HANDOUT

Title: Lima Bean Oral History of William Miller 1988

Handout #: 18e

Content:

Excerpt from 1988 Oral History: William Miller, Superintendent of Hondo Ranch

- 28 -

Miller: beans were hauled to it.

Johnston: Oh, I thought the threshers went out to the farm.

Miller: They do now.

Johnston: But they didn't then?

Miller: Yes, they did then. But I'm just talking about the harvesting part of it.

Johnston: But there were stationary ones? I didn't know that.

Miller: Uh huh. Ventura Manufacturing & Implement Company, which was in Ventura then, made any number of those big threshing machines, and each one of them had to have about 14 wagons to bring the beans in from the field. The beans, in those days, were all piled, and they were piled like the sugar beets - were put in rows. The wagon would drive down between two rows, and the workers, one on each side, would pitch the piles of beans up into the wagon. The wagons had nets in them. And the threshing machine then - the wagon loads of beans would drive up to it and they had a derrick with a rope running down to the in the wagon, and the horse hooked onto the rope, and the horse would give a jerk enough to turn the net out of the wagon and dump the beans onto the platform, and then the fellows would shovel it by hand into the thresher.

Johnston: Then these are the beans with all the vines still on them?

Miller: Yes.

Johnston: And then they go into the thresher and that separates the vines from the beans?

Miller: Well, sure. The beans would come out, and we always had what we called the "dog house." That's where the threshed beans would come and they would sack them. In those days the beans were all put in sacks. Nowadays they're bulk. But they were always threshed in so many sacks.

Johnston: Gunny sacks?

Miller: Yes. They had a special lima bean sack.

Johnston: These were all nice clean beans? No vines or anything else? Because

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