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**Summary of Oral History Interview with Arno Hartbauer**

1990

Interviewed by Irene Francis

Arno Hartbauer was interviewed as part of an oral history series for the Old Westcliffe Schoolhouse Museum. He shared memories of his family's ranching life in the Wet Mountain Valley, including the hardships of early homesteading, advancements in dairy farming, and changes in community life.

Arno's family originally settled in the valley, where they built a log home and prepared for long winters by storing wood and harvesting crops. He recalled that modern generations would struggle to endure the harsh conditions that his parents and grandparents faced. His family later moved into town in 1969, selling the ranch before relocating.

A key part of the interview focused on dairy farming. Arno's family was the first in the valley to install a mechanical milking system in 1940. Before that, three people hand-milked 32 cows twice a day, which caused significant strain on their hands. The introduction of milking machines greatly improved efficiency. He compared their operation to modern dairies, noting how technological advancements now allow cows to produce up to 18 gallons of milk a day.

Arno also discussed his father's health struggles, including a severe case of persistent hiccups that lasted 21 days before he was diagnosed with leukemia. Despite medical intervention, his father passed away shortly after.

The interview touched on his children's careers. One son served in the Navy before working in soil conservation, while another worked for Pepsi. His daughter pursued higher education and became an assistant dean at Denver Technical College.

Arno reflected on societal changes, expressing concerns about modern values and the ease of life compared to earlier generations. He and his wife, Joanne, recalled their early years of marriage, working alongside his father on the ranch, and the challenges of raising a family while maintaining a dairy operation.

His interview provides insight into the evolution of ranching and dairy farming in Wet Mountain Valley, as well as the cultural and economic shifts that shaped the community over the decades.

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