

BOB BARR INTERVIEW

This is transcribed from an audio-recorded interview that Dick Wilkie and Skip Dolphin made while visiting with Bob Barr in the early 1950's. Bob Barr was an early settler in Paradise Valley, north of Warm Lake one mile. They started off talking about the mine platted as the Golden Bar Placer Mine on Cabin Creek northerly 4 miles from Paradise Valley.

Barr: Just a big pile of timbers I guess. Yeah, there's nothing left there now. You know (Bill) Kesler I think claimed that and he took dynamite and shot it down. You've seen the picture down there... haven't you? Well he claimed they owed him for stuff there at the hotel and he claimed he shot that down and hauled out a lot of lumber. That cabin where I lived was the assay office that was like new stuff. They had a sawmill up there you know to make all that and he gave that to his nephew when he took that, I guess he got him to take the lease down there (Warm Lake Hotel). He was a Pritter, Pritters back in to the Cinnabar Mine. Wilkie: Well the mine was right under the building then, huh?

B: Yeah, they had two big stamp mills down in the bottom there they was all in, everything was in running order the first time I was there. Pig Starr took us right there and we stopped down the road, there was a little barn down there to get the four horses in and we packed our grub box and everything up there. They had slab wood about three feet long. Oh you could have a roaring hot fire there and we dried out and we camped right in there. We made us a grub box out of some of that new lumber while we was there. I don't think we had any saw, just whittled across it. We stayed there till the weather was over. W: What kind of ore did they get out of there, silver wasn't it? B: Gold was it, what was supposed to be, they never got any. If there was ever any that showed up in there the fellow that was running that stole it. He skipped out just before they, stop orders began to come in from back east. A fellow by the name of Snow was superintendent there. I don't know, maybe it was like the mine Reach, old Airpreson, Halloway and them down there, old Richards, maybe he put the gold in it that was taken out. They sold it, them days you could sell anything that (the name) gold mine would use. Old (John) Reeves, old (Elmer) Bell and John Knox, now the one that had the cabin here by Warm Lake. They was all in that (mine). They had a cabin that was made out of great big logs right over north of us a little ways. It was a standing when I was new up in there. I don't know if they, how they worked it, they sold it and got plenty of money out of it, if there wasn't anything in it. They put in that mill and they had a double cable there that brought that ore down and when the buckets full, the great big buckets, and sent the empty back when the one come down. Young boy: Where is the Thunderbolt mine at? W: Right where we went to, the big pile of timbers. B: You see it was on the hill above where the old mill was. W: Oh! B: That's where the cable come down from, that's where the old cabin was. W: Well there was a building up there over the mine or something wasn't there? B: Oh yes. They had a new building built over the mine, over everything. The sheriff took that. I don't know as they had much on the rift. They just took it, hoisted that up and put it in the buckets and ran it down on the cable about a quarter of a mile and they had a road that went right around the hill. I was up there a lot of times. W: Was the tunnel way up on the hill, is it? B: Yeah, just a straight down shaft down to that and they was shoveling out the ore. They had a, old Reeves and old Bell and John Knox was all in that and they had a cabin there right over north of the

shaft where the gold mine was. When they sold it this company built that mill. Two big stamp mills to work that ore and a big crusher you know, it came in at the top, the cable did. W: That's the stamp mill in the picture over there in your cabin is it? B: That's the mill just above the road. They had a lot of houses around there, new cabins, the first time I was there. W: And the shaft is right up the hill behind it. B: Right up west. I guess about a quarter. They had a road that ran around it was a mile or more to it by the road to get around by wagons you know. I went that way quite a lot of times hunting for birds and huckleberries and up that road there was plenty of birds and huckleberries both. They had an old time cabin and then down this side of there about one and a half miles or so old John Knox had a cabin of his own. They all had several rich claims but old John Knox and old Reeves and Bell was in that. Old Reeves I recon he was the big shot, he got \$17,000 for his part. I think old Bell and old Knox just got \$10,000 apiece. That is enough money if you took care of it and if you left the fools alone. That fall old Reeves went back to St. Louis and stayed all winter and came back dead broke and ready for someone to grub stake him. I never did feel very sorry for him.

Deadwood Area Mining: Of course he got in on the Deadwood (mining) and got somebody to grub stake him down there. I guess when that Bunker Hill and Sullivan took over that tall mine down there he could have sold out and got money out of that. Old Baker, old Bill Baker who lived here in Scott Valley, he had a shaft right there in their way, right under where they dumped that stuff and they offered him \$3,000 for it. He had 20 acres and you get 20 acres with every claim you know and they wanted that timber too. No, old Bill wanted \$30,000 for it so he died on a little pension he got. He never got anything out of the mine. They wanted to get him out of the way and dump their millings right there you know, where his shaft was and they would use a lot of that timber he had, he had on that 20 acres, not all of it had timber. That \$3,000 would have done him quite a bit of good and he was awful hard up. But he was afraid they was going to make a million-dollar mine out of it, but they ran at a loss all 8 years there. They mailed out a lot of stuff and hauled it in but ran at a loss all the time. It never did pay its way. During the war (WWII) they got the government to back them down. Old Reverend Davis out here, he got a company St. John National Zinc Co. to take it over and run it and the government had to pay a lot there. I knew lots of fellows that was working there. I was there at Landmark. They said if the government or something was paying it that they wasn't selling enough stuff out of there. They ate meals and stamp hauled it out and got everything they could find. The government wouldn't let them quit on account of that lead and zinc in there. That mostly was silver in that; they didn't care so much about that in time of war. As quick as the war was over the government withdrew there half, it went down right then. W: It never made any money, huh? B: Well they had some ore in there, they thought they would strike a big knot of it you know and they were doing that. The Bunker Hill and Sullivan would get, as long as they were developing it they would get their money back on income tax and finally after they got to milling it they couldn't get anything back. Then they developed where they thought maybe they were going to make some money out of it but silver, that was what they had to most of, got down so low it wouldn't near pay its way. Then they wanted to shut down for a while and wait till silver came up so it would pay expenses, the stockholders there in Boise, some were Hawe and Jack Troy and a few of them like that wouldn't let them. They said they would keep all the tunnels open and everything ready to go as quick as silver came back up to where it had been, but in less than two

years silver came back up to more than twice what it was when they shut down. They had it opened up and running again but they kept on until all them died paupers.

Young male: How did Cupp Brown get its name? B: Some old fellow by the name of Cupp Brown get its name? B: I guess he was a younger fellow that had sheep up in there. I don't know if he was Sam Cupps father or what, I knew him in here. W: Well he built an old cabin up there then, huh? Well Cupps did. Well there's an old cabin up there. B: Well I don't know if he built that or not. There was a trapper cabin somewhere up there. W: Maybe that's it. B: Yeah, but I guess Cupp ran sheep through there and made them corrals about working the sheep you know. He came in there in the spring and had that, but I've known Cupp corrals ever since I had been in the country. I don't know how it was named. I knew a packer Sam Cupps back in here about as no good a fellow that ever breathed. He paid all of his bills with checks back in here. Never did know of anybody who got a dollar on one. If he got a hold of any money why he took it in his pocket. They say he was a good driver and a good packer and all but dump master of ...on earth and never paid anything. I didn't have a chance to teach him, and finally somewhere back up here I seen in a paper where one of them poison rocky mountain wood ticks bit him and killed him. I never thought them things ever done any good before. It was good they killed as no good a tramp as he was. Done a little good.

Grizzly bear:

Now him and Cy Johnson packed that old millionaire oilman in that come up for the summer. He come to Nampa and come from Bunker City, old Mack Passage it was getting way up in years, then turned 70's he liked hounds I guess. He had 40 hounds. He had metal crates made for all of them. Money was no object to him. He had a young wife. I expect he had set a lot of money on her when she married him. Fairly good looking gal but she come through in the fall and went back to the camp in Chamberland Basin where they was going to try and get a grizzly but they never did get any. I heard old Cy say several times, there's never a grizzly in the Basin. There wasn't any in the country but then old Sam Phillips getting on a big drunk in the fall started on, a big snowstorm caught them on the other side of Landmark and they lost their horses. There was one along the trail they found, old Sam put the poison in that and killed a grizzly bear. Somebody was with him, I don't know who, later on, he had one that belonged to me (horse), it and two more got way back of the Chillkoot Pass, I seen the bones where they died over there and old Stone was trapping in there when they was two of them there. He said he seen them after they got snowed in way high and didn't have his pistol with him. The next time he came back he brought his pistol but one of them was dead and he shot the other one (horse). But that old Lilly he was along, old Lilly the fellow that hunted in Colorado with Roosevelt. Teddy Roosevelt got him to hunt bear with him in there. He said there was sign of grizzly in there on the trees. Their claws are different than other bears. For the last 20 years there was one over their where I worked on the head of Meadow Creek. I would see its tracks about every fall but it would den up somewhere right in there. See they have great long claws that stick out of their long fingers, out from their pads. But I don't know what went with that. I never did hear anything about any tracks of it or anything after I quit staying back there. Which I would see them tracks every fall in there. He had a place he denned up in some cave or

something with a bed in there you know. They stay around, all them bear have their place fixed to winter.

Horse thief:

I went one summer, I and another fellow we had a wagon and three horses and got up in there and stayed till, he stayed till he claimed he had to go home that week. We camped at the mouth of Sulphur Creek, oh Lord; fine fishing there. As we came in we met a big bunch of horses and some old mining man, that was old Con Murphy. He went to the pen for old Con Dewey when Conner's killed a man down there once. He shot him in a fight and some way old Murphy took it upon himself and took the rifle. Laughter. The view is they was kind of taking care of him after he got out of the penitentiary. He was getting pretty old then. We left them at the ford and we come on up and we met the horses back on this side and Wes Wyatt was riding a big buckskin horse and just as we, I was coming out of there for some more grub and George was a going to take his team and wagon, they was his, and go back to Ole (Ola). He claimed he had some big business there. I didn't have any and I don't think he did either. Just as we was getting up there old Clint turned this horse around, the other side to us, and after we got there he said did you notice Clint turned that horse around so we couldn't see the brand on it? I said yeah, it was a big buckskin horse and stole out of a pasture there by Montour. They took it down. Jeff Dokin he had a horse ranch down in Oregon. They would take them off down there, get them in the night you know, on that hill with the Masters boy Claude De Masters and another feller and they took another horse and in a week or so here they would come back with their saddle on the fringe. They would get a little money out of their catch. I don't know, Duncan brought a big bunch of horses up and taken back and old Clint in with him you know. He turned that horse around he thought we might well he'd have done that with anybody so they couldn't see the brand on it. I come out and got my grub and went back. George, sheep man, took a job as bodyguard down on Sulphur Creek. He was down and around there quite a bit. We had to get our camp back up on Sulphur Creek and back up on the hill when Traylor Kinder was working on the trail a little. When I got back he said they come in there and old Sam Phillips had that horse there. He said he was up after his horses. God, I don't know why I can't think of his name. They were Scotchman's I knew that oldest boy that ran sheep, when I was there at Knox. The old man finally had to have a leg took off and died, the old father of him. He said, old Sam take my new horse and ride up there after his. Well he said he rode that horse for me, knew the brand and everything. He said that buckskin horse was stole out of a pasture there at Montour. I forget who it was that had it. Then, big buckskin, he said and I rode in. Says I took and rode him up and got my hara and your gates and everything. Says what would you do about it? I said I think I'd get word to that fellow that was the horse still out. So I guess he did. Anyway they got word and when Duncan and them, when they brought the horses out they had 50 head or so. They brought them out, there was somebody watching them at Cascade but that horse wasn't in the bunch. A couple of days after that Duncan came through there leading that horse behind a buckboard he was driving. But they went down there and got him. Found out about him going through there you know then they went down to his ranch with an officer and got the horse. But that old Clint, I've been acquainted with him a long time there at Ole (Ola), he was pretty

hard up for money. Break in talk. I don't know about that. Barking sound. I had 8 ewes and 8 lambs in there and I had

This next segment was apparently recorded years later because Bob Barr's voice sounds much older.

The silver blutton they called it. But I never did fish in there but I think there's fish in it. I don't know why there wouldn't have been. They was little bull trout all the way up in Reardon Creek. Young male: Have you ever, did you ever hear about the lost Cleveland mine or something like that? B: The lost which? Cleveland, oh I guess I have, I don't remember now. There's so many of them lost mines that were just so rich you could just scoop up the gold nuggets in them. Never did find many of them much after I was in here. I know I never got anything out of them. Young male: That old boy looks like he's traveled mine up there to the gentleman's bear. B: Yeah, that's a very poor picture. Bear don't bother you that a way and grizzlies will go to Wanashawan you know. When down at Given Springs Barry told me once he was a hiding out he was, they had him in the pen a good deal of the time them days for horse stealin and one thin and another. He and some feller was makin a run on some one and they went up on the third fork and then they come across a trail that came in somewhere over there. He said up through there was a great big bear a comin, it cut across just before it got to 'em, come along about 20 yards out there and the other fellow said don't shoot at that bear, said that's a grizzly and you cripple him and he'll kill us. I don't know if he had a notion to shoot that or not. I suppose they had some kind of a rifle. He said he was a great big brown bear long slung. There was kind of a crook in the trail where he seemed, where he wanted to head, he just went out to one side and went along.

Possibly at Knox: B: One time I was cutting hay, I had pretty good hay crops there, timothy and stuff and then get it chopped and haul in there and pack it back in them little old log buildings they built in the Thunder Mountain boom you know. We would pack it about as far as the back of this house. I guess he thought I looked a little mad, I didn't have anybody helping me and he told me, when I had only worked an hour or so he could work like a fool for that long but that would do. He told me, I had it all cut then and when I got that in why and the (irrigation) water on it, I could take a little striped leg mule and have a week off. Well I got it off the upper part. There was a road that went down to where he had an old cabin right across the edge of the woods over there. Paul Limeings family was living in that and I turned it on (irrigation water) that when I got the hay off and it run off and it run off down there and ran all around the house. The kids had a lot of fun paddling around in that water. I was afraid maybe she would get a little mad but she didn't. Then I got old Clint Warnickton to come up there and shock some I had below. One evening he had come in from Pistol Creek. He had a lot of horses, most of them was stolen horses I guess, they were way down toward the mouth of Pistol Creek. Greg had told me I could have a week off you know. Old Clint thought that would be a good place. You could get all the fish you want anywhere. A fellow was freighting into the sheep camp at Reardon Lake. They had a camp right there where the Reardon Creek goes in right where I camped. I camped a little above that when we went in there to work. He said, oh my God you can get all the fish you want over there. But I kind of

wanted to go to the Middle fork I'd heard a great deal about that and I got somebody to write me a map where to turn from Landmark here and there on up by Whiskey Creek and went down there. Dragging that little old mule with house keeping outfit on it. I didn't know anything about packing then and thought I had a terrible load on it but guess I didn't have much. I finally went over the summit that goes down close to that little town of Sulphur Creek that leads up to the summit there. But the sheep had been on that. I just kept a goin and goin. The mule he was pullin back and me was pullin hard. Greg told me to turn the mule loose ahead of me and I was afraid it would get away from me with my camp outfit and grub and everything. I went on until the sun went behind the hill and I camped in that little meadow where they have a corduroy bridge now and a big spring right across the creek from me and I didn't know it. Right there I camped in the trail, a snow slide and things on one side. The mule couldn't get by me there so I turned it loose and made camp right there. That's where I caught my first red side. I cast out in there, riding along you could see some of them trout in there, just, or salmon everywhere. Well I cast out in there and caught a red side and cast back and caught another one. Next morning I got where I could see down in there it was right over a salmon bed they was around there eating the eggs. Boy: How big were they? B: The redside? Oh from 1 to 3 pounds. I put a handle in my spear that night. I took it along with me salmon fishing, a salmon spear. Got one right off the nest. I thought I might get the eggs maybe for bait but they were all gone, it had layed up. There was a big tent up right across the meadow there. I'd never seen that when I camped. Next morning when I got ready to go I went over to there to see, I'd never seen nor heard nothing of my mule. I had a little bell on it and had it hobbled. I went over there to hunt it up and there was a big tent. A lot of whiskey kegs layed around. Old Sam Phillips had brought up a bunch of cattle for somebody to summer in there and he didn't want to waste any time and so he would stay there at the big spring and watch 'em from going back and make whiskey while he was there and not lose any money. I just went over the ridge and heard the bell and went down and there was my little mule and 4 or 5 horses with it. I went back and packed up and when I got back there I came down to the flat there was old Dick Sanford. We always called him old Bean Billy Dick, in camp right across in front of where Prescott's cabin is (at Warm Lake, Lot 2) is right down to the creek and cooking a big pot of beans and set there till he would eat them up. Ever day he would eat on 'em. That's the way it was, somebody in Boise gave him the outfit he had, wanted to get rid of him and he came up the Boise River and going back to Warm Lake. I think I would have turned the horses loose, there was feed all up and down the river and fished around in there, going and get me a couple of good fish ever time I wanted to eat. Are you still camping on Tripod? Dolphin: No we are on Lodgepole. B: Did you see in the paper where they found a meteor (meteorite) that hit a tree on Lodgepole? D: Yeah, I found that, I'm the guy that found it. Yeah, that's why I wanted to see your paper. B: Yeah, well I've got the Cascade paper in there. I don't know but I thought I seen that in the Boise paper, said the tree was hollow and rotten in there, I suppose it was a yellow pine maybe. D: No it was a big white fir. Yeah, but that burnt down in there. B: You know I seen one of them things go by one spring while having guard training there at Crawford. We went, we just went to bed, they had a little hay in the barn, open in the west, all at once there was a big light busted in thee. My God, lighter than the city, I rolled out and went back to look and it looked like it was going slow and looked low. Great big light and it went on a little

while, the damedest boom I ever heard. Old Drake said it hit right there somewhere but nobody ever did find where it hit. He thought Jim Carpenter had got his powder and blowed up himself. He was working on the road up on the summit. It looked like it was going right square toward Knox and it probably was higher than I thought. I don't know if it hit somewhere but nobody saw it, they thought all summer somebody would run onto it, where it hit. Dwight thought his man Friday he had working on the road, thought his man had blowed up his powder cache up there, but he hadn't. D: I got about half of that over by the fence. B: What's it like? W: It's like a burnt lava rock, yeah. B: I worked one summer where there was a big one fell over by, east of Walla Walla Washington kinda black rock there. Old fellow had homesteaded there, he hauled a big hunk to the park and left it. I don't know how much was in the ground, it stuck up 5 or 6 feet. It was a big one that had landed there. D: I chopped into this tree to put the fire out, see. In the center of the tree. I hit it with the edge of the polaski, it bent the edge of the polaski out of sight. It was like hitting a rock. It was quite hot. Oh man it was hot. You could get anything you wanted out of it too. Water came out of it, rolled down the burn. I wouldn't believe it if I hadn't seen it. You wouldn't know they would be that much water in it.

Music on the tape

A repeat of some of Barr's earlier comments

Western music

A repeat of earlier comments

End of recording

What's a red side? Chinook or kokanee salmon?

Transcribe from the audiotape by LeRoy Meyer Sept. 20, 2000.