

Well, before we moved out here in 1885 or 1886--we was living out southeast of El Reno--a place they call Riedmont, now. That's where my people, the Gros Ventre, stock of the Arapahoes--and the Blackfeet--we all lived there. And when these Chisholm trail cattle drove by every year, the cowboys along the river bottom would rope a steer or a heifer and tie it there in the brush where the wagon trains go by and the cattle. At night they come back to the Indians' camp. They say, "We've got a steer tied down there in the brush. I'll take a blanket and maybe a braided rawhide rope. Bring your rope and we'll put the rope on it--the steer--and I'll go on and get and get my blanket and my rope--I'll go on and you people can butcher your cow. So the Indians go out there. Give him their own rope--put the rope on the steer--take his rope off and he's gone--and they butcher that and have a lot of meat the next day. The Indians had these Hudson Bay blankets and these Pendleton, Racine, Wisconsin blankets, nice ropes. And beef was cheap at that time. The rawhide ropes cost four or five dollars--thirty-six or thirty-eight feet long, you know--twelve strands. Pretty work by the women. Some of them were as cheap as four dollars. Eight strands about four dollars.

(In a rope that cost about six dollars, how many strands would it have?)

About twelve.

(Was it always the women that made those?)

Mostly women, yeah. I know my mother was good. (at making ropes)

(When would they sell the ropes--when would they have an opportunity to sell them?)

Well, mostly when that Chisholm Trail was driving them through. Otherwise they'd sell them to other cowboys. Local cowboys.

(Like, for example, if your mother made a rope, would she just go over to some ranch or farm--?)

They come to your tent and ask for ropes. They always go looking for ropes and