

Voices from the Past

“Taylor Brothers Raising Sheep”

By Gordon B. Taylor

March 25, 1970

Tape #1

Oral Interview conducted by Harold Forbush

Transcribed by Louis Clements and Theophilus E. Tandoh

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Upper Snake River Valley Historical Society

INTRODUCTION

The Library of the Upper Snake River Historical Society in the Teton Flood Museum contains over 600 video, cassette, and reel to reel tapes. These oral interviews have been gathered to over the past years from individuals throughout the Snake River Valley. I had the opportunity to catalogue this collection over the past couple of years and was amazed at the information containing therein.

I decided that it was unfair to the public to have all of this historical information on a tape and only available to a few who had the time to come to the library and listen to them. The library does provide a service in which copies of the tapes can be made, and during the past few years many have come in and obtained a copy of a particular tape. The collection has a lot of family stories, some pioneer experiences, a few individual reminiscences of particular parts of history, and some recorded individuals have a personal knowledge of a historical event.

I spent a lot of time trying to come up with a name for this series of stories that would describe the overall text of the message contained herein. Since they are transcribed from the actual voices of those who experienced the history the name Voices From The Past seemed appropriate. The oral history in this volume of Voices From The Past has been taken from the interviewer with it being recorded on tape. Since Idaho's history is so young in year, the oral history becomes greater in importance. Eyewitness accounts rank high in reliability of the truth of events, although the reliability suffers as they interviewee ages or the time between the event and the interview grows. As the age of some of the cassette is progressing into the time period of deterioration of tapes, all are currently (2002) being copied onto audio discs (CD's) for preservation.

I have selected this event as one that occurred in Eastern Idaho which was experienced by the person or persons being interviewed. There was such a vast amount of information available in the library; I had to reserve many of the tapes for inclusion in future volumes. The tapes are being transcribed in order of importance according to my thinking.

Transcribing from a tape to written word is a new experience for me. I have done this on a very small scale before but to attempt to put the contents of a conversation down on a paper requires a great amount of concentration. I have taken the liberty of editing out the many "a's" that occur in an interview as well as other conversational comments. Then comes the problem of the book a challenge from the point of view of making a correct transcription and yet an interesting story. I have made a few editorial changes in view of this problem.

I would like thank the many people who have taken the time to arrange for the oral recording of an individuals story. The information obtained in this manner is, in many cases, not available from any other source. One of the pioneers of oral history in Eastern Idaho is Harold Forbush. Despite the handicap of being blind, he travels around the

whole Snake River Valley visiting with people and taping their responses. He began his career of taping while living Teton Valley and serving as the prosecuting attorney there. His lifetime interest in history got him started and since then he has been a major contributor to the collection of stories in the library. He continued his oral history recording after moving to Rexburg. After retiring from being Madison Counties' magistrate, he moved to Idaho Falls for a time and now has returned to Rexburg to continue as occasional taping session. He is to be congratulated for his lifetime commitment to the preservation of Idaho's history.

There are many others who have done some taping including several Madison High School students. Most of the student tapes are not of the same sound quality as the professional oral history collector, but the stories they have gathered over the years have provided a special look at the Depression, war experiences, farming experience, and many other subjects which can't be found anywhere else. Many thanks to them.

There are some tapes in which the interviewer did not identify themselves. These unknown records have provided several stories which have helped make up the overall history of the Snake River Valley and I thank them even if I cannot acknowledge them personally.

I hope that as you read the following stories you will be inspired to keep a record of your own either in written or tape form so that your opinion of what has happened in the world or in your life can be preserved. Many think their life has been insignificant and others would not want the years and find each other to have its own contribution to my knowledge of what has happened. Idaho is an exciting place to live and is full of stories which are unique to our area. Share them with others.

Louis J. Clements.

(Through the facilities of the Upper Snake River Valley Historical Society the reel-to-reel taped interview following is now transferred onto a C-90 cassette this 2nd day of April, 1984.)

Taylor Brothers-Raising Sheep

Interview with **Gordon B. Taylor** on March 25, 1970, by Harold Forbush on the history of raising sheep in Eastern Idaho.

Harold Forbush: This tape contains the story of the Taylor Brothers who left Salk Lake in the early part of the century and brought their sheep into the Upper Snake River Valley and Rexburg area and thence into the Teton Valley. It includes their experiences with the sheep and their efforts to earn a livelihood by raising sheep.

HF: It is my pleasure to have come to my office on this 25th day of March, 1970, here at Rexburg, a former bishop of the Sixth Ward of the Rexburg Stake, Bishop Taylor. Bishop will you kindly state your full name and the date and the place of your birth.

Gordon Taylor: Gordon Brinton Taylor, born in Rexburg, Idaho, June 8, 1906.

HF: What are your present address and your present occupation?

GT: My present address is 134 East 2nd South. At the present time I am working for Ricks College in the Athletic Department issuing equipment to the young men.

HF: Now Bishop Taylor, would you kindly state to us your father's full name a little something about his background. Who was it of the Taylor's who first came into the Church, when they came to America and some of this background information?

GT: My father's name was Albert Ether Taylor. He married Dora Brinton. My grandfather came from England originally, both he and Grandmother Taylor. Grandfather Brinton and Grandmother Taylor, I understand, were immigrants from England. They came into Utah real early following the pioneers there. I talked to Grandfather Taylor and he told me about his first trip there. He worked for his board and room and was lucky to get that. The first year after he worked, he told me about his board and room and earning a little mule. In the fall he didn't have anything to feed it and took it down to the swamps and turned it loosed in hopes it would winter down by the Jordan River. He went back the next spring, and he found the mule still alive. That was his beginning. He took that mule back to work and got work with whoever he could. He was quite a teamster, a driver. With that mule he gradually worked and acquired some sheep. I know a few years later, he and Uncle Will, got into the sheep business. Uncle Will was the oldest with seven children on Grandfather's side.

HF: Turning from that momentarily, were the Taylor's large in stature. How would characterize their physical build?

GT: They were all large in stature, most of them six feet and over. I think E. J. Taylor or Uncle Ern, as we called him, was smallest. Uncle Will was six foot three. Father was a little over six foot. They were all good sized, well built, good looking men.

HF: Your grandfather was a good sized man.

GT: Yes, Grandmother was taller than Grandfather. She wasn't heavy, but she was a tall woman, very stately.

HF: Would you say that the Taylor's loved the outdoors? Were they lovers of education, intellectual things or maybe more of the outdoors and things of this nature?

GT: Well, they were definitely the outdoor type of people. However, they all had a good education. They went to school. They got along well in life as a result of their education. They were able to handle their business deals and were like by people. They associated with people who were educated and enjoyed their acquaintanceship. They were very successful. Uncle Will was one of the first representatives from Teton County when the county was divided from Fremont. I understand he was the representative in 1914, and Father was the representative in 1924.

HF: So they were inclined intellectually, politically, public life, something like that?

GT: Yes, they all built real nice home there in Driggs. They were thrifty people. They were p in the morning and doing enjoyed life. They took pride in their livestock and things they did. They were successful all the way through life. Even though the Depression came, they weathered them through. The three boys had the bank there in Driggs for years.

HF: Let's turn you attention momentarily to consider the Brinton family on your mothers' side. Can you give us some background information about them?

GT: Grandfather and Grandmother Brinton had 13 children. They've all been very successful in life; most of them have been bishops. Grandfather Brinton was a bishop, I think for 23 years our Cottonwood. He had a farm and was very much in the public eye all the time. He carried the mail. Mother was very much an outdoor lady. She helped her father more than she did her mother. Of the 13 children, there were more girls than there were boys in the family. Religion was the thing that brought them all to Utah. They remained true to this. I myself give that one thing credit for their success and happiness in life was the fact that they maintained their testimonies and lived to the belief they had.

HF: How would you characterize their family traits?

GT: They were all well educated people. In fact, they came from royalty in England. Mother talked about her coming from the royalty. They were people of good stature; well built, good looking, tall and slender. They took an active part in social life and political life. Their children are very successful. Most of mother's brothers went into the New York Life Insurance Business. Two or three of them lived here up in Victor for years. Milt Brinton ran the post office up there and Van Brinton ran the store for a number of years.

HF: I have a small life insurance policy from Milton Brinton which I took out, I think, in about 1939.

GT: I have one that my father took out for me when I was six years old with 20 year pay, and it's been paid up now for about 40 years.

HF: That's interesting and from the New York Life?

GT: From the New York Life, yes they all worked for the New York Life.

HF: As the family gets started their sheep industry, how did your grandfather fare in getting started?

GT: Grandfather acquired a homestead up Parley's canyon which was later sold to the City of Salt Lake. It is now used as a water supply for Salt Lake. They had this little farm up the dell, they called it. He acquired this farm proved upon it. They gradually worked up a herd of sheep. They ran their sheep east of Salt Lake in those mountains and also just east of town in what they called the Bench, where the old state penitentiary used to be right east of what is now known as Sugar House. It was while they were lambing one spring that the sheep contacted what we know as 'Big Head'. When the boys were grown and their father was on a mission at the time in the Eastern States, had been there for about 15 months...

HF: Your father or your grandfather?

GT: My father was on his mission, and Grandfather was running these sheep. When it contacted 'Big Head' it kind discouraged them. They lost about 400 as a result of it. He told the boys that if they wanted the sheep it was up to them to take them and run them. How was through with them. Father was called from his mission. I understand that maybe a year or two before that, Uncle Will came up in this country exploring. He came to Rexburg and also went up into Teton Basin.

HF: Can you kind of suggest a time when this might have been, maybe around 1900?

GT: 1894, I think is when Uncle Will first made a trip up here. But after the boys took these sheep it was around 1902. They just worked up this desert, followed the rim around here where they could get to water. They brought their sheep and came up in here about 1902, along the bench here east of Rexburg.

HF: They conclude that conditions were somewhat crowded; rangeland and summer pasture unavailable in the Salt Lake Valley. Is that why they came up here?

GT: That's right. It was being well taken up, and there were a lot of people clamoring for it so to speak. They came up here because the country was pretty well open and free. All this country west of Rexburg and north of Rexburg on the desert was open and free country same as it was up here on the bench. They came up here on the bench, I remember them talking about Mud Springs, up towards Pincock's.

HF: Now is that in the upper part of Canyon Creek?

GT: It's up in that area.

HF: What about Mud Springs?

GT: It was just a know place, kind of headquarters where these sheepmen had their sheep. When they first came they had tremendous trouble with the cattlemen. I've heard father tell about the cattlemen coming in and cutting their harnesses up and burning their outfits. For a long time there was a quite a prejudice deal because the cattlemen, some of them were here before they brought the sheep. That's like it was in Jackson's Hole only the sheepmen had never gotten in. They wouldn't let them over there.

HF: They were really strict about that, weren't they?

GT: I'll say they were, we were never allowed to look over the line, even up on the forest there.

HF: Well, had your father and his two brothers formed a kind of partnership to initiate this sheep industry?

GT: They came up in here together, but they divided their sheep. They each one had their own sheep. Right straight way, in order to acquire summer rights; they had to buy property adjoining the forest where they ran their sheep. As a result they all bought places in Teton Basin. Uncle Will, being first, bought one a mile and a quarter north of Driggs. Uncle Ern bought one a mile south of Driggs. Father bought a ranch up Fox Creek Canyon. They ran their sheep on their sheep on the east side of the Basin in those mountains which at that time was wonderful range. It hadn't been used and the feed was good up there. The grass was a good out here on the bench to lamb in the spring, and they went out here on the desert in the winter. For a year or two they went clear down to the desert in Utah. They got caught in a storm down there once and lost nearly all their sheep so they came back here and decided to stay here.

HF: To winter out?

GT: But they never wintered out much here, they came into hay. They used to feed down around Mud Lake. Down around Rupert they would buy hay. They would go out on the desert here in the fall and just pull off the edge of the desert and feed this hay when the snow came. They used to, may lam on the range. They didn't do any of this shed lambing like they do now. Now these fellows all shed lamb in March.

HF: In other words, by lambing earlier they can get their lambs at a much larger size by September for the fall market?

GT: Yes, but not only that, they're in the shelter. They have a shed to put them in. Now my experience has been, and as long as I was running the sheep with Father, we always got a premium out for our May lambs that were lambled out here on the desert. They were milk lambs when they came off the mountain, and we raised lambs that were born in May and put them on the market in September at 90 pounds to 93 pounds.

HF: They would have summered up in Teton Basin.

GT: Real choice meat that is, all premiums when they were May lambs.

HF: Initially, when they came up into the Upper Snake River Valley, was the Rexburg Bench used for summer range for a year or two?

GT: Yes, they stayed right up here on the range just working up east against these mountains east of us. As the dry farmer came in and started to plant this grain on the bench it was gradually taken up in farming, and the boys were pushed out on the desert north of here. When they went out there they farmed together.

HF: Now when you say north, would this be beyond the sand hills out around the Junipers?

GT: That's where it is, that's where I mean, out around the Junipers and clear up to Sand Creek. That country out there was all taken up in one lump sum, leased from the state, under the name of the Fremont Wool Growers. That lease still holds, I understand, and it has been some 50 years, maybe 45 years, since they have been out there. This large tract of land was leased in the name of the Fremont Wool Growers. Then it was sublet to the different fellows.

HF: Kind of a co-op affair?

GT: No, just leased with each man getting his own share according to the number of sheep he had.

HF: Did they attempt to fence the area?

GT: No, they didn't attempt to fence the area, but it was divided. We all knew which was ours. We had our lines. It was divided up into sections. We had a piece out there that had

sixteen sections in it. I'd say along about 1920 when Wood's Livestock, a big sheep holding outfit, went out of business we bought, I think, 8500 acres of deeded land from them. We divided that between Father and Uncle Will and took about 4000 acres a piece. Those allotments we still had when we sold the sheep. I think Lawrence still has his.

HF: Now Gordon, did you use this area out beyond the Junipers as a summer range also as well as a winter range?

GT: No, too dry and hot out there in the summer. You had to haul water out there clear from St. Anthony or from wells. Rudd had a well out there and the Rigby boys had a well but that was still about ten miles from our allotment. In the early days when we hauled water with four horses and a steel rimmed wagon that was along way to haul water. Good water when we got it but expensive to run. We built a cistern that would hold about 60,000 gallons of water. We would fill that and use it for storage. They built it on one of the highest points they could find with the idea of piping the water to the different sections of the range. That never was successful. Before we got that done these trucks came into operation and it was cheaper to haul it. Finally the trucks improved and the road improved until the well was given up and we hauled the water altogether from St. Anthony.

HF: This well and the area out there would be used strictly for spring range and fall range?

GT: That's right. We'd go out there in the spring as soon as the roads opened up which was probably the last week of April or the first week of May.

HF: And lamb out there?

GT: All the boys did a lot of May lambing out there in the early days. Later years they did shed lambing in here. We did a lot of May lambing out there, and it was very successful unless we got caught in a snowstorm. Then we didn't have any shelter. Sometime it cost us a few lambs.

HF: Then in the late summer, say Labor Day, you'd bring the animals out of the mountains?

GT: Well, we'd leave the range out here to the north, as a rule we got on the forest around the first of July to the tenth of July. Then we'd stay up in the Basin on the forest up there until around the tenth to fifteenth of September. In the early days it was longer than that. We stayed until the first of October. But as the range was used and they could see that we were overusing it the government kept cutting us down. We had to acquire more range to keep in the business. Finally that was one of the reasons the sheep have been cut down and as many men have gone out of the business as there has. With the range problems we had these sportsmen associations that could pay more for it than the sheepmen. A lot of this range had been turned into sports area, recreation areas. It is used almost entirely for that now.

HF: This area that you mentioned, the holding that you people had out there, is in a sports area?

GT: This sports area is on the forest area. However a lot of the ground out on Sand Creek was turned into a game preserve. We have some out here around the Junipers where there is perhaps a hundred head of elk. A lot of deer pull down out of the forest in the winter, and they come out here and winter out his desert. Of course, that takes a lot feed. A hundred head of elk is almost like feeding a hundred of cattle. I've seen springs out there when the choke cherry trees and things liker that were eaten right down to the bare stocks, perhaps only four feet high. Hard winter when the elk and the deer are out there and that sand out there, but it was a fine place for these animals to winter and, of course, sportsmen want it.

HF: Are you familiar with the Fog Butte area?

GT: Yes I am. I know where the Fog Butte is.

HF: Now would that be further north and a little bit west of your range land?

GT: No, that's almost north of ours.

HF: That's quite an area for wildlife. They tell me that a number of elk calve in that area in the spring.

GT: That's right.

HF: And then move on up to higher elevations, of course, as the summer goes on.

GT: That's right. Then in the fall, or course, the snow comes and drives them back down out again. They come clear down to the Junipers right here north of town. The fact of the matter is they come here to these swamps west of Rexburg. I've seen many of them elk and moose here.

HF: Is that right?

GT: Yes, in the last year I've seen them down here.

HF: The water is warm, somewhat, I suppose and they can get good foliage. During the period your father and his brothers had these holdings out there can you name some of the other sheepmen, competitors, who also had ranges in the area?

GT: In the early days when they first came up her there was Webster and Smart with quite a large outfit. The Parkinson's had sheep. Then there was Clarence Siddoway, Irving Murdock and the Lee boys.

HF: Hamilton's?

GT: Hamilton's had sheep. There were three Hamilton brothers and they had a lot of sheep.

HF: Now when you moved on into the Teton Basin, did you ever range the West Mountains of the Basin?

GT: We never did range the West Mountains. After we first acquired the rights on the east side we stayed right here. However, Father had some sheep on the south end of the Basin. During the Depression days some of the fellows met hard times and lost their sheep and the bank took them. As a result there was a herd sold to Father on the Fogg Hill allotment, the ole Canyon allotment. We had quite a large allotment there for twenty years. We finally sold it. After Father died, I sold it to Gene Taylor. I acquired more range over on the north and east side. Right after the Depression days the government tried to help young people start out in the sheep industry. As a result they took ten percent of the range land of all the old men that were in the sheep business and gave it to the new beginners. As a result it put a lot of co-op sheep in these range herds. The two sheep never mixed. These co-op herds were pets, so to speak, raised around farms and barns and it didn't work out at all. In other words it was a hardship on the range because they railed around a lot. A number of the sheepmen, in order to get rid of them, bought them out after they were put in the herd. They were gradually all bought out. I bought out a quite a number of them.

HF: That range later on was east of the North and South Leigh area in Teton Basin?

GT: Yes, when Father first went up there he went back up by Baldy's Knoll, Tale Knoll.

HF: That's southeast of Fox Creek, isn't it?

GT: That's right. Due to a forest fire up there, we nearly lost our sheep one summer. We moved out after the fire, we couldn't use the range for a couple of years. WE went over between North and South Leigh Creek. That's right east of Tetonia. That was the range we had from then on as long as we were in the business.

HF: Just a little comment about this forest fire. Was that right I Fox Creek Canyon on the North Slope or the south slope?

GT: It was higher up in the mountains. It was clear back in the tops.

HF: Pretty much on the divide?

GT: Yes, back up in there where the sheep were. It was quite a serious fire. It took a lot of country at the time.

HF: Was this kind of range fire or a lot of timber?

GT: There was a lot of timber in it. Of course, it took everything as it went. It presented quite a problem of getting the sheep out and around it before we lost them.

HF: Now over the year, in your experience with the sheep, who were some of the herders and camp jacks you had? Can you enumerate some of them the outstanding ones?

GT: Well, we had especially three men that stayed with us better than 30 years a piece. Claude Horsley was with us for a long time; in fact, for a number of years he was a foreman. Fred Richens was with us 33 years. An excellent herder fine man. Pete Brown was with us for some 30 odd years. A good man. That is they were men who understood sheep. Then there was Frank and Earl Re, and Walt and Hugh Furness. Some of those fellows that spent their life with the sheep; Move around a little but they worked for us a goodly number of years.

HF: Now were those what you termed herders and camp jacks?

GT: Most of those were herders, however, they did camp jack some. But camp jacks were more or less fellows that just transients that would come or go and didn't stay long. These herders that learned to know the range became valuable men because you could put them out and they understood the range, they knew where their country was and they knew how to herd it. Along about 1930 the government came into what they called a rotation program. They divided our range up into about four sections. One year we'd feed one section first and the next year we'd feed another second first and rotate it that way so that the last section we didn't get on till after the 20th of August giving the flowers and the vegetation on it a chance to reseed, bring back the foliage on it. The fellows understood these programs, and it was very beneficial to use to have someone who knew how to herd it.

HF: If one were to enumerate the responsibilities of the herder and enumerate the responsibilities of the camp jack, how would you analyze these two categories?

GT: The herder was the man that was responsible for the sheep and more or less responsible for the way they fed the range. A good herder understood his sheep. In the morning when they would leave about three o'clock, he would know about how to turn them to have the part of the country fed the way we would get the most out of it. Sheep have tendency to go to the top all the time. That's why a lot of these ridges are bare on the mountain. But a man that understands it knows how to get the sheep down into the canyon where the feed is. And it's his responsibility to see the sheep do that. Now the camp tender merely moves the camp around where it's convenient for the herder, takes care of the cooking and the horses. In other words, he is just what they call him, a camp flunky.

HF: Now the camp would be moved as the grazing area would be pretty well eaten up?

GT: Yea, we'd move from one campground to another. Maybe there would be 20 campgrounds on a summer allotment. Some of them would be in a little longer than others, but the scamp was generally put on water. Course we needed water to cook with and for culinary purposes. The sheep had to go from these ridges from one to another. We knew where all the little springs were. It was the herder's job to know where they were and see that the sheep got to them without trailing anymore than possible. This trailing has a tendency to cut the grass and cause the soil to erode. It is not goof for the range, and men who understood that could evade it.

HF: Approximately how many sheep constitutes one herd?

GT: Back in the 1920s they used to have as many as 1500 in a herd. When we finally sold our sheep they wouldn't let you have anymore than 800, sometimes 700. It would depend upon the condition of the range. The herds were cut practically in half or more. The time in the forest was cut considerably.

HF: Could you combine two or three herds into one feeding group?

GT: No. That's the reason for cutting the group was because there wasn't so many and they didn't trail around so much to get the feed. The smaller the herd the less they had to move around and that was to the benefit of the range.

HF: Personally did you ever herd sheep or act as a camp jack?

GT: Personally, I herded sheep, but I never spent a lot of time that way. When I was a young fellow of 17 I spent 7 summers moving camp consistently. I lived with Fed Richens and moved his camp. He was a good man, a clean man, and a man I didn't mind being with. As far as staying right out in the summer herding a herd of sheep, I have fed them over winter. I stayed right with them. In other words, I have stayed with the sheep year round before I was married. Since I was married I didn't spend the entire time.

HF: Now of the years you were camp jack, these seven summers, where were those summers spend and could you reflect on some of the experiences you had?

GT: Most of them were located in the south of Victor in what is known as the Pole Canyon, Fog Hill allotment. That runs Pole Canyon up on Fog Hill Mountain across clear over to Mike Harris and over to the state line on the east, over to the Wyoming line. As a young fellow I spent some very enjoyable times up other hunting. I can remember when the chicken or pine hens were very plentiful. We used to have chickens when the chicken season opened quite considerably.

HF: Now were these what they called the pine hens or the drum hens?

GT: That's right. Well there were the pine hens and then there were these little willow grouse. They're what they call the drum hens. They're not quite as large as a pine hen.

HF: Fool hens. You could almost walk up and knock them on the head with a long stick, couldn't you?

GT: Well, I saw the day when I gathered as many as 10 or 12 chickens just with rocks. I would take them down and give the folks a few. There was a lot of wildlife. There were coyotes that we had to contend with and there were bears. I had some really interesting experience and close call with bears. Never was hurt, never was injured but I've had some real thrills at times.

HF: Well comment on one or two of those experiences?

GT: One evening Fred and I were going out on Fog Hill. The sun was coming down and we were on the west side of the mountain so we were in the shade. Fred was a little bit careless about eh number of shells he had in his gun. It wasn't always full. Sometimes it was and sometimes it wasn't. We just happened to look up and here came big brown bear straight down the trail. You could tell by the looks of her that she had cubs. He fired at her. Evidently he just shot a little low and shot right in front of her. She started coming faster. He fired a second time the same way and didn't hit her. By then she was getting quite close. The third time he fired she let out quite a bellow and lunged dead. He had hit her with the third shot. When he went to shoot the fourth time he didn't have anymore shells. We were both there bare handed. Gives you quite a thrill, a few experiences like that. Another thing that was kind of thrilling, I've had my tent pitched on the side of a mountain tied up under a large pine tree at night and had the lightning hit the pine tree and tumble down on us. Fortunately never hurt seriously but I have been knocked cold by the lightning. I've had our horses and dogs knocked out the same way.

HF: Now the thunderstorms up in that country and the lightning flashes can get pretty close can't they?

GT: I'll say they tear the ground up right close to you. They set fires quite often. I spent all night, many nights, stopping a fire that's been set by lightening to keep it from spreading into a large fire. Had citations from the government for it.

HF: Did the forest people often call upon you for help in fire alerting and fire helping?

GT: We were always on the alert, and we always knew where we could get in touch with the rangers. Anytime we saw a fire of any kind we always went directly to it if it was in our territory where we could reach. If not it was our duty to get word to the ranger as soon as possible.

HF: Now you mentioned the bear and coyotes as somewhat of a problem, they being predatory animals. Do you recall any experience where they got into the herd and destroyed some of your sheep?

GT: Oh, I could name a number of times when they got in the herd and killed 10 or 15 or 20 sheep. They just get in the herd and walk through them using their front paw as you

use your hand only much stronger. Slapped them right over the ribs, break their rib cage. Of course, that killed them. Not only that, but you had to be careful where you bedded your sheep at night. A bear would get into them and push them over a cliff and they would be smothered, two or three hundred. I've seen 300 sheep smothered that way.

HF: I know they talk about sheep dogs and the importance of dogs in assisting the herder and the camp jack and so forth. Would you have some comment of the importance of good, well trained sheep dogs?

GT: A well trained sheep dog is worth as much as a good herder. They are almost priceless. A good trained sheep dog, a dog you can signal to him, maybe go clear across the canyon saving you a trip across that would take you an hour. A dog will not cut off a part of the sheep and leave them. I've seen dogs trained like that, that you can send as far as you can see and they would do a good job. You have to be very careful in sending a dog like that; they don't do the same things a bear does, panic the sheep and put them over a cliff. You need on that when you motion for him to stop, he'll stop.

HF: What does that dog do, I mean does he bite their...

GT: No, a good sheep dog never takes hold of the sheep. All he does is go around them and bark, but a good sheep dog is not noisy either. If he barks it turns the whole herd when maybe you just wanted to turn one side. You teach him to go as far as you send him and to stop there and they learn that. They're very useful.

HF: Any type of breed that seems to be...

GT: Oh these shepherd dogs, these collies make pretty dogs. We used to have a breeder dog, a little fuzzy dog. I don't know what you would call it. We just called them dogs. But they turned out to be real good dogs. You have seen them, called whiskers and shags, things like that. A real fuzzy dog, heavy hair seems to be a protection for them in the mountains, protection in the wintertime and a protection for them from the heat in the summertime. These English Shepherds are good dogs too.

HF: Now at the time you were about finished up with the sheep business in Teton Basin had Van Price and Egberts gotten started in the sheep industry?

GT: Yes, Brother Egbert had been in the sheep industry quite some time.

HF: This would have been Richard's father?

GT: Yes. Most Richard Sam though. Their father was never in the sheep so much as Richard and Sam. When they came along they were in sheep business. Now Van Price and Baylors and some of those fellows were in sheep. I bought quite a number of those fellows out in order to straighten up this range situation I was talking about. Finally, before I let my sheep go I had bought five range rights to build up and keep track of the two that I had. So I could still run the same amount of sheep on them, it took that many

ranges. I had all the range from clear out by Boone across over to Leigh Creek up around Red Mountain and up in there. Some of the range that was used by the Ricks boys in the early days. Eph Ricks was another man that had a lot of sheep. By buying out these ranges I had acquired all the ranges from there clear across.

HF: That would have been the area east of Felt, all the way along there.

GT: All the way along there.

HF: Clear out to Badger Creek or Sonant Creek?

GT: Yeah, clear out to Conant Creek, clear out to Boone Creek. Fact of the matter, on the east side clear over to the Park line, the Yellowstone Park line, was our boundary on the north and the east.

HF: What comment would you make about the range land in there? Is it excellent? How does it compare with that on the south of Victor in Pole Canyon?

GT: We had one range up between North and South Leigh Creek, a small range that would take care of more sheep than two ranges on the forest. It had these wild carrots thick on it, excellent feed. The range further north got in to quite a bit of timber. It took a lot more range to take care of the same number of sheep. The range from North and South Leigh around the east side and over to Pole Canyon was much better range than the range on the south side or the north side. It wasn't as dry, and the slopes of the mountains were better so that the late fall feed was a greener. It didn't dry out. These other ranges weren't quite so high and the timber was heavier in places, and where it wasn't they were open and the slopes were on the wrong side so that they dried out early in the summer. They had to come by the 20th of August.

HF: Are you familiar with what they call Fred's Mountain where they have established this Grand Targhee Ski development?

GT: Yes, I've been on Fred's Mountain.

HF: Did you range sheep up there on that...

GT: No, I didn't range sheep on Fred's Mountain. I joined Fred's Mountain on the north. Alan Ricks was in that territory, up in there and he had sheep. There was some of that higher country up in there that they never allowed the sheep to get on because the feed was so late coming and there was not enough of it. But most of it was all used for sheep as one time or another. In the later years it was cut quite a bit because of range protection. But from Fred's Mountain north clear over to the Park line, I had all of that range at one time.

HF: How about the alpine flowers in the fall of the year? Did they become quite abundant?

GT: In the early days there was a lot of that. There was a lot of what they all broadleaf which was an excellent feed. It seemed like the sheep liked that best and as a result cleaned it up pretty well. It had a hard time seeding it and keeping it going. That was one reason for this program that I just mentioned on this seeding program, rotating it so that some of it went big enough to seed. This lupine, or as you call it, alpine, they liked that. I think we sometimes called it blue bell. The sheep really enjoyed that.

HF: Did you have to be alert to keep the sheep from eating poisonous plants? Was there any problem in that regard?

GT: There's no problem in that regard in those east mountains in Teton Basin. When you get around over in to Island Park country and up over the Wyoming line, I have run into places up there where we have had yearlings where we have lost 150. When you first pull in, in the spring the ground is soft and they pull roots out. It's the roots that kill them when they eat them.

HF: As time passed into the 20s, 30s, and 40s, government control and regulation had influence which was rather adverse to the sheep people. Did you experience some of these conditions, and when did you actually get out of the sheep business?

GT: As the government controls came into existence and especially these range controls, they kept cutting our range rights. We had to acquire more to run a herd of sheep that was economical. After you get down to so many then it cost more to run them than you make out of them. You have to run about so many in a herd to make them pay. As a result, the fellows either had to acquire more range and it resulted in that some of the larger men buying out the smaller men because the smaller men couldn't acquire more range, so we acquired what they had and along with that we had to have more land, more farm rights in order to build up what they call these Taylor grazing rights on our lines and that can measure property. In other words, we had to have property enough to show that we could support our sheep feed wise throughout the year if it became necessary. Things like this made it very hard, made the investments so large in property holdings that it almost became that a lot of the fellows had to get out. Now, I can remember when I think there was around two-hundred and forty thousand sheep run out here in this Fremont Wool Growers and the last time I talked with them there was around forty to fifty thousand was all there was out there. The sheeping businesses were pretty well gone in this country if I might say it that way according to as I knew it in the early days. And these rights and properties, you had to transfer them if you sold any property or acquired any. These rights became very valuable things and these Taylor grazing people out on these west deserts began to give us allotments and tell us how long we could stay out and when we had to come in. It seemed like, I don't know if they did it intentionally, but most of the government programs that came into existence hurt us, more than they helped us. In other words, they made the industry so that it was more expensive to run and prices didn't go up according to expenses. I got out of the business mainly because I could afford to own them any longer.

HF: In what year approximately was this?

GT: I sold my sheep to the Ball brothers in the fall of 1958. Of course help got harder to get, and men that were dependable, didn't like to go out and leave their families and stay and men that did do that, used liquor. We had quite a lot of problems with men that weren't too pleasant as far as I was concerned anyway and then I had a little health problem that entered into it. In other words, all putting together I...when I sold my sheep to the Ball boys I didn't think they meant it when they talked about buying and finally they come up saying, "All or none," and I said, "All" and I found myself out of the sheep business.

HF: Now, Bishop in the days of the late teens I suppose and the twenties your father Eve and your Uncle Will and Uncle Earn were pretty important individuals in Teton Basin in the economy of the Basin and industry and so forth. Could you comment rather liberally about their various activities up there?

GT: Well the three boys had done well. They were very influential men both financially and socially and otherwise. They had quite an influence, I think, on the people in Teton Basin. They helped a number of them. The three boys were in the banking business there. They built it up to a place where it was successful, not only in the banking but in helping other people. Financing and get started up there and carry on in business. They built quite a number of buildings there throughout, especially in Driggs, and some in Victor. They financed other people that began up there in business. I know that Father owned a drug store for a short time; they owned horn-a-shop business. Uncle Will owned some of the buildings there that stores were in helped the fellows get started. In other words, there was five or six or seven boys up there, the Harper finally came in and they helped up there and the Bates boys across over on the west side also were influential men up there. But among the three brothers they did a lot in Teton Basin. I think they were missed when they left.

HF: Well now, did your Uncle Will and his wife own and occupy a home there in town for quite a few years?

GT: Yes, they owned and occupied a home there in town and they farmed just north and were back and forth there. We owned a home a home in Driggs, built a nice home there.

HF: And where was it located?

GT: It was located just a block east of where the bank is now on the south side, that big brick home there on the corner.

HF: Kiddy corned, I see.

GT: Yeah, and Uncle Earn built that big rock home up there, it was Chet Walkers I don't know that you've heard now.

HF: South of town?

GT: Up north of town, up by the stake office up in there. And then Uncle Will had a big brick home just around the corner.

HF: Down there and to the West.

GT: Yes, to the west. Jim Griggs had a home right up there.

HF: Your Aunt May, I think, occupied that quite a few years.

GT: Yes, she lived in town. Uncle Will spent most of his time out on the farm with the sheep.

HF: And your home was a block east and kiddy corner across the street to the south of the bank.

GT: That is right. And Uncle Earns is a mile north of town.

HF: Not mile south of town?

GT: South of town.

HF: Well now, when we were preparing this tape you commented that one morning you were there at your home when they brought this Mister Henry in who had been shot. He was illegally stealing liquor up there, and had an episode. Could you kind of comment about that I don't know just how far and how detailed you want to be but I would like to have you comment about this without any particular aspersions to any individual but just to comment about what you observed and understand about it, the episode?

GT: Well this Mister Henry as I remember was Jack Henry. He had a steal up between North and South Lee where we had our sheep. It was a very disturbing thing, we didn't like him, of course nobody else did but as I remember it got to the place where young people went out there and acquired liquor. And people got very upset about it and they finally planned to watch and find out. They finally discovered this steel in the bottom of the creek and the entrance to it had some bailed hay over it. Anyway they went out there about five o'clock one morning to bring him to town and he refused to be brought and they got in a little trouble and he was shot. The lower part of his face was taken off. I remember him coming in just at sun up. Doctor Martin lived right across the street from us and I saw him come in there, I was just a young fellow at the time. But it was quite shocking to me. They started out to Rexburg here with him to the Doctor but he passed away at Clemensville and they came back. Those are just some of the side lights I guess

of things that happened during prohibition days. Being in the sheep business we were out in part of the country, and not only up there but on these west desserts in some of these caves and places. We used to find steel every once in awhile where somebody was Moonshining, I think they called it.

HF: Quite interesting.

GT: Yes, it was.

HF: Well now, Bishop Taylor did you yourself and your wife ever live in the valley?

GT: We never did live in the Teton Valley, my wife and I. We lived right here in Rexburg all our married life.

HF: I see. Now I'd like to have you comment who you married and to whom you were married and when this occurred and a little something about your wife, of her background, the Stohl Family.

GT: I married Edna Marie Stohl, a daughter of David W. Stohl and Elizabeth Spori. We were married in 1935. We have six children, four boys and two girls we are very proud of they have very fine families all of them. Edna's folks, especially on her mother's side, are quite important in Rexburg because Brother Spori came from Switzerland. He was a University teacher over there and he was the first teacher you have up here in Ricks College, Jacob Spori was one of your founders at Ricks College, you know that.

HF: Yes, yes.

GT: I have heard her tell about him coming here and working on the railroad taking the money he made in the summer time to use at the college to help pay teachers. And I heard her tell about the time when they received as pay only the things they ate. In other words, there pay came in kind potatoes and flour like that the first year of the college. Brother Stohl was a very successful man here in Rexburg. He was mayor for three different terms and in the insurance and real estate business in the early days he was in the Studebaker business, wagon business until it turned into automobiles and then he sold cars for a few years before he went into the real estate business. He had seven children. One daughter died early as an accident up at the college but his two sons are both physicians, surgeons, at the present time and the daughters are all married and have lovely homes and have raised fine families.

HF: Then during the years that you were involved with the sheep industry you lived here in Rexburg and operated your activities from this place?

GT: We moved to Rexburg from Teton Basin in the fall of 1924.

HF: Now this would be your father?

GT: This is my father and family. And the Teton Basin is a wonderful place but the winters are long up there and we had to come down here with the sheep and then we came to Ricks College too. He brought the family out for school; that was the main reason for coming out. However, it was really a more central place for the sheep out here, when they came out here. Father came out here, we lived up on the hill the first year but we bought the big Mark Austin home down here on Main Street. That big rock home, we had that for forty-five years. Father passed away in summer of 1943. I continued on with the sheep until 1958 but we had a very happy life here. Father and Uncle Will and Uncle Earn suffered quite severely out of the depression when the banks all went broke in the twenties, late twenties. You all know what that is. It took them, some of them; in fact the three boys were just getting out of debt when they passed away. They struggled with those debts for twenty years.

HF: Let us see now, did your father pass away here in Rexburg?

GT: Yes, Father passed away here in Rexburg. Uncle Earn was in an accident right down here by the third ward and was killed here in Rexburg. Uncle Will passed away up in Teton Basin.

HF: I see. Well then following your sheep involvement, of course, you became a farmer then didn't you? You had to ranch out in the Burton area.

GT: Yes, I had a farm down here in Independence rally.

HF: Well now Bishop, just one word about your church involvement, service. Would you comment as you would like?

GT: Yes, I acquire my happiness in my wife and most of my pleasure in life, Brother Forbush, my church. I served on a mission in England in 1929-1931. I came home and decided that my church was important as anything to me in life. It was hard with the sheep but the first thing when I came home I was put in a position in the Mutual. I was superintendent in the Mutual for three years and then I was superintendent of Sunday school for five years. When I got out of that, I was made a seventy in the Presidency of the eighty-fourth quorum of the Seventy. I served there for five years and then I went into the High Counsel and served there for nine and a half years. And from there I was called to be Bishop of the Rexburg Sixth Ward and I served there for better than seven years.

HF: What date was that when you were called and sustained as the Bishop?

GT: I think that it was about 1961 when I was called to the Bishop of the Sixth Ward and I was released in 1968.

HF: It has been a real pleasure to have you here this morning. Before we close this interview, are there any extra comments that you would like to make on your own. I will give you a chance to volunteer any comments that you might wish to make. You don't have to make them but maybe you would like to make a comment.

GT: It has been very pleasant living here in Rexburg, especially in our church association. My wife and I have discussed a number of times perhaps moving away but every time we decide that Rexburg is still the best place. We have enjoyed the people here. We have educated our children here and we have enjoyed our home life here and the people here and our church has been most pleasant. The association and the kind of people that live in Rexburg are very pleasant to be with. It's something in life that you don't find all over the world.

HF: Thank you so very very much Bishop.