

My Grandfather, Jacob Wheeler Reed was born in Unionville, Nevada in the early 1860's. His father had interest in both mining and cattle. As a consequence, much of Jacob's early life was spent working and handling cattle.

In the fall of 1899 Jake and his brother, O. K. Reed, joined the gold rush to Nome Alaska- traveling over the Dawson Trail and using a big white ox pulling a sled for transporting their belongings. The Reeds were tall, dark complected men. Jake and O.K. would often walk while hauling weary travelers and their supplies in order to defray expenses. That winter, they stayed at Lake Bennett, where they built a boat so that they could sail down the Dawson River to Nome when the ice broke in the Spring. While working on the boat, O.K.'s knife slipped seriously gashing his knee. That put an end to their hopes of going on the Tanana strike father north.

After returning to Nevada, Jake went to work for the well known sheepman, John G. Taylor. Soon after, John G. Taylor and Jake Reed entered into a cattle and horse raising venture together which resulted in the development of the Desert Ranch, the V N, and Deep Creek Reservoir in northern Elko County.

My Grandmother Anna Woodward (Reed) met my Grandfather while traveling by stage from Elko to Jack Creek. Anna was returning home after receiving a teacher's certificate from the University of Nevada. Anna had been born and raised at Jack Creek, where her father, Chesley Woodward had ranched and ran a freight team since 1872. However, before embarking on the stage from Elko, Anna noticed a rather dark looking cowboy inside the coach. Having second thoughts, Anna decided to ride up top with the driver. Later, after they had eaten their noon meal at Dinner Station 20 miles north of Elko, Anna came to realize that she had misplaced her purse and could not pay. Learning of her predicament, the tall dark stranger offered to pay for her meal. This of course, broke the ice and from there on Anna rode in the coach where she and Jake had a chance to become better acquainted.

In the years following their marriage, six children were born to Jake and Anna Reed. Georgiana, whom we all called Jo, was the oldest – John or Johnny Reed was next - then my Dad, Lawrence Reed was born – followed by Hughie, Jane and then Charlotte.

In this day and age, with all the comforts we have, it is difficult to understand the hardships our forefathers experienced – traveling and working in every kind of weather, day in and day out – without the warm clothing we have today. Often, with only an axe, a shovel or saw with which to build a home. Never going to town, but once or twice a year. Even in my father's time, when things were becoming easier, everyone, even the children to work and work hard, often at a very young age

Dad told of helping to trail horses to Golconda some 75 miles to the south when he was only nine years old. It was a long two days down, and a long two days back, traveling in a long trot the whole way. However, things were getting a bit easier by then. Jake had purchased an automobile for the family to ride home in. But that didn't help Dad any – for when it came time to leave, Jake chose Lawrence to drive the saddle horses home.

Dad said that it might not have been so bad, except, that when he got to the Lower Clover (ranch) where he was supposed to stop for the night, he was unable to turn the horses into the corral. So he went on with them – thinking that he could put them in the corrals at the Upper Clover. However, when he got to the Upper Clover he had the same problem. And so he just kept following them, all the way home – seventy five miles on a long trot without stopping – needless to say, he was pretty sore and beat up kid by the time he got home.

My Grandfather was running about three thousand head of horses on the desert at that time. Mechanized equipment was just coming on the scene and there was still good demand for both saddle and work stock. And too, the government was still buying a good many remount horses each year. Consequently the marketing and delivery of the horses that were sold each year was a big undertaking. Saddle stock were generally delivered to the railroad where they were shipped to different parts of the country, while work stock on the other hand, was driven to Boise area where they were sold within the various farming communities. Dad remembered swimming over a thousand head of horses across the Snake River when delivering horse to Idaho.

All of the brood stock was run on the Owyhee Desert. Trips were made back East for the purpose of acquiring well bred stallions, and riders stayed on the desert during Spring and early Summer for the purpose of seeing that the various classes of horses remained separate. Along the rim of the Owyhee Canyon there are areas where side canyons and bends in the river provide natural holding areas. Dad remembered helping to hold certain unruly bands of horses in such areas at night that they would not cause problems with other bands.

Along in the early 1920's came a big drop in the horse market. People started selling horses for chicken feed just to get them off the ranges. The Double Square outfit north of Winnemucca was probably the biggest horse outfit in the country at that time. I believe my Uncle John said the Double Square was running about ten thousand head of horses at the time. Word got out that they needed someone to gather their horses to get them off the range. So my Grandfather took a contract to catch them. After they'd gather a bunch, they'd drive them to the railroad, either at Winnemucca or Golconda. When gathering, they'd herd the horses they'd already caught during the day, and then they'd put them in the big corral, they had there, at night.

Uncle Johnny said one night after they had about a thousand head of horses gathered, the horses knocked the gate open, and by the time they were able to get their horses (which they had staked for the night) most of them were headed out. Evidently they had a heck of a time getting around the horses. They were strung out for miles. But he said, it was the prettiest sight he had ever seen in all his life – a

Thousand head of horses, traveling up that draw in the moonlight with a cloud of dust hanging over them.

Everyone had to work in those days it seemed. Even when I was a boy, I can hardly remember when I didn't have one job or another - selling newspapers or setting pins at the bowling alley, or helping Dad or my uncles. There was always something for a boy to do. I'll never forget, it seemed that I'd always wanted a pocket knife of my own. Finally, after saving my money for some time, I was able to buy one. Thinking I had the world by the tail, the first thing I did was to show it to my Dad. That was a mistake. Dad promptly told me I was too young to be carrying a knife, and he took it away from me. It seemed that I was old enough to work, but not old enough to carry a pocket knife.

When I was twelve Dad sent me out to my Uncle Hughie's place to help with the haying. They call the place the Reed Ranch now. There I was given an old team of horses and a dump rake - which would not have been so bad, except that the old team was just spoiled enough that they kept running off with me. However, Uncle Hughie did let me drive a mower for a couple of days. That made me feel good, for mowing was considered a man's job.

During the summers, when I was thirteen and fourteen, I worked at the Willow Creek Ranch, buck-raking for my Uncle Johnny Reed. When I was fifteen, I went to work for Dan Fillippine on the Dean Ranch. Dan had a lot of good horses. I got along good there.

The following year, Dan wanted to come to work a little earlier so I could help with putting up their alfalfa. Dan had purchased a bailing machine for putting up his alfalfa, and they needed someone who didn't mind bucking bales. That sounded good to me. So I talked Lynn Burnes into going with me. We were both wanting to get in shape for football the following Fall.

We had a lot of fun that summer. Dan had two wagons with three men assigned to each. The way they had it figured out, one man was to drive the team which was pulling the wagon while one man was to throw bales on the wagon, while the third man was to stack. However, it didn't take Lynn and I long until we were both on the ground - one on each side - throwing bales on and stacking them as we went along. And boy did we eat. We ate so much that the cook began complaining. Dad said "feed them all they want they're stacking twice as much hay as the other wagon crew is."

Haying went good that year - so good in fact that when we got back to Elko, I learned that they needed help at the PX ranch - so I went up there for the rest of the summer. The PX was a big outfit- a lot of men - lots of horses. When they ask me what I could do, I told them that I'd run a buck-rake for a couple of years. They didn't seem to believe me. They seemed to think I was too young to have had that kind of experience. I finally told them that it was my understanding that I was being hired to buck - ranch, and if they didn't need me, I would go elsewhere. They finally relented.

When we left the ranch headquarters to go on down to where we were to start there were six buck - rakes all lined out one behind the other, with me bringing up the rear. As it turned out, the main gate where we were to begin buck-raking was narrower than the buck-rake headers were, so the lead buck-raker drove on down another quarter mile or so, to where there was another gate that was wide enough

for the buck-rakes to pass through. When I saw this, I just drove up to the smaller gate – and by placing two of the buck-rake teeth to the right of the right hand gate post, I simply drove through the gate, circling to the right as I did. Then, after I was through the gate, I simply backed up and began buck-raking hay. Needless to say, there was never anything said again about me being too young to be buck-raking hay.

They paid me \$7 a day while I was there. Bing Crosby owned the PX at that time, and every once in a while he'd ride out on an old pinto horse he had to see how everyone was doing. Bing was really a nice guy.

In all I worked 78 days that summer – worked 7 days a week – only missed a half day all summer – worked right through fair – went to school the day after I got home. I got a lot of experience during those years – saw a lot of country – which was good for it helped later on. Especially during the winter of 1951 and 52. Along toward Spring, it seemed nearly everyone was running out of feed for their cattle. A “hay lift” was organized – large military planes were brought in – military people were being put up in the local hotels – everyone seemed to be involved.

Most of the hay was being purchased in Lovelock and Fallon, then flown out of Fallon to outlying areas throughout the state. It was a big operation. At one time, they had five separate planes making two runs a day. They would load in Fallon, fly out and dump a load – fly back to Fallon – reload- fly to Elko – stay all night – and then put out the second load the following morning.

They needed help, but at first they only wanted we kids to help with loading the hay. They wouldn't let us act as guides or spotters. But when they began having trouble finding older men for the job, they began letting Jack Peters and I guide them.

Then they began letting Jack and I kick the bales out of the planes. They made us tie ropes to our belts so we wouldn't fall out. One pilot even made us wear parachutes although we didn't know how that was supposed to work – we were flying so close to the ground – we thought that maybe we were supposed to flip and land on our parachute packs in order to cushion our fall.

My Uncle Hughie was in worse shape than most that winter. Even on an average year, there is generally a good deal more snow in the Columbia Basin than there is elsewhere. But in 1952, it was double bad. I believe Uncle Hughie said that he estimated that there was as much as twenty feet of snow in some places on the ranch. I know that when flying over the place, only one small part of the roof of the house could be seen.

I believe Uncle Hughie had one or two small stacks of hay left, but he couldn't get to them, for they were coved with snow. I don't know how Hughie was able to do it, but finally, he was able to move his cattle to Deep Creek where there was a good deal less snow. That's where the hay was dropped.

Thousands of deer died in northern Nevada that winter. I remember, I was playing Junior Varsity basketball that year, and when we went to play Owyhee, there were thin and dying deer all down the Owyhee Canyon. There were so many deer, and they were so weak, we were opening the windows on

the bus and shooting them with spit wads as we went by. People talked about the loss of deer in the Owyhee Canyon for years. Many people have said that more deer died in the Owyhee Canyon that winter, than there are deer in the whole country now. Even so, there must have been thousands of deer that survived, because there were still a lot of deer in the country the following year and for years after.

Back then, there was always a bunch of us that would go hunting at Uncle Hughie's in the Fall. Hughie was running a deer camp. Leroy Horn and Ervin Ambler were usually there helping as guides. It was great – there were deer all over at that time. I can remember Uncle Hughie saying that in the Fall of 1951 – during the course of one days hunting – on the third day of the season – when the hunters had the deer moving off the Independence range – that he remembered counting over 400 bucks crossing into the Columbia Basin. That was just the bucks – he wasn't counting the does.

During my sophomore year of college I was given the opportunity to work for the South San Francisco Union Stockyards. Mostly, I was involved with the handling and feeding of many of the hogs that were coming into the yards. I believe that there were five different packing operations in close proximity of the yards at that time, as well as one large feed lot. I wish now that I could remember the number of livestock that were going through the yards at that time. They handled so many livestock there for years it was called Fat City. Now it's all been shut down. No livestock of any kind are being handled there any longer.

I graduated from Cow Poly in 1958. Soon after I went to work for my Dad. Dad and Emmet Edwards were co-owners of the Elko Stock yards at the time. The heart of our business was receiving livestock into the yards, weighing them, and then loading them into railroad cars or trucks for shipment elsewhere. I believe the weigh charge was 3 cents a head for sheep and 10 cents a head for cattle at the time. Fred Horn and Silver State Truck lines had a few trucks at the time, but for the most part, most of the livestock that were going east were still being shipped by rail. We were also kept busy feeding and watering. By law all livestock transported by rail had to be unloaded every thirty six hours for rest, water and feed.

Fall was our busy time. From about the first to the tenth of September we would unload, sort and reload on trucks and railroads cars anywhere from six to nine thousand lambs a day. I remember, there being trucks lined up all the way from the old Safeway store there where CarQuest is now, to the stockyard waiting to unload. They would bring trucks out of California and Idaho to get the job done. There were two long allies in the back of the yards where we would sort the fat lambs form the feeder lambs. The fat lambs would then be loaded in train cars to be shipped to slaughter plants in California. While the smaller feeder lambs would be trucked to pasture in Idaho mostly.

After the lamb run was over, then would come the yearlings to be weighed and put on the trains to be shipped to different parts of the country. After that the calves would come to town, and then the cows. Along in November and December it seemed there would be a lot of horses show up. Evidently, after most of the cow work was done, there was time for gathering excess horses from the range. There were always a lot of horses in the yards. I believe that during that period there would be about 2,000 shipped out of our yards each year. A lot of them were fairly good looking horses. The mustang laws had not

been passed yet, and most of the ranchers were still running a lot of their own horses outside on the ranges – so most were fairly well bred. I can remember there would always be a few people like Bill and Bob Kane, Jack Peters or some of the Chapins who would pick out a few horses to break during winter. We called those kinds of horses mustangs back then because they were mostly unbranded horses, but they were ranch horses for the most part.

Of course we operated a sale yard as well. At first, Dad was the auctioneer. Before long, however I was doing most of the auctioneering. We would sell about two hundred cattle every Friday. We had a lot of special sales as well. We would hold horse sales and or special cow or calf sales.

There were thousands and thousands of sheep and cattle being produced in northern Nevada at that time. In our yard alone we would ship 85,000 lambs and 40 to 45,000 cattle each year. And that didn't include the sheep and cattle that were shipped from all the other points along the railroad from Utah to Reno. There were cattle and sheep being shipped from Tobar, Wells, Deeth, Halleck, Argenta, Battle Mountain and so on clear across the state. I don't know for certain how many sheep there are in the state now. I do know that Pete Paris and the Spanish Ranch are still running sheep, but they are about the only ones that are still running sheep on a year around basis, in this part of the state anymore. And as for cattle Gary Nolan and I (representing Western Video Auction) only ship about 12,000 head of cattle each year. And Allie Bear (representing Superior Livestock), probably ships a little more than about twice that many. All these years, while the numbers of government employees have been increasing, these same people have been forcing a decline in livestock numbers. Now instead of producing livestock we produce fires.

I worked for the Forest Service during the summer of 1953, right after I graduated from high school. I was made fire warden, but mostly I was put to work painting outbuildings and so forth. I don't think there were more than three or four Forest Service employees in Elko County at that time – and probably only that many people working for the BLM. And I believe Earl Dudley was the only State Fish and Game employee that was operating within Elko County at that time. Now, who knows how many government employees there are in Elko County. And look at what it has done to our wildlife.

All those years when I was going to high school – every change we got, two or three of us would go out to Uncle Hughie's to go deer hunting. There were deer everywhere. And there were cattle and sheep everywhere too. And there were Sage Hens too. I remember that summer when I worked for my Uncle Hughie – after we got Uncle Hughie's hay up we started helping Grant Sharp with his haying. Grant and Betty were on my Great Uncle Kin Reed's place at that time. It was about five miles over to Uncle Kin's place. Every morning we would get up at daylight catch our horses and ride over to their place – and then in the evenings, we would ride home again. There were Sage Hens in every draw at that time. You have to ask yourself, if cattle and sheep were so bad, why was it that when we had the most livestock on the range was when we had the most deer and Sage Hens. And why was it, that when we were running the most livestock on the range, we had the least fires.