

## **Bloom Oral History**

Bernita Bloom: -nine or eleven miles. When I'm a little kid that didn't mean anything to me.

Interviewer: Sure.

BB: North

Interviewer: Did you walk or ride a horse or...?

BB: Rode horseback all over this whole area. My dad would tell me - we would see the foundations and the old dugout cellars - he would tell me who lived there, used to live there. Things like that. But of course I'm a little kid and I'm not thinking about... the names that stuck in my mind would be like Bowders....can't think of another one right now.

Interviewer: Would that be B O W....

BB: It could be. It could be. I mean if you're familiar with any of the history you probably know more than I do, because I didn't know I was going to want to know, you know. And crazy me I just pulled out a little book, notebook thing, that I started writing a book about cannot us some 25 or 30 years ago. And I'm reading some of this very stuff that I'm trying to tell you after - I couldn't read it does in pencil and I can't see very good.

Interviewer: You still have it, all these notes?

BB: I have it. I have it.

Interviewer: Would you be willing to let us see it?

BB: Well, could if you could decipher it. I got a grandson that is real interested in some of this old stuff and I keep wanting to get him to look at and read it. He never lived there because, my family lives north of Wall along the Cheyenne yeah along the Cheyenne River again. I keep thinking 'where am I'. I'm not pointing in the right direction. That's got to be. Yeah. That's gotta be. Well you got this at an angle too. But anyway when you come off the horseshoe curve road you come down to some that were down in here and Sonny my cousin still lives, like, somewhere in here. When you went to my grandpa's house you drove up in through - now see this might be where my grandpa lived .... because I don't know what you mean by Park but the Badlands made a wall around here like this. I don't know where it is, except this has got to be something like this. And my grandpa lived...Do you know where Tyree basin is?

Interviewer: I do not.

BB: Tyree basin is off of Sage Creek Road. Can you find it?

Interviewer: The Sage Creek Road comes around here...and then down.

BB: Well the Tyree Basin - you could come to my grandpa's house by coming down this, somewhere along this area, through this Tyree Basin. And then at one time the Vanishing Trails - we were an organized exploring bunch of people - anyway, that's how I learned about it is because from my grandpa's place we could drive up this little off-the-beaten-path kind of trail.

Interviewer: Kind of a two track

BB: Yeah and we visited the grave site of the reason that is called Tyree Basin.

Unidentified: It's right here.

BB: Okay, now see I – you know more, 'cause you've changed it. I mean, 'where's the Badland wall?' Well I don't see it.

Interviewer: It probably hugs like that, right?

\*Some indecipherable speech\*

BB: Grandpa lived right up against the Badlands practically. It was only about a – if I said a quarter to a mile to where this Tyree Basin trail is, that's where my grandpa lived. And I just got through reading how he found that place and if I think about it I can look, but I think it said something about Schell land, and that was spelled S C H E L L – and I never knew that. I never knew anything – but then, back then I'm a little kid, you know, and today to hear some of that...it's like 'oh that's news to me'.

I remember very well, this path. When the Vanishing Trails did it, we did it with the car. I also remember it when I was a little kid and we walked over there and we saw something in a hole and it moved. And we're kids. Sonny Heather is a year younger than I am. My sister, she'll stop by after a while I hope, anyway we started throwing clods, boulders, whatever, in this hole at this little ball of fur. Well when we finally got brave enough to get close enough...it was a baby calf, and it wasn't dead, but of course it couldn't of gotten out. So somebody – oh Sonny, maybe, I don't know which one of us – ran to grandpa's house to tell them about this baby calf we found so they could come and get it. After that I don't know any more of the story.

Interviewer: It's pretty great, though.

Unidentified: It is.

BB: Well that's what I mean, I didn't know what you are after. If you are looking for, say, actual boundary facts. Lines of dimension or whatever.

Interviewer: No, no, what we want to know is about people that lived in this area, what they can tell us about their family history, getting here, experiences on the land, some of the issues associated with the Dust Bowl era and the Depression, and some issues of failing homesteads, and also about the process of land agents coming in and purchasing some of the failed homesteads, and ultimately the process of starting to work with federal government for grazing leases and how that kind of reorganized the use of land. All that stuff and I'm sure, because of your experience on this landscape, that you can tell me all about it.

BB: I got a little box hidden in there – when you mentioned the leasing of the grasslands, that's how come I would be horse riding with my dad, is because that was called open range. And that's why, I mean my gosh, '44, we'd ride horseback almost all the way – see my home, also. Do you have a picture of it? There's a lone Badland peak right close to my house where I lived, cause I moved from where grandpa lived. We live...and then we moved back over this direction.

Interviewer: Around Sage Creek basin.

BB: Well, we weren't ever in the basin. We're still in the Cannata Basin. We are still down the bottom and there's a great big peak the Day-Lewis made a picture of, and I used to have it hanging on my wall and all that. I can show you – I can even

Interviewer: Yeah if you had a picture of it.

BB: I know that you – I know where it is. If I could describe exactly 'cause...

Interviewer: And that's where your family –

BB: That's where MY family – MY dad.

Interviewer: And that house is no longer there?

BB: And Sonny Heather bought that house, recently. Very recently. See I don't know what y'all did with the garage and if they burned it down or what. Somebody told me they were trying to get rid of everything so that it was – looked natural. Well what are you gonna do with those big old chunks of cement that are out there in the boondocks over here on the grasslands, unless someone digs 'em out and hauls them away and I'm not sure that that's smart.

Interviewer: - and document and protect them so –

BB: Well I don't know what your whole game is.

Interviewer: We have no game other than to try and learn as much as we can from the locals. We value the partnership that comes from – I'm from the University, so I'm an outside party – but the federal government working with the local community, and partnering to talk about the land, the history, some of the archaeological resources that might be on both the public lands and the private lands.

BB: Oh I got lots of boulders.

Interviewer: We just want to sit around and hang out with people out –

BB: I got old dinosaur teeth and crap like that. I don't know that I can find any of it.

Interviewer: Do you have any Native American artifacts?

BB: No.

Interviewer: No?

BB: Not that I'm aware of. Where I lived in front of this peak, you could go around that peak – see there again, if this is the Sage Creek Road... Now that, isn't it?

Interviewer: Yeah, that's right.

BB: Okay so somewhere in here I would imagine this is – there is some empty stuff, but this also a range a Badlands poking up. When you come right straight south of Wall up on top, at the pinnacles, if you knew where to look, you would see my dad's – where his place was, is, was; this badland peak. Well anyway, we would go around this little wad here. And when we were quite young, we would climb up another trail – we had to climb it – but it was obvious that it had been, probably team and wagons had gone up it, you know. But there was a gully washed out and 'we kid's weren't afraid of it', \*laughter\* for

fear we would fall in it and go down forever. We were just a bunch of dumb kids. We - I think we went up there for school picnic. One time for sure. And we left a note up there in a jar – of course I've never been back and that would be fun if I ever did it and could find it. It was fastened in a cedar tree. In a cedar tree. We called that a – no, park dubbed those 'Cedar Parks'. So on this bad land range, on the south side of it, is a patch of cedars. And as far as I know they used to make hay up there. Now we didn't, but somebody did and that's one of the reasons for the path. But anyway. I can – there is so many – not knowing that would want to remember, ever *want* to know. Except for when I found my little notebook and I'm writing some of this stuff down and I'm thinking, oh, for gosh sakes I didn't know I, you know, cared enough. And I was having trouble reading it because it's in pencil. Who had a pen back then? Probably the only kind you had would have been the kind you dipped in the jar.

\*Laughter\*

Interviewer: Right.

BB: I mean not when I wrote it, but somewhere another I probably didn't have that. So, it's not very legible and all that...but I had a lot of fun looking at it. Because I read the article and this was gonna happen, it sort of stimulated the idea that maybe I know I'm something I'm supposed to know, or that I'm supposed to be sharing. I don't know. You know, 'cause not knowing back then...

Interviewer: Yeah.

BB: Like this North Cannata school. That's where I went to school, grade school.

Interviewer: Now you said the North Cannata school.

BB: North Cannata. It was not a town, all it was...lets see now, did my dad have..... I can't think if that old building got moved to my dad's. I just can't remember. But it was just a great big old square building and had a cistern. Here's another one of those pukey things that I can tell you. We also had a wash basin and a bucket, with the rope, and we would go out and drop this bucket in the cistern catch us a buck of water – us kids – and bring it and set it down by this washbasin. Well you can guess. We had washed our hands 'slop slop slop.' But the same water bucket got taken out, dropped in the cistern for another bucket of water that we drink out of! We each had our own cup. Oh heaven forid. We couldn't –

\*Laughter\*

Interviewer: You gotta have your own cup.

BB: Oh and you think about the fact that we washed this bucket off in the cistern – Basically. It's what you did, you washed it off. You didn't know you're doing it. You had a bucket of water – and then you drank out of it. You drank out of the bucket. And I'm 81 years old, so I don't guess it hurt me.

Interviewer: Yeah, must not have. Must not have hurt you too much.

\*Laughter\*

BB: There's quite a few of us still alive. In fact; Deljah, Violet, Catherine, Margie, and Sonny, Leroy and my sister. Are what's left of us, and Deljah lives over here Prairie Village and Violet. Violet lives in her own home yet, but I didn't call, I never did. I never thought about calling. I had been wanting to visit with Deljah just because she's four, or f...well, now she'd be six years older than me.

Interviewer: Okay.

BB: And I've been wanting to visit with her to..... kinda measure some of the stuff that I remember.

Interviewer: Compare notes.

BB: And she's never ever talk like she cared. Well, she probably is a little bit like me. She never had a reason. You know she didn't need... and life and gone by, so what? I don't know what Sonny – his name is William. He's always been called Sonny –or Willy.

Interviewer: So was this like a little bigger, it sounds like, than a one room school house?

BB: This is a one room schoolhouse.

Interviewer: But it was a country school house in that way.

BB: Yes it was a country school. It had a big long porch. And at one time there was a room on each end of this porch and a kinda low ceiling. The question was... \*gasp\* these were bathrooms, toilets! Not when I went – we went outside – but can you imagine? And that's one of the things I'd like to talk to Deljah about. Were they ever indoor toilets?

Interviewer: Right.

BB: Okay, I think above one of them...there was a tank or barrel of sorts. It tells you that they had to been designed to have been toilets indoor. Can you imagine indoor toilets in a one room school?

Interviewer: That's pretty... pretty high living.

\*laughter\*

BB: I – during my time they had built a partition, a room, inside of this one room school for the teacher to live in, and I remembered that more than anything just because it's more when I went to school there. My gosh, we had a stage, we had a blackboard, we had a great big old potbellied furnace – not potbellied. In fact, I think we've got the furnace.

Interviewer: Did you have to feed it while you were there?

BB: Oh yes us kids got to go out to the coal barn, coal shed – coal shed, that's what we called it – and get coal in a bucket – in a coal bucket – and there was some wood.

Interviewer: Where did you get that coal if I might ask?

BB: I don't know. See, I'd imagine it was probably, I'm gonna say, a 'commodity.'

Interviewer: Sure. Was the rail line through here active at that time?

BB: Okay, now, that's in Cannata.

Interviewer: That's a little farther south.

BB: And yes, it was.

Unidentified: And I've heard it really interesting stories about coal being dropped to the side for people to pick it up and use it.

BB: Oh it may be. We didn't ever, that I knew of. All us kids would do would run down to get the mail sack when the guy would kick it out of the, whatever, car. He'd kick out this big sack and you wonder why all your stuff was broke and beat up. That's why. But we thought that was fun because we go pick up the mail sack and take it into what was called the Depot Building and we'd take it in there and I don't remember how it got to the post office or what, but they let us pick it up. I mean, we weren't criminals or anything. I suppose they were glad that us dumb kids would go and pick this up and drag it to the Depot Building. When they pick up the mail sack, you would hang it on this bracket, and see the train didn't always stop. That's the reason they kick it out. So part of the time the train would go by and grab this sack of mail off of this bracket. While it's going.

Unidentified: Oh wow. They'd just reach out and grab it?

BB: Yeah.

Interviewer: And it didn't have a hook or anything? It was just a guy's arm?

BB: No, it was a hook of some kind. It was a mechanical – a mechanical thing that would do this.

Interview: Well would you like to come into our theater? We have a place to sit and we can talk with this in more detail.

AM: Totally different story because the drought down there was much more severe. Oftentimes in South Dakota and North Dakota, Montana, people – because of the collapse of prices of things – people just couldn't make a living anymore.

Frank Bloom: We know, we know...do you know about where they homesteaded up there?

Berneta Bloom: I could go show you because there are fences broken off and –

Frank: Mom, you aint gonna know by looking on this map.

Berneta: No, no, not a little thing like that, because it's 14 miles from the reservation fence-

Frank: Its 9-

Berneta: -back to where it runs into the Cheyenne River.

Frank: It's actually 9. It's 9 miles here, because-

Interviewer: Well, you know, when we record this, this is all good information, so even if this map isn't helpful to write stuff, you know, just feel free to describe it and that's good enough.

Man: Yep

Interviewer: Does that make sense.

Frank: Yes it does. Now have a chair mom –

Berneta: Alright.

Frank: - and write down the names of the people that were up Indian creek to get you started.

Berneta: Well I can name 'em.

Frank: Okay, write 'em down.

\*sounds of set-up. Papers shuffled. A few indistinguishable words.\*

Berneta: there are five different... five different.

Interviewer: Before...before we get started, are we recording?

Unidentified individuals:           Yup.           Yup.

Interviewer: And Alex, are you recording?

Alex: Yes.

Interviewer: I'm just gonna read a little something here and, um, I'll have you fill this out. First of all I want to say thank you for participating in this important project that seeks to honor our nations heritage by preserving knowledge about the history of homesteading on the Great Plains and the formation of the national grasslands. The history of homesteading in the National Grassland System are tails that are inexorably intertwined. The goal of this project is to unearth and preserve information that demonstrates the relationship between these two stories. The primary objective of this research is to obtain local knowledge. I will now ask a series of questions meant to informally guide this interview, but free just talk, and tell stories about things you've been thinking about. The interview can last however long you'd like it to be. Typically it lasts about an hour. At the end feel free to add any information you may have about homesteading and the grasslands, anything you wanna say. You- you are literally a treasure to us, for this project, and we just want to document your knowledge.

\*Confirmations from multiple people\*

Berneta: if anyone is interested and would like to view the place we would welcome - and he lives right on the edge so he could maybe - he's got a buggy that could take us all the way and I could show you the very spots.

Unidentified Individuals:           okay           absolutely           yes

Interviewer: Thank you very much we would be interested in that. but for now let's do the oral history and we will go from there. Do you want to tell us what you have first and then will ask our questions? I think that would be good.

Unidentified: Read it

Interviewer: Yes just go ahead and read-

Berneta:

The History of Heart Table; every community has its sites named by people of interest whether a hill, curves in the road, creeks – and the name remains throughout the area for generations of time. My homesite is 6 miles west and 4 miles north from Scenic on the northwest corner of Heart Table. I have lived there all my years.

In order to write this story I need to tell about my parents as they were connected to this bit of history. Their names were Carl and Laura from Oklahoma. They came north in the late part of 1915. The oldest brother of Carl had joined the rush of homesteaders. They lived west of Sioux Falls and came by train. Since the railroad to Scenic [out] of Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Pacific was being built it wasn't until 1907 that the first train arrived from the east.

The engineer thought the badland area was beautiful, so he named this town of Scenic. This brother of Carl homesteaded in 1905, and [as] part of a small group coming that early had to come on the Northwestern train through New Underwood. Homesteaders rented a boxcar, (((horse??))) team, wagon stove, plow, and tent. This group took three days to come from Rapid City. My folks came by train to Rapid City through Chadron, Nebraska looking for work. Two ranchers were wanting a man and wife.

One was the ranch of John Heart on Spring Creek, south of Rapid City, where the Home Heart resort is today. Wonderful valley just across the East from the Reptile Gardens, the other one was Pete (((Lemley????))) at (((Cresten????))). The Hart family had a youthful young man and an invalid girl. My mother did not want to work here so they chose to work the Lemley ranch.

Mother was a kitchen helper, also this woman had a telephone exchange; a box shaped unit with lots of holes in front. If party A wanted to talk to party B the two lines must be connected by pushing plugs into the right holes. Father irrigated hay fields in the summer and in winter cut and split wood for home and a bunk house for the other hired men to sleep when they worked here. They worked here in 1916.

In 1917 and 18 they shared half of the income from a man who wanted to leave his place. income from cream and few cattle. During these two years the flu hit the area and several families lost loved ones. By talking with a neighbor who told my father that a man had borrowed a hundred dollars against his place in the form of a mortgage. The man was in Scenic, operating a (((crane??))) station. If my father would go to Rapid and pay the hundred dollars, the place would be his. In this deal, three 40 acres, making 120 acres. My folks continued to work through 1919 and in 1920 for themselves.

The house had a kitchen with the 2x4s still to be seen. Boards cover the outside. The man had burned coal so the inside was black from soot. Empty houses set all over the country. They moved one, wrote the owner, and he wanted \$100. They moved it back and took another.

To get back to this purpose of writing, John Heart's son became a rodeo performer, given the name of Frank Hart. His art of bronc riding was praised by audiences everywhere. the praise and glory Frank received led him on. When the excitement died out, Frank established cow herd 3 miles down Spring Draw. About three city blocks from the creek is a spring like no other. There are three more springs on down the line to the Cheyenne River. This one throws a stream three quarters of an inch wide and probably has for the last hundred years that people that have ever seen it. He had a house built there with a fancy wooden floor, hard-surface kitchen counter tops. Dances were held there.

Every town from Rapid City had a stockyard, and Scenic was the largest. I have read where Frank loaded out a half a train load of cattle at a time. Remember trains were fired by coal and not by diesel. If someone must have honored Frank to use his name on this land site. And he did not homestead up on

the flatland where all homesteaders did, he homesteaded the area and he lived down off the curve of the hill on the outside banks a little way from the creek.

Frank: Now that she's read that, I guess, we never did introduce ourselves. I'm Frank Bloom, the son of Burnita Bloom. If this recording; Bernita Bloom from scenic South Dakota and my grandmother. Her mother came here in 1916, so my question to you guys or do you want to ask us questions of who lived where and when – I mean there is, we could talk days and days about the people that she knew and homesteaded. We just we wouldn't have near enough time, so I mean what do we need to get from you guys?

Interviewer: How about we go – we have a standard questionnaire and we have that we can address that. It's very vague so we can address that and go in all sorts of different directions. Lets just go through that and then we'll just sort of ask follow-up questions.

Frank: Sure

Interviewer: We're extremely interested in individual names and experiences as told you. What we want to know is why did you originally come here and what do you know of the stories of coming here to homestead. What was the experience like? As we saw a transition moving into the Dust Bowl and sometimes much earlier, what were some of the conditions associated with the failure homesteads? What about the process of the land being purchased to acquire for the federal government for the national grasslands? What about the process of moving from having an open range or having your own pastures, to using grazing leases? Those are the kind of stories we're interested in, but you guys are the experts. This is your history and you've experienced these things, so were just trying to guide the conversation slightly, but we're interested in all of it. So I'll realize there's limits on how much time you have but, choose the things that you want to talk about that you want to share.

Frank: Uh, they came here in 1916

Berneta: – 1915, but they accepted that place in 1916

Frank: The reason they came to this country is because my grandfather had a brother that was already here. He came in '5, is that right?

Berneta: That's right.

Frank: His name was Henry Stanky and - and so that is why Carl and Laura came to this country is because of Henry Stanky and... Henry Stanky was a great carpenter and he built barns and whatever people needed to be built and worked on the railroad because the railroad was not in here yet. Like I said he came in '5. So having said that, that is why Laura and Carl Stanky came to this country was because of Henry Stanky.

They also had another brother – name of Albert Stanky – who worked in the Leid (SD) gold mine and that is one of the reasons why they got here from Chickasha Oklahoma. Right? (((Blanchard????))) Oklahoma.

Berneta: Blanchard

Frank: - Blanchard Oklahoma is where they originally came-

Unidentified: Is that by Chickasha?

Frank: By Chickasha

Unidentified (Interviewer?): Okay, yep.

Frank: Yep, Blanchard. And we still have relatives buried in the cemetery down there. Laura and – the reason we're so targeted to this Indian Creek/Heart Table and that area is because Scenic was our main hub at that time. Okay, Laura and Carlos Stanky came to this country at the end of '15. Now when did Ernie and Earl come? Now that would have been Laura's younger brothers. Earl and Earl – Earl and Ernie Godsol came in here in what year?

Berneta: My mother, when she found out she was to have the baby, she wanted to go back to Oklahoma. So in 1925 she goes down there. Now she had two younger brothers. My mother was the oldest of 10 and she had two younger brothers down on the tail end of the valley, and she wondered if grandmother would give her permission if one or two of them would come up here and live with them and help them prosper the way that they could. While they didn't come yet that year, they came maybe two years three years later

Interviewer: Okay.

Berneta: But they settled up here, both of them and married, and of course everyone of that family is dead now but... but uh...

Frank: But where I was going with this with this story was they were supposed to have homesteaded in Indian Creek, but I have been to the archives, I have been to the courthouse in Rapid City, and I don't think they homesteaded. (Woman affirms) I think they were squatting down there working for Earl - Earl Taylor. (Berneta: That's right.) Earl Taylor had such a big holding down Indian Creek here and he was real good friends with Pete Lemley and Ray Lemley who run cattle down here on the reservation.

Interviewer: Okay

Frank: Okay. Back to the Taylors, I think Earl and Ernie – but I can show you their homestead hole, but which is not a homestead, but I can show you the hole that they lived in.

Interviewer: We would be very interested in that.

Frank: And that is.... that would have been in about 20... he was born then... so that would've been about 28 or 9.

Berneta: well

Man 2: Then the government bought them out to make it a bombing range.

Berneta: That's right. And that was just before the war

Frank: That's what I'm saying.

Berneta: That's WWII, because the United States knew they were going to have to defeat Germany so, they knew they couldn't keep the people there, they needed a bombing area.

Interviewer: Right.

Berneta: And I remember the planes going over by carrying a steel cable and a parachute would be hang – flying in there air, and that would be what they were shooting at.

Interviewer/Other: Wow, wow.

Frank: And that's why and they homeste - and they say they homesteaded but it was right here, right here on this little dry creek. I can take you right to it. (Want me to just put a circle in here? Interviewer: and make a notation.) It's right there so..

Interviewer: So this was north, though, of the reservation border is that correct?

Frank: Yes.

Berneta: Yes

Interviewer: The bombing range was all in there.

Frank: Yes. The bombing range took care of all of this here. All this right here, because even when I was a kid (Aside: How are you? Unidentified: How's it going?) When I was a kid, I can remember riding down here gathering cattle down here off of what they used to call the Lemley Lease and the planes and they still had targets and the barrels and all the shells and all the stuff was still out there

Berneta: Yeah. And you could find empty shells scattered they'd jus – throughout and there were a few that hadn't been activated. You could find them with powder in them, and in the little case that they that they unite bunch like this , and you could them.

Frank: Now Sonny Stangle had his white bedroll down there and he was camped out, and I can't tell you what draw was, but they in them airplanes were shooting white targets and he left that morning and was checking on some cattle and when he was came back that night his bedroll was littered with 50 cal. So he just picked it up and got the heck out of Dodge.

Interviewer: Wow. So the cattle are still grazing out here at this time. I mean, am I right? He's checking on the cattle as their moving through here, as their bombing.

Frank: Yes, yes, (Interviewer: Wow) as they were bombing, they're not no more.

Interviewer: Right, past tense.

Frank: Yes, as they were bombing, through the summer all the cattle – and my dad used to ride a lot out in here in all this, Cactus Flats, all this country out here was...was bombing range... back then. And, and they would trail them cattle right up Indian Creek, well from way up in this country from Farmingdale all the way down, and they would go right up Indian Creek and ride down here on the reservation with all these cattle. And it would take 3 or 4 days to get 'em, you know, from Farmingdale up –

Interviewer: Sure.

Frank: 'cause Lemley's – Pete Lemley and all them guys, they took care of most of them in this area here see?...so.... okay questionnaire. Cause we've been getting on a big tangent.

Unidentified individuals: That was a great tangent. We like tangents. That was awesome.

Frank: What were the – I'm gonna write on this map – what are the names of the people that were in

Berneta: I think you better take another sheet, 'cause you won't get them all.

Frank: I'm gonna write right on this.

Berneta: Alright. George Bowen. (Interviewer: That's the name) I think he should be on a sheet so they can be visible better.

Interviewer: We talked to somebody today who mentioned that family

Frank: Oh really?

Interviewer: And farmers giving up them homestead, and that she - her grandfather said that was the Bowen's property, and that was their dugout, or that's the hole associated with the...their farm.

Frank: George Bowen did not farm at all down there-

Berneta: There wasn't any farming down in there.

Frank: So, I mean they could have been the same person, but maybe he moved out of Indian Creek and then started farming somewhere, I can't tell you.

Interviewer: I mean, cause she was talking somewhere about the Cannata basin, I mean, do you recall if there would be farming over here and not, not over at Indian Creek.

Frank: Oh Yeah, yeah there would be farming.

Berneta: There never was an acre plowed in Indian Creek.

Interviewer: Not an acre...okay.

Frank: And they might have left Indian Creek and went down here and then... that's where – and George Bowen wouldn't be a common name. It wouldn't be doubled up is what I'm saying.

Interviewer: Right.

Frank: You know

Berneta: Well these people were past sixty, so I don't know where – they had to leave.

Interviewer: Okay

Berneta: The government said go. So nobody knows where they went.

Interviewer: Okay.

Frank: Okay, George. How do you spell George.

Berneta: G E O R

Frank: G E O R...and Bowen. B O W N..B O W E N?

Berneta: ... E N.

Frank: Okay. And then what was the other name?

Berneta: The next one?

Frank: Yeah.

Berneta: Well right about a quarter-mile on up the creek was a bachelor and his name was A..... That has left me for the minute... Abe Jefferson!

Interviewer: Abe Jefferson. He was a bachelor living up there, huh?

Berneta: Yes he was a bachelor.

Frank: Now, you know, are you considering Shields as one of these families too?

Berneta: Yes, yes. But that's on up yet.

Frank: Okay. And his name, his first name was uh, Shields.

Berneta: Walter Shields.

Frank: Walter Shields, yup.

Berneta: And he was, went up a canyon east of where these other present people had lived.

Interviewer: Ah, okay. And how do you spell his last name?

Berneta: Shields? S H I E L D S

Interviewer: Alright.

Berneta: And he had a wife by the name of Lina.

Frank: Okay, now do you remember another one?

Berneta: Yes, yes. Now the Taylors, Earl Taylor had a brother that wasn't married, and he needed someone to come and guard his cattle over the summer. So he moved his brother up there and his brothers name was Will.

Interviewer: Will.

Woman Will Taylor. Now right now there's a fair dam isn't there? up at that place, but that was just because Earl Taylor placed him there.

Interviewer: His brother Will

Berneta: Yes

Interviewer: The fair dam.

Frank: Well, we called the rock face dam. There's a whole bunch of rocks, and it's called the Rock Face Dam, but I still call it the Will Taylor Dam.

Interviewer: That is good to know new.

Frank: Okay, now there should be one other one.

Berneta: Are you ready? Earl...

Frank: I got that one. Earl and Ernie God soul

Berneta: There were five.... have we.

Frank: 1 2 3 4 5 George Bowen, Jefferson, Taylor, Shields, and Godsols. I thought and what about Conklin were there any Conklins a lived in there.

Berneta: No....you have the Conklin's land up east of you. (Yes) I don't know, whatever the hundred and sixty...maybe the south end went just over, I don't know.

Frank: Right, cause I know they call that Conklin draw. That's what –

Berneta: Yes, that's what the cowboys call their ridge, you see. But there wouldn't be very much over there if he went to the road. So I don't know, I wouldn't associate him with the Badlands.

Frank: Okay, um, I mean there's so damn much history, and homesteaders, and all the history that there is no way we can cover it all.

Interviewer: Yeah, so, do you remember there being schools? Like the one-room country school house.

Frank: She was the teacher.

Interviewer: You were the teacher? Okay. (LAUGHTER) I love educational history.

Berneta: There was not anyone else living in this Indian territory, or Indian valley. From the Cheyenne River to where the government ground is, it's 14 miles. 14 miles, because my father timed that many times going from –

Frank: Now you're getting off on a tangent, he wants to know about your schools. (Berneta: Oh, well, now that.) Now, the first school you can remember in that area was over by Heinrich's is-

Berneta: Yes that was. Ernest (CHURCH???) was the first teacher

Frank: Okay

Berneta: In the school on the northwest corner of Kube Table. And that school was built – first, they had a school in, there were a lot of deserted homesteads. You know, they just put them up with sod or something and there was a school there. Well, when the numbers became so great, they built a nice big school all (board????) six. The roof was, oh 14 something in that thing, and that was built in 1912.

I wanted to know some history, because I wanted to have a program for the parents. So I went to the county superintendent in Rapid Courthouse, and that's where I gained the information about the schoolhouse being built in 1912.

Interviewer: So was it two stories with maybe one half in the -?

Berneta: No, no.

Frank: It was one great big tall building...and I –

Berneta: with a high ceiling.

Frank: - can show you exactly where that was.

Berneta: Now, it was right on the corner of Highway 40, if.. it was called that, at that time.

Frank: It was right here. I'm gonna put a dot right there.

Interviewer: That's the 1912 school?

Frank: That's the 1912 school, because this used to be the old Highway right here.

Interviewer: Oh, highway 40, like you just mentioned, yeah.

Berneta: Yes. And it went every corner and every mile or so it would go north, it would go west, it would go north again –

Interviewer: And that was called the Heart Table School right?...Was that called the heart table school at that time?

Berneta: The one we're speaking of is the Kube Table. (Interviewer: Kube. The Kube Table) Because that table was *named* Kube. There was a man that came from Rapid City with the team and wagon and he came close to the Cheyenne River and the Indians were chasing him. So when they got to –he got to the river, they quit. He crossed the river and less than a half a mile after he got up the hill, he could see some green trees off to the left and every one of the homesteaders had the feeling that if they were green trees then there should be water.

Interviewer: Sure

Berneta: So he went there and yes there was. So he chose that place for his homestead and his name was Herman Kube.

Frank: K U B E

Interviewer: About what year was that?

Berneta: Well it was homestead days. the man was homesteading.

Frank: Had to have been somewhere around '3 to '5. Wasn't it?

Berneta: Well I suppose. Well, Henry Stankys were the first to come into the country, and that was 1905. There was not any...any settlements around at that time, (Interviewer: Okay) but they came like flies after that. (Interviewer: Okay) Yeah, by bunches.

Frank: When was the last homestead? Was that in '12 to '14 or when was the last homestead?

Berneta: Well the people that homesteaded, they started themselves out because you know you can't make a living with a plow and a tent and that type of stuff. They came out with a couple hundred dollars in their pocket and they consumed that, and then what do we do then? Then that's when they mortgage the place that had been designated to them (Interviewer: Right) and they borrowed, most of them. I have read – I am fortunate enough to gain this history from borrowing the abstracts of the people on the table. That gives you their names, the year of the homestead, the amount of acres. And I don't put acreage down, and I don't put sites down because when you read in stories, you can't place that, and I

have a book that thick, at this size, and I had 90 pages in there on the history and the people of Heart Table. I *love* to write.

Voices Speaking Simultaneously:

That's why you guys need to just come and get

You guys

Absolutely,

You guys might

we would love to see that

read that

Interviewer: More than might. More than might. That sounds fantastic. So how – that was...You compiled that over the years?

Berneta: Well, I did my mother's father's genealogy book. Then I started this afterwards. I did their book in 2008 and this has been since then.

Interviewer: Okay

Frank: So I mean, that's what I'm saying. This 30 minutes is not even – I mean, cause we're taken this whole, every homesteader, every – everybody that has ever been associated with this area she can tell you about.

Berneta: And I can tell you the names of... You see, way back in the 1880s and 1890s, the cattlemen would in here first. (Interviewer: Right.) Yes, and there were no fences so everybody's cattle were run mixture. It was designated when a homesteader - by the government – that they plow 5 acres, fence their place and dig a well.

Interviewer: They had to show some improvement

Berneta: They had to show some improvement, but there wasn't – after the government got the people coming in here, to heck with them. We will tax them now, after they get their deed, that was the purpose of the government; whatever the people did, they didn't care. Well, the people couldn't do anything with this and so about two or three years, people begin to leave because two or three years is enough. You know in these abstracts, it stated what bank that the money was borrowed from, or relative – for some borrowed from a relative – and if they didn't get.. if they – if the money wasn't paid back those people then owned the land where the homesteaders was.

Interviewer: You mean the bank or the relatives

Berneta: Yes

Frank: And that's why the abstracts are so important. (Berneta: Oh boy, ye- ) Because there are a lot of abstracts that come up missing because the title companies and the banks and stuff collect them and they – if you can get abstracts, that is a big part, even in your... your, what you want to do.

Berneta: He and I, I myself have the homestead of nine people that had homesteaded into this unit.

Interviewer: Into the same unit.

Berneta: But not his place. He lives 6 miles from me.

Interviewer: So was this, you're talk in you talk about these units. Were they 160 acres?

Berneta: That's with the government designated them to have.

Interviewer: Okay. So, when these people gave up and had to leave or whatever, by what means – do you know where they went?

Frank: Some of them went to California.

Berneta: I don't know what happened to them.

Frank: Some of them went to California. Some of them moved into Scenic, because they couldn't make the payments. Some of them went...who knows where

Berneta: Back home, to where they came from.

Frank: Back home; Yankton or Salem, or wherever they came from... maybe Iowa – I mean...

Interviewer: The reason, the reason I asked that is I grew up in Wessington Springs and my dad tells me that's a lot of the people, that live there. A lot of the names we have in the area now are people that were from the Cannata of basins Badlands area and they got relocated by the government over there so we got like Saffronas and Linns and Bushckas and I can't remember all the names that he said that he could remember that came from out in this territory.

Frank: And that's probably very true too. A lot of time –some of them, some of the very fortunate ones, very few, got stayed, but the other...The ones that did not stay; maybe the neighbor bought him out or somebody else bought him out or...It was just kind of a trading game back then.

Berneta: Well, the place stayed vacant for years and years and years until farmers, small farmers and ranchers began to make a unit. They then took on this quarter that bordered them, see?

Frank: Because a lot of that was back east information and also back east money – just like that quarter up there, south, up there –you know, like Ackerman; he leased that for years and then had to buy it from them people back in Yankton, and you borrowed the money when you bought that quarter south near your house, there.

Berneta: Yes.

Frank: I mean, Gram said she bought this house...how'd she say it? We bought this land for a song and sang it our self.

Berneta: You could get it for paying off the mortgage that was against it.

Interviewer: Sure, that was the price of the land.

Berneta: That mainly, was the price of the land.

Interviewer: Right

Frank: So – and I noticed some other people come in and we’ve taken too much of your guys’ time with this so, so – so where we’re going with this is, is if you guys want information or to throw out a name or give us information – this is a four or five hour sit down..... You guys’ll just have to come and see us.

Interviewer: We’d absolutely love to do that

Berneta: He sits on the edge of the Badlands , if you throw a ball; goodbye ball.

(Laughter) Frank: Well, that’s right.

Interviewer: Well would that be all right with you if we came to visit sometime?

Berneta: I’m – more than welcome

Interviewer: we will thank you. We’d love to hear about all this and have you just go on every tangent possible.

Berneta: When you can show someone the actual site, that’s when it sinks in up here. But put something down on the map, that’s only 1%.

Interviewer: That’s right. They teach you that with firefighting never trust your map; trust your eyes.

Frank: Yeah, I know, yeah.

Berneta: And I am so glad that my mind is still here.

Interviewer: Well we are to. Well, thank you for for coming in and even thinking of us.

Frank: Um... I’m just- and I know, and I realize that I shouldn’t be writing on this, but you guys can do what you want to.

Interviewer: Oh yeah, you should be writing on this.

Frank: You guys can do what you want to with it, but am I’m just gonna put Blooms... and that’s- that - we take up pretty much all of this...well, and pretty much all of this.

Berneta: His place is a tremendous amount of acres.

Frank: So, I mean, we got a lot of... a lot of connection to this whole area clear toward... clear from Farmingdale through there. We do not know a whole lot down here in Cannata basin east of Scenic. Just not enough people connected because that was the line and everyone that went to school went this way, and these guys went that way now. Now, have you guys got with **Tony Kudner?**

Interviewer: We have not. He’s on our list of people to call.

Berneta: Well that’s great.

Interviewer: Yes

Frank: Yes, that’s a must.

Berneta: He's 100 years old in January.

Interviewer: That's right. The last one in here was talking about his birthday party and they recommended him, so.

\*Indistinct chatter of multiple individuals

Berneta: He's had several birthdays.

Interviewer: He's had a couple, yeah.

Berneta: I was there on the 99<sup>th</sup> one and I shook hands with him. I said 'well now you got to live one more year.' and 'Oh, I don't know about that' he says 'that's 365 days away. I don't know' but he reached it.

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Frank: So we just lost a really good historian Donald Jobbin and he was very good.

Berneta: for 71 table

Frank: for 71 table. She's going to be good for Heart Table and Kube Table. Kudner's gonna be good for down in this area. (Berneta: He lives on- \*indistinguishable\* So I mean, that's where you'll have to break that down.

Interviewer: okay what we will do that. Can I have you state your name please. very quickly?

Berneta: You better write it down I think.

Interviewer: I'll do both.

Berneta: Berneta Bloom; B E R N E T A. B L O O M

Interviewer: Okay.

Berneta: And you want my address?

Interviewer: Yes please, ma'am.

Berneta: 16...501 Indian Creek Rd. Now the reason for that – when you get to see it; the road that goes from scenic out across the table where both live is called Indian Creek. Now I'll tell you how that got its name.

Interviewer: Okay.

Berneta: Back...back in Rapid City when the tourists begin to come out, you know, they just... you know, they get transportation to come out and enjoy the Black Hills. The Indians would go to Rapid by wagon and team (Frank: That's why they call it Indian Creek) because Rapid had asked them to come up (Frank: They used this corridor.) and perform their dances for the entertainment of tourists and the Indians came... \*Indistinct\*... all over town...Pineridge, Rocky Forge, and all those other places down there. The Indians used to travel with their wagon and team come up this Indian creek and... and go on up to Rapid, and they cared less where it whether it took him a week, you know – you know their nature, I mean– (Unidentified male: Yah. Its Indian time.) We're here, and tomorrow and still were here.

Frank: That's why it's called Indian Creek.

Interviewer: Oh and that's why, because they would follow along that creek bed, sure.

Frank: They would come up from the reservation come up Indian creek. Now, Pete Limley ...somewhere, somewhere right in this area, not too far off the river. He shot one of them and he still laying down there to this day, because they were after him and this was before – This was right after... they had an uprising down there at Wounded Knee. They were after him and he got away from him and he shot one of them down in here, and that's pretty much proven fact that they should he shot him, because I've heard that from many stories

Unidentified Male: I wonder if there wouldn't still be wagon ruts.

Man two: Oh I'm sh.... I don't know, the Badlands really sets in, so I don't know if it be there, not.

Interviewer: Could I also get a phone number from you

Frank: You ain't gonna be able to visit with her. Call me.

Berneta: I've got hearing aids. And, if you speak loud enough like he is, I can understand it. But not an old lady that speaks like this.

Frank: 993 3100 is my number 3100. My cell number is 390-9200.

Interviewer: All right.

Berneta: Now he grew up there... born – I, he was raised there. My family and I had a girl and two boys that were all raised here and they went to this Kube school that we talked about.

Frank: We rode our horses to school.

Interviewer: Well, I just wanna make sure we can get a hold of you so that we can – so we can follow up on this 'cause... This is just fantastic.

Frank: And really what we need to do is you guys just come down to my house, I'll get her up there and you guys can spend a whole day with her and talk about...

Berneta: Yes, and you won't get anywhere.

Frank: I know. 'Cause I know there was other people here, and it's past 4:30 and there was...they want to put their story in too.

Berneta: and this country portion out here was settled by people who came from Sioux Falls and Yankton and Vermillion. And the northern part was from, you know, coming across the Minnesota and they went that direction.

Frank: And you got a card?

Interviewer: We'll get you Denis's card – and thank you very much for coming in. We'll get....Cause this's got his cell phone number on them as well. I mean, you can have my cell phone number too as far as I'm concerned, honestly.

Berneta: And if you are interested you could borrow that 90, pages too.

Interviewer: Yeah we'd love to take a look at that. That'd be fantastic.

Frank: And you can copy it or...

Interviewer: Scan it in, yeah.

Frank: Yeah because there's a lot of information there.

Berneta: Well, you could read it and get a tape; how ever you prefer.

Interviewer: Sure.

Berneta: I went back to the days when cattlemen were in here and I have a whole page like this of a man's name and his brand, after that.

Interviewer: Okay – oh with his brand, that's great.

Berneta: Yeah, in the shape of his brand. See, some the earlier brand books came out...that was when the state required that the ranchers put a brand registered in Pierre

Frank: 1938 was when the first brand board.

Berneta: But it probably took a long time.

Frank: Yup, sure did.

Berneta: An all of these people; none of them are alive now.

\*indistinct chatter over each other.\*

Frank: That's when the first brand book came out.....I know, I know they come out 1938, so that's... it goes back quite a ways so... but there were a lot of people branding before they mandated it. I mean there are people branding back there in the 1800s, you know... but they, they just put their mark on it.

Frank Laughs

Berneta: And another thing that they another thing – I could talk clear till midnight – another thing because the cattlemen ran all over these homesteaded places – because none of them got them fenced – so the ranchers would pay the owner of the place, maybe \$100 or whatever, because they had used the.... Yes, they'd grazed through. They'd grazed the homesteaders land, so they reimbursed them. I don't – I haven't read what it would be.

Frank: Well dad said we he worked for Pete Limley and he worked for Ed Swineheart at the same time, and he'd steal Pete Limley's cows in the daytime, and then at night he would go back and steal Ed Swineheart's cows, so he was stealing 'em back and forth day and night, and that's the way....that's the way they worked it.

Berneta: You brought another story to my mind. When my mother worked there, Pete Limley told her that if anybody came to the place and asked for Pete, to please put a dish towel out on the line because Pete was moving somebody else's –

Frank: Well they were butchering right behind the house in the trees, and if he sees a white dishcloth out of the line he knows there is someone out on the yard because there was butchering somebody else's cattle.

Berneta: Oh boy.

Interviewer: We want all these stories. These are great.

Berneta: I don't know if we should say the real names now or not.

Interviewer: We can change the names if you want.

Berneta: No, it's okay.

Frank: Write down – if you can get the book the Badlands Fox.

Berneta: I got it!

Frank: I know, but these guys need to read it. The Badlands Fox is written by Margret Limley.

Berneta: Pete Limley had a boy named Chauncey, then he had another boy named Ray, and Ray became a doctor and practiced in Rapid City. Then the third one was Margret and when my mother worked there, she would stand and rock that thing, because Margaret was a bawling child and she would do her work and stand there and rock the cradle.

Frank: But that – that book that Badlands Fox has a lot of old names in it too. So I mean that it be worth.....is there nobody out there waiting? Have we taken up all your time?

Berneta: That Fox related to her dad, Margaret, and she didn't like his type a living and well.....

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Interview ends as the people leave the room and begin chatting elsewhere. Chatter is indistinct.