

FCC Field Reconnaissance Class

Allen Beck instructor

INTERVIEW WITH JIM MCDUGALD

April 7, 1982

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Information not verified with McDougald

Ann Carson

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INTERVIEW WITH JIM MC DOUGALD

Duncan McDougald - Jim McDougald's grandfather was a miner. He married Annie Smith who lived at the Fort Miller Stockade.

Neal McDougald - Jim and Don Mc Dougald's father.

Jim McDougald married Matilda Maude Hughes in 1938. They had three sons, Ned, Jim, and Neal. Son Jim was murdered. Son Neal married Norby's daughter (Central Camp?) and now live in Madera. Son Neal is a good person to contact for information about the railroad on the range.

McDougalds came from Ireland.

Ryan - Jim McDougald's mother's maiden name.

Jim McDougald was born in 1914. He attended O'Neal's school for the first 8 grades (walking to and from school) and then attended Madera High school.

Jim's father Neal McDougald, homesteaded the lower property. He leased mountain property for range cattle in 1914. Jim McDougald has maintained the lease of the mountain property all these years while most of the other participants dropped out. Hiram Dyer woned the high country property before Jim McDougald leased it for cattle. a house had been built on the property by a man named Nawblock (sp?) who had friends in positions of power in the forest service. Local forest officials opposed the building of the house and had it blown up 15 years ago. Nawblock was a German fellow who played the tuba.

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McDougalds leased property from Lisenby between 1920 and 1928 for 15¢ an acre. The people who lived in the vicinity of the range did not fence their property so all the cattle were driven to the high country together. In 1924 a fire started on the Fresno River and spread almost to Northfork (in the early summer, probably June). All the cattle had to be taken to Madera for the winter. Cattle, game and quail were killed in the fire. Judge Cole came to help with the fire. McDougalds did not lose their house or their cattle.

Indian Site on the lower McDougald's property high on the hill (near the range boundary) was tested by Fresno State in 1940 (southwest side of the property 1/2 mile from the creek). Four burials were found.

Jim McDougal's property north of the range was purchased from Cunningham (spelled Cullinan in the records).

Strawberry Tungsten Mine , one of the best tungsten mines in the country, is partially owned by Jim McDougald. The mine is in the high country near Jackass meadow and employes several hundred miners. Jim McDougald's fireplace is built of tungsten ore that he brought to the valley to interest a prospective backer. When negotiations broke down Jim used the ore for his fireplace. He was finally able to interest a group of lawyers and doctors in the investment. Now the mine is managed by Teladyn Tungsten.

Hughes , Jim McDonald's father in law, was county supervisor of Madera County. He had a collection of old maps that Jim now owns.

Johnny Hughes, grandson of County Supervisor Hughes, is a Vet at Davis. He knows the history of the area around the range and would be a good contact.

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General Information About the Range

Chinese Camp was on the southernmost island in the stream bed near the fence dividing lower McDougald homestead property and the range. The house was on the south side of the creek about 100 yards up the hill. The Chinese built numerous rock walls in and around their site. White folks ran the Chinese off their property in 1914. The Chinese supposedly buried gold on the property and Jim McDougald's grandmother claimed that she found it though she would not reveal details of the find.

Railroad roadbed that runs along the southern boundary of the range is the remains of a shortline built to transport lumber from the foothills to a mill in Pinedale. The present fenceline is approximately 15 feet North of the railbed. Possibly the original boundary of the range included part of the railroad right of way. Jim McDougald stated that the fenceline North of the railroad had been disputed even though the government had conducted a survey.

Ward owned land in Sections 26 and 35. He sold the property to the range in 1914.

M. E. Smith owned property in Section 26 SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ and the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$. In section 25 Smiths owned the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ and the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$.

F. M. Smith owned land in Section 31 SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$, the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ and the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$.

Lisenby was a millionaire who owned land in downtown Fresno south of the present community hospital. He had a partner in the logging business named Brower.

Lisenby bought up homesteads and had a man named Hinton "run the Place". The

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range was not used as a dude ranch, however, Lisenby had several buildings built where the present day range headquarters are now. These buildings were to house Lisenby's guests. Barns were built for elk and deer that had been brought in for hunters. Lisenby had grain planted to feed the quail and transported wild hogs for the hunters. In later years O'Neal finally killed the remaining hogs because the children were frightened by them. All the springs had wild blackberries. The area that the present day caretaker's house stands was where Lisenby's house was built. A blacksmith shop was among the out buildings.

Kenneth Wagnon (sp?) who now lives at Davis, ran the Range 18 years before Charlie Graham. He knows the history of the range and has completed a considerable amount of research on the property. His wife is an O'Neal.

Cobby name on the 1914 map may be Cobb who now owns the Christmas tree farm just off Hyw 41 at the base of the foothills.

Miller and Lux well known promoters on the West side of Fresno, sold part of the Range to O'Neal.

Nelson who held a managerial position on the range had been a wild west rider in Buffalo Bill's show. He is dead now.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

"Bellview was quite a town". It was located south and east of the lower McDougald ranch at the intersection of present day Road 211 and Road 208. Cleady (sp?) owned the Bellview store ("a wild place"). One of the Cleadys became a judge. Cunningham lived in Bellview and he pumped water for teams. Road 211 was the main road to the lumber industries stands of timber. The town burned. Cobb(s ?) bought Cleady property.

Indian Springs, located south of the McDougald homestead was an indian site and buildings were erected in historic times for people to bath in the hot springs.

Pintry Bethel (sp?) and Bill Ryan were trusted Indians who worked with Jim McDougald's father.

Newidra (sp?) Mines were opened recently by Don Johnson (gold mining). Don Johnson's daughter Mary Kay Keith works in a rest home. There are Mexican graves at the mine. The mine is worth visiting as it is the oldest mine in the county.

Bates Station was originally called Pruit Station. Turn west on the Bates Station road just off Hwy 41 near the experimental range. The station was near the old fig tree that still stands. The station was a stage stop on the

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way to Yosemite. A large rock outcrop near the station was a favorite spot for stage robbers to waylay the tourists. One mile in from Bates station is an old house and barn owned by L. S. Morris next to the Weekly estate. O'Neal owns it now. A man, his wife and sister lived in the house high on the hill. The house was filled with beautiful antiques. The house was burned and Jim McDougald rescued the two women, however, a guest perished in the fire. Neighbors called it a ghost house.

John O'Neal wrote books opposing Forest Service policies.

Carrie Cruthers who died last year was also part of the O'Neal family.

Betty Jamison is a good person to talk to about the Range. She has taken quite an interest in the history of the area. She lives at Four Corners near Table Mountain and is O'Neal's only daughter. Betty still runs horses. Her phone would be listed in the O'Neal book.

Hilda Jones, an 80 year old woman who runs a store at Baysore Meadows owns property with a very large site behind the store in Coarsegold. She is very alert and would be an excellent contact.

Jim Douglas is in his 90's and really knows about the "old times", however, he is a rather difficult person and may not be willing to visit with a stranger. His phone would be listed in O'Neals directory.

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Sontag and Evans, the famed local bandits, would steal lunches from children on their way to school at O'Neals. The ranchers finally traced Sontag and Evans to a cave under a large rock and surrounded the rock. Dynamite was thrown into the cave but each time the fuse was blown off by a gun shot from one of the hidden bandits. As a last resort Duncan McDougald (Jim McDougald's grandfather) who was a miner, drilled a hole 18" deep in the top of the rock to set a charge of dynamite. Sontag and Evans gave up and came out of the cave.

RECORDS

Fresno Bee Old files are on the second floor and can be studied Monday through Friday 3:00 to 5:00

Madera County Library has a file of interviews with old timers in the area.

PEOPLE TO CONTACT

Johnny Hughes

Mary Kay Keith

Kenneth Wagnon

Betty Jamison

Cobb

Neal McDougald

Hilda Jones

Jim Douglas

An Interview with Jim McDougald

April 1982

by Marilyn Evans

subject to corrections by Mr. McDougald

An Interview with Jim McDougald

His parents came down from Canada in 1908 and bought on the south of the Range. This north ranch was bought from Cummings. Lissenby bought all those homesteads. There never was a dude ranch there---just a place for him and his guests . Elk and deer were brought in. Wheat was planted to encourage the quail . All this made a hunters paradise for his guests. He owned a big home down by Community Hospital---close the that big antique place. He was in the logging business with Grouse. Hinton was the superintendent at that time The buildings were all there til the government took over in 1935. The hay barn was where the office is now. The black smith shop is below. Lissenby's house was where the caretakers house is now.

There was a fellow by the name of Noblock (played the tuba) who built a big cabin way back in the mountains. Benedict (a man who worked for the forest service) helped him. He had carved some beautiful old German emblems on it. It was a well made house. Later they tried to run him off. Fifteen years ago the Forest Service had it blown up. * I have that land leased now from the Forest Service. It's about 60 miles from here.

Some of the names of the homesteaders include the Smiths, the Cobbs (ancestors of the owners of the Cobb Christmas Tree Farm.), and the Shawbacks.

* It is my understanding that the Forest Service blew up and burned down all permanent buildings on government property (that had been formerly homes or cabins) to discourage squatters and fire hazard from vandalizing. M.G.E.

The Chinese were run out about the time I was born. Around 1914. My Grandma said she had found some gold they had buried. There is a foundation of their house up on the south side of the creek about 100 yards. Those chinamen made that rock wall near the indian site at the property line near the creek. Up on the bluff where the fence angles across on my side there were four burials washed out in 1940. Fresno State sent a team out to document this. They had been buried in a sitting position. This was SW of the range and 1/2 mile west of the creek.

Kenneth Wagnon (now retired from the University of Calif. Davis) would be a good source of information about the Range. He ran the Range for 18 years before Charlie Graham came. He married one of the O'Neal girls. We all went to Spring Valley Elementary School. The old road went through Belleview. There was a big hotel there. (At this point, Jim showed us a fine old picture of the old Belleview hotel. Judge Kludey is in that picture). The Minnerets railroad came through here in 1924. There is a good history book by Norby on that railroad. Jim Douglas would know a lot about this area too. He lives at O'Neals.

There was a fort at Friant. Fort Miller. My Grandma Annie Smith lived in that fort as a girl. My Grandpa Ryan came from Ireland.

Yes, there is a place called Indian Springs, below our old place. People came and bathed there for health reasons. It was an old indian site. There was an Indian boy who used to work for me, named Ernie Goode. He died just last year. There was Pinky Bethel too. He was very talented making ropes and quartz things.

My wife was a Hughes. Her father was the county treasurer. He also was connected with the old Hughes Hotel. He even took his horse to the top floor of it one time.

Some more names of people who could help you with your research on the Range would be Hilda Jones in Coursegold. She has the Store at Besaw Meadows in the summer. Also Betty Jamison just south of here on Highway 41. She is an O'Neal.

We rented Experimental Range land from Lissenby aro 15¢ an acre from 1920-27. One of the men, named Nelson, who worked for the Forest Service, used to ride with Buffalo Bill. Before Lissenby there were no fences, and everbodys cows just roamed around together. We all got together for roundup. There used to be wild hogs that roamed around the Range. There were big berry patches near the springs, and those hogs would come charging out of there and chase us.

In about 1924 a big fire burned out this whole area. Two big bands of cattle (1800 head) had to be ranged on the west side. We took Lissenby's with us too. Some people lost their cattle, of course. That fire out ran my horse. It was June. Dad had gone to fight fire at Bates station to head it off. I had gone up to the top of the hill to see it, but the fire beat us back to the house. Judge Cole came over to help me save our place.

Bates station was an old stage stop. There were some robberies at that station. There was a school house near Bates station. The children's lunches started disappearing. They decided one of the gangs must be hiding out nearby and discovered a cave. They tried

to dynamite them out, but the robbers just shot off the fuses every time. Grandpa Ryan went around behind and started drilling a hole down into the rock for the dynamite. Then they surrendered. It might have been Sontag & Evans. That was on the Wagner place. Those men were friends of the Morris people.

The Morris people were a man, wife, and her sister, who lived up on a high hill above 22 mile house. They owned lots of antiques. A lady burned to death there, and it was called a ghost house. In 1934, I was coming home from high school, and saw a fire. They saved the women, but the antiques had disappeared. Maybe it was a robbery, and the house was set on fire to cover up that robbery..

The End.

Note: As we talked, Jim showed us many newspaper articles, old maps, and many fascinating photographs. He laughed as he showed a picture of the filming of a "Marlborough Country" ad on his ranch. (Complete with hauled in snow and pine trees) "That fellow sat on a saw horse and smoked cigarettes for hours". He has one of the most beautiful fireplaces I have ever seen. It is made of tungsten from one of his mines, the "Strawberry". He has also owned quicksilver and gold mines. He has very graciously offered to show us the site of the old cave.

M.J.E.

Newspaper: Articles at Jim McDougald's

- On Ryan Fresno Bee, November 7, 1976. by Miles Ryan Marty
Tempo section.
- Carrie Carothers Tempo Friday Dec. 21, 1979. The Rugged
Individualist Didn't Fade With Time.
- Cattle Drive L.A. Times. Tues, Oct. 10, 1978. Cattle
Drive Alive in Sierra. Topping Cow Camp.
- Bill Ryan Madera Tribune, Sept. 4, 1970. Bill Ryans of O'Neals
named Old Timers Day King & Queen.
- William Ryan Ranch Fresno Bee. Sunday March 30.
- Women's Activities Fresno Bee Sunday July 7, 1968. Mrs. McDougald
is shown in this article.