moore.

HARDY: (clears throat) Jim lives right down the street here.

JUNGE: Oh, is that right? How old is he?

HARDY: (cough) Oh, Jim has got to be in his late ’60s by now.

JUNGE: And he’s retired?

HARDY: Pretty much.

JUNGE: I mean, he wouldn’t be living here by the golf course if he wasn’t, right?

HARDY: Well, he’s got the house here and I think his wife was here all the time. I think Jim goes back and forth some to the ranch. But he had a hip replacement here and --

JUNGE: Robbie Dunc-?

HARDY: Duncan?

JUNGE: Duncan?

HARDY: Now he’s a Moore. See, these are all Moores. Jim Moore, his dad was Bob. Of course, this gets into [02:30:00] a hell of a lot of history. See, the original Moore that came to this country in 1880s came up out of Texas with a cowherd, Leroy Moore. Well then he established a ranch operation that’s out in our country there. Well, there’s more to the story than that, if you get into in depth, but he married and had five children and then that wife, (cough) I think she died or they divorced, I can’t remember. Sure, he married again, had five more

kids. So there was 10 of those original Moores. They were all boys but one girl. And that Robbie Duncan is her offspring. (cough)

JUNGE: Oh, so this would be Leroy Moore's grand, grandkid.

HARDY: Grandson, yeah. But [02:31:00] --

JUNGE: And then Bill Moore.

HARDY: Well, Billy Moore, yeah, he's out north yet.

JUNGE: Does he fly?

HARDY: Yeah, oh yeah. About all of them have flown.

JUNGE: What about his wife, Frankie?

HARDY: She was a stewardess.

JUNGE: Right. For what, Amer-, was it United?

HARDY: I'm not sure, I think maybe she was a stew for United when Billy met her. But the whole Moore clan, they've all been associated with airplanes. Jimmy flies, Bill flies, Frank and Verne and then there's a third, see they, Frank and Verne and Parker, I didn't put Parker on here but they were triplets. Those three, and their dad was Eddie and Rhoda, Rhoda, they're both dead now.

JUNGE: Wasn't Eddie in the Legislature?

HARDY: Yeah.

JUNGE: In the House?

HARDY: Yeah, he was. Yeah.

JUNGE: I think, OK, so then you got, [02:32:00] who's?

HARDY: Orchard, Rob Orchard.

JUNGE: Oh, Rob Orchard, yeah.

HARDY: John Delce, he's here in Douglas. Bud Turner's here in Douglas.

JUNGE: Yeah. So these are all Flying Farmers.

HARDY: They all were at some point in time.

JUNGE: How do you look at this sort of demise of this organization?

HARDY: Cost of aircraft and regulations and everything, it's gotten and you know, it's, it's prohibitive what an airplane, even on a two or four-place airplane costs today. And that people just kind of keep, a lot of them don't do it anymore.

JUNGE: How much was your first airplane?

HARDY: I bought the Super Cub in 1957, it was two years old from new. I paid $5,500. A Super Cub today, a comparable Super Cub today would run you about [02:33:00] $205,000.

JUNGE: No kidding.

HARDY: Mm-hmm. Not kidding. This RAN 7-S, which is, you might call it a home-built, practically home-built, by the time you get one of those built you'll have -- depends on how you equip it with a radio and navigational equipment, you can put $200,000 in one, $180,000 at least.

JUNGE: Even one that your, like your son-in-law, even when you're building it yourself.

HARDY: Yeah, yeah. Of course, he did a lot of his own work so you know, he figures he's a little cheaper but it's expensive. And you get into a Cessna 182, the one I owned, it was a 1956 model, it had been re-engined, [02:34:00] and that plane I think new, the year it came off the factory floor, done at Wichita, where Cessnas were built, that plane, the top price on it would have probably been $18,000. I sold it for 40 when it was -- (laughs)

JUNGE: What did you pay for it?

HARDY: I paid $7,500 for it.

JUNGE: And you sold it for 40?

HARDY: Yeah.

JUNGE: How many years later?

HARDY: Well, let's see. I bought it in about, I think I got it in about 1970 and owned it until about four years ago.

JUNGE: (laughs) I'd say that's a pretty good investment.

HARDY: Well, not bad.

JUNGE: Do you, looking back on your whole aviation career or it wouldn't be a career, it would be an avocation, [02:35:00] do you think that the plane was more important to you as a pleasure, an entertainment? Or as a working tool?

HARDY: As a working tool.

JUNGE: Really?

HARDY: Yeah. And that's the way Shaun -- and Shaun will tell you this, he said, "I wouldn't own that plane if I didn't use it here at the ranch every day."

JUNGE: He uses it every day.

HARDY: Just about every day he can, you know. There's weather and wind and so on.

JUNGE: Does he use it mainly to check the ranch or to fly down to Douglas and get groceries?

HARDY: Check the ranch. Now, he doesn't use it to fly into town, no. It's around the ranch.

JUNGE: Yeah. You guys have got a new airport, don't you? Or fairly new?

HARDY: Here at Douglas?

JUNGE: Yeah. You don't fly out there at the International Raceway.

HARDY: No, no. The airport's out north of town here, about four or five miles.

JUNGE: Yeah. Are you going to do anymore flying?

HARDY: You know, I don't know. [02:36:00] If I had the plane closer I would. Getting a hangar out here, if I had a hangar like I do at the ranch, we got two hangars, I built one there, it's, I built it all except I put a door on it

in later years, it's a factory-built door, but for years, I built the whole thing out of steel. I've done a lot of welding.

JUNGE: Do you think most of these little (laughs) one-horse operations, these little hangars were built by the guys that ranched, or are they all homemade?

HARDY: A lot of them. A lot of them are. Some of them are very crude. And the problem you've got with an aircraft is if you don't fly it regularly it gets mice into the damn thing. You just can't keep mice out of it. And they will totally destroy an airplane.

JUNGE: Mice will?

HARDY: Oh yeah.

JUNGE: How? [02:37:00]

HARDY: Oh God, the [stink?] for one thing and then they'll chew through wiring, get behind all your panel of instruments and so and --

JUNGE: Can't you just put a cat in the hangar?

HARDY: I don't think that is very practical or not very effective. I've tried keeping mice out, you know, and I've put tin things around all the wheels so they couldn't, and somehow they find a way. They'll get into planes.

JUNGE: Oh, you mean like these little guards on power lines for squirrels? Something like that?

HARDY: On that order. I made about a, just tin about that high and made a circle go clear about the tire. I didn't think they'd crawl up that, get over the top and get on the tire, but they seem to find a way.

JUNGE: (laughs) Why don't, you sound like an inventor as well as a mechanic.

HARDY: Well, [02:38:00] (laughs) to an extent, maybe.

JUNGE: Have you ever patented any of your ideas?

HARDY: No, no.

JUNGE: No, you just sort of made --

HARDY: Just do it, yeah.

JUNGE: Just do it. I admire that in a person. I never have had that ability, but that mechanical ability is something that I admire. Have you always had that?

HARDY: Oh, yeah. I've always been mechanically inclined. Ever since I was a little kid, I had, when I was little I had what they called an "erector set," all nuts, bolts, screws, pieces, put together all kinds of stuff.

JUNGE: Yeah. Did you ever see that movie, *Never Cry Wolf*?

HARDY: I don't think so, no.

JUNGE: It was a Disney movie about a guy that landed up in the, oh, the Tundra or the Arctic, way up north, the far north. And this pilot he flew with was a, oh, Brian, what's his name? I can't think of his name. But anyway,

he was flying up with this brush pilot [02:39:00] and the thing just stalled. And the brush pilot leans out and grabs a wrench and starts whacking away (laughter) and this poor, this kid was an environmentalist and he was trying to figure out why the, you know, something about the wolves up there, he was trying to figure out something about the wolves, and this plane just basically stopped and this guy was banging away on it. It started up again. And they landed on a lake. (laughs) And it was a, you should see that scene, just for that one scene, you'd get a kick out of it.

Well listen, Gene, is there anything else that we need to talk about in your -- this, I really appreciate this list. They're all gone, pretty much, except for the Moores.

HARDY: All of the Moores here now, Robbie Duncan lives here in Douglas. And Jim has got a house right down here, right on down the street here, right on the very corner. And Frank and Elaine, they're, they've got a house in Douglas. [02:40:00] Verne does. He also spends time in California, so you know, whether you could find him here today or now I don't know because, but --

JUNGE: Robbie Duncan?

HARDY: Yep, Robbie.

JUNGE: He didn’t fly for Bighorn Airways, did he?

HARDY: You know, Robbie has flown everywhere that, more than I can tell you. He flew professionally for years. He flew forest spray planes and --

JUNGE: Yeah, yeah, for Bighorn Airways, maybe.

HARDY: Well, he probably did at one time.

JUNGE: Where’s he at?

HARDY: He’s here in Douglas.

JUNGE: Do you know where?

HARDY: I could look it up.

JUNGE: Well, OK. Because I worked with him, I thank you. I worked as a flagger for Bighorn Airways. And if it’s the same Robbie Duncan, yeah, I know this guy.

HARDY: Bet it’s him. He’s got a big mustache now. Gray hair, mustache.

JUNGE: Not a very big guy, is he?

HARDY: (off mike) About my height, not too big. [02:41:00] About the (inaudible) like I am. I forget what Robbie’s address is, but he’s, he’s here in Douglas.

JUNGE: I’ll be darned. I’d love to talk to him because he was kind of a wild man when I, if it’s the same guy I’m thinking of.

HARDY: I’ll be it is.

JUNGE: He worked for, if it's the same guy, he worked for Bob Eisele, did you know Bob Eisele? Bighorn Airways?

HARDY: I didn't know him but the name rings a bell and I think probably Robbie did fly for him.

JUNGE: Didn't you ever have your sagebrush sprayed by anybody?

HARDY: Cactus a time or two, have him sprayed. Let's see, was that Bighorn Airways? I can't remember who it was now. There's -- [02:42:00]

JUNGE: I think it would be D-U-N-C-A-N.

HARDY: That could be. These damn phonebooks anymore, they're --

JUNGE: Well, you use your computer now.

HARDY: Yeah. And I'm not, I'm not a computer guru, to tell you the truth, I hate the damn things because they're always doing something that I didn't want it to do.

JUNGE: (laughs) OK, I hear you. [02:43:00]

HARDY: They don't give me an address.

JUNGE: Is there a phone number?

HARDY: 358-0717. [Three-five-eight, zero-seven-one-seven.]

JUNGE: Zero-seven-one-seven?

HARDY: Mm-hmm. Robbie and Pat. That is, this last name.

JUNGE: OK, 358-0717. I might just give them a call, see if it's the same guy. And Delce, you think he'd be a good person to talk to?

HARDY: Well, I think he'd be all right. John's, yeah, he's pretty sharp yet. He's 90 or so. He had to quit flying. His vision gave out on him. He's got macular degeneration. Let's see. Delce. [02:44:00] John, he's listed at 622 East Popular, Douglas, (clears throat) 358-2705.

JUNGE: OK, now the reason he'd be a good interview is because of the Flying Farmers?

HARDY: He was a member. And I know for a long time he kept his membership.

JUNGE: But you don't know if he still is.

HARDY: I don't know if he still is or not.

JUNGE: When's the last time you ever, you got together with these guys, these Flying Farmers?

HARDY: Well, the last bunch, kind of rejuvenated it a little bit. [02:45:00] There's some guys down around Glendo that are kind of putting together a deal down there once a year, a little fly-in get together. I can't think of anybody I know down there now that's involved in that. But --

JUNGE: OK. All right. Well, let me, I'll make a couple of contacts here. There's a guy --

HARDY: Bud Turner's here in Douglas.

JUNGE: Yeah, I'd like to talk to Bud. I've talked to him --

HARDY: I'll tell you where to find him and John playing cards up here at the, at the clubhouse.

JUNGE: What clubhouse?

HARDY: Right up on, it's up here on the hill, when you first come in, it's the country club. And whether or not they're there now, I don't know, but that's, that's their usual haunt, it's where they hang out.

JUNGE: Turner. Is here still [02:46:00] sharp?

HARDY: Yeah, Bud's sharp, yeah.

JUNGE: The last time I talked to him he was sharp, anyway.

HARDY: Yeah, he is. He might be a little sharper than John.

JUNGE: OK, let me look up Turner here. Turner, Turner --

HARDY: You're not in the --

JUNGE: Oh, I'm not in the residential, I'm in the business.

HARDY: You're in the business, yeah --

JUNGE: All right, let's get in the right section of the --

HARDY: (inaudible) they have phonebooks anymore, they print them so fine you can't hardly read them.

JUNGE: I know, I know. OK. Turner, Bob?

HARDY: No, that doesn't sound right.

JUNGE: Well, I can remember what his, Clayton, Gordon, Bud! H.W. Bud.

HARDY: Yeah, there you go. Henry is his name, but he always goes by Bud.

JUNGE: H.W. Bud, three --

HARDY: What do they give for an address?

JUNGE: Just says 324 North Seventh, that's him.

HARDY: Yeah, that's, that's about where his house is. [02:47:00] His wife died here not too long ago. They had a --

JUNGE: Not too long ago?

HARDY: Oh, in the past year.

JUNGE: I think he's got a, he's living with his brother, I think. Last time I --

HARDY: Oh maybe, I'm not sure on that.

JUNGE: Well, I'll give him a call. Well listen, this has been fun. I really appreciate it.

HARDY: I hope I didn't ruin your machine with rambling on. (laughs)

JUNGE: No, that machine's still going. It's two hours and 47 minutes. (laughs) Whoever transcribes this is going to have a ball. Well, we haven't got any, well, I think we've tapped you out on all your aviation stories.

HARDY: Yeah, pretty much. You know, there's fly-ins that I've been to, but nothing that's outstanding or so on. It

just used to be an issue that we do two or three times a year.

JUNGE: Oh, you did it two or three times a year? [02:48:00]

HARDY: Oh yeah, we did it several times. You know, good weather, we would fly-in up at Lander and go up to the Fourth of July rodeo up there. We've done that a few times. And [Doug Liston?] was always, you know, we had quite a few people around Douglas flying, so we had a lot of fly-ins right here, this drag strip, that was the --

JUNGE: How do you like living in Douglas, compared to the ranch?

HARDY: I don't know. I kind of have trouble finding something to keep busy at. Of course, I keep busy pretty much. I just got back from Dubois two days ago. I'd been up there to one of these ADMB meetings. Drove up one day, had the meeting the next day and then drove home later that same day.

JUNGE: What was the AD, what is it?

HARDY: ADMB. Animal Damage Management Board.

JUNGE: Oh yeah, OK. You're on the board.

HARDY: Mm-hmm. [02:49:00]

JUNGE: OK, are you going to stay involved with that?

HARDY: Well, until they kick me off.

JUNGE: (laughs) Why would they kick you off?

HARDY: (laughs) As long as I'm able to drive and get around, then --

JUNGE: You're too ornery to get kicked off, aren't you?

HARDY: Oh, I don't know. (laughter) See, I've churned the Wyoming Board [Bag?], I was on that four years and I was chairman one year. Second vice president of the Stock Growers, goes back several years. I've been president of the Woolgrowers. I'm immediate past president of Woolgrowers.

JUNGE: Wyoming?

HARDY: Yeah. Right now.

JUNGE: What about the national organization?

HARDY: I'm active in it. I'm on some of their committees. And I've been, I've been to the national meetings, you know and where in the hell, Reno, I've been to Reno, I've been to San Diego, been to, back in Georgia, I forget what town it was now, but [02:50:00] -- been to D.C. I've been --

JUNGE: Gene, you're 84. What is it about this kind of work that, that you like?

HARDY: Drink good scotch. (laughter)

JUNGE: Yeah, right. Well you know, every job has its benefits, right?

HARDY: Well, I don't know, I've just always been active in -- here, I've got a plaque, I'll show you. Got some -- (off

mike) [02:51:00] Now if I ever get all my decorations up and everything, why --

JUNGE: This says, this is a belt buckle, 2010, Wyoming Department of Agriculture, Excellence in Agriculture Award, Wyoming Department of Agriculture, it's says on this buckle, 2010, Gene Hardy. And below it says, "Pacesetter Award Presented to Gene Hardy, presented by Wyoming Department of Agriculture," that is, that is pretty nice.

HARDY: This buckle I'm wearing now, that was given to me by the, the *Roundup Magazine*.

JUNGE: One of the livestock --

HARDY: Yeah, one of the livestock, *Roundup*.

JUNGE: Wow, that, that's OK.

HARDY: And this was an award [02:52:00] that was in the *Roundup* and they framed a copy of it for me.

JUNGE: OK, this is a Wyoming, let me quote this because I might want to look this up. *Wyoming Livestock Roundup*, Volume 25, No. 28, November 16th, 2013 and this is the weekly news source for Wyoming's ranchers, farmers and agri business community, www.wylr.net and it says, "Giving Back," this isn't a very long article, is it? Oh, wait a minute, here we go. I see. Huh.

HARDY: That was on the front page and of course, they had other news on the front page of the *Roundup* as well as that picture. That was taken at Jackson, Wyoming.

JUNGE: You've lost some weight. No?

HARDY: No. This is Peter John Camino here and this is me. They gave me that, [02:53:00] see that ram's head deal that I'm holding up? That was a plaque award.

JUNGE: Can I read this just so I have it on record?

HARDY: Sure, I don't care.

JUNGE: OK, OK. The article says, "Giving Back, Hardy Recognized for WWGA Service. Jackson. During the 2013 Tri-State Woolgrowers Convention held in Jackson on November 7th to 9th, Wyoming rancher Gene Hardy was presented with the Patron Award, an honor presented to an individual who has given back to the Wyoming Woolgrowers Association, WWGA. 'Gene has given back generously for many decades,' commented WWGA board member Liz Philp of Shoshone, 'His knowledge of the history and the issues is invaluable. Hardy's leadership and participation on various boards across the state has contributed to the growth and development of the sheep industry and has allowed the industry to survive in Wyoming. [02:54:00] Gene had dedicated many years to various boards and committees and he rarely misses a meeting,' Philp

continued," P-H-I-L-P. "She also marked Hardy's ability to work behind the scenes on projects and initiatives championed by the, by WWGA to improve the industry. In his actions, Philp noted that Hardy is diplomatic and works with all producers to accomplish their tasks. As an integral part of the Wyoming State Ram Sale, Philp said, 'Hardy has been a member of the Ram Sale Committee for over 30 years and he started the Ram Sale Party, which (laughs) precedes the sale. Gene worked to establish the [Brucella Ovis/Brucellosis?] regulations in Wyoming while he was on the Wyoming Livestock Board,' Philp said, 'He works for predator control, still serve on the Converse County Predator Board and is on the Wyoming Animal Damage Management Board,' Hardy mentioned Philp [02:55:00] has been an important part of the WWGA for many years and deserves the recognition," and it's by Saige Albert, is the managing editor of the *Wyoming Livestock Roundup* and her email is saige@wylr.net. So you worked behind the scenes, huh?

HARDY: Ah, somewhat I guess. My son-in-law Shaun, he says I'm a goddamn politician. (laughter)

JUNGE: Well, you know what? He's only saying that in the best sense, I think.

HARDY: That was back quite a few years ago. I served for a long time on the, on the executive board here at the county, County Executive Board for the Stock Growers.

JUNGE: It says, “In appreciation, Gene Hardy, for serving on the Wyoming Stock Growers Converse County Executive Committee,” [02:56:00] and then you were actually a statewide vice president, right?

HARDY: Yeah, the State Stock Grower vice president, second vice president.

JUNGE: What’s this here?

HARDY: That’s ancient history. That’s a branding. That’s me on horseback. And that’s my dad. And these are neighbors that were helping branding.

JUNGE: Man, that was in the, that’s you on that horse? So you must have been --

HARDY: I was about 10 years old or 12 or --

JUNGE: Were you? About 1940?

HARDY: Yeah, ’40, ’41, somewhere in there.

JUNGE: Wow. Well, it says on the back, whoever, who everybody is. Gateman Walt Forbes. Didn’t he own a ranch, the Forbes’ place up in Big Horn or something?

HARDY: He owned a ranch right out in our country at one time and I don’t think he was ever, let’s see, this is, that’s sheep that dad used to [02:57:00] have.

JUNGE: Here’s a picture of it, though, a whole bunch of sheep. Wool, wood blinding? Wool blinding?

HARDY: Yeah.

JUNGE: What is that, on Hardy Ranch?

HARDY: Well, Rambouillet sheep are pretty wooled on their face. And in the wintertime if they get snow on that, they can’t see, they’re blinded. So you have to, you have to clip that wool back so it exposes the eye more so that they can see.

JUNGE: Well, why do they call it “wool blinding?” is that your, you’re taking the --

HARDY: You’re taking that wool off. Clipping it off over, around the eye.

JUNGE: OK, this is circa 1939, 1942. Are you familiar with Charlie Belden? Photographer.

HARDY: I know who he is.

JUNGE: That picture of all those sheep reminds me of some of the stuff that he did up in the (inaudible).

HARDY: Do you know Jack [Turnell?]

JUNGE: Yeah. Well, I don’t know him but [02:58:00] I know of him.

HARDY: Yeah, I know him and [Leelee?], see she’s, she’d be a granddaughter to Belden, I think. And their home, I’ve been in and they’ve got Belden pictures, solid on, clear

down to the level like this and then up there and then up there.

JUNGE: Is this in Meeteetse?

HARDY: Yeah. On the Pitchfork Ranch. They sold the Pitchfork. That's kind of a different deal now, but I think they still live in the same place.

JUNGE: Yeah, I talked to Margo Todd, who was his daughter, she lived in Cody at the time, I think she's gone now. Margo, so it might have been Margo's daughter?

HARDY: Yeah, I'm not sure on that. I wouldn't want to say one way or the other.

JUNGE: Well Gene, your memory is so good. Your memory is tops.

HARDY: Well, I hope I can keep it that way. [02:59:00] These unfortunate people with Alzheimer's and that kind of stuff, that's no good.

JUNGE: I don't think you have to worry about that, do you?

HARDY: Well, I hope not. I hope I never get to that point because take me out and shoot me, when I get there. (laughs) Now that's unfortunate.

JUNGE: Well, here is your phone book and here's your magazine. I think this is great. I think you should be very proud and I'm sure you are.

HARDY: Well, I am, you know. See, I put 12 years on the Livestock Board, too, was chairman of that for nine years.

JUNGE: What Livestock Board?

HARDY: Wyoming Livestock Board.

JUNGE: Oh, the board that controls the Department of Agriculture.

HARDY: No, they don't, they're separate boards. But the Livestock Board's jurisdiction is brand inspection [03:00:00] and health. The state that is executive director of the Livestock Board and they deal with animal health and imports of livestock coming in and brand inspections.

JUNGE: So they're the ones that hire the brand inspectors?

HARDY: Mm-hmm.

JUNGE: They actually do the hiring.

HARDY: Yeah.

JUNGE: So the Department of Agriculture has a separate board, then, apart from the Livestock Board?

HARDY: Oh yeah. They've tried to combine those boards a couple times and there was too much opposition to that so they never tried to merge those boards again, although there are legislators down there that might think that's a great idea. But for the most part, everybody has been in opposition to it because that leaves, you see, if they

would merge the Livestock Board in with the Board of Agriculture, then the Livestock Board [03:01:00] would become basically nothing more than ad advisory board and they need their own stand along jurisdiction on livestock health and everything.

JUNGE: Because otherwise you get involved with other issues, right?

HARDY: Oh yeah, by God, you have, oh! Well, I've been on both of them, so -- then of course, they've issued this, it's out there and has been out there for years, this Brucellosis issue, that the elk and the buffalo infected the cattle and it's been a real uphill battle for these cow producers over on the west side of the state because they've got to blood test everything that leave the ranch now, when they sell it.

JUNGE: Well, that's a public safety thing, right?

HARDY: It is because, yeah. And other states say there's problems getting them to accept [03:02:00] some of these Wyoming cattle because Brucellosis, in humans, it can affect a human and they call it "undulant fever" in a human. And for years Game & Fish didn't want to admit and the Park Service that manages everything in Yellowstone Park, they still don't have anything, won't have anything to do with it. At all. And that's the big problem of

cleaning up Brucellosis is the elk herds and buffalo in the park. And how are they going to test all the, especially the elk, they can't. They've been trying to vaccinate elk on the feed ground up there at Jackson and well, I suppose they've had some degree of success, but --

JUNGE: I talked to a fellow who wrote books about Yellowstone Park. He worked for the US government in the park [03:03:00] and what's his name? I'll think of it in a minute. Talk about Alzheimer's. Lee Whittlesey, Lee Whittlesey. And I was an editor of *Annals Magazine*, which is the historic, state's historic magazine for a while and we accepted an article from him and it was called *Cows All Over the Place*, and his contention was that, that actually it was cows initially that --

HARDY: Who gave it to the elk, I suppose.

JUNGE: The elk or the bison.

HARDY: Yeah, the buffalo.

JUNGE: And I'm not sure they were Wyoming, but they might have come up from Texas, I'm not sure.

HARDY: Well, who knows? Nobody can tell you where it originated at or how it got up there but you see, the elk population is pretty heavily infested with Brucellosis. So's the buffalo. Now the Indians, they'd like the tribes, they want to take some of the buffalo and [03:04:00] put it

on their own land. That would be a management issue now. (laughs)

JUNGE: Yeah. Now we're talking about the Buffalo Commons issue, right? (laughs)

HARDY: I think it could be that, yeah. It could turn out that way.

JUNGE: Well, OK. Listen, we've got to quit and, but I need to take your picture somewhere. Can we do that? Just a snapshot? It won't be a formal portrait.

HARDY: No, it sure won't, huh? I'll guarantee that.

JUNGE: (laughs) OK, let me turn this off.

HARDY: All right. [03:04:32]

END OF AUDIO FILE