

Warm Valley Historical Project
Interview with Sidney and Alice Freese,
Date of Interview: January 29, 1991
Interviewer: Sharon Kahin
Transcriber: Gail Bell
Begin Tape 1, Side A

S Freese: The Arapahoes worked down at the northeast end of town on the railroad tracks. The Shoshone would park up here where the bowling alley is. That was their stomping grounds. One of them would have a big dance_____.
They were pretty fair contestants.

SK: When you say they were pretty fair contestants, what kind of contests did they have?

S. Freese: Horse races and cutter horses? #29.2

SK: At the rodeo grounds, yes?

S. Freese: They used to be hell for those Roman races, and roping but no roping.

On Counter # 28.7 Mrs. Freese starts talking but she is too far away to hear what it is she is saying.

S. Freese: Seemed to me like it was one of the Large's

A. Freese: No, I don't think so. The Indians and the white people got along a lot better than they do now. Heavens, the Indians would come to my mother's house to sell moccasins and stay all night. She wouldn't get undressed and go to bed. She would just lie on the davenport meter # 27.7 Indians used to come to our house and gather dishes and pie plates and things that they could use. We would save it for them.

SK: Where were you living then?

A. Freese: We lived right across the street from Crago's Super Food Store on Lincoln Street.

SK: Well that's what I was wondering. I have heard from the Indians, too, that people in Lander got along with the Indians.

A. Freese: They did, until just recently. Too much alcohol and dope.

S. Freese: They didn't drink then?

A Freese: Our kids all palled around. We have a daughter named Alice and she went to school with Indians. She could talk their language and dance the

dances.

SK: Besides the big celebration at the fourth of July, were there other times that the Indians would come in and participate in what went on here in Lander?

A Freese: No, not really, I don't think. They always had a nice float in the parade and then they would get mad at us for some reason and would just have their own parade for awhile.

SK: When they came and camped and put on the dances, did the tourists go and watch the dances?

A. Freese: Oh yes, but you mustn't be downtown

SK: So they didn't pay the Indians to come in and camp, but they would pay them to dance once they were here. And that is when everyone would go watch. What about the parade? Did they pay them to be in the parade?

S. Freese: No, they would get pretty good size prizes for the best Indian costume.
meter # 25.6 can not hear Sidney Freese

SK: When did that change? When did they quit coming in and camping?

A. Freese: The city made them quit camping out there. Then they gave them land to camp up on the hill where the roads fork.

SK: Why did they change?

A Freese: I suppose it was in a residential area.

S. Freese: Mostly senators.

SK: So when people started getting cars, that is when they stopped coming into camp?

S. Freese: Yes, you know they could drive in here in twenty minutes and bring camp with them. A Freese: For my father, I would itemize all the things they would use in parades for the fourth of July—that was back in the 1930's - 35—the side saddles and the costumes all those things. Mr. Carlton lived where the Maverick is today and my folks lived where the Super Food store is. Then they got a different bunch of people to take care of things, like the rodeo and they just didn't care. They just let the clothes go to pot.

SK: When was that?

A. Freese: It was after 1935.

SK: But before then, Ed Farlow would take care of all the parade things.

A Freese: Yes, the clothing and historical things.

SK: Who did all the things belong to?

A Freese: They belonged to the association Meter # 23.4 The big barn up there by the Game and Fish, that's where it was, and people just got into that. I have been up there when they were putting those costumes and things in suit cases. Mr. Farlow is no longer in charge of it.

SK: So they got vandalized then?

A. Freese: Yes. People stole the side saddles. They would check them out and never bring them back.

SK: You said they had an old fashioned doctor. What were the other things they had?

A. Freese: ??????????(SJ)General Fremont, everybody would pick out something to wear and they would have the costumes right there and they would be checked out to that person to wear and then they would check them back in.

S. Freese: They had a stagecoach pulled by four horses, and some guys would ride up with a six shooter and hold it up. It had girls of the evening riding in it.

SK: That all fell apart after Ed Farlow quit being in charge?

S. Freese: Well, he sold the stage.

A. Freese: She means the whole thing. I don't know when Ed Farlow died but that is when things started going down hill.

SK: It was really his show then?

A. Freese: No, he was just in charge of it. My dad did it a year or two after Mr. Farlow was gone.

SK: He sold the stage coach in 1962 or 1963. Were there a fair number of tourists back in the 30's that would watch this?

A. Freese: They were the ones that did the judging of the little contest.

SK: Not like there is now?

A. Freese: Even now there aren't the tourists like there were back in 1938-40.

SK: That was the height of the dude ranching. When you said they had games downtown. What kinds of games were they?

A. Freese: Women driving nails into boards and things for children and different age groups.

SK: And this was for Indians as well?

A. Freese: Anybody, but the Indians did not join. About that time they got to drinking.

SK: Do either of you remember seeing signs in Lander, things like, no Indians allowed in restaurants'?

A. Freese: No!

SK: Did you remember seeing them in Riverton?

A. Freese: I wasn't in Riverton that much, but I don't remember seeing them there.

S. Freese: Meter # 19.6 not hear

SK: Here in Lander?

A. Freese: I don't think there was either. An awful lot of them are married.

S. Freese: It isn't the Indians, it is the people that are governing. They have a right if they want to use it.

SK: Someone was telling me that on the reservation they had women's teepee contest as part of their rodeo?

A. Freese: Yes they did. They had a powwow and a sundance. The white man used to be real welcome, then it got to be that they weren't so welcome.

SK: About when was that? Did you ever go to any of the sundances?

A. Freese: Sure, the real old ones. They had a big circle and they would bring their sick in Meter # 18.3 and dancers, they would have a whistle in their mouth meter #18.2 They would dance for hours maybe all day and all night. Now they make them rest.

SK: They didn't rest back then?

A. Freese: They do now make them rest.

- SK: What about tourists? Did they go to the sundances and things like that from the dude ranches?
- A. Freese: Yes, from every place. We don't have as many Indian friends as we used to, but it's because we are older. They are gone. Sidney worked out there for a long time on the reservation building houses and things. I think we must have been pretty good friends of theirs because they would come if they didn't have a ride home or if they were stuck in town.
- SK: You said some of them used to sell their beadwork, where did they sell their bead work in town?
- A. Freese: They would bring these moccasins in a flour sack to sell to my mother. She would buy them for the grand kids. They are real expensive now.
- SK: Were there any main outlets that they would sell them at?
- S. Freese: They had a couple or three bead shops that they sold to. Some Jewelry stores would sell them, Chisholm sells them.
- SK: So back in the 30 's and 40's what kinds of stores would carry them?
- A. Freese: I was never in a bar, but they tell me you could buy them in a bar. Chisholm's, the jewelry store carries them. A man and his wife had a store that would carry them.
- S. Freese: There were squaws that would come to town and slap a cop or get drunk and do something, just so they would get thrown in jail so they could catch up on their bead work. See they don't have a family to cook for and take care of when they were in jail. They can just sit there and do their bead work.
- A. Freese: But they don't do that anymore, they used to.
- SK: So they could sell it ?
- S. Freese: They could catch up with their orders that way.
- SK: What kind of a store was it that Calhouns were in?
- A. Freese: A novelty store, a big novelty store. They finally had to give it up when the mill closed because of lack of business. She was a teacher for a long time.
- SK: Maybe one of you would remember when they staged things like the cabins burning, during the rodeo. Do you remember seeing those or is that before your time? I was reading in Ed Farlow's memoirs and he talks about that they would stage kind of a mock battle with the Indians coming in and

burning the cabins. I was wondering if you remember that?

S. Freese: They would put a guy in it and he would have Indian clothes in there and he would jerk his off and put the Indian clothes on.

A. Freese: meter 14.3 - 14.0 can't hear her

SK: She didn't speak English?

A. Freese: Yes, she did.

SK: So Farlow spoke both Arapahoe and Shoshone, did he?

A. Freese: I don't think it's Arapahoe though. I think it was something else.

SK: She was Souix I believe.

S. Freese: meter # 13.6-13.2 can't understand him

SK: Making ditches? Building damns.

S. Freese: His dad was the boss.

A. Freese: His wife and two children live right over here. I understand that both meter 12.9 can't understand the names. are dead.

S. Freese: In other words he died a poor man.

SK: Going back to the burning cabin, did you ever see that at the rodeo?

A. Freese: I never saw it and I don't think it happened. I have been here since 1927

SK: What were some of things that people would be? Besides General Fremont and the Stage Coach, what were some of the others that were every year in the parade?

A. Freese: The first doctor.

SK: Did they have a doctor's buggy?

A. Freese: Yes. Oh, I could dig out pictures. The fur traders, they just had a whole string of history, Fremont County History. meter # 11.1 - 10.6 can't hear A Freese.

SK: Did they have categories and prizes for everyone besides the Indians too?

A. Freese: Oh yes, meter # 10.04 - 10.00 - can't hear

SK: Chief Washakie?

A. Freese: 10.0 - 9.9 - can't hear

SK: Did he come into Under very often? Did people see him?

A. Freese: I don't know.

SK: Was that before his time?

A. Freese: I remember Mr. Roberts.

SK: What kind of a person was he?

A. Freese: A gentle, kind person. meter # 9.3 can't hear something about a church

SK: Yes, someone told me it was the first in Wyoming.

A. Freese: It could be. I think it still stands.

SK: Did many of the Indians come in to town for church?

A. Freese: Maybe twenty years ago they built a church. It was a nice church. One church of theirs burned. He built one just the other side of Ray Lake. The majority of the Indian people are good people. They are just like the white people.

SK: I heard a story once that in Shoshoni, merchants would take their bus to the reservation because a lot of Indians did not like to shop in Riverton.

A. Freese: We had this boycott (I can't hear her) The Indians decided they were going to boycott Riverton because they didn't give us ??? so they boycotted them. It's just like our son-in-law's nephew's store in Riverton. There isn't a better man that ever breathed. He helps people. Did you know ??? I can't hear her

SK: What about Indian rodeos? Did you ever go out there and participate in their rodeo or did other people do that?

A. Freese: We did not participate.

SK: But would white riders, and so forth, go out or was it just all Indians?

S. Freese: They had some small Indian rodeos.

A. Freese: They were having a rodeo every week.

S. Freese: You never seen an Indian riding a bull.

A. Freese: But there are more and more coming into the Old Timer's Rodeo. My sister adopted two white children.

SK: What about races out on the reservation? Do you ever remember going to any horse races out on the reservation?

S. Freese: No, but they have them.

SK: So really the 4th of July was the big event of the year?

A. Freese: Like I said, when our family was getting ready for the 4th of July, it would take up to six weeks getting costumes ready.

Interview with Sidney Freese

Date of Interview: 01 /29/91

Interviewer: Sharon Kahin

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Begin Tape 1 Side 2

SK: Lets start off with where you were born, Sid. Were you born around here?

S. Freese: I was born in Nebraska in 1906. I came to Wyoming in 1913. I can't hear Sid. He is talking about Tim McCoy

SK: At Fort Warren? Where is that?

S. Freese: At Cheyenne. He had twenty or thirty head of horses here in Lander and thirty in Riverton. I used to shoe their horses but anyway I can't hear S Freese.

(Meter notations indicate places on tape where it is not audible)