

**SUMMARY OF TAPE B109.1 INTERVIEWS WITH GERTRUDE AND HUBERT  
BLAKESLEE**

**June 19, 1979**

**Interviewer: Connie Fahnestock**

This tape continues the talk with Gertrude and Hubert about the road to town, following portions of which are now called Lone Peak and High Drive. The road then was curving, steep and icy in the winter. Hubert relates a harrowing story about taking over a ton of hay down the road in winter on a sled pulled by horses.

An interesting account of that era's hay cutting and baling technology is given by Hubert. He tells of the progression from hand rolling into shocks to buck-rakes and over-top loaders for drying hay. In the winter horse-powered balers and blocks were used. When bales were ready to sell in town, a two-horse stacker threw the bales into a wagon in summer or sled in winter.

Most ranchers butchered their own cattle. Hubert describes the butchering process and explains the differences in age for steers and calves. His account gives minute details for how the cattle were killed; how the hide was removed; curing the meat; storing the meat; and how the meat was cut for consumption.

Gertrude then relates how the women boiled and canned the meat. Most ranch women were not involved with the butchering. Everyone on the tape agrees that boiled meat, made from cuts around the neck and ribs, was next in good taste to the frozen cuts. Meat was stored in the milk house and would freeze during the winter.

Gertrude's description of women's work on ranches of the day continues. She milked the cows and made butter. Cotton rag rugs helped keep the dust down. The rugs were made from strips of cloth, either tacked by hand, or machine sewn at a carpet store in Golden.

Potatoes were a source of income for most families. Everyone in Gertrude's family helped plant, cultivate, dig and pick the potatoes. Once they were picked and sacked, they were sold. Gertrude and Hubert said Idaho Springs was a good market, not just for potatoes, but for hay and butter.

A discussion followed about the old roads in the area. Old 40 was the way to Idaho Springs. Bear Creek Road was narrow and curving. Hubert then reminisced about the floods of 1896, 1933 and 1937. The flood of 1933 washed the Bear Creek Road out and flooded Morrison. One of Hubert's sister-in-laws (Mary) was rescued from drowning when another Blakeslee wife (Gladys) pulled her out of the raging water.

## **TAPE B109.1 (Continued)**

Connie led the interview back to Hubert's rodeo experiences. His first rodeo was in Sedalia. No entry money was required. The participants would take up a collection and then divide the money. Hubert rode saddle broncs, bareback, and steers. Other rodeos of the day were held at Bandimere, Troutdale, and Tiny Town. Two well-known champions, Dutch Foster and Cecil Kennedy, were participants in these local rodeos. Cecil Kennedy, Hubert recalls, broke his neck saddle bronc riding and is buried in Kit Carson or Rocky Ford.

Hubert also rode in the Douglas County Fair and Woodland Park rodeo. He describes how ropes were looped around the horse; some of the rules that were loosely enforced; and terms used in bronc riding. Tercio was a bucking horse reputed to be the meanest of the time. Hubert won second money in a rodeo for staying on Tercio.

The rodeo talk is interrupted by Hubert's story of blind old man Rockford getting lost in Giant Gulch. The young kids, including Hubert, found him dead. Connie leads Hubert back to stories of the rodeo. He was successful as a bronc rider, and said he was not afraid. Hubert elaborates on rodeo riders who were hard-drinkers. He tells of fights between gun carrying cowboys and rodeo riders. One story tells of law enforcement officers ambushing and killing a cowboy.

During Hubert's rodeo time, he returned to work for Gertrude's father. "Dee" (Gertrude's nickname) was enlisted to help Hubert. Gertrude was 15 at the time. Although rodeo riders were considered "neer-do-wells", Gertrude's parents did not discourage her from seeing Hubert. He took her to one dance, and several rodeos. When Gertrude was 21, they were married. Hubert gave up rodeo riding and sought other work. In 1936 they bought his grandparents' ranch, after previously living with her parents on the Simmons's ranch. For some time before buying his grandparents' property, they lived in a small house on a meadow atop Bear Mountain, which was homesteaded by the Davis family. The first of Gertrude and Hubert's three children was born in that small house. Gertrude lost her wedding ring while doing chores there, and they have looked for it ever since. They had two more children.

They tried different livelihoods. They raised veal calves and large vegetable gardens to sell. Hubert worked for Jefferson County driving a truck for 20 years, and also sold Watkins products in the Brighton area. Watkins products were discussed—everything from vanilla to face powder and perfume. Hubert was a good salesman, and built up a clientele.

This tape ends with the Blakeslees describing the projects and additions they added to the homestead. Connie tries to talk them into letting her take some photos.