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SBOH-5, Shaefer Ranch

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Interviewer: Robyn Krock
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Shaefer ranch 4-16-2005: Raymond Shaefer, Mom Shaefer, Ty, Gary, Rodney, Robyn Krock

Raymond: ...water and put it in the shade.

Robyn: That's a good idea. Did you get a lot done this morning?

Raymond: <laughs>

Inaudible

Raymond:... well, it's about 125 years old... or older

Robyn: And who built it?

<inaudible background talking>

M: ... 1813 or something?

Ro: 1878 or somethin' was that-

G: No, that might have been.

Ro: 1880 <inaudible>

G: 1885

Ry: Yeah, it was somewhere around here where we buried it. All the junk.

G: That was where the old house was at, back here

Ry: Yeah, back here.

G: and it burned-

Ry: right here

G and it burned down.

RK: It burned down before that one?

G ... and they built this one.

RK: And who built that one?

Ry: My grandfather built it.

M: Your great- wasn't it your great-grandfather?

Ry My great-grandfather

<inaudible talking at one>

M Yeah, you'll have to get a picture of that.

Ry All three of 'em lived here, Emma, my mother, and Jimmy were all born right there. Grandpa was evidently born back here and him and his brother, Jim...

Rk: That's your mother and your aunt and uncle were born over there?

Ry Yeah. My mother and her sister and her brother were all born there.

Rk: Where were you born?

Ry: Gridley.

Rk: Gridley.

Ry: 1916.

Rk: Wow. 1916.

Ry: <inaudible> July the 8th, 1916

Rk: Your mother was hardy.

Ry: Huh:

Rk: Your mother was hardy.

Ry: Yeah. Right in the middle of the afternoon, it was 112 degrees.

Rk: Did she ever forgive you for that?

Ry: She had a lot of trouble and Dad says, no more! So I'm the only one.

Rk: So did you grow up in Gridley or did you grow up-

Ry: Huh?

Rk: Did you grow up in Gridley?

Ry: Not always. I was in three different first grades. Dad and Mom was out on the—where Jimmy and them was farming out there at the old Dobe (?) place. I started there and they moved out to the ranch and I started there. There was one school in there. The teacher taught eight grades.

Rk: Wow.

Ry: Each row was a grade all the way through.

Rk: And you were there in first grade?

Ry: Yeah. I was born in Gridley and then they moved out there, then they went back to Gridley again, and then for a short while and then we moved to Roseville, all in the first grade, the same year. My dad went to work for the railroad.

Mom: Daddy, she's more interested in this property, place.

Ry: Oh, I know it.

Rodney: He's just fillin' in a little bit...

<inaudible><laughter>

Rodney: Just wait till you get him going; you'll find out his whole life story.

Rk: That's fine.

Rodney: His grandfather, his—

Ry: ... great-grandfather...

Gary: Ask him leading questions.

Ry: When my greatgrandfather came out here he settled up at Quincy, then he went down to Vallejo. Then he bought this property. And some of this is land grant property from the president of the United States.

Rk: Okay. How did that work?

Ry: He asked for a land grant and they gave it to him. From the President.

Ty: Signed by the President.

Ry: So I don't know... it was signed by the President.

Rk: Okay.

Ry: I got a deal at home on that.

Rd: We got the old books at home with a lot of the information on this Grandma had. All those old books she had.

Ry: Oh gosh yes.

Rk: Really?

Rd: Yeah. Got some books that go way back-

Gary: We have a copy of the old grant deed that was signed by the President.

Rk: I'd love to see that, even get copies of it if possible. At some point.

Ry: That'd be fine. But the old house, the old house was just beyond this grill right here. And one time <inaudible> ... it was set right back in there by that—just this side of that oak, that far oak tree right there.

Rk: Okay.

Ry: That's where it set and that's where it burned down.

Rk: Wait, up right- right in here or up where those rocks are?

Ry: Yeah. See that one oak right there? Just this side of that.

(pause)

Ry: Then there was one rock, there's mostly, uh, there's one rock way back in there that had six holes in it where the Indians grinding – that's right in there where you see these first sets of trees.

Rk: And is it still there?

Ry: No. The rock guy—we were selling rock and he moved it and then he took it to Sacramento.

Rk: <inaudible> Okay, wait, so you went to Roseville and then when'd you come back up here?

Ry: After I graduated out of Davis. I got a job in the creamery here, they sent me up here.

Rk: Doing what?

Ry: From Davis.

Rk: And what were you doing at the creamery?

Ry: I come in, well, just everything. I've gone through everything under the sun. Then way down there, beyond this bunch, there's an old coral. And if you walk around that old coral, you'll find a lot of rocks that are about that wide and that high and they've all got holes ground in them where the Indians ground—where the Indians ground them in there.

Rk: And those are still there too?

Ry: Yeah. Those rocks are still there, but they're only small. But the one, the one big one that's gone to Sacramento, Hoffman Park, got nine holes in it. It was way up to the top of the fence, right way up on top farm way back there. It weighed 19 tons, with nine holes.

Rk: So, when you... got all my equipment going here... so you came up back here and were working at the creamery and then you lived in Gridley at that point?

Ry: Yeah. We had done—we bought our place out, our home. Then I went to Mt. Shasta. They sent me up there. They closed the creamery here, we didn't get paid, and we went to Chico. They gave me a notice and sent me up there. Krebbs from San Francisco owned this ranch, I guess, from way back, and then when I was—I was up there for a year sent up the dairy where they were delivering all over the town.

Rk: And who were you workin' for?

Ry: Krebbs. They were from San Francisco. We set on the ranch there, we set on the ranch there in a cabin where the milkers was all there and I was with them. We got \$75 a month and then room and board.

Rk: So, did you—when you came back down here you were living in Gridley, but you were—did you work this land here?

Mom: He did for awhile but—

Ry: What's that?

Mom: You worked this ground, land.

Ry: Well, I did after I retired from Davis. I went down to Sacramento, then we—we leveled this and leveled all that up there. It was about 150 acres in this farming ground.

Rk: And is this—what's this used for now?

Ry: It's all alfalfa right now.

Rk: It's all alfalfa.

Ry: Irrigatin'.

Mom: And what's back here?

Ry: That's oats back in there. Alfalfa right here and it's oats right here, clear back to the gate, you know, the gate way down there. You can see that fence line. That's our fence line way down there.

Mom: Up against those trees.

Ry: Yeah. Up against the trees there, you can see that. That's the fence line. Right there is where the—where the state wants to—there's a gate right there.

Mom: Sore subject.

Rk: Uh-huh. So you go back—

Ry: You can almost see that gate right back through here.

Rk: So that—your land goes—

Ry: That's the old Pugh—our land goes right back to that rock fence.

Mom: That's the old Pugh ranch.

Ry: That's the old Pugh ranch that the state bought. 2.9 million dollars.

Rk: So starting from about those trees is what the state owns?

Ry: Yeah. That hill line—that hill you're looking at belongs to the state. That's part of the 1,185 acres that they bought.

Rk: Right. And so they want to put an easement through here?

Ry: They're trying to buy it—to get an easement through there. 'Cause you can see the gate right—straight back through there. It'd make it easy for them to get in there.

Rk: Yep.

Ry: Right now they've got—right now they're going to have to go through four different farms to get back there. But if they come in here you've only got this one to fight with.

Rk: Right. And it's yours.

Mom: That's right.

Ry: It's mine and my cousin's. And the two boys.

Rk: So how do you feel about that?

Ry: Huh?

Rk: What do you think about that?

Ry: I don't want it! We'll fight it if we have to. My cousin's the one that wants—She looks at that 2.9 million that they got back there because there's eleven hundred and twenty-three acres here.

Rk: That belongs to you?

Ry: Yeah. Belongs to us.

Rk: To you and your cousin.

Ry: Yeah, my cousin and my two boys.

Rk: And, so she wants to sell them an easement or she wants to sell them part of the land?

Ry: She wants to try to sell the place. I don't know—

Mom: We don't know—

Ry: It's all—

Mom: She has never confided in us.

Ry: It's all—she has never confided in us. We don't know what's going on between here and the state.

Mom: She went behind his- they're back.

Ry: I caught 'em out here and I told 'em about it. I told 'em ours is not for sale and I want you to know it right now and it's undivided territory. That's what I told the ranger.

Rk: Good. Good for you.

Mom: Yeah. Stick up for your rights.

Ry: Right over this hill, right over this hill—you can see a post right out there—that's where the missile base was at. If you go over this hill and you can see a big flat spot over in there. And

there's a post right here. The cables come over the top, right down through the field, and then over the top to the missile base. And they can, they—from...

Rk: So the missile base is over that way?

Ry: Yeah, it's right over these hills here.

Rk: On the other side of that hill?

Ry: Well, you can see the fence line. It's right on that fence line, right over the hill.

Rk: And who does that land belong to?

Ry: That belongs to us right there, but it belonged to Finn before. I don't know. Somebody in Stockton's got that missile base now since they gave it up. They never did—they had dug those holes in there and everything else, but they never did use it. It was obsolete by the time they got it built twice. Spent millions of dollars then never, never used it.

Rk: It was like open for three years or something like that?

Ry: Something like that.

Rk: That seems to be one of the stranger stories up here.

Ry: Yeah. Well, they built three of them.

Rk: Three missile silos.

Ry: Yeah, one down in Lincoln, one at Chico, and this one over here. The one in Lincoln they're using for garbage now down in Lincoln.

Rk: Wait, so now, you said somebody down in Stockton owns that?

Ry: Yeah. There's about—I forget how many acres is in that. It's about 20 acres in that. And then the whole Finn ranch runs all the way back to the Pugh ranch. West of us.

Rk: And how far that way does the land go? Does your land go?

Ry: Oh, it goes quite a ways over there.

Rk: So most of your land is in that direction?

Ry: Both directions

Rk: I thought that that fence line was yours.

Ry: Well, yeah, that fence line going up the hill and comin' down this hill, that's all ours.

Rk: Okay.

Ry: But the other fence line you can see back over here, it goes straight through.

Rk: And then you go a ways back up in that way.

Ry: Go a lot of ways, way back up over in here.

Rk: So, did you, when you were a kid did you come up here a lot?

Ry: We did. I walked, I walked all around here with some boy scouts and stuff... one boy wanted to get his eagle—his first class—and we walked all around back in those mountains over there and come back in behind the old Pugh home which is right back in there. Over—there's a big valley right behind these trees—right behind that series right, of trees.

Rk: And that was when you had boy scouts coming up here?

Ry: Yeah, well, up here we used to have a camp every year, all the patrols'd come in and they'd all be in contest right up in this grove right here. In the hill.

Rk: That was good of you to open your land to them.

Ry: Oh yeah. They all come in here and the kids had to walk from roadway out there up to that place. That's the way they got their start, then they set up their camps and they were all judged—each troop, each patrol was judged on the way they had their compass laid out here where they had to follow a compass.

Rk: And what about when you were a kid? Did you come up here a lot?

Ry: Not too much. We were here... my folks from Roseville... we had a picnic right about this time of the year up here. All—our whole neighborhood come up here. They always looked forward to that.

Rk: So, when you were a kid and you weren't living here, was the land being leased out at that time?

Ry: Well, it's always been leased out.

Rk: Okay.

Ry: Outside of right now, it's leased out right now. The hill ground's all leased out too. For awhile my uncle run sheep over the hills when he went out <inaudible> the sheep farmers had it and Green Man had it all leased out every year.

Rk: Green Man?

Ry: And then my grandmother and grandpa both moved over here for awhile, then they moved back into Gridley again.

Rk: Why?

Ry: They pretty near lost this place. 'Cause this place was given to my grandfather's brother.

Rk: Okay.

Ry: And he mortgaged it, then they were ready to bankrupt him, and my grandfather was given the property in town—the old livery stable and woodyard and coal. They used to get a lot of coal come in. Every year the cars, all the farmers bought coal and slab wood from the lumberyard.

Rk: But your grandfather was able to save it?

Ry: Yeah, he saved it. He took it over from his brother and saved it. That's how we still got it.

Rk: Wow. This is such a beautiful piece. So how much time do you get to spend up here now?

Ry: I come over about once a week or something. Two weeks. I love it over here, but you got to watch your rattlesnakes. They bail the rattlesnakes to this whole area in here.

Rk: They bail?

Ry: Yeah, when they run their hay out.

Rk: Oh.

Ry: And they go to pick it up in the bailer, why they—here they are in the bailer. They're mixed in the rows when it's all rowed off.

Rk: Wow. That's scary. Although I've heard that they're worse during the summer.

Ry: Well, they are. That's what I'm afraid of back there, that when the state's bought that out. If they allow people now that they've declared that a park, if they allow people in there in August and September, they're in trouble. Because your rattlesnake loses its skin. They're blind.

Rk: Really?

Ry: When they lose their skin they get another rattle on the end of their rattles and they're blind. And anything sound, they can jump out the full length of their body and then if you're a long ways away, they can hit ya. Cause they're gonna hit ya because of they're gonna hit in sound.

Rk: Have you ever seen somebody get bit?

Ry: No.

Rk: Good.

Ry: I've killed rattlers here.

Rk: Wow. How do you kill them?

Ry: Huh?

Rk: How do you kill them? When do you do--?

Ry: Chop the head off.

Rk: Okay.

Ry: You don't want that head to—

Rk: We're back to rattlesnakes.

Mom: I know what you're talking about.

Ry: I killed one right in this row, had 12 rattles on it. It was—I was walking up this land right here; it crossed the road right in front of me. I got a great big club and got him. The kids was comin up that day.

Mom: His elderly aunt who lived here used to chop their heads off. She with a, with a shovel.

Rk: Good for her.

Mom: I can't do it.

Ry: Well, my uncle always had that hoe all sharp and everything else. He hit it. And if you got a Siamese cat, they get about halfway out in that field, they can smell the rattler.

Rk: Wow. That's what—

Ry: They always had a Siamese cat here. He'd let them know that there's a snake around somewhere.

Rk: I guess livin in that house, they must have seen a lot of rattlesnakes.

Ry: They did. There's some of 'em livin' underneath of it.

Rk: I'll bet.

Mom: Got 'em in the <inaudible>

Rk: Yeah. We'll just take pictures from afar.

Mom: There's a fireplace, what do you call it... hearth?

Rk: Uh-huh.

Mom: It's beautiful and I want to take it home and I want to get it today, Raymond. We'll get my kids to do it.

Ry: The front room—my mother and her sister and brother never were allowed in that front room in the fair—on the north side.

Mom: Northeast.

Rk: Why not?

Ry: People—and that was the entertainment room.

Mom: Company—

Ry: They always had to stay in the back room, which is behind that front room.

Rk: Right.

Mom: So anyway, that's what I want.

Rk: That hearth.

Mom: Yeah. Cause it is, you know, just a remembrance of the place.

Rk: So send your kids in with the rattlesnakes.

Mom: Yeah. No, I'd go in before they would. I'm a little bit older.

Rk: So, they all grew up here and then, then your mom must have married and moved into town.

Ry: No... she lived in town at that time. Cause that's when my grandfather had givin'—my greatgrandfather had given that in town.

Rk: To your father.

Ry: She started school out here right over the ridge out here where you make the turn, come this way. There was a church there and a schoolhouse. It's not there anymore.

Rk: And where was that?

Ry: When you're going into Live Oak. And you make a bend and go down this way, and when you start to make the bend there, right in that corner was a school and a church. They used to

walk over the hill to go to the church. All that, and then the horse and buggy, they would all come to somebody's and have afternoon picnic and everything else together, all the farmers.

Rk: Oh that sounds nice.

Ry: When I started school out here where they 8th grade was, there're people were about halfway down here and town came in horse and buggy to school. They'd tie their horses up and go into the classroom.

Rk: And do you remember the name of that school?

Ry: Butte School, I forget what it was called. There was another one halfway into town, into Gridley. West Liberty School.

Rk: Okay.

Ry: But this was the Butte House School.

Rk: That's not the West Butte School.

Ry: Yeah.

Rk: Oh, that was just given to Middle Mountain.

Ry: It's way over there though. About halfway—beyond Grey Lodge out there. That Grey Lodge used to belong to the Fairleigh brothers

At 001_A_002 20:43