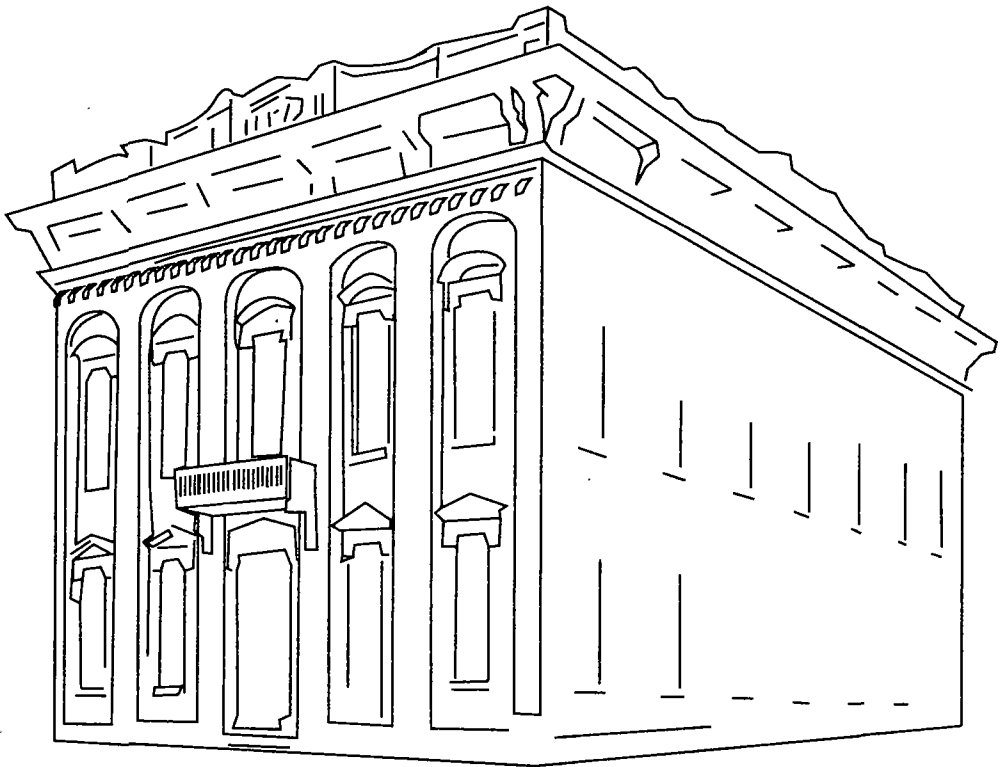


EUREKA MEMORIES



EUREKA MEMORIES

A Series of Interviews
with Fourteen Individuals and Families
in Eureka, Nevada
1993

Oral histories conducted and edited by Robert D. McCracken
Albert Biale Interview by Susan Gallagher

Eureka County History Project
Eureka County, Nevada
1993

Copyright 1993
Eureka County History Project
Eureka County Commissioners
Eureka, Nevada 89316
First Printing 1994

CONTENTS • EUREKA MEMORIES

- An Interview with Walter Baumann
An Oral History conducted by Robert D. McCracken
Photographs
Interview
- The Middle Years, An Interview with Albert Biale
An Oral History conducted by Susan Gallagher
- An Interview with Lucille Allison Estella
An Oral History conducted by Robert D. McCracken
Photographs
Interview
- An Interview with Leroy Etchegaray
An Oral History conducted by Robert D. McCracken
Photographs
Interview
- An Interview with Pietrina Damele Etchegaray
An Oral History conducted by Robert D. McCracken
Photographs
Interview
- An Interview with Estelle Gensoli
An Oral History conducted by Robert D. McCracken
- An Interview with Louis Gibellini
An Oral History conducted by Robert D. McCracken
- An Interview with Herbert Hawkins
An Oral History conducted by Robert D. McCracken
- An Interview with Martin Milano
An Oral History conducted by Robert D. McCracken
Photographs
Interview
- An Interview with J. N. Rebaleati
An Oral History conducted by Robert D. McCracken
- An Interview with Isadore Sara, Jr.
An Oral History conducted by Robert D. McCracken
Photographs
Interview
- An Interview with Aileen Mahoney Schlager
An Oral History conducted by Robert D. McCracken
Photographs
Interview
- An Interview with Floyd and Charlene Slagowski
An Oral History conducted by Robert D. McCracken
- An Interview with Marianne Smithwick
An Oral History conducted by Robert D. McCracken
-

PREFACE

The Eureka County History Project (ECHP) engages in interviewing people who can provide firsthand descriptions of the individuals, events, and places that give history its substance. The products of this research are the tapes of the interviews and their transcriptions.

In themselves, oral history interviews are *not* history. However, they often contain valuable primary source material, as useful in the process of historiography as the written sources to which historians have customarily turned. Verifying the accuracy of all of the statements made in the course of an interview would require more time and money than the ECHP's operating budget permits. The program can vouch that the statements were made, but it cannot attest that they are free of error. Accordingly, oral histories should be read with the same prudence that the reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information.

It is the policy of the ECHP to produce transcripts that are as close to verbatim as possible, but some alteration of the text is generally both unavoidable and desirable. When human speech is captured in print the result can be a morass of tangled syntax, false starts, and incomplete sentences, sometimes verging on incoherence. The type font contains no symbols for the physical gestures and the diverse vocal modulations that are integral parts of communication through speech. Experience shows that totally verbatim transcripts are often largely unreadable and therefore a waste of the resources expended in their production. While keeping alterations to a minimum the ECHP will, in preparing a text:

- a. generally delete false starts, redundancies and the *uhs*, *ahs* and other noises with which speech is often sprinkled;
 - b. occasionally compress language that would be confusing to the reader in unaltered form;
 - c. rarely shift a portion of a transcript to place it in its proper context;
 - d. enclose in [brackets] explanatory information or words that were not uttered but have been added to render the text intelligible; and
 - e. make every effort to spell correctly the names of all individuals and places, recognizing that an occasional word may be misspelled because no authoritative source on its correct spelling was found.
-

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As project director, I would like to express my deep appreciation to those who participated in the Eureka County History Project (ECHP). It was an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to obtain oral histories from so many wonderful individuals. I was welcomed into the homes of all participants and was allowed to share in the recollection of local history. I thank the residents throughout Eureka County and Nevada — too numerous to mention by name — who provided assistance, information, and photographs. They helped make the successful completion of this project possible.

Appreciation goes to Eureka County commissioners Pete Goicoechea, LeRoy Etchegaray, and Hale Bailey, who initiated this project and whose continued support made it possible. A special note of thanks goes to Vera Baumann, Executive Director of the Eureka County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Council, for advice and input regarding the conduct of the research and for constantly serving as a sounding board as any problems encountered were worked out. Thanks also go to Leonard Fiorenzi, Eureka County Director of Public Works, for his administrative help on the project. This project would never have become a reality without the enthusiastic support of the Eureka County commissioners and Vera Baumann and Leonard Fiorenzi.

Jean Charney served as administrative assistant, editor, and typist throughout the project. Her services have been indispensable. Transcribing, data entry, editorial services, and indexing were also provided by Jared Charney, Adam Karpel, Jan Kristiansson, Karen Mason, Connie Oehring, Mary Palmer, Edythe Porpa, Rose Strassberg, and Elizabeth Townsend. Ellen McCarthy, Connie Oehring and Edythe Porpa shouldered the task of proofreading the oral histories. Bambi McCracken assisted in several interviews and in numerous secretarial and clerical duties. Phillip Earl of the Nevada Historical Society contributed valuable support and criticism throughout the project. Much deserved thanks are extended to all these persons.

All material for the ECHP was prepared with the support of a U.S. Department of Energy grant. However, any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of DOE.

Robert D. McCracken
Las Vegas, Nevada
September 1993

INTRODUCTION

Historians generally consider the year 1890 as the close of the American frontier. By then, most of the western United States had been settled, ranches and farms developed, communities established, and roads and railroads constructed. The mining boomtowns, based on the lure of overnight riches from newly developed lodes, and the settlement of most of the suitable farmland, were but a memory.

Even in the 1990s, the frontier can still be found in Eureka County in the attitudes, values, lifestyles, and memories of area residents. The frontier-like character of the area is still found in the close relationships between most county residents and the land upon which they live, and in the big, beautiful, and relatively undisturbed quality of the natural environment, much of it essentially untouched by humans.

A survey of written sources on Eureka County's history reveals variability from town to town: A fair amount of literature, for instance, can be found covering the town of Eureka from its first newspaper, beginning in 1870, to the present. Newspapers prior to 1884 are available on Ruby Hill. In contrast, such communities as Cortez, Mineral Hill, Beowawe, and Pine Valley never had newspapers of record. Throughout their histories, all Eureka County communities received only spotty coverage in the newspapers of other communities. Most of the history of Eureka County after 1920 is stored in the memories of individuals who are still living.

Aware of Eureka County's close ties to the land and our nation's frontier past, and the scarcity of written sources on local history (especially after 1920), the Eureka County Commissioners initiated the Eureka County History Project (ECHP). The ECHP is an effort to systematically collect and preserve the history of Eureka County, Nevada. The centerpiece of the ECHP is a set of interviews conducted with individuals who had knowledge of local history. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and then edited lightly to preserve the language and speech patterns of those interviewed. All oral history interviews have been printed on acid-free paper and bound and archived in Eureka County libraries, Special Collections in the James R. Dickinson Library at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, and at other archival sites located throughout Nevada.

The interviews vary in length and detail, but together they form a never-before-available composite of Eureka County's life and development. These interviews can be compared to a bouquet: Each flower in the bouquet is unique — some are large, others are small — yet each adds to the total image. In sum, the interviews provide a view of county history that reveals the flow of life and events for a part of Nevada that has heretofore been largely neglected by historians.

The ECHP is one component of the Eureka County program to determine the socioeconomic impact of a federal proposal to build a high-level nuclear waste repository in southern Nye County, Nevada. The repository, which would be inside Yucca Mountain, would be the nation's first, and possibly only, permanent disposal site for high-level radioactive waste. The Eureka County Board of County Commissioners initiated the ECHP in 1992 in order to collect information on the origin,

history, traditions and quality of life of Eureka County communities that may be impacted by the repository. If the repository is constructed, it will remain a source of interest for hundreds, possibly thousands, of years to come, and future generations will likely want to know more about the people who once resided in the surrounding area. In the event that government policy changes and a high-level nuclear waste repository is not constructed in Nevada, material compiled by the ECHP will remain for the use and enjoyment of all.

RDM

An Interview with WALTER BAUMANN



Walter Baumann, 1992

*An Oral History conducted and edited by
Robert D. McCracken
1993*

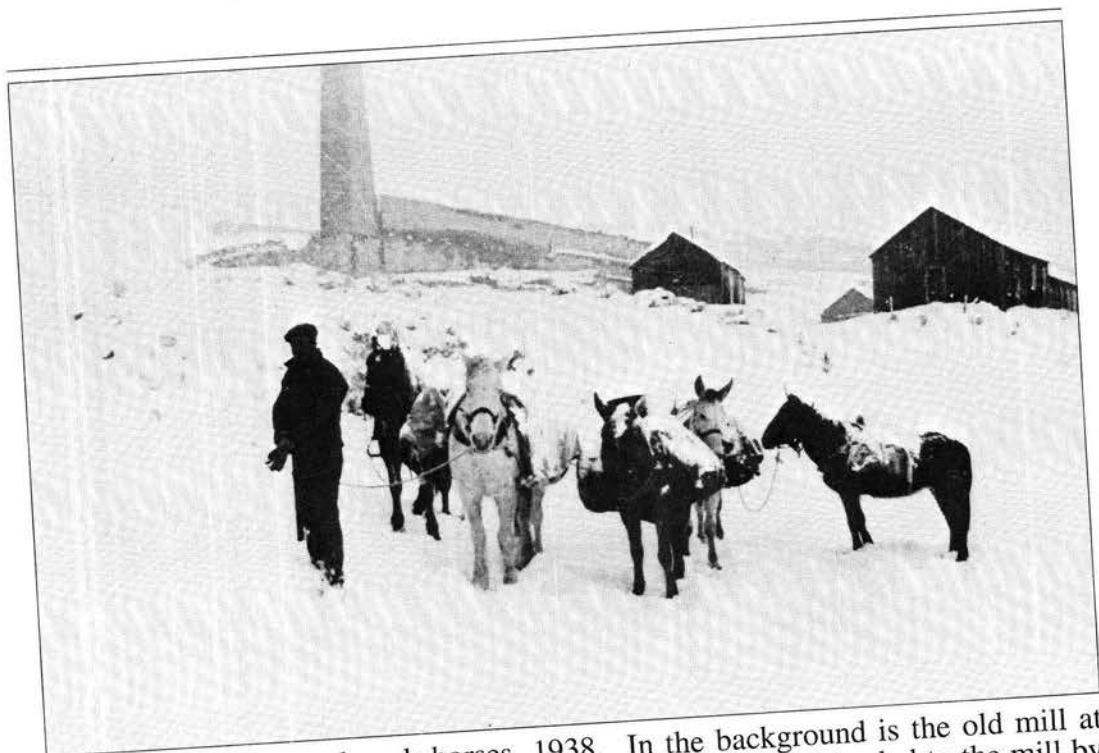
Photographs from Walter Baumann



1: Standing in the orchard of their McCluskey Creek Ranch is Ernest Baumann with nieces and nephew Jim Baumann, Marilyn Baumann, and "Cookie" Partridge.



Left 2: First tractor at the Baumann ranch, McCluskey Creek, Eureka County, Nevada, circa 1945. Pictured are Jim and Joanne Baumann (on tractor).
Right 3: Joanne Baumann on a sled following a snowstorm, Baumanns' McCluskey Creek ranch, Eureka County, Nevada, 1942.



4: Walt Baumann and pack horses, 1938. In the background is the old mill at Cortez, Nevada. It used to burn charcoal and wood cut and hauled to the mill by Italian and Portuguese wood-packers. As soon as the snow began to fall and got deep, sheepherders would move their sheep to the "desert" in the Gabbs area. The pack outfit in this photo is carrying supplies into a sheep camp.



Left 5: Walt Baumann and Jeannette Webb prior to becoming married, circa 1938, standing in front of the post office at Cortez, Nevada. Walt has just come from a sheep camp on the desert and wears his snow cap, chaps, and rubber boots.



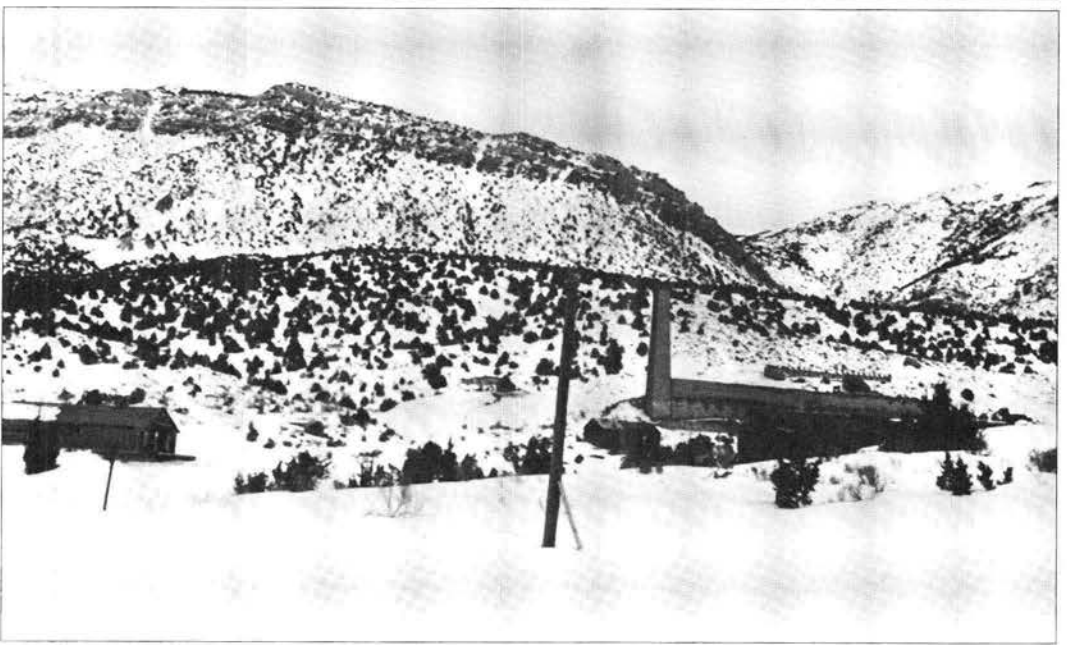
Right 6: Walt Baumann with his horse, Cortez, Nevada, 1938. Baumann is in his sheepherding outfit, including leather jacket, chaps, rubber boots, and hat.



7: Georgia Boitano and Jean Boitano at the Walti Hot Springs, circa 1940.



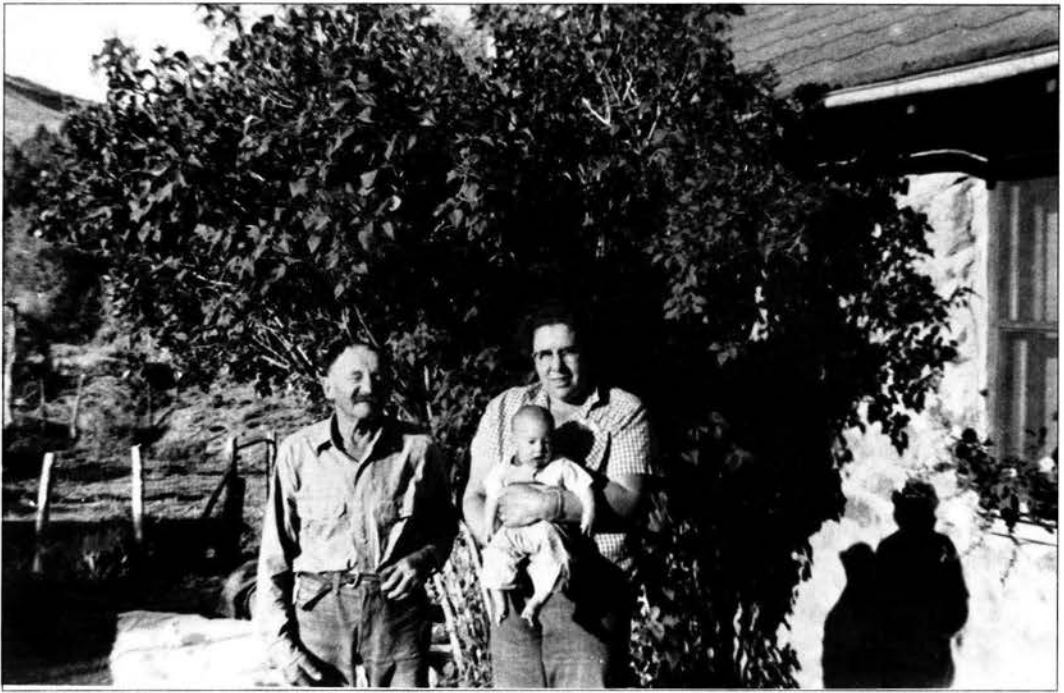
8: Cortez, Nevada, March 8, 1937. In the background is Eureka Mountain. The line separating Eureka and Lander counties ran right through town.



9: Cortez, Nevada, March 8, 1937.



10: Marilyn Baumann swimming at Walti Hot Springs, located about five miles south of the Baumanns' McCluskey Creek ranch in Eureka County, Nevada, circa 1940.



11: Emil Baumann and his daughter, Helen Baumann Partridge, with his grandson, Jackie Partridge, at Baumanns' McCluskey Creek ranch, Eureka County, Nevada, 1943. The stone house in the background was built by the family after the first home was destroyed by fire.



12: Walt Baumann, McCluskey Creek ranch, Eureka County, Nevada, 1938.



13: Pupils at the Baumanns' McCluskey Creek ranch, Eureka County, Nevada, 1923-24 school year. Back row, left to right: Trudy Baumann, Elsie Walti, and Ernest Baumann. Left to right in front: George Baumann, Helen Baumann, and Walt Baumann. Pietrina Damele Etchegaray was the teacher. The building in the background was the school, which had originally been built as a home. Pietrina slept in a bedroom off the school room. When Walt Baumann got married in 1939, he remodeled the structure and used it as a home.



14: Schoolhouse at the Baumanns' McCluskey Creek ranch, Eureka County, Nevada, 1923-24 school year. Pietrina Damele Etchegaray, the teacher, had her living quarters on one side of the building and the school was on the other side.



15: Four generations. Left to right: Martha Webb, grandmother of Jeannette Webb Baumann; Jeannette Webb Baumann; Kate Duffy, mother of Jeannette Webb Baumann; and baby Joanne Baumann, circa 1941.



16: Beowawe, Nevada, October 1951. Left to right: Howard Wright, Jim Baumann, Laurie Lynn Wright, and Marilyn Baumann. The town of Beowawe was free of racial prejudice, and Jim Baumann did not encounter racial prejudice until he entered the United States Army.



17: Beowawe, Nevada, schoolchildren, circa 1953.

CONTENTS
An Interview with Walter Baumann

- CHAPTER ONE** 3
Background information on Walt's father, Emil Baumann, who came to Austin, Nevada, from Switzerland in time to experience the winter of 1889-1890; how Walt's uncle Leopold was lost that winter; the Baumanns' home ranch on McCluskey Creek in Eureka County; Walt's mother, Ida, comes to the McCluskey Creek area from Switzerland, meets Emil, and marries him; a description of the properties that make up the Baumanns' ranch, and of feeding cattle on the range there; the breeds of cattle raised on the ranch; a discussion of the years the Baumanns raised sheep, and of Walt's experiences as a sheep camp tender; remembering a horse that liked to run away.
- CHAPTER TWO** 10
Remarks on training horses; the differing ages at which calves and cows are sold; how bulls are bought; recalling harsh winters and drought conditions in Eureka County; wintering sheep on the desert, and breeding livestock; remarks regarding different breeds of sheep; the vegetables and fruits grown on the Baumann Ranch, and how they were stored; remarks on local wildlife, and on tularemia in the rabbits.
- CHAPTER THREE** 17
Walt recalls his first sighting of a train, and visiting Cortez as a youngster; some information on the Cortez Mine; remembering fetching the mail on horseback; the current owners of the Tonkin Ranch and the McCluskey Creek properties; further discussion of Cortez and of the mines there; Walt meets his wife, Jeannette, in Cortez; Jeannette's uncle John Boitano leases at the Cortez Mine; the Boitanos' store in Cortez; Jeannette's love for the wide-open spaces of Nevada; the challenges of educating children in a remote area.
- CHAPTER FOUR** 24
Memories of Beowawe while it was a stop on the Eureka and Palisade Railroad; remarks on hiring shearers; memories of Isadore, Sara, Sr.; the poor prices of sheep and wool during the Great Depression; the advent of electric power at the Baumann Ranch; stringing telephone wire along trees and poles; Walt and Jeannette leave the McCluskey Creek property and help their son, Jim, and his wife, Vera, start a ranch near Eureka in Diamond Valley.
- CHAPTER FIVE** 30
Reflections on the Taylor Grazing Act and on the rapid growth of the BLM's bureaucracy; a description of the Baumanns' ranch in Diamond Valley; recollections of a midnight stampede during a roundup; how old-time cowboys would go without water.

CHAPTER SIX

34

Recalling how provisions were bought for the Baumann Ranch in the days before automobiles; robbery at the McCluskey Ranch and a theft at the Horse Ranch.

CHAPTER SEVEN

36

Discussion of the Dann sisters, local Shoshone women who are claiming land in Nevada.

This is Robert McCracken talking to Walt Baumann at his home in Elko, Nevada, August 6, 1992.

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Walt, what is your name as it reads on your birth certificate?

WB: Walter Earl Baumann. It's Swiss. My folks were from Switzerland.

RM: And when and where were you born?

WB: I was born out on the ranch at McCluskey Creek. Our post office at that time was Cortez.

RM: And what was your birth date?

WB: July the 5th, 1914.

RM: What was your father's name?

WB: Emil Baumann.

RM: And when and where was he born?

WB: He was born in Leutiwil, Switzerland. It's a little place; you probably couldn't even find it on a map. We went back there and stayed a month about 12 years ago.

RM: Do you know when he was born?

WB: It was 1871, I believe.

RM: And what was your father's occupation?

WB: He came over when he was only 16.

RM: Did he come over alone?

WB: No, he came with his sister-in-law, I think. His brother was here; his name was Leopold. He was in Austin and she came to join him in the winter of 1889-1890. That was a terrible, hard winter they had — there's never been one that bad since. Of course they didn't have any transportation, just horses and buggies and everything. At that time they had a lot of cattle, but they raised them out on the desert; they never put up any hay. They started putting hay up after that because nearly all the cattle died that winter. It kind of changed everything. They started raising hay, and from then on they were prepared.

RM: Before that they didn't put up hay?

WB: They did a little for the saddle horses, but they left the cattle on the range all year. This uncle of mine, Leopold, had been in California and he had a brother who lived on a little ranch down by Austin. I don't know if you've heard of Molly Knutsen?

RM: No.

WB: She's with the university and she does a lot of writing. Anyway, she has the place that's . . .

RM: Down at Austin?

WB: You go out this side of Austin; they call it the Grass Valley Ranch, and then this uncle of mine, Hartman, and his brother, Leopold, had a little place they called Cowboy's Rest, near the Grass Valley Ranch. He was staying out

there and Leopold came up during that winter for some reason. He went up to Cortez and I think he either borrowed or rented a horse and he was going to ride out there — it's about 40 miles from Cortez. The horse probably got exhausted, but he never showed up; and his brother didn't know he was coming. He went into Cortez about 2 months later and they asked him how Leopold made it, and he didn't even know he was supposed to come up. So they went out and found the remains of him way out there in the desert.

RM: Is that right?

WB: Coyotes had eaten the horse and him; they found just a few bones. The coyotes even stripped the leather off his saddle. They buried what few bones they had in Austin, in the cemetery there. There are 2 little depressions there and my father said he didn't know which one of them was his. We went in there later and looked and Father just told me he was in the lower end of the cemetery.

RM: He would have been your father's brother?

WB: Yes, my father's brother. There were 3 brothers there. Father came out that year when he was only 16, and that same winter his brother froze to death. As I said, from then on they raised hay in this area. We did run cattle out on the range later, some years, and they managed to make it, but most of the time we've had hay. We had hard winters — the winter of 1931 was real bad. We lost pretty near all our cattle, although we didn't have too many. We had sheep at that time, and we wintered them down on the desert. We had 2 little bands, about 3000 head, and out of that we lost about 800 head. They just starved on the desert down there by Gabbs. We wintered a lot of sheep down there. (Of course, Gabbs wasn't even there at that time.)

RM: When did cattle first come into this country?

WB: About 1860, I think. That's when our old home ranch was settled; I guess somebody homesteaded it. I think his name was McCluskey — they called it McCluskey Creek.

RM: And where was it located?

WB: It was on the Austin road, between Austin and Beowawe.

RM: It's a dirt road, isn't it?

WB: Yes, it's just a dirt road from Cortez to Austin. They improved it a little — it's traveled now — but it's still just a dirt road.

RM: How far north of Austin would it be?

WB: About 50 miles. There's a ranch right near there, the Hot Springs. A fellow by the name of Fritz Walti had the place. He was about the same age as my dad and he was from Switzerland. They didn't know each other back there, but he also came in there when he was a boy of about 16.

RM: I've talked to quite a few Nevadans who had Swiss parents. Why did so many Swiss come here, do you think?

WB: I don't know why. Down around Loyalton they say they are Swiss-Italian, mostly, and there are a lot of Swiss-Germans.

My dad bought several ranches right in the Austin area. Before he was

married I think the first place he had was called Ackerman Canyon. It's on Hickison Summit. That's where the petroglyphs are.

RM: How was he able to afford to buy them?

WB: I don't know. Of course, it didn't take money like it does now. And on a lot of places, they didn't take up the land, they just had a possessory claim on it.

RM: I see. What was your mother's name?

WB: Ida Meier was her maiden name.

RM: And when and where was she born?

WB: She was born near Wintertur, Switzerland, in the northern region. This is a larger city and a niece still lives there. I was there a few years ago.

RM: When did she come over here?

WB: She came over in 1905, I believe.

RM: And where did she go when she got here?

WB: She came to the ranch, where she had friends. She and Mrs. Walti were friends in Switzerland — they communicated and then she came over to be with her. My dad met her — this Swiss girl — and they married. She moved out to the ranch and they stayed there about 2 years after my oldest brother was born in Austin. The story was that there were so many rattlesnakes up there they didn't like it. [Chuckles]

Then they had a bad winter and they decided to leave. They moved down to where Mrs. Walti was, because they had been friends in Switzerland. My dad intended to move to Canada. He sold the ranch and he had a sister who had just moved up near Calgary, to a farming community named Vulcan. This sister and her husband (their name was Steiner) were going up there to raise cattle. There were several members in the family, and that's where he intended to go, but then he decided to buy the place there next to . . . the Waltis owned 2 places [including] the Walti Hot Springs — the university has that now. (The university calls it the Gund Ranch.)

RM: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

WB: I had 3 brothers and 2 sisters.

RM: Did you grow up on the ranch down there?

WB: Yes, I was there till we moved over to Eureka and then we stayed there 14 years. That was in 1976.

RM: So you lived on the ranch you were born on until '76?

WB: Yes, where I was raised. We went to school on the ranch there.

RM: Could you describe again where the ranch is?

WB: It's about a mile off of the main road from Austin to Cortez. I think they used to call the road Number 21. The ranch was a cattle ranch. We had about 2200 deeded acres. We acquired another little place they called Fye Canyon in 1929, and then Horse Ranch, which is on the east face of Mount Tenabo. It's near the old Buckhorn Mine. We bought that in '36 and we ranched in the 3 places.

RM: And you started with what ranch?

WB: The one ranch — McCluskey Creek Ranch. Then we acquired Fye Canyon,

which was a little short of a section. The Horse Ranch was just a possessional claim. In the first place, it wasn't surveyed. They just kept a man there. As long as somebody kept even a bedroll and camp gear there, they could hold it. As soon as it was surveyed, my second-older brother, Ernest, filed on it. I don't know whether it was a section.

RM: But you had a total of 2200 acres?

WB: All of it together, yes. We picked up a few [parcels] of land that were fields, meadows, that weren't included. There were odd sections in there and we acquired about 100 acres more that way.

RM: How much hay were you raising?

WB: Not an awful lot of hay. We put up about 500 tons, because we'd run our cattle over the range as much as we could.

RM: Was it grass or alfalfa?

WB: It was some of both — mostly alfalfa, but the Horse Ranch was all grass hay.

RM: How many tons does it take to feed a cow in the winter?

WB: Down where we were you figured about a half a ton; it didn't take much.

RM: A thousand pounds would feed a cow for how long?

WB: Up in this country they figure 1000 pounds would be about 3 months. It would depend on the winter. If it was a real cold, severe winter where the cattle weren't able to get out and forage, it would take a little more.

RM: When they feed the cattle in the winter, do they put them in a corral or do they just take the hay out to them?

WB: Sometimes we just fed them on the open. In fact, we had a grazing right on the outside where we'd utilize the browse with the hay we fed. We had kind of a variable schedule on grazing. It's different now; it doesn't work quite that well. Of course on the southern deserts they still graze all year.

RM: About how far south do they start grazing all year?

WB: I'd say about from the Austin area down. Then you go further south to the dry deserts, but the cattle usually don't look as well. And up around the Elko region they have to put more hay into them and the range is better quality.

RM: And then north of Austin they feed them in the winter?

WB: Yes. From about where we were people fed them off and on. I don't know what they are doing down there now.

RM: And that feeding began in 1890, you say.

WB: Yes, that's when they started it. Before that I don't know if they had enough hay to wean calves. Even down around the southern part of the state they keep enough hay so they can wean the calves.

RM: So you say the cows do a lot better up here than down south.

WB: Yes, they've got more flesh on them — they're a little better quality cattle. From Austin south, the cows don't look quite as good. They may be tough and everything; they're probably tough to eat, too. [Laughs] We used to go out and decide to eat one off the desert, and they just aren't that good. Of course, that's in the wintertime. I remember going out and rustling up a beef in there, but it just wasn't too good.

- RM: What kind of cows were you running?
- WB: We had more Shorthorn at one time and then we kind of went to the Herefords. Now they're raising these mixtures — you have these exotic breeds like the Simmental and Charolais.
- RM: What was the advantage of the Shorthorn?
- WB: They didn't do quite as well as the others. They're bigger and they take a little more feed; the Herefords are a little smaller cattle and they'll do a little better on [the range]. Now with the mixed breeds it's a little different. At one time we just didn't want to have anything to do with them — they had to have a nice white face. Now they can be any color in the rainbow.
- RM: That's interesting. You say your father was in the sheep business too?
- WB: Yes. We didn't have very many cattle at that time — about 1920 —and we decided to go into the sheep business. Then in 1939 we sold them.
- RM: So you were in the sheep business for almost 20 years. Did you hire sheepherders or what?
- WB: Well, my brother Ernest was always out there herding sheep. It was kind of a lonely life — probably wasn't the best thing for him either, because he was kind of a loner, but he enjoyed being out alone.
- RM: Did you herd any?
- WB: Yes, I herded some.
- RM: Did you like it?
- WB: No, it would get pretty lonely. [Laughs]. Sometimes you wouldn't see anybody for 5 days until someone brought supplies. When I was about 17 or 18 we wintered down on the desert around Gabbs. One day they counted, because they knew they were short some, and we were missing about 300, so I was dismissed. My brother dismissed me and [then] I was a camp tender — the cook and so on. You see, we packed horses and mules for camping. More in the eastern part of the state, down toward Eureka and east, they had wagons. In the west there were too many ranges, so they'd go in with pack trains. They'd have about 4 head of mules and they always had a pack horse. One of them had a bell on it and they'd follow that one, especially if it was a mare; they'd stay with this mare.
- RM: The pack horses would follow the mare?
- WB: Sometimes. Sometimes you'd turn some loose. It didn't always work too well. One time I was going along and I had 2 of them loose, and I had one mule fully packed and we ran into a bunch of mustangs and she saw them and away she ran, with my pack and all of it. I had a crate of eggs on her and she got to running and I couldn't stop her and the pack turned and broke all my eggs.
- RM: Wow. How did you get her?
- WB: Well, when they turned she [came back]. I was ready to kill her. [Chuckles]
- RM: That's funny. What kind of food did you prepare out there when you were a camp tender?
- WB: We ate a lot of beans and potatoes and mutton. It wasn't very fancy food —

the Basques live on beans and macaroni and potatoes and coffee and bread, and that was about it. They'd make their bread in big old Dutch ovens.

RM: Was it that shepherd bread?

WB: Yes. I used to take 25 pounds of flour at a time and it was supposed to last. If a cook didn't make it very good, it lasted quite a while. [Laughter] It gets kind of stale.

RM: So you didn't have to tie your pack train together?

WB: If they would follow, we'd preferably let them follow; otherwise you'd tie them together like a train — one's head to the other's tail, or else just a loop through the behind and then go around. But on the tails — especially if you've got a skittish horse . . . I remember I had one brown one that was kind of rankled. He'd go to bucking and I used to tie the pack horse right to his tail, and that would kind of hold him down. He got a little too much for me, bucking and things, and finally I put the pack on him. He got the pack and I rode the gentle one. [Laughter]

RM: Were you a pretty good horseman?

WB: Not that good, but I got along. I'd get thrown off pretty easily.

RM: What makes a good cow horse or a good sheep horse?

WB: There were a lot of wild horses down there and we used to go out and catch some of them. Once in a while we'd get one that was pretty good, but most of them weren't too good. We did have a few pretty good horses — even with the mustangs you'd get one that was an exceptionally good one.

We had one whose mother was kind of a work-type mare. She was out with a mustang stallion and she had this buckskin colt and he turned out to be exceptional. Boy, he could run. He was fit and he was real gentle, except he'd have some smashups because if you'd go too fast and hit a badger hole. He dumped every one of us, anyway. Finally he broke his back. He hit a badger hole when he was going full speed. I was just trying to see how fast these 2 little mustang stallions were and I was on him.

RM: You were on him when he broke his back?

WB: I was [trying to jump free] and he landed right on top of me. I thought my leg was broken — it was paining pretty bad. I tried to get out and I was going to hold him, because I didn't want him to get away. I was there a couple of hours, I guess. Finally I said, "I can't go on this way," so I gave him his head, and he kind of struggled a bit and I was able to pull free from him.

RM: But you lay there 2 hours with him on top of you?

WB: It seemed like it anyway, because the sun was pretty high. I was watching that sun and it was getting toward evening. I gave him slack and he struggled and I was able to pull free and I found out I was all right and the horse couldn't get up. He did get home and everything but he never was good anymore.

RM: You didn't shoot him?

WB: No, we thought maybe he'd get better. Finally we just sold him for chicken

feed, I guess. But he was pretty fast and good and he really handled well.

RM: Didn't you ever get hurt in those tumbles?

WB: [Not really]. One of my brothers was the same way — he never got hurt bad, but he was pretty stiff. And both of my sisters got thrown off him also. He'd get his head and you couldn't hold him. He threw one sister off and kind of hurt her a little bit. And then one time when they were haying over at a little place we had, I guess my other sister jumped on a horse bareback to tell us to come in for lunch. I saw this horse streaking by — he was lighting out and she couldn't hold him; he got his head. Finally I guess she lost her balance and off she went. I think she broke several ribs and had to go to a doctor.

RM: So this horse liked to run away?

WB: Yes. You couldn't hold him, and he was fast.

RM: Can a horse get his head when he's got a bit?

WB: If you've got him in a bit you usually can hold him.

RM: What do you do when a horse runs away?

WB: You just do the best you can to stay with him.

RM: He'll quit eventually, won't he?

WB: Yes, probably. I had a colt one time take off with me. I was gathering the horses and he stampeded with them.

CHAPTER TWO

- WB: I was riding this colt and he got his head and he stampeded. The same horse got with a bunch of wild horses, and I had no control. I don't remember how it happened — he got on the horses in the trail or something.
- RM: But he had a bit?
- WB: Yes, he had a bit. But a bit isn't quite as effective with a colt because you start them out with a snaffle bit — it's more like a driving bit.
- RM: And that's not as effective in holding them?
- WB: No, it isn't, but when you break colts you use them and then you gradually go to something else. Of course some of them break them with a hackamore — that's just a rawhide noose that kind of goes over their nose and it's got a hard thing in it and you press it on their nose. I didn't ever do much with those.
- RM: Did you ever use a war bridle?
- WB: Let me see, it's just a rope . . .
- RM: It's a thing up here that goes up behind their ears, I think, and when you snap it, my dad told me you could knock them to their knees with it.
- WB: I don't think I used that, but I think that's what the Indians used. That's where it got its name from; I guess that's the way they rode them. They'd put a gunnysack over the horse and they'd ride it. They'd say those Indians' [horses] had the sorest backs you ever did see.
- RM: Who were your neighbors up there on the ranch?
- WB: There were some people right straight below us on the same creek —their name was Allen. His first name was Charlie Allen, and my older brother married the youngest daughter.
- RM: What kind of an operation did they have?
- WB: They just had the same kind, only smaller.
- RM: How could a person make a living with that few cows?
- WB: They usually had some elsewhere, or they might work in the mines or something like that. We eked out a living out there; we didn't get rich on it or anything.
- RM: How many cows do you figure it took to make a living?
- WB: Well, we had pretty near 800 head of cows of our own stock, but then their calves were free, so we were in the neighborhood of 1000 head.
- RM: And you could just barely make a living with that?
- WB: Yes, we didn't get ahead; we just stayed.
- RM: So basically you had to be running about 800 or 1000 head to make a living for a family?
- WB: Yes, that's the way it was, and we didn't get ahead too much, either.
- RM: How do you pick which cows out of the herd to sell?
- WB: You'd sell the older ones and any culls — barren ones and so on. They used to wait till the steers were about 3 years old, but as time went on the grazing fees you had to pay [went up] so you'd sell them at a younger age. At the

- last when we were out there we used to sell them at about a year old. Now they sell calves at about 6 months. My son Jim and his wife Vera sold their cattle and they leased [their ranch] out, but they may go back into it later.
- RM: So originally they would sell the cows at 3 years — they'd let them grow to maturity, in effect. Then at what age did you cull the older cows?
- WB: We just waited to separate the older cows. Now they preg test them, and if they don't produce or they aren't with calf they get rid of them. The way we operated over there, our cattle would be out on the range a lot of the time and maybe we'd pick them up every year. We weren't able to cull like they do now.
- RM: How can you tell an old cow?
- WB: Usually their nose gets broad, and their eyes get kind of sunken when they get really old.
- RM: How long will a cow live on the range?
- WB: They usually get to around 15 years.
- RM: They'll live that long?
- WB: Yes, but not all of them.
- RM: How long will they stay productive?
- WB: Oh, they'll keep producing, but not as well, when they get that age.
- RM: How old do they cull them now?
- WB: Well, it's mostly if they stop producing. Some of those old ones would just keep producing and they'd keep them till they died. When they get up to 10 years old then it's time to go, calf and all.
- RM: How did you select your bulls?
- WB: Usually they go up and buy bulls at the fair, but Jim [works with] a fellow named Grant who comes out from Ogden. He comes around every year. Jim was buying them from him.
- RM: So you didn't breed your own bulls?
- WB: Well, once in a while you would if you'd get what they called mustang bulls. Some of them were pretty good. And there's a fellow in Fallon by the name of Guazzini who used to raise bulls, and we'd get them from him.
- RM: What did you look for in a good bull in the old days?
- WB: My dad would usually try to get a heavier-set one, one with a longer body and a nice straight back, because you'd get more steaks that way.
- RM: How long would you keep a bull on the range?
- WB: About 3 years, because they start inbreeding then. If you keep that up, then they'd start going downhill.
- RM: Oh, they're breeding their own calves? How would they go downhill?
- WB: Their calves would not be as hardy.
- RM: So that really is true?
- WB: Yes, you could see it.
- RM: At what age did he cease to be a good bull?
- WB: At about 7 years he wouldn't be as good. They get off by themselves and they don't breed.

-
- RM: When does he mature so that he can sire?
- WB: When he's about a yearling.
- RM: Are they effective bulls at a yearling?
- WB: They're not as good as when they get older, but by 2 or 3 they're pretty good — that's about their prime.
- RM: And you only kept them about 3 years?
- WB: Well, you'd keep them about 7 years — 3 years for each herd. These fellows who come out will trade them in and then they might resell them, but most of the time they take them to the slaughterhouse.
- RM: So you would trade the bull in on a new bull just like a car.
- WB: Right. [Laughing]
- RM: What kind of a trade-in price would you get?
- WB: About half, but I don't know what it is right now. The last few years when I was still in the cow business with Jim we were giving about \$1200 for a bull about 2 years old, 18 months, or something like that.
- RM: And then would you trade him in?
- WB: Yes, he'd get the same bulls, or else he'd trade them to somebody, and once in a while you'd maybe sell one to a neighbor or some other rancher.
- RM: You'd get \$600 or something?
- WB: Yes, about that price, or maybe not that much. I don't know, they'd use it for bologna or something.
- RM: When you would buy a new bull from this guy, wouldn't the new one be related to the original bull?
- WB: No, this particular fellow gets them from all over. He'd go clear up in Montana and get them from ranchers up there, and he'd get a lot of them from Utah and Colorado too.
- RM: What are some of the problems that a rancher faced when you were in business?
- WB: The drought was one bad thing — you'd get years like [these last few years]; 1934 was real bad. Usually you'd get a real bad drought and that coming winter you might get a severe winter, and you didn't have the hay in. Of course it wasn't like now, when you can get hay brought in so much easier. I remember in 1932 when they ran out of hay and they were trying to bring it in on horses and sleighs. We only had about 40 head and they took them up to a neighbor up the valley, up near Austin, and he sold quite a little grass hay. Everybody bought more than he had. The winter turned out so severe that we brought our little herd up there for the winter and they ran out of hay and took them out there in the desert and we never saw them again. I guess they died out there.
- RM: When you went out on the desert, did you always go down toward Gabbs, or did you ever go south toward Tonopah?
- WB: Yes, we went there too.
- RM: What area did you go to when you went south to Tonopah?
- WB: The San Antone desert. I didn't go down there myself. My brother spent a

winter down there, but I went with him down by Gabbs; we also went over toward Duckwater. That was before the BLM would give you an area to use and you'd have to pretty much stay there. That type of trailing through the deserts is kind of out; not too many people do that anymore. In fact, there aren't too many sheep anymore. There are just a few outfits, mostly up here in Elko County.

RM: But you were running more sheep than cows for 20 years?

WB: Yes. During that time we just had about 30 head of cows and those are the ones we lost [that one winter]. We had the sheep, but we didn't have a very big outfit of sheep either.

RM: How does a sheepman select his rams?

WB: That was the same deal — we usually bought them in Elko at the fair.

RM: And did you get a trade-in on them?

WB: I don't know what they did. They just sold them, I think.

RM: What was a good ram worth?

WB: During the Great Depression it was probably \$50. And I think they got \$1 a head for the old ones; the government had some kind of a program — they gave them a little money and they took the skin for a tally.

RM: How many cows do you need per bull?

WB: We used to figure about 30 head.

RM: What about for sheep — what was the ratio there?

WB: I think it was about the same.

RM: What kind of sheep did you use?

WB: We had the Rambouillet. It was kind of a white sheep. They had some Merinos, but the shearers didn't like them, probably because the wool was real fine and there were a lot of wrinkles on them. The wool also has a lot of grease in it — it's dirty as can be. They wash that out, but they have that lanolin in there, and in the older times they didn't want that. The shearers would tell the shepherd, "Don't get Merino, whatever . . ." [Chuckles] But now that's the prime, the best wool, I understand, over in Australia. As far as I remember, the Merino was a small sheep here, but they're big back there. And the wool is real fine; it's a top quality.

The Black Hampshire and Suffolks are black-faced sheep and their wool is coarse. They're primarily a mutton sheep, so they pay less for the wool. Jim, my son, uses the black-face. They're pretty good for a ranch sheep. They don't like them as well in the mountains because they don't herd very well — they scatter. And they're kind of lazy — they don't want to go climb up the mountain, where the Rambouillet and white ones handle better.

RM: Is that right? Did the Merino handle well?

WB: Yes, I think they were pretty good too.

RM: The shearers went from one camp to another, didn't they?

WB: Yes, that's what they used to do. They'd have the crews, and the people from the ranch would board them. My mother had to cook for them — there'd be crews of a dozen or 20 shearers.

-
- RM: Where would they stay?
- WB: They'd have tents, and if you had a bunkhouse, they'd be in there — all around. Now they bring their own outfit — they have kind of a portable pen with an electric motor and it just goes real nicely.
- RM: Tell me a little bit about your mother's life on the ranch; what did her life consist of?
- WB: Raising kids and cooking, I guess. [Chuckles]
- RM: What were some of the things that she cooked?
- WB: We lived pretty much on what we could produce — they'd buy flour, but you didn't go to the grocery stores. We just used what we had on the ranch — we'd raise our potatoes and meat, butcher our own beef . . .
- RM: Did you raise vegetables?
- WB: We always had a big garden.
- RM: What were some of the things you had in the garden?
- WB: They'd have lettuce and lots of cabbages — I remember Dad used to bury the cabbages in a kind of a trench outside.
- RM: He buried them outside?
- WB: Yes, he'd dig kind of a pit and bury them with the heads down and the stem up. Sometimes the ground would get so hard he couldn't dig them out.
- RM: How deep would he bury them?
- WB: Just so the head was buried and the stalk would stick out of ground. It looked like it was all upside down. [Chuckles]
- RM: Oh, it would be sticking out of the ground.
- WB: Yes, most of the time they'd be kind of soft and you'd pull them out and they'd keep them until spring. You'd use them all winter long, until about April or so.
- RM: Did you make kraut or anything?
- WB: Yes, they made a lot of sauerkraut, especially with my folks from Switzerland.
- RM: Did you raise carrots?
- WB: Yes, and he'd dig a pit for them also. They did that for the potatoes too. And I remember having an old pit — the root cellar — and you'd go down there and dig out that.
- RM: Did he bury the carrots upside down too?
- WB: No, he just made a hole and dumped them in and then you'd have to dig them up. We had a lot of beets, also. I have some in the back yard here; it's sort of a hobby for me.
- RM: Didn't the ground freeze?
- WB: Sometimes it would be real hard, and if it froze too hard, you just didn't eat it.
- RM: Did you wait until it thawed, or was the food was lost?
- WB: You'd wait until it would thaw out. Usually they didn't freeze underground like that. Of course, if the snow got very deep, it was just like insulation — it wouldn't freeze under the snow. When the snow thawed, got wet, and

there was no protection, then it would get hard. And it probably didn't do your vegetables any good.

RM: Did you have fruit trees there?

WB: Yes, we had an apple orchard. There were 2 places where we had pretty good trees — some of them are still living.

RM: What kind of apples did you have?

WB: There was what they called Ben Davis; now you don't see anything like them. They weren't a very good apple either — they were tough. They'd make cider out of it. We had a press, and we'd grind the apples up and my dad would put us all to work pressing. And then he'd put them in a barrel (and why on earth we did it, I don't know) and it'd get tart. They could make vinegar, but you didn't use that much vinegar. I still don't know why he had us do that. Back in Switzerland he liked his "winegar" — he always pronounced the "w" as a "v". (For "we" he'd say "vee.")

RM: What fruit trees did you have there besides apples?

WB: We had some plum trees and a lot of pears. The Swiss like their pears — you go to Switzerland and they've got more pears . . . pears are staples back there, though I don't know why. They make cider out of it, and they even make pear bread — that's one of the specialties.

RM: I'll be darned. What do they call it?

WB: Birruh.

RM: Was the pear bread good?

WB: Yes, it had that flavor to it.

RM: Did your mom or dad make it?

WB: I don't remember, but when we went back a few years ago, we had met a lady here from back there — she taught at a university in Zurich. When we went back she wanted us to come and visit her, so we stayed a few days with them and her dad had his pear bread. It was very special.

RM: Did you have trouble with the blossoms freezing on the fruit trees?

WB: Yes, a lot of years we would. Or they'd get wormy. We didn't spray or anything like that, and sometimes they were so bad we'd have to cut out a lot of it.

RM: Did your family make sausage and things like that?

WB: Yes, they made a lot of sausage.

RM: What did they make it out of — beef and pork?

WB: Yes, they mixed the beef and the pork.

RM: Did they ever use venison?

WB: Yes, in later years. There wasn't any venison until about in the '20s, because there were very few deer. Then they built up and during about the '40s there were just droves of them. Now they're on the decline again.

RM: Why do you think they rise and fall like that?

WB: I really don't know. It's the same with [other animals]. For instance, the chukker partridge — they brought them in and during the '50s there were just hundreds and thousands, and within 6 months they just kind of disap-

-
- peared. I don't know where they went.
- RM: What about jackrabbits — do you see them rise and fall too?
- WB: Yes, they do. They're on the increase right now. You see them right around in this area. There are just hundreds and hundreds of them out there. And then pretty soon, I don't know if they get a disease, but they'll just disappear.
- RM: Did your folks ever eat jackrabbit?
- WB: We used to, until they got tularemia. Then they stayed away from it, but they'd get those half-grown jackrabbits and they were pretty good. The Indians used to live on them and they still like them.
- RM: When did the tularemia come in?
- WB: I think it was about 1950. A lot of them died from that. And in the summer months they'd get some kind of a fly that would lay their eggs [on the rabbits] and they'd have these big old grubs under their skin. The cattle would get them, too. Because of the grubs they'd never eat the rabbits in the summertime. The old-timers used to say that the rabbits were good in all the months with an "r" in them. May has no "r" so they'd stay away from the rabbits until September, when there was an "r" again. A cottontail will get them, too.
- RM: Does the cottontail get tularemia too?
- WB: I imagine they do — I don't remember.
- RM: Did your mother make bread?
- WB: Yes, she used to.
- RM: Did she make your clothes too?
- WB: Well, she did a lot of them.
- RM: Did she yodel?
- WB: I never did hear her yodel. We went back there, but the only yodeling I heard was on a record.

CHAPTER THREE

RM: Was there ever a church out there?

WB: Not out where we were. I think I went to a church once when I was a kid.
[Laughs]

RM: Were your folks raised as Catholics?

WB: No, they were Protestants. A lot of Swiss people are Catholic, but there was a little friction there.

RM: Did your dad's whole family come over here?

WB: No, just 2 brothers and sisters. My dad came from a big family; I think he was the youngest of 13.

RM: Was it the youngest who had to leave over there?

WB: Well, I guess there was nothing for him — he came when he was 16. But there's another funny thing. Over there, the youngest brother is the one who supposedly inherits the property.

RM: Oh, so why would he leave?

WB: Right, but he left. His mother died when he was born and then his dad died, so he was just sort of an orphan. They used him around there to cook. He used to cook for them, but he was pretty young — I imagine a kid who wasn't even 16 years old wouldn't be too much of a cook. So he decided to come over with his older brothers, and his sister-in-law came with them. Then her husband died that winter and [she] moved to England, but I think [that part of the family] still keep in contact some way or another.

RM: Did you go into town much when you were living on the ranch as a kid?

WB: I was 14 years old the first time I saw a train. They took me down there and I saw this big old thing a-huffing and a-chuffing, and I was ready to stampede. And we went into this little mining camp, Cortez in the early '20s. I was young and I was pretty shy. [Chuckles] I remember that trip. We went in the buggy and my dad took produce in. He used to sell produce in Cortez. It's a funny thing — all the old-timers say Cordes, but it's Cortez. Now if you say Cordes they don't know what you're talking about.

RM: What did Cortez consist of when you went in there the first time?

WB: We went in with a buggy and a team of horses and Dad peddled his produce. There were about 100 people working there in the silver mine.

RM: And what was the name of the mine?

WB: The Cortez Mine. It was all underground mining. They don't mine right there [now], but below there, at a place they still call Cortez Mine, there's a gold mine, and they have a mill down there.

RM: Is it an open pit?

WB: Yes, it's open pit. They still have the mill at the Cortez Mine, but they bring ore from the Gold Acres Mine — it's mostly this microscopic stuff. They're heap leaching it.

RM: And the old silver works are still there?

WB: They're still there, but they don't [mine it]. My wife's uncle used to have a

lease on it in the late '30s.

RM: When did the Cortez fold?

WB: I think that's about the time — the early '40s or the late '30s.

RM: Where is it?

WB: It's on the Austin road from Beowawe.

RM: How far down from Beowawe?

WB: About 30 miles. It's a little bit off the road.

RM: Did you folks get your mail at Cortez?

WB: Yes, but before that, in the real early days, my older brothers used to go over the mountain to Tonkin. There was a ranch there and they had a mail route from Eureka. Most of the time they rode over the hill. It was only about 8 miles over, and it was about twice as far around the mountains, so they'd just ride over horseback. I was a small boy and I wasn't able to ride [that far]. Most of the time they'd stay overnight. That was around 1920. Cortez was 15 miles away, but we moved [our mail pickup] there. If somebody came out from Cortez, they'd always bring our mail just as a favor. When the Cortez Mine closed up in the '30s we went to Beowawe [for our mail] and we had that till we moved to Eureka. I imagine they closed Tonkin down in later years, and then I think they had a mail carrier coming out from Eureka.

RM: What was at Tonkin then?

WB: Tonkin is a ranch — a bigger ranch than we had. They had a big stream of water that ran year round. Our water, at McCluskey Creek, depended on the snow. When the snow melted, it was dry except for the few little springs.

RM: Who owned the ranch at Tonkin at that time?

WB: The Damele family.

RM: Do the Dameles still own Tonkin?

WB: No, they sold it.

RM: And it was a bigger operation than yours at McCluskey?

WB: Yes. And then as they expanded, one of the sons bought the JD Ranch, so they had a pretty big spread. They expanded and then they sold it in about the '50s, I think. It went through several hands then, and I believe Russell owns it now.

RM: Is the ranch on McCluskey Creek still going?

WB: There are still some people there, but it went downhill. We sold it and Lander Development made a deal with us. They lease out some of the areas and all that. It's kind of a mixed-up deal, but some people of Swiss-Italian descent from kind of a Swiss colony down around Reno are there now.

RM: Where is this Swiss colony?

WB: Have you been to Loyalton or heard of it? It's in California, but it's out of Reno. When I was there, this man said, "My wife's Swiss-Italian," I thought. I said to her later, "Were you born in Switzerland?" and she said no, and I said, "Well, I sure didn't think you had an accent." She said, no, they were just [from this colony at Loyalton]. There was a lot of Swiss-Italian in this

country, more than Swiss-German.

RM: Did your mother and father speak Swiss-German in the home?

WB: Yes.

RM: Did you kids learn it?

WB: I could understand it, but we didn't talk it. The older brothers used to talk like heck and then when they went to school they'd get out there and rattle off this Swiss, and the teacher didn't go for that; she wanted to know what was going on. So they quit it — they never did [speak it again]. Mom would always talk to us and we'd answer in English.

RM: Oh, she spoke to you in English?

WB: Yes.

RM: Did she have a heavy accent?

WB: No, she didn't. She did have some accent, but she picked English up; a lot of them never did.

RM: They spoke German, didn't they?

WB: Yes, it's a dialect of German that they use back there yet. I remembered some of it and when I went back there I used it and a lot of them could hardly believe that. They'd say, "Wunderbar, wunderbar!"

RM: Is that right? Now, did Tonkin have a school there and a building for the post office?

WB: They had a school there, but I think Mrs. Damele probably did [the postal business] in a part of her house.

RM: What was her name?

WB: Her name was Tessie, and his name was Steve.

RM: Then tell me some more about Cortez. What was that like? What all was there?

WB: It was started as a silver mine by Mexicans or pretty early Spanish who came into there a long time ago. They took the ore out on mules — they used to go up on the mountain. The owner, I think, came from England. His name was Simeon Weneban. He had this big house and in his day it was just like a mansion. It's all gone now. And there were a lot of Chinese — they worked cheap and they stayed with him.

RM: This was before your time?

WB: Yes, it would be before the turn of the century. And I think somebody by the name of Coleman got it later. Anyway, Weneban employed a lot of Chinese, and they lived in little adobe huts and the remains are still there. They helped him out, I guess, all during hard times; even put their money in when things went rough, when the price went down. That family always had their Chinese helpers — they were very loyal.

RM: When did the Chinese fade out of the picture?

WB: Probably around the early part of this century, or even earlier than that. My dad was there in 1907, and I don't think there were any Chinese there then.

RM: What was at Cortez when your dad went there?

WB: Well, they did a little mining; they had these leasers and then once in a while

they'd get quite a crew. During the early '30s it was working pretty good — they had about 100 men working. It wasn't a real big outfit.

RM: Was there a store in town?

WB: Yes, there was a little store. When my wife first came up here, she ran the post office and helped her aunt. Her aunt and uncle were living there and they had the post office. Her aunt was teaching school and my wife came up from California because she wanted to see what Nevada was like.

RM: And what was her aunt's name?

WB: It was Vera Boitano — that's an Italian name. She'd have been a good one for you to talk to if she was still living. She really knew the area.

RM: I'll bet. So she was teaching school and running the post office there and then your wife came up for a visit. And what was your wife's maiden name?

WB: Jeannette Webb.

RM: And that's where you met her?

WB: Yes, that's where I met her. She came up to visit for a little while, and they asked her to stay and help out over that winter, and then she was going to go back the next year, but she never made it back. [Laughter] She's been here ever since. They had this little store and she took care of that and her aunt was teaching school and her uncle, John Boitano, had a lease in the mine. He had just a small operation with one or two men helping him. They'd take out ore and I guess they shipped it to some smelter.

RM: Probably in Utah?

WB: It could have been, yes. I think it was Tooele.

RM: Were you ever down in the mine?

WB: Not too much. They say there's 50 miles of tunnels in the mountain. They said they dug tunnels and stopes, everything.

RM: Was the ore in veins?

WB: Yes. Now these companies want big bodies of ore, even if it's low grade.

RM: Right. Is the mountain still there, or have they open-pitted it?

WB: No, they never did. It's just silver, and of course the price of silver is so low that even the silver mine down around Candelaria is closed.

RM: Yes, silver is real low now.

WB: I guess it got down to about \$5 an ounce . . .

RM: It's down around \$4 now. In fact, it's been below \$4. Was there a shaft in Cortez?

WB: Yes. There were shafts.

RM: I wonder how deep it was.

WB: I really don't know.

RM: What ethnic groups were living at Cortez during the '30s and so on?

WB: Well, the Chinese were gone. There was one old fellow by the name of Lloyd High who stayed there. He wasn't a watchman, he just lived there — he was kind of retired.

RM: You mentioned you grew up with Isadore Sara. Were you neighbors over there?

- WB: Well, sort of; Roberts Creek was about 15 miles away. And we used to gather cattle in the fall, and we'd ride together. We'd go to the neighbors and stay with them and he'd come over. I never did ride out of Roberts Creek, but we'd both go to Tonkin, and we rode together in that area.
- RM: Let's back up just a little bit. You say that Cortez folded in the late '30s. I wonder if the government shut it down during World War II. Being a silver mine, they probably didn't consider it essential.
- WB: Yes, I guess it wasn't essential. It is pretty well picked over. Her uncle had been working in the mines a lot, so he knew where these little pockets were, so he'd get a lease and he worked out there during the late '30s.
- RM: Did he do all right on those leases?
- WB: He made it, but he didn't get a fair deal, because the owner was charging so high a royalty all the time.
- RM: What was he charging?
- WB: Jeannette, what was the royalty your uncle was paying there?
- JB: I don't know, but he was paying Coleman 50 percent.
- RM: Fifty percent!
- JB: It was high grade ore, but he wouldn't give him a lease on it unless he gave him that much.
- RM: Did your uncle do pretty well despite that high royalty?
- JB: Yes, he did. John had been a watchman, sort of, there, because they lived there, and instead of paying him, he took it out of the ore deal. It was kind of a crooked thing.
- RM: Is there still ore in that mine?
- WB: I think there are just 2 very small pockets, as far as I know.
- JB: I went in there a few times and crawled on my stomach under the places where the cave-ins were. It was kind of scary, but my uncle took me in and he knew about it.
- RM: For the tape, you're Jeannette Webb Baumann, Walt's wife. And you came up from Southern California, and that's where you met Walt, while you were living in Cortez?
- JB: Yes. My aunt and uncle had the post office and store there, and I took that over because my aunt taught and my uncle had that lease on the mine. (My aunt was my father's sister.)
- RM: What did the store consist of?
- JB: It was a small store — he carried canned goods and most things you might need [as staples].
- RM: Did he carry cloth and dry goods and things like that at all?
- JB: He had some, and he had had more before I came there. It was in one of the mine buildings, and I don't think he had to pay any rent on it or anything.
- RM: And when did he come in there?
- JB: He was born in Cortez years before, but he had been around the country, different places, before I came up there. My aunt went up to teach and that's how he met her, but afterwards, when she'd go down to Los Angeles, they'd

go down and stay for a while and he'd work down there and then they'd come back.

RM: And what year did you go up there?

JB: I think the fall of '35.

RM: And then what year did you get married?

JB: In 1939.

WB: I couldn't talk her into it sooner.

RM: Took you 4 years to convince her? [Laughs]

WB: Yes, she didn't know if she wanted to stay up there and put up with me.

JB: It took me 4 years to catch him. [Laughter] No, I wasn't in any hurry to get married, and there were lots of people around. But I loved the country when I came here. I didn't like Los Angeles, and I like it even less now.

RM: You didn't like Los Angeles growing up there?

JB: No, not too much. I always liked to go into the country. I had another aunt who lived in Azusa, California, and it was like going to the country; it isn't anymore. But I used to love to go out there. So when I got to Nevada I didn't mind the wide open spaces. It's kind of lonely up here sometimes, but I didn't mind that at all.

RM: How about the winters? Didn't they bother you?

JB: No, but the first winter was quite a shock. We went up to Mount Whitney out of L.A. and I saw the snow there, but it was nothing like what we have here. But I didn't mind the winters; I put up with them. Really, it was kind of new and different, and it was good.

RM: Did you raise your family out at the ranch?

JB: We had a school situation that was a big problem. They no longer had the schools on the ranches and I had to go away with the kids to school because the roads were too bad to travel every day. It was 50 miles to Beowawe, so I had a house down there and I'd go home on weekends and holidays.

RM: I see. And you stayed on the ranch, Walt?

WB: Yes, I stayed out there. I was chief cook and bottle washer, working alongside the hired men besides cooking. I don't think that was quite fair.

JB: He'd do baking and things when I was home. He got along fine, but it was not good. I wouldn't advise anybody else to do it. It takes a lot out of your marriage — 13 years of [separation].

After they got into high school, they put a bus on from Beowawe to Battle Mountain, so part of the time I was with the younger ones — I had 3 — and the older one came up here and boarded for high school, because she's about 4 years older than Jim is.

RM: So then they were bused in from Beowawe to Battle Mountain?

JB: Yes. And I think they're going to do it again, because they're having so much trouble with the county here over the money from the mines, some of them. I heard they're going to bus the kids into Eureka because the kids from Carlin and the kids from Pine Valley have to come on the bus up here.

RM: They come to Elko?

JB: Yes. I guess it's a little better than it was when I was doing that. When my kids started in Battle Mountain I moved down there for 2 years. I didn't want somebody else taking care of my kids; I wanted to know what they were doing.

CHAPTER FOUR

- RM: How many people lived at Beowawe when you got your mail there?
- WB: There weren't many, maybe 50.
- RM: So it was smaller than Cortez in its heyday?
- WB: Right. But there were quite a few ranches out of Beowawe, and of course it was a railroad town, so the section hands would come in there.
- RM: Was there a store in Beowawe?
- WB: Yes, there were 2 stores — the Beowawe Mercantile and Stone's Market. My older daughter was married then to Stone's son, Bruce Stone. It changed hands later. The Beowawe Mercantile was the older store and I don't know if they changed the name when some other people took it over, but it was the old original store. They'd sell feed, and then they had sort of a boarding-house.
- RM: Did most of the people there work for the railroad?
- WB: Yes, and there were ranchers and a few people from the mines.
- RM: There were mines around Beowawe?
- WB: Yes, a few little mines. They were just mining claims, little lease deals, but there was a mine up above in Mule Canyon, which was up near Cortez. It was kind of a leasing deal.
- RM: How far was Beowawe from McCluskey Creek?
- WB: About 50 miles north.
- RM: Tell me about Isadore Sara, Sr. He owned the Eureka Land and Livestock Company, didn't he?
- WB: Yes, there was a partnership there. I think there were some brother-in-laws — I believe the name was Ardans. I know he was the sole owner at one time, but [before that] it was kind of a partnership, and they were Basque.
- RM: What was it like for somebody who wasn't a Basque to be involved in the sheep business?
- WB: We were one of the odd ones. They'd look at me and my brother and say, "They're not Basque [chuckles]; there must be something wrong with them." But we got along, and I'd work with them. I never did speak Basque, but I knew Spanish. We had Mexican hands and I listened to their Spanish and learned it more or less from them.
- RM: Where did you get your herders?
- WB: We'd pick them up in Eureka, and there was a place up here in Elko. In later years there was a place they called the Palace Bar. [The owner] was a Basque, but he'd take these Mexicans in and keep them until they'd get a job and when they'd get their pay then he'd get paid back. I guess he did all right — they had a lot of Mexicans.
- RM: So they were using Mexican herders?
- WB: Yes, in the later years. At first it was pretty much all Basque. Then during the Depression there were several Americans and cowboys who you wouldn't think of as herding sheep, and they were out herding sheep. Things were

getting tough, and shepherders paid just a little bit more than the cowboys got. I know there was one fellow who worked for us, an American, and he liked it so well that he was mad when we sold our sheep. [Chuckles] He wanted to keep on working for us. I guess he was a pretty fair cowboy, too.

RM: Did he herd them on horse or on foot?

WB: They were all on foot. They'd pack a burro with the sheep. That's the way he did it too. And he didn't care if he was alone or not. He wasn't a loner; everybody liked doing business with him because he was one of those kind of guys who liked to visit.

RM: What kind of a fellow was Sara?

WB: He was a friendly sort of a person, and his sons were also. He had 2 sons and one daughter. I don't know if the daughter is still living —his son Peter is gone. Peter was about my age and Isadore Jr. was just a few years older, and then the daughter was older yet.

RM: How was he able to put together that huge operation?

WB: I guess they just started with a batch of sheep and sheep were selling for a pretty good price there in the early '20s, and they made pretty good money. They were good sheep and they were all in pretty good shape. My dad had a few cows but he just barely eked out a living and then he got the sheep and he did a little better, but we didn't get wealthy from them.

RM: Where did you ship your sheep from — Palisade?

WB: There was a little railroad station at Alpha. When I was just a kid, about 14, my brother and I took a bunch of lambs over there — it's about 15 miles [from our ranch]. There was a narrow gauge railroad and I remember loading the lambs on it.

RM: Did you take the lambs back to Omaha?

WB: I think they went to Omaha, but I didn't ride with them. My dad went back there. There was a Basque sheepman in that area, and he and my dad went out to Omaha with them. That was just about the time the Depression started and the sheep went way down and he didn't know what to do with them. And wool prices were so bad they shipped it back to Boston. They'd go clear around — to the West Coast and then through the Panama Canal and up that way. I know one year the wool was so cheap that Dad sent it back and then a year later he owed storage on the wool. That was kind of rough, but we lived out there and we didn't spend much, so it didn't seem to hurt us. But there was no work.

RM: You didn't have electric power at your ranch, did you?

WB: Not until later years, during the '40s.

RM: Was it public power or a home generator?

WB: It was [our own power]. At first we had a Kohler generator and then we got one that ran on propane, an Ohnan — it was kind of a troublesome thing. Later we got a Witte, a diesel outfit. At that time you could run them day and night, but the Kohler started up when you'd pull the first switch — it would go on and come on. The Witte was a big one-cylinder outfit with 2 big fly

wheels.

RM: Was it pretty good?

WB: It was good, yes. For about 5 gallons a day you got a little power. Of course it was limited power, too.

RM: And it would run 24 hours a day on 5 gallons?

WB: Yes, 5 to 7 gallons. It was one of those old one-lungers. It would hit and then it'd pop pop pop. First we had a 5 KW, and then we found it wasn't big enough, but we kept it as a standby and then we got a 10, and it didn't run an awful lot cheaper.

RM: Did they hold up well?

WB: Yes, they did. They ran till we sold the ranch, and then the man who was taking care of it didn't check the oil or anything and it burned the thing up. That was the end of it. Right now, I think they've got some English kind. It was supposed to be real good; I don't know whether they use it.

They found a pretty good deposit of gold ore over at Tonkin, so an outfit came in there, and they had to get power — they needed a lot of power. They agreed to put the power right through the ranch, but the lady who's there now didn't want to pay the amount of money [it would cost to deliver power to the ranch], so they've got this big high tension line going right through the yard and there they have a Kohler generator.

RM: [Laughter] That's funny. I wonder how much they wanted to charge her.

WB: I think it was about \$30,000.

RM: Oh, that's a lot.

WB: Well it is, but when we were there they wanted \$100,000. That was just about the time we were selling, and I didn't want to go for the \$100,000.

RM: Did your father stay with the ranch till his last days?

WB: Yes, he did. He was active — he even rode a horse till he was at least 75, maybe even more.

RM: How about your mother? Did she remain there until the end?

WB: She died in 1949; she wasn't too well.

RM: What did she die of?

WB: She had a cancerous growth. My dad just got older and he went into pneumonia. He had kind of a cold and we took him to the hospital here, and within a day he died.

RM: That was after you had moved off?

WB: No, I was still there. But I was in Beowawe, where she was — I was putting in a phone line. We didn't have any communication, so we put this one-wire telephone down, and we were working on that at that time. He got bad and we went back out to the ranch and he wasn't doing well at all, so we took him in, but it was too late.

RM: That's a shame. How did your telephone line work?

WB: Well, it was just a single line. As long as it didn't break or anything it worked all right.

RM: Was it on regular telephone poles?

- WB: No, there were juniper poles and even trees that it was hooked on. [Chuckles]
- RM: Where all did it go — just to your ranch?
- WB: Yes, from the ranch, and then we hooked on an old single-line telephone line with regular poles [that went] to the Cortez Mine. That was abandoned, and the old line there was in disrepair, but we repaired it.
- RM: Where were you hooked into at Beowawe?
- WB: We just came to my house at Beowawe, and then later I think it went down to Winnemucca; then you'd get the operator in Winnemucca.
- RM: Oh, but originally it was just to your house in Beowawe.
- WB: Yes, then Jeanette got to relay the messages. Yes, we had those little crank phones that everybody used.
- RM: Were other ranchers hooked into it too?
- WB: Yes. Some of them would listen [laughter] and they always accused her of [listening]. [Chuckles] You had so many rings; we had 3 longs.
- RM: You'd turn the crank 3 times . . .
- WB: Yes, 3 times, and some of them had a long and a certain number of shorts. I still have 3 of those old crank phones up at Jim's. I'd kind of like to get her one and maybe have it down here for an antique or something. I've got my shotgun here — I've got all kind of antiques.
- RM: So you put in 50 miles of wire, then?
- WB: Yes, over the years. It started as 15 miles, from the ranch to Cortez.
- RM: Where did you go in Cortez? From the mine?
- WB: No, it was down below. The line went on and up, so we just hooked on a little below the camp. We repaired it enough to get by. It wound way up to another old mining camp — Buckhorn; it came out of there. But we were forever fixing it; it was an awful thing, it followed way up there so long. Finally we got some poles and put it straight down the road.
- RM: Where did you get the wire?
- WB: Some of it was there, but my brother and I went down and got an old telephone line that used to go out of Mina. There's a line that went over the hill to the mountain range in Bishop, California, and we took a part of that. We didn't go into California; we just got about 30 miles of it, I think. It was double line and we wound them up . . . we had a drum on the truck so we [spooled] the wire. We found some of it wound double but it didn't work too well; it kind of snarled up. So we'd pull them out and they'd come out pretty well — half a mile, maybe, at a time.
- RM: How long did it take to put it in?
- WB: About a-month, I think, putting in that first 15 miles.
- RM: Did it work well?
- WB: It was not very good. You did kind of holler a little bit. [Chuckles]
- RM: And what did you do about cows knocking down the line, or did you put it up high enough?
- WB: The worst trouble we had was insulator theft. Those insulators were pretty

old, because we got them off this line out of Mina, but somebody went along and followed that thing for 15 miles and he pulled off all the insulators.

RM: That must have ruined your line.

WB: Well, it did; we had to go and put the whole thing up again. We're lucky he didn't cut the wire. I think he was smart — he knew we were out for haying or something.

RM: Is the line still there?

WB: Yes, I think so. They abandoned it; I imagine it's lying all over the brush, unless somebody wound it up.

RM: When did you do that?

WB: That was about 1950.

RM: Did you ever have television there?

WB: We never did, though we tried. It just wouldn't come in good. The neighbors down below had it and the kids were glad of that, but we couldn't get it because we were up in the canyon. When Jim and Vera were there, they tried too.

RM: How many children do you have?

WB: Three. Our oldest daughter, Joanne, lives in Montana.

RM: And when was she born?

WB: She was born in 1940. Jim is 4 years younger, and then my youngest daughter, Marilyn, is in [the other room]. She's about 14 months younger than Jim. Marilyn is married to Jeff Steiner. There are a lot of Steiners. Dad's mother's name was Steiner, and [the branch of the] family in Canada are all Steiners.

Of course, Jeff's no relation to the Steiners that came from Austin. My dad's sister married a Steiner, and they had a ranch down at Austin. Do you know where the Frontier Tavern is at Austin?

RM: I've been by it, yes.

WB: Well, it's just a little ways from that; they had a ranch there and they used to sell vegetables in Austin, and I guess they eked out a living. In 1904 they were looking for greener pastures, so this Emil Steiner went up to Canada and looked around and he saw all these prairies and he thought that would be the ideal place to raise cattle. They got all ready and moved up there and so on and they had to move all their horses. [Their son] Walter was a boy about 14 years old, and they took off with some 100 of their horses and drove them all the way to Calgary. There were no freeways, no obstacles, and it took them 3 months to go from Austin to Calgary. (Not clear to Calgary, but in that area — Vulcan.) They still have the place where they settled — it's all open country.

Then the next year the farmers started coming in and plowing it up and it all went into feed. So that was the end of the big cow operation, but they always did have cattle. All those prairies are wheat now. They're still farming there. (Of course the older ones are all gone.) I guess I was named for Walter; he was quite a little older. He and I have the same birthday — but he

was Steiner and I'm Baumann.

RM: What was the reason you went back into the cow business?

WB: You'd always [have problems] getting herders and, of course, we spent an awful lot of time there — herding sheep isn't the most interesting life. So we sold them and went to cattle in about 1939.

RM: How did that work out?

WB: It was better. Cows were pretty good then. We were lucky; we bought a bunch and then about a year later they went way up, so we made more money, and then we acquired a little more ground and a bigger herd.

RM: Was that when you bought the Horse Ranch?

WB: We bought the Horse Ranch just a little before that; we still had sheep. First we bought a little place there called Fye Canyon — that was just about a section. Then in '36 we acquired this Horse Ranch and we got a little bigger. My second brother lived there. He was a bachelor and he lived there by himself and took care of that ranch. My older brother had the same school problem — he was out there and the one child got ready for school, so they moved to Elko and he went to work. He didn't care for livestock too much; he liked equipment and things like that. He's still here.

RM: And then when did you finally sell out for good?

WB: I sold my half to my brother in about 1976. Then I went over to Eureka and we got that place there. We were going to get some kind of a place or else move up here, and then Jim and Vera bought a ranch by Eureka.

RM: Oh, you bought the place that Jim and Vera are on now?

WB: Yes, we helped him get that. Then he moved up there and then he acquired half a section down below.

CHAPTER FIVE

- RM: Walt, tell me a little bit about your recollections of how the Taylor Grazing Act came in and what impact it had on you.
- WB: When it first started in '34 or '36, we didn't sign up for it. Some of the ranchers thought it would benefit them, but we wouldn't sign up. We signed up for the takeover, so it kept going on until about 1950. We didn't have much choice at that time — they just kind of forced you into it. And the grazing fees . . . of course, people didn't want to put out their money, but it was 12 cents a head per month per cow.
- RM: That was the fee in 1950? What was it in the '30s?
- WB: I don't remember, because we didn't go into it. But we thought 12 cents was terrible. Now it's \$2 and they say they are going to want to raise it to \$8.
- RM: That will run all the ranchers out, won't it? I don't see how they can make it.
- WB: Yes, they are just eking out a living right now.
- RM: What did people think about it when it first came in?
- WB: Well, we just didn't want to have anybody telling us what to do. The way it was before, we ran the amount of cattle we wanted. Of course they said the range was hurt, but anybody who thinks anything about the range, if he knows anything at all, won't put so much stock on that. That will ruin the range.
- RM: What was the initial plan? To allot people certain areas? Was that what they did in the '30s?
- WB: Well, they didn't do much. They were supposed to, but it just stirred up trouble. We always got along with our neighbors well enough, but then when the grazing came in they told you, "Well, you've got a certain area . . ."
- RM: Was that Taylor Grazing Act the BLM [Bureau of Land Management]?
- WB: It'd be the same thing. The Forest Service came in sooner, but that's for the higher, better type of range. We never did have any of that. Around Austin and all that country you find the higher range. But in the '50s the BLM came in and just said, "OK, this is your spot here, and this is yours over here . . . And the ranchers said "No, that's ours," and this and that, and pretty soon they just put everything in a turmoil as far as who [had what range].
- RM: And then the hold of the BLM has just become progressively stronger, hasn't it?
- WB: That's right. And at first there were only about 3 BLM employees and they used to come out and they helped us on the ranch with different projects. Now there's so much money and so many employees. I remember when there were 3 of them, and they had time to come out to the ranch and help you gather . . . Sometimes they had to straighten out things a little bit — they'd put fences across and the neighbors wouldn't take their cattle out, so they'd come out and help us out.
- RM: How do you see the future of ranching?
- WB: It just doesn't look to have much of a future in ranching anymore. I hate to

- see it that way. I don't know whether my son wants to go on ranching.
- RM: Does he have an allotment?
- WB: Yes, he's got allotments in 2 different districts — White Pine and then the rest in Battle Mountain. He has one winter allotment off toward Ely.
- RM: When you sold out, you moved down to the ranch in Diamond Valley, didn't you?
- WB: Yes, I sold my interest to my brother, and then my nephew leased from him.
- RM: What kind of a setup did you have in Diamond Valley?
- WB: It was a smaller setup. We had 300 head of cows.
- RM: How many acres did you have?
- WB: About 1600, I think. He's got the hay meadows, but a lot of it is grazing land.
- RM: Was it a new ranch or was it an established ranch?
- WB: No, it was established.
- RM: What's it called?
- WB: Simpson Creek, but they call it Hunters — people by the name of Hunters were there. Of course, it has been passed down — I think the earliest ones were a family by the name of DePaoli; they're in Eureka yet. I don't know if you know Willis DePaoli?
- RM: I've heard the name. But it wasn't a ranch like they have out in Diamond Valley where they just moved into an established house and all?
- WB: No, it was just grazing. They didn't cut very much hay — they had bad hay, kind of a strung-out affair.
- RM: Did you live there?
- WB: I stayed there a little while when we first came there till we got the house, then we moved 8 miles down, right by the airport. Jim and Vera bought it and we stayed on the ranch. They needed someone to stay there, so we did that for 14 years. There were no trees there then. It had been an old ranch — somebody was there who was raising pigs, I think — but it was tumbledown. [Jim and Vera] did an awful lot of work and fixed it up. They have good production now. He's got pivots for the hay. At first he just flood-irrigated, then he got a wheel — sprinklers on a wheel.
- RM: Oh yes, that go in a straight line.
- WB: Yes. And that still took a lot of work, so he finally decided to get 2 pivots; the hay does much better.
- RM: Is that out in the valley where you see all that irrigation?
- WB: Yes. He's got a half-section — 320 acres. You lose the corners with the pivot, but it still produces more.
- RM: Did the original owners get that under the Desert Land Entry Act?
- WB: Yes, they did.
- RM: The cowboy's day began at daylight, didn't it?
- WB: It's a lot easier to start in the morning when it's dark than in the evening and be caught late at night. Of course, on some of those drives it'd be way late. They'd go gathering a long ways — you didn't want to turn the cows loose,

or most of the time, you didn't. And you'd keep a-driving, so it was dark. The only ones you could see were the ones with a white rump. And it'd be so dark that even then sometimes you might miss some. Sometimes it just got so bad you'd just have to give it up and hope you'd find the cows the next day.

RM: You could probably do pretty well in the moonlight, couldn't you?

WB: Yes, we did. One time, we were trailing a bunch of steers to Beowawe. First we used to go down to this Dean Ranch with the cattle —about 30 miles — and the biggest part of the day was gone and you'd just have to weigh them. They had a pretty good shrink on, and that wasn't good. We decided to make kind of a stop in between — at this old Cortez Mine. There was an old well there, so we pumped water and made a fence. The ground was real hardpan, so we couldn't go very deep; we just had a temporary deal. The ground was real soft on top, but underneath it was hardpan. So we put the steers in there and thought everything was good. And we'd been riding these poor old horses all day, so we thought we'd just turn them loose with the cattle.

That night was moonlight. We had our bedrolls out and I could see the steers kind of milling around and they came over. I raised up a little bit and they jumped and were startled, and then there was an old watering trough that had been full of water, but it was empty and it made a big racket — they kind of humped it. And away they went, the whole bunch. There must have been 100 of them, and when they hit that fence they just laid it down. And the sorry part of it was, our horses were loose out there. There we were out there on foot — except for the truck (it was lucky we had a truck). We had to drive clear back in the night, 15 miles to the ranch, and wrangle up some new horses. Our cattle had gone kind of north, and they just scattered. Some of the neighbors went down and we caught them. In the moonlight we could see them across the alkali flats, and we could see the dust rising.

Then one fellow and I drove them back and got them bedded down. We slept in our saddle blankets — we had beds, but they were where that corral used to be. We stayed till daylight, and this one fellow took the cattle back and I went to try to get ours because they were just everywhere — up in the trees and everywhere. I didn't have breakfast that morning, and finally, about 3:00, we got them together and took off for the Dean Ranch, which we were supposed to make that night, but we never did.

And I was so hungry — that was the hungriest I ever was in my life. I had no breakfast, no lunch, and it was getting late in the afternoon. Pretty soon the mail carrier came along and I asked him if he had a little of his lunch left over, and he said, "No, I ate it all up." He said, "I think this fellow, Pete here, has got a sandwich." He had a couple of them and he peeled off one sandwich, and gee, that tasted good. [Chuckles] I could have choked him for that other one, too.

Then we took on down there. There was a cabin down at the mouth of the

canyon that belonged to John Boitano, this uncle of Jeannette's. I knew where the keys were, so we went in there and I guess we just ate everything he had in there. [Chuckles] Then we journeyed on.

RM: Did you ever get really thirsty out there?

WB: We used to carry a little jug most of the time, but those old cowboys would kind of look at us — they'd think we were a bunch of sissies.

RM: Oh, really — they could go without water?

WB: They wouldn't drink water, they wouldn't eat . . . The Filipinis were a Swiss-Italian [family] from the southern part of Switzerland. They'd tough it out — they wouldn't drink or eat until they got in. But I was kind of soft — I'd pack water anyway.

RM: But the old ones didn't pack water? I'll be darned. Who were some of the old cowboys?

WB: Well, there were the Filipinis; they lived down at the Dean Ranch and we used to drive with them.

CHAPTER SIX

RM: Are there any other stories that we should be talking about?

WB: Yes, those were hard times. They used to get the groceries in about twice a year. They'd send in orders to a place in Sacramento, then my dad would go down with a team of 4 horses to the railroad station at Beowawe. The trip took 4 days — 2 days to get there and 2 days back. I don't know if he loaded up the same day or the next day.

RM: And they came out of a place in Sacramento?

WB: Yes — they called it Feldhoozens. I remember back in 1933, I went down there and that place was there.

RM: And that's where you'd get a year's supply?

WB: Yes. They had a kind of a folder they'd send out, and you'd get what staples you'd need. The only time we had fresh vegetables was in the summer.

RM: Are there any stories of lawlessness that stand out in your mind?

WB: Well, there was one time when my dad was pretty old. It was about 40 years ago. We were haying and he stayed at the home ranch and did the chores. He had a little bunch of sheep and he went up in the hills to get them one day. A fellow came in there posing as an insurance salesman (I don't know if he really was or not). When Dad came in, this fellow was sitting there, and he asked him if he wanted insurance and he said, "No, I don't." He kept sitting there, and it came time to fix dinner so he fixed dinner for himself and then he asked the fellow, "Well, would you like something to eat?"

And he said, "Yeah, sure." So this salesman still sat around after dinner. Dad had to go up and get the milk cows, about a half a mile up the road, and he got the cows and the guy was still there. But when he come back the guy had a rifle, and Dad looked down — he didn't hear very well — and he said, "What are you doing?" He didn't know — it was my brother's rifle. He said, "What are you doing, shooting birds or something?"

And the guy said, "No, you get in that building there — this is a hold-up." He got the gun and pushed him in and locked him up in there. The door just had a hasp — it didn't have a lock — so he pushed that hasp with stick down it.

And my dad was getting pretty hot under the collar by that time. He cut his way out of the back window. In the meantime the guy went in the house and he went through everything. But he didn't find very much money. Most of the money he found was in the kids' piggy bank. So he took that — mostly pennies and small change. When he left, he went down to the Frontier Tavern and bought some gasoline there and they wondered why he was paying with that small change. In the meantime, my dad walked down (he couldn't drive a car) to the neighbor's, 5 miles down, and told them and they called up the sheriff.

RM: Did they ever find the guy?

WB: Yes — a year later he gave himself up. They brought him back and they had

WB: Yes — a year later he gave himself up. They brought him back and they had him in jail in Eureka for a while.

RM: Did he rob anybody else?

WB: No, it was just that time, I think.

RM: He needed gas money?

WB: Maybe he was desperate and maybe he wasn't doing so well. Whether he was an insurance salesman, I don't know. I don't think he was a professional; I think it was pretty amateurish.

RM: Was rustling a problem for the ranchers?

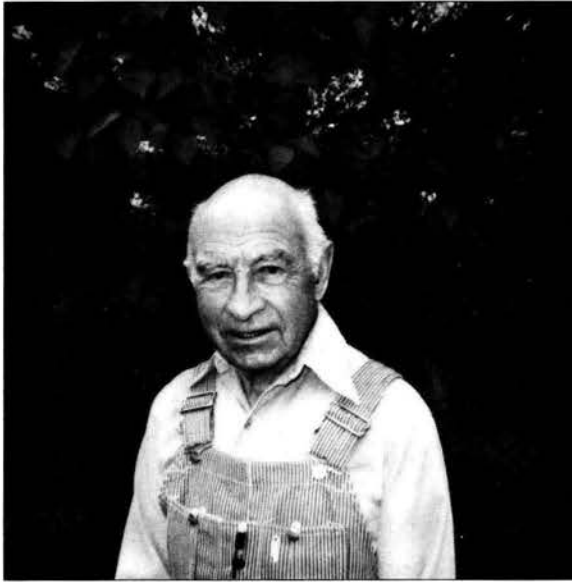
WB: Not that we knew of — we didn't have too much of it. That went on more after we were gone. I imagine there were instances of it. Some of the guys around there might go out and get a beef or something like that.

One time my brother — the single one — went over to this Horse Ranch. He was staying up there, and we had to go into Eureka for a ball game or something, so he left his pickup out there. He said, "I'll just leave it out there in the big grazing field down there. I'll get it tomorrow." He had a little Volkswagen and he decided to save some gas so we went in with that. When he came back the next day we looked out at the pickup sitting out there and we thought, "Gee whiz, it must have settled down in the mud," but somebody had come along and stolen all the wheels and the battery. They broke the glass — he had a lot of tools in it and they broke the glass and all that. And we thought, "Well, we better go up to the ranch; he might have stolen something else." We went up there, and there was nothing like that, but he did butcher a cow up in the barn. The head was lying there and the sheriff put it in a sack and put it in his office somewhere and he forgot about it. And they thought there was an awful smell around there for a while. We never did find out who did this.

CHAPTER SEVEN

- RM: Walt, we were talking about the Dann sisters, and apparently you were asked to do some testifying in that case?
- WB: Yes, but I never did see any of their stock. For instance, there were no horses up in our area. We had this Horse Ranch, but of course right now there are a lot of horses in there and they say they belong to them.
- RM: But they're really just mustangs, probably?
- WB: I think so. And they increased until they were just everywhere.
- RM: And the Dann sisters are claiming all of this vast territory? They're Indians, aren't they?
- WB: Yes. They're claiming aboriginal rights dating back to before the whites were here.
- RM: Did you know their family?
- WB: Yes, I knew their family. We knew the dad real well and he was very well thought of.
- JB: That's the father, Dewey Dann. He was a good friend of my uncle, John Boitano. He liked him very much — he thought he was really honest.
- RM: Basically, they're claiming a lot of the state of Nevada — clear down to the Test Site — aren't they?
- WB: Yes, clear to Utah.
- RM: But their headquarters are where?
- WB: From Beowawe it would be down in the valley below Frenchie Creek.
- RM: In Eureka County?
- WB: Yes.
- RM: Do they have a little ranch down there?
- WB: Yes, they have a ranch down there.
- JB: They run quite a few cattle now, or they did.
- WB: They had a right for about 140 head, and I understand that now they have 1000 or more.

The Middle Years
An Interview with
ALBERT BIALE



Albert Biale, 1993

An Oral History conducted by
Susan Gallagher
1993

CONTENTS

An Interview with Albert Biale

- CHAPTER ONE 3
On the washout of 1909 that left Eureka with no railroad for 2 years; remembering Mr. States, who founded the first movie theater in Eureka, and Mr. Shumann, who brought the first movies to town; contracts for the first highway through Eureka in 1923, and the prosperity of the town between 1923 and 1927; the evolution of the movie theater; Eureka's masquerade ball — a grand affair; other dances in Eureka; how Eureka celebrated Memorial Day with speeches, bands and processions to the town's many cemeteries; Albert's memories of the old school building, which sustained earthquake damage and was replaced; Albert's high school class, and a memorable trip the baseball team took to Elko.
- CHAPTER TWO 13
More memories of Albert's high school baseball team, and of other childhood activities; Albert's father has a near escape in the Diamond Mine; how Albert's grandfather Bonetti purchased a building on Main Street that became, in time, the Eureka Cash Store; recollections of the volunteer fire companies in Eureka, including the tragic death of a fire fighter; remembering the *Eureka Sentinel*, its editor, E. A. Skillman, and the Skillman family; vivid recollections of the 1926 flood.
- CHAPTER THREE 23
Further memories regarding the flood of 1926; recalling the different bands in Eureka, a musical town; political parades and speeches of the early 1900s in Eureka; more recollections of Eureka bands, and Albert's membership in one of them; additional memories of Memorial Day and Fourth of July observances; Albert records the finish of a horse race and saves people a lot of quarreling; a discussion of the many cemeteries in Eureka; the high infant death rate in Eureka at the turn of the century; remembering the railroad through Eureka and the traveling salesmen who rode it.
- CHAPTER FOUR 34
A circus visits Eureka; memories of the depot and roundhouse in Eureka; the motor cars that ran on the railroad tracks in the 1920s; the loss of the railroad in 1938; the narrow gauge route from Eureka to Palisade, and memories of Palisade; recalling the Chinese inhabitants of Eureka; a Chinese cook's expertise in buying vegetables; the tunnels beneath some Eureka buildings; remembering the early days of the Lincoln Highway and watching travelers pass through; an army convoy stops in Eureka.
- ADDENDUM 45
Information on Albert's father, John Biale — his background and how he came to Eureka; John's early years in the Eureka area burning charcoal, cooking for the

charcoal crew, working on a number of ranches; a description of some Eureka County ranches of the 1880s and 1890s, as well as mention of the winter of 1889-1890; John works at a mill in Newark Valley, then at a nearby mine; remarks on John's self-education; recalling John's narrow escape at the Diamond Mine; John travels to Utah, where he unexpectedly finds work in a mercantile store; background information on Albert's mother, Laura, and how her mother came to Eureka; John returns to Eureka from Utah and he and Laura meet and are married; an anecdote in which John loans Jim Butler of Tonopah \$5; John and Laura take up ranching, then have the opportunity to open the Eureka Cash Store in 1903; a discussion of the mercantile business; John is elected county commissioner; the 2-year loss of the Eureka & Palisade Railroad following the washout in 1910; how the business concerns of the area (sheepherding and mining) were reflected on the shelves of the Eureka Cash Store.

An oral history interview with Albert Biale conducted by Susan Gallagher at the Eureka Museum (which used to house the Eureka Sentinel newspaper) in the spring of 1988.

CHAPTER ONE

AB: Looking at that picture on the wall of the flood in 1910 reminds me that I saw that when I was not quite 7 years old. The agent at the depot took my dad and my sister and John Repetto and me down to see that. It was quite a sight to see that muddy water and the tracks disappear and then come up again.

SG: Where would that be now?

AB: Down by the slough.

SG: Where is the slough?

AB: Down by the Lone Mountain, the little knolls down below the airport. That was about 6 miles from Eureka. So that was the start of the old teams again for over 2 years, because there was no more railroad. The heavy freight had to be hauled by heavy wagons. Joe Minoletti was the main teamster and he had at least a dozen animals. It took the freight teams about 10 days to make a round trip from here to Palisade, load and then come back again.

In the meantime mail and express and perishable items came along by light wagons in sort of a relay system. They started from Palisade and would come to a ranch, and every so often they would change horses and go to the next stop and then probably change drivers. There was one going and coming every day — one coming to Eureka and one going to Palisade. They kept that up for a little over 2 years.

The washout happened in February of 1910, and the first train that came back to Eureka was on the 6th of May in 1912, a little over 2 years later. It was really a cause for celebration. The band was down there and I think half of the people in Eureka were down there and when they saw that smoke from the train coming up the canyon everybody got excited. It was quite a day.

SG: Oh, I can imagine — to get it back in so you had the services.

AB: Yes. At that time, too, the mines were shipping ore from up at Ruby Hill and that had to all be handled by teams. As I said, it was really a nice sight to see that train coming again.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

AB: I think before we go any farther we ought to talk about what caused the washout. The fall of 1909 was a very wet fall; there was a lot of rain during October and November. Then along about the end of November it got extremely cold, colder than usual, and the result was that the ground froze. I started school in the fall of 1909, and going up what we call Clark Street to go to school the water pipes had frozen and the men were using picks and shovels to uncover the pipe. Then they would put bark and chips over it, and

kerosene, and set fire to it to thaw out the pipes.

Well, along about December and January we got a great deal of snow over this frozen ground. Then early in February it began to rain and the weather turned warm and the ground was frozen and the water had no place to go but on top. It just went on down on the surface and it washed out much of the railroad in Diamond Valley. It was bad, too, in Pine Valley.

SG: Oh, it did wash out up in Pine Valley too?

AB: All the way through. And of course the little railroad didn't have the capital to rebuild at once. It took 2 years before they got it going again, because they had to fix so much of the track.

Now about the theater — you were speaking of Mr. States, and the States family. I think Mr. States came here as a miner — that is, he was interested in mining claims. I think it was about 1915 when he started the movies, and it was partially by accident. A fellow came in with a moving picture machine and demonstrated it, and I guess it gave Mr. States the idea. So he bought that and started in on a small scale, I think at first maybe once a week. After he got going I think he had it twice a week, on Fridays and Sundays. At first they had the little moving picture machine down on the middle of the floor shining up on the screen on the stage, but film was highly flammable, especially in those days, and he found out that there was a law — if he was going to do it publicly the machines would have to be enclosed in a booth. So he did that, first with just one machine. When the reel would end they said, "Reel 2 will follow in a few minutes." They'd have to rethread the new one.

Mr. Skillman, the editor of the *Sentinel*, played quite a part there. He used to bring his Victrola over and when the one reel would end, he would put a record on and then part two would follow and so on. Of course that was something new for Eureka. So Mr. States started the movies and went from there.

But as I recall, the first movies in Eureka were brought in by a fellow by the name of Shumann, possibly 2 or 3 years before Mr. States started. He had one of the first automobiles — that created a lot of interest. I think they said it was an old Locomobile, but I'm not too sure. He had a generator mounted in the back of his car and he'd park it out in front of the theater — we called it the Opera House those days — and he had a moving picture machine and he'd show these pictures. I was only about 9 or 10 years old and as I remember his feature film was kind of dry, but at least the people were moving. It was Napoleon's retreat from Moscow and it showed them in the wintertime and all these soldiers were having quite a time, it seemed like. He also had possibly a reel or so of comedy and something different, probably a travelogue or something. He came through for 2 years and that was the end of it until 2 or 3 years later when Mr. States started. The movies were very popular and the residents of Eureka packed the Opera House every night.

SG: I'll bet they did.

AB: It was really good. Then little by little they got to 3 shows a week. And as I've often mentioned, I don't believe I ever saw the town better than from 1923 until 1927. There were two reasons for that, really. One was that the Holly Mine west of Eureka was really going and the mine and the mill were employing about 125 men.

Then on top of that the first highways that started in Eureka were put through. In 1923 the contract was let from the north end of Main Street out to the Hay Ranch, a distance of about 12 miles. Nevada Contracting Company started that. (A fellow by the name of Brown was the boss.) In those days there was no machinery. They plowed up the ground and used Fresnos and scrapers, horses and men. You can imagine how many men were employed in putting in that road, and they finished it that year. That boosted the population here in Eureka too. As I said, those were probably the best times I ever saw. The theater was really booming and you can't imagine the dances at the old pavilion up above town.

SG: That's what Rebaleati has now?

AB: Yes. That floor was 60-by-100 and they did have a 25-foot stage. But on the nights of the Fourth and fifth of July in 1924, the floor was so packed that you could hardly dance; they were just squeezed in.

The movies I'm talking about were silent movies — Mary Pickford, the Magish Sisters, Bill Hart . . . I should have a list of all these names; I can't recall them all right now. But beginning in 1931 they brought the talkies to Eureka. That was quite a thing.

By that time, Mr. Bartine had bought the Eureka Theater from Mr. States and he was operating it. They bought a talkie machine from McGill. McGill was getting the new sound on film, but these first talkies had a phonograph record synchronized with the film. The trouble is, the film would break and they'd splice it and then the synchronization wasn't working, and it was sure funny to see somebody's mouth moving but they weren't saying what they were supposed to say. [Laughter] But that didn't last long; Bartine finally got the sound on track too. Of course that created a lot of interest when you could listen to it and you didn't have the titles. The movies lasted until television; when television came in that just about finished them.

In about 1924 Mr. States leased the theater to a fellow by the name of Gene Shaw, and Gene Shaw had a brother by the name of Harold Shaw who had an orchestra with just 4 pieces. Harold Shaw played the piano, and there were 2 Indians. One was Bobby Cromwell, who played the trumpet. I don't remember the name of the fellow who played the trombone, and then they had another fellow who played the drums. But, boy, they really had the music. The music of those days was kind of ragtime.

SG: Yes, the Charleston and . . .

AB: They could play just about anything. He didn't stay here very long, but it was good to hear and to dance to their music.

SG: How often did they have dances there?

- AB: Oh, at least once a week. They had big dances, like at New Year's.
- SG: Didn't they have a masquerade ball?
- AB: There was a masquerade ball for years — that was the Knob Hill Fire Company. You might say that was really the dance of the year. I think that it attracted more people, due to the [fact that it was a] masquerade.
- SG: Did people from out of town come to that too?
- AB: Oh yes, they even came from Duckwater. The Duckwater people came to Eureka a lot in those days — it was a little bit closer than Ely. And people from the outlying ranches even as far as Palisade would come in on the train. And it was fun. They had it on New Year's Eve. It would start about 9:00 and these maskers would come in from the back of the Opera House, and one of the members of the Fire Company would announce them as whatever it was they portrayed.
- SG: Oh, they didn't say their names, they just said "This is [the Queen of France or something]"?
- AB: Right, because they were masked. And that was the fun, trying to guess who they were. And they kept coming and coming and by about 11:00 all the maskers were in and they'd parade around and dance. Then they'd get 3 judges, and the judges would be up on the stage watching them, and then they'd announce the winners. There were usually 3 prizes. First, I think, was something like \$15, which was quite a bit in those days, \$10 was for second prize, and \$5 was third.
- But in the meantime, people would be disguised and everybody was trying to figure out: "Well I wonder who that is, I wonder who that is." And it was surprising. I can remember one especially; there were 2 ladies here — one was a dentist, Mable Young, and her partner, Alma Wood, had the ranch out here at the Willows. Mable Young was a very tiny person, but strong, but she wasn't too young at that time. But on one masquerade ball this person came in dressed as a monkey. As I say, she wasn't very big, and she was active, and everybody thought it was some young boy. She ran around the floor, went up on the balcony, and there are those poles that hold the balcony up, and she was climbing those right to the ceiling. Everybody had no idea who it was, but they knew that it was a young boy — someone who would be strong, you know. Boy, talk about a surprise when she [unmasked]! [Laughter] I'll bet you she was close to 50 at that time. But she was active.
- So there was always that element of surprise when they had those masquerades. And of course it was interesting to see who was going to win the prize. I'm pretty sure my wife and I won the prize on that last masquerade.
- SG: What were you dressed as?
- AB: That was a funny thing. We were married a year and my wife decided we ought to go in costume. I'd never gone before, and I didn't believe in that at all, but she sent to the Salt Lake Costume Company and got 2 costumes — Russian count and countess. And I never felt so out of place in my life. We must have looked all right, but I didn't feel all right. They were really fancy

costumes and she looked all right, but I didn't think I did. [Chuckles] We went to the masquerade dance and we came out with the rest of them. I remember I had to wear long stockings and they had some buckles that I put over my oxfords, and [I had to wear] these knee pants. I was really self-conscious. [Laughter] We didn't act out much, we danced, and we got in with some other people that we knew. I still believe there were some there who deserved the prize better than we did, but, anyway, I couldn't believe it when they said that the Russian count and countess had won the first prize. I think that was about the last one they had, maybe because radio was coming in and all that stuff. It's too bad, too, because that was really the highlight of the season.

And the St. Patrick's dance would be a big dance. And of course the high school graduation would be big, and Fourth of July — usually the baseball team or the Rescue Hose Company would have that. And Labor Day and Thanksgiving were also big dances. But there was a dance every week. Even the Friday night dance would have a big crowd.

SG: Yes, they did a lot more dancing in those years. That's how you got together.

AB: Yes, it was different. People all got together. Before my wife and I were married we'd go together and there would be couples going together but they wouldn't stay by themselves; they'd dance with different ones.

SG: Was there a potluck dinner included with the dances?

AB: Not exactly a potluck dinner, but the dances started at 9:00, and many a night they didn't let out till 4:00 or even 5:00. The orchestra would get tired of playing about 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning and they would take up a collection to keep them going. And at 12:00 midnight one of the restaurants would always be open, and maybe some organization would serve sandwiches and coffee in the hall. So they'd always have a 1-hour intermission and then go to dancing again. I know my wife sure liked to dance, and I didn't so much until I started going with her, but after that I got to dancing too. And many a time, especially in the summer, the birds would be singing when we would go home. [Laughter] Yes, they were different, too. Times have changed. We would never be able to come back again, but we did have fun.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

SG: OK, you're going to talk about Memorial Day weekend.

AB: Speaking of Memorial Day, in those days, when I was a youngster, the Odd Fellows organization and the Rebekahs (mostly the Odd Fellows) took charge of the program. They had their service in the building that is the Masonic building; it used to be the Masonic and Odd Fellows both. And the day or so before the Memorial Day program our teachers would tell us that we would have to be there to march in the parade.

SG: And you didn't get out of school for Memorial Day?

AB: No, school always let out after the first of June. But if for some reason or another we couldn't be there, we had to have an excuse just the same as if we

were in school. It was quite a procession — the band would march going up to the cemetery. There'd be the different lodge organizations, the Rescue Hose Company, the Knob Hill Hose Company and all the school children and anybody else — even citizens would get in it and march in the parade. In the early days before cars there'd be buggies and carriages going along. Later on, especially the old Model Ts would be going along too, and they'd visit every one of the cemeteries. The march to the cemeteries would start about 10:30 and it would be possibly 12:30 before we would get back.

SG: And would you play music at each of the cemeteries?

AB: Yes, at each cemetery the band would play a little selection and then they'd blow "Taps." That was after World War I. The first cemetery would be the Odd Fellows. By the afternoon people had been decorating their folks' graves and things like that and maybe you'd have picnics in the afternoon — they made quite a day of it.

SG: Oh yes, it was an all-day program.

AB: Yes, and the Fourth of July programs would be the same. They'd have the kids' races and the horse races right up the middle of town. That's another kind of thing we had.

I failed to mention before that in 1923 Fred Bartine and Richard Gibson started a moving picture theater in the building south of the Owl Cafe, but it didn't last long. Eureka couldn't afford 2 theaters. But the upshot was that Mr. States sold out to Bartine — that's how Bartine got hold of the theater. That was in about 1924. So he ran it from then on.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

SG: This session is about the Eureka school system. We have to say the Eureka school system, because the discussion will go from one building to the next. Because you will talk about the old building and the new building.

AB: We'll talk about the old building that I went to when I was a kid. I believe the old building was built about 1879. I think it was about the same time that the courthouse and the Sentinel Building were built. It was a 2-story building similar to the Sentinel Building here. The lower floors housed the grammar school, grades from 1 through 8, and the upper floor had the high school, the ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades. A good many people went to school in that building from the time it was built until the new building was built. And an earthquake brought the new building to a head faster than it would have otherwise. I was a junior in high school at that time, and it was quite a severe shake. And that old 2-story building, I'll tell you, was really rocking. [Chuckles] We all came out of there as fast as we could. They shut school down for several days because when they looked at it [they saw that] the north wall — the upper walls especially — got broken. The building was situated between the Catholic church and where Isadore Sara now lives, and when they looked at the building, they found out that the walls had bowed — in other words, the one next to the Catholic Church was convex; it was bowed out. And the one that was on the south was concave.

SG: I'll be darned.

AB: So as I said, they shut school down for possibly a week. They got some big 12-by-12 timbers, and they put a timber across the north wall, and then 3 12-by-12s from the footing of the Catholic church up against the schoolhouse wall.

SG: But it didn't do anything to the Catholic church?

AB: No, it didn't seem to hurt that at all. But that's when people began to get a little afraid of that building. They thought, "If that's going to go down one of these days — and with all those kids in there — it's going to be bad." So little by little they started talking about building a new school. But it met with quite a bit of opposition. They began to say that it might cost \$70 or \$80,000, and that scared a lot of people out. But they kept working at it. And there was a principal here by the name of Mr. Luce who took quite a part in getting things going. But a lot of people said, "Well, they can't afford it." It would cost too much and raise the taxes and there was just a lot of scare talk.

But the biggest part of the taxes for Eureka was coming from organizations like the Southern and Pacific railroads and the big ranches in northern Eureka County, and even around here — there were quite a few good-sized ranches. So a committee wrote to all these people and every one of them said yes, they thought that a new school was needed and they were all for it.

So they finally brought in an architect and they figured out what they needed, and they said that it was going to cost right around \$100,000. Well, that was a lot of money, but it finally went through. Before that, though, they condemned the old building. In the school years of 1922 and '23, and also '23 and part of '24 they held school in different places in town, like some of the abandoned business buildings, and I remember that one of them was the Presbyterian church, and also in the Remington Building (the top is torn down in that). That went on for about 2 years. They were afraid of the old building. In August 1923 they started to build the schoolhouse; that means they started to blast the foundations. By the way, that building is set on that white rock.

SG: Oh, it's set on solid rock.

AG: In other words, it's got a good foundation. In August they started to blast that, and by early fall they had 11 bricklayers. They worked all during the winter. The winter wasn't too severe, so they managed to work on it. Then the carpenters came in; and classes actually started in April of 1924. But it wasn't dedicated until the 16th of May, 1924.

It was quite something, as compared to the old building. The old building had no gymnasium or stage or anything; the graduation exercises had to be held in the theater. But here they had a gymnasium, they had the stage for the school plays and they had showers, and it was really a big boost for Eureka. The night of the dedication the governor of the state, and I think the lieutenant governor and the superintendent of public instruction, all made talks and then they danced just about all night. The building actually cost about

\$100,000 because the county paid, imagine, \$5,000 a year for 20 years. And I remember in 1944 when the last payment was made. Pete Merialdo was the auditor, and he told me one day, "Well, the schoolhouse belongs to Eureka now; the last payment was made." And you know, people really didn't even realize that it was being paid off — just that little bit. Another thing that helped was the fact that when they were building it, quite a few local men got jobs up there, doing labor. But that was quite a thing.

I remember that there weren't enough students in the school. When they had basketball teams there weren't enough for 2 teams, so some of us who had just graduated a few years before would go up and scrimmage with them. We thought that was pretty nice — [laughter] on a gymnasium floor, something we'd never had before.

SG: Let me ask you about the old school now. How old were you when you started in school?

AB: I started the first grade in 1909, when I was 6 years old. There were 4 rooms downstairs, but one was a storeroom. One room had the first, second and third grade; one, fourth, fifth and sixth; and the other one seventh and eighth.

SG: Who was your first teacher?

AB: My first teacher was a Miss Boomhauer. By the way, that's her picture over there. She was kind of sympathetic with the kids. I remember I got in trouble once with something and I was sent up to the high school, to the principal, and I had to stand in front of the assembly up in the high school. I can still remember them all snickering at me, and here I was a little fellow. That's when a fellow needed a friend. [Laughter] When I came back, I guess I was probably crying. I can still remember her putting her arms around me and trying her best to comfort me. She taught us in the first, second and third grades.

Then in the fourth, fifth and sixth grades Mrs. DeSautels was teaching, and then Sarah Imobersteg. The seventh grade was Mrs. DeSautels again, and then in the eighth grade we had Christy McGillvary.

When we went upstairs [to the high school] ours was one of the largest classes that went into high school — there were 20 of us. In all the other 3 grades combined I don't think there were over 15 or 16 [students]. One senior graduated that year, 1917-1918. There were 4 juniors and there couldn't have been over 7 or 8 sophomores. So we were one class that they couldn't haze. (They used to haze the freshman boys, you know.)

SG: What did they usually do to you?

AB: They used to take us downtown and make us dress up in any old kind of costumes, and things like that. Not only that, they would kind of raise the dickens with us up at the school. [Laughter] But we'd all band together so they couldn't bother us at all. That was the year of the flu, too — no, that was the next year.

We played basketball on the grounds outside in the fall. In the spring they started us playing baseball. We played on the ground just back of the gram-

mar school now, where the football field was originally. I can't remember just how it was — Eureka either challenged Elko, or Elko challenged Eureka, but we went down and played. We went down in 4 Model T Ford cars. The game was to be on a Saturday; we left on a Friday. It was somewhere about the early part of May 1918. And that was quite a trip. We left at 9:00 in the morning and we got to Elko at 9:00 at night, but a lot went on between. We left here and we went by way of the Sadler Ranch, then over the Union Summit. When we got to the Sadler Ranch we stopped and talked to the Sadlers for a little bit and then we took off again. When we got maybe 8 or 10 miles north of Sadlers' the axle broke on the Ford I was riding in — the hind wheel came off — and we spun around in the sagebrush there. That disabled that car and we were already crowded, so we didn't know what we were going to do.

But one of the cars went back, and Edgar Sadler, the owner of the ranch there, gave us his Model T Ford to use. So we started out again. When we got to Union, there was a little something going on there. There was a mining camp, and I remember they had one saloon there, and we were allowed to go in and get some soda water. The bar that was in there is now in the Nevada Club. That was a pretty fancy deal. Union was an old mining camp and it had its ups and downs and finally it quit.

Anyway, we struck out, and everything went pretty well. We went down through Pine Valley, through by Bruffeys', and just before we got to Carlin there was a bridge crossing the Humboldt River.

One of the Fords in the group sheared a hub — the hind hub. There's a pin that goes through the axle and it sheared it. Well, that disabled that one. We were only about a mile or so from Carlin, so a car went in to see if they could get a part for it — a new hub. They went in, but they couldn't find anything. But it was a strange thing; the fellow who had bought the car was named George Cox. He had bought the Ford secondhand. He lifted up the back seat to get some tools, and here was a brand new hub in there. [Laughter] So they put that on, and it didn't take too long to put it on and we got going again. We finally got to Elko at 9:00 at night and we stayed at what they called the Mayer Hotel. That was one of the more modern hotels in the state at that time. It's where the Stockman's is now. The old Mayer Hotel burned down quite a few years ago, but it was in that same locality.

We were a bunch of pretty green guys down there in Elko, and the thing that got us was those broad gauge rails and the trains coming through Elko. The game was supposed to be that afternoon at 1:00, and at about 11:00 our coach took us in and ordered lunch for us. And I always remember — we were not supposed to overload before the game. [Chuckles] It was a little bit of a dry chop and a piece of potato and we didn't have very much to eat. Anyway, we went out and went up and put on our uniforms, but you should see those uniforms. They were borrowed from the town team — in fact, some of the uniforms were blue, and some were sort of a brownish color. We

were quite a gang, I'll tell you.

SG: [Laughter] A motley looking crew, I'd say.

AB: I remember when we came down from the upstairs and through the lobby, you could see those people laughing. I guess they thought, "I wonder who the hell . . ." [Laughter] But we went out and warmed up and played and we lost down there. They had had quite a team, a much better team than we had. I think the score was something like 15 to 4. When the game was over, we noticed that there was an ice cream parlor — they called it Hunt's Candy Shop. We were hungry anyway, and you know how kids are. We loaded up on ice cream and ice cream sodas and things like that, so when it came to supper that night [chuckles] we didn't do much to that either. [Laughter] We left the next morning and came home. We went by way of Lamoille and up [through] Jiggs. In fact, they called it Skelton at that time. They named it Jiggs afterwards. The only trouble we had was that one of the cars broke a fan belt, but we finally got that patched. It looked like the Fords knew we were going home — they did a good job.

SG: They were ready to go home. [Laughter]

AB: I think so. About a week or two weeks later, the Elko team came up. But it wasn't the same team we played down there; I don't think half of them were the same team. Their star pitcher wasn't there. Anyway, we beat them about 14 to 3 or something in that area, so we evened up the series then.

SG: That's good. Were there any other sports?

AB: No, that was the first high school baseball team that they ever had and the last one.

CHAPTER TWO

- AB: That's extremely sad. In fact, they never played much baseball in high school. After the new gymnasium was built then of course they went to basketball.
- SG: Were there any sports played with any other schools when you were going through school?
- AB: Not when I went to high school. They did put up 2 posts in the back [of the school] and we used to play basketball a little bit outside, but we didn't have any competition with outside teams. On the playground we used to play Prisoners Base and a game called Pom Pom Pullaway. And we used to play in front of where Isadore Sara is now. Whitmores used to live there.
- SG: That baseball trip must have been a fun trip for you boys.
- AB: Oh, yes. The strange part of it is that for [the last] 5 or 6 years or more, I've been the only one left of that whole bunch. Pete Merialdo was the lone senior, and he was the pitcher. He was quite good. Bob Laird (we used to call him Bobby Laird) was the catcher and Judson Hooper was the first baseman. Russell TenVoord was the second baseman and Peter Breen was the short-stop. (His grandson is a judge in Reno now.) Robert — Bob Lucey — was third baseman and Victor Rattazzi and Raymond Pastorino and I were in the outfield. That was the 9, and Walter Kitchen and Jim Jurey came along as substitutes.
- SG: I want to go back to the school a little bit. Did you have programs at the school like the Christmas program that they used to put on here? Did you do a Christmas program when you were in elementary school?
- AB: Yes, they called them "cantatas" at that time. Of course they had to hold them in the Opera House, because there was no place at school. Yes, they'd have Christmas programs, but not as much as they did in later years, because in those days the churches used to hold Christmas programs too.
- SG: Did you have dances at the school?
- AB: Not in the building up there, no. There again, dances would be held in the theater.
- SG: But they were organized by the school?
- AB: Oh, yes. Any functions, like graduation night or anything like that, were also held there. They even used to have dances in the Masonic Hall. I know we had what they called the Junior-Senior Dance or something — the 2 classes got together — and we danced there. But most of the dances were held in the Opera House. The thing that we really enjoyed when [the new school] building was built was the gymnasium.
- SG: Yes, then you could have the dances right after school and not have to wait.
- AB: Yes, you didn't have to go downtown.
- SG: Did you have school plays?
- AB: Yes. In fact, when I was in high school we had a play every year. I was in all of them when we were freshman, sophomores, juniors and seniors. Each class would give a play each year and being that there weren't too many

upperclassman, as I said, they had to borrow from the freshman, so some of us got in [chuckles] on all of them.

Speaking of the theater, years ago they used to have home talent plays. I can remember a long time ago, when I was little, they had a Red Rosette Dramatic Club. It was a group of young men and women. A Mrs. Burdick had been in the theater, they tell me, before she came here, and she used to coach the plays. And boy, those amateur plays used to fill that Opera House right up.

After I got out of high school, for 4 or 5 years we had a group like that and we gave plays. We gave them to raise money for the baseball team or for the Catholic church. We did them a number of times. There were about 10 of us, maybe 5 young men and 5 young women and there was a doctor here who used to coach the plays, Dr. Brennan. And there was a Mrs. Travers — she'd been on the legitimate stage. (Her husband was the banker here.) She coached us and even though the movies were going on, those plays really [did well]. In those days if you raised \$200 or \$300 that was a lot of money, because you never charged over 50 cents admission for adults in the '20s. That was a lot of fun for a group of us at that time.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

AB: My dad used to tell us about his experiences, especially in the mines. When I was quite, quite small it used to scare me and I couldn't used to sleep well after he'd tell me about this one incident. They were sinking a shaft in the Diamond Mine up at Prospect and he and another fellow were sent down. I'm not sure whether they had drilled the holes, but they were sent down to load the holes. There were 23 holes and they had to put dynamite in each one of them and put the caps and the fuses in and then they were to set them off. This shaft, as I remember it, was probably only about 75 feet deep. And they had a little compressed air hoist, an engine that ran the hoist with compressed air and just a bucket. He said they put a leg and a foot in the bucket and each one of them would hold onto the cable and be lowered down.

When they got down there they prepared the dynamite, loaded all the holes and then cut the fuses. They cut the fuse so that they wouldn't all go at one time — one would go and another one and so on. And when that work was done, they had to signal the engineer to tell him they were ready to spit the fuses, as they called it — to light the fuses. They rang so many rings [as a signal] and he answered, to show that he was on the job, by raising the bucket a few feet, and lowering it; that meant that he was ready. In those days they used to use candles in the mine, and they used to use these little snuffs, as they called them — small pieces of candle. They lit them and each one was lighting fuses. The fuses were all going and they rang the bell, for to be hoisted up.

Each one put a foot in the bucket and held onto the cable and away they started. They got up about two-thirds of the way, and the thing stopped. The engine centered — this little compressor engine. They were breaking in a

new hoistman, and he kind of lost his head, I guess. He knew what was going on. They could look down and see these fuses going, and there were no ladders or anything that they could get use to get out, and they couldn't climb the cable because it was greasy.

Just through sheer luck they'd sent in an old engineer, a fellow by name of Johnson. It was getting close to the end of the shift and he was either coming on or leaving, but he happened to come in and he saw what was going on. And the hoistman was just frozen; he didn't know what to do. Johnson, the old man, hollered, "Take your foot off the brake." Well, when he did, the weight of the bucket and the men took the engine off center. Now he said, "Give it the air." And he gave it the air and it started up.

There were people who knew what was going on, and they got them by the hands and pulled them up, and he said it couldn't have been over a few seconds after they got them out that the first shot went off. They didn't have time to take the bucket out of the shaft and it just blew it to smithereens. It was wood with steel hoops around it.

SG: Oh, my god.

AB: So he used to tell me that and when I was little, it scared me.

SG: As a little kid it would scare you.

AB: I got to thinking about it later, and I said, "Well, if that had happened, I wouldn't have been here." [Laughter]

SG: And you're here now to tell the story.

AB: That was about the only real narrow escape that he had, but I still remember what an effect it had on me.

I'll tell you about when my grandmother first came here. She came to Eureka in either the late '60s or early '70s. There were several of her friends and I think cousins who came over at that time — I never did get too much straight on that. But she married Ferdinando Bonetti; he was my grandfather. They lived in the building just opposite where the store is today — right across the street. They lived in the back of that. My grandfather and 2 partners had a store and saloon there. In about 1879, I think, when they had that big fire, most of the east side of Main Street was destroyed by fire. I'm pretty sure they called their building the Old Stone Saloon, and it was completely gutted. It was a 2-story building, and it had a saloon and sort of a dance hall and rooms for rent upstairs.

When that was destroyed, my grandfather bought it. It was just across the street from where he lived, and he proceeded to knock the top story off and rebuild it as just a 1-story building. He had a saloon in the front part and my grandmother ran a boardinghouse in the back (she also had a few rooms for roomers who would stay there).

My grandfather didn't live very long; he died in 1882 of pneumonia. In those days when a person got pneumonia, they didn't have too much chance. Anyway, here she was, a widow with 2 small children. I think my mother was about 6 years old at the time and my aunt was 4 years old. She had quite

a struggle for a while, trying to raise the kids and all and still trying to keep the boardinghouse going. A year or so later she married a former partner of Bonetti's, a fellow by the name of Gabriel Morgantini. So he ran the saloon and she ran the boardinghouse. After some years, my father married my mother and they had a ranch.

SG: Your father had come over from Italy, hadn't he?

AB: Yes, my dad came from Italy. Maybe I'm getting ahead of myself a little bit, but I wanted to bring out something about the building there. Morgantini died in 1902 and he had been running the saloon. My dad had some mercantile experience in Utah, and when Morgantini died, he and my mother had been out on a little ranch about 5 or 6 miles east of Eureka. Then they had sold that and he had been working for a grocer, Phil Paroni, up about where the post office building is now.

Anyway, my grandmother asked my dad, "Why don't you run this saloon?" And he said he didn't want to run a saloon, but he would like to start a store, and she said it was all right with her. So that's how he started what they called the Eureka Cash Store. And that was started in 1903, the year I was born. I was born when he was putting up the shelves in there. That was the start of their mercantile business, and for several years he had a little bit of a hard struggle. There were 3 or 4 other stores in town, and starting out from scratch with not too much capital, for a few years he didn't know if he was going to make it or not.

But he stayed with it, and then along about 1912, 1914, a lot of sheepmen began to come into this country. And of course, in those days the land was free for all — anybody could buy sheep and run them. He found that there was quite a little bit of business there, by keeping the proper things that the sheepmen needed. He could outfit them for almost anything. Besides groceries, he had tents and harness goods and pack bags and pack saddles — everything they used at that particular time. He even carried things like needles and thread for sewing canvas and leather.

And for a number of years, from about 1913 or '14 until the Depression hit in about 1930, [he sold to lots of sheepmen]. But there were too many sheep. They were overgrazing the country, so something had to be done, and the BLM came in about that time [when they passed the Taylor Grazing Act]. But during those years he built up a real business. The sheepmen would go 100 or more miles south in the wintertime to get away from the tough winters here and we used to load them up with merchandise of all kinds to take south with them. They'd even send some teams in in between times to load up. Then in the spring they would come back north where they would lamb and shear then. But that was how my dad really built up a big business there. And after that, he still had groceries and we had hardware. Then World War II came on, and it just left my dad and me alone. The fellow who was working for us was drafted and rationing came on and I got a little bit fed up with the grocery business, so in early '46 I sold the grocery business out and went

into the hardware business.

I retired in 1968 and I turned the business over to my son and he ran it until 1982. Now my son-in-law and my daughter have it, so that's the history of the building.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

AB: Now we'll talk about the volunteer fire departments that I can remember. There were more in the early days from what I understand, but the 2 that I remember are the Knob Hill Fire Department, which was situated up on Knob Hill, and the Rescue Hose Company, of which I was a member, which was situated not far from here, just north of this building.

SG: Over where the fire building is now?

AB: Yes, right close here. That's what they called China Street, because from there down to the Colonnade Hotel were all Chinese houses. I became a member of the Rescue Hose Company when I was about 14 years old.

There were quite a few members and besides fighting fire, which was their main job, they also were part of the social life of Eureka. The Rescue Hose Company gave their dance on Fourth of July. And they would practice. In those days they had hand-pulled carts with hoses on them and every so often they would practice tying onto a fire plug to see how fast they could do it to keep in practice.

Both fire companies took an active part in celebrations. On the Fourth of July and Memorial Day they would dress in uniforms. Before my time, the Rescue had a blue shirt with a white "R" on the caps. I think there are a couple of caps here that I turned in with the "R" on them. And the Knob Hill Fire Company had red shirts and they had the fireman's hats. I think that's one over there too. They would dress up in the parades on Fourth of July or Memorial Day. It was kind of nice to see them in those days. And as I say, besides fighting fires they were quite prominent in the social affairs of the town. And of course there would be quite a rivalry between them when there was a fire — they'd want to see who could get there first, see if they could put more water on the fire or whatever. That went along until maybe in the late '30s. And for some reason or other, like so many organizations, they finally came to the end. Not too long later, the Eureka Volunteer Fire Company was formed. They say Lester Bisoni had quite a bit to do with that.

And that is the forerunner of what we have today; it's been carried down through the years. And the fire company became motorized. In other words, they didn't have to rely on the hand-pulled carts anymore. I remember that 2 or 3 of us went into Ogden — they had a LaFrance fire engine for sale, and we went in to look at it. In fact, it was Delbert Robinson and Ronald Hicks and I. And that was in 1957. We went in and there was a good price on it, and it was in good shape, so we recommended it be taken, and we got that. Since then, the Eureka Volunteer Fire Company has been quite up to date. They've got new equipment, new hoses and schooling. They used to send what they call a fire captain out and he would give a school of training. I have an idea

they do that today. But it was valuable training because it not only taught us to fight fires, but they taught us about the dangers of certain things that burn — gases and whatever. So that was the way it evolved from the old days of the hand carts to the modern ways of fighting fire.

SG: OK, let's go back and talk about that accident where that guy was killed.

AB: I don't remember just what year it was, but it was before I moved down to the house there. I'd say it must have been around about 1920 or '21, when they were still using the old carts. This incident happened on a Memorial Day. Somebody turned in a fire alarm which, sadly enough, turned out to be a false alarm, but a bunch of the volunteers took the Rescue Hose Company cart out. There was a fellow who used to be the school janitor by the name of Clay Sims. He took and developed pictures. He was very thin and not very strong, but I guess he figured he had to do his part, and he got hold of the rope on the higher cart and as they came in front of the Sentinel office here and started between the courthouse and where the livery stable used to be, he stumbled and fell and he lost his grip on the rope. And the cart, with several hundred pounds of hose, ran over him. It crushed his chest, from what I understand. He died that afternoon in the house that I am living in right now. (The doctor was renting the house at that time.) It was an unfortunate thing. It would have been bad even if there had been a fire, but this just happened to be a false alarm.

SG: Can you remember any big fires that you fought — any that really stand out in your mind when you were with the fire department?

SG: The biggest fire I can remember, I think, was the Hotel Bradley. In fact, I think that might have burned twice. The second time was in 1952, when they had a Chinese restaurant in the back of the hotel and the kitchen caught fire. It was the spring of that bad winter we had in 1952, and it really took a hold and it destroyed the back end of the hotel. We started to fight that fire about 2:00 in the morning and we fought it until about 7:00. It's just lucky we did save the [building]. Of course it was brick so the walls weren't hit too bad, but most of the roof in the back was gone. That's one of the biggest I can remember.

SG: Thank god we don't have many fires now.

AB: No, that's one good thing — they never had too many fires here and during my time they were always pretty much able to control them. So we've been pretty fortunate that way. I guess that's due to the efforts of the volunteers — they all get out and help fight the fires.

I remember the old fire bells before they had the siren. Those things used to send a chill through me when I was a kid, especially at nighttime. They had bells at the Knob Hill Fire Company place up there, and one at the Rescue and for a number of years they had one at the upper end of town where there was no fire company. Whenever there'd be a fire, somebody would get those 2 ropes and pull them and boy, you could hear those bells. I think they still have some of those bells out in the front of the courthouse.

SG: There are 2 out in front of the courthouse, yes And they all had to be different tones so you knew which one it was.

AB: Yes, you could tell pretty much which [one was ringing]. I remember the one that the Rescue had seemed like it would go through you. [Chuckles] And especially when I was little, I used to be scared to death. I used to hear my folks tell about the time the fire took just about all the town, and I think that's probably what I was scared of. There's a lot of history here, if you could just think about it.

The reason I did put so much time in this building was the fact that Edward Skillman, the editor's son, and I started school together. We were very friendly and I used to play up here and he'd come down home and play down at my place.

SG: Which Skillman was he the son of?

AB: The father's name was Edward Skillman, too, but he went by the name of E. A. Skillman. From what I understand, it was a family deal. His father, Archibald Skillman, started the paper. I think there was a man by the name of Cassiday who also had something to do with it, and I think he started in 1871. Edward and I started school together in the first grade in 1909 when we were 6 years old, and 6 years old is about the time I began to remember things. We played a lot, and I was always interested in watching them print the paper. It was quite a thing.

The family lived upstairs — there was Mr. Skillman and his wife, Etta. She did quite a bit of the writing. And there were the 2 mothers, the mothers of Mr. and Mrs. Skillman. E. A.'s mother lived to be almost 100 years old; she was over 99 when she died. And Mrs. Crumley, Mrs. Etta Skillman's mother, was quite old, too. She didn't live that long, but I can still remember them. The young Mrs. Skillman used to give piano lessons, and my sister, among others, took lessons from her. In fact, my folks sent me up to take piano lessons, but I figured it was a girl's job; and I have really kicked myself ever since.

SG: I think we all do.

AB: [I wish I had taken] lessons for a year or two, just enough to be able to play for my own enjoyment; I would've liked that. Instead I got a trumpet. Of course, I enjoyed playing in the band later.

But as I say, I used to like to come up and watch the process of printing. When I first remember it, they set the type by hand. They had what they call fonts and I can remember that there were 2 young women and 2 young men who used to set this type. It was surprising to see, once they got onto it, how fast they could pick that type out of these different places and put them in this [form]. The girls at that time were Clara Rosavear from Ruby Hill and Grace Clark from Eureka. They worked for quite a while, and Ben Moyle, my wife's uncle, and also Ed Moyle worked for Mr. Skillman. And Albert Laird worked for a while.

They'd set this type and when they'd get so much of it they would make a

proof. They would ink it and put a piece of paper over it and then roll it with that roller. Mr. Skillman did most of that, and I think Mrs. Skillman did, too. They would read the proofs so if there were any errors they could correct them. That went along until 1919, when they got the linotype.

I also want to talk about the way the press was run. There was a Chinese man — I think his name was Charlie — turning that by hand. That went along for a time, but Charlie wore out or got old or something. Then I remember Mr. Skillman had a gasoline motor belted to the press and they ran that for a number of years, until I think about 1927 or '28, when Kelley and Rebaleati started to generate electric power.

SG: There's a motor back there that is similar to the one that Skillman had here. It's not the one that Skillman had, but it's like it. It's the same type of motor that would be used to run it; the one-cylinder engine or whatever it is.

AB: Yes, it was the same type exactly. Anyway, then they put the electric motor in. From about 1928 till 1948 we had direct current, not the alternating current. And that made a little difficulty in a lot of the motors you could get; the direct current didn't work as well as the other. In other words, there wasn't enough of the direct current used to warrant making a lot of things to use with it. But anyway, that took care of the power for the printing press.

For a long time the *Sentinel* came out on Saturdays. But in 1914 Mr. Skillman bought a Model T Ford and after that they used to print on Friday, so that gave him Saturday and Sunday to go touring. [Laughter] He was really all excited about the cars.

In 1919 the Eureka Croesus Mine started and that started kind of a boom. It seemed like it was more of a stock proposition, though. But they came to town and they bought the Brown Hotel for headquarters, and they bought the livery stable here on the corner where Al Hammond's station is now. They brought in horses from Lamoille, beautiful draft horses, for their teams. They even had a very fancy harness with "Eureka Croesus Mine" printed on it. As I say, it really started a boom.

On the strength of that, Mr. Skillman and his son Edward (by that time, Edward was about 16 or 17) went to San Francisco and bought a linotype. The linotype machine is in here now. And that was quite a difference from setting type by hand. Edward stayed down in San Francisco for 2 or 3 weeks learning how to operate the machine. He was still going to high school then and he didn't have much time to play after that; he had to set the type on the linotype machine. It was a little bit complicated to start with, but one person with the linotype machine could do more than the boys setting by hand; it was so much faster.

My wife's uncle Ed Moyle worked continually for Mr. Skillman for years, from the time he was a young man. He was a handyman around here, too. He was very handy; he could fix things. The Skillmans thought a lot of him. In later years he ran the paper. When Mr. Skillman got older, Ed Moyle took over. And there was another boy, Willis Skillman; he was younger. And he

ran the paper for a while. But he married, and his wife died quite young. They had 2 children and she was in her early 40s when she passed away.

SG: Did Willis take over from your friend Edward Skillman?

AB: Willis took over first from Mr. Skillman.

SG: So Edward didn't really run the paper, then.

AB: No, he left. It was a strange thing — we graduated in 1921 and he was still working. Then in about 1925 he left Eureka and went to San Francisco, where he worked on the *Chronicle* or *Examiner*, I don't remember which, for a while. He went from there to Denver and worked on the *Denver Post* for a while. Then he went to New York, and he worked as a linotype operator for the *New York Times* for years. I understand he's still alive in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Anyway, when Mr. Skillman's health failed (Mrs. Skillman died in the meantime, and the 2 mothers) Willis took over. As I say, he was married and had 2 girls. They weren't very old when their mother died. And Willis had been quite a ballplayer. In fact, he even had a tryout with the Oakland club of the Pacific Coast League. He didn't quite make it, but it shows that he was good enough to get a trial. He did a lot of ball playing, and also piano playing. He could play ragtime music and he was in demand for dances. He used to go to Austin and Palisade and different places and play for the dances. Well, he got sick and got sort of paralyzed. I know he couldn't use his hands, and it used to bother him; he couldn't play the piano well. They claimed it was something like Lou Gehrig's disease. He died quite young, too. I think he was only about 47 or something in that neighborhood when he died.

SG: Was he living here when he died?

AG: He died in Cedar City. They took his dad down there and Willis's wife's folks took care of him. And Willis was up at the county hospital here for a time when he was sick, but I think they moved him to Cedar City. He didn't live very long; he died there. But he's buried here; all of the Skillmans are buried here in the Odd Fellows Cemetery.

All this time Ed Moyle was working for the paper. He continually operated the linotype; he was really good at it. He was really clever at making billheads and letterheads and so on and he was a very neat worker. Well, he'd learned it from the time he was in his teens; I don't think he even went to high school. But Willis ran it until his health failed, and then before he died they had to shut the paper down; there was nobody to publish it. That's when the Tonopah [paper] took over. I didn't know that Stella Genzoli was coming here today, but the paper was printed in Yerington, did she say?

SG: Yes, it's not even printed in Tonopah.

AG: I thought it was printed in Tonopah.

SG: I did, too, and then somebody told me a few years ago that it was being printed elsewhere.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

AG: I recall the flood that hit Eureka the 4th of August, 1926. It was on a Wednes-

day. The reason I can remember it was a Wednesday is because we had the store and it was our day to deliver groceries at the Diamond Mine just south of Prospect Peak up there where the floodwaters hit. It rained a little bit here, but very little. I used to walk home for lunch. Our home was barely half a mile from the store, and at noon as I got near my home I could hear the water rushing in the big ditch in front of it. Up to that time, I'd never seen that much water in the ditch. In fact, I haven't seen that much since in that ditch. We have a footbridge going across to our house, and at that time the ditch was at least 6 feet deep. When I saw that much water, I decided that I'd better get some film; I wanted to get a picture of that. I didn't realize that the water was rising. My wife came out across the bridge there, and I told her to delay lunch a little bit. I said, "I'm going to go up and get a roll of film to get a picture of this."

She said, "Wait a minute." It began to rain. "You'd better get a sweater." So she brought me out a red sweater and I put it on. And as I started out, she went in the house to see something about what was cooking, and she came out 2 or 3 minutes later and the footbridge was gone. She looked up and she could see me walking up above, and by the time I got back to the store on Buel Street the water was already coming down the street; it must've been 6 or 8 inches deep at that time.

I still had the film in my mind and I went in the back of the store. My folks were there, eating lunch. I told them about all the water and I said, "I'm going over to get a roll of film so I can get a picture of it." As I went in the back of the store, I happened to look out . . .

CHAPTER THREE

AB: Our delivery boy, as I mentioned, went to Diamond that morning and he just got out of there in time, because he didn't get into any of the floodwaters. But he parked out in front of the store, and I noticed that my truck was moving; it looked like something was pushing it along. And a little water was coming in under the door. I forgot all about the film, and I was going to figure out how to save my dad's truck. I couldn't go across the street — it was about 6 feet from the sidewalk, and the water was deep there; it must have been 3 or 4 feet deep. The danger was that there was all kinds of timber and debris coming down. I thought I'd never be able to get to the truck. I was thinking about getting a rope and lassoing the headlights, which used to stand up on sort of a pillar.

But Pete Laborde had a saloon across the street where Louie's club is now, and that side of the street, the west side, is higher than where we were. He came out — he was in water up above his ankles — and he said, "I'll get the truck," so he got in it and drove it across and put it over between the 2 buildings.

SG: Did very much water come into the store?

AB: Just a little bit under the door. There was a little bit in the warehouse. And back of the store my dad had at least a carload of the blacksmith coal they used to use in the mines and the blacksmith shop. That was damaged quite a bit; we had to resack a lot of it. But that was in the back, in Buel Street.

Anyway, I began to wonder, because down where we live, we were going to get it all. I was quite worried because my wife was there alone. I was wondering how I could get down there, so I came out the back on Buel Street, and I walked up against the buildings all the way up. I had something to hold onto, because the water by then was halfway up to my knees and in the middle, it would be worse. I was wondering how I could cross and I found a timber; I believe it was a cedar post or something. And I kept looking up the street. As I got into the water, I used the timber to brace myself and I'd watch to see if there was any timber or anything coming down. But I finally got across. I crossed the bridge at Spring Street and went partway up on the hill and walked home.

When I got down to the house, Jim Rogantini, Estelle Genzoli's father, was there. (I think he had planted potatoes up in that field above our house.) He was warning my wife. He said, "Now, Mrs. Biale, if that water keeps getting higher, you go up on the hill here." [Chuckles] When I saw everything was all right at home, I felt better. We kept watching, but by that time the crest began to go down.

It took our footbridge out, as I said, but it didn't do us any more damage other than bringing down a lot of debris. Very little went into the fence, though. So we were very fortunate. I remember coming uptown later on — you hardly recognized the street anymore; it was just full of boulders and

timber and all kinds of stuff. And it did damage to some of the different buildings. But luckily there weren't more lives lost. Some say that when the flood hit on top of Prospect, part of the water went south towards Fish Creek. They used to say that if it all came this way it could've been worse. It was bad enough, anyway.

SG: Tell me about the 2 people who drowned.

AB: One was Barney Hogan. He was an older fellow, and he was an alcoholic. The red-light district of Eureka was at the upper end of the south end of town, up above Rowley's store a ways. And this fellow used to drink quite a bit. Whether he was under the influence then or not I don't know, but they figured that he was going to warn the girls about the flood. He was on the other side of the ditch and he would have had to cross to get over to their place. And evidently the bank gave away; he lost his footing or something. He was washed down, and they found his body afterwards right close to where Mrs. Rowley's store is now; he washed in against the building.

The other person who died was Mrs. Affranchino. She was an old-timer. Her husband and she lived at the Diamond Mine for years and they had a son, too — Ernest Affranchino. They were working at what they call the Uncle Sam Mine, which was below the Diamond or Prospect — the town there. She saw all this water going down and she should've known, probably, that they would be safe, because they were on higher ground. But she walked down on the left-hand side of the hill, coming down, and I understand they saw her coming; she was going to warn them. She would've been all right, but just before she got to where they were, they said a water spout hit above her — heavy rain or something — and washed her down into the main channel. She wasn't carried very far — maybe a few hundred yards — but she got stuck in a chokecherry bush; a real big bush, more like a tree.

She didn't actually drown; she lived almost 2 days. But the doctor said that she had swallowed so much sand and gravel that it lodged in her lungs, I guess, and caused pneumonia. And there was no chance in those days to do anything for her. They were the 2 who got killed in the flood. I think a few others had narrow escapes, but they weren't hurt.

SG: How about the car that got smashed?

AB: They were right above Rowley's store in the old Matt Hoy blacksmith shop. It was an old gray building and I remember that it was all sagged even before then, when I was a kid. At the time of the flood there were 2 cars stored there. One of them [belonged to the man who] was district attorney, I believe, then; later he was a judge. His name was Reynolds. He had a Saxon car. And ahead of the Saxon there was an Austrian miner who had a brand new Willys Knight car. It had some sort of sleeve valves; it was supposed to have been quite an improvement over some of the cars. It was practically new; I don't think he had it over a few months. Well, the floodwaters came down and there was enough force that it opened the 2 doors and out floated the Willys Knight, and soon after it got out, the building collapsed and it

crushed the Saxon.

There was so much damage they couldn't do anything for it. The fellow who had the new car was lucky. The floodwater pushed it down against a neighbor's fence and after the water receded, a day or so later, they cleaned the motor out — took the pans out and cleaned it — and it didn't have any damage. They didn't dare start the engine before they cleaned it, because water got into the motor.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

Today we're going to talk about the bands in Eureka. From what I heard the old-timers say, when there were a lot of people here in the early days there were a number of bands. In fact, I understand some of the organizations had their own particular bands. I know somewhere I've seen a picture of the Italian Benevolent Society — probably a dozen members — with their instruments, so they must have had a band, too. The one I remember very much is the old Lobster Club Band. I can remember back when I was 7 or 8 years old, and even older, the band used to come out and play for different occasions.

One of the big occasions was Memorial Day. They would lead the parade, going up through the street to the different cemeteries, and they'd play funeral dirges on that particular day. They used to visit every cemetery in those times. They'd go up Ruby Hill Avenue, way over to the Odd Fellows cemetery, then back to the city cemetery, Schwamb, and then up to the Masonic cemetery and end up at the Catholic cemetery. After the war they'd blow "Taps" at each one of the cemeteries. They also played for dances at times, and they'd hold concerts sometimes in the summer evenings.

SG: Oh, those would be nice.

AB: Yes, they'd be in front of the Brown Hotel or the courthouse or someplace. They used to attract quite a crowd. I remember we kids would follow them around, and we were quite thrilled if one of the members gave us their extra music to carry. We thought we were doing something.

Another thing I can remember about the bands were the political parades in those days. In the days before radio and television the Republican and Democratic candidates, along about October, would come out in force. Practically the whole ticket would come out and boy, they really did it up brown. They'd have bonfires, a torchlight parade — the band would lead the parade — and they would go into the Opera House and speak. The candidates for governor and senator and congressman made the big speeches. The lesser officers would just get up and say a few words. That was quite a thing. Maybe the Republicans would come in first, then maybe the next week the Democrats would come in. Some of the more prominent citizens of their parties would be up on the stage with them, and one of them who was a pretty good speaker would get up and introduce the candidates. I remember when we were little, they used to put us to sleep. [Laughter] Although there were some times you couldn't sleep. They could yell, too. I often wondered how those fellows did

it. You never saw a note; they'd get up there and speak right off the cuff. And I tell you, there were really some orators among them. I can remember [a number of them]. Francis G. Newlands was United States Senator. And Sam Platt — I don't think he ever was elected, but boy, could he speak. And J. G. Scrugham, who ran for Congress. Emmett Boyle ran for governor. Tasker Oddie was both governor and United States Senator. Pat McCarran — if I remember right, his first position was clerk at the Supreme Court, but he gained popularity as he went along, and he got to be one of the real outstanding senators from the state of Nevada. As I said, they spoke without notes, and they could really keep you spellbound. [Chuckles] But after radio became prominent, and of course later, TV, then they didn't have the rallies anymore. It's something that the town missed, I think.

SG: I think a lot of things that went on here 70 and 80 years ago are things that all of us miss. I think having a concert on the street would be fantastic. I went to a couple of outdoor theater-type things when we lived in Berkeley. I saw Arthur Fiedler, the conductor of the Boston Pops, play in an outdoor theater, and it was one of the most exciting times of my life. I wish our kids had that.

AB: Yes, that was quite a thing, having the concerts in the evening. And as I said, the torchlight parades were really impressive. They'd get wood and rick it up in the street in 2 or 3 places and set fire to it—they probably put kerosene on it. And a lot of people would get broomsticks and put gunnysacks on them and soak them in kerosene and light them and be marching up the street . . . it made quite a [show]. That's another thing that went out after radio. I think we miss a lot now. [Chuckles]

SG: And you miss the personal contact with the candidates, because they come over the radio or they come over the television; they don't come into each individual town and make their spiel.

AB: That's right. Another band I can remember at this particular time was the Ruby Hill Band. A fellow by the name of Tom Cardew was the conductor and leader. They called him "Fessor," short for "Professor." He could really play a trumpet, and he had a good band. The Ruby Hill Band would come down from Ruby Hill to Eureka and play for dances sometimes, and for different occasions. I don't remember too much about them getting in on the parades in my time, but I think they did before.

I can remember 2 or 3 times when someone who was a member, or had been a member, of a local band here in Eureka died. The band would come out and march in the funeral for them. I remember one particular man —Tom Hicks. He was killed in a mine accident. I can still remember the band going up the canyon playing funeral marches.

I went up to Ruby Hill once with a fellow by the name of Will Flavin, who was working for us at the store. He played in the Ruby Hill Band and I went up with him one Sunday and listened to the band. And how they could get into this little cabin . . . they were almost touching one another. Tom Cardew had a small cabin and they'd just about blow the roof off [chuckles] when

they'd play something. And he was strict. Two or 3 times when I was up there he'd stop the band and bawl some fellow out who didn't play [a passage] right or played some false notes or something. By that time I was learning to play the trumpet a little bit. I told Will Flavin, "I don't think I'd want to play for Tom, because he'd be bawling me out." [Laughs]

SG: Did you ever play in a band?

AB: I never did play in that particular band, but later on the Lobster Club Band came to a halt. Like everything else, it changed. Some of the members passed away and some moved out of town (there's always a floating population in Eureka). So for a number of years they had no band. But when some kids my age got around 18 or 19 years old, about the time we got out of high school, there were some old members of the Lobster Club Band around. I can name a few of them here: There were 3 Hoopers — Dick and Jud were the sons, and the father was Billy Hooper. And they were all musically inclined. They were really good; they sort of led the band. With them were Will Swick, Joe Rebaleati and Jim Rattazzi — I remember he was a big fellow and he played the bass drum. They got some of us who were around about 18 or 19 interested. There was a room right here next to the Sentinel office, and that's where we had our band. It had been a warehouse at one time. Later on, after they got us going, they allowed us to go into the sheriff's office, and while we played we got so we were quite good, with these fellows leading us. We used to play for the parades and come out, and sometimes we'd give a little concert. We also played for dances a little bit.

I think our biggest enjoyment — at least mine — was the practice sessions we had. We'd get in there, a bunch of us, and we'd be practicing and telling stories, and it was just a good get-together. We had a lot of fun. I think, as I look back, I enjoyed that more than almost any organization. The nice part of it was that it wasn't one of these professional organizations. About the only [officer] they had — and I was it most of the time — was a treasurer. That was to see that we had money for music and whatever. Other than that, we had no set rules or regulations; it was just a lot of fun. We stayed together from about 1921 to possibly into the '30s. The last couple of years some of the older members passed on and some of the younger members got to going to college or someplace else, so our ranks got pretty few, too. It finally ended. I remember kind of an amusing story. The last time we came out for Memorial Day, they asked us to come out and we hadn't been practicing. I think we practiced a couple of nights, but we went up to the cemeteries. We all knew that the music didn't sound very good. The next day down at the store, a fellow came in and I knew he'd have something to say about our performance. He said, "Well, I see you had the band out yesterday."

And I said, "Yeah." I said to myself, "Well, I might as well let myself wide open." I said, "What did you think of it?"

"Well," he said, "I'll tell you. It sounded like every man for himself." [Laughter] I think he was right, too.

-
- SG: Did they have any band or music in the schools when you were going through?
- AB: [No.] But right after our band came to the end there was a fellow by the name of Vernon Westfall here. It seems to me he worked for the highway department; I'm not sure. He interested some kids [in a band], but it didn't last very long. I think one of the reasons it didn't last very long was that at that time the new schoolhouse had been built for several years, and they got a music teacher. His name was Darrell Winters. And boy, that fellow knew music. The first thing he did was start a band, and he had a wonderful band. He had the interest of just about everybody in school, and he really did a good job. In fact, after he left here he went to Sparks and was bandmaster there. Then he came back and he was principal at Eureka, and also he had the band. After that, sometimes they'd have band and sometimes they wouldn't. They've had a couple of pretty good bands since then, but I understand the men haven't had one for some little time.
- SG: No, but the school has a band. On Halloween day they have the kids march up in their costumes, and usually the high school band will go lead that.
- AB: I think band is quite important for a school. I imagine in years past there were times when it was pretty hard for them to get a band teacher.
- SG: Yes. Right now the curriculum requires that we have someone who can teach band and music. But the kids lose interest in it. You'll get a couple of years when the kids are real enthusiastic and you'll have a lot of them coming out for it. But fifth and sixth graders have to take band. My daughter plays.
- AB: Well, that's good. I think while we're on this subject we might talk about the Memorial Day celebrations they used to have years ago.
- SG: That's great.
- AB: I don't know if you call them celebrations, but in those days it seemed like the lodges were the ones that would be at the head of the doings. They had a speaker, and I remember many times they used to have it down at the Odd Fellows building. Upstairs they had a good-sized hall and, as I say, they had speakers. As I told you before, when we were going to school we were supposed to go to that and march. If we didn't, we'd have to have an excuse, just the same as if you had missed a day of school. But we enjoyed that; we thought that was a lot of fun — when we were small, especially. I think maybe you've seen some pictures of that. The band used to lead it, or a lot of times they had the fire companies — the Knob Hill Fire Company members might be dressed in their uniforms and hats — and the Rescue, and then maybe the band behind them. They also had floats at times. They weren't really the kind of floats where they compete for prizes or anything like that, but I remember one time when they had one of the fire carts that was big enough that kids could ride on it. And they had the queen and the attendants. I remember a couple of us boys went dressed up as sailors; we were on this particular float.
- [The Memorial Day observance] would start about 10:00 in the morning, and they'd have their public speaker in the hall and they'd duly form ranks

and march up. And you know, that was quite a thing, to march to every one of those cemeteries.

SG: That's a long way to walk, yes.

AB: And the Memorial Day weather was very unpredictable.

SG: It still is.

AB: That's right, it still is. There were times when it would be boiling hot — I know I got a good case of sunburn once. And then other times they had to cancel; there'd be a foot of snow on the ground, so there was no fun having a parade. But most of the time they were able to march. And of course the kids had to dress up. That was another thing they used to do differently in those days. I think if they didn't have all this competition in radio and TV and everything else . . . people got together in those days.

And of course they always had a Fourth of July celebration, very much like they have now — kids' races and contests and one thing and other. I remember when the town was real good, especially in 1924 and '25, they had a 2-day celebration — on the 4th and 5th. I think once they even had it on the 3rd, 4th and 5th. There were all kinds of contests.

In those days they used to run horse races up the street. They couldn't do it now; the horses couldn't stand it on that pavement. In those days it was just dirt and sand. The races would start down about where the lower motel is — the one on the left — and it went up to just about opposite Rebaleatis' house. I remember there was a stable across the street and that was the finish line. They had 2 or 3 races, and they'd have prizes — maybe \$25 for first prize and \$15 for second and \$10 for third, depending on how many horses were running.

Invariably, when the horse races were finished they'd match the outstanding horses. They didn't have any prizes for them, but they would bet on the side — maybe the owners of the horses. Talk about rivalry — boy, there were even fistfights. [Laughter]

I think it was 1927 when I got a Graflex camera; I'd been wanting one for some time. That's the kind the newspaper reporters used to use. You could actually stop action with that camera; it had a fast shutter and fast lenses. I was trying to get some pictures of action, to see if I could stop the action, so the race was made to order. The stable was in back, but in front a fellow had an office, and there was a platform where they could back wagons up and unload hay and grain, and that's where the finish line was.

I didn't take pictures of any of the other horse races — I wasn't thinking too much about that — but finally there were 2 horses that were the favorites — that is, had won their races that day. They matched them and I got to thinking, "Well, I'd like to get a picture of that. This is a good chance to see how they come out." (I didn't know much about my camera. And it was quite a complicated shutter when you first got it, but after you got onto it, it was really simple.) I got up on the platform and the 2 judges were there — one was right under me and one was across the street. The one below me was the

sheriff and the one across the street was the district attorney. They had a string, and I was right over the top of it. I remember my camera would take pictures up to 1-1000th part of a second and I thought, "Well, I'll try it at half of that." So I got my camera set about half of that speed. And the camera was a reflex — you'd look down and you could see what you were going to get there.

I got everything ready and someone hollered, "Here they come," and I was watching. As they came up the street, I put my head down in the hood [of the camera] and just as they entered the picture, I snapped the shutter. I didn't know whether I got anything — as I said, I wasn't too used to my camera. But all at once there was an awful lot of yelling going on. It ended up as a real close race, and boy, there were more arguments! John Hunter won the race, against Frank Pastorino — that was Tom Pastorino's brother. As I remember it, the Hunter horse was white and the other one was sorrel.

It was about the last event in the afternoon anyway, so I went home. And I used to do my own developing. I went down to the basement darkroom and I developed the films. After I developed them so they'd be permanent — so the light won't hurt them — I looked at that negative, and the lead horse had won by about a neck. I stopped it; I guess it was beginner's luck. I stopped it and they were centered. The horse that won, the white horse, looked like he'd made that final lunge, and the other one was coming down. And there was not quite a neck's difference.

Well, when I saw that — and I knew that these arguments were going on — I made what they used to call a sun print. I put the paper in my printing frame and made the print. Of course you could tone them, but I didn't have time for that. But as long as you kept it in the dark, it was all right. So I put it in the black envelope the film came in, and I went up to the courthouse and into the sheriff's office, and these fellows were in there. I said, "I've got something to show you guys."

SG: [Why were there so many arguments?]

AB: Well, the judges were right on the line [and they could see the finish], but people down below couldn't tell exactly [who had won].

And oh, boy, there was all kinds of racket going on. I showed them that picture and they took it down. I said, "Keep it in that envelope till you're ready to show it." They went down to all the saloons and showed this. They said, "Now see, we were right." [Laughter] They were sure tickled to get that picture. [Chuckles]

SG: That's great. I want to ask you something about the cemeteries. You mentioned the Catholic and the Masonic and Oddfellows and the Schwamb and the city cemetery. Now, what was the cemetery that was up by the high school?

AB: Oh, up near the high school? They used to bury the Indians and Chinese in there.

SG: Somebody said that it was also the pestilent cemetery.

-
- AB: I understand that the pestilent one was down the canyon further. The canyon that runs down below the schoolhouse is what they call Hog Pen Canyon. The reason they call that Hog Pen Canyon was that the early Chinese used to raise pigs. I don't know if there was a law that they couldn't have them in town or if there wasn't very much room, but anyway, they used to raise pigs down there. We used to go hunting down there for cottontails and things. But I understand that when people used to die of smallpox and other contagious diseases they'd bury them there.
- SG: Did you ever see it?
- AB: No, I really didn't. It was just hearsay. I do remember when I was little that a Chinese man died and they buried him over [by the high school]. They used to have sort of a procession for Chinese funerals — I saw one in San Francisco, in Chinatown. They even have paid mourners. But up here, I can remember what looked like cigarette papers; they claimed that was to keep the evil spirits away. I was too small; I don't remember too much about it. But I heard that when they bury the Chinese they put all kinds of food on the grave afterwards.
- SG: Now, that one was across from the high school — and that was where the Chinese and Indians were buried. When they built the high school, what did they do with the graves?
- AB: Well, when they did some excavating there, they found bones and things. But that was not so much the high school itself, but further over. They said they found bones; that's the way I understood it.
- SG: But they didn't do anything special with them or anything?
- AB: No, I don't think so. And it's funny, I don't remember seeing a headstone or marker there.
- SG: There's a fence around a grave up there, but I don't think there's any marker or anything. It's up on the hill across from the high school.
- AB: I don't remember too much about it. And of course, there's the Jewish cemetery — I guess you know where that is.
- SG: Yes, I know where that is.
- AB: I was up there a couple of years ago, and there are a few headstones in there; some are knocked down and broken. In the real early days there was quite a Jewish population in Eureka. Most of them were businessmen.
- SG: Yes, you can read the names and guess that they're Jewish.
- AB: I remember hearing my folks speak . . . in fact, I can remember one — old Ed Krause. His store was Kind and Krause. It was quite a big store, where the Eureka Hotel is now. And that's where they claim the basements came from — they used to put merchandise down there.
I think the Odd Fellows cemetery had some real old graves of 2 girls. They were both very young. On one of the headstones it says, "Dress me pretty, Mama." That was in the 1870s or 1880s.
- SG: People ask me about the cemeteries because our tour guide lists so many of them. I wanted to make sure, when I do the new tour guide, that I have down

what they are. And the pestilence cemetery is the one that has puzzled me. I knew about the one up here — the Chinese cemetery. (I didn't realize there were Indians in it.) And somebody told me that they buried people who died of smallpox or something like that in that same area.

AB: Well, I heard that they buried them further down the canyon. Really, I don't see that that made any difference. Once you put them under 6 feet of ground

...

SG: No, it doesn't, but back then it did, because they believed it could be . . .

AB: When I was a little kid, just about where that tennis court is now they had an old hospital — they called it the old hospital — but they claimed it was a "pest house." That's where they used to bring people, sometimes, who had smallpox or some contagious disease. When I remembered it, it was in ruins; the stone walls just collapsed. I used to hear the folks talk about it. In those days I guess they had no way of combatting diseases.

SG: No, they didn't have what we have now. Once smallpox got started in a town, it just swept right through it, and everybody was susceptible. And it's such a deadly disease.

AB: They said that so many children died — babies. One of the reasons they claim that a lot of babies died here was the smoke. They called Eureka "little Pittsburgh." I know my grandmother's first child was a boy, and he died as an infant. And she just had the one, my mother, afterwards. So many of them died there during that time. Of course, it was pretty rough living in those days. I guess people had to be tough to survive.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

I often think about when the railroad was running. We kids were young and there was sort of a fascination in going down to the depot and watching the old trains pull in. In those days, if a person wanted to leave town for any distance at all, the train was about the only transportation they could use. I remember especially during school vacation we used to be down at the depot just as often as we could to see the train come in. In those days, there'd be passengers — probably some of the town people who had gone somewhere.

And there were always the traveling salesmen. That's the only way they could come in. And they used to come in early in an afternoon and maybe stay a day or two, depending on how much business they had to transact. I remember one fellow by the name of Charlie Luby. He was a short, roly-poly sort of a fellow; looked like a kewpie. He used to dress very well, and I remember he had a little goatee and he wore a big Western hat; kind of reminded me of a mushroom. [Chuckles] I would know a lot of the salesmen because they were selling things to my dad. My dad at that time had the grocery and general merchandise store and there'd be grocery salesmen and hardware salesmen and they'd be selling a lot of things that he was handling, guns and ammunition, which I liked.

A horse-drawn bus would come down from Eureka and bring the passengers

up to town, where they'd go to the different hotels. After that, the train would usually take empty ore cars up to Ruby Hill and bring full ones back.

SG: How long did the Ruby Hill railroad last? Did it go longer than the railroad?

AB: Well, yes, because then they hauled after that with trucks. Of course, in those days there were times when there wouldn't be so much mining. That is, maybe the big mine would shut down. But there'd always be leasers, so the train made trips quite often up to Ruby Hill and back. And it was good to hear it chugging along, and to hear the whistle for the different crossroads. That put me in mind, too, of 2 occasions — it might have been more — when a circus came in on the train.

SG: Oh, how neat!

AB: Yes. It wasn't one of the real big circuses. It usually had one elephant, and maybe Shetland ponies and monkeys and things like that, and horses . . .

CHAPTER FOUR

SG: Did the circus bring in any tigers or lions?

AB: Yes, they even had lions and tigers. It was quite a thing. And they usually had a parade up and down Main Street, maybe the next morning, with the elephant leading. And of course by that time they had it well advertised, and those were the days when there weren't too many things to go to — there were no movies yet — so it usually drew a big crowd. In the tents they'd have kind of rooms that they'd fix with the horses. And they had dogs, too.

SG: Where did they put the tents up?

AB: Right at the depot; there was kind of a big vacant place there.

SG: Oh, where the Melkas have their meadow.

AB: So they didn't have to go very far. I can still see the old elephant pushing the cars around with his head. And he was trained to help put up the tent and everything like that. They had trapeze acts and things of that kind.

And other things used to come in about that time. There were traveling dramatic clubs — they'd come 2 or 3 times a year. They would have their acts in the theater — the Opera House, as we called it then. That always drew a lot of people, and some of them were quite good. And most of the time there'd be a little dramatic club in town; they'd put on plays. And there were dances. In those days, because there were not too many forms of entertainment, the dances were all big dances. So they offered a lot of entertainment too.

And I can remember there was a roundhouse down at the depot. They'd run the engine in there in the evening. Before they got to the roundhouse, there was a turntable. The engine would run on it, and they had to turn it to face Palisade. That sure must've been a well-constructed turntable, because 2 men using one big timber [on one side] and [another on the other side] could just walk right around it. Then it ran on one track and they would run it into the roundhouse. A fellow by the name of John Conway was night watchman, and he would grease and oil the engine and keep the fire going for the next day. We used to go out and watch him sometimes. As long as we didn't get in his way, it was all right. He was a crabby old guy. [Chuckles] I guess you couldn't blame him; kids get a little bit under people's skin, you know.

SG: Yes. They like to be involved, but a lot of times [they can get in the way].

AB: Of course, some of this took place before the washout in 1910; after 2 years the train service was resumed again.

SG: Were the little cars that traveled back and forth in the later years electric, or how were they powered?

AB: You mean the little ones other than the engine?

SG: Yes, those little boxcar-looking things.

AB: They had an automobile engine. In fact, they were on an automobile chassis, but it was built so that it would fit the narrow gauge tracks. And they had 2 — one was a little smaller and one was a little larger. They put those in use

after the trucks began to run. They didn't have as much freight to haul and they didn't have as many passengers, so it didn't pay them to run 6 trains a week. They'd run 3 trains a week and 3 motor cars.

SG: I talk to people who ask me all the time how those little cars were powered, and now I know.

AB: Yes, they just had regular gasoline engines. The last time I rode in one of those was in 1923. I went to California and visited some friends down there for a couple of weeks and rode in one of the old motor cars. One thing about them — they made much better time than the trains did.

SG: Oh, yes, they would be a lot faster.

AB: Yes, the train had to stop at different stations and get water here and there. But all this soon had to end, I guess. You can't stop progress, and of course when the trucks became more dependable and there were more of them, and passenger cars . . .

SG: Well, and the roads got better, too.

AB: Yes, and the railroad couldn't compete. They had a big investment in the engines and the rolling stock and the roadbed; they had to keep that in shape. It was just a matter of time until it couldn't operate anymore. I think it was the first day of July, 1938, when the last train pulled out. And it was kind of a sad day. We knew that there was no chance of it keeping going, but it was missed for quite a while — even just hearing the whistle.

SG: Yes. It's too bad in a way that the track and everything was taken out. If the track was still intact, we might have the possibility of reinstating the engine. It would be neat to have it to run up to Palisade and turn around and come back again, the way they're doing in Ely. (You know, they've redone the train in Ely.)

AB: Yes. The one in Austin, I think, went out the year before ours — from Austin to Battle Mountain. Ours went out in 1938. And it's a strange thing, but those rails were sold to Japan. And when Japan hit Pearl Harbor during the war . . . Japan had no mines like the United States, so they bought [things like those rails]. I suppose they got them for next to nothing; I wouldn't be a bit surprised. But anyway, it was kind of sad to see the old railroad torn up and the old landmarks gone. But, as I say, there was no way in the world that you could stop it.

SG: I have a piece of the railroad line. Somebody bought one of the rails and they cut it up and I got a piece. It's about that wide and it's got a label on it [describing] what it is.

AB: Quite a few of the ties weren't so good; they were pretty old. But there were some good ones, and they sold those. I remember my dad bought a mile of them. They were handy for quite a few things. Some people even made little buildings with the ties.

You can still see the roadbed. I'll tell you where you notice it quite a little bit — after you get past the J.D. [Ranch] you go down that sort of a grade there and you can still see where the track went. And before you get to Alpha

you'll see it on the right-hand side.

SG: Where the road is cut across it now and it goes around; yes.

AB: The Alpha station was above the ranch, just around the corner there. So there are still places where you can see where the old railroad went.

SG: I didn't realize what that was when I first got here. Then I took a trip with Maxine Rebaleati, and she showed the roadbed to me. So whenever we're traveling and I've got somebody with me, I show them where it is.

AB: Down in Pine Valley [it went right through the field of] what they call the Raine Ranch — that's Tomeras' now, I believe, but we always referred to it as the Raine Ranch. (In fact, that was the grandfather of the Bob Raine who started the Raine's market; he's not there now.) The tracks went right through the field. And I can remember, they had an excursion once in about 1913 or '14. The baseball team in town had an excursion to Palisade. They were going to have 2 games, one with Palisade and one with Carlin. And at the Raine Ranch (I don't know if you noticed or not) there are some trees.

SG: Yes.

AB: Well, we stopped there and had a picnic.

SG: Were those trees for people to stop and rest — for the train to stop there?

AB: Well, we stopped and they took lunches with them, and we had lunch. Then we went into Palisade. [Chuckles] I don't know what the rates were, but they cut the rates way down so that a lot of people could go. The people from Palisade used to come to Eureka and the baseball team would come up to play.

SG: Was there anything else that went on in Palisade other than the railroad depot? Was there any mining or anything up there?

AB: Going towards Carlin, there was what they called the Iron Mine; it produced iron. And I think there was another mine of some kind down there. But that Iron Mine ran for quite a little while.

SG: When the railroad stopped running, did everybody more or less disappear from Palisade?

AB: Yes, that made Palisade a ghost town.

SG: There's nothing left there anymore. You can see a few stone steps, and that's about all that's there.

AB: They've torn down buildings. There were quite a few buildings there years ago. I remember they usually had a good ball club. The railroad workers were there, and the bosses, for both the Western and the Southern Pacific railroads. There was quite a rivalry between Eureka and Palisade. And Carlin would come and play Eureka, too, and Elko came up and played several times. When the automobile came in, then Austin joined in.

SG: Now, these were adult teams; this wasn't the high school team.

AB: No, it was just the adults.

SG: It was only that one year that you had the high school team?

AB: Just that one year, yes. Maybe later on they could've done it, but as I told you earlier, when our class went up as freshmen in 1917, there were 20 of us.

We had more in the freshman class than all the other 3 classes together. There was one senior who graduated that year, in 1918, and 4 juniors and about 8 sophomores. That's one time they couldn't haze us, either. They used to do that, but we always ganged together, and we had some pretty good-sized kids in the freshman class.

Anyway, in those days there were no games to speak of. They got us playing baseball in the spring. We used to play basketball outside on the dirt court in the fall and a little bit in the spring, but then we got to playing baseball. And we had a pretty good team. I don't remember just how it happened, but the first thing we knew, Eureka either challenged Elko or Elko challenged Eureka for a game and then a return game here. That's the time we went to Elko in 4 Model T Fords. [I told you about that trip.] We left at 9:00 in the morning and got to the Mayer Hotel at 9:00 at night. They beat us down there. Of course, they had much the better team; they had so many more to pick from. But when they came up here, they didn't have their full team. I don't know, some said that some of them had to go work on the farms; a lot of them were farm kids. But I understood that some of them were expelled [chuckles] because they did something. So when they came up here they had a little different team — there were only maybe 3 or 4 of the old ones, and we beat them. We got back at them. [Chuckles]

SG: We've had games here in the last couple of years that have been cancelled because right before the game was due to be played the kids had gotten low grades and they were off the team. There weren't enough kids to make a team, so they didn't even show up for games. I think a couple of years ago the girls' volleyball team from Nixon didn't have a volleyball game one day because a bunch of them got ineligible from poor grades. [Chuckles] And there have been a couple of times we've been down to just the bare minimum.

AB: They've sure done well in volleyball, haven't they?

SG: Oh, yes, the girls taking state this year was great. And of course, the girls took state in basketball last year.

AB: They're pretty good, aren't they?

SG: And the fact that both girls' and boys' teams went to second place — the boys haven't done that well in years.

AB: No, that's right. These girls have really been going.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

AB: We're speaking about the Chinese today. When I was real small, I remember that Chinatown started just this side of the Colonnade, and came up as far as the Rescue Hose Company. (In fact, they have the new building there now.) There was also a joss house, as they called it. I was never in it, but they said it was very fancy, very ornate. And where all that stuff went to, I don't know. It's too bad, because they said there were some beautiful things in there.

SG: Oh, that is too bad.

AB: My earliest recollections of the Chinese are of 2 Chinese women. I thought

it was odd, because at that time they were the only women who wore trousers — pants. They were kind of big — they weren't exactly bell bottoms, but they were wide.

SG: Big and full all the way through, yes.

AB: Yes. And I never could figure out what happened to those Chinese women. I remember seeing them, but I don't think I was over 5 years old if I was that old. Later on I don't remember seeing them. Now, whether they moved away from Eureka, or whether they passed away, I don't know.

But at that time I was deathly afraid of Chinese. All the older fellows would tell us to keep away from them, that they'd cut our ears off and things like that. And I really was scared of them. On one occasion, my sister and a friend of hers (they were older than I) were coming down Clark Street. Just as we got to the Colonnade Hotel I saw one or two of the Chinese women coming our way and I ran and fell down. I can always remember that. I cut my knee quite badly; I still have the scar. There was a piece of a bottle — the end of a bottle — and my knee hit that and it made a half moon. I was scared to death. They said that I almost went into hysterics, I was so scared of them. But you know, as I got older I found out that the Chinese were very friendly. It's too bad that people treated them like they did. They didn't treat them real well at all. They not only threw rocks at them, and snowballs, but in the wintertime they'd get up on the roof and stuff sacks down the stovepipe and smoke them out and things like that. And it's funny, I don't remember them ever taking revenge on anybody there.

Their reputation was good. As far as paying bills, I know that in our store I don't know of any Chinese who had run a bill. They mostly would pay as they went along. I imagine years before that there must have been a lot of them, because I understand the younger men came out when they built the railroad, and they also worked in the mines.

SG: Did they work in the mines? I was wondering whether they actually worked in the mines here. [I know that] a lot of old Chinese who came out years ago did laundry and worked in houses for people, but I didn't know that the Chinese had worked in the mines.

AB: Yes, there were a few, I think, but very few, who worked here. I know originally on the transcontinental railroad there were a lot of [Chinese workers]. I think quite a few of them came to Eureka when they built the Eureka-Palisade railroad.

But as I remember, there were a number of Chinese. The 2 that I can remember better than any of them were Sing Lee and Louie Ock. And there was a fellow they called "Mike the Chinaman." I never knew what his last name was. Then there was a Wash Ock — Ock seemed to be a common name; I don't know if they were related or not. He used to have a laundry. And then there was a man we used to call "Fat Ock." He was a gambler. And there was a little fellow; I don't think he weighed 85 pounds soaking wet. They called him "Cracker." He wasn't 5 feet tall and there was nothing to him, but he

and Wash Ock used to have a laundry.

A lot of people didn't like the idea of listening to this, but the way they sprinkled their clothes [is interesting]. You've probably heard how they sprinkled their clothes.

SG: The water in the mouth and spray?

AB: Yes, they'd take a mouthful of water, and boy, they could sure spray it good. I used to watch them from outside in the summertime. They'd spread the clothing out and then they'd get a mouthful of water and just spray. And then they'd iron. They had great big irons, and they had stoves that looked something like a heater, and this particular one had a square top. And those irons were big; I guess they'd hold heat well. They'd be ironing and talking. I used to like to listen to them talk because it was like they were singing — kind of a sing-song.

SG: Yes, the Chinese speech has a nice sound to it.

AB: So that's the way those 2 made their living. And as I say, Fat Ock gambled.

SG: Was he welcomed into the white [gambling] establishments?

AB: He seemed to be. He'd go in and play. In those days they used to play poker. I don't suppose the stakes were very high, but they always would gamble; they had a game every night, and sometimes in the day. (I think they played poker, mostly.)

Then there was the fellow I was telling you about who used to turn the crank on the printing press. I think his name was Charlie, but I'm not sure. He wasn't too tall and he was thin too — there was very little to him. I used to wonder how he could turn that big old fly wheel, but he never ever seemed to rest. Once Mr. Skillman, the editor, would give him the high sign to start, he was just like a motor — he just kept right on a-going. As I told you, I watched him many a time, because when I was little Edward Skillman, the editor's son, and I went to school together and we played a lot together. I put in quite a bit of time up in this place here. Later on, of course, they motorized the place, and they didn't need Charlie. In fact, I doubt if they could ever find anybody who would do it. [Laughter]

The 2 Chinese who probably were the last ones who lived here were Louie Ock and Sing Lee. Sing Lee always ran a restaurant. The bank then was a saloon, and in the back was a place that he had called The Chop Stand. Sing was the cook, and later on he had a restaurant just below Louie's — practically directly across from Al's Hardware Store. And he also cooked on ranches at times.

Louie Ock was the last of the Chinese. And he was a friend of everybody's. He was really, really good and quite humorous. He used to make kites for the kids, and boy, he used to make fancy ones — he'd make them look like butterflies and things like that. He was quite a favorite in town. He had a Model T Ford, and some of the kids about that time used to have a lot of fun. They turned it over once, but nobody got hurt; it was lucky [chuckles]; they weren't going very fast.

Louie also worked as a cook at different times, especially out in the sheep camps when they lambled and sheared. There was a lambing and shearing ground over by the other side of Ruby Hill, at the Silver Corner; A. C. Florio had it.

I don't think we taped the story about the corn?

SG: No, we didn't, but you told me about it. Tell me about it for the tape.

AB: This was in the store. During the early '30s there was a fellow by the name of George Vokac who started to bring vegetables up here from Sacramento. He lived in Florin, I believe, and he used to get fresh vegetables and bring them up. At that time he was supplying 3 stores. He'd supply Austin and Eureka, and then go to Ely. He was successful and his sister and brother-in-law started a store in Ely. They were real businessmen and they gained a reputation, and they really had a good store there.

He used to come through Eureka every Wednesday and when he'd come in about 1:00 in the afternoon, Louie the Chinaman was always there, because the Chinese really like vegetables. This one particular time we got a sack of green corn from Vokac. I dumped it on the floor, and I noticed, as I was moving it, the worms. I'd peel the corn down a little bit, and on almost every ear there was a worm. Louie came in about that time and he was looking for corn. I said, "Worms in there, Louie." He didn't say anything; he looked through, and picked up 3 or 4 ears (they weren't the big ears). He took them along with his other [purchases]. I thought, "Well, I guess Louie doesn't care whether there are worms in them or not." I took some of that corn home and it was really good.

A couple of weeks or so later we got another sack of corn, and I looked through them and not a worm; there wasn't a worm at all. Louie came in and I said, "Got good corn this time, Louie. Look here — there's no worms."

He said, "No worms?"

I said, "No."

He looked through it himself and threw them down and walked away. He said, "Worms no want them, me no want them." [Laughter]

SG: That's great. [Laughs]

AB: And you know, he was right. I took some home and that corn didn't have any taste to it; it was tough. So he taught me something that day. [Chuckles]

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

AB: Now we're speaking about tunnels under Eureka. I can remember 2, but they were connected. One particular case was the Sadler store. That was run by Governor Sadler and it was situated just above Louie Gibellini's. That was his store, and up on the street behind it was his residence, a 2-story brick building. And he had a tunnel connecting the 2 — in other words, he could leave his store underground and come up into either his yard or his house. It was especially handy in the wintertime, when there was snow.

Then there was another one, from under the Eureka Hotel to the Colonnade Hotel. I never did find out whether the [owner of the] Eureka Hotel and the

owner of the Colonnade Hotel was the same person; I don't know. But anyway, there was a passageway there.

Under the Eureka Hotel proper is where a lot of people say there were opium dens. But I don't know. I would rather doubt it, because the Chinese had their own part of town. I believe that the places underneath the hotels weren't really tunnels; they were more like a cellar or basement, and they had beautiful brickwork. I think they were mostly for storage. I know my dad used to tell me that Kind and Krause had quite a store. (I remember Ed Krause a little bit.) They had the store in the early days, and they used to store their merchandise in there. And I think that's what it was meant for more than anything. I never did hear that they were used for opium dens. The Chinese used to smoke opium up in their own places. I know that, because up in Chinatown we have found a lot of these little opium bottles.

Pretty near all the houses in those days had cellars underneath them for vegetables, to keep them from freezing and also keep them cooler in the summertime. I think some of those basements were connected, but . . . And there have been stories of tunnels under Main Street. There may have been some connecting, like from across the street, but I never did hear of any. When I was a little fellow and up until the early '20s, there was a lot of sand in the street. I think 1924 or '25 is when they graveled the street. They dug quite low, and they also dug places to put culverts; there were culverts going across into the ditch. So I'm sure that there were no cross tunnels and no tunnels going lengthwise up the street. I think what happens is that as these stories go from one to another they begin to get a little exaggerated. [Chuckles]

SG: Yes, I can believe that.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

AB: Today we'll talk about the Lincoln Highway. The Lincoln Highway was the first designated coast-to-coast highway. I think it was started in about 1913. In 1915 I think I put in one of the best summers I ever put in. San Francisco was holding the Panama-Pacific International Exposition and there were a lot of cars that came through, something that was really out of the ordinary for Eureka or almost anyplace. I can remember the cars coming in. They used to get in late in the afternoon most of the time, or sometimes quite late in the evening.

Right across the street from where I lived Rudolph Zadow had a gas station — if you could call it that. (It was a lot different from the modern service stations.) The gasoline came in in 55-gallon steel drums. He'd put a faucet in one, and a valve, roll it up on a stand, and then he'd fill the cars from a 5-gallon can that had a spout. He had a big funnel with either a chamois or a felt hat that he used to strain the gasoline, because you'd be surprised how much water and dirt was in it. And the travelers would leave early in the morning.

I was over there just as early as I could possibly make it, hanging around,

watching, to see the different makes of cars. It's surprising how many makes there were. I have a few of them marked down here, and that's just a few. They're what they call Chandler, and the Chalmers, Imperial, Thomas Flyer — that was quite a car in its day — the Haynes, E. M. F. — jokingly they used to refer to that as “every morning fix it” [chuckles] — and a lot of other different makes that I can't recall right now. Those were the days before Henry Ford started the system of building them wholesale. Most of these cars were hand built, and most of them were good. I think most of the people who were traveling those days had money. They must have.

SG: Oh, in that day and age, yes.

AB: I can remember on one particular occasion, one morning, I was over there and there was a tall, fine-looking fellow with iron-grey hair. I was gawking around the cars, and he asked Rudolph Zadow, “Is this your boy?”

Rudolph said, “No, he's the neighbors' boy.”

While Rudolph was gassing him up and he was getting ready to go, I remember he opened up the cover built along the running board of this long car. It was really well stocked with all kind of liquors. So they were traveling first class.

When he left, Rudolph Zadow said to me, “You know who that is?” Of course, I didn't know who it was. His name was Harry K. Thaw and he had been involved in quite a scandal. I don't exactly remember how it came out, but he was involved in one of these eternal triangles, I guess they call them. He was supposed to have killed a man's wife by the name of White. I don't know whether he was ever sent up for it or what, but it was quite a scandal in those days.

Almost every morning throughout that summer there would be cars. And some were having car trouble. There weren't any real mechanics in town, but there was a fellow by the name of Gilbert and I remember him working on some of the cars. I used to like to watch what he was doing — he'd take them apart and I just couldn't figure out how those things would even run. [Chuckles]

So I really enjoyed that summer because I was interested in these cars. It was a year after my dad had shipped his carload of Model T Fords. That was the beginning of the automobiles; from then on they began to get more and more all the time. At first, I think, people didn't think the horseless carriage was going to be much, but it finally was.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

AB: I remember in 1919, in the summer, there was an army convoy that came through Eureka. I don't recall how many army trucks there were, but there were quite a number, because they had a band. I have an idea a lot of the drivers were members of the band. They stopped in Eureka overnight; they came in the afternoon. And they created a lot of interest, to see all of these army vehicles; we'd never seen anything quite like that. I understand that one of the reasons for that convoy was that they were testing tires. Half of

the trucks were equipped with Goodyear tires and the other half with Firestone tires. They were making a test to see, probably, which one would hold up the best. Anyway, they stopped overnight.

And I remember the front of what they called the Zadow Hotel then —that's the Eureka Hotel — had quite a canopy over it. And their concert that night was really wonderful; those fellows could really play. They played a lot of different kinds of music — stirring military marches and popular music of the day, like waltzes and foxtrots and things like that. They also played spirituals — religious music. I could listen to them all night, and I think everybody else could. They were really nice.

The next day they left, and I understand they just went as far as the Willows. That was a ranch; Dr. Mabel Young, who was a dentist, and Alma Wood had it together. In later years I heard Alma Woods talking about them stopping there overnight. She said that Dwight Eisenhower was a lieutenant and was with the group at that time. And I thought she said something about a picture. It would be wonderful if a person could have had that picture.

SG: Oh, yes, that would be fantastic.

AB: But she's been long gone. She left here and went to Arizona — Sun City — and that's where she put in her last days.

SG: [It must have been great] to have something like that come through town. Could they have been a band that was going across country and promoting the army while testing the tires?

AB: I had an idea, too, maybe they were testing different makes of trucks. I don't remember, but it could've been that. But I know one of the things was testing the tires.

SG: It could be that it was a band, and that they had set places they had to be at certain times to perform concerts, but when they'd stop at all these little towns along the way they would also perform. Because most musicians like to perform; they want to be out and show everyone what they can do.

AB: Oh, yes. Well, they were good musicians. Every time I hear a good military band . . . I can remember when my wife Marie and I were in San Francisco for the World's Fair of '39 and '40 (we went down both years). Both years we went out to a certain place there, and they had the Presidio band. It would be between 3:00 and 4:00 in the afternoon and they would perform what they call a retreat, when they take the flag down and all of that. They'd march and play and I just felt like . . . [Laughs]

SG: [Laughs] Getting up and marching, too.

AB: Yes.

SG: Were you in the service, or were you between?

AB: No, I was between. I was too young for World War I and a little bit old for World War II.

SG: What year were you born?

AB: I was born in 1903. In 1917 and '18 I was 14 and 15. Then in World War II, in 1941, I was 38. I would've been subject to draft, but I guess my family

status kept me out. I know fellows my age were taken, or even a year or two older. But I think they made a mistake; that is, for combat. They soon found out that they were too old. In other words, when they trained with a bunch of young fellows they just couldn't keep up with them.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

AB: One of the last things we spoke about was the Lincoln Highway, and about the exposition in San Francisco and the cars coming through. That was in 1915. And then 1919 was when the military convoy came through. But each year there were more and more cars being used, and the roads were in bad shape then. There were some awfully bad spots in it — dust holes through these alkali flats, and if it ever rained you were bogged. So something had to be done.

I remember the first highway that was built out of Eureka was in 1923. The Nevada Contracting Company from Fallon got the contract and a fellow by the name of Brown seemed to be running it. In those days there was no machinery. The surveyors came along and designed the road, putting up the stakes and things. Then in moved the horses and men and plows and the Fresno's and scrapers . . .

[Music]

Male Voice: Well, folks, I hope you enjoyed listening to Albert Biale's stories of Eureka. I'm quite sure that the next time you wander around Eureka you'll have a new insight as to what this town was at one time, thanks to Albert's vivid descriptions. I have to apologize; the original tape of Mr. Biale's was a few minutes longer. But due to the physical characteristics of cassette tapes, I couldn't quite get it all on here. Rather than edit out some of the stories about Eureka that were contained in the middle of this cassette, I chose to cut out a few minutes at the end. The part that was edited out spoke mainly of road construction that led out of Eureka. Once again, my apologies. And come back and see Eureka. And tell them Albert Biale sent you.

ADDENDUM

Experiences as told to our family by my father, John B. Biale, after his arrival from his home in Italy and leading up to his founding of the family business known as the Eureka Cash Store.

Written by Albert F. Biale, 1987

My father, John B. Biale, was born in Santa Giustina, Italy, near Genoa, on February 15th, 1871. His father had come to Eureka in the early 1870s to work as a charcoal burner as did many of his countrymen. The charcoal was used by the 2 large smelters, the Richmond at the south end of town and the Consolidated at the northern end of town.

He worked making charcoal for 4 years and then returned to his native land. Most of his work was done in the Fish Creek area, where a short time later the Fish Creek War took place.

A few years later my father's sister, Clotilde, and her husband, Tomaso (Thomas) Pescio, came to Eureka. Pescio worked on some of the nearby ranches and at the Consolidated smelter. Today Phil Brown and family live at the approximate site.

In 1885, at the age of 14, my father left his home in Italy on the long journey to Eureka to live with his sister and brother-in-law. He arrived in June of that year after a long trip by boat to New York City, a train ride nearly across the continent to Palisade, Nevada, and finally to Eureka on the Eureka and Palisade narrow gauge railroad, which had been completed just a few years before. All in all, it was quite an undertaking making the trip alone.

That fall he entered the local school at the first grade level because he could speak very little English. His teacher was very patient with him and helped him in learning the language. Playing with the neighbor's children also helped him and he made good progress and didn't stay in the first grade very long.

His brother-in-law and sister had wanted to buy the Pinto Creek ranch, which was for sale, but the 3 partners who owned the property couldn't agree on the terms and it was finally tied up in litigation.

His brother-in-law and sister then decided to go back to Italy and visit their folks, but planned to return, hoping that it might be possible to buy the ranch. They wanted my father to go with them but he insisted on staying here and no amount of coaxing could make him change his mind. So, taking their 3 young children — 2 boys and a girl — they left for the Old Country. All 3 children were born in Eureka. As it turned out, the brother-in-law and sister never returned to this country, but some years later, when they were grown up, the 2 boys, Tony and John (nicknamed "Babe"), came to Eureka and later moved to the Ely area and eventually went into the ranching business in Duck Creek near the smelter town of McGill. The daughter, Emma, joined them some time later.

My dad was about 17 when his folks left. He had to quit school and go to work. He worked here and there on ranches for \$10 per month. The older men were paid \$20 and he said he was working just as hard, but because he was a minor they

had an excuse to pay him less. There was no minimum wage in those days.

He was offered a job with a small crew of men who were going to make charcoal near the little town of Union, about 50 miles north of Eureka. Besides odd jobs around the camp they gave him the job of cooking for the crew. It seems he did a fairly good job, as there weren't many complaints. The food was mainly beans, macaroni and rice, along with salt pork and bacon. One of the favorite foods was polenta, which was made with coarse corn meal. The workers liked it as it "stuck to their ribs" and supplied the energy needed for the hard work of chopping the trees and preparing the charcoal pits in the rough and rocky hills. He told us about his first experience in cooking rice. Not knowing how much to use, he said he filled just about every pot and pan in the camp. By trial and error he soon learned how to prepare meals, and this experience came in handy in later years.

When charcoal was being made the ricks of wood had to be watched very closely. Too much draft would cause the wood to flare up and produce ashes instead of coal. For this reason the pits had to be watched day and night. On one occasion the boss gave my dad a blanket and told him to watch the pit during the earlier part of the night. He had been working all day and after a while he fell asleep. The pit started to burn and the next thing he knew the boss was kicking him and cursing him and ordering him to help shovel the dirt needed to smother the flames. He said that for a long time after that incident there were many nights that he would jump in his sleep and wake up scared.

On another occasion the mules that were used to pack the chopped wood to the charcoal pits got away and my dad was sent to find them. He finally located them after wandering around for some time and then realized that he didn't know where the camp was, as the country all looked the same. He noticed smoke rising over a ridge so he drove the mules that way. The smoke was coming from a fire that was being used by some Indians who were cooking something. As he got closer he noticed that what they were cooking were gophers, or ground squirrels. He said that they were well cleaned and the meat was white. The Indians asked him if he was hungry. He had to admit that he was, as he hadn't eaten since early that morning. He mentioned this incident many times and told us that they tasted real good. They are clean animals and eat only grass and roots. The Indians showed him how to get to the camp. He was real lucky and thankful that he had met them.

I think it was about this time that the smelters cut down on production and finally shut down permanently. At any rate, my dad's job with the charcoal burners ended in a bad way. The men were not paid, and to make matters worse their cabin burned down and they lost all of their few possessions. My dad had only his working clothes left and a 50-cent piece in his pocket. He walked the long distance to the railroad station at Alpha thinking that he might be able to get a ride on the train to Eureka — 40 miles away. But he said that when the train stopped at Alpha 2 of the train crew started a fistfight and were really punching each other. This scared my dad so badly that he didn't ask for a ride and the train pulled out.

He decided to start walking to Eureka, but a Swiss man who had a little eating place there told him that a teamster by the name of John Aiken was due and

that he could ride to Eureka with him. My dad said he only had the 50 cents and maybe that wouldn't be enough, but was told that Aiken wouldn't charge him anything, as he would be glad to have his company. A little later the teamster arrived and said he would enjoy having someone to talk to and they started out. As it was afternoon they drove as far as the Henderson Ranch, where they would camp for the night. When my dad mentioned that he had been cooking at the charcoal camp Aiken was interested. When they stopped at Henderson Aiken showed him the grub box and told him to cook up something for supper while he took care of the mules. John Aiken enjoyed the meal and said that it tasted better than his own cooking. When he found out that my dad had no job Aiken told him that he would be glad to hire him as his "swamper," which in teamster language meant his helper. He said that he would have to have the mules shod and the wagons put in shape and then they would start hauling again. This was real good news but it didn't last very long. A few days later Aiken came to my dad and said that his sister in California had died and left him her property so he had sold his outfit and was moving to California.

Now this was real bad news, as winter had set in and he couldn't find a job. He came to a ranch owned by a Mr. Hall. This ranch was about 9 miles from Eureka and was later owned by Chris Hildebrand and family. Mr. Hall told my dad that he could stay at the ranch for the winter but would have to pay \$10 per month for board. He bought him some new clothes which he needed badly, and the coat for them would be extra. As he had no other place to go he decided to stay there. Hall had a wife and 2 daughters, and as the house was small there would be no room there, and Hall said he would have to sleep in the barn. He made a bed in one of the mangers with hay for a mattress and charcoal sacks for blankets. Hall was very stingy and for the most part the meals consisted of jackrabbits and potatoes and sometimes a little cabbage or some root vegetables from the root cellar. It wasn't a very comfortable winter, but my dad said he got by and was thankful that he had food and shelter. He kept the barn clean and helped at other jobs.

When spring came he owed Hall \$60, which he promised to pay as soon as he could. He was lucky to get a job from Frank Pastorino. Frank was a real kindly man and my dad enjoyed working for him. Frank Pastorino was the father of the late Tom Pastorino, who was the Eureka County Assessor for about 30 years.

That fall my dad walked to Hall's ranch and paid the \$60, but winter was due again and he had very little money left. Frank Pastorino kept him on and paid him \$10 per month, which he earned by helping with the ranch work.

My dad used to tell us that not long after he stayed at the Hall Ranch Mr. Hall sold the property and moved to California. Later, news came that Hall had bought some property from some sharpies who took him for quite a bit of money. Maybe he was paid back for being so stingy.

His next job was at the upper Italian Ranch — later owned by James Hunter and at this writing by Jim Baumann. My dad worked for a Mr. DePaoli, who then owned the ranch along with several partners, among whom I think he said were his 2 nephews, John and Angelo DePaoli. It was here that he spent the winter of 1889-90. This was one of the most severe winters recorded in the western part of the

country. Heavy snowstorms continued and the wind piled up huge drifts. Cattle herds were almost totally wiped out and it was impossible to get hay to them or to drive them to the hay. The men on the ranch got around by fastening boards from wooden boxes to their feet with rope, which served as crude snowshoes. Fenceposts and bushes were buried and on the hillsides only the tops of the junipers and piñon pines could be seen. The well and water trough were about 50 yards from the stable. The men shoveled a trench between the stable and trough and led one horse at a time for water. Water had to be carried in pails for the milk cows.

It was nearly a month before the train from Palisade finally broke through. It must have been a welcome sight as the train pulled into the Eureka station, as the stores were running short of supplies and no mail was received. When the piled-up mail was brought to the ranch the men celebrated by staying up all night reading the letters and newspapers. The cook prepared a midnight meal and the boss brought out the wine, which sort of made up for the extra work and inconvenience caused by the tough winter.

In those days most of the ranches that were fairly close to town raised vegetables which they sold. The Italian Ranch raised and sold a lot of this produce and from early summer to late fall delivered it to town about 3 times each week. They also delivered to Ruby Hill and Prospect, the 2 towns where the mines were located. A number of ranches of that time raised carrots, turnips, beets, rutabagas and cabbage, which they stored in underground cellars and sold in the winter. Nearly all of them raised and sold potatoes. The Eureka ranches had a good reputation for the quality of their spuds.

The Italian Ranch cut ice each winter from a reservoir not far from the ranch house. The ice was stored in an underground cellar and was mainly sold to the saloons and the Eureka Brewery. The brewery was owned and operated by a German brewer by the name of Charles Lautenschlager, who also ran a saloon in the building now occupied by the First Interstate Bank.

My dad next went to work at the Bay State Mine in Newark Valley near Water Canyon. Tom Robinson was in charge and was operating a mill situated between Mine Canyon and Water Canyon. The mill was a one-man operation. Tom Robinson worked the day shift from 7:00 in the morning to 7:00 in the evening. My dad worked the night shift. He liked the work and the pay was good. He was paid at the rate of \$3 per day and paid back \$1 per day for board. This netted him \$60 per month. That was quite a difference over the \$10 and \$20 he had been working for.

The water at the mill came from Water Canyon by way of a wooden flume. That summer the volume of water kept getting smaller due partly to the dry weather and partly to the flume, which was leaking in many places. In order to keep the mill supplied with water my dad would sleep a few hours and then spend some time repairing the flume. Finally the amount of water dwindled to the point that the mill had to be shut down and he was left without a job. However, he told us that this was a turning point in his life. He had grown up, and with his ranching and mining experience he had very little trouble getting a job and from that time on was never broke.

In later years, when I was quite young, he took me to the old mill, which was still standing but in dilapidated condition, and explained how the mill worked, starting from the rock crusher through the various operations to the final concentration of the ore. He often mentioned how much he enjoyed working at the Newark mill and the high regard he had for his employer, Tom Robinson.

A few miles south of the Bay State Mine a man by the name of Meister was driving a tunnel into the mountain. He had found traces of silver and lead and was hoping to find the ore body. He offered my dad a job, and it was here that he learned to drill with a single jack and load the holes with dynamite. The 12-hour shift held here too, and after he learned to drill and load the holes he worked the night shift from 7:00 in the evening until 7:00 in the morning and Mr. Meister worked the day shift. Mine rails were laid and a mine car was used and the 2 oldest Meister girls often pushed the car loaded with rock out to the mine dump.

The Meisters were German and had come to Nevada from Nebraska. There were 4 or 5 children in the family. Mrs. Meister was a good cook. The food wasn't fancy but of the kind that was good for hard-working people and growing children. At the meals and around the house the family often spoke German, and my dad said that after a while he picked up enough of the language so that he could understand what they were talking about.

While my dad was working there Mr. Meister started to build an addition to the house they were living in. He hired a carpenter who had only one hand. The other hand had been cut off just above the wrist. Even with this handicap he could do a better job than some of the "so-called" carpenters.

On the day that the roof rafters were to be put up Mr. Meister had my dad help the carpenter. It was in the spring of the year and a strong wind was blowing that made the job of holding and fastening the rafters very difficult. On several occasions when gusts were real strong my dad let out with a few choice cuss words. The Meisters were very religious and when Mr. Meister heard him swear he said, "Now, now, Johnnie, you shouldn't talk like that, as it won't do any good." My dad said something about the strong wind making it hard to work in and Mr. Meister said, "If you think this is a strong wind you should be in Nebraska. There the wind really blows and this would be just a breeze."

My dad replied, "In that case if I should turn up missing here, don't look for me in Nebraska."

I don't remember how long he said he worked at the Meister mine, but the tunnel they were driving didn't hit any ore that would pay and the work was stopped.

After this he worked at the Diamond Mine at Prospect on 3 separate occasions, did some prospecting on his own and worked on several ranches.

During these years he added to his education, which had been cut short when his folks returned to Italy. He read everything he could lay his hands on — newspapers, books and magazines. He bought an English-Italian dictionary, which he said really helped. Half of this dictionary had English words with the Italian meaning and the other half had Italian words with the English meaning. When he came to a word that he didn't understand he would look it up. He passed a good deal of time in

this way, especially during the long winter evenings. This not only offered entertainment but added to his ability in reading, writing and speaking the language of his adopted country. He applied for and received his citizenship papers when he reached voting age.

It was while working at the Diamond Mine that he and his partner had a very narrow escape. A shaft was being sunk inside the mine and at the time of this incident had reached a depth of about 75 or 80 feet. A one-cylinder compressed air engine supplied the power for hoisting the men and the ore and waste to the surface. Twenty-one holes had been drilled in the bottom of the shaft and my dad and his partner were to load the holes with dynamite, insert the primers with the fuses attached, and when this was completed to light the fuses. When the holes were loaded and ready they signaled the hoistman that they were ready to blast. He responded by lifting the bucket a few feet and then lowering it, which meant that he was ready to hoist them to the surface as soon as the fuses were lit.

They lit the fuses with short pieces of candles and when this was completed they signaled the hoistman and each put one foot in the bucket and held on to the cable with one hand. The bucket started up, but when it was about two-thirds of the way to the top it suddenly stopped. The piston of the engine had stopped on dead center. Below them they could see the burning fuses and it wouldn't be long before the first shot would explode, followed by the others in rapid succession, which would have blown them to bits. The hoistman on this shift was new on the job and when the engine centered he didn't know what to do.

Just at this time — call it fate or luck or whatever — Mr. Johnson, who had been hoistman for a long time and would be taking over the next shift, came in a little earlier than usual. Seeing the trouble he yelled to the hoistman, "Take your foot off of the brake!" When he did that the weight of the men, the bucket and the cable took the piston off center and the bucket started down. "Now give it the air," Johnson yelled, and as the hoistman did this the bucket started up. As it reached the top of the shaft my dad and his partner were helped out of the bucket by another worker who was standing by. Just a few seconds after they were on safe ground the first blast went off. The bucket, which was made of wood and reinforced with iron and was still dangling in the shaft, was shattered. This all happened so quickly that they didn't have time to be really scared, but when it was all over and reaction set in and they realized what a close call they had had, they were plenty shaken up. I remember how scared I was when he used to tell us about this narrow escape.

There were very few safety measures in those days and there were quite a few accidents in which workmen were injured and sometimes killed.

Some time later my dad operated the same hoist. In the back of his mind was the time the engine had stopped on dead center, and he was always ready in the event it happened again.

The Diamond Mine was noted for being cold and drafty summer and winter, and as hoistman he wasn't very active and had to wear heavy clothing to keep warm. On a timber back of where he stood or sat was a coal oil (kerosene) lamp with a large reflector to show him the markings on the hoisting cable. In between operating

the hoist he would get close to the lamp, which afforded a little warmth. He developed a cold and cough which he couldn't seem to shake, so he quit the job and went to work on a ranch, and it wasn't long before the fresh air and outdoor activity had him feeling well again.

The ranch he worked on is still called the Maggini Ranch, and is about 25 miles north of Eureka. The owner at that time had dairy cattle and made butter and cheese, which he sold in town. Due to the long trip to town with horses and wagons he couldn't supply milk and cream. One and sometimes two trips a week were made to Eureka to deliver the butter and cheese, and at times my dad would make the trip. He sometimes helped with the milking, and another part of his job was to ride up on the mountain to keep the cows out of the poison areas. In the event that he found a cow that had eaten the poison plant (larkspur) and was bloating, he was taught to stick a knife blade in front and below the cow's hipbone to relieve the bloating. If done in time it could save the animal's life.

What I am going to tell about next is not a pretty story, and is merely used to point out what people had to do in the pioneering days before the advent of antibiotics and the present availability of modern medical attention. A man that was working on the ranch had cut his hand and it had become infected. In those days it was called blood poison, and if not taken care of promptly it could be fatal. The man's hand was swelling and the telltale red streaks were starting to show up on his arm. On seeing this the ranch owner told my dad to go to the cow corral and as soon as a cow had a bowel movement to bring the warm manure at once. He did as he was told and the boss applied the manure as a poultice to the man's hand and wrapped it with plenty of clean white cloth. This poultice was kept on for about 24 hours and when it was removed the hand was white, the swelling had gone down and the red streaks had disappeared. Some of the old-time remedies were effective.

I have noticed in the last year or two that health food stores have sprung up like mushrooms. They feature many herb teas, one of which is chamomile tea. This tea is advertised as being especially good for the digestive tract. My maternal grandmother, Louisa Morgantini, always kept a jar of the dried chamomile flowers on hand, and when anyone in the family had an upset stomach she brewed a cup of this tea for them and it really helped. This was standard medicine for most of the Italian and Swiss families at that time.

After he left the Maggini Ranch my dad worked a short time for a Mr. Hammond on the middle Italian Ranch. Hammond was an expert gardener and raised vegetables for sale in Eureka. He could produce more vegetables in a small space than most growers could raise in a much larger area. My dad, who liked gardening, said he learned a lot from Mr. Hammond and later used some of his methods.

It was about this time too that he worked for John Damele at the Sulphur Ranch, about 25 miles southwest of Eureka. Mr. Damele and his wife, Pietrina, had come to Eureka from Italy a few years before. At the time he worked for them they had 5 children — Bernard; twins Steven and Antone; Peter, the youngest; and one daughter, Margaret (later married to Maurice Pieretti). In later years the family and its descendants acquired several large ranches — Tonkin, Three-Bar, Dry Creek, the

J.D., Willow Creek and Sheep Creek. At this writing all of the above ranches with the exception of Dry Creek and Sheep Creek have been sold, but grandchildren and great-grandchildren are still operating farms in Diamond and Pine valleys.

My dad worked again at the Diamond Mine. Compressed air drills were now being used in the main tunnels. These machines were called Burley drills. At that time these machines were drilling dry holes, which created a lot of dust. This was especially bad for the drillers and their helpers, as they were inhaling the dust, which resulted in silicosis, or "miner's consumption," as it was called then. It is said that many of these men didn't live to see their fortieth birthday.

My dad operated these drills, but only for a short time. It was the summer of 1897 and the state of Utah was celebrating the fiftieth year of the Mormons settling the Salt Lake Valley. Charlie Read, the mine superintendent, invited my dad to go with him to Salt Lake City to view the parades and other festivities.

When they arrived in Salt Lake the hotels and roominghouses were all filled. Mr. Read had a lawyer friend who had an office on the second floor of a building on Main Street, and my dad slept there on a couch. He often told us that the long parade on the 24th of July with the many bands, colorful floats and costumes, horsemen and carriages, was the big event of the day, and he really enjoyed it.

Before returning to Eureka Mr. Read told my dad that the mining company was planning to sink another shaft in the Diamond Mine and would like to have him operate the hoist when that time came. My dad decided to stay a while longer, as he wanted to visit 2 friends from Eureka. There were brothers, Ben and John Repetto, who were running a saloon in a small town called West Dip. Not far from West Dip was the booming mine town of Mercur, and he wanted to see that too. He even asked for a job there but was told that they were not hiring at that time but were planning to increase operations in the near future and then would be needing more workers. He decided to return to Eureka, but this was not to be for at least some months.

There was in Mercur a large department store called Murphy and Prebles. Mr. Murphy was in the Klondike region and the store was being run by Mr. Prebles. The store handled many items and there were about 8 or 9 clerks working there.

The day before he was to leave for Eureka he went to the store to make a small purchase. While he was in the store he noticed a woman with several young children trying to tell a lady clerk what she wanted. It turned out that the woman was Austrian and couldn't speak English, and of course the clerk couldn't understand Austrian, with the result that they weren't getting anywhere. The Austrian and Italian languages are somewhat similar, so my dad could understand what the woman wanted. The woman would tell him what she wanted and he would tell the clerk. She bought clothes for the children and other items which took quite a while. This amounted to quite a large sale, and just as she had paid for the merchandise and she and the children, all loaded down with the goods, were leaving, Mr. Prebles, the store owner, came in. He told the clerk that she had made a large sale and the clerk replied, "If it hadn't been for this young man I couldn't have sold her anything."

Mr. Preble turned to my dad and offered him a job as an interpreter as there

were quite a few foreign people there and they were having trouble trying to understand them. This sudden offer of a store job almost floored my dad. He told Preble that he had been working in the mines and on ranches and didn't feel qualified to hold down a store job. Mr. Preble asked him what he was doing at the moment and he said that he was not doing anything. Preble said, "Come take a ride with me. I have to make a delivery a few miles out of town and we can talk about the job on the way." When they returned he had the job. His pay would be \$30 per month for 6 days a week and one meal each day at a restaurant next to the store. He liked the work right from the start and was soon doing as well as the other clerks besides acting as interpreter when necessary. The clerks were young men and women. All were friendly and got along well and they all liked Mr. Preble, who was a firm but fair employer. Every Saturday evening after the store was closed he would call the clerks into his office and ask if there were any problems and invited any suggestions that might add to the efficiency of the business.

He had worked in Mercur for nearly a year when he received a telegram from Mr. Read stating that the work on the new shaft was to start at once, and offering him the hoistman's job at \$60 per month. Mr. Preble did not want to see him leave, but when he found out that my dad had promised to help when the new shaft was started he was advised to hold to his promise. He asked how long it would take to complete the shaft work and was told that it would be about 3 or 4 months. It was agreed that as soon as the shaft work was finished he was to return to Mercur and continue his work in the store.

As it later turned out, he did not return to Mercur. A disastrous fire swept the town and metal prices dropped, putting an end to the booming mine community.

He returned to Eureka and started working once more at the Diamond Mine. After this job was finished he worked for Phil Paroni, who ran a grocery store and meat market adjoining the Eureka Opera House, or Eureka Theater, as it is now known.

While working there he boarded and roomed at Louisa Morgantini's, my future grandmother. Louisa had arrived in early-day Eureka as a young immigrant from Switzerland. She married Ferdinando Bonetti, who had also migrated from Switzerland. Two children were born to them. The first, a son, died in infancy, as did many babies at that time. It used to be said that this high infant mortality rate was due to the smoke from the 2 large smelters, one at each end of town. In fact, at that time Eureka was called the "Pittsburgh" of the West. A second child, a daughter named Laura Judith, was born December 8th, 1876. She was destined to be my mother.

Ferdinando Bonetti had a brother who had settled in Sacramento. The brother and his wife had 4 children — 3 girls and a boy. As I understand it, the brother died and a short time later his wife passed away, leaving the 4 young children orphans. The 3 older children, the boy and 2 girls, were raised by a family in Sacramento. Bonetti brought the youngest, 2-year-old Lizzie, to Eureka to live with his family.

Bonetti and 2 partners had a store and saloon on the west side of Main Street and he and his family lived in a house adjoining the back of the store.

Directly across the street on the east side of Main Street was a 2-story brick-and-stone building that housed a restaurant on the lower floor and rooms to rent on the upper floors. In 1879, in the last of Eureka's several disastrous fires, this building was completely destroyed. Only the brick-and-stone walls were left standing. Bonetti purchased the ruined building. He tore down the upper story walls and rebuilt the lower portion. (Today Al's Hardware is located in this building.) When the building was completed the family moved to this new location. It was at this time that most brick-and-stone buildings were fitted with iron doors and shutters. Roofs were metal clad. Bonetti equipped his building in this manner. Eurekaans were getting tired of having their buildings destroyed by fire. (At this writing the front of Al's Hardware still has the original iron doors in place.)

Bonetti ran a saloon in the front of the new building while his wife, Louisa, took in boarders and roomers.

In January 1882, Bonetti was stricken with pneumonia and died at the age of 42. The next year was extremely hard for Louisa, who had the 2 small girls to raise and still kept boarders and roomers. About a year later she married Gabriel Morgantini, who at one time had been a business partner of Bonetti's. Morgantini ran the saloon until his death in 1902.

When my dad boarded at Louisa Morgantini's, Laura, her daughter, and her cousin Lizzie were young women. Laura was helping her mother and Lizzie, who had graduated from Eureka High School in 1897, was teaching school. My dad and Laura fell in love and were married November 11, 1899.

After they were married they moved to the Four Eyed Nick Ranch owned by the Morgantinis and situated about 5 miles northwest of Eureka. When the ranch was sold about 2 years later they moved back to town and my dad worked again for Phil Paroni. Their first child, a daughter, was born August 6, 1900. She was named Clotilde after her aunt in Italy. Her middle name was Louisa — the name of her grandmother.

It was about this time that my dad loaned Jim Butler the sum of \$5 to pay for the feed and care of his horses at Fletcher's Livery Stable. At that time Butler had been prospecting over a large area in Nye, Lander and Eureka counties and came to Eureka occasionally. It seems that he had an unpaid account at the stable and was told "no money, no horses," or words to that effect. Phil Paroni, noticing that my dad had given Butler some money, laughingly said, "Jim's always broke — you'll never see that money again."

Some time later, after Butler had found the rich ore that was responsible for the famous boom town of Tonopah, he came to Eureka and asked for my dad, who at the time was doing assessment work on the family mining claim in the Newark Valley district. Jim Butler handed my mother a \$20 gold piece and said, "Give this to your husband. It's in payment of money he loaned me when I needed it. Please thank him and tell him that I'm glad to be able to repay him."

A few days later, when my dad returned, my mother told him of Butler's visit and gave him the \$20 gold piece. My dad, recalling the incident, said, "I loaned him money only the one time and that was for \$5." Butler came to Eureka again. At

that time he hosted a dinner for his friends at the Brown Hotel. When my dad saw him he said, "Jim, you made a mistake. I loaned you only \$5 but you gave my wife \$20."

Butler replied, "I made no mistake. I needed the money badly then and I want you to know I appreciated it."

After Gabriel Morgantini, who had been running the saloon, died in 1902, my grandmother suggested that my dad take over the saloon business. Always in the back of his mind were the pleasant recollections of his mercantile experience in Mercur, Utah. Ever since that time and the times he had worked for Phil Paroni in the grocery and meat market he had dreamed of someday having his own store. Here now was his chance. He told his mother-in-law that he wouldn't consider running the saloon, but said that he would like to start a store in the building. She readily consented, and that is how the family business he named "The Eureka Cash Store" was started. It was just at the time he was finishing the work of putting up the shelves that I was born — April 10, 1903. My folks used to say that I was born with the business.

Starting a new store from scratch was not all roses. In fact, it had its periods of frustration. With limited capital he had to watch his buying very closely. As he went along, in addition to grocery items he stocked household goods such as pots, pans, dishes and glassware. As time went on he put into stock commonly used and necessary hardware items. Being an avid hunter he added guns and ammunition. All of these items added to his volume of sales, but this all took time and for the first 6 or 7 years he sometimes wondered if all the hours he was putting in were really going to pay off. There were other stores in town and, as anyone who has lived in a mining town for any length of time learns, there are many ups and downs, and it seems that the downs come more frequently.

In 1908 he ran for the office of long-term county commissioner and was successful. The other members of the board were Alex Fraser and Otis Fulton. Mr. Fraser had been blinded in a dynamite explosion while working in a mine and Mr. Fulton had lost the sight of one eye. My dad was fortunate in having both of his eyes, and people referred to the commissioners as the "3-eyed board."

It was during his tenure in office that the Eureka & Palisade Railroad was washed out in Diamond and Pine valleys in February of 1910 due to the heavy winter snowpack, frozen ground and warm, early rains. The extensive damage to the roadbed and bridges shut down the E & P Railroad for more than 2 years. The little narrow gauge railroad was sorely missed. For the next 26 months all of Eureka's supplies had to be hauled by horse and mule teams. Ore from the mines had to be transported to Palisade by the same means. Joe Minoletti was one of the main teamsters at that time. A period of about 10 days was required to make a complete trip from Eureka to Palisade and return. A horse-drawn stage was used to carry passengers and the U.S. mail, making 3 trips each week. Railway Express items and perishable merchandise were brought in on buckboards or light wagons drawn by 2 horses or mules. These conveyances ran in relays, with fresh animals and drivers at certain distances. The automobile had not yet come into common use.

Rail service would have been restored earlier, but the money necessary for the

repairs to the roadbed and bridges was not immediately available, which was the reason for the long delay.

Finally, on May 6th, 1912, the first train arrived at Eureka. This called for a celebration, and I remember the day quite well. School was dismissed for the afternoon and a good many of the town's residents were gathered at the depot. The Lobster Club Band was on hand, and as the train pulled into the station it was greeted with a lively tune. Everyone was in a holiday mood. The long wait was over and normal transportation service was now a reality.

At about the time that rail service was restored, my dad noticed that sheep raising was growing by leaps and bounds. This industry opened up a new source of business, and he took advantage of it by catering to the sheepman's needs. Camp wagons called for bows and canvas covers, harness for horses, pack saddles and bags for mules and burros, rope, horse- and mule shoes, tents and tarps, Dutch ovens and other utensils and camp supplies. In the spring at shearing and lambing time he supplied sheep shears, wool bags and twine, sheep hooks and handles. The need for rifles and ammunition increased for protection from coyotes.

In addition to these items was the increase in the sale of groceries — flour, beans, rice, sugar, dried fruit and canned goods. Increased selling led to increased buying. He was able to purchase some items in full carload lots: flour and feeds, stock salt and mixed groceries. There were 2 advantages in quantity buying: lower cost of goods and reduced freight rates. The freight rate on carload shipments amounted to just a little more than half of the rate on less than carload lots. In this way he could sell these goods at a saving to the buyer and still maintain a reasonable profit.

This was the turning point in the operation of the business. Up to now he had been able to run the store practically single handed. Now he hired help. My aunt Lizzie quit teaching school and took over the bookkeeping job, besides working in the store. He built a new warehouse and converted 2 older buildings for the storage of merchandise, and by early fall these buildings would be bulging with supplies.

Starting about the first of October the sheepmen would trail their flocks to the southern deserts, where winter snow was usually not a problem. They loaded their wagons with the supplies needed for the winter. In February they would start trailing back for the shearing and lambing season and the summer ranges.

Sheep raising on a large scale continued until the early 1930s, when it went into decline. The Depression of 1929 had caused wool and lamb prices to drop to the point that many of the sheepmen went broke. Added to that was the fact that the ranges were badly depleted due to overgrazing. This was the reason that the Taylor Grazing Act was put in effect for the purpose of regulating the number of sheep and cattle that could be run on certain areas.

Mining activity increased in the 1920s and the store added dynamite, fuse and primers, drill steel, hammers, miners' lamps and carbide to its inven-

tory. Also cement, lumber and building materials were shipped in carload lots, but that is another story, and the Lord willing, I would like to write a more detailed history of the Eureka Cash Store showing the important part it played in this section of the state and the methods of merchandising in the days before the Depression and World War II.

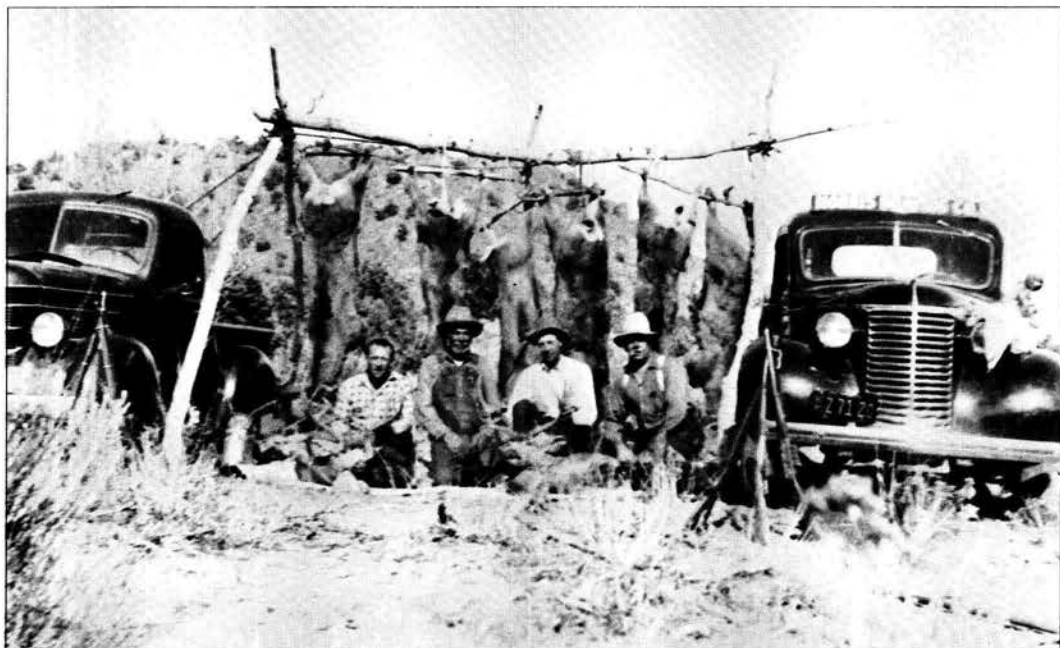
**An Interview with
LUCILLE ALLISON ESTELLA**



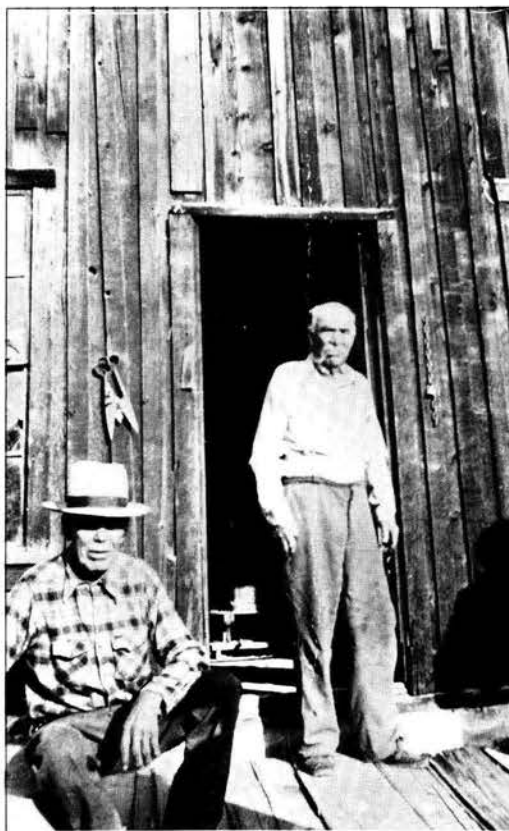
Lucille Allison Estella, Eureka, 1993

*An Oral History conducted and edited by
Robert D. McCracken
1993*

Photographs from Lucille Allison Estella



1: Charlie Allison (second from left) and deer hunters, Eureka County, Nevada, circa 1940.



2: Charlie Allison (right) and brother-in-law Dick Allison, Buckhorn area, Eureka County, Nevada, 1952.



Left 3: Unidentified deer hunter, Nine Mile area, above Antelope Valley, Nevada. Undated.



Right 4: Tom Allison and daughter Lucille Allison Estella, Three-Bar Ranch, Eureka County, Nevada, circa 1955. (Isadore Sara, Jr., was foreman of the ranch at this time.)



5: Lucille Allison Estella with son Gene Estella (standing) and grandson Christopher Pierre Estella, circa 1986.



6: Lucille Allison Estella, great-granddaughter of Charlie Allison, 1993.



Left 7: Lucille Allison Estella, born 1931.



Right 8: Gene Estella, son of Lucille Allison and Pierre Estella, circa 1968.



9: Tom Allison at ranch near Buckhorn, Eureka County, Nevada, 1963.



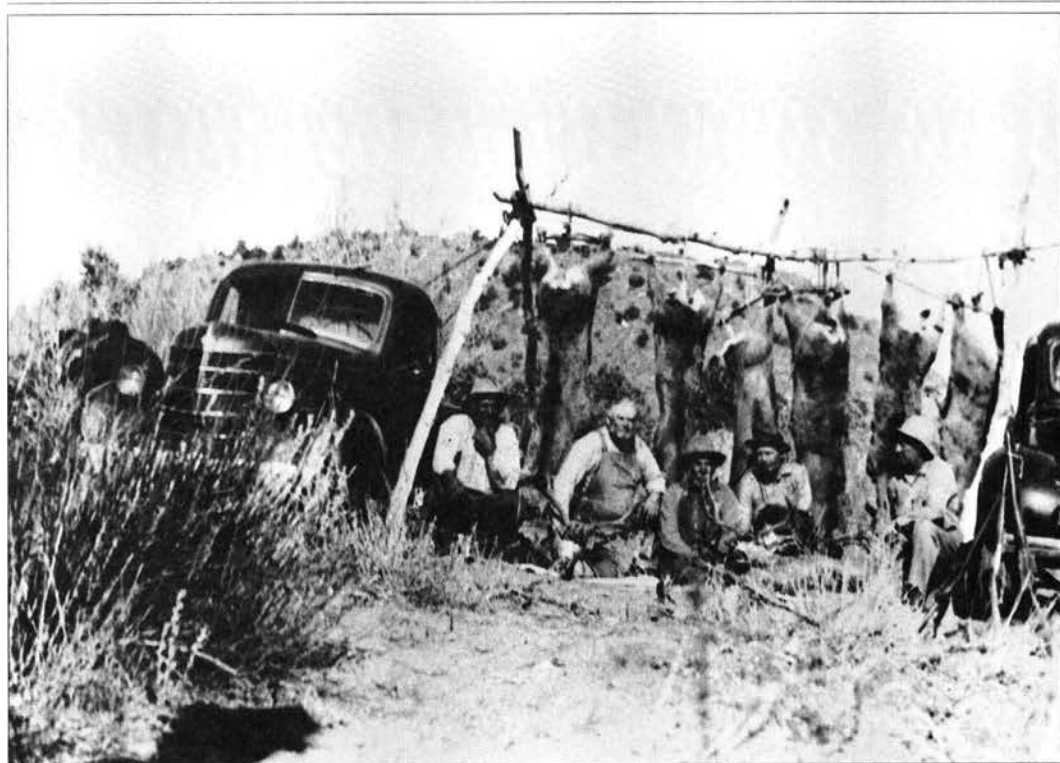
10: Mrs. Fillippini, a white woman, used to ride down from Ruby Hill to White Rocks and play cards with Indian friends. Undated.



11: Charlie Allison on his favorite mare, Old Buckskin. Antelope Valley area, Eureka County, Nevada, circa 1950. Allison was never without his pipe. His Indian name was *Pahundo'i*, "Man With a Pipe."



12: Allison Creek, Antelope Valley, Eureka County, Nevada, circa 1928. Angerine Allison, mother of Lucille Allison Estella (right) and Bessie Allison Penola. Neither of the girls, who are about 16 years old in this photo, could drive.



13: Deer-hunting party, Eureka County, Nevada, circa 1940. Tom Allison (left), Charlie Allison (center). Indians acted as guides for white hunters.

CONTENTS

An Interview with Lucille Estella

CHAPTER ONE

2

Information on Lucille's parents, Tom Allison and Angerine Haywee, and Tom's work as a cowboy; on Tom's father, Charlie Allison, who was born and raised on Ruby Hill before Eureka was founded; how the Shoshone wintered in and near Brown Canyon; remembering Charlie's ranch near Buckhorn, and his knowledge of native plants, especially pine nuts; remarks on Charlie Allison's skill as a horseman and cowboy; how Lucille's grandmother Allison and her Shoshone band came to Eureka County from somewhere far to the south; a discussion of the various Shoshone people living in the valleys around Eureka; Lucille's mother dies while Lucille is quite young; Lucille's grandmother Maggie Haywee in Austin, a domestic worker for white people; of Angerine's first marriage to Ben Allison, Charlie's son, who was a well-known rodeo cowboy; Frank Allison, Tom and Ben's brother — another famous cowboy; memories of childhood in Austin.

CHAPTER TWO

10

Memories of school days and a loved teacher in Austin; Grandmother Maggie dies and Lucille and her siblings join their paternal grandmother in Eureka; a root found in Nevada that cures certain ills; as young girls, Lucille and her sister work for a Chinese cook in Eureka and also work for area ranchers and townspeople; spending summers at Charlie Allison's Buckhorn ranch; Lucille meets and marries Pierre Estella; remarks on local Shoshones and the affinity some Indians have for buck-rooing; the Eureka Indians find a source of clothing after the flood; on speaking Shoshone.

CHAPTER THREE

18

The relationship between the Northern Paiute and the Shoshone; concerning Indian people marrying non-Indians; Charlie Allison's beliefs concerning good and evil; Shoshone beliefs about dying, and about how the animals were the people before the advent of human beings; Charlie's beliefs concerning evil spirits; remarks on Indian doctors; what the Shoshone people did with old arrowheads; Charlie's cowboy friends, and his memory of the Eureka flood and fires.

CHAPTER FOUR

24

Further remarks on Charlie Allison's friends; Indian camps at Eureka, Tonkin, Roberts Creek and the Three-Bar Ranch; attitudes towards Indian boys and white girls dating in the early days; Lucille's work as a school bus driver.

This is Robert McCracken talking to Lucille Estella at her home in Eureka, Nevada, February 17, 1993. Isadore Sara is also present.

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Lucille, why don't you tell me your name as it reads on your birth certificate?

LE: Lucille Nevada Allison.

RM: And when and where were you born?

LE: I was born in Austin, Nevada, October the 22nd, 1931.

RM: And what was your father's name?

LE: Tom Allison.

RM: When and where was he born?

LE: He was born in Antelope Valley, in Eureka County, in 1890. His parents, Charlie and Mary Allison, had 7 children: Thomas (Tom), who was born in 1890 and died in 1971; Frank, 1892-1983; Ben, 1896-1927; Archie, 1899-1975; Mable, 1901-1963; Bessie, born in 1909 (she lives in Battle Mountain); and Hattie, who was born in 1912 and died in 1989. Ben served in World War I and Archie served in World War II.

RM: And what was your mother's maiden name?

LE: Angerine Haywee. In Shoshone *Haywee* means "mourning dove" (the bird).

RM: Do you know when and where she was born?

LE: It would have to be Austin [I'm not sure of the exact date].

RM: Were both of your parents Shoshone?

LE: Yes.

RM: And they were from this area?

LE: Well, my mom was from Austin and my dad was from Antelope and Ruby Hill.

RM: Tell me a little bit about your dad. What kind of a fellow was he, and what do you remember about him?

LE: He worked on ranches, and he went to school at Ruby Hill.

RM: How far did he go?

LE: He told me he went to the third or fourth grade; he could write real fancy. [Chuckles]

RM: What did his dad do for a living?

LE: He was a rancher, too; a cowboy.

RM: What was your grandfather's name?

LE: Charlie Allison.

RM: Was he from here too?

LE: Yes, he was born in 1876 and raised here on Ruby Hill. Eureka wasn't here then. The Eureka courthouse was built in 1879, 3 years after Charlie's birth.

RM: Were there many Indians here when your grandfather Charlie lived here?

LE: Yes. He was here before there were any whites. The Indian people told him his mother was buried right here — there was a bunch of willows through

here. Today the slag dump is over it.

RM: And you're at the upper end of Eureka.

LE: Yes, the east end.

RM: Was there an Indian graveyard there, or was just his mother buried there?

LE: He said other Indians told him there were other graves here, that it was a small cemetery. He used to tell me that all the time.
And he had this crooked thumb; I can still see him. He'd be pointing that way. [Chuckles]

RM: With his crooked fingers — is that right?

LE: Yes. He didn't have a thumb.

RM: He didn't have a thumb?

LE: When he was roping, it got tangled up and they had to take it off. He was right-handed, but he learned how to use his left hand and he could rope just as well with that. He was a great roper.

RM: Did your grandfather ever talk about the way the Indians lived before the whites came in here?

LE: He used to say they roamed. They wintered right around Brown Canyon. I never could see where they wintered; we went out there once [and looked].

RM: Where is Brown Canyon?

IS: Brown Canyon is south of Eureka. The wagon trail went through Ruby Hill and Spring Valley, then on to Antelope Valley. Charlie would come in for groceries. It took 2 days, but only one day on horseback.
We went over there and I could never figure out where they camped. I think they used to drink snow water in the winter. That's when we had a lot of snow here.

RM: Like this year?

LE: Yes, like this year. [Laughter]

RM: What did they live on most of the year?

LE: They used to have a lot of jackrabbits around, and deer — he used to say they used to follow a deer and run behind it to chase it.

RM: On foot?

LE: Yes. And they'd catch it to kill it. He used to talk about living out like that. He'd say it was rough a lot of times. In the wintertime, especially, it was hard to find things to eat. He said he ate some berries one time that gave him an awful headache.

RM: What kind of berries were they, I wonder?

LE: He told me. It was out towards Buckhorn. We used to live out there, too, where he had a ranch (it's still out there). He raised us kids out there. He showed us some berries that grow out there and he said, "Never eat that. They'll give you a headache." He was telling us kids that in case . . . you know how kids are; they'll taste anything. [Chuckles]

RM: He probably knew a lot about plants, didn't he?

LE: Yes, he did. There's one weed that he said they used to grind up and make pudding out of. It's out here.

- RM: What other kinds of plants did they use that he would tell you about?
- LE: There was a carrot-type root called *yomba*. There was a lot of it out at Buckhorn. It tastes good; it tastes like walnuts. He'd boil it and that's how he said they used to eat that. And they had another kind of roots out there, too, but to me it was kind of bitter; it never did taste good.
- RM: Did they use a lot of pine nuts?
- LE: Yes, lots of pine nuts. In the fall they'd go and get all the pine nuts they could. He used to tell me the way they used to save pine nuts was, they'd leave them under the ground where they cooked them, and then go get it.
- RM: Would they dig a pit?
- LE: Yes. I could still do that.
- RM: They would build a fire in there and then put the pine nuts in on the coals?
- LE: Yes, when the coals [were low and] wouldn't burn them. Then they covered it up with dirt and it was a big heap like that.
- RM: And then they'd just leave it there and come back when they needed it?
- LE: Yes, that's what he used to say. But we had more pine nuts then, and the pine nuts tasted different. Oh, they were good.
- IS: They were bigger, too.
- LE: Yes, about the size of your thumb. And they had a butter taste when you bit into them. Nowadays they stick. The old-time ones didn't do that; they just popped right out.
- RM: Why do you think that is?
- LE: I don't know. It seemed that they were greasier, too. They were good; had more of a pine nut taste.
- RM: The first pioneers into Eureka cut down all the trees, didn't they?
- LE: Yes, I guess they did.
- RM: There weren't probably that many pine nut trees right in here, were there?
- LE: Yes, up Windfall Canyon and out towards Silver Connors, behind Ruby Hill. Also, over Pinto Summit near Chalk Pitch we used to gather some. We camped there sometimes.
- IS: That was way before my time.
- LE: Ruby Hill has got cedar trees. We call them cedar trees — always did. But I've heard other people call them juniper trees.
- RM: Oh — you called the juniper trees cedar.
- IS: All our lives, that's what we called them. What kind of houses did your grandfather's people live in for shelter in the winter? Did he ever talk about that?
- LE: You know, I never thought to ask him. In the place where they used to stay down in Antelope Valley there was already a little rock cabin. They must've had tents down there, because there's nothing there.
- RM: What was your grandmother's name?
- LE: She had an Indian name; I don't remember it. But at the time when they had the sugar ration and you had to have little coupon books they gave her a name — Mary. [Chuckles] By the way, Dick Allison was my grandma's

brother, not Charlie's. The white people called him Dick Allison, but Charlie was not his brother. He was his brother-in-law, in other words. That name, Allison, was given to him by the white people because he didn't have a name. And I guess "Charlie" suited him.

IS: Tell him about Allison Creek.

LE: There's an Allison Creek down Antelope Valley where they used to be; that's where the name Charlie Allison came from.

RM: Or was the creek named after your grandfather?

LE: It seems to me my grandpa said he was named after that creek.

RM: And your grandfather pretty much worked as a buckaroo when he worked with the white men?

LE: That's all he did, was cowboy all his life.

IS: He was one of the best in this country, Bob; best ever in this country.

LE: My dad could ride, but nothing like him.

RM: How did your grandfather learn to ride like that?

LE: You just picked it up in those days. Your horse was your car. Either you could ride it, or you couldn't. [Laughs]

RM: You'd walk? [Laughs]

IS: He rode hundreds of horses out there.

LE: I know. They used to run the mustangs in the corral down there. The corral is still there; I always meant to go down and take a picture of it but I still haven't done it.

RM: And they would get their horses by catching the mustangs?

LE: Yes.

IS: They'd ship them at Diamond Station. That's what he told me a hundred times.

RM: Oh, they were shipping them for horse meat and horse hide?

IS: Oh, selling them.

LE: I was going to ask you, Isadore: He said he used to drive hundreds of cattle. What was he talking about?

IS: They would bring the cattle from the Roberts Creek Ranch to the Fish Creek Ranch every fall and take them back up to Roberts Creek in the spring. He did that for years for Eureka Livestock.

LE: Oh, that's what he meant. Yes, he said rain or shine they were herding cattle.

RM: Were there different Shoshone tribes or bands, or how did that work here?

LE: It sounds like the group was one big family. My grandfather met Grandma at an Indian dance over at Hamilton; that's where he met her.

RM: And where was she from?

LE: Grandma came in here. She said she ran away because the white people burned their village.

RM: Where was their village?

LE: It was south past Antelope, way down someplace. And she had Dick, her brother; he was a little fellow. She said she was bringing him with her and she used to have to put him on her back.

- RM: And the whites had burned a village of theirs down south? I wonder where that would be, Isadore?
- IS: Now, I'm making a guess. I'd say Fish Lake Valley.
- LE: No, she said they came to Little Fish Lake Valley, but the village was farther down. She said they crossed the waters kind of like a river. She said she put little Dick on her back and got off the horse and let the horse swim, and she was a-hanging onto the tail. You know the lady who died up at the Eureka County Hospital that they called "Indian Peggy"? That was the lady who was bringing them; she was the oldest. And from the way she talked, it took all summer, walking. And they only had 2 horses.
- IS: Were Mince Pie and Susie related to her in any way, do you remember?
- LE: I don't think so. Can you remember the old guy who used to be down Antelope Valley named Sherodie? Sherodie's wife was my grandma's relative of some kind. She was another one of the people running from down there.
- RM: Where do you think that was? I mean, crossing a river — does that make sense? Where would that river be?
- IS: There's the Amargosa down there; maybe they were down that way.
- LE: Yes, I often wondered about that.
- RM: I'll bet it was the Amargosa when it might have been running.
- IS: That's the only one it could be.
- LE: They say the people talk Shoshone down there.
- RM: Yes, there are Shoshones in Beatty and Amargosa and clear down into Death Valley.
- LE: Maybe that's where she ran away from.
- RM: And so she came up here?
- LE: Yes, and she met my grandfather out at that Indian dance at Hamilton.
- RM: And your grandfather's village was at Ruby Hill and in Antelope Valley. Were there quite a few Indians living at Ruby Hill then, do you think?
- LE: Yes, from the way he used to talk about it. And there were some out at Hunter's Ranch.
- RM: Where's that?
- LE: You go across that lane, and up that one canyon there. He said Indian people used to live in there.
- RM: Did they live out in Diamond Valley, or any place out in there?
- LE: Yes. Indians lived over near Mount Hope. I found a rock over there and it was broken. I've got my grandma's grinding rocks stored away.
- RM: And there were Shoshones living up in Pine Valley, too, weren't they?
- LE: Yes, the Doc family.
- IS: And Boo-Hoo and Boonie and Lame Charlie. He was a crippled guy; I remember him well.
- LE: My grandpa and those people used to live down Antelope, and they exchanged ranches with Fernando Segura. Segura's ranch was Blair's before he bought the outfit out.
I think it was 1927 when they moved to Buckhorn, where Grandpa raised us

kids after my mom died. Charlie Allison left Antelope Valley after Ben Allison died in 1927. There's a small cemetery there. Dick Allison's one daughter, and his son Harry, are buried there, and so are the Blair kids, who died during the bad flu epidemic.

My mom died when I was 6 years old, and I had to go over to Austin. Then my grandma in Austin died in 1942 and my dad brought us back here.

RM: Where did your dad grow up?

LE: Right around here — at Ruby Hill and out at Antelope Valley.

RM: And he probably learned to ride and everything just being with his dad, didn't he?

LE: Yes, I think my dad said he was born down at what is today the Ardans' place — right out on that hill. And [they also lived at] Sherodie's place. There's nothing left down there but a couple of trees and an old abandoned building.

RM: What about your mother's family, now? Where did they come from?

LE: They were around Austin. After our mother died Grandma raised us over there. Maggie Jackson Haywee was her name. Her grandfather was chief to the To To Wa Reese River Valley group. (This was way before the Yomba Reservation was founded.) My grandma's name was *Andga Nybee*, meaning "young girl with red (hair)." She was born and raised in Austin and halfway up Reese River Valley and she had 16 brothers and sisters and some half-sisters and brothers. I think they buried her mother, which would be my great-grandma, up Reese River Valley someplace. And that's when the BLM was seeding, so there went the cemeteries. I don't know where they're buried anymore.

RM: Oh, you can't find the cemetery?

LE: No, because the BLM straightened everything out; they were seeding at that time.

IS: There are 2 old-timers we missed — Dick Lander and old Jake.

LE: Dick Lander was the old guy who died up here in the hospital.

IS: And old Jake died out there. They buried him out there somewhere. He was around the Henderson Ranch when I was a kid.

LE: Dick Lander used to come up and visit my mother when we lived up Goodwin Canyon. Today it's right where Phil Brown's got his garage. That's where we used to live in a 2-story house — it came to a peak. [Chuckles] That's the way they used to build houses in those days.

RM: Do you remember any stories that Grandmother Haywee told about her life or what it was like around Austin?

LE: She and her sister used to talk. It was about the same as what Grandpa used to say about things here.

RM: How did they feel about the whites coming in here?

LE: They never did say. My grandmas were friendly old ladies. [Laughter] They would work for the white people, and they'd iron all day for 25 cents.

RM: While their husbands were buckarooing?

-
- LE: Yes. [Laughs] My grandma here in Eureka couldn't speak English, but my Grandma Haywee in Austin used to speak good English.
- RM: How did your grandmothers feel about white peoples' food?
- LE: Oh, they liked it. They probably got tired of their own food.
- IS: Your grandmothers or some of their friends must have worked for some of the women who were on these ranches at different times.
- LE: I don't know about my grandma here; I don't think she ever did, because she couldn't speak English. But my grandma in Austin did.
- RM: For 25 cents a day?
- LE: Yes. She'd iron all day with those big heavy Sadd irons. She used to like to iron.
- RM: Where did they live in Austin? Was there an Indian community there?
- LE: No, they didn't have a camp; they were all over. We used to live on this side, way up against the hill, and there were other Indians who used to live [in other places]. That was when I was in Austin, though. Before that, I don't know where they used to stay, but I understand there were camps over there. There are Shoshones there, too. In the winter they'd stay among the cedar trees. The highway goes through there today, on the left side going to Fallon there was a spring up in there, I understood. What's that little small summit there, just as you leave Austin? They lived up there, in the cedars.
- IS: That summit was Mount Airy.
- RM: The loss of your mother must've been a tragic thing for you. What did she die of?
- LE: She had an operation for gall bladder troubles. My dad told me that the next day she thought she heard somebody come in, and she got up. And you know the hospital beds, how high they are? She fell off the bed and broke [the wound] open. And she died from that. She was only 28 years old.
- RM: Oh, my god. And she had other children besides you, didn't she?
- LE: Yes. There are 3 of us. But she was married to Ben Allison first. Ben was Charlie Allison's son, and she was married to him first and they had Marguerite and Lee. And then Ben died in 1927. They were at a big rodeo down Smoky Valley — that's what I was told. And he was a great buckaroo, too — he was always at some rodeo. They had rodeos out here with no corrals or anything; it was just out here [in the open]. I guess Ben was riding and the horse stuck his foot in a gopher hole and that's when it rolled with him and broke Ben's neck.
- RM: How terrible.
- LE: That's how Ben died. A couple of years later she met my dad, and that's when we were born. My dad, Tom Allison, was the oldest of the Allison family.
- RM: Oh, and she met Tom later? So first she was married to his brother, Ben Allison.
- LE: Yes.
- IS: One thing you're omitting, Lucille — Frank.

-
- LE: Yes, Frank Allison was Charlie Allison's boy, too — he was my father's brother. He followed rodeos clear to Montana and he met a Flathead Indian girl up there, and that's where he died, in 1983. (We went to his funeral; he was 91.)
- RM: Tell me about growing up.
- LE: It was rough because my mother's mother was an old lady. She raised us until she got sick and passed away. Then my dad went to Austin and got us and brought us back here in 1942.
- RM: So you were about 11 years old. What do you remember about Austin?
- LE: We went to school there. I liked it because I got to know the kids over there at that time.
- RM: Were there a lot of Indian children there?
- LE: Yes. I had my cousins on my mom's side with me.
- RM: Did the Indians and the white kids get along pretty well?
- LE: Yes, they did. I thought they always did.

CHAPTER TWO

- RM: You said that your old schoolteacher in Austin is still alive?
- LE: Yes. Her name's Dolly Crowell. You've probably heard of her, Isadore.
- IS: I knew her very well. She was married to old John Ansolabehere out in Boone Creek.
- LE: She's still alive; I went to see her when my cousin Beverly Charley Stone was here. We visited with her for about a couple of hours. She didn't know who I was until I told her — and talk about happy! But she didn't look anything like I pictured her. [Chuckles] She's an old lady, and here I was thinking about Dolly Crowell. That was quite a visit.
- RM: What did you do for fun as kids in Austin?
- LE: Oh, we'd play . . . you know kids.
- RM: Did you do Indian play or white play?
- LE: White play — the girls would play jump rope and hopscotch, and we used to play with dolls and jack stones.
- IS: And marbles?
- LE: No, the boys used to play with marbles. Oh, they were good at it.
- RM: And you played dolls?
- LE: Oh, yes. But we didn't have a doll. My teacher finally bought me a little doll that I used to pack around. Today, everybody's got things, but we couldn't afford anything. And my dad was never there with us; he was always gone, working. He used to come in deer season; he'd bring the deer home.
- RM: You were going to name your brothers and sisters.
- LE: Oh, yes. My mom and Ben Allison had 2 — Marguerite and Lee. And when she married my dad, Tom Allison, and there was Bernice Kern (she's married) and I'm the middle one — Lucille — and then my younger sister is Madeline Hesselgesser. She lives in Elko.
- RM: And did all 5 of you kids live with your grandmother in Austin?
- LE: Yes.
- RM: That was a big job for your grandmother, wasn't it?
- LE: Yes, and she was an old lady.
- RM: Then did your father bring all of you over here to live with him after she passed away?
- LE: Yes, my grandma here was still alive and so we came back. We used to live right up there, in a cabin.
- RM: Right up to the south there?
- LE: You can't see it anymore; they flattened the ground there. Later on my dad bought a place down here on Spring Street and that's where we were. My grandma died in 1948, and then we lived with Grandpa — Charlie Allison. He passed away in 1958.
- RM: So you got to know him really well, didn't you?
- LE: Yes. I knew him better than I did my dad, because my dad was always gone, working — feeding cattle in the winter and haying during the summer. Dur-

ing haying he'd sometimes stack and sometimes run the buck rake; that was worth more pay, he'd say. Sometimes he'd go up to Elko County and work for Hunter at the Bank Ranch. He also went to Deeth, Nevada, past Elko, and worked on the big ranches there. In the winter he'd come home and feed cattle for the Hay Ranch. Later he worked for A. C. Florio's Three-Bar Ranch when Isadore was foreman. Then he worked for Peter J. Damele at Ackerman.

RM: Did Charlie ever tell you about any of the Indian medicine ways —things like using plants to cure illness?

LE: Well, he had a root for cold.

RM: What root is it?

LE: I don't know what you guys call it; we call it *dozup*. I'll go and get some.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: Did you get this yourself?

LE: I got it up at Windfall Canyon.

RM: Does it really work?

LE: Yes. You make a tea out of it, drink it and go to bed.

RM: You've got a piece of root here about 2-1/2 inches long . . .

LE: They get bigger than that, though. It looks like a carrot top when it's growing. There's a lot of it out at Buckhorn.

RM: Does it have one big root, or a lot of other little roots?

LE: Just one. At Buckhorn they used to get about that big.

RM: They'd get about 3 or 4 inches in diameter and then taper down to 10 inches?

LE: Yes. This one was small.

RM: And then you boil it, and it'll cure a cold?

LE: It does mine. [Chuckles] My grandpa also used to smoke it. He said it opened up his sinuses.

RM: What other plants did he talk about?

LE: My dad had a laxative he used to use, growing in the foothills by the JD Ranch. It had white tops when it was blooming. He used to use that all the time.

RM: Did he boil the white tops?

LE: No, I think he used to boil the root.

RM: What was that called?

LE: I don't know. I even forgot the Indian name.

RM: Do you recall any stories your grandfather would tell about the Indians and the whites, or how the Indians lived or anything?

LE: It seems to me he got going with the white people right away; he got away from the Indians. He didn't like the Indians' ways. [Chuckles] That's what he used to say. I never mix with them, either. He kind of grew it into me. You know how they do. Just our family always stayed together. And when we got married, we married white.

RM: So you grew up here in Eureka after you moved from Austin?

LE: Yes, here and Buckhorn — we spent the summertimes at Buckhorn. RM:

And he had a ranch there?

LE: Yes, a little place. It's still out there.

RM: What do you recall about your way of life when you moved to Eureka? What do you recall about being a kid here?

LE: My sister and I used to wash dishes; I had to go to work early in my life. We used to wash dishes for a Chinese man here. Do you remember, Isadore? (Isadore used to come in for dog-food scraps every night.) We'd stand on a box and wash dishes. It was downtown at the Eureka Hotel. And then I washed dishes for Juanita and Charlie Damele out [at their ranch] one summer during the haying season. I made \$62; I always remember that. She gave me extra. [Laughter] Boy, I thought that was good.

RM: What did the Chinese man pay you?

LE: I can't remember anymore.

RM: What was his name?

LE: Ing Soong; his partner was named Henry.

RM: Did he have a pretty good restaurant?

LE: It was a busy restaurant, because Ruby Hill and Mount Hope were running at that time. I think it was during the war.

RM: Things were good in Eureka then?

IS: Real good. There was more money in sight at that time in this town than I ever saw.

RM: They needed that lead for the war, didn't they?

IS: Well, they were all producing here, but it wasn't all straight lead, either. It was zinc and everything else to go with it.

RM: Were you going to school and washing dishes at night?

LE: No, we had to quit school early.

RM: What grade did you quit in?

LE: In the fifth, and Bernice was sixth. But my younger sister went on to the eighth, because she was younger.

RM: And you don't remember what he paid you?

LE: You know, I have no idea, but he used to give us money to go see the show. That probably went out of our pay too. And then we used to have to peel potatoes — a whole sack.

RM: So you worked there all day? Then you didn't go to school long after you'd moved here.

LE: No, as soon as I got here we couldn't go to school. And besides, my aunts didn't believe in school. They wanted us to help take care of their kids. One of my aunts, Hattie, had 3 little boys — George, Aldeen, and Ray Penola — and they were doing the town wash. We used to have to do washing and help them. (George and Aldeen live in Battle Mountain and Ray lives in Oakland, California, now.)

RM: Were they your father's sisters?

LE: Yes. Hattie had the 3 little boys she was raising and we used to have to wash clothes for the town, the guys. She didn't charge them much — 10 cents a

shirt or something like that.

RM: Did you wash on the board?

LE: Yes, there was no washing machine. We were heating water on the stove. And she'd iron. It was an all-day job. And in the wintertime the clothes were frozen outside. You'd have to bring them all in and dry them in the house; then the house would be half damp.

RM: How long did you do that?

LE: Oh, till we'd go out in the summertime to Buckhorn. He always took us out there with him. We had a few horses out there. That was our life, riding those horses. [Chuckles] It makes me laugh today — people always say they can't do that. We did it; why can't they do it today? There's nothing hard about running horses. [Laughs]

IS: She's right.

LE: One time that old horse almost threw me. He jumped the ditch and I pretty near fell off. And he almost fell down when he hit the other side. I didn't know that ditch was there. That was out by Dugout, in that flat country near the Cortez Mine.

RM: How long did you work at Soong's place?

LE: We just worked there in the winters, and then we'd go to the ranch. We also cleaned for Mrs. Kelly down here. We'd wash her walls and she'd give us a quarter.

RM: You weren't being very well paid, were you?

LE: [Laughs] Underpaid. And I made beds for Blanche Olinger for a long time. She used to own the Alpine (they called it Alpine; it used to be the Lincoln Hotel). And I made beds for Fred Minoletti when he had the Eureka Hotel open and for the Brown Hotel for Ethel Venturino after John died.

RM: Was there ever any talk of sending you to Indian school?

LE: No, my dad didn't want us to go. I often thought he should have sent all 3 of us girls away to school someplace. But, no, he wanted to keep us home with Grandfather all the time.

RM: Did you ever want to go to Indian school?

LE: I didn't know about it. We believed everything Dad said. [Chuckles] My dad never spanked me, but if he came up here today and told me, "Go downtown and get me some . . ." I'd run. It's just natural, I guess.

RM: Was that true of most Indian parents — that they didn't spank their children?

LE: Oh, other people did. That was just my dad. But if he asked us to do something we did it.

RM: Because you loved him?

LE: Probably. Well, he's all we had. We all sure miss him.

RM: What happened next in your life?

LE: I got married.

RM: Who did you marry?

LE: Pierre Estella.

RM: Where was he from? And you said he was white?

LE: His father and mother both are Italians. He came over from Hamilton.

RM: When did you get married?

LE: In 1952.

RM: And did you have children?

LE: Yes, one. He was baptized Catholic as Jean Pierre Estella in 1965, but he doesn't like the name, so he calls himself "Gene."

RM: Does he live here?

LE: Yes, he lives up on Ruby Hill Avenue. That's his picture right there. He's married now, and I have a grandchild — his name is Chris — Christopher Pierre. His wife is JoAnne.

RM: Do your sisters live in the area?

LE: Bernice is in Battle Mountain. After Johnny Kern, her husband, died, she moved down there.

RM: And what's her name — Penola?

LE: No, that's my aunt Bessie Penola. She's the only one left of Charlie Allison's kids; she's 84. She lives in Battle Mountain. And my youngest sister, Madeline Hesselgesser, lives in Elko.

RM: Tell me some more about what you know about the Indian way of life, and how the Indians lived, both before the whites came and after.

LE: They must have just lived on deer meat, because they'd jerk a lot of deer meat. And they had their pine nuts. But Grandpa would work for other people to feed his family.

RM: The Indians didn't take to sheepherding like they did to buckarooing, did they?

LE: No.

IS: Right. One or two that I knew out at Duckwater herded sheep for A. C. Florio and that was all. Most of them, like her dad, didn't fool with those sheep.

RM: Why do you think that was?

IS: It was just a different way of life to them. They weren't adapted to it, and didn't care to learn about it. They were buckaroos — they were right there with the cows and horses.

RM: But sheep, forget it?

LE: They made too much noise. [Laughter] And they [were] dirty. [Laughs] Yes, they were mostly into horses and herding cows — buckarooing them and breaking the wild ones for saddle horses and work horses.

RM: So your grandfather basically turned to the whites' ways as opposed to the Indian. Was he raised pretty much as an Indian?

LE: From the way he used to talk, he must've left the Indian ways as soon as he got on his own.

RM: I wonder why he did that. Not all of the Indians did that, did they?

LE: No, they went on the reservations, mostly.

RM: Was there ever any talk of you folks moving to the Duckwater or Yomba reservation or anything?

LE: No. As I say, he only used to talk about 2 Indians. One was Coney Clifford. He was left by some Indians when they moved [camp]. Some white people down around Tonopah found him as a baby in his cradle. They took him and raised him. He worked at the Hay Ranch for A. C. Florio for years and was my dad's real good friend. When I was small he used to come visit us when we lived up Goodwin Canyon out of Eureka.

The other Indian he used to talk about was the great cowboy George Adams.

RM: And George Adams was a great cowboy?

LE: Yes, just like him. Once they said they wanted Ben Allison to go back to Madison Square Garden to ride, and he chickened out; he didn't want to go over there. He was a cowboy, all right.

RM: So your grandfather was really a great cowboy?

IS: Oh, he was.

LE: He was. (And he and all the menfolks spoke good English.) To see him rope was beautiful. He'd just throw that rope out and yank it back; that old rope just did what he wanted it to. I never saw anybody rope like that. When he got old one time he tried it. Well, he still had [the touch] a little bit, but he pulled the rope like that and he fell over backwards. [Laughter] I always remember, he did that out at the ranch.

RM: Oh, boy. That must've been embarrassing for him.

LE: It was. He got up a-cussing — you should've heard him. [Laughs] Being raised around those guys, we cussed just like them. But my brother Lee never did; I don't know why.

RM: Did the cowboys cuss?

LE: Oh, yes. [Laughs]

RM: I've been told that sometimes they didn't.

LE: Well, nowadays they say it, to me, dirtier. They say it like telling you good morning now. Then, they didn't cuss until they got mad or something went wrong.

IS: The ladies are just as bad as the men nowadays.

LE: Yes, the women are just as bad.

RM: Did women cuss in the old days?

LE: I don't think so. I'll tell you, when I learned to smoke, I didn't dare, because Grandpa and the others said that bad women smoked. So when I smoked, I'd go around outside the house.

RM: How old were you when you started that?

LE: After I got married. But even when I got married I had to sneak a smoke, because that's what Grandpa and Dad and the guys used to say — only bad women smoked. And you didn't put any makeup on; only bad women put on makeup.

IS: Just floozies used it.

LE: Yes, only them.

RM: What did the Indian women wear in your grandfather and father's day? Did they wear pretty much white clothes?

- LE: I think so, yes. I remember my grandpa saying once that when they had the flood here it went through all the stores and took everything —clothes and all. The Indian people from Ruby Hill used to ride down there and they'd dig their new clothes out of the mud and wash them and wear them. He used to say that and he'd laugh — he thought that was funny.
- RM: It was a way of getting some clothes.
- LE: Yes. Then they'd work them over. If something was too small they'd just probably sewed them [to make them larger].
- RM: Or maybe trade it for something else. Do the Indian people that you know like any special kinds of foods? For instance, the Navajo make fry bread and that kind of thing. Do the Shoshone have any special foods?
- LE: No, I just make yeast bread. I fry that, though.
- RM: Do you fry it all the time, or just on rare occasions?
- LE: I used to do it all the time, but not anymore. The old man can't eat it anymore.
- RM: Did you grow up on just regular white food?
- LE: Yes. Our main dishes used to be macaroni and beans and homemade bread — yeast bread.
- RM: You don't recall any bitterness or anything in your father or grandfather about the whites taking the land or anything?
- LE: No, they never felt that way.
- RM: Why do you think some people are bitter and some aren't?
- LE: The older ones, the ones who are mad about it, keep it up to the younger, so of course they get mad about it. Well, I can't talk about it. [Laughs] If I was married to an Indian man, maybe we'd get going, but my husband is white. I never even taught my boy, Gene, how to speak Indian. I can speak it, but he doesn't know a word. It's kind of hard to teach him, because Pierre's always here.
- RM: Do you speak Shoshone?
- LE: Oh, yes. They even asked me to go down to Duckwater and teach the Indians how to speak Indian down there. I thought, "That's a reservation."
- RM: That's funny, isn't it? So nobody down there speaks Shoshone?
- LE: Well . . . Indians nowadays are kind of ashamed of it. I'm not, and my grandpa wasn't, either. He used to like to talk Indian.
- RM: Who do you talk Indian to now?
- LE: I don't have anybody to talk to. Well, I ran into Doug down in the post office a while ago and I was talking to him. He's from Duckwater.
- RM: Did you speak Indian in your homes in Austin and Eureka?
- LE: Yes, Grandma and Grandpa and all 3 of us, and Lee.
- RM: Do you think of yourself as mainly a Shoshone-speaker or an English-speaker, or both?
- LE: Both. When you're around the Indian people you want to talk Indian; they look down on you if you don't. That's how I get by right away. [Chuckles] They don't want to talk it, anyway; you know how they act. So when they

hear me talking, the older ones get right in and start talking. When I go to Battle Mountain I talk Indian down there.

RM: Are there many people who speak Shoshone now?

LE: The older ones. I don't know if the younger ones want to talk or not.

RM: What do you consider older?

LE: Well, I'll say myself; the older ones.

RM: About over 60?

LE: Yes, I'm 61 now.

RM: People under 60 don't speak it, or people under 50, or . . . is there a dividing line?

LE: I would say they know how to speak it, but they don't want to.

CHAPTER THREE

- RM: What differences do you see between the Northern Paiutes and your Shoshone people?
- LE: I don't know any Paiute. It's funny how an older person can tell something to you, and you believe it. My grandfather used to tell me that the Shoshones and the Paiutes never got along, so just naturally I don't talk to Paiutes.
- [Laughs]
- I remember my dad said one time the Shoshones had a winter camp on the other side of Three-Bar Ranch, in those hills down there. They went out hunting and left all the women and kids home and the Paiutes came along and killed the women and the kids. When the Shoshone came back, they found them all dead and the Paiutes were running away. They ran them into a cave, and they made a big fire in the mouth of the cave and I guess the Paiutes suffocated. So they got even with them.
- RM: Where do you think that cave is?
- LE: Somewhere down Monitor Valley. I think there were renegade Paiutes running around doing that kind of stuff. But from then, the Shoshones didn't like the Paiutes; they call them "coyotes."
- IS: That's the understatement of the year; they hated them when I was a kid.
- RM: Did the Paiutes hate the Shoshone, too?
- LE: Oh, yes. They still do.
- IS: They were a little scared of them; they wouldn't come around.
- LE: Right, they wouldn't come around here.
- RM: Are the Shoshone bigger, physically, than the Paiutes?
- LE: The reason my dad and his family were big is because my grandfather had a white father. He was Swiss-Italian. So he wasn't a full-blood; he was a half-breed, and you could tell it by looking at him. He was a big man, over 6 feet.
- IS: Six feet 2 or 3 at his best. Tom too.
- LE: My dad was big, my brother Lee was big and my boy is big. Mag's kids are all big. But I noticed the Shoshone in Elko are not very tall.
- RM: So you think it's the white influence?
- LE: It's got to be. Even me — I'm not very tall (5 feet 4 inches) but I'm usually taller than any Indian women.
- RM: How much taller are you?
- LE: Oh, a couple of inches, anyway.
- RM: What do you know about your grandfather's mother? Did you know her name or anything?
- LE: No. I often wondered. For instance, they have a bunch of Indians at Reese River and they call them by what they ate — the *Yomba* Indians. That's an Indian root; the *Yomba*. I don't know what Austin was; I don't know Austin. And around here I don't know what they called the Indians like my grandfather's people.

RM: Did his mother come from here?

LE: Right from here, yes. She had 5 sisters; there were 5 of them. And as I said, she's buried here and there's a slag dump over the grave. She stayed and the rest moved away. One of her sisters married an Indian from Ruby Valley and one of them died.

RM: Let me check out a theory with you. You seldom hear about an Indian man marrying a white woman; it's usually an Indian woman marrying a white man. My theory is that that's because a lot of the Indian men were being killed in battles with the whites, and there was a surplus of Indian women, and so they often married whites. Does that make any sense to you?

LE: I don't know.

RM: If a lot of Indian women were marrying white men, that means that there were Indian men who didn't marry an Indian woman. And the men also didn't usually marry a white woman, so they never got a wife.

LE: For one thing, my grandmother Maggie Haywee had 16 sisters and brothers, so all the young Indian boys I met were my relatives. [That's one of the reasons I married a white man.]

Up in Montana, the Flatheads are real light complected. When we went to Uncle Frank Allison's funeral, I thought he had a lot of white people friends, but they were his wife's people. There were some real light-complected people at the funeral. Now, I'm seven-eighths Shoshone. I belong to the Te-Moak Band in Elko.

RM: How many people are in that band, do you know?

LE: Not very many anymore. The younger ones are marrying Mexican boys now.

RM: And they don't keep the language up, do they?

LE: No. But I know a lot of Battle Mountain girls are married to Mexicans; there are a lot of Mexican boys down there, too.

RM: Was there any sign of your grandfather practicing Indian religion or anything like that? Did he have any spiritual beliefs that . . .

LE: Well, it's the same thing as the Catholic church up here. The things the Catholics say and the things Grandpa told me are about the same. For instance, you guys say there's a god. Well, there *is* a god, and there's also a bad man. And he used to call it . . . the closest I could say is the devil. Never follow him. And a lot of people follow him instead of God. It's about the same thing.

RM: What was the bad man called?

LE: The *aza'*. "Never pay attention to the *aza'*, because he's the one that'll lead you away." And a lot of people will follow him quicker than they will God. Who's ever that perfect anyway? And it's the truth.

RM: Did he call God "God," by that name, or did he have his own name?

LE: I never heard him call him anything. He just mentioned *aza'*: "Never listen to what *aza'*s going to tell you."

RM: And you say he was close to being the devil? But it wasn't quite the same

- thing, was it?
- LE: Well, almost the same. I could tell you in Indian, if you could speak Indian. It's better. [Chuckles]
- RM: Well, tell it here, and we'll try to transcribe it.
- LE: Let's say, "There is no god, though." *Ke shukoni'e nnaphandu. O shoko'ozar. Ke shk azar. Ke ezadoko me'a meth.* I just said, "Don't listen to *aza'*, because he's the one . . . the people follow him quicker, usually." And then he used to say, about your neighbors, "Don't run them down. If you have kids, the *aza'* will take care of that; he'll pay you for it — make the kids go wrong. Never run your neighbors down."
- RM: Because *aza'* will get you?
- LE: Yes, he'll show you. He's stronger. And he usually is.
- RM: What did your grandfather think happened to a person when they died?
- LE: He said you go with your mother.
- RM: Where do you join her?
- LE: She comes after you, or your dad'll come after you. I'll tell you; I believe this: My uncle, Ben Allison, was dead, and when my mom was dying, she looked up and she saw Ben come after her. They say if you ever get married, you want to get married once, because you'll go with your first husband. You could be married 10 times, but you go with the very first one. Ben came and got my mom and my dad was sitting right there. He said when she said, "There's Ben," she just went limp. She went with Ben.
- RM: Is that right? Where did they go?
- LE: I don't know, but she never came back. And Grandpa used to say the same thing.
- RM: How did your grandfather think the world got here?
- LE: He said a long time ago, there weren't any people; they were all animals. Mr. Coyote was here, and the wolf and the cottontails and things like that. They were the people.
- RM: And they had human personalities?
- LE: Yes. And they talked. And then, I don't know how it happened, but all of a sudden they had these kids and they were their people.
- RM: Oh, their children were people?
- LE: Yes. I remember a long time ago, when everybody was a full-blooded Indian, when an Indian died, a coyote howled. I believed it; I heard it when I was a kid. They don't do it anymore, because they're all mixed. I remember hearing it a long time ago. My dad used to say, "Somebody's going to die," and by gosh, in a couple of days, somebody died. And that coyote would be howling a lonesome wail way up Reese River Valley.
- RM: Are the Shoshone afraid of spirits, or do they believe in spirits and things like that? I know the Navajos are scared to death of spirits.
- LE: Well, most Indians are. But my grandpa wasn't. He said, "You want to be scared of the alive; don't be scared of the dead; they're not going to hurt you."

RM: Did he believe in ghosts or anything?

LE: He saw a few spirits. One time when he was a-buckarooing down Antelope Valley on that big Nine Mile Mountain, he was riding and he said he looked up and saw a flash of a Navajo Indian standing right in the path. He said it was kind of raining; he had his hat pulled down. He looked up just when he saw it and just like a flash, it was gone. And he wondered what that was. It was a narrow horse path. He was just standing right there and then he was gone. Maybe the Navajo were going through here or something and his soul was . . . My grandfather said his horse didn't even look. It was just for a split second.

Another time he told me he was riding along down that way and there was a light. You know how you flash on a cigarette light? Well, a light kept a-squirting out, under a bush. And he got kind of scared, because he said a witch doctor had put his medicine there. He said he just went around it and left it alone.

RM: The Shoshone believe in witch doctors, don't they?

LE: There aren't any anymore, but there used to be.

RM: Apparently your grandfather believed in them, then?

LE: I guess he did. Maybe that's why he stayed away from them. At one time he said, "They're no good. That's the only thing they know. Especially if you're a young girl, and pretty, they'll be after you. If they can't have you, they'll kill you off." Maybe that's why we never went around [other Indians].

RM: You mean, if they can't have a young girl sexually then they'll kill her?

LE: Yes, then they'll put a hex on you and you'll get sick and die. That's what he used to say.

RM: Where do the Shoshone believe all the animals came from?

LE: Well, they were the Shoshone people. Those are their animals — also the owl and the deer. Everything gray, he said, used to be the people.

RM: Where did he think the world came from?

LE: He didn't say.

RM: Did he believe in a Great Spirit?

LE: What do you mean by a Great Spirit?

RM: Well, you hear about the Indians talking about the Great Spirit as if it were God, or something.

LE: No, that's not what they mean. They mean that when they die they're always going to go to the Great Spirit. After you're dead, you go to the Great Spirit.

RM: Where did he believe good and evil came from? Where did *aza'* come from?

LE: He's just here, the same as God.

RM: Did your grandfather ever pray?

LE: No, but my grandma did.

RM: How did she pray?

LE: She'd just say words. She said Indian words like *nawavohoy*, and then she'd go like that, to send them out on the waters — way out in the ocean. Then

she'd feel better.

RM: Her words would go out in the ocean?

LE: Yes, it sounded like it. It was about the same thing as praying, only hers would go way out.

RM: What did your grandfather think people got sick for? Was it because of magic?

LE: They never got sick.

RM: Your grandfather never got sick?

LE: No. He died in his sleep. The only thing was, he hurt his back roping — cowboying. That's all he used to talk about.

RM: But they would get colds . . .

LE: Not my grandpa. He'd be too busy chewing this root all the time. He never got a cold; he'd be running around over town.

RM: What about the other Indians who did get sick?

LE: I think they used to get appendicitis. I think that killed a lot of them. And maybe in the wintertime they'd get a cold.

RM: What else do you remember about your grandfather's beliefs about Indian ways of life and thinking?

LE: Well, they had the Indian doctors. They could talk to you, and they'd sing little songs for you.

RM: Did you ever go to an Indian doctor?

LE: I never did, but my aunt went to one and I took her. I think the Indian doctor is good for your nerves. When she came back, she was better.

RM: Willy Blackeye, over at Duckwater, was an Indian doctor, wasn't he?

LE: Yes, he was a good doctor. If you were sick and went to him, he'd tell you what was wrong with you, after a little while. But most of the time it was somebody being nervous. Today, to me, it's nervousness. When you're not very happy about anything, you know how you get nervous and all?

RM: Yes.

LE: They can help you with that.

RM: Do you know any Indian stories that your grandfather would tell you?

LE: They used to tell about Mr. Coyote. I'm trying to remember right fast, and it's terrible; my mind's a blank. [Laughter] He said a long time ago the sun wasn't bright like it is today and they had a cottontail go to it, and when he came back, the sun became brighter.

RM: What did the cottontail do?

LE: He didn't say; I guess you just use your imagination.

RM: Do you have any other stories?

LE: I don't remember any, now that I want to. After you leave, I'll remember a bunch. [Laughs]

RM: Sure, that's the way it works, isn't it?

LE: I was trying to think of things he told about when he was a little boy. He didn't mention much. All he said one time was that they told him his grandma used to pack him in a basket. She raised him, and she's the one who told him

about his mom passing away.

RM: Oh, Charlie's mother passed away?

LE: Yes, when he was real young. In fact, she passed away giving birth to him.

RM: What did the Indian people think when they would find old arrowheads?

LE: They used them. That's how they used to try to kill the deer that they used to chase — they'd chase them maybe for a week straight and then shoot them with the arrows.

RM: But didn't they make arrows?

LE: Yes, they did, but I don't know where.

RM: But they would use the old ones, too?

LE: Yes. Hunting with the arrow was before Grandpa's time, too. He had an old gun. I don't know whatever happened to it, but he always had a gun. That's probably the reason he didn't stay with the Indians that long.

He used to always talk about Ross Parker from down around Antelope.

IS: That was his great friend; also Charlie Williams and Billy Moore.

LE: Yes, he was always talking about Charlie Williams and Ross Parker. It seemed like he kind of left the Indians as soon as he was on his own. I don't think they liked him too much, anyway, for being a breed.

RM: Oh — there was discrimination against part Indians?

LE: Yes, a little bit. They didn't like him all that well.

RM: How did he feel about it?

LE: He never did say. He was just a jolly old man when I knew him. [Chuckles]

RM: Can you think of anything else that we should be talking about here?

LE: He was here a long time, because he used to tell me about the floods and the fire. There was a bunch up on the hill, he said, when Eureka was all red. They were sitting over there on that hill called Caboose and were watching it from there. Eureka burned a couple of times.

RM: And he watched it?

LE: Yes, and he was a little guy.

RM: I wonder what he thought when he saw it going up in flames.

LE: He said he was a little boy and all he could remember was, all the Indians were way ahead of him, and he was way behind, running and a-crying at the same time, trying to keep up with them. And he used to call that canyon over there "Portagee" Canyon.

RM: What's it called now?

LE: Nothing; there's nothing up there. He said there were a lot of Portuguese here at one time, and Chinese.

IS: Eureka Livestock Company had all Portuguese herders.

CHAPTER FOUR

LE: During sugar-rationing [in World War II] Archie figured that Bessie was born in 1909. So she was older than you are.

IS: Three years older. I'm 80; she's 83.

LE: Well, her birthday's coming up pretty quick.

IS: OK. I've got another one coming March the 18th.

LE: Oh. Yes, Grandpa was here a long time. I must be about the fifth generation, or the sixth.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: Isadore was talking about Billy Moore.

LE: Right. He was Charlie Allison's friend. He had Moore's Station down here.

RM: It's down by Tybo, isn't it?

LE: Up this side of it, yes. And he had a ranch down here at Warm Springs in Newark Valley. My grandpa used to talk about him a lot. It seemed like all his friends were white people. That's what I mean; he had gotten away from the Indians. He talked about Billy Moore, Ross Parker Pete Laborde, John Venturino . . . and Fernando Segura was another good friend. And whoever this Sherodie was. He used to talk about Sherodie. Sherodie's wife was my grandma's relative of some kind. She's supposed to be buried up here at the Catholic cemetery; that's what Bessie told me once. I'd like to know who called him Charlie, since he didn't have a name when he used to be up at Ruby Hill. Somebody gave him that name, Charlie.

RM: He must've had an Indian name.

LE: Oh, yes. It was "A Man Smoking a Pipe" — *Pahundo'i*. He always had a pipe. Yes, I've heard other Indians say *Pahundo'i*'s grandchild, meaning me. I wondered what they were talking about, and that's who they meant. He was mostly ranching and buckarooing for white folks — breaking horses, probably. It takes quite a while to break a horse and have it gentle so you can ride it.

RM: Can you think of anything else about the Indians here?

LE: My sister and her husband, Johnny, were riding those hills, working for . . . who were they working for when they were at Ardans' that time? She said she found 2 Indian rocks down there in Antelope Valley in the cedars.

RM: You mean grinding stones?

LE: Yes. So there must've been Indians — they must've gone down there and stayed.

RM: Were there any Indian sacred sites in this area that you know of?

LE: No, not that I know of.

RM: About how many Indians were there in Eureka when your grandfather was young?

LE: There must've been quite a few, because we had some here . . . Tessie, Alice and Louie and their folks. And then these I'm talking about are where Dick Lander was, out at Hunter's; up that lane. And then over on Mount Hope, on

the other side, there's a spring, and another bunch used to be there.

IS: And the Indian camp over by Tonkin.

LE: And then there was another one out at Roberts Creek, and Three-Bar had a camp, too. Grandpa said somehow Maggie Blair was a relative of his.

IS: She was born in Roberts Creek, yes. She was 103 years old when she died.

LE: Yes. She was a half-breed, too.

RM: What were some of the other names of Indians here besides Allison?

LE: One woman married a white man named Blair (I don't know what her maiden name was). Maggie Blair — she was an old, old lady; as Isadore says, over 100 years old. Dixon Georgie was an old guy. There was that bunch at Roberts Creek.

RM: What were the family names?

LE: I don't know.

RM: Do you know, Isadore?

IS: No, that's beyond me.

LE: And then there was this old lady down Battle Mountain who passed away; her name was Nancy Green. She used to go to school with Bernard Damele out at Three-Bar. That was another bunch; most of them left.

RM: Where did they go?

LE: They went to Elko, but Nancy Green went to Battle Mountain. The late Benny Damele took his father, Pete, to visit her once. She used to wash clothes for the guys working at Buckhorn when Buckhorn was going, when she was a young woman. That's what she told me once. She died about 3 years ago, and she was an old lady. I always meant to ask her more about my grandpa, because she surely must've known something; the Roberts Creek is right out there.

RM: Did you have much to do with the Smoky Valley Indians?

LE: No, but I heard there were a couple of big camps down there. That's where Ben Allison was rodeoing when he died.

RM: Did you ever have anything to do with the Indians down at Kawich?

LE: No, I didn't get down that far. I always meant to go down there because I wonder where my grandma crossed a river.

RM: There must have been a lot of Indians here in the early days.

LE: Yes. Up here, against this hill, right at Richmond Springs, I found an Indian rock — just [the grinding stone] — so they must've been up there. And my aunt Hattie told me they used to stay in this bowl up here; she found an Indian rock over there. That must've been in the summertime.

RM: Can you think of anything else you want to mention?

LE: This is a story about a young Indian boy in Nancy Green's family. In those days [they were not supposed to] talk to any whites. He got friendly with an Isacca girl. Her father came and shot him right there in front of them all, and got away. They held the trial here at the courthouse in Eureka. Charlie Allison helped talk to [interpret for] the Indians. Isacca went home free. He lived over in Grass Valley, Nevada. I asked Charlie Vaccaro if he remem-

bered that episode. He said it was a long time ago, but Isacca was turned loose.

Over in Austin the same story was told, only the father waited until the young Indian boy rode by on horseback after seeing his girlfriend, a white girl, and shot him in the back. The girl never knew her father had shot him. She had a nervous breakdown and he sent her to California.

I was the first lady school bus driver in Eureka County. You had to know about cars (like changing tires) and have a driver's license. I stayed down at Sadlers' ranch in the old schoolhouse until Friday and would then come into Eureka. My school kids were Phil and John Brown at the Siri Ranch and Kathleen and Paul Sadler. Leonard Fiorenzi drove the other side of Diamond Valley; he stayed at Ted Thompson's ranch. This was in the days before there were farmers in Diamond Valley.

An Interview with **LEROY ETCHEGARAY**



LeRoy and Mary Jean Etchegaray, Eureka, 1985

*An Oral History conducted and edited by
Robert D. McCracken
1993*

Photographs from LeRoy Etchegaray



1: Banca, France, birthplace of Fred Etchegaray (father of Eureka County Commissioner LeRoy Etchegaray), located in the estate of Oxarapeiya, 1983. In recent years the estate has been converted into a pigeon-hunting resort.



2: Birthplace of Pete Etcheverry, Arneguy, France. The name of the home was Hamecainea, which is related to the Basque word *hameca*, meaning "eleven." Photo circa 1963.



3: Birthplace of Catherine Goyhenetche,
wife of Pete Etcheverry, Urepel, France.
Photo 1983.

RM: This is a photo which Mary Jean is . . . 3 photos which Mary Jean will identify. The first is . . . we'll call it photo number one, is of a kind of an aerial view of a house with a big mountain in the background. And would you describe that.

ME: This home is where LeRoy's dad was born back in Banca.

RM: B.U.N . . .

ME: B.A.N.C.A. And every home back in . . .

RM: Banca, France?

ME: Uh-huh [affirmative], Banca, France. And every home back in that area has a name, and the name of this place was Oxarapeiya.

RM: And how do you spell that? State that again. Pronounce that again.

ME: Oxarapeiya.

RM: OK. [Laughs]

MJE: It is O.X.A.R.A.P.E.I.Y.A.

RM: And that's the name of the home?

ME: That's the name of the home.

RM: And again what was LeRoy's father's name?

ME: His name was Fred Etchegaray.

RM: OK. And approximately when do you think this photo was taken?

ME: This photo is relatively recent. Let's see, probably about 1983.

RM: OK. So that house is still standing after all these years and in good shape, huh?

ME: And it is now a resort for dove hunters . . . or pigeon hunting I guess it is, not doves.

RM: Wow. Isn't that amazing. Now the second photo is a photo just of a house with . . . it's a white building with shutters. Could you identify that?

ME: This is where my father was born, Pete Etcheverry, in Arneguy, France.

RM: Could you spell that again?

ME: A.R.N.E.G.U.Y. And the name was his home was Hamecainea, which was spelled H.A.M.E.C.A.I.N.E.A.

RM: And what did that mean, I wonder?

ME: Well, *hameca* is 'eleven'.

RM: Eleven, huh?

ME: But that was before my dad was there so I don't know what . . . for whatever reason.

RM: And that's in the Pyrenees region, isn't it?

ME: That's in the Pyrenees region.

RM: And when do you think that photo was taken?

ME: This photo was taken probably about 1963 or -4.

RM: OK. The third photo is of a pastoral mountain scene with trees in the background and a beautiful white house and a green pasture.

MJE: This home is my mother's birth place and my mother was Catherine Goyhenetche. This is in Urepel, Y. . . I mean U.R.E.P.E.L., France. And the name of this home is called Tarateña and I wouldn't attempt to spell it.

RM: OK. One of my typists is a linguist and if you say it a couple of times she can type it out . . . she can write it out phonetically. So just pronounce it a couple of times.

ME: Tarateña. Tarateña.

RM: Say it one more time.

ME: Tarateña.

RM: OK, I think she can do a pretty good job with it. [Laughter]

LE: Well, that language [Basque] is a tongue twister.

RM: Yeah. And when do you think that was taken?

ME: Oh, this was . . . probably in about 1983 also.

RM: '83, OK. That's great. Why don't you put those in with Pietrina's folder right there.

CONTENTS

An Interview with LeRoy Etchegaray

- CHAPTER ONE** 3
Background information about LeRoy's father, Fred, who came to Nevada with his twin brother from the Basque region of France to herd sheep; Fred and his brother experience a northern Nevada winter on the range without even a tent; Mary Jean Etchegaray's parents, both of whom came from the Basque region of France; on the shepherding of the late 1800s and early 1900s; a description of a shepherd's routine and of his dogs; hostility between cattlemen and sheepmen before the 1930s; remarks on the plants that sheep will eat; the business of sheepshearing; Fred Etchegaray works with the Kitchen brothers, who take him on as a cowboy and teach him English; Fred and his brother join the Damele brothers in a sheep operation; how shepherders would work until they acquired a herd of their own.
- CHAPTER TWO** 10
A shepherd's bedroll, and surviving a winter in the open —becoming sensitive to "cues" regarding the weather; remarks on the status of shepherding in Eureka County in 1993; area plants that are poisonous to cattle; how Fred spent 2 years running a stage from Austin to the Monitor Valley Ranch; how Fred and his brother worked to keep sheep alive in a harsh winter; the shepherd's life at the sheep camp; a discussion of the careers former Basque shepherders have taken up; how Mary Jean's mother came to Eureka from France to work in a hotel, and a discussion of the Basque hotels in Eureka; different local teas the shepherd would brew.
- CHAPTER THREE** 17
On the food at a Basque shepherd's camp; the role of the camp tender at the sheep camp; the role of garlic in the life of some immigrant families; Fred and his wife, Pietrina, buy the Santa Fe Ranch just before the Great Depression; LeRoy's school days in Eureka and holidays at the ranch, and a memory of returning to Eureka through heavy snow; the telephone line that connected the Tonkin, Three-Bar and JD ranches in the 1930s and 1940s; recalling the winter of 1948-1949; the post office at the Tonkin Ranch; the unpaved road between Eureka and Carlin.
- CHAPTER FOUR** 24
LeRoy recalls his school days, including playing marbles and sledding on the streets of Eureka; remarks on the current climate in Eureka County and the climate of the 1930s; LeRoy and Mary Jean are married; 1951-1952 — another harsh winter, including an aerial hay drop; further memories of Eureka during LeRoy's schooldays, including Eureka's movie theater, the Basque hotels, the grocery stores and Rebaleati's power plant.

CHAPTER FIVE

31

Gas stations in Eureka in the 1940s; irrigation in Diamond Valley; the ranches in Kobeh and Diamond valleys, and how the small ranches have been bought up through the years; an effort to market potatoes from Diamond Valley; the excellent quality of Diamond Valley alfalfa.

CHAPTER SIX

38

Further discussion of Diamond Valley alfalfa; the large gold mine operating in Eureka County in 1993; on LeRoy and Mary Jean's children; selling the Santa Fe Ranch, managing another area ranch, then developing a property in Diamond Valley; feeding cattle in the winter; remarks on the confusing regulations of the BLM and on a philosophy of range usage.

CHAPTER SEVEN

45

Discussing the ranching lifestyle; memories of visiting Eureka in pre-automobile days after spending as long as a year-and-a half on the ranch; the ice sold in Eureka in the 1930s, and keeping food fresh before refrigerators were available; recalling the Hiskey Stage Line; how local ranchers cooperated on spring and fall roundups in the years before the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934; on rattlesnakes.

ADDENDUM

52

A description of the hog-butchering and sausage-making that took place on the Ferguson Ranch, and how lamb and mutton were preserved during warm weather; recollections of the annual wine-making at the Ferguson Ranch.

This is Robert McCracken talking to LeRoy and Mary Jean Etchegaray at their home in Diamond Valley, Nevada, July 14, 1992.

CHAPTER ONE

RM: LeRoy, would you state your full name as it reads on your birth certificate?

LE: LeRoy Wayne Etchegaray.

RM: What was your place and date of birth?

LE: I was born July 3rd, 1929, in the Elko hospital.

RM: And what was your father's full name?

LE: Fred Jean Etchegaray.

RM: When and where was he born?

LE: He was born in Banca, France, February 24th, 1894.

RM: And he was of Basque descent?

LE: Yes.

RM: And what is your mother's maiden name, and her place and date of birth?

LE: Pietrina Margaret Damele. She was born March 17th, 1904, at the Three-Bar Ranch, in Kobeh Valley, the next valley west from Diamond Valley.

RM: What was your father's occupation?

LE: He was 16 years old when he and his twin brother, John Etchegaray, came to this country, and they came as shepherders. They came to Monitor Valley, to the people who had the Monitor Ranch there — the Laxagues. When they came over, they had nothing. The Laxagues probably had to forward them money for them to even have their bed; they were broke when they got here. Anyway, they went out to herd sheep. I can remember my dad telling me that this was in the wintertime, and they woke up with a foot of snow on their bed. With the first money they made, they bought a tent.

RM: They didn't even have a tent?

LE: They didn't even have a tent. If I'm not mistaken, tents were \$5 to \$7 — my dad used to say, "First 6 bucks were spent for a tent." [Laughter] Their old tent was the first thing they invested in. They had a good tarp and bedding, but they had to put sagebrush under their beds so the water wouldn't wet the tarp every night. They had to put all their clothes and their shoes under the bed at night to keep everything dry for the next morning.

RM: They put the tarp on sagebrush so that it wasn't directly on the ground?

LE: You might say that sagebrush was their mattress. It kept the tarp off the ground so that the water couldn't run under them.

RM: How was it that your father and his brother happened to come here?

LE: I imagine they were awfully poor. And they were all big families — I think there were 11 in the family. They were the oldest, so they had to go out to work.

RM: And shepherding was the occupation that they had in Europe?

LE: Well, yes. Back in France, they had a few milk cows and a few sheep, and that was how they made their living. They started doing that as small chil-

-
- dren, and that's all they knew how to do. And there was a demand [for their work] here in this country, because a lot of sheep were raised in this area.
- RM: How did they hook up with the Laxagues? Were they contractors?
- LE: No, in those days they weren't contract herders. I think the Laxagues were distant relatives.
- ME: Your grandmother on your dad's side was a Laxague.
- RM: So they were basically in touch with relatives in the old country, and that's how they came over?
- LE: Yes, somewhat.
- RM: And they probably paid their way over?
- LE: I think they had enough money to get over here, but then they probably had to borrow money just to get started.
- RM: Did they come to New York and then straight out to Nevada?
- LE: I don't know exactly how Dad came. He probably came by train to Palisade or Elko.
- RM: Do you know much about the sheep business in Nevada prior to their coming here? When did they bring sheep in here, and when did it become a big business in this territory?
- LE: Sheep probably came in in the early 1900s. It was a lot bigger business than the cattle business was. I could not tell you when it started because I don't remember asking Dad. Mary Jean, do you remember your dad saying . . . ?
- ME: No, not really. I know more from my grandfather being here in 1889-90 and in through there. I'm sure that the sheep business was fairly well on its way that long ago; before the early 1900s, even.
- RM: Mary Jean, why don't you give me your date and place of birth?
- ME: I was born in Ely, Nevada, July 7th, 1930.
- RM: And what was your father's name?
- ME: My father was Pete Etcheverry and my mother was Catherine Goyhenetche.
- RM: Do you know their birth dates and places of birth?
- LE: My mother was born March 8th, 1909, in Urepel, France. My father was born October 21st, 1894, in Arneguy, France.
- RM: And you grew up in the area between Ely and Fallon?
- ME: Right. When I was a year old my family moved to the Alpine Ranch in Churchill County. We moved back to Eureka in 1943.
- RM: Now, LeRoy, could you please tell me a little bit about the sheep business?
- LE: They were mobile then. They traveled pretty much all over; there was no set place for them. They went north in the summer and south in the winter.
- RM: How far north did they range?
- LE: They ranged clear up into northern Elko County, and maybe beyond that, into Idaho.
- RM: And how far south did they go?
- LE: South of Tonopah.
- RM: How big was a typical flock?
- LE: The summer band was about 1000 head; some of them were 1100 head, or

sometime even a little smaller. Sometimes they put 2 summer bands together for the winter band.

RM: How many herders did a band have?

LE: Just the one herder.

RM: And what did the shepherd's outfit consist of? He had dogs, didn't he?

LE: He had his dogs, the tent and a few groceries that he could carry on his burro. Some of them had saddle horses in later years, but in the early years they didn't even have saddle horses.

RM: Is that right? How many dogs would they have?

LE: It varied. Some outfits had 3 or 4 dogs and some of them had 2.

RM: Were they a special breed of dogs?

LE: They called them Australian Shepherds — that was the most common [breed].

RM: And was it the dog's job to protect the herd?

LE: Yes. And to round them up and keep them in the flock. The herders let them scatter, and in the morning when the sheep would get up, at daylight, the sheep would go out and feed, and the herder would watch them. Then at about 10:00 or 11:00, the herder and his dog would kind of bunch them up and he'd go eat. The dogs watched for coyotes. The dogs were protective of the sheep and also their master during the time of the rabies epidemic in the coyotes.

RM: Were coyotes a constant problem?

LE: Yes, coyotes and bobcats and mountain lions. In the summertime when the weather was hot, the sheep would go to water about noon, and then they'd bed down and the herder would get a rest. As the day cooled off, about 3:00 in the afternoon, they'd start getting up to go out to feed again. And just before dark, the herder would bunch them up and bed them down for the night.

RM: The herder would have the dogs bring them into a bunch and the sheep would stay there?

LE: Yes, they'd go to sleep for the night unless they were disturbed by predators. But sheep get up awfully early the next morning.

ME: Unless it's a moonlight night!

LE: Unless it's a moonlight night! Sometimes they traveled all night; they'd feed all night like deer, if it was moonlight. A lot of times the herder would have to get up in the middle of the night.

RM: How did the herder know where he was going, and how long did he stay in one place?

LE: He'd stay as long as he had feed. There was a camp tender who brought groceries about twice a week.

ME: Every 5 days.

LE: Every 5 days. Sometimes the boss was the camp tender and sometimes they had a special camp tender to boss the herd. They would get their instructions that way.

RM: I see. So the camp tender knew where they should go next?

-
- LE: Oh, yes. He knew what to tell the herder.
- RM: At about what rate would they move along?
- LE: Mary Jean, how often did your dad move camp? My dad sold his sheep when I was 6 years old, but her dad had sheep right up until '61 or '62? ME: Yes, '62.
- RM: They always had to be near water, didn't they?
- LE: In the cooler weather, sometimes they watered every other day.
- RM: So they typically weren't more than a mile or two from water?
- LE: Possibly 2 or 3 miles. They probably moved camp once a week.
- RM: I see. The sheepherder would work out of a camp.
- LE: Out of his tent. Then he'd move several miles and pitch his tent again.
- RM: How did he know where to move? Did he have a certain territory, or what?
- LE: In the real early days, they didn't have a territory. It was kind of a war between the people who had cattle and the sheepmen.
- RM: Tell me about that. You hear about it in movies, but . . .
- LE: Well, it wasn't really a war, but there were instances where they shot a herder. The cattlemen would usually go up to the herder and tell him to keep moving on and that'd throw a scare into him.
- RM: In which case he would move along?
- LE: Yes, usually.
- RM: Is it true that sheep are harder on the range than cattle?
- LE: In some areas, yes. But sheep will graze a lot of areas that the cattle can't get to.
- RM: You mean more rugged areas?
- LE: Right.
- RM: What do the sheep eat?
- LE: They eat a lot of the different types of brush. My dad used to call one bush up here the *Pipicharra* or something (I couldn't even tell you how to spell it). They called it lamb brush in those days. In the summertime, he said the sheep would always hang around there; it made the lambs fat. I never did herd, so you're asking me some things where I have to rely on what I was told.
- RM: I'm trying to get information about what you learned about as a kid.
- LE: All I know is what my dad told me.
- RM: Were there herds on all of these mountains?
- LE: According to Mary Jean's dad, Pete Etcheverry, and my dad and the old-timers, there were anywhere from 15,000 to 100,000 lambs and ewes on the Diamond Range here in the summertime.
- RM: Is that right! So there was a lot of feed up there? There must be a lot of water holes, too.
- LE: The herders and camp tenders and owners developed a lot of water holes. They put troughs up and made reservoirs, because when the sheep came in in big bunches, they all piled in there and drank fast. They dug out a lot of reservoirs just with a pick and shovel, fenced the springs so that the animals

couldn't get into them, and piped it into troughs and reservoirs.

RM: When did they market the sheep — in the fall?

LE: Usually in the fall. They'd bring the sheep off the mountain and make portable corrals and then they'd drive the lambs to the railroad, to Palisade or Beowawe, near Carlin, in this county.

RM: When did they shear them?

LE: They usually sheared in April — sometimes before lambing, sometimes after. They tried to shear before lambing.

RM: Did the shepherd participate in the shearing?

LE: No. All he'd do is bring the herd into the corral.

RM: From movies I've seen, they had guys who went from one camp to another who did the shearing?.

LE: That's correct. Some of the bigger outfits would have 20 to 25 shearers. Some of them had a crew of 12.

RM: So there were big outfits that controlled large herds?

LE: Oh, yes, they had some large herds of sheep. Some of them had 2 or 3 herders and 2 or 3 camps. Some of them had 7000, 8000, 10,000 head.

RM: Is that right! Do you remember the names of some of the big owners in the Eureka area?

LE: Walter and Isaac Handleys — 2 brothers — had a lot of sheep. So did Leandro Oroz, Isadore Sara, Leon Ardans, John Ardans, Jean Biscay, Phillipe Legarra, Martin Hachquet, Pete Etcheverry, Fred Etchegaray, the Dameles, the Seguras and the Martins, to name a few.

RM: Were the Basques ever owners of the sheep themselves?

LE: Oh, yes.

RM: What would happen? Would a man come over here and make a little money and get a start that way?

LE: Yes. I'll go back to the question you asked me — when my dad came here. He came as a shepherd, but he didn't like to herd sheep. He didn't like that way of life. The Laxagues had housed him, and he told them he'd rather work with the cows, so he started working as a cowboy for them.

And through his cowboying, he met with the Kitchen brothers; they ran a lot of cattle down in Antelope Valley. He learned to speak English from Hiram and Joe Kitchen. They later sold their cattle and what is the Raine's Market in Eureka today — it was the Kitchen Brothers Market. They had a lot of wild cattle, and they couldn't gather them. A lot of them had horns, and the steers were mean, and they were hard to gather off the wild. So in later years Hiram and Joe decided they were going to put up a butcher shop in Eureka and start the Kitchen Brothers Market. They were the ones I basically heard my dad talk about. In those days, all the cowboys used to ride together to separate the cattle. Basically, that's how he learned English. He stayed there working for the Laxagues for 7 years.

My grandfather on the Damele side and his brothers, Bernard, Peter and Antone, had cattle over here at the Three-Bar and Tonkin ranches. They wanted

to go into the sheep business to protect their range rights because there were so many tramp sheepmen coming through.

RM: Because they were losing their feed on the range to the tramp sheep?

LE: Yes, and they wanted to claim an area. They heard about my dad and his twin brother and went down to talk to them, and they made them partners. My dad and his twin brother bought half of the sheep and the Dameles bought the other half. Dad and his brother John ran the sheep for the Dameles.

RM: And what year was this?

LE: That's how he met my mother, probably around 1922.

RM: And what year did you say your father came here?

LE: It was in 1911.

RM: When did your father come here, Mary Jean?

ME: Nineteen thirteen.

RM: Was that a period of a large influx of Basque herders?

ME: I think so. The sheep industry was big business in Nevada.

RM: What did the sheepherder make in that period of time?

LE: When my dad first started, I don't know if it was more than \$15 a month.

ME: My dad, I think, started off at \$25 a month.

LE: Let's say \$25 to \$30 a month.

RM: And was sheepherding a 12-month job?

LE: Oh, yes.

RM: There was no vacation or off time?

LE: Sometimes in the fall after they'd shipped the lambs they'd give them a little break and let the herders come into headquarters maybe for a week or so — they'd send somebody out to watch the herd. Then they went right back.

RM: It must be really a lonely life.

LE: It is.

RM: Do either of you remember your fathers talking about the loneliness and the way of life that they lived?

LE: I've heard my dad say that if he'd had the money to go back to France that first year, he would've gone right back.

RM: The kind of sheepherding he was doing here was really different than it was in France, wasn't it?

LE: Yes. And they were young teenagers — 16-year-old boys.

RM: So you had 16-year-old guys in charge of a big herd of sheep out in a wilderness. I'll be darned. Do you recall anything they would tell about the kind of life that they lived out there?

LE: My dad always played a mouth harmonica, and he bought himself an old accordion. He could play a little bit in his own way.

RM: So he'd be out there in his camp playing music.

LE: Yes, entertaining himself.

RM: Did the sheep ranchers have a home range?

LE: Well, in those days some did and some didn't. The Taylor Grazing Act didn't come into effect until 1934.

-
- RM: So it was totally open range then?
- LE: Totally open range. You could graze your cattle or sheep anywhere you wanted. Of course, when you got close to the ranches where they were running cows, they would try to keep the sheep moving on. Most of the sheepmen fairly well respected that. There were some shootings, but I don't recall a one. The only one I can remember hearing my dad talk about was that old Brackeny shot a herder.
- RM: I'm not quite clear on this — do the sheep and cows eat the same thing on the range?
- LE: Basically, yes. I think the sheep's more of a browser and the cattle eat more grass. But sheep eat grass, too, and wildflowers.
- RM: What year was it that you said your father got out of shepherding? He bought a half-interest . . .
- LE: He bought a half-interest in 1922.
- RM: It sounds like he was kind of wanting to settle down.
- LE: I kind of think so. A lot of the shepherders didn't take wages. They went partners with the owner, if the owner would accept them. Sometimes they never got paid for 2 or 3 years. This was kind of a custom. The owner would just furnish them grub, and they'd get an interest in the herd. That way the owners felt that the shepherders would take better care of the animals.
- RM: He had an investment, yes. What did the shepherd wear?
- LE: They dressed just like we're dressed now, only they always had good shoes and overalls. Just anything that was durable. They'd get a Levi shirt and Levi's.
- RM: What kind of coats did they wear in the winter?
- LE: In those days they wore sheepskin coats.
- RM: Any kind of head gear?
- LE: They all had caps with earflaps and scarfs.
- RM: When did the shepherd's wagon come into play, or did it? The ones with the rubber tires on them?
- LE: In the mid-'40s. Some of the big outfits used them in the summer, but around here the wagons were their home in the winter.

CHAPTER TWO

LE: Mary Jean knows more about the sheep business than I do. But the camp wagons and the commissary came into play mostly in the winter, although some of the big outfits did use them in the summer too.

RM: I see. But mainly they lived in their tent, if they had a tent?

LE: Yes. I would say probably after 1915 or '20, pretty near everybody had a tent. It was some of the early ones who came who didn't have a tent when they first got here.

RM: What did the shepherd's bedroll consist of?

LE: They always had a heavy, durable tarp — usually a white tarp. And my dad had a feather mattress in his. And of course they had a lot of heavy quilts and wool blankets.

RM: And he slept out on the ground summer and winter . . .

LE: For a while, until he got enough money. The first dollar he made, he invested in a tent. Really, those tents are fairly warm. They're a good wind break, and if you don't touch them they don't usually leak, either. They knew how to pile the dirt up and everything so the water ran off the sides of the tent and they didn't get wet inside. Soon after he bought his tent he bought a folding cot.

And they learned to watch the weather. They were probably as good weather prophets as we get on TV here. It was survival out there. They learned lots from the stars and the clouds; they knew exactly what was coming, whether it was going to be wind, storm . . . and they tried to prepare for that.

RM: Did they have to prepare the sheep for certain kinds of weather?

LE: If they thought there was a big storm coming they'd try to bed them down where there was a little shelter, yes.

ME: It's most important to do that after shearing and during lambing time. Otherwise they would lose a lot of lambs. If the sheep had been newly sheared, they'd be cold, and if a cold storm was coming, they'd have a tendency to bunch up, and then they could suffocate each other.

LE: They could pile on top of each other and smother in a ditch or a ravine.

ME: They even watched signs like rainbows. They knew that after a rainbow there would be so many more days of rain.

RM: Could they predict the weather far ahead of time? My dad used to say that when the Milky Way is really white in the summer, you're going to have a hard winter.

LE: I would say 3 or 4 days ahead.

ME: I don't know about that, but if they watched for several months ahead, it was more probably by pine cones and how they developed and so on. They watched animals, too — other animals besides their sheep. I think they saw a lot of behavior patterns there that would indicate things.

RM: I'll be darned. Like what? Do you recall?

LE: The horses played . . .

- ME: Yes. They buck and play before a storm.
- RM: I've noticed that, yes.
- LE: And they're hard to work. Cattle are the same way — when it's windy, they're hard to work.
- RM: Was the sheepherder the only person there during the lambing or did he have help at that time?
- ME: They usually had a little more help during lambing time. There would be the sheep owner himself and the herder, and they usually brought in more help. That was almost a 24-hour-a-day thing.
- RM: How long did the lambing period last?
- ME: About 40 days.
- RM: Did they lose a lot of lambs and ewes?
- ME: It would depend on the weather. If it was a mild spring, they probably could have a real good lambing, but if it was a very stormy, cold spring, they could lose a lot of lambs.
- RM: Is there still sheepherding going on in the county now?
- LE: Oh, yes.
- RM: Are Basque sheepherders still involved?
- ME: No, right now the owner is a Basque fellow, Martin Larralde, just out of Eureka, but he has a Mexican camp tender and Peruvian sheepherders. RM: When did the Peruvians come in?
- ME: They haven't been here long — 12 to 15 years.
- RM: Is sheepherding still a practiced art here?
- ME: For those people who own sheep.
- RM: Are there many?
- ME: All the sheep that are here now I think are pretty much imported for the summer months from the Bakersfield [California] area. The other fellow here who has the other sheep does the same thing. He has several places and runs cattle year round on those places, but he trucks his sheep to Bakersfield in the winter. That's Philbert Etcheverry of the Three-Bar, Roberts Creek and Alpha ranches.
- RM: Does he keep them in feedlots down there?
- ME: No, I think both parties that I'm thinking of have range down there.
- RM: So there's no year-round sheepherding in this area anymore like there used to be?
- ME: Not in Eureka County, but White Pine has some yearly operations.
- LE: One thing I'd like to add — usually they put the sheep on the mountains that have poisonous plants on them, because the sheep do not get poisoned.
- RM: Is that right?
- LE: The Diamond Mountains have a lot of larkspur on them, and so do parts of Roberts Creek and different mountains. That's why they had sheep here — the high mountains are utilized by the sheep first. The cattle aren't usually put up in that area until August, till the [poisonous] plants die off.
- RM: What does larkspur look like?

-
- LE: There are 2 types of larkspur. There's tall larkspur and short larkspur. Tall larkspur will get from 2 feet to 30 inches high, and it usually grows in clusters.
- RM: I should mention that Pietrina Etchegaray has just come in. Why don't you come over here, Pietrina, and sit over here? If you want to say something, the microphone won't be able to hear you [if you're over there].
- Pietrina Etchegaray: I don't have anything more to say. The only thing is, I forgot to tell you about the telephone lines. They put the telephone line in in 1910.
- RM: OK, thanks. Now, you say there are 2 kinds of larkspur?
- LE: Tall larkspur and low larkspur.
- RM: And they both grow in the mountains on both sides of the Diamond Valley?
- LE: Yes, parts of Roberts Creek and down south here at Nine Mile, and that area; I don't know what that mountain's called. It'd be south of Eureka anyway, down around the Segura Ranch.
- ME: And even up around Pinto Summit.
- RM: Would sheep eat it?
- ME: Sheep do eat it, but it's not poisonous to them.
- RM: What happens if a cow eats it?
- LE: She's dead in just a little while. I don't know what it does to them, but they look bloated.
- RM: How long does it take to kill a cow?
- LE: I can't tell you. I've found them dead, but I've never been right there when it happened. They always said that sometimes where an owner owned both sheep and cattle, if the cattle got up in there [and ate some larkspur], they used to cut their tails and bleed them, and it would save them.
- RM: Oh! Cut their tail off?
- LE: Cut their tail off to make them bleed good. So it's something in the blood. I've never really dug into studying it, so I can't tell you.
- RM: So for the first part of the summer, the shearers were not intruding on the cattle's range that much? Is that fair to say?
- LE: No, that wouldn't be true.
- RM: Because they ate the food that would have been there afterwards?
- LE: Yes. But where the owner was a sheep and cattleman combined, they usually ran the sheep on the higher elevations where the larkspur grew and kept the cattle down at lower elevations till after August.
- RM: I wonder why larkspur grows in some areas and not in others.
- LE: High selenium soil is usually a good growing condition for larkspur.
- RM: I wonder if it's the selenium that kills that the cow.
- LE: It could be. As I say, it's something I've never studied; right where we were, we didn't have the problem.
- RM: OK. Let's pick up, then, when your dad purchased the interest in the sheep. What happened then?
- LE: I'll get back to Mama here. What year did Daddy go into partners with your

dad?

PE: He bought the sheep in 1922.

RM: So he'd been over here about 11 years when he bought in the interest in the sheep.

LE: This is not in sequence, but for a while before he went in partners . . . I'm going back now.

RM: That's all right.

LE: When he quit cowboying for the Laxagues he got a stage contract over in Lander County, in Austin. He used to run the stage line from Austin to the Monitor Valley Ranch. How many years did he do that, Mom — 2 years?

PE: I never did know how many years that was.

LE: I know in the winter he used to run the stage with a sleigh and sometimes in the spring with a buggy. In later years, he bought a Super-6 car and ran the stage line with that.

RM: They had so much snow that sometimes he used a sleigh?

LE: Yes. He had a cutter, or sleigh.

RM: And he was going from Austin to the Monitor Valley Ranch?

LE: To the Monitor Valley Ranch over Pete Summit.

RM: How far is that?

LE: It was 35 to 40 miles.

RM: Was he doing that every day?

LE: No, maybe twice a week. He delivered mail; he had a government contract. Also, he used to do a lot of favors for the ranchers — he used to haul groceries and their needs out to them. But he did that just as a favor, because they did a lot of favors for him. Mrs. Laxague used to heat rocks in her stove in the kitchen, and she would put them in the buggy to keep his feet warm on the road in the winter.

RM: That's something. So he made that trip in any kind of weather?

LE: Any kind of weather. The contract called for it.

RM: LeRoy, are there any other things that you would like to say about sheepherding?

LE: I don't know much about sheepherding because I never did any of it.

PE: Mary Jean knows. [Laughs]

LE: As I say, I was 6 or 7 years old when he sold the sheep. I can tell you some more about my dad. One winter he and his twin brother John were down south and the sheep were snowed in. They were down at Rye Patch, by Tonopah. The train brought corn into Tonopah, and they had to feed them corn because the sheep couldn't move; there was too much snow. He and his twin brother had 18 mules, and they used to haul corn from Tonopah to Rye Patch — 500 pounds on each mule. The corn kept the sheep alive one winter. He said he never worked so hard in his life. They had to melt snow for the mules in tubs over a sagebrush fire. He said they just pulled tons and tons of sagebrush to melt the snow to make water for the mules.

RM: Oh! Do you know approximately what year that would have been?

-
- LE: No. It was before he was married. He was in partners with the sheep.
- RM: What year did he get married?
- PE: We got married in '28.
- RM: So it would have been some time in the '20s that this terrible storm happened.
- LE: Yes.
- RM: And they did that all winter?
- LE: I can't tell you how long they did that, but there was quite a spell during the cold season. Then it warmed up and the snow started to melt and the sheep could move around and feed themselves. But when the sheep were snowed in, they couldn't move to feed. A sheep doesn't take much — 2-1/2 feet of snow and he's boxed in. They also used to take the mules and drag logs to make trails for them. They'd pour the corn in those trails and the sheep would follow the corn.
- ME: When the snow gets deep enough and the sheep lie down in the nighttime and some more storm comes along, all they have to breathe through is just a little tiny hole, because there's snow way over the top of the sheep when they lie down.
- Bambi McCracken: Oh, my word!
- RM: Can they get out?
- ME: Usually the shepherd and camp tender have to help them along.
- LE: And when it gets cold and there's a lot of snow, a lot of them are frozen down in the morning. They'd have to get them up, because their wool would freeze to the snow and they couldn't get up. They'd have to go around in the morning and get all those sheep up.
- BM: How would they melt their wool — or would they just pull it?
- ME: They'd just pull it.
- LE: I think they'd pull it and maybe in instances you might have to cut some of it.
- RM: Mary Jean, are there any things about shepherding that you would like to add here?
- ME: I think LeRoy has pretty much covered anything that I would say. Most of the shepherders way back then generally butchered their own meat, and they didn't have the fancy canned foods and things that they have in this day and age.
- RM: You mean when they were out in their own camp?
- ME: Yes, way back in the earlier days. They saved all the tallow from the mutton that they would butcher and made their own candles. The dried sheep pelts were used as rugs by their bedsides.
- RM: What did the shepherd eat when he was out in his camp?
- ME: They most generally had things like beans and rice and other dry foods. And dried cod.
- LE: And they always had their meat.
- ME: They always did have meat.

-
- RM: But they were eating cod, too. That's interesting.
- LE: And dried apricots and prunes.
- ME: They had goats that they milked year round; canned milk wasn't furnished in those days.
- RM: They weren't milking the sheep, then?
- ME: I don't think they milked the sheep as much as they did the goats.
- RM: What happened to the Basque shepherders who came over here? Did many of them go back to the old country or did they stay in this area or go to another area, or did they become ranchers like your father, or what?
- LE: A lot of them got into the hotel business.
- ME: And gardening.
- LE: Yes, a lot of them down around California are in the gardening and hotel businesses, and they have Basque restaurants. Some of them went back and some didn't. They did a little bit of everything.
- RM: Did many go back?
- ME: Not in those days. They do now. In the last 35 years, I think most of them have gone back. Some went back for good and others have returned.
- RM: When did the Basques stop coming over here to herd sheep?
- ME: In about 1947 they started to come over as contract herders. When they came as contract herders, they had to guarantee that they would herd sheep at least for 2 years. And that was kind of discouraging — they didn't have the freedom to up and leave. They had to stay 2 years, and if they didn't stay 2 years, they could be reported and sent back, very much like the Mexicans and illegal [workers].
- RM: I see. Did most of the Basques who came into this area stay in the area and become hotel men and what not, or did they kind of drift off to other areas?
- LE: A lot of them drifted off to Ely, Elko, Winnemucca . . . some of them to Reno. If they wanted to try something else, they would move.
- RM: Shepherding was strictly a male occupation at that time, wasn't it?
- LE: Oh, yes.
- RM: Did many Basque women come over here? And if they did, what circumstances brought them here?
- ME: My mother came because there were 2 Basque hotels at that time in Eureka. She came over to do maid work, and she was a cook. She had gone to cooking school back in the old country, so she was a cook most of the time.
- RM: What year did she come over here?
- ME: My mother came in 1928.
- RM: What were the Basque hotels in Eureka then?
- ME: The Star Hotel, owned by the Uriarte family, was where she started to work. She later went to the other hotel, the Eureka Hotel, owned by the Pete Laborde family.
- RM: And when you say they're Basque hotels, did that mean they were owned by Basques?
- ME: Yes. But they were for anybody who wanted to stay there.

-
- RM: Was she cooking Basque dishes or was it pretty much standard American fare
- ME: Whatever. I remember her not knowing what hotcakes were — so-called hotcakes, pancakes. Someone who was staying there and running the mail route between Eureka and Austin taught her how to make pancakes. I guess it was more family style [than a typical American] restaurant.
- RM: That's still the way the Basque restaurants serve their food, isn't it?
- ME: Yes.
- RM: How large were the hotels?
- ME: I don't know how many rooms the Star Hotel had.
- LE: The Star was what is now the Lincoln Hotel. The Eureka Hotel is still there. I imagine there were 12 to 14 rooms in each establishment.
- ME: There was a third hotel, the Colonnade.
- RM: Who typically stayed in those hotels?
- LE: Everybody. A lot of the Basque herders, if they were off for a while or if they got sick or something, would usually stay there. For instance, if one of them had to come in to the doctor and was sick for a week or month he'd stay at a hotel.
- RM: What do they do when they're out with the herd and they get sick?
- LE: The camp tender would probably take over and see to it they got to town or got some kind of care. Sometimes they were confined out there. A lot of them had Rocky Mountain tick fever.
- RM: That was probably a hazard of their occupation.
- LE: Yes, it was. A lot of them lay in those tents and a camp tender doctored them with quinine and whatever he could. The flu of 1918 killed some of them. Some of them laid in their tents for 2 or 3 weeks at a time with fever. And they took quinine and I guess a lot of garlic. [Laughs]
- ME: And they had sage tea.
- RM: Is that Mormon tea?
- ME: I don't know, but they would make a tea out of the sagebrush.
- RM: Out of regular sagebrush, not the kind of plant that they call . . . are you familiar with Mormon tea here? It's a plant that grows down south.
- ME: Well, the Indian tea.
- RM: I'll bet that's what it is.
- LE: Yes, we have that here. And there's a white sage tea and I think some of the Indians drank black sage tea; it made them sweat. They kept them in those warm blankets and let all the sweat and perspiration come out. They used that and quinine and aspirin and whatever they had then.

CHAPTER THREE

- RM: Did the early Basque shepherders have any other medical cures or anything that you recall? They must have had pretty good knowledge about some of the native plants and so on.
- LE: They used mustard plaster for chest colds and to cure pneumonia. And I know they ate a lot of garlic. Mary Jean's dad, Pete Etcheverry, was a great cook. They learned how to cook for themselves and I'll tell you, you would get a feast if you went to one of those camps.
- RM: What would you get?
- LE: You'd get fried potatoes and beans and soups, and they made a wonderful mutton stew and a garlic soup.
- ME: Shepherd bread.
- LE: They carried their eggs in a gallon-and-a-half kettle that was full of oats for the horses. When they put that on the packhorse, the eggs wouldn't get broken. And canned peas. The food tastes wonderful because it's made on that sagebrush. I've seen them just boil some regular old canned peas out there and flop an egg in and let it get hard boiled. And they could really cook the dried codfish. In those days, we used to get dried apricots and prunes in wooden cases. That's what they used for their fruit, mainly.
- RM: What exactly is shepherd's bread?
- LE: It's just an ordinary bread, but baked in a Dutch oven. It's baked underground, in coals.
- RM: Oh.
- ME: It's more crusty.
- RM: But otherwise it's regular bread? Is it unleavened?
- ME: No, it's leavened. It's made with yeast.
- RM: And the shepherd made his own bread?
- LE: Well, the camp tender, most generally.
- RM: Was the camp tender there all the time?
- LE: No, my dad most generally was his own camp tender, and my mother would bake the bread in the oven of a wood and coal stove. In the summertime he generally had 2 or 3 camps. He would make those camps himself, but my mother would bake the bread at the ranch. But in the wintertime usually there were more sheep, and my dad would go south with them. Then he was his own camp tender, and he would bake his own bread. And he would bake it underground, in the coals.
- RM: Did most of the shepherders have a camp tender?
- LE: Oh, yes. Someone had to bring them their supplies.
- RM: But he was the guy who was bringing in supplies. He wasn't there all the time, was he?
- LE: No. He helped occasionally when the herder needed him on the days that he was there. And he listened to what the herder's problems were. But his main job was to bring groceries and see if the herder and sheep were healthy.

-
- RM: And he was servicing several herders?
- LE: He might be servicing several herders, yes.
- RM: Did you want to tell a story about Mary Jean's father?
- ME: About the garlic and seven sicknesses, I think. [Laughs]
- LE: Oh, Mary Jean was working in town and of course we were busy out in the field. And sometimes her dad would cook for us here — in the evening he'd have supper when we all came in. He was making garlic soup (he was catching a cold or didn't feel well). He really ground up a bunch of garlic, and Mary Jean came home and she said, "Gee daddy, man, this house smells just like garlic!"
- And he said, "Good for seven sickness in the old country." [Laughter]
- RM: I wonder what the sicknesses were.
- LE: I don't know if you ever asked him, did you?
- ME: Oh, I know for sure that when kids had diphtheria or pneumonia they would make a necklace of garlic and put it around their neck. Now they claim that garlic is bad for ulcers, but they always claimed that it was good for ulcers and your entire digestive track. It's good for high blood pressure.
- RM: Yes. You hear it's almost like a wonder drug.
- ME: Yes.
- PE: We used to have to wear it around our neck just like beads so we wouldn't catch sickness. [Laughs] The Italians do that too! We always had garlic. But we had diphtheria. That's why we always had a necklace of garlic around our neck.
- RM: Did they use the garlic when the diphtheria that you were telling us about [in our earlier interview with Pietrina] came into your area?
- PE: Yes. They used everything they had. But nothing would help until . . . they did get the doctor, but he had to come to Palisade on the train from Elko. And then my uncle Bernard had a car, and he picked him up at Palisade and brought him up to Tonkin.
- RM: So the doctor would come down from Elko to the Tonkin Ranch?
- PE: Yes. We were the only ones. There weren't really any kids at the Three-Bar. We kids at Tonkin had the diphtheria.
- RM: LeRoy, when did your father buy this interest in the sheep? I guess he was still working as a sheepherder then?
- LE: Not really a sheepherder; he was more of a camp tender and co-owner.
- RM: Did he have a ranch by then?
- LE: Yes. Let's see, he bought the Santa Fe in '29. And they didn't sell the sheep until 1935, wasn't it?
- PE: That's right. Or '36.
- ME: Thirty-six, I think.
- LE: They had a few cows there at the ranch, and they went to raising cows.
- RM: Why did he sell the sheep, do you think?
- LE: All the partners wanted to get out the sheep business. They were still partners with my grandfather.

-
- RM: Why do you think they wanted to get out?
- PE: The prices were awful.
- LE: They were offered a big price a few days before the Depression hit. They were going to sell them all, and some of the partners wanted to sell and some didn't. Then the Depression hit and the sheep weren't worth anything. I don't know, what were they worth, Mom?
- PE: I don't know.
- LE: I don't know if you could get 50 cents a head for them, could you? The pelts of the dead sheep were worth more than the sheep. The government came in and killed them all.
- PE: They sold them to the government, then the government killed the old ones. Then they stripped the hide up so you couldn't use it.
- RM: What year did you say he acquired the Santa Fe?
- LE: In 1929.
- RM: How large a ranch was that, and who did he acquire it from?
- LE: He acquired it from Margaret and Maurice Pieretti. And Margaret was my mother's aunt, a sister to her dad. We moved from town when Mom and Dad bought the ranch.
- RM: Now we're getting to the time of your childhood, when you can begin to remember what the area was like. Why don't you discuss some of your recollections about life at that time?
- LE: I started school in Eureka in 1935 and we went out to the ranch for Christmas vacation for 2 weeks or whatever it was and we got snowed in out there. The old Eureka-Palisade train was still running. (The whole train wasn't running but they had a couple of engines. They called one of them the dingy or the dinghy.)
- PE: I don't know what they called it.
- LE: Anyway, we had to go on horseback to Tonkin and then to Mineral Station to catch the train. I remember going from Santa Fe to Tonkin. We left early in the morning, and the snow was up to the horses' shoulders. My dad and mother broke trail with their horses — they took turns so the horses wouldn't get tired. I was a little kid riding on my horse back there, following. We got to Tonkin way after dark and the next day they could get from there to Mineral Station with a car. And Mom's brother, my uncle Leo, took Mom and me to Mineral Station.
- We got on the seat with the engineer — it was just a canvas-covered seat with canvas sidewalls. And this little train had a Model A engine. There was a lot of snow and when we got to Alpha Ranch we picked up a boy by the name of Frankie Otegui. Of course Mama used to wrap our feet in paper inside our overshoes to keep our feet warm. Poor Frankie just had a little jumper, and Mama had blankets and everything. We all huddled up in that engine seat and I can still remember — we had to get out and shovel on the railroad track, because if the engineer hit the snowdrifts going across the tracks it would make the train jump the rail. We didn't get to Eureka till 6:00

or 7:00, in that cold. I know it was way below zero. There was a lot of snow that winter. We went to what they called the old depot in the canyon just north of the town limits of Eureka. I can still see it.

PE: I can still see it, too.

LE: And packing those suitcases clear up to the house! There were no trails or open roads. There was snow up to our knees and we had taken all our clothing out to the ranch for a couple of weeks, then we had to bring it all back.

RM: That was in '36, you think?

LE: January of '36, right after Christmas.

RM: You couldn't go to school out at the Santa Fe, could you?

LE: No. There was no school out there.

RM: Did you rent a house in Eureka?

LE: Mom and Dad had a house in town but Dad stayed on the ranch all winter.

RM: And then you went in with LeRoy, Pietrina?

PE: Yes. And then weekends we'd go out.

LE: If we could go out. We never could, though, till Easter vacation that year.

PE: It's a good thing we had a telephone at the ranch.

RM: One of you was telling me something about that today.

LE: Yes, I was. My mom may have mentioned it too. He had the telephone to the neighboring ranches, so at least he could talk to the neighbors and they knew that everybody was OK.

PE: My dad and his brothers put that telephone in in 1910.

RM: Where did the telephone go?

PE: Just between the 3 ranches — Tonkin, Three-Bar and the Santa Fe.

RM: How far was it from the Santa Fe to the Tonkin?

LE: Eighteen miles. The phone went further than that in later years. They added the JD Ranch, which was another 13 miles. Once the phone line got as far as the JD, the old railroad had a telephone line all along Pine Valley from Palisade to the JD. They could flip a switch and you could get a message to Palisade. In the later years we put an underground telephone line in from Eureka to the JD. We did that around '51. It was before the hard winter. Do you remember if we had it the year before the hard winter?

ME: You didn't put it in in 1950, I'm sure of that.

LE: No, when we got married it wasn't in, was it? I would say it was 1951 when we put another line, an extension, from Eureka to the JD Ranch. They could flip a switch at the JD Ranch and I could talk to my wife in town. It used to accumulate moisture and we couldn't always get through, but if there was an emergency we most generally could get through. That way we always knew the families were all right.

ME: When the farmers came in . . .

LE: When Diamond Valley started farming here in the late '50s and early '60s, the line wasn't deep enough. They probably only had it underground about 6 inches deep. They started plowing and disking and they cut a lot of it. We had some of it patched for a year or two, but eventually it was useless.

-
- RM: How did you put that line in?
- LE: We had a little TD-6 with a little pull grader behind it and an old Dodge power wagon with a reel on the back to reel the wire. My 3 uncles and myself and two fellows by the name of Harry Polley and Jack O'Conner helped us lay it.
- RM: Did you just take out across the sagebrush with it?
- LE: Yes, we just took off from Eureka and went right across the sagebrush. It was about 47 miles.
- RM: Is that right. Did you finance it out of your own pockets?
- LE: Yes — the 3 Damele families paid for it.
- RM: That was in the days when you didn't have to fiddle with the government, wasn't it?
- LE: Yes. You didn't have to have an easement or anything like that.
- RM: Tell me some more about the big winters that you recall.
- LE: Well, '48 and '49 was a hard winter. I was going to college, so I wasn't at the ranch, but I was always worried about the folks. My mom and dad were there and they had a hired man, an old rancher who had been in the area for years, Frank Pastorino. He stayed there all winter with them that year. Towards spring, they had a lot of wind and they ran out of hay. They had to haul a little hay in, but not very much. They had the hay, but they had a hard time getting to it.
- RM: Was the winter of '48-49 one storm or a series of storms?
- LE: It was a whole series of storms and cold.
- RM: When did it begin?
- LE: It began before Christmas. There was a lot of fluffy snow, powdery snow; it didn't have much moisture in it. There was a lot of wind and a lot of drifts.
- PE: Mostly it was wind that piled it up. The wind was violent.
- LE: Did anybody plow you out that winter?
- PE: No.
- LE: In those days all the county had was a little old D-6 and it was almost useless because it couldn't get around to everybody to plow them out like they do nowadays.
- RM: Plus they'd probably plow them out and the wind would pile it up again, so they didn't bother. How much snow was flat on the ground from that first storm?
- LE: I would say probably 30 inches.
- RM: And then what happened?
- LE: It just turned bitter cold, and it would snow again. The wind would blow and it would snow some more. I remember being in college and I heard the news on the radio in Reno, and I was kind of worried about the folks and everything, and I remember hearing one night that it was 57 below in Carlin.
- RM: Oh, my! Did they drop hay that winter?
- LE: No, not in our area.
- RM: I know they did back in Colorado; I can remember that.

- LE: A lot of the sheep were snowed in down towards Tonopah, and over around Ely and in some of those deserts — Duckwater . . . they did drop hay to those sheep.
- ME: Leon Ardans . . .
- LE: Leon Ardans's burro got killed — a bale of hay hit him on the head.
- RM: Good grief. Now, you mentioned that you got snowed in at the ranch the winter of '36. Was that a bad winter?
- LE: It was a pretty hard winter; there was a lot of snow. But nobody plowed anybody out. We didn't seem to think anything of it. The stage driver used to go on horseback from Eureka to Tonkin. There was the post office at the Tonkin Ranch. Mom, did you tell him that?
- RM: Yes, she did.
- LE: He would go every Wednesday, and sometimes it would take him 3 days. He'd go from Eureka to Roberts Creek the first day and then to Three-Bar and to Tonkin and then back. Sometimes it was 6 days, because it would take him 3 days to come back. That went on until Easter. I know he had that route into the '40s.
- RM: When did he begin it?
- LE: He used to run it with a horse and buggy in the summertime. What year did he get the contract, Ma?
- PE: I don't know.
- RM: About when did they start the post office at Tonkin?
- PE: The post office was established sometime between 1896 and 1904. Walter Tonkin was the name of the man who had the ranch before they bought it.
- RM: And when did they buy that ranch?
- PE: They bought it in 1905.
- RM: So there was a post office there then?
- PE: Yes, when they bought it from him.
- RM: Was there still a post office at the Tonkin Ranch in the '40s?
- LE: No, the post office wasn't there anymore.
- RM: When did they close that post office at Tonkin Ranch?
- PE: The post office was closed in March, 1931.
- RM: So this man had a route going from Eureka out to the Tonkin Ranch delivering the mail?
- LE: Yes. He delivered it on horseback mostly in the winter and he used a car in the summer.
- RM: When you moved to Eureka as a kid, were there any paved roads in the area?
- LE: Well, just Main Street.
- RM: How about the road to Ely and Austin?
- LE: Oh, that was paved. That's the old Lincoln Highway.
- RM: But none of the other roads were paved?
- LE: No. There were no paved roads between Eureka and Carlin. It was all dirt going into Elko.
- RM: Do you remember when they paved the road to Carlin? Has it been in recent

years?

LE: It was '48, '49 or '50.

PE: I don't remember when they did it, but, oh, that was a horrible road —nothing but chuckholes and dust.

LE: It was paved partway when I was a senior in high school in 1947. I think it was paved as far as Mount Hope, probably in '47. So it had to have been in the early 1950s, or '49.

RM: Tell me some of your recollections about Eureka. You started school there in the first grade and then went all the way through school there?

LE: All the way through.

CHAPTER FOUR

RM: So you moved to Eureka in '35?

LE: Yes, I graduated in 1947. We led a very active life at school. We played a lot of games — a lot of marbles, tops . . . we played every recess, and before school and after school. We did a lot of skiing and sleigh riding in the winter on our own — we never had an instructor or anything.

In the eighth grade we had a principal by the name of Emile Gezelin, and he let the seventh and eighth graders have a manual training shop. We made some neat little things. I think Mama's still got the footstool I made.

PE: Yes.

LE: That was a very good experience for me.

RM: What kind of marbles did you play, just out of curiosity?

LE: We played 9-hole and we used to play what we called "Poison in the Single Pot."

RM: How did 9-hole work?

LE: Nine-hole is just a toss. You put up so many marbles in the center pot, and you just stood back and tossed. Usually you used the steelie.

RM: Oh, because it wouldn't roll?

LE: Yes. What you'd try to do is hit the center pot on a 9-hole. The center pot was like this [a 3-by-3 matrix], then you had a cross like this. You paid the ante on the corners of the cross, and on the corners of the 9 holes you had to pay the original ante again, but the center pot took the whole pot. If you hit one of the other 4 corners, you had to ante up.

And we played a lot of hopscotch, Run My Sheepie, Run and Pom-Pom Pull Away, Come or I'll Pull You Away.

RM: What was that?

LE: Pom-Pom Pull Away, we used to call it. "If you don't come, I'll pull you away." There was a person who was "it" out in the middle. You ran between 2 lines and if he could touch you, then you were "it."

RM: Did you roll tires?

LE: A little bit, but not that much. We did a lot of sleigh riding in the winter, because there was no street plowing, so all the streets were for the kids. We could sleigh ride off the Clark Street hill. And we tried to learn how to ski. I look at the way they ski today and the way we did when we were kids . . . [Laughter] We just came straight off those hills. Nobody taught us how to turn and slow down. We tried to find the steepest hill we could, and to see if we could make it to the bottom without falling.

RM: It sounds like there was a lot more snow.

LE: There was a lot of snow from '36 clear into '52. Occasionally we had a dry year, maybe, but there was usually a lot of snow, which we don't get anymore.

RM: Is this area dryer than it used to be?

LE: It's a lot dryer — totally different. The climate's just completely different.

RM: Describe the difference.

LE: Well, we still get what moisture [we do get] in the wintertime.

RM: It's mainly winter, then?

LE: Yes. I don't know if the summer months have changed much. But we don't get any snowfall in the winter.

RM: Has it changed the feed on the range?

LE: Yes it has — it's scarcer. It'll come up in the spring when you've got a little moisture, then it just dries up. It used to stay green way up until June and July.

RM: Is that right?

LE: Late July sometimes, in the higher mountains. Now it just dries up early. We had a lot of runoff — a lot of those mountain creeks used to run off oodles of water. They'd run up till June, at least.

RM: And that was common?

LE: That was common every year. Now, even in the spring of the year you don't even see a creek come out of these canyons.

RM: Was there animal life in those creeks then — like fish or frogs or tadpoles?

LE: Well, it was mostly snow runoff. The main springs that run steadily, like Tonkin Creek and Roberts Creek, always had fish in them, but they ran year round. There were some fish in some of the smaller streams too, like at McCluskey Creek and Simpson Creek. I don't think fish can live there now very well.

RM: When did it start drying up, do you think?

LE: After '56, I'd say. And then we had a couple of fairly good winters. The winters of '69 and '73 were pretty good, and we've had some pretty good snow winters off and on since then, but not like it used to come every winter.

RM: I want to come back to your childhood, but we were also talking about the hard winters. We did the winter of '48 and '49, and then the next one was '52, I guess?

LE: Fifty-one and '52, yes.

RM: Could you talk a little bit about that?

LE: We'd just gotten married about a year before that, and we had a daughter who was just a few months old.

RM: You got married in '50?

LE: Yes, we got married October 12, 1950.

RM: Where did you meet?

LE: Mary Jean lived on the Ferguson Ranch, right next door. And of course we both went to high school in Eureka.

RM: Oh, so you knew each other in high school.

LE: Yes. But back to the winter of '52. We got a pretty good storm early, in late December. And then we didn't get much snow, just occasionally a little snow off and on. We could still get in and out with 4-wheel drive. Around my dad's birthday, the 24th of February, I'd say there was 20 or 21 inches of snow on the ground on the level. Most of the snow came in March. It started

early in March, and I don't know if it ever quit snowing.

ME: And the wind blew.

RM: How much snow was there in total, do you think?

LE: We had over 4 feet on the level out in the flats. All the brush was covered in Kobeh and Antelope valleys. You could see for miles — there wasn't a black spot out anywhere on the flats. It didn't bother us for a while, but it kept coming and coming and coming. And usually winter would start breaking in the last part of March. But it snowed clear up through the month of March and into early April. Our main concern was, how would we get out if one of us got sick? In those days, I guess, there might have been a chopper around somewhere — maybe the government had them.

RM: You had your phone, didn't you, at least?

LE: We had the phone, but we didn't have any snowmobiles. And it was really useless for anybody to open the roads. The state highway department did send a Cat the 8th of March to plow our road out, but the next morning it was plumb full.

RM: And then they had to drop feed, didn't they?

LE: I don't know if they had to, but we called for it, because we had some hay we couldn't get to. My dad and I used to feed with a team and sleigh, and we had to tie a chain . . . what we called double tree and stretchers. We had to shovel out, because the horses couldn't go into the hay corral. The haystacks were about 20 feet high, and the snow was clear up to the top of the stack. So every morning we had to shovel to get in there, to make enough room for the horses to pull the sleigh in backwards. We'd pull it in backwards, and then hook it up and load it. That happened every morning. We shoveled more snow than we did hay, I think. It was a lot of hard work, but I was young and healthy and didn't mind it. [Laughter] Anyway, we were worried. We had about 30 tons of hay in the stack up there, and we were afraid the weather wasn't going to break. So we called an attorney we knew in Elko and told him to send out a load of hay with the airplanes, when the hay lift came in. He got on the plane and directed them to the ranch. He was a good friend of ours. He used to come to the ranch all the time to visit with us.

RM: What was his name?

LE: Kenneth (Pat) Mann. He rode the airplane, and we got notice over the phone to take the cows off the feed ground so that they could drop hay, so we corralled the cows. The feed ground was getting so small that we could hardly turn the sleigh around anymore, and it was all packed down where the animals would eat. When the animals would get off that trail, they couldn't go anywhere.

We corralled them, and they dropped that hay, and they missed the feed ground with a lot of it. We had about 18 head of horses in the field there, and some of those bales were 15 to 20 feet off the trail, and even the horses couldn't get to it. They tried. Every day they'd try. They'd go right down past their shoulders when they got off that trail. Anyway, they had 5 ton in

the airplane, and they dropped it. Well, it was alfalfa; it just scattered all over. And there was too much for that one bunch, and they only dropped it on one feed ground. We got a fork and tried to get what we could up to feed the cows for one day, but that was the end of that 5 ton. And we phoned in and told them not to send any more.

But we did call in and tell them to send hay to the highway. We heard the army was coming in. This was the 10th of April. The army was coming in, and we decided we were going to order a lot of hay and have it brought down to the Bartine Ranch on Highway 50, and we'd make it until the army could get us plowed out, because they were coming up through there. Well, there was a D-6 with a dozer and he just came along and took a little off the top.

RM: He couldn't do that much?

LE: He couldn't do that much. But he did come up, and he started to open up our hay corral, where we had the hay. He dug himself in a big hole, and then he had a hard time getting out. [Laughter] And then bigger Caterpillars came in. And then it started to rain, and it just poured. Eureka County was hauling fuel to the army Caterpillars, and they couldn't bring fuel to them anymore. Then they had to go around by the Alpha and JD ranches to get to Tonkin and the weasel and the Cats had to walk over the summit and get on that side of Roberts Mountain so that they could get fuel. From the Three-Bar Ranch on, they didn't open it to Tonkin. They just left it so that they could get fuel.

RM: Did the rain cause a lot of flooding?

LE: The water in the road was 2 to 3 feet deep. You couldn't see an automobile where they plowed it out. It was 6 or 7 feet high where they plowed it out; they took it pretty near to the dirt. It melted what little bit they left, and the water 2 feet deep in the road.

RM: Wow. [Whistles]

LE: So then we were mudded in. But at least we had hay at the highway, and some hay at the ranch. We figured we could always drive the cattle down the road some way to get to the highway to keep them alive.

RM: Were there any other big winters after that that stand out in your mind?

LE: Yes, we had quite a bit of snow in 1969, and in '73 there was quite a bit of snow. Then I guess there was a pretty good snow up there in '81 or '82, and again in '83.

PE: Molly McGee wrote about the Grass Valley Ranch in the valley over there, about that airlift. I've got the book there — it comes from the museum in Elko.

ME: (It's a quarterly.)

PE: And she said that the Three-Bar had the hay lift, but it didn't.

LE: No, it didn't.

RM: She was wrong?

PE: It was the Santa Fe. So it's wrong in the book that she wrote.

RM: What do you recall about any of the hard winters, Mary Jean?

ME: Well, we survived. [Laughter] We played a lot of cards.

RM: Do you get a feeling of claustrophobia when you're snowed in?
ME: Not at all. I like the snow.
RM: You get a cozy feeling, do you?
ME: Yes, I don't mind the snow at all.
RM: When I can't drive my car, I get claustrophobia. [Laughter]
ME: I may now, but I've gotten older. I don't think I'd enjoy the depth of the snow like I did then. But it didn't bother me at all then.
RM: Let's go back to growing up in Eureka.
LE: Oh, we had a lot of fun. We played basketball all over — Elko, Ely, Austin, Battle Mountain, Carlin, Montbello, Wells, Lund . . .
RM: Did you ever get down to Tonopah?
LE: Yes, we played at Tonopah. I know one of the kids there yet that we played.
RM: Were you on the team?
LE: Yes, but not in my freshman year.
RM: What were some of the business establishments in town at that time?
LE: Well, the post office was in 4 different places in my time. And there were 2 barber shops.
RM: Who ran them?
LE: Vivian Hicks ran one, and Carl Harris ran one. The Ruby Hill Mine was working — there was a little activity then. The theater was running every Wednesday and Sunday.
RM: Did they get a good turnout?
ME: Yes, a good turnout. There weren't a lot of other things to do.
LE: Ford had a soda fountain — Ford's Fountain. We could get a cherry coke there for a nickel.
RM: How much did the theater cost?
LE: I think it was 50 cents, wasn't it? I used to take her to the movies.
RM: Did you? [Laughter] Did it have a balcony and a downstairs?
LE: Yes. The younger ones always sat in the balcony and the older people sat downstairs.
RM: Yes, they wanted to watch the movies, and the kids were just fooling around? [Laughter] I suppose they sold popcorn and everything at the theater, didn't they?
LE: No, I don't remember that they did.
ME: There was a popcorn machine, but they didn't have a concession stand.
RM: They were missing a good bet, weren't they! [Laughter]
PE: I can still see Fred Bartine — he used to get so mad at those kids. He owned and ran the theater.
LE: Earlier. But in the later years, Pastorinos owned it.
RM: And what were their first names?
LE: Frank and Marge and Tom.
RM: What would you consider later years?
LE: I think it was '45, but don't quote me on that.
ME: I think that's why there wasn't popcorn, because there was too much throw-

ing popcorn.

LE: You know, all the old bald-headed guys downstairs. [Laughter]

RM: What other establishments were there in town?

ME: There was the Brown Hotel and Bar, owned and operated by John and Ethel Ventorino.

RM: Were the old Basque hotels still going?

ME: They were still there, but when we were in high school, there was also the Gold Bar, which was owned by LeRoy's aunt and uncle. And there was the Nevada Club, which was owned by his aunt and uncle.

RM: And what were their names?

LE: Mike Etchegaray and Joe and Jean Sorholus.

ME: The Eureka Hotel was still owned by Pete and Mary Laborde, and they were the same people that my mother had worked for. And the Colonnade was owned by Ed Herrera. I think Blanche and Lee Olinger had what used to be the Star Hotel, where my mother first worked when she came, but by that time the name was changed to the Lincoln Hotel. And Louie Gibellini, a little later, had what's Louie's Lounge, if you've noticed Louie's Lounge.

RM: Yes. In fact, I'm going to interview Mr. Gibellini tomorrow. So he was there then?

ME: Well, he started towards the end of the time when we were in high school — about '46 or '47.

RM: What other bars were there?

LE: Pete Laborde had the Eureka Bar. When I was in high school we weren't supposed to be in the bar, but he had a pool table in there, and he would let us play pool, but he was real strict with the kids.

RM: Did Eureka ever have a brothel?

LE: Oh, yes.

ME: There was one when we were in high school.

LE: It was an old lady up there. Her name was May; I wouldn't know what her last name was.

RM: Did they serve liquor there?

LE: Yes, they did.

RM: Was it on the outskirts of town?

LE: Yes, it was up about where the Mount Wheeler building is, but down farther in the canyon.

RM: Were there any other bars along there?

LE: No.

RM: And how many grocery stores were there?

LE: Four. Tony DePaoli and Fred Eather each had a grocery store. The Kitchen brothers had a grocery store, and Al's Hardware, which was Eureka Cash Store in those days, had a grocery store.

RM: Was trade there mostly credit at that time?

LE: A lot of it was, with the ranches. I guess a lot of the other people were too. I can remember, heck, we'd only pay our bill maybe once or twice a year.

They trusted us.

RM: People were more trustworthy then, weren't they?

LE: Yes. And I know the Eureka Cash Store and Kitchen Brothers Market would haul anything. They'd haul provisions in from Reno and Sacramento in an old International 2-ton truck. You could order a mowing machine and a buck rake and they'd haul that.

RM: Is that right! How about garages? Were there many garages in town?

LE: There was Frank McBride's shop and garage.

ME: Herrera.

LE: Ciriaco Herrera had the Eureka Garage. Joe Rebaleati had a garage. (Norman is his boy.)

ME: The Rebaleatis also provided the power.

RM: How far back does the Rebaleatis' power company date?

LE: Into the late '30s — I'd say '36 or '37, maybe.

RM: Before that was there power in town or was it kerosene lamps?

PE: We always had power for lights when you went to school.

RM: What about when you went to school, Pietrina?

PE: When I went to school, we didn't have power. We had gas lamps.

RM: So maybe Rebaleatis' was the first electric power in town?

LE: Oh, it was.

ME: Even when I came to Eureka it was still a DC current, though.

RM: And when did you come there?

LE: Nineteen forty-two.

RM: When did they go AC? When they went onto the Mount Wheeler system?

LE: No, way before that — probably '46, '47 or '48. I remember going up there when they installed the big Fairbanks Morse engine to flip to AC power.

RM: They brought in a new generating system when they did that?

LE: Oh, yes. A huge, huge Fairbanks engine generator. It was the first one here. I remember when they poured the cement, but I can't remember the exact date — it seems to me it was '46 or '47. Before that, they were running with 2 Caterpillar 44 diesels for DC [direct current]. I used to go down there a lot and tinker around with them.

RM: Did the power plant run 24 hours a day?

LE: Yes.

CHAPTER FIVE

- LE: In 1952 Highway 50 was closed for a couple of weeks between Eureka and Ely. There was no mail, no groceries or anything. The rotary snowplows couldn't keep the roads open. Joe Kitchen used to haul groceries from Ely to Eureka to keep the town supplied. He had an International truck with a stove in it to keep groceries from freezing. He was an old sheepherder/cowboy, and he just put his bed in there and stayed there and followed the rotaries. When they finally got the road open, he got the groceries to Eureka. He said, "I didn't worry. I was nice and warm. I had plenty to eat, a good place to sleep." And that's how he delivered the groceries to keep the town going.
- RM: What a story! That was during one of these big storms?
- LE: In 1952.
- RM: How about the one in '48-49?
- LE: I was going to college in '48, so I'm not sure what all transpired. Joe Kitchen was awfully good friends with my dad. When they were young guys they cowboyed together. And as I said, Joe taught Dad how to speak English.
- RM: At one time the Kitchen brothers were providing part of their own beef, weren't they?
- LE: That's how they started the store here, but in later years federal inspection came in on the meat thing. By that time they'd dissolved their cattle herd anyway.
- RM: What were the gas stations in Eureka during the period we're talking about?
- LE: There was Herrera Service — Union 76 — and the Eureka Garage was Chevron. And Frank McBride had Flying A gasoline and Baptista Minoletti had Shell.
- RM: Were there any other gas stations in town?
- LE: Yes, John Repetto up there had some Shell. He used to sell Shell bulk. Then there was the Standard Oil bulk plant that Bill Holland had.
- RM: Where else in the area could you get gas besides in Eureka? Was there anybody in Diamond Valley who sold gas?
- LE: No, this valley was all sagebrush, except for the few ranches that are along the foothills.
- RM: Do those ranches along the foothills go back a long ways — like, to the founding of Eureka?
- LE: Yes.
- RM: But out in the center of the valley . . . ?
- LE: There was nothing.
- RM: Why didn't they have anything out here?
- LE: There weren't diesel engines in this area for water pumping.
- RM: There wasn't any way to get the water out of the ground?
- LE: There wasn't much well drilling or heavy equipment around. There was no equipment even for the county. All they had were a couple of little 2-ton International dump trucks, you know, and an old Gallion solid rubber tire

-
- motor grader and a little D-6 Cat. Sometimes, when they bladed some of the roads, they pulled one of those pull-graders behind the Cat to help the other grader out. If your road got bladed once every 2 or 3 years you were flying high.
- RM: In other words, the county was so poor that they just didn't really have anything?
- LE: Right, they didn't have anything.
- RM: Why wouldn't somebody come out here in the valley and sink a little well and put a windmill on it?
- LE: They did that for stock water, but there was no farming here till at least 1958.
- RM: How did the various people acquire that land?
- LE: Under the Desert Land Act.
- RM: Who is a good person to talk to about how agriculture got started in the valley with the Desert Land Act?
- LE: I'd say talk to Don Palmore or Don Morrison. They farm in the area, and they were some of the first ones here.
- RM: The next valley over is Kobeh. Were the ranches on the periphery of that one also, or were they out in the center of it?
- LE: They were more out on the periphery.
- RM: Was it the same in Newark Valley, where your grandmother lived?
- LE: That was the same story.
- RM: It was also around the periphery?
- LE: Yes.
- RM: Then technology only enabled them to live and make a living on the periphery.
- ME: That's because of the snow, I think.
- RM: That's really interesting. Did the centers of all these valleys develop because of the Desert Land Act?
- LE: Right.
- RM: That made a big difference in terms of the economic development of the county, didn't it?
- LE: Right. Only a very few of the ones who started here are still here, though. I guess those men I mentioned are the 2 originals.
- ME: And Ruth Martin.
- RM: Let's go over to Kobeh Valley — tell me about the original ranches. Were there a lot of them or were there just the ones you've been talking about?
- LE: There were just the Three-Bar, the Santa Fe and the Ferguson, which her folks purchased, and Dry Creek and Ackerman and the Grubb Flat and Bean Flat and Roberts Creek above Wood Ranch.
- RM: Was the Tonkin one of them?
- LE: No, there's a little summit you go over. Tonkin is in Garden Valley.
- RM: Oh, OK. And then what about the original ranches of Diamond Valley? Or are there too many to do that?
- LE: Do you want the old names or the names as of now?

RM: Well, actually both, if you've got them. [Laughs]

PE: There's Sadlers'.

ME: Well, start over here.

RM: What's this ranch over here called?

LE: Sulfur. We have to start right about due northwest of here. That's where Grandpa started.

RM: Who?

LE: My great-grandfather.

RM: What was his name?

PE: John — Giovanni — Damele.

PE: He just leased it. He only had a few cows — I don't know, 12 or something. They didn't stay there very long. And he chopped wood up here in McCullough.

RM: Where?

PE: McCullough Spring. That's up Spring Valley near Eureka. And he chopped wood over here in Black Point.

LE: And he had his family at Sulfur.

RM: What's that ranch called now, or does it have a name?

LE: It belongs to the Buffhams — James Buffham. We used to call it the old Romano Ranch.

RM: What would be the next ranch up?

LE: Baileys'. Some of the family is still there. Then there's the Sadler Ranch; it's a good ranch.

PE: And the Siris.

LE: Oh, and Flynn, that's right. There are 2 more — Flynn and the Siri Ranch.

RM: Basically, do you have a ranch everywhere there's a canyon with water?

LE: Yes, on this side of the valley. There are some springs and snow water over here.

RM: But in any canyon over there where you've got water, whether it's a running stream or a spring, you get a ranch. Is that basically how it works?

LE: Pretty much. In other words, they settled where there was water.

PE: Let me tell you a story: Dante Siri's dad owned the ranch over here. Dante grew up and he did most of the work on the ranch, but he and his dad couldn't get along. He wanted to leave and he didn't want his dad to know where he was going. In those days, he didn't have a car — all he had was a horse. So he took his horse and put shoes on it, but he put them on backwards so that his dad couldn't track him. [Laughs]

RM: That would make a good episode for a novel, wouldn't it? [Laughter] That's a good one.

PE: He came over to Tonkin to my dad and one of the stage drivers, Andy Pastorino, brought the mail over. He was telling them about it, and he asked them if they had seen Dante, and Dante was over there. [Laughs]

LE: He didn't go very far. Then he went back.

RM: Would that horseshoe trick really work?

-
- LE: I don't think he could fool his dad. His dad probably had it all figured out.
[Laughter]
- RM: That's a good one.
- ME: Then you come on this [east] side of the valley. What are the ranches over here?
- RM: This is north right here?
- LE: Yes, from north to south.
- RM: And this mountain range is known as the . . .
- LE: Diamond Range. They call [the first ranch] the old Mau Ranch. Right now it belongs to Milton Thompson.
- PE: I think O. R. Mau was an uncle to my mother. They were cousins to me. O. R. had the store in Eureka.
- ME: Your mother always said they were cousins.
- PE: They had this place down here, too. He used to rent the range to sheepmen. But he had the store in Eureka where he had dry goods.
- LE: I forgot to tell you about the dry goods store.
- RM: Were there other dry goods stores, as long as we're on it?
- LE: Yes, the Eureka Cash Store.
- RM: And they carried a general line of dry goods?
- LE: Oh, yes — and clothing.
- ME: Kitchens did too, by the time I got to Eureka.
- LE: That was afterwards, though. Earlier, those were the only clothing stores.
- ME: When I came to Eureka, there was also Evelyn Rattazzi.
- LE: Oh, I forget about that. That's right!
- ME: She had a beauty parlor and a dress shop and a variety shop. I forgot about her too, till now. Anyway, the next ranch after Mau coming south is Cox.
- LE: I'm not too sure about that. There was another little place in there, but I can't tell you who it belonged to. Then the main ranch, where Thompson is . . . Thompson owns all those grounds, but prior to Thompson, Martin owned that.
- LE: Prior to Martin, Jacobsen owned it. Mary Jean's dad was partners with Jacobsen with his sheep.
- RM: Coming on down, what's the next one?
- LE: Louie Maggini and his mother. And there was one homestead south . . . there are little ranches all the way up this valley here in these canyons. You have Walthers', Minolettis' and the Cottonwood, owned by Handleys. And later there were different owners — Palmas, Hildebrand, the Bank Ranch, Williams, 4-Eyed Nicks, the DePaoli ranch (which is now Hunters'), to name a few.
- RM: Going clear down to the highway to Eureka?
- LE: Clear to Eureka. But the 2 biggest ones were the Hunter Ranch and the Handley Ranch. LaBarry owned the Handley Ranch later, and it's had several owners since then. They've all changed hands. In fact, Jim Baumann has the Hunter Ranch now. I guess Russell has the old Handley

Ranch in Cottonwood. LaBarrys had it.

RM: Basically these ranches were probably originally established when Eureka got going, because that way people could make a living here.

LE: As I said, they raised fruit and vegetables when Eureka was a booming mining camp.

PE: They'd sell their vegetables and things in town and they'd always have milk cows and they'd take milk to town.

RM: And each one of these little ranches would support at least one family?

LE: I could show you places that raised 10 and 12 kids, but there's nothing anymore. They don't even have any water there today.

RM: In line with the change in the climate since '57 or so, are a lot of the old springs drying up and so on?

LE: I think so, yes. A lot of the weaker ones are.

RM: But you could take me to places where they raised big families, and there's not even any water there now?

LE: I could take you up Pastorino Canyon. They raised 11 kids there. And I'll bet you this year you could hardly even water a cow there. I don't know how they survived. There were creeks coming out of those canyons.

RM: How about on the other side of this mountain range?

LE: There are a lot of springs over in there. There are canyons that have runoff, too.

RM: Is that still in Eureka County?

LE: No, that would be in White Pine County.

RM: Are most of the ranches along the canyon still functioning, or are most of them kind of defunct?

LE: The only ones that are functioning are the Thompson Ranch that Milton has now, and the Cottonwood and the Hunter place.

RM: Why aren't the other ones functioning?

LE: They were just all small acreages, later purchased by larger operators.

RM: Just guys eking out a living?

LE: Yes, eking out a living during the mining camp boom days.

RM: When would these ranches have folded?

LE: It was before my time.

RM: Were these ranches still going when you were a kid, Pietrina?

PE: Some of them were still there when I was in high school, because some of the kids used to come to the school with a horse and buggy.

RM: They would come in every day on a horse and buggy?

PE: Yes, or horseback.

RM: That would be a long ride, wouldn't it?

PE: For some of them, that was. Where is Hildebrands', for instance?

LE: It's north of Hunters' maybe 3 to 4 miles. So you're looking at 6 or 7 miles [one way].

RM: What caused them to fold?

LE: It's the economics.

-
- RM: They were just too marginal?
- LE: They were too small, too marginal. And they started bringing food in on the railroad.
- RM: By about what time were most of these ranches kind of defunct?
- PE: There weren't very many left during the '20s. Probably the Depression [was a factor], then.
- RM: What happened to the land, then? Was it incorporated into some of the larger operations?
- LE: Yes. For instance, the Cottonwood and the Handley place bought the Minoletti place and the old Hildebrand place.
- ME: Palmas.
- LE: Palmas. They bought them out.
- RM: So these little ones were no longer supporting a family, but were part of a larger operation.
- LE: Yes.
- RM: And then with the Desert Land Act, you got development of the centers of these valleys?
- LE: Yes. Most of the people who started here on that went broke, too. A lot of them came in here and they had to beat all the brush down and drill wells, which is expensive, and level the land, which is expensive and takes a lot of equipment.
- They started out raising potatoes; they built the potato sheds over here. Stiemle and Mel Bailey, I think, built the potato sheds, and then they got all the guys in the desert entries in here to raise potatoes. Well, they couldn't get the crops in on time. They couldn't deliver the crops, and some of them were outside — they were frozen — so they couldn't get them transported. Then maybe the market was bad in L.A. They were going to go to L.A. with all these potatoes, and a lot of them just fizzed out.
- Some of them went into grain and they sold grain wherever they could, but it wasn't economical. Gradually, different people bought portions of the farms and started to raise hay.
- RM: So it's mainly hay now?
- LE: It's mainly alfalfa. The grain would freeze in June and July. Potatoes can be raised here, but . . .
- RM: Why don't they raise them?
- LE: The market. When I was managing for DV Ranch, we planted 34 acres of seed potatoes. [Laughs] One lot of 17 acres did real well. The other lot did well, but we got a disease in the seed — they call it black leg — so they would have to be transported for eating potatoes. It didn't hurt them to eat. It was very expensive to plant seed potatoes and fertilize them and everything. We did well on 17 acres. On the other 17 acres, we couldn't afford the transportation to L.A. to put them on the grocery market. Potatoes are a crop where they say if you have a good year one out of every 5 or 7 years, you'll make money.

-
- RM: That'll carry you over for the bad years?
- LE: Yes.
- RM: Is the hay successful here?
- LE: It's very touchy. You've got to raise top quality hay, because it's got to go as dairy hay in order to make it. You've to get that top price.
- RM: You've got to get the top protein?
- LE: Top protein, top TDN (total digestible nutrients), and it can't get rained on, because it costs \$35 to \$38 a ton in freight to the California dairies. With Mount Wheeler Power raising their rates, it's getting to be a touchy thing.
- RM: How do you see the future of farming in the valleys?
- LE: If the power rates don't run us out, we might be able to survive — if transportation costs don't get too bad. It's all a matter of economics.
- RM: Is there pretty good demand in L.A. for the dairy hay?
- LE: There's good demand for top quality, but you have to spray, you have to get your weeds and your grasses out. There's a little demand for Timothy hay here now — that goes to the horse people in Las Vegas and L.A. [Laughter] Now they even sell it in the Bay Area.
- ME: A lot of our hay goes to Petaluma, California, not only to Southern California.
- RM: Where is Petaluma?
- LE: It's on the coast down by Santa Rosa.
- RM: It probably isn't that much farther there than it is to L.A., is it?
- LE: Oh, it's further to L.A. I think Petaluma is crowded by the surrounding towns, so they don't raise any hay there. They have to import everything. In Southern California I guess they probably raise some alfalfa off and on as a spare crop.
- RM: What kind of protein content do you get here?
- LE: We're looking at 17 to 20 percent.

CHAPTER SIX

- RM: Do they make pellets out of the hay here?
- LE: There isn't a pelleting place here. And there are no cubers so far. There's been some talk of putting [a cubing operation] in, but right now I can't see that it'd be very helpful.
- RM: How many people are actually growing alfalfa here?
- LE: There are about 30,000 acres of alfalfa.
- RM: That's a lot. [Laughs] Just in this valley? How about the other valleys?
- LE: There's some alfalfa being raised in Newark. There's some hay in the Antelope Valley in Lander County, but they haven't been too successful there either.
- RM: What is it about this valley that made it take off on hay?
- LE: I don't know. Probably the water and soil and the high altitude. The water comes from shallow pumping. And the high altitude hay is very good for milk.
- RM: Why is that?
- LE: Well, you get a higher protein, higher TDN — total digestible nutrients.
- RM: So you think hay might make it here if the power rates don't go up?
- LE: Hay is in big demand. But the cost of electricity seems to be going up, up, up, so it could get marginal.
- RM: What are they paying a kilowatt here, do you know?
- LE: We have a variety of rates. It's 6.4 cents per kilowatt hour, I believe.
- RM: What aspects of history are we leaving out here? We haven't said much about mining.
- LE: Eureka County has 2 big mines on the far north end — the Barrick and Newmont mines are running strong.
- RM: And they're huge operations — world class.
- LE: Yes, world class. And we've got the Atlas about 40 miles west of here in Kobeh Valley, right near the Santa Fe. It's only 3 to 4 miles away [from the Santa Fe].
- RM: What are they mining there?
- LE: Gold. It's all gold.
- RM: They're all heap leaching, aren't they?
- LE: Yes, so far. I won't say this for Barrick and Newmont. They've got an auto-clave system — milling.
- RM: Is the Atlas a big mine?
- LE: It's been a pretty good mine. It's made Eureka bloom; there are about 150 to 180 people working there.
- RM: When you had the Santa Fe Ranch, was there a mine there?
- LE: There was nothing there. They found it.
- PE: We were dumb and couldn't find it. [Laughs]
- LE: We knew it was there, but we couldn't do anything about it.
- RM: You knew there was gold there?

LE: We got little bits and pieces of it, but in those days gold was \$35 an ounce and we had no equipment whatsoever.

RM: Are they just taking the whole mountain at the Atlas, or are they working in veins?

LE: It's open pit, but it's in different locations.

RM: Have they got a lot of reserves there?

LE: I won't say that they have. I look for it to go down in a few years.

RM: How did they find it?

LE: By soil sampling.

RM: Was it right on the surface?

LE: Yes, right on top.

RM: I'll be darned.

LE: Well, Tonkin Springs is in Eureka County.

RM: Oh, there's another one at Tonkin Springs?

LE: Yes, but it's closed right now.

RM: Right by your other old ranch?

PE: Yes.

RM: So you had ranches right by all the big gold mines?

PE: Yes, and we didn't know it. [Laughter]

LE: Well, we knew it. My mother's uncle used the old blow pipe and he got numerous assays. We knew gold was there, but in those days the technology was nonexistent. The leaching process wasn't in existence, and at \$35 an ounce and without the big equipment it was impossible to do open-pit mining. The assays only run 2 or 3 hundredths ounces of gold per ton of ore.

RM: They're that low?

LE: Yes, a lot of them are that low. It wasn't like the old gold mining where they found it in the quartz veins.

RM: Was there an old mine at Tonkin Springs, or was that a totally new thing?

LE: That's totally new, too.

RM: I'll be darned.

LE: Mom's uncle used to get these assays there of \$5 a ton, but it wasn't feasible to mine that.

RM: Which uncle was that, Pietrina?

PE: My mother's brother — Albert Mau.

LE: The ore is scattered in small quantities over a big area, so they have to go in and drill and pick out the best spots.

RM: So they're digging a lot of waste too, I suppose.

LE: Yes, they're digging a lot of waste. But they can afford to with the big equipment that they have nowadays — at least, up to a point.

RM: Do they have a lot of ore at the Tonkin Springs?

LE: I think there are a lot of reserves there, but what reserves are left are either carbonates or sulfides. They're going to have to put in a roaster.

RM: You can't heap leach that, can you?

LE: No.

-
- RM: How far from your old ranch is that mine, again?
- LE: It's 3-1/2 or 4 miles.
- PE: We used to walk up there when we were kids. [Laughs]
- ME: It isn't operating now, is it?
- LE: No.
- LE: They tried a new system there. They were going to try to get the ore or the sulfides out with a bacteria. They spent a lot of money there setting up this plant, and then it didn't pan out.
- RM: So there are no men working over there now?
- LE: There are a couple of men there — overseers. I think it'll work eventually. I think they're going to have to consolidate, probably with some of Atlas's ores and some from the Buckhorn mines.
- RM: There's another mine called the Buckhorn?
- LE: Yes. It was operating, but they're closed now.
- RM: Is it another large low-grade gold mine?
- LE: Yes. It's an old mine.
- RM: Where is it located?
- LE: It's 15 to 18 miles northwest of the Tonkin.
- RM: What do you recall hearing about the old mines in Eureka as you were growing up?
- LE: When I was a boy and I'd go down to the barber shop to get my hair cut, I'd listen to the old miners: "Ruby Hill's going to boom." The old miners who lived around there all had hopes that that mine was going to really go, and was going to do something. And then they ran into all that water.
- RM: How deep were they when they hit the water?
- LE: I imagine some of those shafts of water start at about 800 feet. I think the Fad shaft is about 2200 feet.
- RM: And they got water at the 800 foot level? That takes a lot of pumping.
- LE: And the further they went down, the more pressure they got beneath the water. It blew all their old iron water doors. It almost trapped several men down there.
- RM: When was that?
- LE: I'm not sure what year that was. Being a rancher, I lose track of things like that. I couldn't tell exactly when it closed.
- PE: Another thing, down in the valley they figured that they could have that water from the mine.
- LE: Yes, the valley was already going. It probably shut down in 1964.
- RM: So it's been about 30 years since those mines were operating at all?
- ME: Yes.
- RM: And then they weren't doing much, were they?
- LE: They dug an open pit at the Windfall. They started that up and mined it for quite a few years. It's closed now.
- ME: It probably still was going until '79 or '80.
- LE: Oh, even after that.

RM: Are there many old miners left in Eureka?

LE: They all look pretty old. Yes, there are quite a few. Louie Gibellini won a lot of drilling contests with the single jack.

RM: We haven't said anything about your children or raising a family in the ranching business in Eureka County.

LE: They all went to school in Eureka and graduated from Eureka High School.

RM: How many children did you have?

ME: We have 3. Our daughter, Barbara, went to the University of Utah after she graduated from high school. She's been teaching in Eureka, and she's married to the manager of a bank there. They have 2 children. Her son will be a junior at UNLV this fall, and her daughter will go back up to Eastern Oregon College.

RM: When was she born?

ME: She was born September 15th, 1951. Fred is our middle one; he was born December 1st, 1955, and he's married and has no children. He graduated from high school in Eureka and went to the community college in Elko, and has an associate degree from there.

RM: And he lives . . . ?

ME: He lives in our house in Eureka. He and our youngest boy are associated in business with us here.

RM: And what's your youngest boy's name?

ME: Our youngest son is John. He was born August 26th, 1959. He graduated from high school in Eureka and went to CSI for one year, then transferred to the tech school in Salt Lake and has an associate degree in diesel mechanics.

RM: Let's go back to when your father had the Santa Fe Ranch and you went through high school in Eureka. When did your family sell the Santa Fe?

LE: We sold it in 1966.

RM: That was after your father had passed away, wasn't it?

LE: Yes, he passed away in 1960.

RM: And you stayed there, and then eventually sold it?

LE: Yes.

RM: Is it an active ranch now?

LE: There's no one living there, but Dan Russell owns a lot of the ranches in the area and it's part of his outfit now.

RM: Were you still working the ranch when you sold it?

LE: Oh, yes. We operated right to the last.

RM: And you and your mother sold it, didn't you?

LE: Yes.

RM: Then you went to work for another ranch here?

LE: Yes, the DV Corporation.

RM: Were they a Desert Land Entry property?

LE: Originally, yes. The owners lived in California, and I was the manager. I stayed here and managed the place for them. They sold their home in California and moved up here in 1970. I stayed on for about a year, and then I

-
- moved down here to start up this ranch.
- RM: What were the challenges you faced in managing that operation for the DV?
- LE: Spending other people's money, I guess. [Laughter]
- RM: Was it tough trying to make something happen?
- LE: No.
- RM: What were you growing there?
- LE: We went right into hay and some grain and the potatoes that I mentioned earlier; and the owner purchased livestock and ran them, which I was accustomed to.
- RM: When did you purchase the property that you're on now?
- LE: In 1971.
- RM: Was it a Desert Land Act outfit?
- LE: Yes, but we didn't apply for it; we purchased it.
- RM: Oh, you purchased somebody's initial stakeout and then you went through the whole process.
- LE: Yes, we developed the land.
- RM: How many acres did you get?
- LE: Three hundred and ten acres.
- RM: Tell me about how you've developed this property. What all have you done here?
- LE: We started out with a flood irrigation system from 2 wells. We went along with that till 2 years [ago], and it was getting too hard for me, so we land-leveled the place. As I got older, it was getting harder to irrigate, so I decided to put in a couple of circular sprinklers.
- RM: How has that turned out in relation to flood irrigation?
- LE: It's saved a lot of labor.
- RM: Does it take less water or more water to pivot?
- LE: I'd say it takes a lot less to grow a crop. You can get over the land a lot faster with the pivot, because you've got speed control — you've got forward and back. With the flood irrigation it was kind of hard here, because usually when you have one well for the 160 acres, it's slow getting over the whole area. It worked all right, but this is so much more versatile. As far as running the pump, I think we probably don't run it quite as long as we did.
- RM: So it's a little more efficient on water?
- LE: It's a lot more efficient.
- RM: And are you running any cattle at all?
- LE: Yes.
- RM: Do you feed them?
- LE: We feed them here in the winter and we lease-range them in the summer.
- RM: I wanted to ask you about cattle ranching in this part of Nevada. Down around Tonopah they leave their cows on the range all year. Up here you don't, do you, because the winters can be too severe. Is that right?
- LE: Yes. And in this particular area, when we went into grazing, we had to keep them in 2 months of the year. We can only run out 10 months.

RM: Was that because of the BLM's restriction?

LE: Yes.

RM: Has the tradition of pulling the cows off the range in the winter been a long-term thing here? Does that date back to the 1800s?

LE: No. In those days, they didn't raise much hay in these areas, and they left the cattle out. They'd keep calves in and feed them, but they ran the cows out.

RM: When did they start bringing them in here in the winter?

LE: I think as they developed hay land, and had the hay to feed them, they started bringing them in.

RM: Would you say that was in the '50s, or was it before that?

LE: It was before that. I'd say probably it was in the mid-'30s.

RM: And it came with the development of the hay?

LE: Yes. They saw that they could lose a lot of cattle if a hard winter came. And there was no transportation in those days — there was no way to bring hay in here. All the trucks were small. Now, you pass these trucks on the highway and they've got 40 tons of hay on them. In those days, if you had 4 or 5 tons on a truck you were a big trucking outfit.

RM: How did the Taylor Grazing Act affect the ranchers in here?

LE: It made some enemies amongst the ranchers, because everybody had to draw an allotment line, and they had priority years.

RM: So if you'd been using the land a long time, you got priority?

LE: Yes.

RM: How did they settle conflicts?

LE: They had a grazing board. The worst problems came later, when the BLM got dictatorial. Once the eastern public got into the fact that they owned part of this land too, they started giving these cuts. They had to make room for the deer and wild horses — the environmentalists started getting into it. It put a lot of pressure on the ranchers. No one really wants to purchase a ranch today.

RM: You can't really sell them now?

LE: They're kind of hard to sell. Nobody wants to buy them because you don't know what the government regulations are going to be in the future. If you pay a lot of money for a place, even though the place has grazing rights for 500 or 300 head or whatever, a year from now they're liable to give you a big cut, and there you sit. And you can't make a living off it. You've got to have so many animals to make a living.

RM: How many animals does it take for a person to support a family?

LE: It takes about 400 head to make a living.

RM: Do you think they're eventually going to run the rancher off the range?

LE: I do.

RM: So eventually that whole way of life is just going to go by the boards?

LE: I feel like it is unless the public changes their attitude. Nevada never got a very large portion of land — what is it, 87 percent [of the land belongs to the federal government]?

-
- RM: Yes, it's really high.
- LE: And nature takes its course. We could utilize it for livestock grazing or wildlife . . . ranchers don't bother the wildlife. They take care of the wildlife too.
- RM: How do you see the argument that Easterners would say, "Well, the ranchers are overgrazing." How do you see that argument?
- LE: I don't think they know what they're talking about. If we get moisture, we've got a lot of grass — a lot of feed. If there's not a lot of rain, you've got a handful. If you have dry years, you're going to be short. But the plants aren't dying. I don't see any change in the plants. A lot of people say there's a change in forage and the deer aren't doing well; that they disappear. That isn't true. It's moisture that we depend on. If we get a good moisture year . . .
- RM: Then there's plenty of feed?
- LE: There's plenty of feed for everything. If you don't, there's not enough feed to support livestock and wildlife.
- RM: Maybe what they're seeing in the deterioration is the lack of water in the last 30 years.
- LE: Yes. You see these water reports that come out. They say, "Well, we're up to normal." Normal from what? Years ago they never monitored anything.
- RM: Yes. I have talked to a lot of people in Nye, Lincoln and now Eureka counties, and everybody says there was more water in the old days.
- LE: Yes. And if you don't utilize the ranges in Nevada, what's going to happen? The grass is going to grow. It's going to sit there, and lightning's going to hit, and it's going to burn anyway. I mean, let's make use of it. Even though it belongs to them, I don't want to see it wasted.

CHAPTER SEVEN

- RM: Is there anything else that we should mention?
- ME: I think we should add that in 1979 our sons Fred and John bought 320 acres adjoining ours, and that's the reason we're here; it's a family ranch.
- RM: How do all 3 of you look back on life in the West? You are real Nevadans and real Westerners. How do you see your life here?
- ME: I think it's great. I'd just like to see the same lifestyle go on for many more generations, but it isn't going to happen.
- PE: I think it's great too. I wouldn't want anything else.
- ME: No. It's not even fun to go to the city, really.
- LE and PE: No.
- PE: I don't care if I ever get to town. [Laughter]
- RM: That's a true Nevada rancher!
- LE: We've had a real enjoyable life. We love it, I guess, or we wouldn't be here —we'd have done something else.
- RM: Do you think it's just a natural change that's ending the lifestyle, or is it the government?
- ME: A little bit of both.
- RM: What are things that are kind of helping to speed its end, you might say?
- ME: I think [one factor is] too many governmental regulations. And people lived with so much less years ago; it wasn't as costly to live. We didn't have power bills and telephone bills; we didn't have a lot of that. We didn't go to town very often, so we didn't have a big gas bill.
- RM: So people need too much now?
- ME: Yes. We're spoiled right along with everybody else.
- PE: We had to go to town in a wagon with an umbrella. [Laughs]
- ME: When I was a little kid growing up there were times when we never went to town for a year and a half at a time.
- RM: A year and a half at a time!
- PE: We didn't, either. Heavens, no. They used to go sometimes in the fall because they had to pay the taxes or go to the dentist or something. Otherwise, they didn't go to town, either.
- RM: What was it like to go to town after a year and a half out on the ranch?
- ME: Just the night before last, we went to town — our daughter came out to the rodeo grounds with us — because Fred and John and all of them were participating in some roping out there. Going back to town, when we just came over the ridge and saw all the lights, I remember coming to Eureka at nighttime for the very, very first time when I was about 13, and I thought, "Oh, my god, that was just wonderful!" And there probably weren't 8 or 10 lights, you know. [Laughter] But it was just great.
- RM: Isn't that wonderful?
- ME: Even when we went to Fallon when we were little kids in the daytime, when my mother did her grocery shopping and other errands, she always let us

stay with friends that we had made during the course of the year. It was kind of a fun day to go to town once in a while.

RM: Did you head for the fountain or soda shop or anything like that?

ME: No. In fact, one story stands vividly in my mind: We didn't have a lot of money, but my mother thought ice cream was the real treat to have, so when we would go in once in a while, she would buy ice cream, and we could have ice cream after we got home if it wasn't already all melted. I never did like ice cream, but I sure liked candy. I remember one day she sat out in the pickup and gave me whatever amount of money it took to buy a quart of ice cream that she and my brother really enjoyed. I went into the store, and I bought candy bars; I didn't buy her ice cream. [Laughter] She sent me back in a hurry, because she was determined she was going to have her ice cream.

RM: Once the ranches out here, did people cut ice for the summer? Did you have an icehouse?

LE: There was an icehouse at the Hunter Ranch and the Hay Ranch, which were the 2 closest ranches to Eureka. They used to cut ice, and they had ice cellars, and then they sold ice in town in big blocks.

ME: They were still doing that at least as late as 1938, because I stayed in Eureka in 1938 in the summertime; I stayed with LeRoy's uncle and aunt, Mike and Jeanne Etchegaray, at the Nevada Club for about 3 weeks or a month. I remember the ice chest that Jeanne Etchegaray had.

RM: Did they have a pond, or what did they cut it off?

LE: They had a pond, and they cut it in the winter.

RM: How thick would it be?

LE: I'd say those cubes were 18 inches or a foot thick; probably 18 inches. I never did see them cut it.

RM: And then they'd put that in a . . .

LE: In a cellar on the side of the hill. If I'm not mistaken, they covered it in sawdust.

RM: And then in the summer they'd haul it into town?

LE: I don't know how long it lasted — it probably lasted till about July. I don't know if there was ice in the fall.

RM: And they probably sold it in the bars and what not in town?

LE: In the bars, and the bars had the old ice chests. And some of them, I imagine, stored it in their basements.

RM: But most of the ranchers didn't do that?

LE: No. The ones that were far out of town didn't do that.

RM: They didn't keep ice for their own use in the summer?

ME: We only had coolers, which were just racks with sides made of screen, and they'd wet burlap and water would drip over the burlap.

RM: Was that how you always kept your food cool also, Pietrina?

PE: Right.

LE: And our milk was always in those coolers, in cans.

ME: We were good sized before we ever got rid of the cooler.

LE: When did we buy the first propane refrigerator at the ranch?
ME: It was in 1952.
LE: It was a Servel; we still have it and it still operates. (We don't use it here, but it still works.)
RM: That cooling system goes way back as a cooling device on the Nevada frontier, doesn't it?
ME: Oh, I think so.
RM: I imagine they used it in Eureka too, didn't they? People probably used them in their homes. They didn't have an ice plant in Eureka, did they?
ME: No.
LE: There wasn't an ice plant; just those 2 ranches.
PE: But I think all the ranchers had a cooler.
ME: Oh, I think so. But I don't remember when I was there in 1938 that Jeanne Etchegaray had a cooler, except the one that had the ice in it. So maybe in town, like in Eureka, they had the block ice and kept things cold that way.
LE: In later years Hiskey Stage brought dry ice in.
RM: From Ely?
LE: Yes.
RM: I went to high school in Ely for one year back in 1953, and I remember Lewis Brothers Stage. Lewis Brothers Stage was how you used to get from Salt Lake to Ely, wasn't it?
LE and ME: Right, it was.
RM: But Hiskey Stage brought dry ice out?
LE: Yes — for the fountains and things.
RM: Oh, and that was how they kept their ice cream and everything cold at the fountain. Was that before they had electricity in Eureka?
LE: Well, they had DC electricity, but I don't think there were any ice makers or refrigerators then.
RM: Did they have a fountain before they had dry ice in Eureka?
LE: Oh, yes.
RM: How would they keep the ice cream cold?
LE: I don't know. Later, Nevada Central took over from Hiskey, even through Eureka. I can't tell you what year that was, but Hiskey ran a long time, up into the '60s. We still got Hiskey's freight when we were at the ranch. But the bus didn't run that long, did it?
ME: I don't think the bus ran quite that long.
LE: It must have run quite a while though, because you remember Lloyd . . . of course, it might have been Central Nevada Stage by then. The stage driver knew Lloyd. He was a fellow who wanted to get drunk all the time. He used to walk from the ranch down the highway, and the bus driver knew us. Lloyd [would say], "I was working for LeRoy and I want to go to town for a few days." He'd give him a ride. [Laughter]
RM: So he'd just walk down there — how far was it?
LE: About 17 miles.

RM: Oh!

LE: He'd do it in about 3 or 4 hours. Then I'd come to town and he'd want to come out again, then he'd want to get drunk and want to go back to town.

RM: Was Hiskey the stage that linked you with Ely?

ME: With Ely, and all the way to Reno.

LE: All the way to Reno, with Austin and Fallon in between. One bus came out to Austin and the other one came from Ely.

RM: Did they run every day?

LE: Yes.

RM: Was it a regular bus or kind of a station wagon?

LE: It was a long limousine stage.

RM: Oh. And they could carry freight and everything on it?

LE: They carried the mail and some light articles. The diesel truck hauled the heavy stuff.

ME: The freight truck came in 3 times a week.

RM: And it sold out eventually to Central Nevada Stages?

LE: The stage line did. I don't think Central Nevada Stages ever had the freight.

RM: When did Hiskey get started? Do they date way back?

LE: They were there from ever since I can remember till the late '60s.

ME: I'm not sure who owned it when my mom came from the old country, but Frank Recend was the one who was driving the bus and he was the one who showed my mom how to make hotcakes. He was staying at the Star Hotel in those days.

RM: And he was driving it then?

ME: Yes.

LE: What bus came through from Ely when you were a girl, Mom?

PE: I don't remember. I don't think there was any. There must have been someone bringing the mail in, but I don't know.

LE: Somebody brought the mail in after the railroad quit. They must have started getting everything out of Ely.

PE: Yes. I don't remember [what happened] after the railroad.

LE: Some of the people who lived in town could probably fill you in on that point.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: OK. LeRoy's got a couple of other things here that he wants to mention.

LE: Before the Taylor Grazing Act came in, the neighbors were all very close, and we all took care of each others' cattle. We all rode together. Usually we had a big roundup in June and all the ranchers moved their cavey to the next ranch and then we would ride that range. When we'd finish there we would just keep on moving, to get all the calves branded in the springtime. Then in the fall of the year we all gathered in certain areas — each rancher had an area he claimed — and we'd all get together and gather the cattle off the ranges. There were no fences. I worked mine towards my ranch and the neighbor would work his towards his ranch, but we all rode together. We all

rode together and we separated our cattle off the bunching grounds and worked them closer to home. There would be anywhere from 12 to 18 cowboys doing this. Everybody knew where we were going to bunch — which area we would gather the cattle in — and we worked them from there and each rancher would go his separate way with his cattle in the late afternoon. This went on even after the Taylor Grazing, to some extent.

RM: But the Taylor Grazing Act kind of put an end to it?

LE: Yes, they came in and divided up the land, and they started building fences.

RM: There weren't that many fences before that time?

LE: There weren't any fences on the range in this area prior to 1952, '55, '56.

RM: Is that right?

LE: Well, sometimes they'd fence their land. Then the Taylor Grazing Act came in and [the government] decided where each grazing allotment was. After each allotment was decided upon there were some hard feelings and everybody wanted to be fenced off individually.

RM: Was it expensive to fence those vast stretches?

LE: Yes, it was.

RM: Did most people fence?

LE: Some of them did, some didn't. It involved a lot of expense and I don't think it benefitted the country at all, but everybody felt that they had something of their own, I guess. I never could see that.

RM: Yes. It really didn't matter if your cow went over onto a neighbor's and his came over onto yours, because the cow was growing and you were paying your allotment.

LE: We didn't seem to quibble about whether there was more grass on the neighbor's or on ours. But after Taylor Grazing came in everybody was quibbling for a few extra AUMs [Animal Unit Months]. These are the things that happen when government policy comes in.

RM: That's right. It changes the way things are done.

LE: It changed the whole system of cowboying, really.

RM: Do you consider yourself a cowboy or a rancher?

LE: I'm kind of a jack-of-all-trades, I guess. [Laughter] I have spent a lot of my years in the saddle. I have got most of Eureka County and parts of Elko and White Pine covered on horseback.

RM: What makes a good cow horse?

LE: The trainer, and natural instinct. It's really fun — it's like playing a basketball game. You can get that horse to guard that cow just like you'd be a guard on a basketball floor. The reactions of the horse and the rider, and the rider being able to train that horse to do something [are the important elements]. Horses are kind of like people — some of them have better instincts than others.

RM: Oh, yes, definitely. What do you do about rattlesnakes? Do you have many?

LE: They didn't bother us much. There were a lot of them where we were at the Santa Fe. We just learned to watch for them.

RM: Have you ever been bitten?
LE: No.
RM: Do the horses ever get bitten?
LE: One horse did. He never ate or drank for 3 or 4 days.
RM: Did he recover?
LE: Yes. He got bit right on the end of the nose — he was grazing.
RM: Oh, my god!
LE: His head swelled up and he got something like lockjaw. He couldn't sip water or eat. When we found him we didn't know what to do for him. We tried to lance it but we didn't get any blood, so we put a mud pack on it to see if we could draw it.
RM: Just mud?
LE: Just mud in a rag. If we could have used pitch or something it might have been better.
RM: Pitch will draw well?
LE: Pitch does a lot of drawing. If you get hurt and you have a lot of infection in [the wound], if you take pitch it will draw a lot of the matter and pus out.
RM: I didn't know that. Do you just put it on a poultice?
LE: Yes, just a poultice.
RM: When you were sleeping on the ground did you ever have a fear that you'd wake up with a snake or scorpion or centipede in bed with you?
LE: Nothing bothered me much but rattlesnakes. I didn't care for the rattlesnakes, and I wasn't fond of the blow snakes either, but they didn't bother me after I saw what kind they were.
RM: A blow snake is a . . .
LE: We called them a bull snake or a blow snake.
RM: And that's because they hiss?
LE: Yes, or blow. But they're harmless. We didn't sleep on the ground much, to be truthful — we carried a cot with us.
RM: Because of the snake problem?
LE: That was one reason. That isn't saying that the snake couldn't get up on the cot, but it was a little bit better. I have slept on the ground, but usually in an area where I know there are no rattlers.
RM: Did you ever know anybody who woke up with a rattler in bed? [Laughs]
LE: No, but I know people who had gone to bed and had a bull snake crawl in their bed.
RM: Oh, boy. That'd be a fright!
ME: As a sheepherder my dad always made his bed, and he said that was part of the reason to always roll it every single day during the day — to keep the snakes out.
LE: When you unrolled it, usually the snake would be in the rolls. They tightened the snaps and everything real well on their beds and snakes wouldn't get in them.
RM: Did your father ever have any stories about rattlesnakes? The sheepherders

must have been constantly bothered by them.

ME: It was really strange. My dad had already sold his sheep and leased his place to another family there at Fergusons. He had never experienced it himself, but there was a sheepherder who was bringing the sheep down to the ranch to be parted out in the fall of the year. This was for the old sheep that were going to be culled and sold and those that were going to be branded and readied for their trail down south to the winter range. Anyway, while that sheepherder was trailing these sheep down to the ranch, he got into a den of snakes that were coiling up, getting ready to den up for the winter. I guess it was quite a frightening experience for him. LeRoy and his dad and everybody always knew that there was a den of snakes there somewhere close, and my dad always warned us, too, in the spring of the year, because that would be the first place rattlesnakes would be, but my dad never did see the snakes as they were denning up.

RM: But this one sheepherder didn't know about this one place, and he got in there?

ME: This one sheepherder didn't know about that. It just happened that that was the day that they were denning up, I guess.

RM: Oh! Did he get bit?

ME: He didn't get bit, but he thought he was going to. I think he was prancing around at a pretty good lick!

RM: Do the cattle get bitten?

LE: We had some cattle that occasionally get bitten. I only know of one cow that died. It depends on the amount of venom the snake has in it and the size of the snake. I think they could kill you. We always kept a snakebite kit, but we never ever had to use it, because no one ever got bitten. I was always worried about the kids when they were growing up. The doctor always told me to just pack it in ice and bring them in to him for treatment. He said not to lance it, because sometimes you can cause more damage that way.

ADDENDUM

There is one event that is worthy of mention, and that is the annual hog butchering that happened every mid-December. We usually butchered at least 8 hogs. We butchered them one at a time, and it took all day, from early morning till after dark. Usually my mother and father and 2 other men were there on butcher day.

Every hog was shot in the head with a .22 rifle and immediately the throat was cut with a butcher knife. The blood was saved in a big pan. My mother collected the blood, and by working quickly with her hands she discarded all the tissue before the blood coagulated. When the blood was cold and she knew it would no longer coagulate she'd add a little salt and put it in a gallon jar. By now water was boiling hot in a big tank. The water had ashes added to it and the hog was dipped in the boiling water for 2 or 3 minutes and pulled back out and laid on a sturdy table. The hair peeled off easily and the skin came out white because of the ashes. Occasionally a second dip was necessary to get the feet clean. The hog was now hung from a meat gallows and the underside was opened from top to bottom. The intestines were separated and cleaned thoroughly. The liver was saved, as were the kidneys. I can't remember if the lungs were ever saved. The head was cut off, split in two and thoroughly cleaned, and the eyes, mucous membranes and tongue were all removed. This was repeated until all the hogs were butchered.

On day number 2 my mother cooked a lot of rice and skinned several pounds of onions and chopped them and steamed them in the oven. All the while as she was busy in the kitchen my dad was boiling hogs' heads outside in the big dipping tank. The heads were boiled until the meat was about to fall off the skull bones. The heads were brought to the kitchen in a very large tub, where the meat was put through a meat grinder, using the coarsest grinding blades possible. The rice and onions were added to the ground meat with salt, pepper and powdered cloves, and thoroughly mixed. Now the blood was added; probably not more than 3 cups were used. Hopefully the mixture would still be fairly warm; the warmer the mixture, the easier the casings were to fill. The casings for these sausages were the large intestines cut into about one-foot lengths and tied at the end with a heavy string. The stuffed casings were then tied at the other end with heavy string and left long enough to make a big string loop. The stuffing completed now, the sausages were taken back out to the tank of boiling water, the loops draped over a pipe, and they were immersed in the water. There they cooked for approximately 45 minutes, all the while being pricked with a sharp pin to let the steam escape. After boiling they were hung to dry. These sausages were called *tripota* by the French Basques or *morsillas* by the Spanish Basques. To eat they were toasted in the oven until the casing was crackly or crusty. (Oh how good to eat, but also fun to make.)

On the third day all the knives were sharpened, and a good meat saw was readied. The hogs were split down the middle of the backbone. On a sturdy table they were placed half at a time. The tenderloins were separated, the spare ribs were cut, the bacons and hams were cut just so and all the fat was separated. This was one-half of one hog, and that was done to all 16 halves. Sometimes if the meat was

not set enough it would take 2 days to get all the meat cut. When all the meat was cut, my mother had skinned several pounds of garlic and boiled it and squeezed it until it was very paste like. Tenderloins, spare ribs, bacons and hams were rubbed thick with the paste. Then the entire surface was dusted with salt and pepper and cayenne. When all this was completed the hams were the first to be placed in a huge wooden box with layers of rock salt between each layer; then the bacons and spare ribs and tenderloins were placed on top. The bacons and tenderloins and spare ribs were taken out of the salt box after 2 days and bathed in water. The bacons were hung from the rafters of the cellar to dry and the tenderloins and spare ribs were put in big crocks after my mother had rendered lard from all the fat that had been separated.

The sausage or chorizo were made from meaty pieces and sometimes a whole shoulder ham was ground. The meat was ground similar to hamburger, with finer blades than were used for the *tripota*. The ground meat was seasoned with garlic paste, salt, pepper and cayenne. The cayenne had to have just a little "bite." The small casings had been scraped with a kitchen knife and "elbow grease" on a bread board till the casings were transparent. The casings ready, the mixture just right with flavor, the chorizos were stuffed with the meat grinder and a sausage-stuffing funnel. Several feet of casing were slipped over the funnel and the meat was stuffed through the grinder. It was fun to see how long we could make a string of chorizo. The stuffed chorizo were hung in a cool cellar for a couple of days to dry. My mother then cut the strings into 3-inch to 4-inch lengths and partly fried them before putting them in big crocks and covering them with oil.

The pigs feet were boiled and eaten almost right away after butchering. Mama boiled the feet. Some she fixed in a tomato sauce stew and some she fixed with egg batter and fried.

Some of the liver was eaten as liver and onions and some of it Mama made into a liverwurst. I liked the liver and onions but I very much disliked the liverwurst, so I never learned to make it.

The hams were turned in the box in about 12 days, depending on the size, and were put back in the salt for 12 more days. They were then rubbed with more cayenne and hung from the rafters in the coolest, darkest part of the cellar.

We had enough breakfast meat to last from one season to the next. Most of the breakfast meat was used at sheep camp. If a visitor passed by the sheep camp and was invited by the herder to eat breakfast at 10:00 a.m., he would surely enjoy it enough that he'd want to be a guest again.

Although today's generation might not think much of the hog butchering and meat preserving process of days past, they would have to realize it was done under very clean conditions, and there being no freezers there had to be a way to keep meat for extended periods of time. The salt cured the meat and kept it from spoiling and flies didn't bother the meat because of the cayenne.

Lamb or mutton were butchered as necessary. At home, at the ranch, the meat was hung with plenty of cool air to circulate around it at night. At daylight, before the flies had a chance to "blow" on the meat, it was put in a fly-proof home-

made meat sack and put in the coolest part of the cellar. At sheep camp the meat was buried in a sack underground during the day and hung uncovered from a tree limb at night.

Wine was also made once a year in October. My dad had a 100-gallon vat, but probably there was never that much made. Each family was allowed to make 200 gallons with a permit issued by the Federal Food and Drug Agency. If more was made there was a tax levied. My dad always got the permit, but the wine making was contracted. The wine maker brought the grapes and sugar and grape press. The grapes were poured out of 50-pound crates they were purchased in and went through the press and into the vat. Sugar was added to the crushed grapes and stirred with a long wooden paddle. The wine contractor would come back when my dad phoned and told him the fermentation was complete. I think it took 3 to 4 weeks for the fermentation to be completed. The contractor, when he came, disinfected the insides of the oak wine barrels with sulphur fumes, which needed to be done to make certain the wine didn't mold or spoil. The 50-gallon oak barrels were used year after year. The wine was strained several times and put in the barrels but wasn't corked immediately. The barrels were stood upright until corked. After they were corked they were laid on the side, slightly tilted forward to keep the top and bottom corks moist with wine. My dad had a wooden spigot which he used to transfer wine from a barrel to a gallon wine jug. The wine was a grape-colored table wine. It was not sweet.

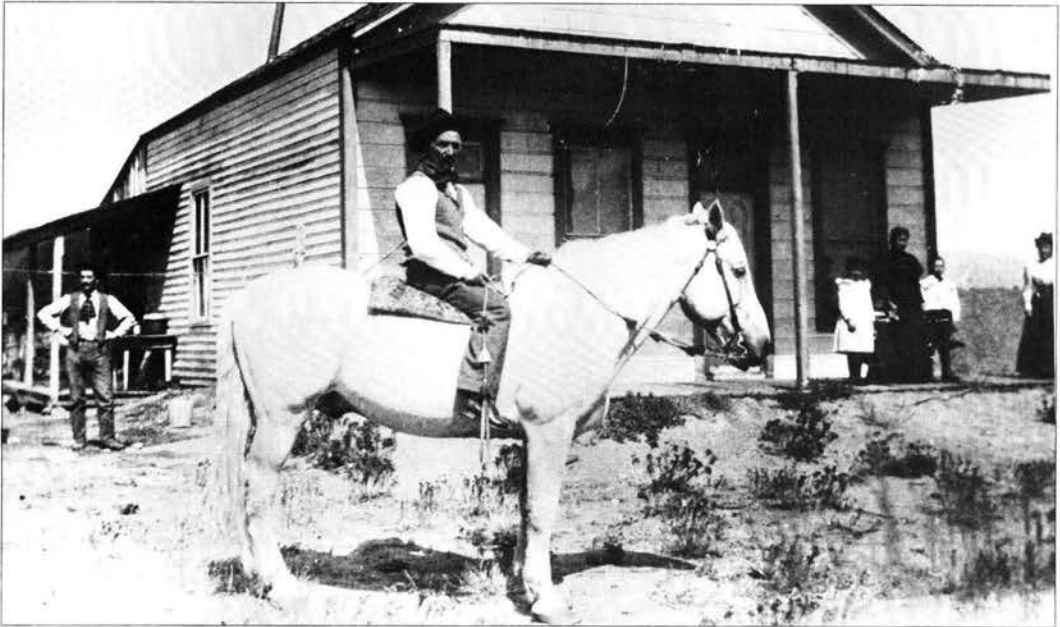
An Interview with **PIETRINA DAMELE ETCHEGARAY**



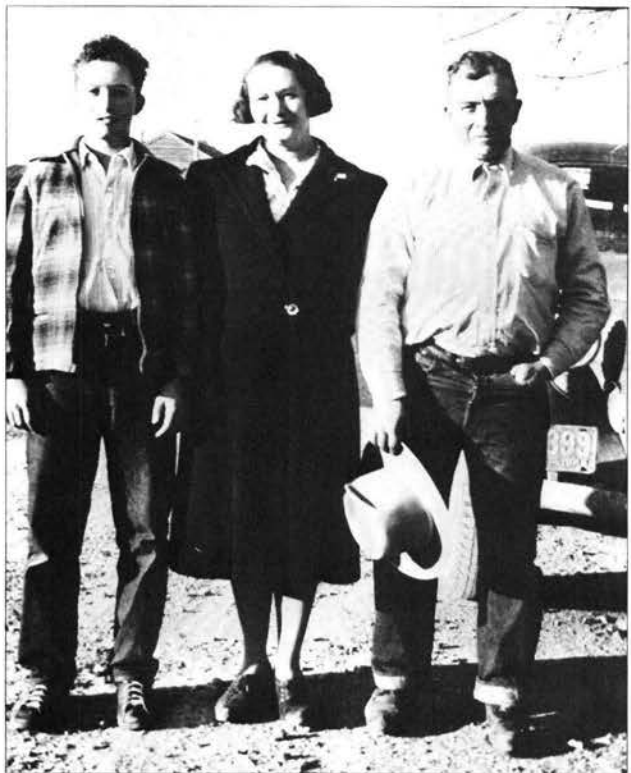
Pietrina Damele Etchegaray
Diamond Valley, Eureka County, 1993

*An Oral History conducted and edited by
Robert D. McCracken
1993*

Photographs from Pietrina Etchegaray



1: John Damele, II, DePasti, Eureka County, Nevada, on horseback. To the left, Bart Vallerga; to the right, standing, Marian Damele Ferguson, Pietrina Vallerga Damele, Peter Damele, and teacher at the first house on the Three-Bar Ranch, which was later torn down and replaced by a new one. Circa 1900.



2: Pietrina Damele Etchegaray, Fred Etchegaray, and son LeRoy Etchegaray, circa 1945.

RM: Do you have any pictures of curly-haired horses?
PE: No.
LE: Well, you probably have somewhere maybe one horse.
[Tape is turned off for a while.]
RM: We're going to identify 2 photos that Pietrina has in her collection here.
Photo #1 is of a man on a horse in front of a house.
PE: Oh, that's my grandfather.
LE: That's her grandfather, John Damele II. To the left is Bart Vellerga. To
the right, standing, is Margaret Damele, Marian Damele. Margaret's
deceased. Marian's still alive. She lives in Los Angeles.
PE: She lives in Los Angeles.
LE: Her son is retired 9th Circuit Court Judge.
RM: And what's his name?
LE: Warren Ferguson. And what's this here? I can't read your writing. Mar-
garet, Marian and what?
PE: "John Damele II, ____ at Cortez on horseback." This at the first house at
the old Three Bar Ranch — the house that was there when they bought the
ranch. And to the left is Bart Vellerga, a brother to my grandmother. And
to the right, standing, is Margaret, Marian and kneeling . . .
LE: That's what I couldn't read. I'm not sure you knew who the other person
was. Is that what it says? Let her at it. She's got good eyes.
PE: Let me see, they're all there. Margaret and . . .
RM: Go from left to right. That's the best way to do it.
PE: OK. Oh, I see. This is Bart Vellerga. I think the other one looks like
Steve Vellerga. That's Grandpa Damele on the horse.
RM: And what was his first name?
PE: John. He's buried over in Cortez. And Margaret . . . Marian, and Marga-
ret and Peter Damele.
RM: OK. They're all Damele kids there?
PE: Yes. And then way over here that you only see half his body is the
teacher.
RM: And about what year was that?
PE: Gee, let's see. When did he die? In 1909?
[Tape is turned off for a while.]
PE: Coyle House.
LE: That's who they bought the ranch from — Coyle
RM: Do you remember his first name?
PE: No.
LE: I don't.
PE: The house was torn down to build a new one that burned.
RM: About what year was that? He died in 1909, you say?
PE: Yes.
[Tape is turned off for a while.]
RM: OK. This is about 1901, this photo. OK. Now, we've got Photo #2 here

which is a portrait of 3 people standing.

PE: [Laughs]

RM: Left to right there.

LE: That's Leroy Etchegaray, Pietrina Margaret Etchegaray, and Fred Jean Etchegaray.

RM: OK. And where's that taken?

LE: That's taken at Santa Fe Ranch.

PE: No.

LE: Wait a minute. Maybe this is in town. Let me see the building.

PE: It's taken in front of the house in town — in Eureka.

RM: About what year? What are you, about 16 there?

PE: He was in high school, weren't you?

LE: Probably a freshman.

RM: So you were born in '28?

LE: '29.

RM: So it would be about 1944.

- Tape Ends -

CONTENTS
An Interview with Pietrina Etchegaray

CHAPTER ONE 2

On Pietrina's parents — her grandfather came to Eureka to chop wood for charcoal, and eventually bought the Three-Bar Ranch in Kobeh Valley; how Pietrina's father, Steve Damele, worked on the Eureka and Palisade Railroad and an area ranch, then joined his father at the Three-Bar; Pietrina's mother, Theresa, was born in Eureka and went to school, eventually teaching school at area ranches, including the Three-Bar; Pietrina's father and his twin brother purchase the Tonkin Ranch; the post office at Tonkin; how Pietrina's grandfather Mau worked his way from Germany to Nevada, where he met his wife in Eureka; how Pietrina's parents met at the Three-Bar Ranch, and then bought the Tonkin; Steve and his twin brother and their families share a home at the Tonkin Ranch; on Pietrina's sister, brothers and cousins.

CHAPTER TWO 8

Pietrina remembers her childhood and schooling at Tonkin Ranch, with her mother as her first teacher; the Dameles' 2-family home at the Tonkin Ranch; describing the garden at Tonkin and the alfalfa grown there; the cattle at Tonkin — their summer range, the breeds raised and cattle drives to Palisade or Beowawe; trips to Eureka in the 1920s — first with horse and buggy and later in a Model T; trips to Pietrina's Mau grandparents in Newark Valley, and taking home a wagonload of apples; ordering food shipped from Sacramento via the railroad to Palisade; storing vegetables in a root cellar; the food at the Tonkin Ranch during Pietrina's childhood.

CHAPTER THREE 15

Cheese-making and food preservation, including corned beef and sausages; the food eaten at Tonkin, and cooking and cleaning for a large household; Pietrina moves to Eureka and lives with her grandmother Damele; recollections of school and of Eureka in Pietrina's high school days; health care available in Eureka; the Shoshone Indians who lived at Tonkin, and picking pine nuts.

CHAPTER FOUR 22

Pietrina attends normal school, then begins teaching at the Baumann Ranch and then at the JD Ranch; a return to Tonkin; Pietrina meets Fred Etchegaray, her future husband; on the large flocks of sheep in Eureka County in the 1920s; the newlyweds buy the Santa Fe Ranch, where they ran cattle until the 1960s; Pietrina's son, LeRoy, and his wife, Mary Jean, establish a ranch in Diamond Valley; observations on the changes the BLM has brought to the ranching industry, and on the future of ranching in general; speculation on the number of trees in the Eureka area before the era of charcoal burning.

CHAPTER FIVE 29

Further observations concerning trees around Eureka; the establishment of the registry of curly-haired horses.

This is Robert McCracken talking to Pietrina Etchegaray at her home in Diamond Valley, Nevada, July 14, 1992.

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Pietrina, why don't you tell me your name as it reads on your birth certificate?

PE: My name is Pietrina Margaret Damele.

RM: And when and where were you born?

PE: I was born on the Three-Bar Ranch. [Laughs] It's not too far from here, in Kobeh Valley.

RM: Where is it from here?

PE: It's west from here. Right on the other side of that mountain. The Atlas Mine is right close . . .

RM: And what is your birth date?

PE: March 17, 1904.

RM: And what was your father's name?

PE: Steven Damele.

RM: And do you know when and where he was born?

PE: He was born in Alpichela, Italy.

RM: Do you know his birth date?

PE: Yes. It was September the 6th, 1876.

RM: When did he come to this country?

PE: He came as a child; I think he was 14 years old. They came right to Eureka.

RM: Why did they come to Eureka?

PE: Well, because they were looking for work and the mine was running.

RM: And what was your grandfather's occupation?

PE: Ranching is what he did. But when he first came from Italy, he chopped wood for the burners.

RM: For the charcoal?

PE: Yes.

RM: In this area?

PE: Yes, in this area, right across here. And then over on Diamond Mountain here to the east.

RM: So he was involved in charcoal production for the smelters in Eureka?

PE: That's where he used to chop wood and sell it. That's what he did. And then he got the Sulfur Ranch. It's not called that anymore, but they lived there. They just had a house and a few milk cows or something. And so he was closer to the family that way.

RM: So that was his ranch, your grandfather?

PE: He leased it, I think. They just lived there and he leased it. And then in the meantime, in 1898, he bought the Three-Bar Ranch. Three-Bar's just over in Kobeh Valley.

RM: Was it a big ranch?

-
- PE: Yes, it was a big ranch for those days. It still is.
- RM: Do you know how much he paid for it?
- PE: I have it down someplace. I don't know if it was \$2000 or \$3000; it just was awful cheap.
- RM: It was a cattle ranch?
- PE: Yes. I don't know how many cows they had; it tells me in my book how many cattle they had. He didn't have very many cattle, but then when he bought the ranch, he told my father and his brother, Antone — my father was a twin . . . My father was working on the railroad down here in Pine Valley on this small railroad, the Eureka and Palisade. And Antone was working at the JD Ranch. I don't know who owns it now, but it's a big ranch. It's over there on the other side of the Kobeh Valley too.
- RM: How do you get there?
- PE: Over Garden Pass, you go to Alpha. Well, you go down the highway, then you go down to the Alpha Ranch. You don't see it on the highway; you have to turn off a little bit. Then you can go right straight west to the Tonkin Ranch. Then from there you go south again and you get to the Three-Bar Ranch. And that's what he bought.
- My dad was working on the railroad and he had quit the railroad and he went to work for Maurice Isaac. And Maurice Isaac had a small ranch over near Cortez. He was chopping wood for the Cortez Mine and so he hired my dad. He had pack mules, and they used to load the mules with wood and then take it to the mine. When [my dad] got word that [my grandfather] bought the ranch, well, he was so happy they got the ranch, he left soon — he left several months later. There was a lot of snow. He quit Isaac's and went to the Three-Bar Ranch.
- And that fall of 1898, when they bought the ranch, was an awful hard winter; there was an awful lot of snow. And his twin brother had quit the JD Ranch and he went over to the ranch and he was alone all winter on that ranch; hadn't seen anybody or anything. When my dad left the Isaac place he went on horseback. It took him 2 days on horseback to get to the Three-Bar Ranch where his brother was. It snowed and the horse could barely make it — the snow was up to the horse's belly or deeper. It got dark on him and the horse was tired, so he just got off and took his saddle blankets and laid them down on the snow and stayed there all night.
- RM: Is that right?
- PE: And the next morning he got up. It took him all day again to get to the house of the Three-Bar. And when he got to the house, he let out a yell to see if there was anybody there, and Antone was in the house. When Antone heard him, oh, he was so happy that he cried. [Laughs]
- RM: Is that right? To see another person?
- PE: To see another person.
- RM: Well, now, it was your grandfather that bought the Three-Bar.
- PE: Yes.

-
- RM: And the boys were working on it?
- PE: They were working on it. He was there too, but he let the boys work it.
[Laughs]
- RM: What was your mother's name?
- PE: Theresa Mau.
- RM: What nationality is that?
- PE: German.
- RM: And do you know when and where she was born?
- PE: She was born in Eureka; her mother and dad had a small ranch in Newark Valley, right on the other side of the Diamond Mountains. And that's where she was raised. But she said they were so awfully poor that my mother went to school in Eureka and after that she took a teacher's examination. She passed and then she taught school, and she gave her money to her mother and dad to help them out.
- RM: What was her birth date, do you recall?
- PE: October 31, 1884.
- RM: She was 20 when you were born?
- PE: Yes. And then she taught school in Newark Valley, and she even taught school at Three-Bar.
- RM: Is that right? When your grandfather still had the ranch?
- PE: Yes, he still had the ranch. And then after a while, my father and his twin brother decided there were too many there, so they bought the Tonkin Ranch on the other side of the summit. The Tonkin Ranch belonged to a guy by the name of Mahoney when they bought it, but Tonkin had the place before Mahoney, I think. (There is still a Mahoney in Beowawe.) There was a postmaster there; they had a post office.
- RM: They had a post office at Tonkin Ranch?
- PE: Yes. And then after they bought the ranch, my dad was the postmaster there. And the ranchers would bring the mail around out there through the winter.
- RM: Was there a store or anything else there?
- PE: No, nothing else. Just a post office and their home. [Laughs]
- RM: So it was a post office for all the ranchers there?
- PE: Yes, for all the ranchers. They used to come over and bring their mail on horseback for miles. [Laughs]
- RM: So your dad was grown when they bought the Three-Bar Ranch?
- PE: I think he was 26.
- RM: How old was he when he came to this country? He was a teenager?
- PE: Yes, he was 14 years old. He didn't get to go to school to learn English too much. He went to school in Eureka a little while, but not too long. They had to go to work because they didn't have any money. They had to work when they were kids.
- RM: But they came directly to Eureka?
- PE: Yes. They had friends here. They knew the Biales in Eureka; I think they were friends back in Italy or they lived near each other. And you know Albert

- Biale? Well, he's got a good memory and he knows everything here about Eureka. He's got a diary that he's kept over the years. He's a real nice man.
- RM: Yes, I've heard about him. How did your mother's family happen to come to Newark Valley?
- PE: They were looking for work. They came from Germany to Iowa. There are still relatives back there in Iowa. I'll tell you, my grandfather Mau didn't have any money but he stowed his way over. He came over in a load of wool. He hid himself in a load of wool.
- RM: To come from Germany?
- PE: To come from Germany. So when he got to New York or someplace he slept his first night in America in a barrel on the wharf. [Laughter]
- RM: Is that right? What did he do then?
- PE: Then the next morning he got up and he went around looking for work and he got a job milking cows.
- RM: In New York?
- PE: Yes. [Laughs] Just anything so he could eat. He liked to prospect, so he was a prospector; he was a miner all the time. And he worked his way and he prospected, and a little at a time he made it to Eureka. He went up to Montana and Wyoming and those places, down and around.
- RM: How old was he when he got to Nevada, do you think?
- PE: He was a grown man.
- RM: Was he a grown man when he stowed over on the ship of wool?
- PE: He was pretty young then, a young kid. [Laughs]
- RM: How did he meet his wife, your grandmother?
- PE: She was working in Eureka. She was a cook. She got a job cooking in the restaurants and they came looking for work. They were all looking for work.
- RM: Was she there with her family, or was she alone?
- PE: She had her sister with her. She married my grandfather and her sister married a guy by the name of Fenstermaker. There's a Fenstermaker Ranch down here, and he owned part of that ranch — I think it was divided up into 3 parts. He's buried over there, and there's a big headstone. He was in the Civil War; it's written on the headstone. It's a shame, because some of those kids use that headstone for a target. It's going all to pieces now. Fish Creek (where they were) is in Eureka County.
- RM: What was your grandmother's name?
- PE: Margaret.
- RM: You're named after her?
- PE: Yes.
- RM: And what was her maiden name?
- PE: Long.
- RM: And she and her sister were just working in Eureka?
- PE: Yes, they were just working there and her sister married Fenstermaker. He used to get drunk a lot. He was kind of a tough guy.
- RM: What was his first name?

PE: Henry.

RM: How did your dad meet your mother?

PE: My mother went to teach school at Three-Bar.

RM: And they had a little school there on the ranch?

PE: Yes. In those days, if you had 5 pupils, you could have a school district, but then you had to have 3 to hold it. And if you didn't have 3, you used to get the neighbor's kids and keep them.

RM: So your mother passed her certificate and got a job there?

PE: Oh, yes. As I said, she taught at Newark Valley too and then she taught over at Three-Bar.

RM: And how old was she when she started over there, I wonder?

PE: I don't know. She was 18, I guess, when she finished high school; she was pretty young.

RM: And how many years did she teach over at the Three-Bar?

PE: She taught one or two years and then she moved to Tonkin because my dad bought the Tonkin Ranch. She was my first grade teacher.

RM: Your mother was your first grade teacher?

PE: Yes.

RM: So your dad bought the Tonkin Ranch?

PE: My dad and my uncle Tony (Antone) — his twin brother.

RM: Do you remember when they bought the Tonkin?

PE: I think it was December 1905.

RM: Well, that was after you were born.

PE: Oh, yes.

RM: It would have been before you were born, wouldn't it?

PE: No, when my brother Charles was born. It was 1905 or 1906.

RM: So they were already married when they bought the Tonkin Ranch?

PE: Oh, yes. There were 2 families living together in the same house. All I can remember for years and years is 2 families in the same house. They never did fight; you never did hear a thing. I don't know how they ever made it. There were 2 bedrooms. One wasn't any bigger than a clothes closet and one was a little bit bigger. Then my dad and Uncle Tony added 3 rooms onto the house. It was a log house.

RM: Was your uncle Tony married?

PE: Yes, he had his wife there too; his wife and his kids.

RM: What was her name?

PE: Her name was Marie Caviglia.

RM: And all lived there together peacefully?

PE: Oh, yes. They lived there a long time, until they built the big new house; that was in 1910. We all lived there and I played with their kids and we all played together.

RM: How many children did your uncle Tony have?

PE: He had 3. He lost one because we had a bad sickness — we got diphtheria. They got a doctor there and I remember he gave us a shot. I don't know what

kind of shots they had those days, but we got better. The boy who died is buried over in Cortez.

RM: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

PE: I had 1 sister and 3 brothers, and I'm the only one left.

RM: Were you the youngest or the oldest?

PE: I'm the oldest.

RM: Could you tell me their names in order of birth?

PE: Charles' birthday was the 2nd of January, 1906; Leo's birthday was the 21st of February, 1913; my sister, Rita's, birthday was September 25th, 1907; and my brother Johnny's birthday was October 29th, 1918.

CHAPTER TWO

- RM: Let's talk about your childhood. Tell me about what you played as a child.
- PE: My aunt would come over and we'd have a lot of fun playing. We couldn't wait for recess from school. Then we'd run up to the corral. She had a calf that she claimed and I had a calf that I claimed. [Laughs] Mine was Beauty and hers was Bruna. It was a black calf.
- RM: Was your aunt young?
- PE: She was 2 years older than I was.
- RM: So when she came over you had a lot of fun playing?
- PE: Yes, sir. We had a lot of fun playing. She lived in Ely and she passed away there. Tina Damele Gibson was her name. She's got a daughter, Nadine Mahoney, living in Ely.
- RM: How many children were in your school there at the Tonkin Ranch?
- PE: In order to start the school, we had 2 Indians who came down to school. Then my aunts Marion and Tina from Three-Bar came over. The school was over at Three-Bar where my aunts were, and they brought the school over to Tonkin so that we could go to school. And my aunts stayed with us all the time. Then they got 2 Indians to come to school, so we had 5 there.
- RM: And your mother was the teacher?
- PE: My mother was the first teacher. After that, every year they'd have a teacher from somewhere.
- RM: Was the teacher usually a young woman?
- PE: Yes.
- RM: Were the teachers usually women from the area here or were they from somewhere else?
- PE: They were from somewhere else, some from California. I don't remember how they used to get the teachers.
- RM: I think there was a placement service or something where they advertised.
- PE: I think so too. They used to get them through that unless they found a local one.
- RM: You mentioned [off the tape] that you also played with dolls — that they would buy the china head and the hands and feet and then attach them to the body.
- PE: Yes, we did. But I didn't play too much with dolls. We wanted something to move. [Laughs]
- RM: Oh, and that's why you played with the calf?
- PE: [Laughs] Yes, calves or puppies or chickens. I was a great one to play with baby chicks. I used to set so many hens so we had a lot of chickens. And if I found a nest somewhere (they used to hide their nests) I wouldn't tell anybody where the nest was. When they had laid so many eggs they'd settle on those eggs, and then we had chicks. [Laughs] Kids!
- RM: What did your house look like when you were growing up? They built a new house in 1910 you said, didn't they?

PE: Yes. It was lumber.

RM: Was it a house for both families?

PE: Yes, one house for both families. Oh, it was a big house. I should have pictures of it.

RM: How big a house was it?

PE: We had 9 bedrooms.

RM: That was a huge house! The family must have been prosperous to afford to build a house like that.

PE: Yes. Well, lumber wasn't as expensive as it is now. At that time, the Buckhorn Mine was running. (It's running again now, I guess. I don't know whether it's going to close down or not.) And there were a lot of houses up there and they bought some of the lumber when it closed down and hauled it over there. And then the carpenter that was up at Buckhorn came to live with us. He was an old man.

RM: And he built the house?

PE: Yes. He's buried in Eureka there, old Dad Gregg. And even after he built the house, he still lived with us for years.

RM: How long did it take him?

PE: It took him quite a while. Well, they helped him when they could.

RM: How big was the Tonkin Ranch?

PE: I don't know.

RM: You owned some land and probably pastured others, didn't you?

PE: Yes, that's right.

RM: And your dad and his twin brother, Tony, were the owners?

PE: Yes.

RM: How long did they stay partners in that ranch?

PE: Until 1922.

RM: Why did they split up?

PE: They had a mortgage on a ranch down here in Pine Valley and the guy in Pine Valley didn't pay for it, so Tony took that place.

RM: They lived together a long time, didn't they?

PE: Oh, yes.

RM: Tell me some more about growing up on the ranch. Did the ranch provide most its own food?

PE: Oh, we always had a big garden. We had an acre of potatoes — they used to have the nicest potatoes. There's a hill there and they had a cellar going in the hill. (I guess it's still there, maybe going to pieces.) It was so cool and nice, and potatoes kept all year round in there. They had 2 cellars like that, one of them next to the house. They used it for meat and other things, cans and everything. They used it for everything.

RM: What other crops did you grow there for the household use?

PE: Well, they had a big garden and they had cabbage . . . oh, everything that's in a garden. Everything would grow there. They'd plant cabbage and tomatoes early in a hot bed; they always had a hot bed. And later on, they'd set

-
- them out in the garden.
- RM: What all did the hot bed consist of?
- PE: Mostly cabbage and tomatoes — things that froze easily. They'd plant them in a hot bed and cover it. It had a lid and they'd cover it at night.
- RM: Was it on the south side of the house?
- PE: Yes.
- RM: And it was a frame that had a lid on it?
- PE: Yes. They'd lift the lid up during the day, but at night they put the lid down.
- RM: How big was the hot bed?
- PE: It wasn't too big; it was wider than that couch there.
- RM: OK, wider than 4 feet.
- PE: Yes.
- RM: How long was it?
- PE: It was about 6 feet long. They planted fava beans in there.
- RM: The top wasn't clear, was it? It was a box, basically.
- PE: Yes, it was a box. No, they didn't have any glass over the top.
- RM: When people had gardens then, did they furnish their own seeds or did you buy the seeds for the plants?
- PE: They bought the seeds.
- RM: Did you raise any other crops on the ranch? Did you raise corn?
- PE: Oh, yes. A lot of corn. We had just everything that I could think of that's in a garden.
- RM: Did you raise corn for the livestock or just for household use?
- PE: No, just for the house. We didn't raise any for the livestock.
- RM: Did you raise hay?
- PE: Oh, all kinds of hay, yes.
- RM: Was it natural hay or was it alfalfa?
- PE: It was alfalfa. And they had a place for natural hay too.
- RM: Do you know how many cuttings they would get a year of alfalfa?
- PE: They'd get 2 cuttings and then maybe a small cutting.
- RM: When they ranged the cattle, did they bring them in in the winter and feed them or did they leave them on the range all year?
- PE: They always brought them in and fed them. That's what they do now. Some of them leave them out and they die and they get hungry. There's nothing to eat.
- RM: There's too much snow here to leave them out in the winter, isn't it?
- PE: Yes, some winters. Of course, some winters there's no snow. But when there's too much snow, you'd lose them all. And they get so they're starving; they'll starve to death. You can't do that. Yes, they always fed them during the winter because there's nothing to eat.
- RM: Where was their summer range for the Tonkin Ranch?
- PE: It was around the ranch. Up towards the summit it went towards Three-Bar, and then up towards the other hills, it went towards the Baumann place. And the Isaac place in Cortez in the surrounding mountains there.

RM: What kind of cattle did you have?
PE: Most of them were Herefords. They had Angus too, but a mixture.
RM: Where did you ship your cattle back then?
PE: Oh, a buyer used to come. If they sold to a buyer, he used to take them.
RM: Would they drive them out?
PE: They'd drive them to Palisade to the railroad and sometimes to Beowawe. Of course, they had places they'd stop, and they took a camp. They'd stop on the road and feed them and water them.
RM: How many hands did you have on your ranch at the Tonkin?
PE: They always had one, but otherwise we did our own work.
RM: How long did your dad stay on the Tonkin ranch?
PE: Until he died in 1945.
RM: Was your mother still living then?
PE: Yes.
RM: Did she stay on there?
PE: Yes, she stayed there till she died.
RM: When did she pass on?
PE: It was quite a while after my dad passed away. She died November 16, 1961.
RM: Is the ranch still in the family?
PE: No, my brothers sold it. But they added to it.
RM: After your father died?
PE: Well, my father was still alive when they bought the JD Ranch. They bought the JD Ranch and they bought the Willow Creek Ranch after my father died. They added on and they had a larger portion of the valley there.
RM: Did you learn horsemanship as a child?
PE: We were always on horseback.
RM: You were a good rider?
PE: [Laughs] Oh, yes. I thought I was.
RM: Did you ever go on roundup and things like that?
PE: Yes. We didn't want to miss that. [Laughs]
RM: When did you hold roundup?
PE: Most of the time in the fall and in the spring. In the spring they'd brand the calves and turn them out again. But in the fall, they'd gather the beef or whatever they wanted to sell.
RM: When did they bring the cows off of the range for the winter?
PE: If there wasn't any snow, they'd come a little at a time. The cows would come home.
RM: Oh, the cows would come down themselves?
PE: If there's snow, they kind of come home in a way. And they'd put them in and then they'd do a little riding every day until they [got them all].
RM: So you really don't have to go up and round them up in the winter?
PE: Oh, yes, they'd round them up, because they'd get snowed on a hill or something and then they couldn't get off. They gather them up.
RM: When did the cows start coming in?

-
- PE: When there's no more feed in the hills; when it isn't green any more.
- RM: When is that?
- PE: Around November, I think, sometime.
- RM: And when would you turn them out again?
- PE: Oh, they don't turn them out until the snow's all gone around in March or April, maybe.
- RM: How many cattle were you running on the Tonkin Ranch when you were growing up?
- PE: I imagine around 500 head. I think around that many.
- RM: Was there any active religious life for people living on the ranches then? Did they go to church, or was it too far away?
- PE: It was too far. Sometimes the teachers would have Sunday school. Mama would have Sunday school, so we had Sunday school at home. And she'd always read the Bible to us. Mama always did that.
- RM: Did you go into town very often?
- PE: About twice a year. [Laughs] Well, when they got a car, then we used to go more often. I think the first car they got was a Model T. They got 2 of them, one for each brother. [Laughs] And I'll tell you, oh, those Model Ts! They didn't know how to run them or drive them. My uncle Tony was driving a Model T and he was going around the yard with this Model T and finally decided he'd go back into the shed. When he got over to the shed, he said, "Whoa!" [Laughter] And the Model T went through the wall. He didn't know how to stop it.
- RM: [Laughs] That's a good story! I wonder when that was. Before 1920?
- PE: Yes, it was about then. I don't know just when they first got them. If my brothers were here, they'd remember.
- RM: What town did you go to when you would go into town before you got the Model Ts?
- PE: We used to go to Eureka. Not very often, though. They'd go in to pay their taxes. And my mother would go to Newark Valley to visit her brother; her mother and dad had passed away. Before they had the Model T they had a buggy. They would have 2 horses and they had a couple of mules that they hooked onto the buggy. And it was so hot. They'd go early in the fall. He had an orchard over there, so they'd go after apples — food for the winter. And we'd sit in the back seat and Mama and Papa were in the front seat. It would take 2 days for us to get to Eureka. The first day we'd go as far as Three-Bar and visit with Grandma. And then the next day, we'd get to Eureka, but it would be kind of late when we got there. And we kids used to get so tired before we got there. And it was so hot. But we had an umbrella. It was down in the back of the front seat. But it didn't throw much shade, this great big umbrella. And to keep us quiet they'd tell us stories.
- RM: What kind of stories?
- PE: They'd see a rabbit or they'd see something . . . I still remember one. Papa had some mules and there was a rattlesnake going across the road, and the

mules almost ran away with him. [Laughs] [I remember him] telling the story about that. And stories about coyotes or rabbits or anything. But the next day we get to town and oh, we were covered with dust. You couldn't see us, because the horses kicked the dust up. [Laughs]

RM: Where did you stay when you got to town?

PE: At the Eureka Hotel. Zadows had that hotel; they were cousins of my mother's. And we'd go into town once a year, too, when the dentist used to come to Eureka. Mama always had trouble with her teeth. We'd go in and maybe stay a week or so and the dentist would work on her teeth.

When he got through, we'd go to Newark Valley and we'd come home with a wagonload of apples. I remember sitting on the wagonload of apples, and oh, we got tired. We threw more apples off of that wagon! Then we'd eat it and take a bite. And no, it wasn't the right kind because it didn't have pink stripes in it, so we'd throw that down. We wasted more apples doing that. But finally we took a shortcut coming from Newark Valley to Eureka. And we'd stop at what they called the Italian Ranch in those days. Now they call it the Hunter Ranch. We'd visit a while and get some apples and then keep on coming to town. We'd stop there. And then the next day, we'd get up early and make it as far as Three-Bar or some place. So we had enough apples for the winter.

RM: On a typical visit to Eureka, how long did you stay in town when your mother wasn't having her teeth worked on?

PE: Oh, maybe a day or two. We never went in unless they went for shopping or for something that they didn't have. They got most of their groceries early in the fall from Feltousins in Sacramento. She used to send a list of what they had in the store. And then Mama used to order what they needed and it used to come on the train as far as Palisade. From Palisade, they'd put it on the narrow gauge train — the Eureka-Palisade — that came to Eureka. And it would stop up at the Alpha Ranch and unload our groceries there. And my dad and some others used to go over there with a wagon and pick up the groceries at Alpha.

RM: What were some of the things you would get?

PE: I know they bought flour by the ton and canned goods by the case. I don't know how many cases they would buy — enough to last all winter.

RM: What were some of the canned goods you would buy?

PE: Oh, they'd get tomatoes and canned fruit — peaches and pears and things. But Mama did a lot of bottling and canning with the fruit that they got. We always had a lot of fruit and a big garden. They always used to put the carrots and beets and other underground things from the garden in a cellar. They'd make kind of a bin and they'd put gravel in that bin and then they'd put the carrots and other vegetables in and cover them with the sand again, and they'd keep all winter. It was just damp enough to keep all winter. And they used to pull the cabbages out by the roots and hang them up from the ceiling.

RM: Did they hang them upside down?
PE: Yes. And then they used to cut the head off and use whatever they wanted. And they kept all winter.
RM: I haven't heard of that.
RM: Well, it was an underground cellar. It was deep and damp enough.
RM: Did you make sauerkraut or anything with the cabbage?
PE: Yes. I haven't been able to eat that good sauerkraut since.
RM: I suppose your mother baked all her own bread and everything?
PE: Oh, yes. They had an outdoor oven. There's one left in town, I think. It belonged to Pete Edera. I guess there's only one Edera left, too — Albert.
RM: And they had an outdoor oven?
PE: Yes.
RM: And you had one out at the Tonkin Ranch?
PE: Yes. And they used to bake our bread in it.
RM: With 2 families living in the same household like that, how did they divide up the work?
PE: I don't know. I don't think they divided it up; they helped each other, I think.
RM: Did you all eat at the same table?
PE: Yes, all at the same table.
RM: So who did the cooking?
PE: My mother used to make deserts and pies and things. My aunt Marie used to make Italian food. She'd roll out ravioli and all that. She took care of that. They both did that together. And then they made their own cheese. They had a big washtub full of milk. They made it in the wintertime, because in the summer it would get sour. And they had enough cheese for all summer. They'd put all the milk in this big tub on the stove and heat it slowly.

CHAPTER THREE

RM: You were telling about how they made cheese. They would put the milk in a big tub on the stove?

PE: Of course, the cook stove was mostly wood; we didn't have any coal. You had to warm the milk slowly. They put the rennet in a glass of water until it dissolved. I don't know how they could tell (they didn't have a thermometer or anything), but they knew when the milk was a certain temperature. But they knew when it was ready. Then they put the rennet in there. And you'd stir the rennet in and let it set and pretty soon the milk would curdle. After it's curdled a while, they had a colander in there, and they would put the curds in the colander and it would strain the water out. They gave the water to the pigs. [Laughter] They had to leave the curds for 2 or 3 days till it was all drained out. And they kept turning them in the colander. And after it's all drained out, they used to take it over to the cellar. After there was no more water in it, then they put a little salt all around it.

RM: What was it in when they took it to the cellar?

PE: Nothing.

RM: Did they put it in a pan?

PE: No.

RM: Was it in a cheesecloth?

PE: No, it wasn't in anything. It stayed together.

RM: It was just a lump, like dough?

PE: Yes. It stays together. And they put salt on it. Then they laid it in on the shelf. They had a screen with shelves in it.

RM: And then when was it ready to eat?

PE: Well, some people liked it when it was fresh, some liked it when it was aged. The older it gets, I think, the better it is.

RM: What kind of cheese was it?

PE: It was like a cheddar cheese.

RM: And you would make that in the winter?

PE: Yes. They'd make that in the winter when they had a lot of milk, or if the cows had a lot of small calves. Then they'd have more milk. When the calves grew up, they didn't have much milk. They had to do it when they had the milk.

RM: Did you preserve eggs?

PE: We didn't like them. [They were preserved in] a salt brine. My mother tried it one year, but nobody liked it.

RM: Would she buy the brine?

PE: No, you buy the salt or whatever it is. And then you make the brine with that salt.

RM: And you put the eggs in that?

PE: Yes.

RM: And they'll keep?

PE: Yes, they'll keep. But the salt kind of penetrates.
RM: Yes, it goes through the shell, doesn't it?
PE: Yes, it's not too good. We didn't do it too often.
RM: How did you preserve the meats?
PE: Oh, my dad used to make the best corned beef.
RM: How did he do it?
PE: Mama used to make a brine. She had 2 big gravy kettles. She filled the kettles and put enough salt in them so that a raw potato would float. When the raw potato would float, then you had enough salt in that water. And you know, they kind of boiled it while the salt's in there. Then you had to make sure the brine was cold. Then they'd take it over to the cellar and they had barrels — oak barrels. And they put the brine down in the barrels and meat and pour the brine over the top of the meat, to make sure the meat was covered with brine.
RM: And that's how they did it?
PE: Yes.
RM: And it was just salt brine? Did it have saltpeter or anything like that in it?
PE: Oh, they never used to use saltpeter. You can use saltpeter, but they never did. The saltpeter just gives it a redder color.
RM: So yours was kind of white?
PE: It would bleach out a little bit. Oh, that was good corned beef.
RM: And then how long would it keep?
PE: He made it in the winter. He'd make it for the summer — nearly all summer. So that when they didn't have any fresh meat, they'd use the salted meat.
RM: So corned beef is just salt meat?
PE: That's all it is. I don't know what they do to it now.
RM: I think they put a lot of chemicals in it now.
PE: I think they do too! Because sometimes I get some at the store, but it doesn't taste the same. And I know the saltpeter just gives it the coloring.
RM: Did your dad or mom make sausage or hams or anything like that?
PE: Sometimes they did; not always. Some years they made sausage and hams before Christmas. They'd have to butcher a pig. And as they got older, it was too much work for them, so they didn't make it anymore.
RM: ^s Do you remember how they made the sausage?
PE: Oh, yes. Everybody makes it different.
RM: What was your family's formula?
PE: All they did was put salt and pepper in it, and garlic.
RM: Did your dad make ham?
PE: Yes, he made ham too. They just put a little salt on it, and they'd smoke it sometimes.
RM: Did he have a smokehouse?
PE: No, he didn't. But our neighbors over there had a smokehouse. They used to smoke theirs. Jerry Todd in Eureka, my granddaughter's husband, doesn't have a smokehouse, but he sure makes good ham. He uses willows to smoke

it. It depends on what you smoke it with. That's the way I like it. It makes good smoke, willow.

RM: What was your main food? Was it meat and potatoes or was it more Italian dishes?

PE: Well, meat and potatoes, I'll tell you. There were Italian dishes too; they'd change. Sometimes they had both. The trouble is, they always had so many to cook for. Just think, she had to cook for 17 to 20 people at a meal. It gets you down. My mother always had that many to cook for. That's awful.

RM: So she had her family and all her children and then she had your father's brother's family and all of his children?

PE: Yes. It's a lot to cook for.

RM: It must have been a terrible dish-washing problem.

PE: Dish-washing wasn't as bad as washing clothes. [Laughs]

RM: Tell us about that.

PE: Oh, dear. They had stacks 3 feet high to wash. I always remember that. And they got a washing machine and you had to run it by hand.

RM: The kind with the lever that you pull back and forth?

PE: Yes, they had one of those. They'd do that back and forth for a while, but then they'd take it out and had to rub them by hand. [Laughter]

RM: They had to do it the old-fashioned way anyway?

PE: Right. [Laughs] We washed so many clothes. Later on we had a Maytag, but the darned thing would never start. It was the darndest thing.

RM: It had a motor?

PE: It had a motor. It was hard to start. [Laughs] Oh, gosh. I hated that Maytag. We'd pump and pump and pump till we got it started. Sometimes it'd take us all day to pump. We'd do better washing it [by hand].

RM: Did you kids have chores to do?

PE: Yes, but they never told us what to do. We always did our own.

RM: What were some of the things you did as a young child to help out?

PE: We were lazy, I think. [Laughs] We wanted to play. We didn't do any dishes. I know we'd run away.

RM: Who would do those dishes?

PE: Well, my mother and my aunt. They did the dishes and things.

RM: Did you have water in the house or did they have to carry water?

PE: No, they used to get water out of the creek. The creek passed right alongside of the house.

RM: But you'd still have to carry it into the house, wouldn't you?

PE: Yes. A little way. Down the steps and you're in the house. Well, the creek was right in front of the cellar — between the cellar and the house. I think that kept the cellar cool too.

RM: I bet it did. Did the creek run all year?

PE: Oh, yes. It had fish in it. It still has.

RM: What's the name of the creek?

PE: Tonkin Creek.

RM: And it runs all year?

PE: Yes. The boys built a big dam over there. Last year I know we couldn't fish. I don't know, maybe you can fish if you get permission from the boss at the JD (I don't know who owns it). But in those days, everybody fished. It had brook trout.

RM: Tell me about Eureka in those days. What was it like?

PE: The only time I was ever in Eureka was when I went to high school, because I always went to school at the ranch for grammar school.

RM: So when you got out of grammar school at the ranch, you had to go to town?

PE: Yes.

RM: Tell me about that.

PE: Then I stayed with my grandmother Pietrina Damele, my father's mother. She had moved to town. She had my dad's other 2 brothers on the Three-Bar Ranch. And I stayed with my aunts Tina and Marion. My aunt Tina was close to my age and we played most of the time and enjoyed it. I stayed with my grandmother all the time.

RM: Where did she live in town?

PE: Right next to what used to be the Presbyterian church, right below the Catholic church.

RM: And you went through the eighth grade on the ranch school?

PE: Yes.

RM: Then you would have been about 13 when you came to town. So it was about 1917 when you moved into town?

PE: That's about right.

RM: And then you went to school 4 years in Eureka?

PE: Yes.

RM: How big was the school then? Were there a lot of kids in school then?

PE: Not too many. There was plenty of room, I'll tell you that. There's so many more now. Nowadays, they have nothing but more ball —basketball, basket-ball. And they go places. We never went anyplace. We had basketball, but we played in the back yard in the dirt. They had basketball like out here in my yard. And we played out there.

RM: You didn't go to Ely and places like that?

PE: No. I never got to go anywhere. They didn't have anything like that. We had the blues and the reds — they were our own teams. Later on there was a building downtown that we had basketball in that had a wooden floor. But we never went anywhere.

RM: Did the boys have a basketball team?

PE: No. They didn't either. They were just like the girls.

RM: Did they have a football team?

PE: No, they had nothing. Just like the girls. And I remember our basketball suits were great big balloon pants and they came down around our ankles. And now they wear nothing, almost — shorts. And we had to have these big balloon pants on.

-
- RM: You had to be covered, didn't you?
- PE: Yes, we did. [Laughs]
- RM: About how many kids were in your class?
- PE: My class only had 7 graduates.
- RM: So it was a small class. There weren't that many people in Eureka then?
- PE: No, the mines weren't working much at that time.
- RM: What did you kids do for fun in Eureka in high school?
- PE: Well, we didn't have anything in school. At home, I always found something to do. We lived there with Grandma and we cleaned house. She was old and we did all the washing, ironing, and cooking and cleaning house when we were old enough. I guess all the other girls did the same thing. About the only thing we had . . . we did have a picnic in the spring. We went out to what at that time was the Italian Ranch. Now I think they call it Simpson Creek Ranch. We had to walk out there.
- RM: Is it close to town?
- PE: Yes. But you know, we had to walk out there; we didn't have a car. So it took us all day to walk out there, and then we had to walk back.
- RM: What were some of the subjects you studied in high school?
- PE: Oh, we took the main classes like English, algebra, geometry, history and general science for 2 years. Then they let us take typing and bookkeeping and more history and so on.
- RM: Did you have a lot of different teachers or just a few?
- PE: I had 2 different ones. One for English and French — they taught French one year. Then they had another one for bookkeeping. Two is all we had, and sometimes the principal taught school.
- RM: So there probably weren't more than about 30 kids in your high school.
- PE: No, I don't think so. We didn't have very many.
- RM: What were some of the businesses in town at that time? Were there gas stations in town?
- PE: Yes. And O. R. Mau had a dry goods place. He had everything, especially for the men for the sheep camp. He had men's clothing —overalls and boots and shoes and blankets and bedding. Then Albert Biale's dad had groceries for a long time. But then he did away with the groceries. He had all kinds of vegetables and groceries and things. And Joe Kitchen . . . there was somebody else before Joe Kitchen. They used to come in with beef and meat and they used to sell meat. Sometimes they used to go around town peddling their meat, and everybody'd buy a piece of what they wanted. But there was no inspection or anything on the meat.
- RM: Was there a theater?
- PE: Oh, yes.
- RM: That present theater building?
- PE: Yes. We used to go to that.
- RM: Was it movies?
- PE: It was always a movie. We enjoyed that.

RM: There were just dirt roads then, weren't there, in and out of town?
PE: Just dirt roads. I forgot what year they put the highway in.
RM: What did people do when they got sick? Was there a hospital or a doctor or anything in town?
PE: There was a doctor in there.
RM: What was his name?
PE: Dr. Brennan.
RM: Do you know his first name? People never know the first name of the doctor.
PE: No, I don't know his first name. But he was a good doctor. He was very good.
RM: Was there a hospital?
PE: No. Oh, Mrs. Laird used to keep what they called the County Hospital. The old people used to live there that couldn't do for themselves. The county, I guess, used to pay for them.
RM: But it was kind of an old folks home?
PE: Yes, it wasn't a real hospital. She wasn't a nurse or anything.
RM: If a person needed to be hospitalized, what did they do?
PE: They'd have to go to Elko or Ely or somewhere.
RM: Which town did people tend to go to more, Elko or Ely?
PE: When the mines were running in Ely, everyone went to Ely. They had good doctors over there. But before the mines started running, they'd go to Elko. They had good doctors in Elko too.
RM: Was there a drugstore in town?
PE: Yes, but I don't think she had prescriptions.
RM: Just sodas and magazines and things like that?
PE: Yes, I think so. And she had aspirin and things like that.
RM: Who was it that had the drugstore?
PE: Mrs. Schneider.
RM: Was there just one drugstore?
PE: That's all.
RM: How about restaurants?
PE: There were 2 restaurants, I guess. They'd open up and then they'd close down again. The Eureka Hotel was running most of the time, but now it's for sale. A Chinese man had it, but the estate . . . it's going to pieces. I don't think anyone is going to buy it; it takes a lot of money to fix it up.
RM: Yes. Were there any Indians living in the area of Eureka?
PE: We didn't have any Indians in Eureka, but we had Indians going to school at Tonkin with us.
RM: Were they Shoshone Indians?
PE: Yes.
RM: Where did they live?
PE: They lived at Tonkin in a tent. They brought their belongings down and picked out a canyon. They lived where they wanted. They put the tent up close to the water there.

RM: So they lived in a tent even in the winter?

PE: Oh, yes. They had a little stove in there though. They always lived there in the wintertime.

RM: Did the children's families work on the ranch?

PE: Well, in the summer when there was work they did. They didn't want to work too much. There used to be a lot of pine nut picking, but now there aren't many pine nuts, I don't think.

RM: Why?

PE: I don't know. I don't think there are any pine nuts this year.

RM: The trees are there, though, aren't they?

PE: Yes.

RM: But it's been so dry; is that it?

PE: Maybe that's what it is. They don't have anything on them. In certain places, there might be some. But they're not around here. When we were kids, gosh, we'd always take a day off to go pine nutting. And boy, we'd fill the wagon. And then they'd pile them up down under the shed. And the evening we had an old pan, and we'd fill the pan up and stick it in the oven so they'd open, you know. We'd take pitch off and then we'd eat pine nuts all evening.

RM: How did you pick pine nuts? Did you pick the cones?

PE: We picked the cones.

RM: Did you pick them by hand or with a stick?

PE: Oh, by hand and with a stick or a rake. And they're sure sticky. But they're good.

RM: There were several churches in town, weren't there, at this time?

PE: Yes, there was a Catholic church and an Episcopal church and a Presbyterian church. But now I don't think they're using the Presbyterian church.

CHAPTER FOUR

- RM: What did you do after you graduated from high school?
PE: I went to one year of normal school.
RM: In Reno?
PE: No, at that time they brought it to Eureka. For 2 years, they had it in Eureka. I went to that and then I went to teaching school.
RM: What did you study at normal school?
PE: Well, you took just the regular courses that they were offering on how to teach.
RM: And you went one year to that?
PE: I went one year to that and I taught 3 years.
RM: What year did you graduate from high school?
PE: In 1922.
RM: And then you went a year to normal school and then you got a job teaching?
PE: Yes.
RM: Where was your first teaching job?
PE: I went over to our neighbors over there at the Baumann Ranch.
RM: Where was that?
PE: It's over in Grass Valley, in Eureka County. Where I taught was Eureka County and Baumann's, where I taught school, was Eureka County. But part of that place, towards the field, was Lander County. The line went through there somewhere.
RM: How did you get your job at the Baumann Ranch?
PE: I just wrote and asked for it and I got it.
RM: You knew they needed a teacher?
PE: Yes, they had a school already and they had teachers every year.
RM: And how many children did you have that first year?
PE: I think I had 6.
RM: Did you live with the family there?
PE: Yes.
RM: Did you like it?
PE: Oh, I liked it.
RM: Tell me about it. Did you have a little schoolhouse?
PE: Oh, yes. They built a schoolhouse. It was small. It's still standing there.
RM: Were the children all from one family?
PE: Yes, they were all from the Baumann family.
RM: What was Mr. Baumann's first name?
PE: Emil. And his kids were Werner — he was the oldest one — and Ernest and Gertrude and Walter and Helen. George was the youngest. They were all nice kids. Helen writes to me all the time; she lives in Bishop. She's a nice girl.
RM: And how long did you teach at the Baumann Ranch?
PE: I taught there one year; then I went to teach at the JD Ranch.

RM: How much were you being paid at the Baumann Ranch?
PE: I don't remember.
RM: Did you take your meals and everything with the family?
PE: Yes. I paid board and room.
RM: Then you went to the JD Ranch. Why did you go there?
PE: Well, I wanted a change.
RM: You weren't unhappy?
PE: No, I just wanted a change. No, I liked it there. I still like it there.
RM: How long did you teach at the JD?
PE: Two years. That's the place that my brothers bought later.
RM: After 2 years, what happened?
PE: I didn't teach anymore; I stayed home to help my mother.
RM: You went back to the Tonkin Ranch?
PE: Yes. She always needed more help.
RM: So you went home to help out with the family?
PE: Yes, I went home to help them. And my friends at the JD had left the JD. They went down towards Beowawe because they just had the JD leased. Then they lived at the Dean Ranch and they had the JD leased. And she was cooking for some of the people up at the mine. Then she went to California, I guess, and then she died. They were nice people.

RM: When was this?
PE: After I went home.
RM: When did you get married?
PE: In 1928.
RM: Who did you marry?
PE: I married a Basco [Basque]. [Laughs]
RM: What was his name?
PE: Well, he was Jean Etchegaray, but everybody called him Fred, because he was a twin. His brother's name was John; so there were 2 Jeans. So everybody called him Fred. He worked around Austin, down Monitor Valley. He was driving stage down there.

RM: How did you meet him?
PE: Oh, my father and my uncles all bought sheep.
RM: Why did they do that?
PE: Because the neighbors surrounding us had sheep and they were running all over the range and taking all the cattle feed away. So they bought sheep so they could protect themselves. And I think Fred worked for the people who owned the sheep down there in Monitor Valley.

RM: What year would that have been?
PE: That was in the '20s. In those days we didn't have any BLM, and that's what was happening.
RM: So people could put anything on the range they wanted, couldn't they?
PE: Yes.
RM: So some people started bringing in sheep?

PE: Well, yes. And they could run right over you.

RM: Why do you think they brought in sheep?

PE: Well, they were sheepmen. They were used to the sheep back in France or wherever they came from, and they bought sheep here. They'd have a big band of sheep and they didn't have any place to go. They'd find good feed and they'd . . .

RM: They didn't even have a ranch?

PE: No. They were just moving around. Some of them had a ranch, but not very many.

RM: Were most of them Basques?

PE: Yes.

RM: What did the cattle ranchers think about that?

PE: They were always fighting.

RM: What would their fights consist of?

PE: They'd have a lawsuit or something.

RM: Did it ever come to gunplay?

PE: Not around here. But they did in some places. I know they did over in Grass Valley; they killed a sheepherder.

RM: How big were the flocks of sheep?

PE: Oh, some of them would have 2000 head, and some of them less.

RM: What did they do with them in the winter?

PE: They'd go south and eat the feed down south.

RM: How far south would they go?

PE: They'd go down around Tonopah.

RM: And then in the spring they'd come back up here and eat all the cattle feed?

PE: Yes. Anyhow, that's what the ranchers thought. The ranchers didn't want them.

RM: But your husband . . .

PE: Well, he didn't own any sheep, but he worked for the guy that had sheep and that Dameles bought the sheep from.

RM: But you said he was a stage driver?

PE: Yes, in the winter he drove stage for the guy who had the sheep.

RM: Where did he drive?

PE: From Austin to the Potts Ranch down there.

RM: Is that in Smoky Valley?

PE: Not in Smoky, but on the other side.

RM: Oh, it's in Monitor Valley.

PE: Yes.

RM: How did you meet him?

PE: When they bought the sheep, he bought a share in the sheep and he came up here.

RM: So when your family bought sheep, he came up with the sheep?

PE: Yes.

RM: But he just drove the stage in the winter?

PE: Oh, he drove all the time before he bought the sheep.
RM: So you got married in 1928?
PE: Yes.
RM: Where did you live then?
PE: Oh, we were fools. We bought a ranch. [Laughs]
RM: Which ranch did you buy?
PE: The Santa Fe Ranch. It's over there where the Atlas Mine is in Kobeh Valley.
RM: How big a ranch was it?
PE: It was a small ranch. And then the Depression came, and we just about starved to death.
RM: Did you hold onto the ranch through the Depression?
PE: Yes, we held on. We had to hold on; we couldn't do anything else. We couldn't leave it.
RM: Was it a cattle ranch or sheep ranch?
PE: Cattle. We didn't have any cattle either [during the Depression]. We only had about 12 head. [Laughs]
RM: So how did you make a living?
PE: I don't know. We survived, anyhow. It's hard to go through, but you do it.
RM: How long did you stay there on that ranch?
PE: Oh, gosh. We stayed there till we sold it. Let's see, I don't know even when we sold it. It was after World War II. Let's see, in 1952 we had a terrible time because we had so much snow. We even had a hay lift. It might have been '66 when we sold it.
RM: Why did you sell the ranch?
PE: Because we could see that the world was changing, and I said, "We can't make a living here. May as well move." If you can't make a living in a place, why . . . I could see from everything I was reading that the world was changing. And I said, "We can't make a living here." And my husband died and LeRoy had [his children in] school.
RM: What did your husband die of?
PE: He had a heart attack.
RM: How old was he?
PE: He was 65.
RM: So you sold the ranch?
PE: Yes. We sold the ranch because LeRoy couldn't do it all alone.
RM: It was just you and LeRoy?
PE: Just the two of us, and I didn't want to keep him there. I wanted him to be with his family.
He graduated in '47 from high school, and then he went to the university.
RM: Had his father passed on then?
PE: No, he graduated in '47 and my husband died in 1960. I didn't want to keep LeRoy there alone doing that kind of work. It was too hard for him.
RM: Where did you go then?
PE: We moved to town. Mary Jean had the kids in town going to school.

-
- RM: Mary Jean is LeRoy's wife?
- PE: Yes. She had the kids in town. So he moved to town and I did too.
- RM: What kind of work was LeRoy doing when he moved to town?
- PE: He didn't do anything for a couple of months, then all of a sudden, this Ned Eyre came along and he wanted him to run his place. So he took it for fun, I guess, and he ran it. He was a boss of Ned Eyre's place up here for 6 years. Then he got tired and he wanted a place of his own, so he bought this place. There was nothing here. Nothing! There wasn't a thing.
- RM: Just sagebrush?
- PE: Sagebrush. And he's done all this work.
- RM: How many acres did he get?
- PE: I guess it's 320 acres.
- RM: And he's built all of this up?
- PE: He's built every bit of it up. Everything.
- RM: What year did he buy this?
- PE: In 1971.
- RM: Then you moved out here?
- PE: I stayed in town for a while, but I kept coming out here. I didn't like to be alone, so I just happened to find this trailer. I haven't got any room, it's just like living in a box. But I'm all alone, so what's the difference?
- RM: Sure. I think it's nice.
- PE: I'm close to them. If I live in town, I'm alone. I've got a nice house in town and I haven't lived in it now for almost 10 years. I used to drive back and forth, but now LeRoy doesn't want me to drive. He says it's too much traffic and accidents. And they don't have time to take me. So I don't even go into my house. I used to go and come out when I wanted to — back and forth. But now I can't go back and forth anymore.
- RM: Now, you just stay here?
- PE: Now I have to stay here in this hole. [Laughs]
- RM: When did electricity come into the valley, do you know?
- PE: It isn't too long — 21 years ago.
- RM: Was it here when you got here?
- PE: They had some electricity, but not too much. They had electricity in town. And when LeRoy worked for Ned Eyre, he had big diesel engines to run. And they were so much work and dirty.
- RM: They were pumping water and generating electricity.
- PE: Yes, that's what they were doing when he was working up there. And then he got tired of doing that. Such a dirty job too.
- RM: Is he your only child?
- PE: Yes. When my husband was alive, LeRoy used to work on the highway on construction sometimes. But then I had my husband at home.
- RM: You mentioned several times that ranching is a lot of hard work.
- PE: It is.
- RM: Would you discuss a little bit about that?

-
- PE: It was a lot of hard work when they didn't have machinery and things. In those days, they didn't have anything to work with. Now they've got all kinds of machinery.
- RM: And that helps a lot?
- PE: Oh, my, I'll say. We used to have to mow the hay and rake it with the horses. And then when you put it in the stack, they had buck rakes —they had to push it over to the stack with horses. Oh, it was all hard work. That's the way it was. Such hard work. When my dad was young it was hard work. He died of a bad heart too.
- RM: He was young?
- PE: He was 69. And his twin brother had the ranch down in Palisade. Then they finally sold that and went to California.
- RM: Did his twin brother die young?
- PE: He died after my dad.
- RM: Of heart disease?
- PE: Yes.
- RM: Were they identical twins?
- PE: Yes.
- RM: It's interesting that your father was a twin and you married a twin.
- PE: Yes.
- RM: How many cattle do you run here?
- PE: I don't know. The boys have some too. Not too many. He doesn't have too many now. He had more and sold a bunch.
- RM: Do you have rangeland too?
- PE: No, he's leasing rangeland. That's why he hasn't got them here. He brings them here in the fall, after the BLM wants them in. But right now, he's over on the Baumann Ranch, where I taught school so many years ago. He leased their range because they didn't have any cows. But then this fall he'll have to ride over there and truck them back and keep what he wants and get rid of the others.
- RM: How did the BLM change things when they came in?
- PE: When they came in they charged so much to run them on the range. They keep raising their rate all the time.
- RM: Is it going to put the ranchers out of business?
- PE: It will in time. They're getting worse all the time. I don't know why they do that — it's mostly the people that think the ranchers are getting something for nothing. But they're not. They have to pay for what they get, and half of the time you don't have enough room. You might find a place where they'll take a few of your cows, but then they won't take them all. Then you don't know what to do with the rest of them.
- RM: How do you see the future of the valley here?
- PE: I don't know. They think if there's a hard winter this winter the price of hay will go up awful high.
- RM: If it's a hard winter this next winter?

- PE: Yes. Because California had a dry year too, I guess. I guess they're getting rain now, but there's no hay anywhere.
- RM: And you've got hay here?
- PE: LeRoy keeps enough for his cows and he sells the rest of it. And the boys sell theirs; they've got theirs already sold. Well, LeRoy has, too — what he wants to sell. Some of them can't sell because they're holding their hay too high.
- RM: What is the price of hay now?
- PE: Oh, gee. Some of them want \$80 a ton or something. But you know, it takes that much money to put it up. At one time you could get hired help for \$3 or \$4 a day. Now, you have to pay such high wages.
- RM: What are you paying for help now? What does it cost?
- PE: I don't know because I don't hire anybody. But I think they pay almost \$30 a day or \$5 an hour or something. They're high.
- RM: It really adds up, doesn't it?
- PE: Yes, it does add up. I need somebody to cut my weeds but I have to wait till they're through with the hay.
- RM: Are there any things that you would like to talk about that you recall from your growing up or living in the area?
- PE: There are charcoal burning ovens.
- RM: Where are they?
- PE: There are 2 over here.
- RM: Right close?
- PE: Yes. I can't tell you where to go, but LeRoy and Mary Jean have been up there.
- RM: Up there on the mountain?
- PE: Yes, there's a road that goes straight up there. They've got it fenced; I think it's a pretty good road.
- RM: But it's an old oven for the smelters?
- PE: Oh, yes. Where they made charcoal. Oh, they're wonderful to see.
- RM: They must have been all over the place. They used a lot of charcoal in Eureka, didn't they?
- PE: They took down a lot of trees. The trees are coming back again, I think.
- RM: Were there a lot of trees when you were a kid, or were the hills bare?
- PE: There weren't too many trees. The trees were small. Now, in some places, like I say, over around Tonkin, there's so many trees, there isn't as much feed because it's too shady.
- RM: So where there are fewer trees, there's better feed?
- PE: Yes.
- RM: So cutting down the trees actually helped the feed?
- PE: Yes, to get the sun.

CHAPTER FIVE

RM: Were the hills around here pretty well stripped of trees when you were young?

PE: I recall around Tonkin that there weren't as many trees. Now there seem to be more trees.

RM: Was it because the charcoal hunters had cut them down?

PE: Yes, up around Pete Hansen [Creek]. Well, there was a man camped up there. It's named after the man that was cutting trees, I guess. His name was Pete Hansen. He was chopping trees up there and making charcoal. He'd pile the trees up and then burn it. I think they threw dirt on it or something. My brothers would know, but I don't know how they did that. But there's still charcoal up there. I don't know where they are but I think maybe my nephew would know.

RM: Where is that?

PE: Pete Hansen is right up by Tonkin.

RM: Are the old ovens up there still?

PE: No, there are no ovens over there. Whoever was there was making it without ovens.

RM: Was that back in the nineteenth century?

PE: Oh, it was a long time ago. I was probably a kid. My dad and mother would remember, but I wouldn't.

RM: So you say the trees are coming back?

PE: The trees are coming back over there; that's where I noticed it. They're thicker, because the men go riding and they say they can't find the cows because they're hiding under the trees and the trees are getting so thick. And horses, too, don't like it where there are too many trees; they can't see (on account of lions and things). They like to get out in the open more.

RM: Are there quite a few lions around here?

PE: Not here, that I know of, but there are out in the hills. They're getting thicker. I remember the time of the "rabie" (rabid) coyotes.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: When was your son LeRoy born?

PE: He was born in 1929, in Elko. Let me show you something.

RM: This is your history here that you've written.

PE: From scraps of paper all over; I finally put it together. I gave them all copies.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

LeRoy Etchegaray: Her folks and her brothers had seen some curly horses in the mountains back in '34.

RM: A curly horse has curly hair?

LE: Yes. And then her Uncle Peter and his boys started to raise some of the curly horses. They were quite successful.

RM: Is that right? It's the only place where there are curly-haired horses?

LE: Yes. Then they developed the registry right here in the county.

RM: That's interesting.

LE: They got them registered and started as a breed.

**An Interview with
ESTELLE GENSOLI**



Estelle Gensoli, 1992

*An Oral History conducted and edited by
Robert D. McCracken
1993*

CONTENTS
An Interview with Estelle Gensoli

- CHAPTER ONE 2
On Estelle's Italian-born parents — James Rogantini, who came to Eureka to work in the charcoal industry, and Annetta, who came to Eureka with her parents as a young girl; how Estelle boarded in Eureka, and her mother's low regard for ranch schools; Estelle recalls her first day of school; how young girls amused themselves in Eureka in the early 1900s, and the clothes they wore; Indians on the Rogantinis' Pinto Creek Ranch.
- CHAPTER TWO 8
The Chinese population in Eureka in the early 1900s; early ranches in Diamond Valley; cutting ice at the DePaoli Ranch; trips to Duckwater; recalling A. C. Florio; remembering the high school in Eureka, and the town's dances and music; discussion of the Basques in Eureka; health care in Eureka in the early 1900s.
- CHAPTER THREE 14
Estelle's husband, Augustus, serves in World War I; how Estelle and Augustus met; Estelle helps a sister raise her family; Augustus's life work as a miner; recollections of a Eureka hotel, the movie theater, and the *Eureka Sentinel* and its editor, E. A. Skillman, and his wife, Etta; remarks on the Depression years in Eureka; the red-light district in Eureka; Estelle's work clerking for the Kitchen brothers.
- CHAPTER FOUR 21
Further discussion of clerking at the Kitchen brothers' store; Estelle's second job, cleaning the bank, and her third job, writing a column for the *Eureka Sentinel*; Estelle's membership in various Eureka service and social organizations; the last illness of Estelle's father and his death; on Italians coming to Eureka to work in the charcoal industry; on baking bread; Eureka's small library; the friendliness of Eureka's people.
- CHAPTER FIVE 28
Memories of winters and a red wig and comfortable chairs, and of some Eureka women.

This is Robert McCracken talking to Estelle Genzoli at her residence in Baker, Nevada, July 26, 1992.

CHAPTER ONE

- RM: Estelle, why don't we begin with you telling me your name as it reads on your birth certificate.
- EG: I was a member of White Pine County because that's where my mother was pregnant and lived, but she always came to Eureka to have her children.
- RM: Why did she do that?
- EG: Because there's nothing out there. It was a ranch. And my father always saw she had a good doctor. So we bought a house [in Eureka] from a Judge McNight when he was leaving town. They bought the house just to have it for the oldest girls to go to high school because they went to country school. (I never did go to the country school.)
- RM: And what was your name on your birth certificate?
- EG: Well, on my birth certificate it was Estella.
- RM: How do you spell that?
- EG: E-s-t-e-l-l-a. But I changed it during my lifetime. I like the "e" on it better, because there was a cousin whose name was Estella too.
- RM: So you wanted your own name?
- EG: Yes. We kept getting mixed up. She was Estella Juanita and I happened to be Estella Annetta. I was baptized in the Catholic church up there in Eureka.
- RM: What was your last name?
- EG: Rogantini. Just like a lot of Italian people, we had similar names with the "tini" on the end and things like that.
- RM: What was your father's full name?
- EG: James Rogantini.
- RM: And do you know when and where he was born?
- EG: He was born in northern Italy. So was my mother.
- RM: And what was her name?
- EG: It was Annetta Minoletti.
- RM: And were they both from northern Italy?
- EG: Yes. Ma was brought to this country by her father when she was about 5 years old. They were all from the extreme north, in the Lake Country up in northern Italy.
- RM: And what was your birth date?
- EG: February the 11th, 1904.
- RM: In Eureka, Nevada?
- EG: In Eureka, Nevada. But, Bob, they already had 2 older children. Sylvia was 13 years older and Mayme was 11 years older.
- RM: Were you the last child of your parents?
- EG: Oh, no. That was Rachel Ann Ascargorta. That's a Basque name. She lives in Fallon. She was married and they bought a house and she has lived there

ever since. I talked to her this morning on the telephone.

RM: What brought your mother and father to this country?

EG: Making coal, or coke, for the furnaces. But when [my father] came out here, that wasn't for him. He didn't like that kind of life so he got a job working on somebody's ranch. Finally, after he married my mother, an opportunity came for him to buy a little piece of property in Newark Valley in White Pine County. They developed it into a very pretty place — really a showplace.

RM: How many acres did he have?

EG: I don't remember. But Mama decided when I was 7 that I was not going to ranch school because they didn't like the ranch schools, and they were too hard to come by anyway. She decided I would come to town and I boarded out and so did my sister. Then my sister got married and she moved out of the boardinghouse quicker than I did. The boardinghouse people were Swiss people.

RM: Oh, is that right? Do you recall their names?

EG: Her name at that time was Rattazzi. Her husband had just died; he died from apoplexy.

RM: And she was Swiss?

EG: She was Swiss, but she was born in Eureka. Anyway, that's where I boarded. Mr. Rattazzi and my father were great friends. All the people from northern Italy were in some way or another always connected with the Swiss people, you see.

RM: Oh really? Because they were close to Switzerland in the old country?

EG: Maybe that's it. But when they came out here, I guess the Italians must have been kind of clannish — the people from Tuscany and so on.

RM: There were a lot of Italians in Eureka, weren't there?

EG: Oh, yes, a lot of them.

RM: Why was that?

EG: Because they came out to burn coal, to make the coke. I still recall seeing [the ovens] out in the wild. They were made like a tepee.

RM: And that's where they made the coke?

EG: Right. They smothered it to make the coal. If you go to Eureka now you might be able ask one of the [county] commissioners to take you down to show you how they made them; it's kind of interesting.

RM: Did they cut down all the trees around Eureka for that, do you remember?

EG: Yes. This is all second growth, everybody says.

RM: Oh, what there is now, you mean?

EG: Yes.

RM: When you were a kid were the trees already gone from being stripped?

EG: No, I remember the trees. But most of the time I was [on the ranch]. We had already acquired the ranch in White Pine County. I was there for about 6 years and my father had a house built. Then it was time for me to come to school in Eureka and that's when I came to board.

RM: What do you recall about life on the ranch during those first 6 or 7 years?

-
- EG: Well, like kids, you just grow up, that's all.
- RM: And you said you didn't go to school on the ranch?
- EG: Oh, no. The 2 oldest girls went to school on the ranch and my mother didn't approve of that.
- RM: Did your mother feel the kids in the ranch schools got a poorer education?
- EG: Well, it was very short. Sometimes they hardly had enough [money] for a teacher for just a few months. And they couldn't get the education they should get. So my father and mother decided they would buy this available house. And in 1904, I was, of course, expected, so they had to find some place for her to be confined.
- RM: So they bought the house before you were born?
- EG: Yes, right about 1903 or something like that. The house has been renovated a good many times. The Ithurraldes own it now. (Their father just died recently from a heart attack.) But they had the house all renovated after they bought it.
- RM: Do you remember the smelters working in Eureka when you were young?
- EG: Oh, no.
- RM: They were down by then, weren't they?
- EG: Yes, by that time.
- RM: You said your father's ranch was quite a showplace. In what way was it a showplace?
- EG: Because it was built up. We had lilacs planted all around it. Of course, the ranch is run down now.
- RM: Tell me what it was like going from the ranch to the town.
- EG: I remember the first day I went to school. There was a woman who bought the house next door to us, and she took me by the hand and took me to school for the first time. [Our teacher was] Sadie Boomhower. And she was a good teacher.
- RM: She was your first teacher?
- EG: She was the first one.
- RM: Did they have a lot of kids from different grades in one class?
- EG: Oh, no.
- RM: It was all first graders in the class you were in?
- EG: Yes. Because the town was still that big, you know. It still is, for that matter.
- RM: What was supporting the town at that time? Mining?
- EG: Well, yes, and ranching. Next door to us was the DePaoli Ranch. They didn't live very far away and it was on the way to Eureka. They were Italians too.
- RM: Did a lot of the ranchers have homes in town?
- EG: I guess they did. The ranch kids by that time all came to town.
- RM: They didn't really have the ranch schools then?
- EG: No. The ranch schools weren't very much anyway. They were so short.
- RM: The school term was so short?
- EG: Yes, because they didn't have the money to pay for the teacher.
- RM: The rancher had to pay the teacher himself, didn't he?

- EG: Well, he contributed toward it. I guess [in the years] before I can remember the teacher lived [on the ranch] so the kids could go to school. My sisters were older than I was by several years — one was 13 years older and the other one was 11 years older. Before I was born, but I don't know when, my father was leasing a ranch before he bought Pinto Creek.
- RM: Is that the name of the ranch that he had?
- EG: Yes. And that's where we grew up. We had it for 19 years before his health gave out and we had to move to town.
- RM: Tell me a little bit more about growing up in Eureka. What was it like?
- EG: For the girls, we had absolutely nothing. If you were a boy you could go anyplace you wanted in Eureka. The boys were all ganging together, but they never formed a gang. They just met. And what they would do perhaps would be to walk the mountain or walk around town and that's all. But the girls didn't even have that privilege.
- RM: You had to stay inside?
- EG: Well, after you came home from school, you stayed in if you were a female.
- RM: Why did they have that double standard?
- EG: It wasn't a double standard as you know it as a double standard today. It's just that it was the way that the girls were kept — confined.
- RM: Do you remember any friends from childhood?
- EG: I remember that I used to play with a girl across the street from me. And we used to talk for the longest time at the corner of an old safe. Then she got a chance to work for one of the governors and so she left Eureka. (She took her mother too. Her father had just died of a terrible malignant cancer.) That wasn't exactly the end of our friendship, but almost.
- RM: What did the girls wear in those days?
- EG: They just wore fashionable clothes like they always did in that generation.
- RM: You didn't wear pants in those days, did you?
- EG: Oh, no. My sister [did] when she came along. She was more tomboyish and Mama allowed her to wear pants even when she rode horseback. But I always had to ride horseback in a dress because I was not the type to wear overalls like boys.
- RM: What did you wear to school?
- EG: Oh, just plain dresses. But for my graduation dress, I made a blue serge dress in home economics.
- RM: And did the dresses have lots of petticoats and that kind of thing?
- EG: Oh, no. We had one petticoat and that's all.
- RM: How did you keep warm there in the winter?
- EG: We had winter coats.
- RM: Did you wear long socks or long underwear?
- EG: Oh, yes, both. I want to tell you about the leggings we used to wear — black leggings that were fleece lined and you buttoned them up over your shoe.
- RM: How high up did they come? To the knee or a little above the knee?
- EG: Just above the knee.

RM: And they kept you warm out there in the cold?
EG: That's right.
RM: What kind of shoes did you wear?
EG: Just plain ordinary shoes.
RM: They were high-buttoned shoes, weren't they?
EG: They were mostly. And when you got a pair of shoes, you wore them for a long time.
RM: You didn't have a lot of different pairs of shoes, did you?
EG: No. We only had 2 places where we could buy shoes anyway. And one of them was just a ramshackle place where the boys used to gather.
RM: What was it called?
EG: Oliver Major's. But we also had Mau's store.
RM: And it was a little dry goods store?
EG: That's right.
RM: So after school, you had to come home and be kind of confined?
EG: We could have friends over or something like that, but we didn't run around town like the boys could do.
RM: Were girls envious of the boys?
EG: No. Somehow or another, that was customary. And that's all you did. I remember a little Chinese man — we had a Chinatown in Eureka. I remember that this Chinese man still had a queue and he carried it in his pocket. It seems to me we've always had a Chinese cook of some kind in Eureka.
RM: In one of the restaurants?
EG: Yes. I wanted to tell you about the Indians. After we moved to town, we never turned anybody away from something to eat. The Indians only had \$16 a month, but that's all the indigents got anyway. And you couldn't do much living on \$16. So we had one or two Indians who always came to our back porch and extended a pie plate or whatever [my folks] had to fill up; they didn't have to say anything. I remember one of them used to take a sawbuck because he happened to be honest. But, of course, we always had men around from the ranch, so we didn't need anybody to help.
RM: A sawbuck is a saw to saw wood?
EG: Yes.
RM: He was going to cut some wood for his food?
EG: That's right. But he never had to at our house, because when we saw the pan or whatever dish he had, [we gave them food]. I guess he took it home and washed [the dish]. Or maybe he didn't even wash it — he licked it, maybe. But he always came to our back door.
RM: Were there a number of Indians living in Eureka at this time?
EG: There was a family of them left.
RM: Do you remember the name of the family?
EG: George was their last name. That's a family name.
RM: They were probably Shoshones, weren't they?
EG: Yes.

RM: It was just the one family there living in town?

EG: Yes, at that particular time. And there was a man named Shurdi who was an Italian who lived with an Indian woman. He liked to drink too well and he got an overdose of strychnine.

RM: How did he get it?

EG: Well, "strychnine disease" was easy to get in those days, I guess.

RM: Somebody poisoned him?

EG: That's right.

RM: Do you think his wife did it?

EG: No. She didn't have the mentality for doing that.

RM: Who would have wanted to kill him?

EG: Somebody who wanted his ranch. And when he died she was left penniless, because he had this big ranch, but they never took care of the Indians or anybody else.

RM: Were there many Indians working on the ranches, do you recall?

EG: I don't know. We had one couple — they called him Buck. If their man happened to die, they just couldn't fend for themselves. We built a little cabin on the ranch for them and everything went along fine. And then her husband died and she couldn't fend for herself so she went to Duckwater, and that's the last I heard of her. Some Indians took the name of the family that they lived with, but these people didn't. On the ranch next to us on the way to Eureka, the Indians were called DePaoli.

RM: Oh, they took the family's name?

EG: That's right. But the ones on our ranch were only the husband and his wife. And about that time we were ready to sell the ranch.

RM: What year did you sell the ranch, approximately?

EG: Let's see, I guess I was 16 about that time.

RM: So that would have been about 1920. And you weren't on the ranch after that?

EG: No. My husband and I went out and during the Depression we cooked one summer for the Basque people who owned the place at that time.

CHAPTER TWO

- RM: Were there any black people living in Eureka that you recall?
- EG: Yes. A girl named Jessie and her family lived next door to the school. [Jessie] used to help take care of my sister Mayme's clothes.
- RM: That they were ironed right and everything?
- EG: Yes. [There was also] a black man that I can very faintly recall who used to go around and sing, "I can't get 'em up, I can't get 'em up, I can't get 'em up in the morning." But that was when I was pretty well grown and we had moved up to Spring Street.
- RM: You mentioned there was a Chinese cook in town. Were there any other Chinese people there?
- EG: Oh, yes. They had a Chinatown; the second street from Main Street.
- RM: Going up the hill?
- EG: Yes.
- RM: Was it quite large?
- EG: Yes, it was. I remember going to one Chinese funeral when I was pretty good sized. They streamed papers along the way. And they had a Chinese graveyard. Everybody walked in those days, and I just happened to see when the funeral went by.
- RM: Was there a large Chinese population?
- EG: There used to be quite a few Chinese. They didn't have families in those days; it was mostly just the men. Before my time, they used to celebrate Chinese New Year's because they had a joss house.
- RM: Where was the joss house located?
- EG: Next door to the Sentinel building. I was never in it, though. Oh, I went in it when I was grown, but there was nothing left by that time. The scroungers around town had pretty well cleaned it out.
- RM: How did the Chinese men earn a living there?
- EG: They used to wash clothes perhaps, or something like that. Some of them used to cut wood. You know, you could smell the drugs. I imagine it was opium.
- RM: You remember smelling it?
- EG: Yes, the [Chinese part of] town smelled like that. Also, during Prohibition, they had underground sort of tunnels where they would gamble; they were all good gamblers. And some of the boys from Eureka would be in there. And of course, they'd lose their money.
- RM: You mean they'd go into the joss house?
- EG: Go into the back of their homes — their little hovels.
- RM: And they would gamble in there?
- EG: Yes, in the back. So that attracted the young people. They made their money that way.
- RM: There was probably gambling in the bars too, wasn't there, in Eureka during Prohibition?

EG: Oh, yes.

RM: They had gambling all over Nevada. Even though it was illegal, they all did it, didn't they?

EG: Yes, they did.

RM: When you were growing up, was there any activity in Diamond Valley? I mean, there were no farms out in the middle of the valley, were there?

EG: Oh, no. That all came later.

RM: Yes. But I understand that there were some little farms around the edge of the valley in the canyons around the mountain.

EG: Oh, yes. Some nice ranches — very, very lucrative ranches too.

RM: Do you remember any of them in particular?

EG: There was the ex-governor Sadler's ranch. He owned Sadler's Ranch until his kids grew up and the boys died and so forth; then he sold out. And then across the valley, there was Aponds'. Oh and another one — I don't recall their name, but one of them was popular in politics just a few years ago.

RM: Yes. They supplied milk and produce to town, didn't they?

EG: Yes. Just produce; milk had to come from closer. Although sometimes they would bring over some cottage cheese or something like that, when they would come in from not so far away that it would last.

RM: Do you remember anything about Pine Valley?

EG: No, I was never out in Pine Valley.

RM: Were you ever associated with Beowawe?

EG: No. Oh! I was going to tell you about ice-cutting. On our ranch we had a small reservoir, but the wind blew so much all the time that the water never really froze hard enough. But not too far away [from home], when we wanted ice cream, we always stopped in at the DePaolis', where they sold ice, and bought a chunk of it so we could have ice cream for home — whenever we had company or something like that. Or for ourselves.

RM: Did the DePaolis have an ice pond?

EG: Yes, they did have the ice pond down there, and they sold it.

RM: And they would cut it out of the pond?

EG: Yes. I was never in it till after I grew up, but I think they stored chunks of ice in straw. They used to peddle ice around Eureka.

RM: They made money that way?

EG: Oh, yes.

RM: Did they have had a very big ice house?

EG: It wasn't so big. It was stored in blocks. Refrigerators had come in about that time; the wooden ones — ice boxes. I remember my sister had an ice box that she used to use until electricity came to town.

RM: Before that you kept your things cold with water running over a gunny sack on a barrel?

EG: Yes. I did that too.

RM: Did you do that in Eureka?

EG: Yes. I remember I had one so that flies wouldn't get in it. It had a mosquito

-
- bar, and then you had drip sacks on it and that way you kept things cool.
- RM: Did you ever go down to Duckwater at all?
- EG: No, but my father used to go down once a year from the ranch to buy produce for the winter, because it was a warmer climate.
- RM: He couldn't grow produce on his ranch?
- EG: No, not enough for everybody for the winter. And I recall my oldest sister went along with him one time, and this lady had chickens in the house. They had one hen that was in the kitchen and she was laying an egg. And when she got up out of the cupboard, she scared the life out of them. [Laughs] I can imagine.
- RM: That was down in Duckwater?
- EG: Yes. [Laughter] When you came back, you had to pass Pogue Station.
- RM: And what was that?
- EG: That was just a way place for people from Duckwater. And Pogue was supposed to be a very dirty man. So when he was taken to the hospital — such as we had — the so-called nurse made a joke of it and she said that he died from his first bath. [Laughter] If you read the Sentinel book, they credit that to my grandfather. Now, my grandfather was anything but dirty.
- RM: But the book miscredits him with “dying from his first bath.” Maybe this will help to set the record straight!
- EG: Yes.
- RM: Did you know A. C. Florio?
- EG: Oh, yes, I knew him well.
- RM: Tell me about him.
- EG: He had this big ranch down in Duckwater where they now have the Indian reservation.
- RM: Eventually they sold it to the government for the reservation, yes.
- EG: He died in the meantime and so his wife went down to Fallon. She died down there. She had a nice home.
- RM: Did they have quite a bit of money?
- EG: Well, they were supposed to. They had a very nice house that they lived in.
- RM: Did A. C. live down at the ranch at Duckwater?
- EG: No, they always came to town. He was kind of a notorious man in a way.
- RM: In what way?
- EG: Well, he was a sheriff for a while. But [he was notorious] even in Eureka before my time.
- RM: In what way was he notorious?
- EG: Because he had the Naples temper — you know, they're hot-blooded people.
- RM: You mean Naples, Italy, temper?
- EG: Yes.
- RM: Is that a saying, that the Neapolitans have a temper?
- EG: Yes. They're from southern Italy too. Anyway, he would pull his gun for no reason at all.
- RM: Is that right? When he was sheriff?

- EG: Yes. And even before that, he's supposed to have carried a gun, but whether he did or whether he didn't, I don't know. He's buried in Eureka.
- RM: Who were some other people that stand out in your mind from when you were growing up in those early years, or from these times in Eureka?
- EG: When I grew up the Rattazzi boys had grown up in the meantime and one of those was the sheriff.
- RM: What was his name?
- EG: James Rattazzi. And he was a large man, so they always said he didn't even have to carry a gun, his looks scared them.
- RM: How big was he?
- EG: Well, he was just an ordinary person. He just happened to be large-built — husky. Anyhow, he was a good sheriff.
- RM: Was there much crime in Eureka?
- EG: Not during my time.
- RM: You went all the way through school in Eureka, didn't you?
- EG: Oh, yes. I graduated there.
- RM: Tell me about going to high school in Eureka. You would have been going to high school in the early 1920s?
- EG: Yes. It was a good school. We got just exactly what they may get now. And we had French, of course. The little bit of French I did remember has left me a long time ago. But I took 2 years of that, and [had courses] in grammar and language and so forth.
- RM: What kind of activities did you have?
- EG: They said that to play basketball we had to stand out in the gravel because we didn't have a gymnasium. But I was never good at that type of thing anyway.
- RM: Did you have dances and parties and things like that?
- EG: Oh, yes. And as we got older, my friend used to play the piano. The piano was already worn out, but she used to play it and we'd dance to that. Do you remember this fellow Kay — when we first had jazz? He came to town with a cowbell and stuff like that to make noise that sounded like jazz.
- RM: When did radio come into Eureka?
- EG: Well, I remember when we had the first demonstration. Everybody stood outside on the street waiting for this demonstration, which never showed up.
- RM: It never happened?
- EG: No.
- RM: What year would that have been, approximately?
- EG: I don't remember. We all had phonographs before that.
- RM: Did your family have a phonograph?
- EG: Yes, we had a Victrola.
- RM: Was it the round discs — cylinders — or flat records?
- EG: My friend had the round one — Victrola, I think it was called. But everybody got to play their [records].
- RM: Was that a big thing in people's lives?

EG: Oh, sure. You always had to have music. We also had a town band. It was considered a very good band in those days.

RM: Do you remember what it was called?

EG: Eureka Lobster Club Band.

RM: I wonder why they called it that.

EG: I don't know. But they used to play for marches and stuff like that.

RM: Did they have parades in Eureka ever?

EG: Oh, yes. Memorial Day they used to have a big-time [parade]. And I remember we always dressed in our finery and marched all the way to the cemetery.

RM: Did the Italians live in their own section of town or were they just everywhere?

EG: No, they assimilated.

RM: And the Chinese had their own section, didn't they?

EG: Yes.

RM: How about the Basques?

EG: The Basques had the sheep, of course, out in the country.

RM: They weren't in town?

EG: No, and when they came to town, they lived it up, to tell you the truth.

RM: They did?

EG: Yes. And they had their own eating house and so forth.

RM: So the Basques were kind of segregated then?

EG: Oh, yes.

RM: What did people think of the Basques?

EG: They thought they were perfectly all right.

RM: There wasn't any discrimination against Basques?

EG: No. They were the people that had the sheep. And when they came to town, the boys were flush, so you could imagine they would live it up.

RM: And then spend all their money and then go back to the hills?

EG: That's right. [Laughter] But there was always somebody there to take their wad or whatever they'd bring in.

RM: Were there a lot of Basque shepherders in those days?

EG: Well, that's all there were — just Basques for shepherders.

RM: It was big sheep country, wasn't it?

EG: Yes.

RM: Was shepherding important for the Eureka economy?

EG: Yes.

RM: Where did the shepherders get their supplies?

EG: At Biale's market. And what they didn't have there at Biale's market, they [bought in] Elko. Ely wasn't much of a town in those days, but Elko was, because it was on the main road.

RM: What did you do for health care, when people got sick?

EG: We had a doctor.

RM: Was there a hospital there?

EG: Well, there was a makeshift hospital that nobody went to except when people got too old and they had to be confined or something like that. Otherwise, you took care of yourself.

RM: So, they just didn't hospitalize people in those days?

EG: No.

RM: Babies were born at home, weren't they?

EG: Yes.

RM: Was there a midwife, or did the doctor deliver the babies?

EG: The doctor delivered them. There were some women who used to go around to take care of the woman. My mother did that.

RM: What would happen if a person broke their leg or something and had to be in the hospital?

EG: Well, I guess you went to Elko. They had a good hospital there.

RM: How did you get there?

EG: You went by car.

CHAPTER THREE

- EG: And my name is [really] Genzoli. I'm gradually coming back to that name now for business and everything because that is really the name. [It was changed to Gensoli because] it was so much easier to use an "s."
- RM: When did you get married?
- EG: I don't remember the date anymore.
- RM: Were you out of high school?
- EG: Yes. We took up housekeeping in Eureka. My husband was in the mining.
- RM: What was your husband's name?
- EG: Augustus Genzoli. He was Swiss.
- RM: Was he a native of Eureka?
- EG: No, he was born in Switzerland. He went to Ely because that's where they were mining. Many Italians went into the United States Army [in return for their U.S. citizenship]. He wasn't a citizen at that time, so he said yes he would serve, and he did. He didn't get his [citizenship] papers until he was wounded in the foot and was in the hospital. Then they presented him with his papers.
- RM: And this would have been World War I?
- EG: That's right.
- RM: What brought him over to this country?
- EG: Mr. Rattazzi was related to his father. [Augustus] came for a visit and instead of just a visit, he stayed on.
- RM: How did he get interested in mining?
- EG: He went to look for a job over in Ely, and that's where the mining was. And he was leasing too. In fact, he was leasing when he went into the service. But he did serve. And as I say, he was wounded. I did give his cap to the museum in Eureka, and I made arrangements with them to give them a uniform. It wasn't the uniform he was injured in, of course, but this was so they would have a uniform from World War I, because they didn't have many uniforms there at all, I don't think.
- RM: How old were you when you got married?
- EG: I was 21.
- RM: So you hadn't been out of school that long.
- EG: Just 3 years.
- RM: How did you meet Augustus?
- EG: When he came from Switzerland, he came to our ranch. I was 9 years old at the time, and I decided then that he was the one I was going to marry because he was rather good-looking.
- RM: Did you have any children?
- EG: No, we never had any children. But I helped my sister with 7 of hers. I was always there at her beck and call — especially before I was married, but even afterwards. I also raised one of my sister's children.
- RM: How did you happen to raise your niece?

EG: My mother was taking care of her mother when [my sister] was confined. And my sister already had her hands full with the other children and she couldn't handle any more than she had. That's how we happened to have Karen. Well, that's almost like raising your own. And we helped out in every way we possibly could.

RM: What was Karen's last name?

EG: She married a man named Schuh.

RM: And did she stay in Eureka?

EG: No. She went, of course, with him. He was a water well driller and she actually helped him in the fields.

RM: Where did he drill wells?

EG: Well, [anywhere that] anybody wanted him.

RM: Did Karen have any children?

EG: She had 3.

RM: And so now you're residing with one of your grandchildren?

EG: Yes. Well, grandchildren or whatever you call it.

RM: Yes, right. Sort of grandchildren. And what's the name of the lady with whom you're residing?

EG: Leslie Schuh.

RM: Somebody told me that Karen passed away. Is that right?

EG: Yes she did; not too long ago. And they picked out a plot at the foot of our graves in Eureka, so that's where they will go.

RM: In the family plot?

EG: Yes.

RM: Why does Eureka have so many cemeteries?

EG: Everybody who was affiliated in some way [with a group] had their own grave in a particular graveyard. The Catholic cemetery naturally is the largest, and then there is the Masons' and the Odd Fellows. They had an Odd Fellows lodge and they kept it up.

RM: Your family plot is in the Odd Fellows, isn't it?

EG: Yes — being Protestant, you know.

RM: Did you raise Karen in Eureka?

EG: Yes.

RM: You say your husband was in mining? He stayed in mining?

EG: He did until he was forced to retire because he was getting at that age.

RM: Did he work his whole life as a miner?

EG: Yes. He was a top man at Ruby Hill and things like that; he didn't like to go underground.

RM: When did your husband pass away?

EG: It was quite a while ago.

RM: Tell me some more about some of the leading people in Eureka that you recall.

EG: I remember Jamie Biale, naturally, because he was always in business. I've forgotten where [his son] Al said he had started out, but he got some train-

ing. And then he married Mrs. Biale, who was a Morgantini. They had the old grandmother living with them, just like we always did.

RM: So your mother lived with you?

EG: Yes. We took care of Mama because she had a stroke and then lasted over 10 years. So we took care of her because there wasn't anybody even available [to help out with her care]. [If you needed to do something of importance], you sweated out by somebody else taking care of her. And my sister from Fallon used to come up and spell me off every so often, so we could take a little jaunt.

RM: Who were some of the mining people in town?

EG: There were mining people, but of course, I wasn't associated with them. My sister was because her husband was in mining.

RM: But your husband was in mining.

EG: Yes, but he wasn't in that part of mining.

RM: You mean he wasn't an administrator?

EG: No. He was a worker.

RM: Who were some more businessmen that you recall?

EG: Well, then there were Mrs. Fraser — I never knew her by any other name — and Mrs. Zadow.

RM: What did Mrs. Zadow do?

EG: She was a restaurant owner.

RM: What was the name of her restaurant?

EG: She used to have the Zadow Hotel. It was rumored that she and her husband didn't get along very well, because he was a butcher. Mr. Zadow was a little bit of a German man about that tall. I recall going to interview Mrs. Zadow when she was already in her 90s with my sister. We took a jaunt. She was sort of hallucinating, a little. (This was in Nevada City.)

When I realized what I got into, I went out and Ray said to me, "I thought you were going to stay awhile."

I said, "I thought we were too, but I got scared out because she began talking about this beautiful cut glass she had, and that somebody had come and stolen it the night before. And I certainly didn't want that reputation." She had beautiful cut glass, which was a fashion in those days, you know. But we made a hurried exit from there, because you never knew.

RM: She might accuse you of stealing?

EG: Yes.

RM: What were some of the fashions that you remember back in those days? You say cut glass was a fashion; what would be some others?

EG: Wicker furniture.

RM: That was a big thing?

EG: Yes. And sort of elaborate sideboards [buffets] and things like that. They used to do a lot of entertaining, I suppose before my time. We still have a sideboard in our family. My sister has it. And we had bookcases, of course. [In the] early days, they were famous for books and so forth.

RM: What were some more fashions that you recall? What were some fashions in dress and clothing in Eureka?

EG: Well, some of the dresses were still full in those days.

RM: Do you remember when the movies came into Eureka?

EG: No, but the other day, Mr. States and his wife stopped out to talk to me. They had the theater in town.

RM: Tell me about the theater.

EG: They made it over, because there used to be a backdrop. It was quite famous.

RM: It was a real theater, not a movie theater?

EG: Yes. They did it quite elaborate. [This was] before my time. They later cut down most of the scenery for firewood or something like that, which was too bad.

RM: Wouldn't that be nice to have in a museum?

EG: Yes, it would.

RM: Do you know the newspaper editor?

EG: Yes, E. A. Skillman.

RM: What do you remember about him?

EG: When he greeted you in any way, he always pointed his finger and he said, "What news did you have?" [Laughter] That's the way he greeted you.

RM: He was always looking for news?

EG: Yes, he was. He was a good newspaperman.

RM: Did he run the whole newspaper or did he have help?

EG: His wife used to help him.

RM: But that's the only help he had?

EG: Yes, that's all. She was as good as he was.

RM: What was her name?

EG: Etta Skillman.

RM: Did they live in the premises of the newspaper?

EG: Yes, upstairs.

RM: Was it a weekly paper?

EG: Yes. And believe me, everybody waited for it, too.

RM: Was that the only newspaper in town?

EG: There were some fly-by-nights that came from time to time, but they didn't last very long.

RM: Was Skillman there a long time?

EG: Yes, he was there till he died.

RM: So he was editor for many many years?

EG: Oh, yes. He had inherited the paper from his father, I think.

RM: Oh, his father had been the newspaperman?

EG: Yes. Mrs. Skillman had given piano lessons and that's how we happened to see him, because we went up this flight of stairs [to go to our lessons]. If you go to Eureka, there's still that flight of stairs.

RM: And Mrs. Skillman gave piano lessons and you took lessons from her?

EG: Yes.

RM: How much did piano lessons cost then, do you remember?

EG: Oh, they weren't very expensive.

RM: Was she pretty good?

EG: Well, just ordinary for those days. She gave my friend a very good start. But my friend's grandmother knew more about music than [Mrs. Skillman] did, because she had musical education in Denmark. I never ever saw the lady ever play, but she used to give my friend more instruction. She had her go to Mrs. Skillman first and then she'd come to her and correct the mistakes and so forth. Pauline got to play very well.

RM: What do you recall about the Depression years in Eureka? Was it tough?

EG: Well, it wasn't for us. But it was for a lot of people, I suppose.

RM: The Depression wasn't that bad in Eureka — or did your husband have a job through it?

EG: Yes, but small communities always weathered a storm of any kind.

RM: Did the mines operate through the Depression?

EG: Sometimes they went down.

RM: But things weren't that bad in Eureka per se?

EG: No, they weren't. You could always get credit somewhere if you needed it. If you didn't need it, why, you just rode the Depression, that's all there was to it. You didn't feel like you did in a lot of larger places.

RM: What happened during World War II in Eureka? Did that affect the town much? Were the mines still operating then?

EG: I think so. It seems to me they were.

RM: I know there was a lot of need for lead in those years. Were things pretty good in town during the war?

EG: Whenever they had to ship any kind of ore, we always shipped it to Salt Lake.

RM: Let's talk some more about the role of women in those days. You mentioned that when you were young, the boys could go and play anywhere they wanted, but the girls had to stay at home.

EG: That's right.

RM: What other differences were there for women in those days?

EG: For one thing, if you walked the streets very much, you might have been classed as a streetwalker or something like that.

RM: Is that right? So you couldn't get out and walk around too much?

EG: No.

RM: A woman had to be very careful with her reputation — much more so than a man, right?

EG: That's right. We did have quite a fashionable red-light district in those days.

RM: Oh, did you? Where was it located?

EG: It was down behind where they were going to build a new school, so they had to move out. You know, [the schools] have to be so many feet away from it. So they went up to the upper end of town.

RM: And did women from town ever go there? I don't mean to work, just to party.

EG: Oh, no.

RM: No self-respecting woman would ever go down there, would she?

EG: No.

RM: How many houses were there?

EG: By the time they got up there, there was just a red brick house and any trailer that they brought in.

RM: Do you know what they were called — the names of the places?

EG: No.

RM: When did they finally close them down, or did they?

EG: I guess they didn't close them down. Business got kind of tough and they had a fire one night and that was the end of it.

RM: That was the end of the brothels?

EG: Yes.

RM: How did the Eureka women feel about the brothels?

EG: They were a place to leave alone or whatever. You tolerated them.

RM: They weren't against them, were they?

EG: Oh, no.

RM: Many of the townswomen were not opposed to the idea, were they?

EG: No. A great many men who were the so-called respected men were drinking up there and things like that.

RM: Sure. They were known to frequent the place.

EG: Yes.

RM: And it didn't really do them that much damage, reputation-wise, did it?

EG: No. I remember I was clerking one time and I was caught up there at that particular time and believe me, I got out in due time.

RM: Why was it you were caught there?

EG: Because I was making a delivery.

RM: Oh. [Laughs]

EG: You could just imagine. This particular time there was a good pile of snow. And I certainly didn't want to be caught. I had my old blue car up there. [Laughter] So I had a heck of a time. I had to borrow 10 cents to call the sheriff to come and pull me out of the snow.

RM: You mean you got stuck up in front of the cat house?

EG: [Laughter] Absolutely. So I borrowed I think it was a dime or a quarter or something like that.

RM: Is that right? You were worried about ruining your reputation?

EG: Well, it wouldn't have ruined my reputation, but they'd have wondered what I had the car up there for.

RM: Yes.

EG: Well, you have experiences in your lifetime.

RM: Do you remember any other stories about that?

EG: About clerking or anything about that?

RM: Yes, tell me about clerking.
EG: I clerked for the Kitchen Brothers — that was a grocery store.
RM: When did you start that?
EG: It was after my husband died.
RM: After your husband died did you have to go to work to support yourself?
EG: I didn't have to, but I thought I would so that I would build up my social security.
RM: And so you went to work for the Kitchen brothers. Were they the biggest grocery store in town?
EG: By that time, they were. Mr. Biale didn't have his store anymore.
RM: Yes. Were the Kitchen Brothers the only store?
EG: Oh, yes.

CHAPTER FOUR

- RM: What was involved in clerking at Kitchen Brothers?
EG: Just your general clerking.
RM: You checked out groceries and stocked shelves and made deliveries?
EG: That's right.
RM: Did you like it?
EG: It was a job. I like to meet the public anyway — I always have.
RM: How many days a week did you work?
EG: Six days, I guess.
RM: Eight hours a day?
EG: Well, yes. Sometimes I helped them close up or something like that, so then I got a little time off. I also cleaned the bank.
RM: Why were you working so hard?
EG: Because I wanted to build up social security. I cleaned the bank and I also wrote for the newspaper.
RM: That's interesting. How often did you clean the bank?
EG: Every night.
RM: Who were the Kitchen brothers? Tell me about them.
EG: The older brother, Hiram Kitchen, was about my oldest sister's age. And he took his brother in as a partner. His brother's name was Joe.
RM: And had they been there a long time?
EG: Yes, they were born in Ruby Hill.
RM: Had they had their store a long time?
EG: Yes.
RM: How long did you work for the Kitchen brothers?
EG: Until they sold out.
RM: Which was when?
EG: I don't remember. It was quite a while ago. And then I also wrote for the local newspaper.
RM: Tell me about doing that.
EG: Oh, it was local and things like that. Everybody says it was very good, so I guess it was because I always liked minding somebody else's business.
[Laughter]
RM: Did you have a column for the Eureka paper?
EG: Yes.
RM: How did you get your news?
EG: Some way or another I always got around to it. Course I didn't have any home to keep for a while so I was able to do it.
RM: Did you enjoy it?
EG: Yes, I really did.
RM: How long did you do that?
EG: I couldn't even tell you. It was a long time, but I don't recall the years now.
RM: So we could go back and find your old articles in the newspaper?

-
- EG: Yes. And everybody liked it because I used to delve about around old people visiting here and in town. It wasn't gossip or anything like that.
- RM: Was your name on the articles? I mean, could we go back and check the newspaper and see what you wrote?
- EG: I guess you could. Everybody was sorry when I did leave because I used to have stories about the old people.
- RM: Why did you leave?
- EG: It was time, I guess.
- RM: Time to retire, you mean?
- EG: Yes. I was just trying to think who had the *Sentinel* at that time. It was sold, anyway. They said even when they'd gotten some poor correspondents, they've always said they wish that I would come back. I wasn't about to come back.
- RM: Did they pay you very much?
- EG: Not a great deal. Money wasn't worth very much in those days.
- RM: It was fun to do?
- EG: Yes. I liked it.
- RM: So you were writing for the newspaper, cleaning the bank and clerking all at the same time.
- EG: Yes, that's very true.
- RM: You must have had a lot of energy.
- EG: I did have a heck a lot more than I've got now. [Laughter]
- RM: In your articles, you mainly focused on the old people in town?
- EG: Yes. That's the way I made my column up. You know, I'd fill up the paper. There was only one time I almost missed a deadline — Karen's baby was supposed to be born in Elko, but she just wasn't ready to have it yet. I remember [getting the article to the] *Sentinel* as we were ready to pull out for Elko. So I didn't miss the deadline, either, that time. I never did miss a deadline.
- RM: That's a good record. Were you a member of any groups or organizations in town?
- EG: Oh, yes. I was a member of the Eastern Star.
- RM: Tell me about the Eastern Star there.
- EG: It's still functioning.
- RM: That's the woman's arm of the Masons, isn't it?
- EG: Yes.
- RM: Was your husband a Mason?
- EG: Yes. In fact, I have his Masonic Bible; Leslie has it. She's going to present it to my friend in Reno so she can give it to her son or grandson. He's going along with the Masons, I think, and I have no use for it otherwise. It's a Bible about that thick.
- RM: About 3 inches thick?
- EG: Yes.
- RM: What are some of the things that you did with Eastern Star?

EG: Just like they're doing today.

RM: Did you have parties?

EG: Oh, yes. We had parties in those days. And I belonged to the Rebecca's Lodge.

RM: What's that?

EG: That's the [women's branch] of the Odd Fellows. But then the Odd Fellows went down. And it finally went down so far that we were taken over by the Masons. You see, the Odd Fellows and the Masons in the early days were all very friendly.

RM: And now they're not?

EG: Oh, they still are. But then we don't have an Odd Fellows Lodge there anymore because it dwindled down to just me. When I had to move, of course I affiliated with one here in Ely. But I still retain my membership with the Eastern Star in Eureka.

RM: What is the chapter number in Eureka?

EG: Diamond No. 8. I was just thinking about it because we have one or two members that have been a Grand Star.

RM: What other organizations were there in Eureka?

EG: A Pythian Lodge. But that was taken over by the Pythian Sisters in Reno or wherever.

RM: And what are the Pythians? I mean, what do they do?

EG: They're the same kind of an organization.

RM: You weren't a member of that?

EG: Yes, I was. In fact, I still retain my membership with Fallon.

RM: And do the Pythians have any special activities or focus?

EG: When we were young, we just had parties and things like that.

RM: What other organizations were there?

EG: In the early days they had Odevil — a society for Italians. That was in the early, early days.

RM: That wasn't going when you were there?

EG: No. The building that they had used was pretty well worn out; it's a boardinghouse now.

RM: What other things stand out in your mind about Eureka?

EG: It was the place where I was born, went to school and graduated from high school.

RM: Basically you lived your whole life there, didn't you?

EG: Yes. After my father and mother sold the ranch I was 16, and we moved to town. And of course, my dad's health had given way by that time.

RM: What happened to his health?

EG: He had Bright's disease. He had gone to a lot of different doctors and he happened to find some doctors practicing in San Francisco who were supposed to be cut rate — Jewish, like they had in those days.

RM: You mean cheap?

EG: Yes. Then they were put out of business. But after going to so many differ-

ent doctors, these doctors found out what was the matter with him.

RM: And the other doctors couldn't spot that he had Bright's Disease?

EG: That's right, they couldn't. [They went to doctors in] Elko and Salt Lake and different places every time and they couldn't find it. But when they figured out that they were cut rate, they closed them up in San Francisco.

RM: But, yet, they were good?

EG: Yes. Anyway, they had given him just so long to live so we took care of him till he died.

RM: What do you think caused the disease?

EG: He overworked for one thing; he was a very hard-working person when he was on the ranch. That's one reason we had to sell, and we did.

RM: Did he ever regret coming to this country, do you think?

EG: Oh, no.

RM: He was always glad he did?

EG: Sure.

RM: And the same with your mother?

EG: Yes. Mama was only 4 or 5 years old when she was brought by my grandmother. But Grandpa was here before that.

RM: I still don't understand why so many Italians wound up in Eureka, because other towns in Nevada — like Tonopah — didn't have a large Italian population.

EG: They have Slavic [populations] or something.

RM: Right, they had a lot of Slavs in Tonopah. They didn't have Slavic people in Eureka, did they?

EG: No.

RM: Why did Eureka have Italians and Tonopah had Slavs?

EG: Because the thing that attracted most of them was making coke.

RM: Why didn't that attract other groups?

EG: Some people didn't like to do that kind of work and the Italians would. They'd make the coke because they knew how to do it.

RM: I wonder if they advertised in Italy for them. How did the Italians find out about jobs in Eureka?

EG: They didn't have to advertise, you know; it was just by word of mouth.

RM: And so then all these people came over and they just stayed?

EG: That's right.

RM: And then of course, the Basques were good with animals?

EG: They were good with sheep.

RM: There aren't very many Basques down around Tonopah or in other parts [of central and southern Nevada].

EG: No, but you find a lot around Elko.

RM: What other kinds of things do you recall about Eureka?

EG: I don't know, just general living.

RM: Tell me about life in Eureka.

EG: We had dances and things like that.

RM: Tell me about a dance.

EG: They would hold it at the Opera House, for one thing. It's being rejuvenated down there.

RM: I know. Isn't that nice?

EG: Yes. It is nice. I haven't seen it yet because I can't travel very well.

RM: So they had dances at the Opera House?

EG: Yes. They say that they had a very good floor — the story was that it was built on springs of some kind. But I doubt very much if it was.

RM: It's an interesting story, though, isn't it?

EG: Yes, it is. Then afterwards, the States screwed down the chairs for the theater.

RM: So they held the dances and showed the movies in the same place?

EG: Yes.

RM: Did you go to the movies much?

EG: Well, I always had the excuse that I didn't go for the love scenes, I always went for the scenery. [Laughter] By that time I was already living with my sister.

RM: And you were living with your sister rather than your mother?

EG: I helped her take care of her kids.

RM: Oh, when you were in high school you went and lived with your sister?

EG: No, I lived at home but I spent a good part [of my time] with my sister.

RM: Oh, I see. Helping with all those children? What was your sister's married name?

EG: Mame Morrison, but she always called herself Mayme. Mama used to walk up the hill with me, because she lived up on a hill. My younger sister lived with my older sister [after my older sister married] because she was closer to my older sister.

RM: What other things do you recall?

EG: I recall the night that one of them was married. They went to the justice of the peace and he knew the marriage ceremony so well. We used to have what they call the butcher book, in those days. It was a book about 6 inches long where you recorded the day's earnings and what you bought at the store. And this justice of the peace knew it so well, he read it to them upside down.

RM: Is that right? [Laughs]

EG: They always laughed about that.

RM: Did you go to Elko much when you were growing up?

EG: We went some, but not a great deal. I remember when my father decided that he would try to learn to drive, so my brother-in-law got him a car. Then Mama, I guess, decided that she was going to learn, too. Like women did, she was so used to driving horses that instead of stopping, she'd say, "Whoa!" or something like that. So my brother-in-law decided that the car was not for them. [Laughter] Which was the truth. They'd been ranchers too long.

RM: Did your mother bake all her own bread?

EG: Yes, Mama was famous for her bread. And there was another lady in town

who baked bread for a living after her husband died — Carrie McKay. Her daughter has the Eureka Garage in Eureka now. I remember her daughter when she used to peddle the bread, and used to carry it around town. Her husband had died and she made her living selling bread.

RM: It was a real problem in those days when a woman's husband died, wasn't it?

EG: Well, you made a living the best way you could.

RM: Because they didn't have social security and that kind of thing, and there weren't that many jobs open to women, were there?

EG: No, but you struggled along the best you could.

RM: What else do you recall?

EG: I recall the night that I was coming home [after my husband had died]. I was sort of feeling sorry for myself, I suppose. And I thought, "Well, old girl. You better get out and earn yourself more than you have for social security." That's how I happened to get 3 jobs.

RM: It looks like you did pretty well.

EG: I think I did as well as anybody else. I was never much of a dancer anyhow or anything like that, so I was perfectly contented with what I did.

RM: Did Eureka have a library then?

EG: They did not have a big library like they have now, but we had a small library. It was down in one of the Odd Fellows rooms.

RM: Did they have many books?

EG: No, they didn't have very many, but now it's pretty well stocked, because it's taken care of by Elko; it's a branch of the Elko library.

RM: Did electric power make a big difference in Eureka?

EG: Yes, it did. First we had just a string light with one light, you know. And then as you could afford it, you got more.

RM: What did you do before electricity came in?

EG: They had candles or ordinary kerosene lamps.

RM: Is there anything about women's life and role that you'd like to say?

EG: Nothing that I know of. We just lived a quiet life. And they already had their bridge parties — Mrs. Skillman, Mrs. Schneider and another old lady, Mrs. Fletcher, used to play bridge. We'd generally meet in one place and play bridge. And they still play bridge.

RM: Was there an upper crust in Eureka or was everybody pretty much equal?

EG: I think they were pretty much equal, I really do. There used to be an upper crust at one time, I think, that these old ladies belonged to. But all that changed.

RM: What made a person upper crust?

EG: Because they used to have their own groups.

RM: Were they more wealthy?

EG: They thought they were, I guess.

RM: They were more wealthy and thought they were better, probably?

EG: There was a distinction among people in those days.

RM: But when you were growing up there wasn't that distinction?

EG: No.

-
- RM: There wasn't a distinction between miners and ranchers or anything like that?
- EG: Oh, no.
- RM: Or if you happened to be Italian, you were in a lower group than other people?
- EG: No, everybody was pretty much equal, and they still are today.
- RM: One thing I've noticed about Eureka is that it's really a friendly place. I mean, for an outsider to come in, it's friendly.
- EG: Well, you know, we always seemed to be.

CHAPTER FIVE

- RM: You had a few more things you wanted to talk about, Estelle.
- EG: I was going to tell you about Mrs. Schneider (this is just a side story). Mrs. Schneider was one of these 3 bridge players I was telling you about. She had a drugstore that she had inherited and she had her hair dyed, I guess; it was always the same red. And the story was told that one time this gentleman, Dan Whitmore, pulled off her red wig. [Laughter] That was just a story; I don't even know whether it's true.
- RM: So she had a red wig on all the time?
- EG: Yes, she always wore the same thing. [Laughter] I don't know if she ever changed her wig.
- RM: Do you remember any of the big winter storms in Eureka?
- EG: Yes. We always had a storm in the wintertime. That's more than they have now.
- RM: They don't have the winters they used to, do they?
- EG: No, they don't. And of course, now they have ways of fighting it. Once you used to go out with a shovel and shovel a path. But of course, you didn't have cars like you do now. And the state can come and do it for you. I remember the old wooden bar chairs that they used to have at the theater that we could move. I'd treasure one of these things right now. But I think, at my age what in the world would I do with it?
- RM: Kind of a round chair?
- EG: Yes, that's right.
- RM: Oh, they didn't have regular theater seats?
- EG: No. Then finally they got theater seats.
- RM: I wonder whatever happened to those chairs.
- EG: Well, darned if I know. They may be up at the hotel, because they're sort of treasured. Everybody used to have those type of chair in the barroom; they called them the barroom chairs.
- RM: But they were round and the back was round, wasn't it?
- EG: Yes. They were very comfortable. All you needed was a little cushion to sit on.
- RM: Did they have cushions on them in the theater?
- EG: No, they were hard.
- RM: You had to really like the movie, didn't you? [Laughs] Do you recall anything else?
- EG: No. Karen, Leslie and David may remember the early times that they went to school. Because their father and mother couldn't take care of them for a while because they were out in the fields, you know. And then finally they began to live with them so they would go to school.
- [Tape is turned off for a while.]
- EG: The first Mrs. Skillman always had [what looked like] chalk-white powder on her face. But they say that she used to go to San Francisco once a year

and have it chalked. There's some process of making it permanent, or that's what they told me.

RM: So that was a rumor?

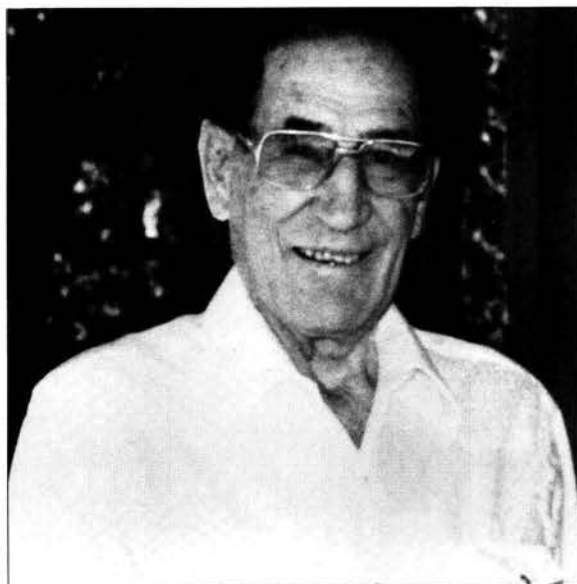
EG: Yes. That was before my time, of course.

RM: That was the style, to look chalk white, wasn't it?

EG: I don't know. After once having had it done like that, I guess you'd have nothing else to do.

I remember Mrs. Horn, who used to live up there, used to do beautiful paintings. I don't know whatever happened to her paintings.

An Interview with LOUIS GIBELLINI



Louis P. Gibellini, Eureka, 1992

*An Oral History conducted and edited by
Robert D. McCracken
1993*

CONTENTS
An Interview with Louis and Janelle Gibellini

- CHAPTER ONE** 2
Louis's father, who came to Nevada from Switzerland and worked in the mines around Eureka; and Louis's mother, also from Switzerland, who met her husband in Eureka, and their children; Louis takes up a career in mining; a discussion of the mines around Eureka, especially the Ruby Hill; Louis's skill with single jacking and a description of single-jacking contests; the pattern Louis drilled when mining; further description of mining at Ruby Hill and the Diamond Mine.
- CHAPTER TWO** 10
Recollections of the mine leases in Eureka when Louis was a young man; further remarks on Louis's experiences in single-jacking contests, in which he held a world's record for years; a description of setting fuses in a mine; working conditions in the Eureka area mines; discussing some of the miners who worked and leased in Eureka.
- CHAPTER THREE** 17
On Louis's vanadium property near Eureka; further discussion of the mines near Eureka; how Louis would ski to the Windfall Mine — 5 miles each way; the daily life of miners and their families during Louis's youth; the decline of mining in Eureka, and the massive amount of water in the Ruby Hill Mine; Louis works in mines at Ely and Lone Mountain and also runs his family's bar in Eureka.
- CHAPTER FOUR** 25
Some difficulties in running a bar — finding good help and dealing with theft; some of the improvements Louis and his wife made to the bar; how Louis came to be in the bar business; a robbery at the bar, and a foiled burglary.
- CHAPTER FIVE** 32
How Louis broke up a fight at the bar; remarks on Louis's strength as a single jacker; how a mine belonging to Combined Metals was lost to taxes; memories of Louis's wife, Josefyne Florio Gibellini, and of her parents and her brother and sister; a display at the Library of Congress including Louis's single jack, steel, single-jacking trophies and the skis he used to "commute" to the Windfall Mine; remembering a couple of dogs.

This is Robert McCracken talking to Louis Gibellini and Janelle Gibellini Dietrich at Mr. Gibellini's home in Eureka, Nevada, July 15, 1992.

CHAPTER ONE

- RM: What do you like to be called - Louie or . . . ?
- LG: I generally go by Louis, but they all call me Louie.
- RM: Do you want me to call you Louis?
- LG: Yes.
- RM: OK. Louis, state your name as it reads on your birth certificate.
- LG: It's Louis Phillip Gibellini.
- RM: And when and where were you born?
- LG: In Prospect, Nevada, on May 14th, 1907. Prospect was about 4 miles south of Eureka.
- RM: What was your father's name?
- LG: Louis Philip Gibellini, Sr.
- RM: You're a junior?
- LG: Yes.
- RM: And when and where was he born? Do you recall?
- LG: He was born in Switzerland.
- RM: Do you remember the town in Switzerland where he was born?
- LG: It was in Kartara-Vol Cola or Certara Conton Ticino.
- RM: Is it in southern Switzerland, close to Italy?
- LG: Yes.
- RM: What was his occupation?
- LG: He was a miner, more or less. When he first came to Eureka he ran a pack train of mules that used to pack wood to the different mining properties operating on Prospect. He also packed the ore off the mountain to Eureka.
- RM: At what age did he come to the United States?
- LG: He was just a young fellow, around 17 years old.
- RM: Did he come with his family, or did he come alone?
- LG: I believe he came alone. I'm not too sure.
- RM: And did he go to any other place before landing in Eureka?
- LG: Not that I know of.
- RM: Do you know about what year he would have gotten here?
- LG: Yes. He was born March 6th, 1864, and came to the United States in 1881, at age 17. He passed away July 19th, 1938, at age 74.
- RM: Was he here a while before you were born?
- LG: Oh, yes. Quite a while. He and my mother married in Eureka, Nevada, in 1894.
- RM: Was he a miner here in town by then?
- LG: Yes, he mined around this area more or less — Eureka and Hamilton.
- RM: What are some of the mines he worked in?
- LG: He worked in the Holly Mine, the Ruby Hill, the Diamond Mine, the Wind-

fall Mine . . . most all the mines that were around here.

RM: What was your mother's name?

LG: Eugenia Guzzi.

RM: And when and where was she born?

LG: She was born in Paris, France, on October 6th, 1873, and was raised in Pernico, Switzerland.

RM: Did they come over here together?

LG: No, not that I know of.

RM: How was it they both wound up in Eureka, being from the same area?

LG: My mother had relatives here. She came to live with her uncle Angelo Belli. My mother and dad met in Eureka and married here.

RM: And you were born in 1907. Were you the first child?

LG: I was the youngest of 6 children.

RM: Could you give me your brothers' and sisters' names in order of birth?

LG: From the oldest: Albina Gibellini Bisoni, John F. Gibellini, Carrie Gibellini McKay, Jennie Gibellini Soden, Hazel Gibellini Feeney, and myself.

RM: Were they quite a bit older than you?

LG: Yes. They've all passed away.

RM: And what do you recall about your early years in Eureka?

LG: I followed mining mainly, also.

RM: At what age did you go into the mines?

LG: I must have gone in with my dad when I was around 15. I followed mining from then on. It was active around here, and it was underground work. Now it's all open pits.

RM: Right. You must have started work in the mines about 1922.

LG: Oh, yes. In that area.

RM: Did you finish school or did you quit school to go to work?

LG: Well, I went to high school. That's about it.

RM: What were the mines you worked in?

LG: Let's see. I worked in the Windfall, Holly Mine, Ruby Hill, Kimberly, Mount Hope and Lone Mountain. In fact, I worked in most of the mines around this area.

RM: Why don't you describe the first mine you worked in?

LG: The first mine I guess was Ruby Hill, I believe.

RM: What did it consist of at that time?

LG: It was mainly gold and silver.

RM: Was it in veins or beds or what?

LG: It was in beds, more or less.

RM: Horizontal beds?

LG: Yes.

RM: How thick were the beds?

LG: They were quite thick; some of them were a couple of hundred feet in diameter. They were quite large.

RM: Is that right? What did they run?

-
- LG: It ran in gold, silver and lead mainly. This was the lead market of the world at one time, and the Ruby Hill was the principal mine. Then there was the Diamond Mine and the Holly Mine and the others, but they were smaller operations.
- RM: When you went to work with your dad, was he leasing or working for a day's pay?
- LG: He was leasing at the Diamond Mine.
- RM: Were most of the miners at this time leasing or were there many day's pay guys?
- LG: There were quite a few day's pay, but quite a few leasers at that time, too. The smelters were operating then, but now they're all down.
- RM: Were there a lot of people working at the Ruby Hill Mine when you started?
- LG: At that time there were mostly leasers. They were operating long before I went up there.
- RM: What did the ore run? How much gold was in a ton?
- LG: A lot of it ran around a half ounce to an ounce.
- RM: That much? How much did it run in silver?
- LG: The silver was probably 20 or 30 ounces. The lead was high — 30 or 40 percent.
- RM: Was the lead galena?
- LG: Yes.
- RM: What form was the silver in?
- LG: It was just oxidized.
- RM: And did they smelt the ore right here in town when you were mining?
- LG: No, the smelters were practically all down when I started mining.
- RM: So by the '20s, when you came on the scene here, you were shipping your ore?
- LG: Yes, we shipped it to Salt Lake City.
- RM: Did you ship it out on the railroad here?
- LG: Yes, the narrow gauge.
- RM: There must have been vast workings in the Ruby Hill Mine.
- LG: Oh, yes.
- RM: How deep was the shaft when you were there?
- LG: At that time it was down around 1200 feet or something like that. Later on they sunk it to 2450, and that's when they hit that enormous amount of water. That's what closed the mine up — they couldn't handle the water too well.
- RM: Did it flood up?
- LG: Yes. The water came up to about the 1200-foot level.
- RM: Is that right? Were they pumping it for a while?
- LG: Yes, they pumped there for quite a while, but they were never able to lower it. Then they had people come out of Canada and they grouted it. They got down into the mine, then they put in big water doors and that was the end of the workings.

RM: The water doors didn't hold?

LG: Well, the water was in the ore zone. That's what made it difficult. They pumped there for a couple of years — around 10,000 gallons a minute.

RM: Wow. They must have had some huge pumps there.

LG: They did, yes. They had a lot of machinery all over that mountain, but they dismantled everything.

RM: When did it flood out?

LG: It was about in '55, something like that.

RM: When you started working there, was it hand labor?

LG: At that time mainly hand labor, yes. At the end there we had air drills, but right at the beginning it was all handwork. I used to do a lot of handwork, you know. In fact, I was the champion of the world at one time in single-jacking.

RM: Is that right? How did you get so good at it?

LG: Well, my dad had done a lot of that and I happened to follow him on it.

RM: Tell me about what's involved in single-jacking. What are the tricks of the trade?

LG: You use a 4-pound hammer, and of course in the championship, they drill straight down in granite. Whoever can drill the deepest in 10 minutes wins.

RM: Gosh. How deep could you go?

LG: At that time I went around 12 to 14 inches.

RM: My goodness. How long did it take you to put in a round in the Ruby Hill Mine, single-jacking it?

LG: Generally there were 2 people in a face single-jacking. We'd drill half of the face one day and half the next, so it would take about 2 days before it was completed.

RM: Is that right? How deep were your holes?

LG: It depended on the formation, but on average, probably around 24 inches.

RM: And describe the pattern of holes that you would drill.

LG: It depended on the formation too, but on the hard formation we had around 15 to 20 holes.

RM: What kind of a cut would you use?

LG: We used a diamond cut.

RM: You would come in with how many holes on a diamond cut?

LG: Four holes. We'd blast the center out first, and go on from there.

RM: Did your angle holes come in from the side?

LG: They'd come in from the center.

RM: To the center?

LG: Through the center from the sides. We blasted them first, and then the rest followed.

RM: So you would use 4 cut holes that you would shoot first?

LG: Yes.

RM: Would they be in a row, or what?

LG: They'd be more or less in an angle.

RM: You'd use a top and a bottom and a hole in the top and the bottom in the center that were angled in?

LG: Yes.

RM: And then one on each side?

LG: Yes.

RM: Would you fire those at the same time?

LG: They went out first, and then the rest followed.

RM: That would blow it out and then the rest would break to that?

LG: Yes. We had fuse and we spaced them. You'd cut the fuse according to the way you wanted them to go.

RM: What were the next holes that followed after your cut?

LG: Well, after that they were more or less straight in or angled.

RM: And what did you call them?

LG: The back holes.

RM: The back holes were at the top, right?

LG: At the top. They were generally flat in, more or less. And then we had 2 uppers.

RM: Were they in the foot?

LG: Yes. Then the bottom was more or less straight in too.

RM: Are the uppers separate from the lifters, or are they the same thing?

LG: They were separate.

RM: The uppers came below the cut?

LG: Yes. The lifters were the last ones that went.

RM: What kind of rock were you working in?

LG: It was mostly limestone.

RM: Was it hard?

LG: Some were quite hard, and others were more or less fractured. It was mostly softer rock in the ore zone.

RM: How wide was the ore zone?

RM: In places the ore body was quite large. On the surface — it's still exposed there — I'd say in places it was probably 500 or 600 feet long and 300 feet wide. There were stopes — all replacement — in the limestone.

RM: Oh. And then how did the ore zone run?

LG: It was pocketed, you see. It was just like a link of sausage. It branched out and then petered out and branched out, just in pockets. But they were quite large.

RM: How big would one of the sausages be?

LG: Sometimes it would be 3 or 4 feet or something like that — they'd branch out and then narrow back again.

RM: So it'd be 3 or 4 feet wide, and then how tall?

LG: When you got into your main ore bodies, they were quite large. The ore body itself was 200 or 300 feet wide sometimes. They were big stopes. Then they'd narrow down again, then form another one.

RM: How much powder did you use in your holes?

LG: We generally used about a stick to the foot.
RM: And what kind of powder were you using?
LG: It was around 40 percent.
RM: And it took 2 men 2 days to drill a round in the hard rock?
LG: In the hard rock, yes.
RM: What would it take in the ore zone?
LG: The ore zone was quite soft; it wouldn't take anything like that.
RM: Could 2 men do it in a day?
LG: Oh yes, very easily. *The ore zone was quite soft compared to the hard rock.*
RM: And then did you and your partner have to muck it out?
LG: Oh, it was all hand mucking at that time. We'd drill one day and blast the next day and then muck it out. It was all handwork.
RM: When you're single-jacking, do you switch hands, or do you always use the same hand to hammer?
LG: The right hand, ordinarily. There were a few that used their left hand, but very few.
RM: So most miners don't switch hands when they're drilling like that.
LG: Ordinarily they don't, no. Then once in a while we'd double-jack. You know what that is.
RM: Yes, tell us about it. I've never understood how you could keep from hitting the other guy's hands.
LG: [Laughs] Well, it came natural that you didn't hit their hand. You used an 8-pound hammer, and the handle was probably 3 feet long. One man's swinging the hammer and the other one is holding the steel and turning it.
RM: Didn't you ever hit their hand?
LG: Ordinarily you didn't, no.
RM: And you never got yours hit?
LG: No. It was just an art.
RM: Do you only double-jack going down, or can you also go horizontally with it?
LG: Well, 2 single-jackers would beat a double-jacker horizontally. Once in a while if you had an extra hole (you know, just the one hole) you'd double-jack it.
RM: Oh, I see. But you didn't double-jack going into the breast?
LG: Not ordinarily.
RM: Would it be hard to swing the hammer that way?
LG: Not really. And we'd drill straight up, too.
RM: How did you ever do that?
LG: It just comes naturally. You'd run raises straight up and you'd have to drill straight up.
RM: So you were single-jacking straight up?
LG: Oh, yes.
RM: Man. And you'd do that all day?
LG: More or less. [Chuckles]

RM: You must have had a powerful arm.
LG: Well, it came naturally. In fact, we didn't know any better — we sort of enjoyed it. [Laughs] Now it's a lost art. They're using equipment and they don't do that anymore.

RM: Can you double-jack straight up?
LG: You could, yes. Ordinarily we mostly single-jacked straight up.

RM: How was the air in the Ruby Hill mine when you were there?
LG: It was not too bad.

RM: You didn't have any vent pipes or anything like that, did you?
LG: In some places we did — where it was close.

RM: Did you have connections to the surface for circulation?
LG: Oh, yes. The Diamond Mine had a lot of connections. In fact, there are icicles hanging in the drifts now from those connections — from the draft.

RM: Is that right? It's that cold down there?
LG: Yes, the main drift was awfully cold.

RM: Because of the circulation?
LG: Yes, from the connections on the surface.

RM: It was even cold in the summer? Did the icicles last into the summer?
LG: They didn't last all summer, but most of the time there were icicles in the main drifts. They were cold. There was kind of a vent connected to the surface that caused that cool draft.

RM: How did you hoist? What kind of a hoist did you have on the Ruby Hill?
LG: When I leased up there they had a gas engine hoist.

RM: That was a long pull, wasn't it?
LG: Oh, yes. We were down around the 600 . . . of course, the shaft continued on down.

RM: Is there any ore left in the Ruby Hill?
LG: Probably so, but the stopes are all caved in now.

RM: Was the ground in those mines hard to hold?
LG: In places it was, yes — in the ore zone. Outside of that it wasn't. You have to use timber and stuff in the ore zone.

RM: Did you do your own timbering and everything?
LG: Oh, yes. You had to frame it and everything.

RM: Did you also lay your own track and everything?
LG: Yes, you did it all.

RM: When did they bring air into the mine for pneumatic drilling?
LG: They had it in the '30s.

RM: How many years did you hand-steel it?
LG: Oh, god, for years.

RM: Boy, you must have been in good condition.
LG: Well, fair, I guess. [Chuckles]

RM: How did you tram down there? Did they have motors or anything?
LG: At that time we didn't have any motors — we had to push the [cars] by hand.

RM: Did they eventually get motors?

LG: Eventually they had motors, yes, but that was in later years.

RM: How big were the cars?

LG: They held about a ton.

RM: How long was a tram up to the shaft, typically?

LG: I'd say around 1500 feet.

RM: Was there any water in the mine at the 600-foot level and in the upper levels?

LG: No, it was dry.

RM: Did you have any problem with dust?

LG: Very little.

RM: There probably wasn't that much silica in the ore, either, was there?

LG: Not too much here in Eureka. Delamar and Tonopah and places like that had a lot of silica.

RM: What was a day's pay for a miner when you started?

LG: Around \$4 or \$4.50 a day. [Laughs]

RM: And what was the arrangement for leasing? What kind of a deal did you have with the company?

LG: You paid a royalty on a sliding scale from 10 percent on up, according to the grade of the ore. The higher the grade, the higher the royalty.

RM: Did you also pay for your hoisting and all of that?

LG: Yes, the company managed to get all they could out of it. It was arranged that they didn't lose anything.

RM: So you paid for your powder and supplies?

LG: Oh, yes.

RM: And 10 percent was on the lowest grade, then? What did the royalty get up to?

LG: If the ore ran \$50 a ton, you probably paid 15 or 20 percent royalty.

RM: And you had to wait to get your check from the smelter, didn't you?

LG: Oh, yes. The narrow gauge ran right up to the mine, and we shipped into Salt Lake.

RM: Where? To Tooele, Utah?

LG: Tooele, yes.

RM: Could most of the miners make a pretty good living by leasing?

LG: Well, a fair living; nothing too great [chuckles], you know.

RM: Yes. Would it about equal day's-pay wages?

LG: In some instance it did; in others it didn't.

CHAPTER TWO

- RM: My mother grew up in Cripple Creek, Colorado. One time when she was in high school, they asked the kids to list their fathers' occupations, and a bunch of the girls put RAL: "ragged-ass leaser."
- LG: [Laughs] Is that right?
- RM: Yes. I was wondering if they were called "ragged-ass leasers" here.
- LG: Well, not that I know of. In the early days there were quite a few Chinese who leased here.
- RM: Oh, really? When was that?
- LG: Oh, god, that was probably 80 or 90 years ago. When they first started, they leased up on the top of some of these ridges. My dad, when he first came, had a pack train. They sacked the ore and then they had mules carry it off the mountain in sacks. It was all high grade ore.
- RM: Where were they carrying it?
- LG: They'd carry it down to the narrow gauge and then it was shipped into Tooele.
- RM: When you started at the Ruby Hill, how many leasers do you think were there?
- LG: There were quite a number of leasers at that time. I can't really recall, but there must have been 30 or 40 or more.
- RM: Leasers always worked in pairs, didn't they?
- LG: Well, more or less.
- RM: Could you get a lease if you were single? Would they let you work alone?
- LG: They'd let you, but it was mostly doubles.
- RM: What time did you go on shift?
- LG: I think we started around 7:30 in the morning and we'd work 8 hours. Sometimes if you got through earlier, you left earlier.
- RM: Did you have a change room there?
- LG: The change rooms were kind of difficult. They didn't have too many change rooms then; in later years it was compulsory to have them.
- RM: Were the companies good companies to work for, or did you feel that they exploited the workers at all?
- LG: They were fair, I guess. But they saw that you didn't get too wealthy. [Laughs]
- RM: If they saw that you were getting too much, they'd cut you back?
- LG: No, you'd always get your day's wages and things like that, but no one really got rich on leasing.
- RM: When you wanted to get a lease, how did you go about it?
- LG: You'd contact the officials and they'd write up a lease for you.
- RM: How did you determine where you were going to lease?
- LG: They'd give you certain blocks of ground in certain areas to lease.
- RM: Could you pick out your block?
- LG: More or less, if it was open.
- RM: How big was the block of ground they would give you?
- LG: It just depended.

RM: What would be a small lease?
LG: Probably 100-by-100, or something like that.
RM: And how far up did it go?
LG: It would go up by about the same amount.
RM: And what would a big lease be?
LG: A big lease would mean probably double that. It depended on what the company would allow you on the lease.
RM: What was the name of the company that owned the Ruby Hill when you started there?
LG: It was U.S. Smelter.
RM: Do you remember any of the bosses or anybody like that?
LG: Not too well.
RM: Did they have a superintendent and . . . ?
LG: A superintendent, a foreman and a shifter.
RM: Was the shifter in charge of the whole mine, or was he just in charge of a level?
LG: It was more or less the whole mine. But in leasing you didn't have anyone really over you. You did whatever you had to do and they didn't bother you too much. They gave you that block of ground, then it was up to you to develop it.
RM: How did you get into the drilling contests?
LG: Years ago, they had those contests on certain days — Fourth of July and Labor Day — things like that.
RM: Did they have them here in Eureka?
LG: Yes.
RM: Did you enter them here?
LG: Oh, yes. I was just a kid when I entered them.
RM: Did you do well when you were a kid?
LG: Well, fair.
RM: And you got better as you got older?
LG: Oh, yes. I held the world's record for years.
RM: When were you at your peak?
LG: When I was around 50.
RM: Is that right? What are some of the contests that you went to?
LG: There was the Virginia City and Tonopah. In Carson City they still have it around Labor Day — it's worldwide.
RM: They still have a contest in Tonopah on Jim Butler days.
LG: Right.
RM: Do you ever go and watch now?
LG: I haven't gone the last year or so; I kind of gave it up.
RM: Did you have your own special hammer and steel?
LG: Oh, yes. I did my own sharpening and everything for it.
RM: Did you use regular steel in the contest, or was it special, high carbon steel or something?

-
- LG: No, they wouldn't allow high carbon steel. And they didn't allow any carbide tips or anything like that. It's just ordinary steel and then you temper it.
- RM: How did you temper it?
- LG: I'd heat them more or less to cherry red and then I'd dip them in water. Then I'd take a torch and draw the temper out. You could see the temper coming . . . on granite the color would be sort of a cherry red.
- RM: What do you mean you'd "draw the temper out?" What would happen?
- LG: You cool it off and it's awfully hard when you cool it. Then you draw it out . . .
- RM: You start down below the tip?
- LG: Yes, below the tip. And you'll see that temper come out.
- RM: Would you move the cherry red color up the steel?
- LG: Well, certain kinds of rock took certain tempers. When you got to that color, you'd dip it.
- RM: Oh. When you got to that color on the tip?
- LG: Yes, then you'd cool it off.
- RM: You say granite took a cherry red?
- LG: Well, more or less.
- RM: What would limestone take?
- LG: Limestone would be a little softer. If you'd use the same temper on limestone as you would on granite, it would break. You'd have to use a softer temper. Different formations took different tempers.
- RM: And the temper was determined by the color?
- LG: By the color, yes.
- RM: I'll be darned. Did you sharpen your own steel when you were working in the mines?
- LG: Oh, yes — on a forge.
- RM: Did you use the forge at the mine?
- LG: Well, I had one here at the place. You generally sharpened your own steel. In later years, when they got machines, they had special steel there and the equipment to sharpen it. They'd sharpen it right there at the mine.
- RM: How often would you have to sharpen your steel when you worked in the limestone up here?
- LG: Quite often — every day.
- RM: How long did it take you?
- LG: Not too long — an hour or more. You had a set. You'd start with the short steel and then you graduated on down.
- RM: Did you do it when you came on shift or when you went off, or when?
- LG: Generally when you came off.
- RM: I'll be darned. And you also had to grind it, didn't you?
- LG: We didn't grind it. We'd just hammer it out.
- RM: You put the edge on it with the hammer?
- LG: Yes, we didn't grind it. Of course in those contests we did grind them. And then you'd give it a gauge, you know.

RM: What's a gauge?
LG: Well, you start with a larger gauge, see. Maybe you use 3/4 steel and you'd give the first one maybe 1/16 inch.
RM: That'd be the edge up on the end?
LG: Yes. And you graduated it right on down so each one would follow. The longer steel was a narrower gauge.
RM: The starter had a big point on it?
LG: Yes, and then you graduated on down.
RM: How many pieces of steel did you have in a set?
LG: We generally used 10 pieces.
RM: How long was the starter?
LG: The starter was probably around 6 inches and then from then on, probably 1-1/4 inch longer.
RM: So the first would be 6 inches and the second one would be a little under 8 inches?
LG: Yes.
RM: And then you'd just keep going up?
LG: Yes — graduating.
RM: Does the constant pounding of the hammer mean that you have to work with the head of it, too? I mean, does it flower over?
LG: Well, we had a water tender. We'd put water in the hole and when you hit, it would throw the cuttings.
RM: I'm not familiar with a water tender. What is that?
LG: You've got a bucket there, and the water tender sees that you get a certain amount of water in that hole. Then when you hit [the rock], it throws it out.
RM: It splashes the cuttings out of there? Will it do that even in a deep hole?
LG: Oh, yes.
RM: I thought they used a long spoon thing.
LG: In mining we did use a spoon, but not in contests. And when you'd hit, it would splash out. Of course, when you were drilling uppers, they were dry. But in angle holes, you use water. And we used the spoon in the mine.
RM: Would you have to use a spoon on a flat hole, too?
LG: No, not really.
RM: About how many inches can you go before you have to spoon out?
LG: It would depend on the formation. Maybe you'd go half an inch or something like that and then you'd spoon out and pour a little more water into it.
RM: It's just a totally lost art now, isn't it?
LG: Oh, yes. They don't hardly use any of that single-jacking. A few prospectors might use it, but outside of that it is a lost art.
RM: Did you see any running fuses in the mine ever?
LG: I never had any. Of course, they were pretty well taken care of so they didn't run. We generally used around a 2-1/2-foot fuse — it depended on the depth of your hole. It burned maybe a half-inch to the foot or something like that.
RM: You mean extra that would hang out?

LG: Yes. We used a piece of fuse about 12 to 18 inches long. It was all split.

RM: Your spitter? Let's just describe it. It's a piece of fuse that's got slits on it. And then you bend it around . . .

LG: Yes. When it came to that split it spits out.

RM: And that's how you light your different fuses?

LG: Yes.

RM: Did you have to prepare your own fuse and caps and all that? That is, crimp the caps on the fuse yourself?

LG: Oh yes, you crimped them.

RM: Did you have to furnish your own steel?

LG: Most of the time, yes. If the company did furnish anything, you paid for it. There was nothing free. They saw that they got their share.

RM: Was there any labor union or anything here in Eureka?

LG: Really, I can't recall any labor union here.

RM: Was there ever any labor unrest when you were were mining?

LG: Not that I know of.

RM: In this period there was labor unrest in Tonopah.

LG: Right. Afterwards there were unions — after Tonopah and other camps had unions.

RM: Why do you think they didn't have unions here?

LG: I don't know. I guess they didn't want them, for some reason. But when the unions came in then they saw that you had better working conditions.

RM: Do you think the working conditions were good here before the unions?

LG: Well, they never had any change rooms years ago, but then when [the other camps] got the unions, they had change rooms. They made conditions a lot better.

RM: When they got unions in other places, they made it better here?

LG: Yes.

RM: So they improved the conditions here to keep the union out. Is that right?

LG: Oh, yes. They didn't have a union, but they went along more or less with their changes. So we had change rooms and things like that. I don't think we ever had a union, but we went along with their examples.

RM: What did a miner take for lunch?

LG: Sandwiches and things like that. It was all cold food. And before the unions you ate your lunch down in the mine, too.

RM: And after the union you came out for lunch?

LG: Yes — they allowed you to. You had around half an hour to eat your lunch.

RM: I worked in a mine a little bit, and we got paid for our lunch hour. In other words, it was 8 hours collar to collar, but with your half hour for lunch you really only worked 7-1/2 hours.

LG: It was probably the same here.

RM: Did you work 5 or 6 days?

LG: No, 7 days a week.

RM: Oh, you worked 7 days a week as a leaser?

LG: It was that way here for a long time. Even day's pay was 7 days a week. We never had any days off.

RM: How did you do that? I mean, you never got a rest?

LG: Well, that was customary. It was 7 days. There were no days off.

RM: And it was 8 hours a day?

LG: Yes. And they had 3 shifts sometimes — graveyard and so on.

RM: Did you rotate on the shifts?

LG: Oh yes. You worked maybe 2 weeks on day shift, 2 weeks on night shift — something like that.

RM: How did you like that?

LG: I didn't like it too well, but it was customary. [Laughs] You either did it or you didn't work.

RM: And was it 8:00 to 4:00, and then 4:00 to 12:00 and then 12:00 to 8:00?

LG: Yes.

RM: Did they call them "day," "swing" and "graveyard?"

LG: That's right.

RM: When did they stop working 7 days a week here?

LG: I can't recall. Of course, now they rotate. Sometimes they work 4 days and are off 3 days; the company rotates the shifts now.

RM: The guys now really aren't miners, are they? They're heavy equipment operators.

LG: Yes, [the mines are] mostly all open pits. If they were to ever open up that Ruby Hill Mine, I don't know if they'd find any miners. [Chuckles]

RM: Yes, where would they find them?

LG: Where would they find them is right.

RM: And what would they have to pay them now?

LG: They'd have to give them a pretty good wage, all right. We practically worked for nothing in those days. [Chuckles]

RM: You basically worked just to survive, didn't you?

LG: That's right. You just survived when you worked for wages.

RM: Did most of the fellows who worked up there own their own houses here in town?

LG: They mostly had their own places to live. The camps are all abandoned now: the Hamilton, the Diamond . . . there were regular camps there, and quite a few people had their own homes, but when the mines closed they all left. There's nothing there anymore.

RM: Sure. Did most of the miners who worked up at the Ruby Hill have their own places here in town?

LG: More or less. I think they had boardinghouses, too, in the early days. They had accommodations for them.

RM: When you were mining, were there any Cornish miners here?

LG: Oh yes, quite a few of them.

RM: How about Yugoslavian miners?

LG: There was a mix of all types of people. [Chuckles]

RM: Did any one group make a better miner than the other?
LG: Not necessarily, I guess. I don't know.
RM: Were there any blacks?
LG: Not that I know of. There were Chinese and a mixed group of people.
RM: Were there Chinese working underground when you were mining?
LG: Not when I was mining, but years before that. They leased. And there were quite a few Chinese — that upper street was all Chinatown. They had stores and everything there. Now there isn't any of that left.
RM: What street was that?
LG: Well, that's Main Street and then the one beyond this — Monroe Street.
RM: Did the Chinese mix with other people?
LG: To a certain extent they did. They were great gamblers, you know, and of course then they'd have to mix.
RM: Did they gamble downtown?
LG: Yes, in the bars. But there aren't any left anymore. They're all gone.
RM: Did they have a double-drum hoist on the Ruby Hill?
LG: Yes. I ran hoist for a couple of years there.
RM: Was it gasoline-powered?
LG: Yes.
RM: Did you have carbide lights in the mine, or was it candles?
LG: They had electric lights, but when I first worked in the mines they had candles, and then carbide lights.
RM: So you had a candle holder that you would hang in the mine.
LG: Yes. I've got one hanging up over there — right around the corner. You can't see anymore with it.
RM: Oh, yes. You're showing me a candle holder that you used in the mine yourself?
LG: Yes. You'd put the point in a crack and then put a candle here.
RM: Would you just have one candle or would you have more than one?
LG: Just one. As I said, after the candle we had carbide lights, and then we had electric lights.
RM: The battery light?
LG: You carried the battery on a belt, on your hip.

CHAPTER THREE

- RM: You say you have a vanadium property? Where is it located?
- LG: It's south here about 26 miles. I had it under option all these years and the last option was held by Canadians. They gave me a bum check and I cancelled them out, so there's nobody on it now. But it's all drilled out. It's a large deposit. Kennecott and others were interested in it, but South Africa dumped all their vanadium on the market and dropped the price. Then the major companies gave up.
- RM: What does good vanadium ore run?
- LG: I've got some there that's practically pure, just in pockets. The average out there is about half a percent. They blocked out around 20 to 30 million tons.
- RM: That much?
- LG: Yes. Noranda did that.
- RM: Did you find the deposit yourself?
- LG: Yes.
- RM: So you've done some prospecting?
- LG: Oh, I did quite a bit of that. I'd go out on my spare time and prospect. When I first found [the vanadium], I found nodules and I didn't know just what they were. I sent them to the Bureau of Mines and they made analysis of it and detected it was vanadium, and from then on I knew what I was looking for.
- RM: How did you happen to find it?
- LG: Just lucky, I guess. [Laughs]
- RM: Was it an old area that had been prospected over before?
- LG: No, it's a new area. They call it the Gibellini Area now.
- RM: What other things have you prospected for?
- LG: I've got an adjoining property where I found platinum, cobalt, nickel and zinc. It's a rich deposit — a pipe that came up. It's really not developed. It's got to really be drilled.
- RM: And it's a pipe that came up in rhyolite, or what?
- LG: In limestone.
- RM: Which way is it from Eureka?
- LG: It's also south of here about 26 miles. One side has the vanadium and the other side is all where that pipe comes up. The vanadium is in the shale and the pipe is in the limestone.
- RM: Did you ever do any gold prospecting?
- LG: I did, but I never realized any profit on it. [Laughs] My dad did a lot of prospecting, but he never found anything that made him wealthy. [Chuckles] I did make money off the vanadium. I sold it about half a dozen times.
- RM: Oh, yes. So you'd get the down payment, then get it back?
- LG: Yes. I did have a deal going, but since South Africa dumped all that vanadium, they gave it up. I don't know when it'll come back again.
- RM: It'll come back, probably. They always do, don't they?

-
- LG: Oh yes. Well, mining's undependable. It's up one day and down the next.
- RM: When you started mining here, Louis, how many properties were in operation? Could you name them?
- LG: Well, there was Mount Hope — it's north of here about 20 miles. Then there's the Diamond Mine. That's south of here about 5 miles. The Windfall is in the same neighborhood, a little south. Then the Holly Mine, and then the Ruby Hill Mine and the Dunderberg. That was years ago. The Dunderberg was operating before my time.
- RM: Are these mines all deep shafts?
- LG: Not exactly. Some were in drifts and stuff.
- RM: Were they all big producers in their day?
- LG: Ruby Hill was the biggest producer here. The rest were smaller producers, but they had smelters. That was before my time. You see those old dumps around here — at one time I think they had around 7 smelters between large ones and small ones.
- RM: How long did you work in the Ruby Hill Mine?
- LG: I think I leased up there for about 2 years.
- RM: Where else did you work?
- LG: I worked in the Holly Mine. They had a mill there.
- RM: How long did you work there?
- LG: Probably a year or so.
- RM: Tell me about the Holly Mine. What was it like?
- LG: It produced mostly lead and silver. Then it kind of was mined out and they closed down and that was the end of that.
- RM: What was another mine that you worked in?
- LG: The Diamond Mine.
- RM: Tell me about the Diamond.
- LG: The Diamond was mostly pockets. They were rich all right, but they were small. It was more or less a leaser's deal.
- RM: Was it deep?
- LG: It was tunnels and then they had shafts going down inside there —winzes and perpendicular shafts.
- RM: Was it a big producer?
- LG: Not really.
- RM: What was the second-biggest producer after the Ruby Hill that you worked in?
- LG: The Holly had a mill out there. It produced quite a little bit too. It was mostly lead and silver. Ruby Hill was a combination — gold, silver and lead.
- RM: What paid the bills, though? Was it the gold or the lead or the silver?
- LG: I think it was about equal.
- RM: Were the mines owned locally or by outside interests?
- LG: It was mostly all outside interests. There was nobody who operated locally who employed anybody.

RM: So, you began mining in the '20s?
LG: Just about.
RM: And did you work continuously in the mines?
LG: Yes, more or less.
RM: What did you do when you weren't working in the mines?
LG: I'd go out prospecting. I was always doing something.
RM: Did you ever get hurt or anything in the mine?
LG: No, I never did get hurt in the mine.
RM: You worked more or less continuously for how many years?
LG: Well, off and on more or less two-thirds of my life, I guess.
RM: When did you finally stop mining, then?
LG: About in the '60s.
RM: How did you get out to the mines?
LG: You generally walked. I was in charge up there at the Windfall, and I had an option on it. I had to put in so many shifts a month, and I went back and forth on skis. It was 5 miles.
RM: Really? Five miles each way on skis one way every day? Wow. You must have had a lot of snow.
LG: Oh, a lot of snow. The winters now are mild compared to what we used to have.
RM: How long did you work out there at the Windfall?
LG: I worked up there 3 or 4 years, I guess.
RM: When you were working at the Ruby Hill, how did you get over there?
LG: We walked. Ruby Hill is about a couple of miles, something like 2-1/2 miles away.
RM: So you walked 5 miles a day to and from work in addition to single-jacking all day. Man, you were in good shape!
LG: Yes, everything was the hard way. But we didn't know any better, so we enjoyed it.
RM: What about out at the Holly?
LG: The Holly is also about 2-1/2 miles. We walked.
RM: You always walked, even when it was cold and snowy and everything?
LG: Oh yes. We did everything the hard way years ago.
RM: On a cold day you were probably glad to get down in that mine, weren't you?
LG: Oh, yes. The temperature is more or less the same down in the mine, you know. Now it's a changed world — it's a lot easier now.
RM: Yes, it is. Do you think it's better?
LG: I think it's better, all right. But at that time we didn't know any better, so we enjoyed it. [Laughs]
RM: If you wanted to get a day's pay job in a mine, what did you do? Who did you see about getting a job?
LG: You'd see the superintendent and he'd hire you.
RM: Did you have many miners here who were on what they call "the circuit?"

LG: There were quite a few tramp miners at one time here. Ruby Hill had quite a few of those tramp miners, but it's a thing of the past now. It's all open pit, with big equipment.

RM: What is your definition of a tramp miner?

LG: He works one day and he's off the next. He's in and out. That's what they call a tramp miner — undependable.

RM: He works here and then he goes somewhere else?

LG: Yes.

RM: Were there a lot of them?

LG: There were quite a few of them, yes.

RM: When you were mining you charged at the grocery store, didn't you?

LG: Yes.

RM: How did that work?

LG: You had credit as long as you paid.

RM: How often did you have to pay?

LG: Once a month or something like that. They gave you credit if they knew you.

RM: Did most of the miners charge?

LG: Some did and some didn't. They had boardinghouses when they first started operating years ago. They stayed at the boardinghouses and paid whatever was necessary.

RM: Were there many boardinghouses when you started?

LG: They were almost a thing of the past. They did away with them.

RM: What did the miners' wives do? What kind of life did they lead?

LG: It was mostly home life, raising children. [Laughs]

RM: Did their life have a lot of hard work?

LG: It was nothing easy. It was all antique work.

RM: Washing on the board and things like that?

LG: [Laughs] That's right.

RM: How did people heat their homes then?

LG: With wood, mainly. There was a certain amount of coal, but mostly it was wood.

RM: Did women bake bread and all of that?

LG: Oh, yes, they did all their own baking and canning food and stuff. They don't do that anymore.

RM: Did the houses have indoor plumbing then or not?

LG: Very little.

RM: How did you take a bath in those days?

LG: In tubs. You would heat water on the stove.

RM: So when a miner came home from work, he didn't take a bath everyday, did he?

LG: Not necessarily, I guess.

RM: What would he do — wash up?

LG: Yes, in basins. It was all antiques. [Chuckles]

RM: Did most people have a car then?

LG: Very few had cars. The first car I remember there was when I lived at the Diamond — the superintendent had a car. He was the only one who could afford one.

RM: What did you do when you got sick?

LG: We had home remedies. I don't know just what they did use, but my folks had home remedies. There were doctors here, too, at that time. Of course, they went on sleds or buggies or something like that.

RM: They came to your house?

LG: Oh, yes.

RM: Was there a hospital in Eureka when you started mining?

LG: There was sort of a hospital up here north about half a mile. I don't know what they called it — the old age home, I guess. We didn't have any facilities like we have now.

RM: Did you get out of town much, over to Ely or Reno or anything?

LG: Very seldom. In the wintertime you went in a sled, and otherwise in a buggy. It would take you 2 or 3 days to get there.

RM: Did you ever take the railroad up north at all?

LG: Once in a great while. We had the narrow gauge and the broad gauge was over in Palisade.

RM: What kind of recreation did the miners engage in here?

LG: They built a big dance hall up there — that big tin building to the right about 2 or 3 blocks up the street there.

RM: Where the market is now, the Quick Stop?

LG: No, it's across from the clinic. They had dances and things like that. That's about the only recreation they had.

RM: Were there a lot of bars?

LG: There were a lot of bars in those days. Every other business was a bar, I guess. [Laughs]

RM: [Laughs] Were there brothels here in town?

LG: Probably so.

RM: Then you quit mining in the '60s?

LG: Well, in that neighborhood.

RM: Did mining just kind of peter out slowly?

LG: It just kind of petered out. I was in charge of different mines, and they all closed down. It was all underground mining then. We never had any open pits around here.

RM: Did they gradually close down because they couldn't make any money, or what?

LG: Well, they ran out of ore. And mining's undependable: [chuckles] up one day, down the next.

RM: How deep did the ore go here?

LG: In the Ruby Hill they found ore on the 2000-foot level. That's where they hit the big water, too, you know.

RM: Was it good ore?
LG: The ore is fair grade all right, but the water was too expensive to pump.
RM: So the ore is still going down in the Ruby Hill?
LG: Yes, the ore is still there. They didn't mine it; the water ran them out.
RM: How about the other mines? Was there ore in them when they shut them down?
LG: They were all pretty well done up — worked out.
RM: So they just gradually shut down one after another?
LG: That's right.
RM: What was the last mine to close down?
LG: Ruby Hill was the last mine they closed.
RM: Were you working there then?
LG: Yes. I was running hoist.
RM: How many men were working there when they shut it down?
LG: Probably 50 or 60.
RM: And all the ore above the water had been stoped out?
LG: Mined out, yes. The old company, U.S. Mining, owned it at that time and they mined most of the ore above the water level. Then they found these deposits below the water, but the water was so great they couldn't mine with a profit, so they closed it down.
RM: Was it good water or was it polluted water?
LG: It was kind of polluted — there was a lot of arsenic in it.
RM: I'll be darned. It must have been like a river.
LG: More or less, I guess. I never was down in there, but [they said] when they struck it, it was just like a river. It just flooded them right out. As I said, they pumped about 10,000 gallons a minute there for a couple of years, but they never did lower the water level. Then they had some people from Canada come in, and they grouted it. Then they put these big water doors in and that was the last of the workings.
RM: What were the water doors supposed to do?
LG: They were to keep the water from coming into the shaft. They hit the water when they drove these drifts from the shaft.
RM: What did you do after that mine shut down?
LG: I went to Ely and worked over there a while.
RM: Where did you work?
LG: At Kimberly.
RM: As an underground miner.
LG: Yes. It was all underground at Kimberly. Ruth was open pit, you know — Kennecott Copper.
RM: Yes. My dad worked in the Kalinsky and Ruth shafts there. He helped sink those. Did you work in those?
LG: Yes.
RM: I went back a few years ago to see if I could find the Kalinsky and Ruth shafts. I asked somebody where they were and he pointed out the middle of

-
- an open pit.
- LG: They probably had shafts and then they open-pitted it and did away with the shafts.
- RM: How long did you stay over at Ely?
- LG: I was there a couple of years, then I left there and came back to Eureka.
- RM: And when did you get your bar?
- LG: I opened the bar in '47, but now I just open on special occasions.
- RM: So you were running a bar at the same time you were mining?
- LG: Yes. I was in charge of Lone Mountain out there and I built the bar in the meantime.
- RM: Tell me about Lone Mountain.
- LG: Lone Mountain was mostly zinc. We sank a shaft over there and we mined out most of it. Then they closed it down.
- RM: How deep did you go?
- LG: The deepest shaft, I think, was around 300 feet.
- RM: Was there a lot of ore there?
- LG: No, just pockets.
- RM: What did it run?
- LG: It was high-grade zinc, probably 40 to 50 percent, some of it, but in small pockets.
- RM: Was there any lead in it?
- LG: Very little.
- RM: Where is Lone Mountain from here?
- LG: It's about 20 miles north of here. You go on Highway 50 and turn off to the right out here about 20 miles. It's off of the highway probably 4 or 5 miles.
- RM: And how many men were working there at its heyday?
- LG: Not too many — 5 or 6 is all.
- RM: When was that — after the war?
- LG: They closed down in '52.
- RM: And they worked there, what, 3 or 4 years?
- LG: Yes, something like that. We sunk the shaft and that was it. It didn't run too long.
- RM: Was it a new discovery or was it an old mine?
- LG: It was kind of a new discovery. Combined Metals had it.
- RM: Oh? The Combined Metals Company that had a mine in Pioche?
- LG: Yes.
- RM: Did you know Ed Snyder?
- LG: Oh, yes; real well. I worked for Ed Snyder at the Windfall — they had the Windfall, too. Ed Snyder and David Snyder and Guy Snyder . . . I knew all of that bunch.
- RM: Tell me about them.
- LG: Ed Snyder was the principal of the whole outfit. He kept them all going while he was alive. When he passed away, that was the end of the organization. He was quite a promoter.

RM: Did he come around here much?

LG: Well, he came around here when the Windfall was running, but just off and on, now and then; not too often. And of course after that, they open-pitted the Windfall. The price of gold went up. It was mainly gold. That's the only one they open-pitted.

RM: Where is the Windfall, again?

LG: It's south here about 5 miles.

RM: How deep was the Windfall originally?

LG: I think about 500 or 600 feet.

RM: And then they just took the whole thing with an open pit?

LG: Yes, when the price of gold went up. The Windfall Mine was not owned by Snyder or Combined Metals when they open-pitted it.

RM: Did they heap leach it?

LG: Yes. They got some big, open-pit holes up there.

RM: So you built your bar in '47?

LG: Well, I opened it in '47.

RM: When did you start on it?

LG: A couple of years before that.

RM: What made you want to open a bar?

LG: My folks owned it and they kind of pushed me into it; not that I wanted it.

RM: Oh, they owned it before you?

LG: They didn't run it. It was a bar years ago and they just owned the building. Then I got started on it and I kept going, but I didn't care about it.

CHAPTER FOUR

- RM: So you got into running the bar because your folks had it?
- LG: That's right.
- RM: Did you remodel it or anything?
- LG: Oh, yes. I practically overdid it. I put a new front in, and a roof . . . I redid the whole thing.
- RM: How did you afford that?
- LG: I did most of the work myself.
- RM: And you opened it in '47 and you've still got it?
- LG: Oh, yes. I just open on special occasions now. If you wanted to give a party or something I might open it.
- RM: How long did you keep it open all the time?
- LG: Years ago I had it open most of the time, but I haven't kept it open for the last 7 or 8 years.
- RM: Did you run it yourself, or did you have hired help?
- LG: No, I had hired help. I didn't care about the bar, myself. I was pushed into it and I got going on it, and I wound up with the bar.
- RM: And you were mining in addition to the bar then?
- LG: Yes, I was in charge of Lone Mountain for Ed Snyder — Combined Metals had it at that time.
- RM: What were some of the things you had to deal with in opening and running a bar?
- LG: Drunks, mainly. [Chuckles]
- RM: Where did you get your liquor?
- LG: We got it out of a warehouse in Ely.
- RM: What do they call it?
- LG: What the heck do they call it? It's a wholesale house over there — it was called Peralda Wholesale and Sierra Wine at first.
- RM: Did you ever serve food there?
- LG: Well, when we had parties once in a while, but we really didn't serve [meals].
- RM: So you didn't have a grill or anything there — it was just a bar.
- LG: Oh, no; just a bar.
- RM: Was it profitable?
- LG: In a way it was, but it was hard to find decent bartenders; they robbed you blind.
- RM: How did you keep them from stealing everything?
- LG: I couldn't. The only time I made any money was when I kept it closed. [Laughter] People would say, "Why don't you open it?" I'd say, "Well, I make more money closed." [Laughs] They either gave your liquor away or they robbed you.
- RM: A guy would come in and order a drink, and the bartender would put the money in his pocket, wouldn't he?
- LG: That's right. I had a bartender and she took me for about \$800 one night.

-
- RM: How did she do it?
- LG: She just took everything that came in. I thought she was doing a good job, and a party said, "Look in your till," and the till was empty.
- RM: Did you ever report these people to the police, or anything?
- LG: No, I just forgot it. They were local, so I just forgot it. Yes, they really knew how to take you.
- RM: Did you have a juke box?
- LG: Oh, yes. I still have it up there.
- RM: Where did you get it?
- LG: I got that out of Salt Lake.
- RM: They couldn't steal that, could they?
- LG: No, but I had an entrance rug in front of the door and they stole that. I had pictures on the wall taken. In a crowd you couldn't watch them all.
- RM: So they'd steal rugs and pictures and everything.
- LG: Oh, yes — terrible. So I made money when I kept it closed. Of course, on special occasions I do all right. I might have 5 or 6 parties a year and I do pretty well then. But it's hard to find a decent bartender, so I just keep it closed.
- I remodelled the front last year. It's the nicest bar in town. I laid all those hardwood floors. When I was working at Lone Mountain as the boss during the day I laid the hardwood floors in the evenings.
- RM: Where did you get the money to remodel the front and everything?
- LG: I did pretty well on that vanadium mine. I had it under option 7 or 8 times.
- RM: When did you make the discovery on the vanadium?
- LG: That was in the '50s.
- RM: Were people interested in that mine during World War II?
- LG: More or less, yes. I sold it 7 or 8 times. That mine is what kept me going.
- RM: The mine supported the bar.
- LG: The mine supported the bar. Now there's nobody at the mine, so I closed the bar. [Laughter] But I did the work on it, except that Young Electric put the new front in. I had a front and I had it all changed.
- RM: Where did you get the bar itself?
- LG: I more or less made it. There's a lot of work yet to be done, but when I closed it I just left everything undone.
- RM: When did you build your quarters in back of the bar?
- LG: In the '50s. This is my daughter, Janelle Dietrich,
- RM: Hi. Janelle, could you tell us a little bit about the building where the bar is, and Louis's living quarters upstairs over the bar?
- JD: I don't know about the original part of the building, but I do know that they opened June 17th, 1947. We moved upstairs in 1952 to the living quarters. My dad did all the carpenter work; he is a perfectionist.
- RM: So you refurbished the top floor for your family quarters?
- LG: Yes.
- RM: Oh, OK. (We're in the very back part upstairs.)

JD: Right. The kitchen, living room and porch adjoin the old building. The street is above the roof in the back of the living quarters. So my dad had to remove the dirt by hand, and return with rock and sand to up the drywall up to keep the street from caving in, then put a cement wall up.

LG: Everything I did was the hard way.

RM: Well, being an old mucker, you could do that, couldn't you?

LG: Oh, yes.

JD: He worked approximately 20 hours a day. He and my mom worked very hard. At age 85, he's still working on the building or in the yard. [Laughs]

RM: He's amazing. So you added the back part later?

LG: Yes.

RM: And the other part — your quarters — go clear to the front of the building?

JD: No, my dad and mom did not complete the front over the front part of the bar, as they were going to build rooms upstairs over the bar to rent out. But about that time the Ruby Hill mine closed. It was a chore living up Spring Street and trying to operate the bar, so my dad built our living quarters above the bar.

LG: I'll show you the bar.

RM: OK. That'd be great.

JD: Oh, it's fantastic. And he has done all the work inside the bar himself.

LG: I laid all those hardwood floors and everything.

RM: You must be quite a carpenter, too.

LG: No.

JD: Yes! [Laughs] He doesn't brag upon himself, but I'll tell you, it's quite a work of art. He started in the dance hall with 2 2-inch blocks of wood in the center, and then he went around. Therefore, you're always dancing with the grain of the wood.

RM: That's interesting.

JD: In those days they had a hard time getting lumber because of the war, so the lumber that they have in the cocktail lounge did shrink a little bit. The wood that they finally got in the dance hall was narrower wood, but better quality. And it is beautiful.

RM: What do you know about the origin of the building itself? How far back does it date?

LG: My folks owned it, and the front was all knocked out. I didn't want any part of it, but I finally got involved in it, and I just kept a-going, and I wound up with a bar. My folks pushed me into it. [Chuckles]

RM: When did your folks acquire it?

LG: I don't know — years ago. A relative donated it to them when he passed away. And that's years and years ago.

RM: Would that be before 1900?

LG: I think so.

RM: Has the building always been a bar?

LG: It was a bar at that time, and then the Basques had a restaurant in there, and

-
- I finally took over.
- JD: My grandmother had leased the building to a man who was going to refurbish the building and start a business. I don't think my grandmother got a penny out of it, did she?
- LG: Nothing. He destroyed everything, and I put it together. [Chuckles]
- JD: This man knocked the front out, and then he tried to make a septic tank, because in those days there was no sewer system in the community. He dug a great big hole out there where the motor home is sitting now. One day my grandmother came up to the house and she was telling my dad, "You've got to go do something. The building's going to fall in."
And my dad said, "I don't want to have anything to do with that building."
[Laughs]
- LG: And I was pushed into it.
- JD: When he looked at it he went back home and told my mother, "Well, they will lose the building if I don't go down and do something." [Laughter]
- LG: He destroyed everything and I kind of put things together a little bit.
- RM: Was that about in '42?
- JD: No, it only took you about a year to open it, didn't it?
- LG: Yes — maybe it was '45. I opened it in '47.
- JD: And one year to the day later he was robbed.
- LG: Oh, yes, they broke in. I had gambling in there at that time — a juke box and punch boards and slot machines. I was still remodeling, and underneath there I had an opening, and they went in and broke through the ceiling, and entered the building that way.
- JD: They had really cased the place, because there was just a little opening right down here. They crawled clear over to where the men's restroom sink was. They broke through the ceiling so that they could stand on the sink and get down. Of course it was masonite, I think, in those days, so it wasn't too hard to break through. And they robbed the place. But at that time he didn't have a safe. And he had a bankroll because he had a 21 table and a crap table, and they looked where it was originally kept, but they didn't get the bankroll.
- LG: Well, I changed [its hiding place] that evening.
- JD: When he gets these suspicions that something's going to happen, they usually do. He did move the bankroll that night, and they did check the area where it would have been.
- RM: How much did you lose?
- LG: I don't know. What I had in the juke box — maybe \$50 or \$60. All in all, what they got away with totalled \$500 or \$600.
- JD: But then, the slot machines were on contract; they were someone else's.
- LG: They broke in the slot machines and punch boards and . . .
- RM: What was involved, Louis, in getting a gambling license in those days?
- LG: It was strict. I got the gambling license and I had roulette, 21, a crap table — I had all the gambling in there.
- JD: And his tables all matched, with the clawed feet. I don't know what the

material was, but it was very heavy wood; beautiful stuff. And of course when they checked him out, he got a nonrestricted [gaming] license.

RM: You could do anything you wanted to?

LG: Oh, yes. You can have any amount of gaming on a nonrestricted license.

JD: He could still get a nonrestricted license if he wanted to reapply, as he has a clear record.

RM: How did the gambling business work here? Was it pretty good?

LG: It wasn't too bad; I did pretty well. But when I lost my wife I lost interest in the bar, so I let my license go in 1962 or '63. If you had a gaming license you had to stay open, and I didn't want to keep the bar open every day.

JD: Tell him the story of the man who tried to rob you when you were tending bar one night.

LG: Well, Ruby Hill was working then, and I got this one guy a job there. In fact, we had him up here for dinner and everything. One night he came in . . .

JD: Daddy, you should start from the beginning. This man had charged drinks and had borrowed money from him. Then he brought down a gun to have my dad hold for security. My dad said, "I don't want a gun around here. Guns are bad business. I've got the kids around also." (At that time I was probably 10, 11 years old, so I was real young, too.)

He finally told my dad, "Well, I want you to keep it for security reasons." So he kept it. And then one evening the man came back to the bar, and Grace Tognoni was sitting in there and so was Billy Ring. Billy Ring was about 90 years old at that time and Grace was a young lady. They were just sitting down at the end of the bar chit-chatting. The guy said he wanted his gun and my dad looked for it and said, "My wife must have moved it because of the kids or something. I don't see it here." And my dad at that point was thinking, "Gee, I wonder if now I'm going to be charged to supply a gun for him," besides the tab that he had run. Well, my dad couldn't find the gun, so the man walked out and then he came back, didn't he? And you found the gun under the bar mops and you gave it to him.

LG: Then he went into the restroom. He said, "Your restrooms are running over." I said, "Let them run." You know, he wanted me to go in there.

So he came out and he said, "This is a holdup. You give me the money out of that till."

Well, I said, "Come and get it." And I had a club there. I figured, "When he's fooling with the cash register, I'll tap him on top of the head." So he came around, and he saw that I had this club and he stopped, and then he went out. Then he came back again, and he had a long coat on, and he put his hand in his coat pocket and he said, "Now I mean business. You hand that money over. Or I'm going to fill you full of lead."

Well, I said, "Come and get it." That's when I had that club. And he saw it, so he stopped right there, see. He had a friend working at the mine up there, and you came in, or . . .

JD: No, my mother came in, and she walked through the bar, went out the back

door and quickly ran uptown and got his friend. I guess they were rooming in the same room — and she said, “Geez, you’d better go down to the bar, ‘cause it looks rough.” Well, in the meantime, Grace and Billy Ring both left. [Laughter]

LG: When my wife told these 2 partners what was going on they came down, and they kind of eased things off a little bit, and they got him out of there. And he said, “Well, I’m going to get you one of these times, regardless.” He came back here several years later and he said, “You know who I am?” I didn’t recognize him then. But he said, “You could’ve sent me to prison that time when I came in to hold you up. Now I’m in charge of a party down here, and we’re going to do some work,” and, he said, “I’m going to give you all my business.” [Chuckles]

So I said, “Well, OK.” Then I recognized who he was. But when he finally left town, I think he owed me some money.

JD: Yes. He owed you some money the first time. The cops came up at the time of this incident and they wanted to know if my dad wanted to press charges and all, and he said, “No, just get him out of town. We don’t need these kind of people in town. Just give him a floater.”

So they did; they gave him a floater. There was a bus that used to come in the morning, and one in the afternoon. One went to Ely and one went to Reno.

RM: What was the name of the stage?

JD: The Hiskey Stage Line. My mother was looking out the window of the bar, and she saw him over there at Gebo’s, because that’s where you boarded the bus.

LG: Right there next to the bank. And she said, “You’re going to let him go, without him paying you?”

JD: Now my dad has never collected a bill before or since. But he said, “No! Damn it, I’m going to go get that money.”

My mother said, “About time!”

Well, my dad met him up at Gebo’s and he said, “I want to get paid the money you owe me.

He said, “Well, I’m coming back, and I’ll pay you then, ‘cause I got a round trip ticket.”

My dad said, “No, you’re going to pay me now. If you don’t pay me now, instead of going toward Ely,” he said, “you’re going to be going toward Carson.” [Laughter] [The state prison is in Carson City.]

And he said, “Well, Louie, would you like to have a drink?”

My dad said, “Sure.”

So they went across the street to the Eureka Hotel . . .

LG: No, we went into the ice cream parlor and he bought me a milkshake. [Laughter] Yes, he said, “I’ll pay you when I come back.”

I said, “You’re going to pay me before you leave.” The stage had just pulled up, and I said, “You’re either going to pay me or you’re not going that way,

you're going this way."

So he went across into the bar, and he went in the restroom.

JD: This was in the Eureka Hotel. And at that time Freddie and Jean Jauregui owned that. (And the bus was only held 30 minutes here.)

LG: He finally came out and he paid me. He said, "I'm going to get you yet!"

JD: But before he finished paying him, he decided he was going to walk up to the post office and get his mail, I guess. My dad walked partway, and then he just ditched into the barbershop, which Carl Harris owned at the time. It was just a little barbershop; not very big. So when the man started coming back down the street, my dad jumped out from the barbershop and said, "Hey, this is it; you're going to pay me!"

LG: So by god, he paid me. And he said, "I'll get you yet."

I said, "OK," and I let him go, and he went on into Ely.

JD: It must've been 20 years later that he came back and asked my dad if he knew who he was. And he said, "Oh, I'm going to be in charge of this place out here, and I'll see that you get all of my business." Well, we never saw him again.

RM: Luckily. [Laughs]

JD: Yes, really. And here he was a big man. Of course, my dad being so scrawny and little . . . but nobody buffaloed him. One time there was a fight in the bar — they had very [few fights].

CHAPTER FIVE

JD: He had very little trouble in his bar because he ran a very straight bar. It was always a very nice place and people really respected it. But one night there was a fight. This one man weighed over 300 pounds, and everybody in town was scared to death of him. His name was Snuffy Smith. Everybody would let him fight or do whatever he wanted because he was the powerhouse. Well, my dad was tending bar. He jumped over the top of the bar, and picked Smith up by a leg and an arm and he hollered at my mother, "Open the door!" It was in the middle of the winter, and of course they were having a dance because they always had a dance on Friday and Saturday, with live music. My dad threw him out of the bar and he went over the top of a snowdrift. Everybody in the place was astonished, because here's this little tiny guy, half his size, picking this man up and then throwing him out. After it was over, my dad kind of collapsed, because his nerves got the best of him. The town was then run by 2 people, the sheriff and the constable.

RM: What were their names?

LG: Stanley Fine and Mike Donnally.

JD: Stanley Fine — we called him "Finney" — was the sheriff and Mike Donnally the constable.

LG: And they walked.

JD: Yes, there was no vehicle for them. The mine was going up at Ruby Hill and the mine was going out at Mount Hope, and there were a lot of big, tough, rough guys in the community. Today it would be a disgrace, because there are people walking and driving all over and they can't do anything. [Laughs] But anyway, Mike Donnally came down to pick up Snuffy Smith and he started giving Mike a little argument. So Mike asked my dad, "Can you help me get him up to the jail?"

And my dad said, "I sure can." He grabbed him by the arm and just led him right up to the police department [laughs] and they put him in the jug.

RM: Oh, my goodness. Isn't that funny. [laughs]

JD: Well, that was the first time that Snuffy Smith . . .

LG: Snuffy Smith worked for me out at Lone Mountain.

JD: After, wasn't it?

LG: No, before. Anyway, after that Snuffy Smith would walk down and he'd look in the bar, but he never did come in to bother me again. He was a tough, big man.

JD: He weighed at least 300 pounds. And he was a cowboy — he used to wear cowboy boots and Levi's.

RM: Well, anybody who could swing a single jack all day, I wouldn't want to tangle with. [Laughs]

JD: No. In fact, I have never seen such strength as what he has had in his life.

RM: Oh, I'm sure. He was a single-jack champion.

JD: He held the world record, you know, up until the '70s. I think he lost it in the early '70s.

LG: [Laughs]

RM: That's incredible. Yes, look at that. [Mr. Gibellini flexes his muscles.]

JD: That's a funny story, too. He went to a doctor not too many years ago because he wasn't feeling well. He was in Salt Lake going through a complete physical, and this doctor asked him, "How long have you had that lump in your arm?" [Laughter] My dad thought he was joking with him. But the doctor said, "My goodness. We should check this out." And my dad said, "It's my muscle!" and goes like this [flexes the arm]. So he had the nurses all come in and check out this muscle. But he actually thought it was a growth in his arm.

RM: Let's see your muscle. Oh, my golly!

JD: In those days it used to be like this.

RM: Isn't that amazing?

JD: It was mainly the right arm.

RM: Sure. Let's see your left arm muscle.

LG: Well, the left arm's not bad.

RM: Yes, there's a difference. That's a great story. Do you know any more?

LG: When I was running the Windfall, on the Fourth of July I watered everything down because I had a hunch they were going to burn me out.

RM: Oh!

JD: He gets these hunches and they've always come true.

LG: I told the people that were working up there, "I think I'm going to get burned out." My father-in-law owned sheep, and he had a camp tender living up above there . . .

JD: Well, they had sheep just above, in that same canyon.

LG: That night I didn't sleep at all. I just worried about it, you know. I saw the sheep tender come down and make a turn toward my dwelling. So I said I guess it happened. He said, "Everything's afire up there." So by god they did burn me out.

RM: Why did they burn you out?

JD: Jealousy and ignorance.

RM: Who did it?

JD: They never did know who did it.

LG: I don't know to this day who did it.

RM: But they burned you out of the mine?

LG: Well, it wasn't mine. I was in charge, but Combined Metals owned it.

RM: Did they burn the building or the gallows frame, or what?

LG: The hoist room and everything — they burned it all out.

JD: And it was all just powder, because they had put gas around the building. They found a 50-gallon drum.

RM: But why would they do that? That mine meant jobs for people and everything. I've never heard of people burning out a mine.

JD: Well, they did. Tell them about the time that Mama went to pay the taxes on the same mine at the courthouse.

LG: We lost the property through the county officials. The taxes were due and they were a little late in coming. Finally Combined Metals sent the money for the taxes. I was working at Ruby Hill and my wife went up to the courthouse with the check from Combined Metals. The county clerk said, "They don't own the mine anymore." So Mickey threw the check on the floor. Then of course the county was supposed to own the mine, because the taxes were due and they weren't paid up to that point.

JD: But the county officials bought it, which was illegal. County officials were not supposed to be buying delinquent tax property.

RM: Sure.

JD: The property was put into 3 names: Mickey Delany, his brother and Pete Merialdo. Mickey Delany was the treasurer and clerk. Pete Merialdo was the recorder. There would have been no conflict with Mickey Delany's brother, because he was not an official for the county.

RM: Louis, why don't we say a few words about your wife? What was her maiden name and when did you get married? You can do that if you want, Janelle.

JD: My mother was Josefyne Elizabeth Florio. She was born September 5th, 1908, to Amie Rosevear Florio and A. C. Florio in Eureka, Nevada, in a red brick home on Ruby Hill that still stands. She graduated from high school in Eureka, and went to Reno to the University of Nevada for her freshman year. She transferred to the College of the Pacific in Stockton, California. She majored in voice and interior decorating. She sang in many contests all over the United States, and won many of them. She had a beautiful voice. She sang for most weddings and funerals in Eureka. She was very talented and was loved by everyone. She had time for everyone, and was so caring.

My mom and dad were married in Salt Lake City, Utah. They had 2 children — my sister, who is 2 years older than myself, and me. My sister's name is Sharon Lea Gibellini, but everyone calls her "Tim" as when she was born she only weighed 4 pounds, so they called her "Tiny Tim." Her name has stayed with her, but she likes to be called Sharon.

My mother was the eldest of 3 children. Her brother Angelo passed away at age 20 of a ruptured appendix. Alice Florio is the youngest, and lives in Reno, Nevada. Alice has written a book of poetry and many beautiful songs. My mother died of a heart attack on November 29th, 1962.

The most recent event for my dad is that the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., has contacted him to put on display for the Columbus Day 500-year celebration his single jack, steel, trophies and the skis that he made when he was contracting at the Windfall Mine.

RM: Oh, yes; he would ski to work.

JD: His contract consisted of 30 shifts a month, and that winter the snow was 8 to 10 feet deep. He made the skis so he could go to work, because his truck couldn't make it through the snow. It took him about an hour and a half to

go to work on the skis.

LG: Yes.

JD: He'd work all day in the mine and ski back home. How long did it take you to ski home, Daddy?

LG: About 45 minutes.

JD: And the Library of Congress will have his skis on display.

RM: In the Library back east?

JD: Not only in the Library. On October the 10th, 1992, they will be on display in Santa Clara, California. On December the 18th they will be on display in Reno. The display will go through the United States for one year, then be displayed at the Library of Congress for one year. My grandfather A. C. Florio's picture and saddle were also taken to the Library.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

JD: When my dad worked at his mine 26 miles south of here he would go out by himself many, many, many days. He had a dog named Jingo. And at 4:00 that dog wanted to go home, and he'd start barking. If my dad had gone down the shaft area, the dog would start pushing rocks, and he'd just raise cain until my dad would come up and tell him "OK, we're going to go home." He had another little dog before that named Prince. That dog used to go in the mine with him and stay right by him all day long. One time when they blasted, it broke his eardrums.

**An Interview with
HERBERT HAWKINS**

*An Oral History conducted and edited by
Robert D. McCracken
1993*

CONTENTS

An Interview with Herb Hawkins

- CHAPTER ONE 3
On Herb's parents, natives of Eureka County; background information on the Eureka and Palisade Railroad and on the lead mines of Eureka; how Herb's Hawkins grandparents moved from Pennsylvania to Palisade; how Herb's father and his 3 brothers had jobs on the railroad; a description of the railroad's run between Palisade and Eureka; the motor cars the railroad ran; times when the railroad would need extra engines; the Eureka and Palisade shuts down in 1938 when the price of lead drops; Herb recalls Ruby Hill in the early 1930s; recalling ranches in Pine Valley that the railroad passed through; the mines at Mineral Hill and Blackburn; how the Eureka and Palisade's engineers would stop and chat with local ranchers, Indians and cowboys; how the railroad delivered mail along its route; carrying a plow on the engine in the winter.
- CHAPTER TWO 10
Remarks on Charles Sexton, owner of the Eureka and Palisade Railroad; a discussion of the Western Pacific and Southern Pacific railroads' operations at Palisade, and the Southern Pacific's rock quarry outside town; Herb recalls his school days at Palisade; using the train to go shopping; the size of the Southern Pacific stockyards at Palisade; a description of the one-room schoolhouse in Palisade; how the economy of Palisade faded during the Great Depression; guarding the railroad tunnels at Palisade during World War II; remembering the freedom of a Palisade childhood; Herb's brother and sisters; a move to Elko.
- CHAPTER THREE 18
On Herb's mother's parents — both the Quicks and Jureys came to Eureka from Cornwall, England; Herb's grandfather Jurey and his brothers were mining foremen at Eureka, and his great-grandfather Quick was a mining engineer; Herb's summers spent with his grandmother Jurey during the Great Depression; some of the jobs Herb held in Elko, including work for Doby Doc Caudill; on Doby Doc's collection of Western memorabilia; how Herb got a job selling General Motors products; on acquiring the Brown Hotel in Eureka.
- CHAPTER FOUR 24
Herb buys and later disposes of the Sentinel Building and Opera House in Eureka; some of the antiques in the Brown Hotel; Herb's children; remembering Fourth of July celebrations in Pine Valley; a description of the area around Alpha.
- CHAPTER FIVE 28
A story of a whiskey mishap during Prohibition; recollections of the mines at Eureka; ethnic backgrounds of the Eureka miners; remembering charcoal burners; how people hauled supplies to Eureka before the Eureka and Palisade Railroad; the stores

in Eureka at the turn of the century; celebrating the Fourth of July in Eureka; remarks on the tunnels beneath some Eureka stores; screening ore from the ore dumps in Eureka and Ruby Hill during the Great Depression; remembering some of Eureka's old-timers; sheep ranching in the area; praise for the people of Eureka; a bank that stayed open during the Depression; an anecdote concerning A. C. Florio.

CHAPTER SIX

34

Recalling a teacher who worked in the Diamond Mine community; the water in the Ruby Hill Mine; trying to reopen the Ruby Hill Mine; Herb's car dealership in Elko, and travels through Eureka County selling trucks to ranchers; remembering various ranchers from Railroad Valley to Battle Mountain; a still in Diamond Valley, and delivering booze in Model Ts during Prohibition.

This is Robert McCracken talking to Herb Hawkins at his home in Elko, Nevada, February 16, 1993.

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Herb, why don't we start with you telling me your name as it reads on your birth certificate.

HH: I'm Herbert Raymond Hawkins. I was born in Eureka, Nevada, September 26, 1925, at Ruby Hill Mine (that's 4 miles out of Eureka). My father was Raymond Elson Hawkins; he was an engineer on the Eureka Nevada Palisade Railroad. My mother was Gertrude Mabel Jurey, and she was born in Eureka, Nevada.

RM: Do you remember where your father was born?

HH: He was born in Palisade, Nevada. The whole Hawkins family was born and raised in Palisade. It was a railroad town — the Southern Pacific went through Palisade on its main line. And they built the narrow gauge around the 1890s with Chinese help to get the ore out of the smelters (the bullion first) and to haul freight and cattle out, and for the ranchers, and to take the freight into Eureka and groceries and supplies [back to the ranches and mines]. I was told there were approximately 5000 Chinese working on the narrow gauge railroad, and they put it in in about 2 years. The 4 Hawkins brothers ran it most of the time.

RM: They were the engineers?

HH: Engineer, fireman, conductor, brakeman.

RM: They did it all.

HH: And they had an extra crew once in a while. For instance, if one of my uncles or my dad got sick or something, another guy would go out. The railroad was owned by Charles B. Sexton. They had a ticket office and freight office in Palisade, and they had a roundhouse with a turntable and unloading chutes for the ore that came out of Eureka. When they'd come back from Eureka, they'd bring speece out of the smelters (I believe there were 5 smelters in Eureka at the time; this was in the early days, before I was born). They'd bring this speece rock back for the railroad for the Southern Pacific to haul back for ballast around the bridges along the Humboldt River and on the curves.

RM: What is speece?

HH: It's an iron ore — a pure iron that comes out of the smelters. There was a lot of silver in Eureka, but mostly it was lead. I guess Eureka at one time controlled the lead price of the world. My grandfather, Henry Quick, ran the mines in Eureka. His picture's in the state museum in Carson City.

RM: Let's back up. How did the Hawkins get to Palisade?

HH: The Hawkins were originally from Pennsylvania. I guess on account of the railroad getting going, they found work in Palisade. They had 9 children — 4 daughters and 5 boys — and every one of the boys was a railroader; they

worked on the railroad for Charlie Sexton.

RM: Were they all born in Palisade?

HH: They were all born in Palisade.

RM: So they grew up there, and then when the railroad came, they just kind of moved right into it?

HH: Yes.

RM: What was their dad's occupation?

HH: He was the constable in Palisade.

RM: What was his name?

HH: Nathaniel P. Hawkins.

RM: And he's the one who came from Pennsylvania?

HH: Yes. He and his wife got married back there and they moved out here, and they both lived and died in Palisade. I believe out of the whole family only the father and mother and one of the boys are buried in the Palisade graveyard. The rest of them are [scattered]. I just lost my father. He died a year ago in Ogden, Utah. The rest of them are in Reno and Elko.

They all lived in Palisade. It was quite an operation. It was a trading point for Eureka — Eureka was a pretty good-sized town at one time. And from what I understand from being up in Eureka later on, there were breweries in Eureka and 40 or 50 saloons, grocery stores, automobile dealerships, an opera house . . . which at one time I owned.

RM: You owned the Opera House?

HH: Yes. I bought it from Tom Pastorino. I bought the Brown Hotel first, then I bought the Opera House and then I bought the Sentinel building. The *Sentinel* was Eureka's first newspaper.

RM: And that's the building where the museum is now?

HH: Yes. I donated that to the county and they made a museum out of it.

RM: That's a wonderful thing. What were the Hawkins brothers' first names in order of birth?

HH: The oldest one was Pete Hawkins. He quit the railroad and moved to Sparks, Nevada. The next was Bill Hawkins; he was a conductor on the railroad. Then there was Ted Hawkins, who was the fireman. The next one was Nat Hawkins — Nathaniel Hawkins. He was the brakeman. After the railroad closed, he moved to Sparks too. And then there was my father. He was the youngest boy — Raymond Hawkins.

RM: And what was his job on the railroad?

HH: He was the engineer on the train.

RM: Did they just have one engine on the tracks at any one time?

HH: Yes. They had 4 engines in Palisade. The train would leave Palisade going to Eureka, probably with freight going up and probably 8 ore cars. Each narrow gauge ore car carried 20 tons, while a Southern Pacific ore car would carry between 80 and 100 tons. They'd leave Palisade at 8:00 in the morning, and it was 85 miles between Palisade and Eureka. They had a battery-operated hand-crank telephone, and every 7 miles they'd have to call in to

the office until they got about 60 miles from Palisade; then they'd call in to Eureka. Charlie Sexton's brother ran the ticket office in Eureka. It was a narrow gauge track, so it was built on smaller ties, smaller rails — 20-foot rails. The ties weren't compacted in rocks like the main line of the Southern Pacific.

RM: They just sat on the ground?

HH: They just sat on the ground. When they'd get about 60 miles out of Palisade, they'd have to call in to Eureka. And on the line going to Eureka, they had 3 places they could take on water. The first place they called the Hay Ranch — that was approximately 20 miles out of Palisade. At the Hay Ranch they had a section with a foreman and 3 men working. The next place they took water was Alpha, and they had a section there.

RM: Now, what's a section?

HH: A section is the stretch of track for the laborers who keep the track up.

RM: Oh, OK — a section crew.

HH: Yes. And they took water there. They also had stockyards at Alpha where the cattlemen and sheepmen would bring their livestock in. It was up on top of a hill, and they had a big wye and a switching yard there so you could turn your train around. Then from Alpha they'd go into Garden Pass. That was the only summit they had between Palisade and Eureka. It wasn't a big summit; it was about 4 miles long. Then they'd go downhill and they had a station there at Garden Pass, and that was the last place they called in. That was about 16 miles out of Eureka.

They'd usually arrive in Eureka about 4:00 in the afternoon, and they'd take the empty ore cars up to Ruby Hill and leave them and bring about 4 loaded cars downhill. In those days there were no air brakes or nothing like there are now; it was like a steering wheel for brakes — they'd wind them down. And they could only bring down 4 ore cars at a time.

They'd stay in Eureka at lodging places — some of them stayed in hotels, others in cafeteria kind of boardinghouses. Then the next morning they'd leave Eureka the same way. When they were coming back, they had 2 motor cars that would leave Palisade . . . (Say the train was coming back from Eureka.) The motor car would always carry the mail, and they had 2 of those. One of the brothers or somebody might run one of those, and they'd take the mail up that way.

RM: It was a railroad car with a motor on it?

HH: It was like what you'd call a motor home today, only it was on railroad wheels. They had one about 20 feet long and one about 14 feet long.

RM: So while the train was in Eureka, this one would come down from Palisade?

HH: Right, with the mail. Unless they really got busy and they were getting a lot of ore. In that case they would put on an extra crew; hire extra guys. But very seldom did that happen. The only time that I ever saw them running 2 trains was when they were putting Highway 50 in. They were hauling the oil up there for that. There was a gasoline station in Eureka at the time —

Standard Oil — and they took the gas up. There was a spur by the depot, and that's how they got gas and things like that. When they were oiling Highway 50 — that was probably during the Depression — I remember all the oil cars they had to buy to take the oil up. But usually it was just one day the train would go up to Eureka and pick up the ore cars or whatever had to come back.

Then in the fall of the year, they used to send a special car up. They probably had about 20 stock cars. There were a lot of ranches in Pine Valley and as far as Alpha. Eureka Livestock Company at one time had pretty close to 100,000 head of sheep, and they brought them back to the shipping yards. The Southern Pacific had a great big stockyard there, and that's where they shipped all the sheep and cattle out of in those days. Later on, after the railroad, they started driving them and trucks started bringing them in.

The reason the railroad shut down (they made the last run, I think, in 1938) was that the price of lead had gone to 5 cents a pound and they couldn't afford to mine it in Eureka. And they couldn't afford the freight. For the last couple of years, all they were doing was running the mail cars. In the Depression, they weren't hauling much ore.

In the old days, when they'd bring that ore back from Eureka to Palisade they had big trestles there originally. When the smelters were working good, they were bringing bullion back — pure bullion in blocks.

RM: Silver bullion and lead bars?

HH: Right. There are pictures in the courthouse in Eureka where they're stacked for 100 yards.

RM: Where was the depot in Eureka?

HH: The railroad came up a canyon there; I guess they've got the sewer plant in there now. The depot was on the north end of Eureka just as you come up the canyon, probably a mile out of the center of town. When I was little, I used to go up with them and the guy who took the freight off was hauling freight in a horse and wagon. (They had a freight house, too, in Eureka.) His name was John Laird, and he took all the freight to town.

RM: So the railroad didn't actually go right into town, did it?

HH: No, it went around town to Ruby Hill and stopped right there at the depot. There was a turntable there, and they'd turn it and it went on the south end, on the hill, up to Ruby Hill.

RM: What was up at Ruby Hill at that time?

HH: That was where the big mines were.

RM: Were you up there during this period as a kid?

HH: Yes, and I rode up there on the train.

RM: Describe what you remember about it.

HH: I remember my great-grandfather's house was like a mansion. And there was a blacksmith shop there bigger than the blacksmith shop in Elko today. They had machine shops and ore bins up there. And like any old mining town, there were a lot of houses all over the hills. They're still there.

-
- RM: How many people do you think were living up there?
- HH: In Ruby Hill when I was little? I would say there were only about 400 at the time. Most of the miners had moved to Eureka.
- RM: What mines were working there at that time?
- HH: The only one that I knew that was working then was a 4-compartment shaft. It was the main mine there. I forget the name of that.
- RM: That's where the big gallows frame is now?
- HH: Yes. Then in 1955 they opened the T-L Shaft down below; it was about 2 miles northwest of the big mine. But I forget the name of that mine up there.
- RM: Were there stores and everything in Ruby Hill?
- HH: There were at one time, but that was before my time. When I would go up with my dad or uncles on the train there were no stores there. They had a big blacksmith's shop, and miners had their own houses to take showers in and things like that.
- RM: The railroad ran right down Pine Valley, didn't it?
- HH: Yes, it ran right through Pine Valley. It would go right through the middle of ranches, right through their horse corrals and everything. The first ranch it called in was the Raines' ranch, the next one was the Yates Ranch and then it went around the Goodfellow Ranch. It was on top of the hill when it hit Alpha. And the Dameles and A. C. Florio and those people had ranches there. And I guess Eureka Livestock was one of the biggest livestock companies in the country at the time.
- RM: Did they have a ranch in the valley?
- HH: No. No sheepmen ever had much ranch. They had to take out homesteads and things like that.
- RM: Eureka Livestock was up at Roberts Creek, wasn't it?
- HH: Yes, Roberts Mountain. I think Etcheverry from Bakersfield owns [Roberts Mountain] now, but I think Florio and Eureka Livestock had it at the time. On the way up, too, there was a mine at Mineral Hill and there was a mine at Blackburn that they used to bring ore from. But they'd just leave cars off on a siding.
- RM: Mineral Hill is well before you get to Eureka, isn't it?
- HH: Oh, yes. Mineral Hill is about 35 miles south of Palisade, and Blackburn is about the same distance.
- RM: It's on the east, isn't it?
- HH: Mineral Hill is on the southwest side and Blackburn was on the northwest side.
- RM: When you used to ride down with your uncle, what was happening at Mineral Hill?
- HH: A lady who lives across the street here, a Mrs. Clinton, is 96 years old. She taught school there and she said there were approximately 1200 people working at Mineral Hill in its heyday.
- RM: When you were riding down, was it still going?
- HH: Oh, they would get an ore car out of there just very seldom. They'd have to

-
- hand-pick it in those days.
- RM: What about Blackburn?
- HH: Blackburn was down a little ways. They're reopening a gold mine there. They were only 3 or 4 miles on a side track from one another, and it was on the southwest side. They had a real rich silver and gold deposit in there that they were digging on then.
- RM: How many people were living at Blackburn then?
- HH: Hardly any. They'd get probably one car of ore a week — 20 tons a week.
- RM: And you said they left the ore in a car on the siding. Did they have a bin where they would dump the ore into the car at each one of these places?
- HH: Oh, yes. They made ramps up to the track and then they'd park 2 cars there. They'd take the ore up and put the cars under it and put them in the bin and then dump it in the cars.
- RM: Did the train stop at each ranch on the way down, or how did that work?
- HH: Oh, yes. It was a friendly railroad. [Laughs] It wasn't all business. I don't think it ever went by without stopping to say hello and see how things were with people, to see if they needed anything.
- RM: And then would they bring things from town for them?
- HH: Oh, yes. They all knew each other, you know. In those days, up by Sheep Creek there were quite a few Indians. They'd trade flour with them for pine nuts. And I've seen them stop the train to talk to the buckaroos!
- RM: Is that right? And they delivered the mail on the railroads?
- HH: Yes. If the train went up one day, it took the mail.
- RM: So if there was a letter for the Yates Ranch, they'd stop?
- HH: They'd stop.
- RM: How did they do the mail? Did they throw it out in a bag, or what?
- HH: Well, usually before they'd come to the ranch, they'd whistle. And usually there was somebody standing right there by [the track]. There was no catch the mail or throw it out or anything. If the motor car was taking the mail he'd stop and go in and take it to them. The railroad went right by the ranches. Then if you got up there where the ranches were too far [from the track], they had mailboxes, and you'd just put it in the mailboxes.
- RM: And there was nothing in Diamond Valley then, was there?
- HH: There were 6 good-size ranches in Diamond Valley in those days; there was no farming like there is now.
- RM: You said they had 2 motor cars and one was longer than the other?
- HH: Yes. It depended on how much freight they had going; that's why they had the 2.
- RM: I see — if they didn't have much, they'd use the shorter one.
- HH: That's right. If they just had mostly mail [they'd use the shorter one]. But there were a lot of times that they took freight on them, too. They'd have an express or something that had to be there. The motor cars didn't get into Eureka any faster than the trains, either.
- RM: Probably because they were stopping and talking and everything else.

HH: That's right. And they never went over 20 miles an hour. If they'd go over 20 miles an hour, they'd jump the tracks. As I said, the tracks were not solid like the tracks of the Southern Pacific. They didn't want them to jump the tracks, so they held the speed down.

RM: And they had 4 engines, but ordinarily they just used the one?

HH: Well, they had master mechanics there in Palisade and everything. On a steam engine it would take time for them to overhaul them. And then they had to have extra engines [for the snow]. You get a winter like this . . . I've seen winters where they wouldn't open the railroad between Eureka and Palisade sometimes for 2 weeks. They'd have to put on 2 engines with snowplows and keep hitting it all the time to open the railroad.

RM: Did they have a snow blower on the front?

HH: No, just a V-plow with 2 engines and a caboose behind it. And they'd stay out there. They had a little car and, instead of coming back to town, they could stay out there as long as they had coal. That way they wouldn't have to come back. They had a little car where they would eat and [sleep], and then they had a caboose on it.

RM: Could they carry enough coal for a round trip from Palisade?

HH: Oh, yes. They used to haul all the coal into Eureka, even. Before that, my uncles and dad told me they used to use wood — when they were little.

CHAPTER TWO

- RM: Tell me a little about the guy who owned the railroad. What was his name again?
- HH: Charles B. Sexton. There are 2 tunnels in Palisade — the river runs through it and there are 2 tunnels on the west end of Palisade. The narrow gauge had to cross the SP tracks, cross the river and go around and come in front of the Southern Pacific Railroad on the other side. Sexton blocked the Southern Pacific Railroad one time because he had rights over the Southern Pacific. They had to go back to Congress, and he got that straightened out. Sexton won the case. His son, Jack Sexton, went to Berkeley for college, and he ended up being the district judge of Eureka. That was after World War II.
- RM: Was Sexton the guy who built the railroad, or did he buy it at some point?
- HH: I think his dad had the railroad before him, but the only one I ever knew was him. His son was probably 10 years older than I. He just had a son and a daughter. And he was really good to his help.
- RM: Where did he live?
- HH: He lived right there in a nice home in Palisade. The SP had their own water and the narrow gauge (that's what we called the Eureka and Palisade Railroad) had their own water. And there was no electricity —lights were kerosene or gasoline. And all you had in your house was water; there was no indoor plumbing outside of water in the sink.
- RM: And it was piped in from where?
- HH: They had big tanks of spring water up on the hill. And they had 2 boarding-houses there.
- RM: Who stayed at the boardinghouses?
- HH: There were a lot of people who worked on the Western Pacific and the Southern Pacific railroads.
- RM: What's the difference between the Western Pacific and the Southern Pacific? Did they both come through and follow the Humboldt?
- HH: Yes.
- RM: But they were 2 different railroads?
- HH: Two different railroads. They even switched tracks; they'd run on each other's tracks.
- RM: And they had crews that would stay there in Palisade?
- HH: Yes. They had ticket offices, they had freight men there to handle it, and both of them had section crews there. The Southern Pacific had a big quarry just about 4 miles east, where they made all the rock for the ballast for their railroad tracks, and they had quite a crew up there. Then they used to bring quite a few extra gangs in to keep the tunnels open.
- RM: Were there quite a few men working at the quarry?
- HH: At one time there were a lot of them.
- RM: Were there when you were a kid?
- HH: No, when I was a kid there was only about 20 people working up there. But at one time it was quite an operation.

- RM: What kind of an operation did they have there? How were they were breaking the rock and everything?
- HH: Well, with dynamite. And then they had great big jaw crushers.
- RM: They were breaking the rock in big chunks?
- HH: Yes.
- RM: With churn drills?
- HH: They'd drill it and then blast it and then put it in these big jaw crushers. It would come out between 2 to 3 inches [in size] for under the track, for ballast.
- RM: And how did they get it down to the train?
- HH: They had a big spur up there.
- RM: How far from the tracks was the quarry?
- HH: It was right on the tracks.
- RM: How far from Palisade was it?
- HH: About 3 miles east of Palisade, right up the canyon. The SP tracks were on one side of river and the tracks on the other side were for the Western. They both ran up the river.
- RM: Now, the SP came from Salt Lake to San Francisco?
- HH: It came from Ogden to San Francisco; the Western Pacific came from Salt Lake to San Francisco. The Western Pacific didn't have the business that the Southern Pacific had. I guess the Southern Pacific bought out the one that first built all these railroads at the time, the Central Pacific. And then later on, they had this other company called the Western Pacific, and they sold out about 5 or 6 years ago to the Union Pacific.
- RM: Are there still 2 sets of tracks going down there?
- HH: Yes, there still are — the Union Pacific and the Southern Pacific. One turns off at Gerlach and goes up through Portola and then to Susanville; the other goes through the Feather River Canyon into Reno. The Southern Pacific runs into Reno, and the Western Pacific turns off and goes up around into Susanville in Northern California.
- RM: Do they both wind up in San Francisco?
- HH: Yes.
- RM: And those 2 railroads were there along with the narrow gauge when you were a kid?
- HH: Oh, yes.
- RM: How many people would you say were living in Palisade when you were there?
- HH: When I left there were about 40 kids at school. That was probably 1935. I'd say at one time they probably had 700 or 800 people.
- RM: How many would you say were there when you were growing up?
- HH: About 450 to 500. There were a lot of kids whose folks worked on the Southern Pacific and kids from the ranch in Pine Valley and others who came in there to go to school. All you could attend there was grammar school; then you had to leave.
- RM: Where did you go to high school?

-
- HH: They went to Eureka or Elko or Carlin. Most of them went to Carlin.
- RM: Palisade is in Eureka County, isn't it?
- HH: Right.
- RM: Describe the town.
- HH: If you go down there nowadays, there's nothing.
- RM: Nothing at all? You couldn't tell there was a town there?
- HH: No. My grandmother's house is gone, all of the folks' houses are gone, everything. There are people now buying them. They just want to get away [from the big cities] and there's a lot of water there.
- RM: They're buying the lots?
- HH: Yes. They brought power in and that. It's a nice little place.
- RM: So it's a town now?
- HH: Well, there aren't too many people there yet. I was down there about 2 years ago and there are probably about 20 families there. And they're working in the mines — Carlin Gold and those outfits. But the Humboldt River runs right through town, and both the railroads go right through it. And all of the houses were built on the north side of the hill so there was no flooding. The town was mostly on the north side. They had a jail there and a constable and a courthouse. And they also had 2 big boardinghouses, 2 saloons and 2 grocery stores when I was there. And they could buy gasoline. Later on they had pumps. Very few people during the Depression had cars in those days down there because it was so hard to get out in a car. There were no roads like there are nowadays.
- RM: And they could get out on the railroad if they wanted to go anywhere?
- HH: That's where they went all the time. When we got our food and other supplies in Palisade my mother would get on a train and come up and shop at the grocery stores, and they'd put it on the train. She'd buy milk by the 5-gallon can. And they'd stop the train. They called it a milk train. It was a slow train, but it stopped everywhere for people like that. That's how you got your groceries and fresh milk.
- RM: Which railroad was this?
- HH: That was the Southern Pacific that came right into Elko. They'd stop at Palisade and unload all that stuff for the people.
- RM: What was Elko's role in this? Did they have a big station here, and were they loading and unloading here?
- HH: Elko was the big station.
- RM: And was it cattle?
- HH: Mostly cattle. It always was ranching. Then after the World's Fair in Frisco, it got to be tourism. It was popular after they built Highway 40 (now it's I-80). There was tourism and ranching. There never was hardly any farming here; it was all cattle and sheep ranching.
- RM: So the railroad stopped here to load cattle and unload supplies?
- HH: Oh, yes. There were big stockyards here, too.
- RM: And Palisade was cattle and sheep also?
- HH: Right. Eureka County had a lot of cattle and a lot of sheep. Mostly sheep, but

they had some big cattle ranches there too.

RM: But they must have had big stockyards here in Elko.

HH: They were a lot bigger here in Elko than they were in Palisade, but they were big in Palisade too.

RM: Could you give me an idea of how big they were?

HH: Well, I'll tell you how big the Southern Pacific freight house was at Palisade — 100 feet long and about 60 feet wide. That was their freight house alone. And when they were loading cattle at the cattle yards there, there would be probably 20 SP cars there waiting. They'd even have a switch engine there moving the cars for them while they were loading. The stockyards were probably a quarter mile long and about 200 feet deep.

RM: That big? So they were moving a lot of stock out of there.

HH: Oh, they moved a lot of stock in the old days. They had their own carpenters and their own train department and everything to keep everything going. There are a lot of people in Eureka like Albert Biale . . . his relations still own the hardware store there. And Sam Siri. They were people out of Eureka who came down there to do that kind of trade. And the old master mechanic, Sam Baglin, was a machinist and was real good; he had his own crew. So it was quite a setup. It ran for quite a few years.

RM: And the narrow gauge was feeding the stockyards at Palisade?

HH: Yes. It would feed them on one side and the SP would pick them up on the other side. They'd jump out of the boxcars on the narrow gauge side, and on the other side the SP had a spur going in to pick them up. When they were shipping — they usually shipped about September or October — their yards were full of stock cars all the time.

RM: Was the town kind of dead when they weren't shipping, or was it going pretty strong?

HH: No, it never was lively. There was no entertainment there. If you wanted to go to a picture show or something, you had to get on the train and come to Carlin or get in the car on a weekend and drive up to see a picture show. I never was in Elko in my life until we moved here. It's only 30 miles from Palisade! [Laughs] I'd been to Carlin and Eureka, but I'd never been to Elko. Eureka was a lot bigger town than Carlin was. It had clothing stores.

RM: Let's talk about the businesses in Palisade. You said there were 2 bars. Do you remember what their names were and who owned them?

HH: Sam Zunino, and the other guy's last name was Martinelli.

RM: Did they have names for the bar?

HH: No, I just knew there were 2 bars there at that time.

RM: Were they small establishments?

HH: They were small. Not small like a little mining town's bars were — they were good-sized bars. Sam's wasn't as big as Martinelli's.

RM: Was there gambling in them?

HH: No gambling, but there were poker games. There was a lot of poker going on in them. And mostly they sold bottled beer. And then there were 2 grocery stores.

-
- RM: Who owned them, do you recall?
- HH: N. A. Whitmore and Frank Martinelli.
- RM: Were they large stores?
- HH: Yes, good-size stores.
- RM: General stores?
- HH: At Martinelli's you could buy dry goods and he had a meat shop, a butcher shop. Whitmore's didn't have dry goods or a butcher shop. It was a good-sized store. Then he sold gas out in front, and he had the air compressor for the car's tires and everything.
- RM: And they probably gave credit in those days, didn't they?
- HH: All kinds of it. Everybody knew everybody. That's how they ran. You'd get paid once a month in those days — you didn't get paid every week or every 2 weeks.
- RM: Was there a post office?
- HH: Yes, there was a post office; it was run by Willy Jones.
- RM: What other establishments were there? Was there a garage or anything like that?
- HH: No, if you had to have work done on your car, you had to do it yourself or take it to Carlin. And in the wintertime you had to build your own snowplows made out of wood and a piece of iron up front to plow out the roads. It was a lot colder in those days than it is now; a lot more snow. We used to get winters like we're getting this winter all the time. This has been a bad winter for Elko. Not bad — they needed it.
- RM: But it's been a lot of snow?
- HH: Yes, there's been a lot of snow — the most I've seen in years. And it's been a wet snow; it's got a lot of moisture in it. Eureka's the same way. If you came up from Tonopah, you probably came up through Pine Valley, didn't you?
- RM: Yes, I did. There's a lot of snow there too. What other establishments were there in Palisade?
- HH: There was just a meeting hall. Then there was a courthouse and a jail.
- RM: What did the courthouse look like?
- HH: It was a small courthouse. They never had any big trials in there, it was mostly justice court. The big trials would have to go to Eureka County. Then they had their own fire station — all volunteer. And they used to keep people from Eureka in there too. The county would come in and grade the roads and things like that.
- RM: Do you remember who the J.P. was?
- HH: No, I don't know.
- RM: And you said they had a constable?
- HH: When the railroad closed, my uncle Nat became constable like his dad was; he quit the railroad to be constable. And then he did other things. And there was only one schoolteacher in Palisade.
- RM: Just one schoolteacher for 8 grades and 40 kids?
- HH: That's right.

RM: Boy, she was overworked!

HH: Yes. [Laughter]

RM: Describe what the school building looked like.

HH: The school building was real nice. It was probably 50 feet long and 40 feet wide. It had a cloakroom in it and they had big pot-belly stoves in there to heat it, with coal. And every grade was in the same room. There was just the teacher in front, and she taught all the kids.

RM: Was her desk on a platform?

HH: Yes. And that's where they used to have the little stage plays and that for Christmas.

RM: How did she conduct class with all these kids in different grades?

HH: Just like they did when we got to Elko. I don't know how she did it with all 8 grades. I always thought, how that woman could teach all 8 grades like that! And she took her time.

RM: She would go from one grade to the other?

HH: Yes.

RM: And then while she working with one grade, other people were doing their lessons?

HH: Yes. She'd give them work to do at one place and then move on to another grade. And I've seen her there till 5:00 or 6:00 at night, grading papers. But there was nothing else for her to do. She just had to go home, you know.

RM: Was it the same teacher all the way through for you?

HH: Yes — Margaret Watson. She was a wonderful teacher.

RM: Was her family from the area?

HH: No, they brought her in from somewhere back east — back in Nebraska or somewhere.

RM: Was she a young woman or older?

HH: Oh, she was about 30 years old when she taught me. A nice-looking woman. Later on, she got a job in the school system and went way high.

RM: And that school is gone? Everything is gone?

HH: They tore it down. There's nothing there anymore.

RM: Did people haul off the buildings, or what?

HH: After I got back from World War II, they went down there with trucks and jacked them up and put them on low boys and brought them out of there.

RM: Where did they take them?

HH: A lot of them came to Elko, a lot of them went to Carlin and a lot of them went out on ranches out there.

RM: When did the town begin to fold?

HH: Right after the railroad did in 1938. As soon as they made that last run.

RM: When was the railroad pretty well gone?

HH: About '35.

RM: Was the town pretty well gone too?

HH: Oh, yes.

RM: Because the railroad was so thin?

HH: Yes. The only payroll in Palisade in '35 was the Southern Pacific and the

Western Pacific, and they were cut way down on account of the railroad wasn't running.

RM: When did they close the quarry?

HH: They never did close it. In fact, it still might be going. They closed the big [operation] in 1933, but I guess they're still working it. They got different machinery down there — a better way to do it. They just take those big Cats and blast it. And then people who live in Carlin go down every day to do that.

RM: Was there a brothel in the area?

HH: Yes, there was.

RM: What was it called?

HH: [Laughs] I don't remember what it was called. It was over by Sam Siri's saloon. And there was one going up north of town right in front of the Indian camp.

RM: Did the girls ever show up in town or anything?

HH: No, not like they do here.

RM: Were there a lot of jokes and everything about it or anything?

HH: No, nothing.

RM: Do you remember the madam?

HH: No, I don't. I remember the one in Eureka, but I don't know the one in Palisade.

RM: When was the town pretty well dead?

HH: By '35. Oh, there were a lot of people living there, but they never had work. They were getting out.

RM: When had it been pretty well abandoned?

HH: I'd say about 1940. The only people there before I went to the service were the people who were guarding the [railroad] tunnels.

RM: What tunnels were those?

HH: They were just on the outskirts of Palisade — right in town.

RM: Where the tunnels are now that we came through on the highway?

HH: No. Where you came through is about 14 miles down the canyon. And there are 2 tunnels — the Western Pacific and the SP; both of them are cut right through the mountains so they could go down the canyons instead of going over the hills.

RM: So they had people guarding them for sabotage during World War II?

HH: Yes. They kept 2 guards on each end for 24-hour shifts. That's all there was there. My dad moved out of there in '39. He went in and got on with Union Pacific in Ogden, and he ran out of Ogden.

RM: Were there many Mormons there?

HH: None. Not in Eureka either.

RM: Were there churches in Palisade?

HH: No. They used the schoolhouse for the church on Sundays, and it was divided between the Catholics and the Presbyterians. And they'd always bring a minister in. They switched off Sundays.

RM: What was it like being a kid there in Palisade?

HH: Well, you could go swimming in the river. You could go fishing. And you were free. You had bicycles. As far as moving out of there, there wasn't anything to move to Elko for. The only thing here were the shows. You had a lot more to do when you were a kid there [in Palisade]. In those days, fishing was good.

RM: What kind of fish did you get?

HH: We used to get trout, bass, catfish. The river was a lot cleaner then than it is now. And there were pretty good-size trout in there.

RM: How big?

HH: The biggest one I ever saw was one my grandmother caught one time — it was about 8 pounds. She caught it with an old cane pole. My grandmother was 80 years old and she was still going fishing every day.

RM: Would she use worms for bait?

HH: That's all; just worms.

RM: Did you move out of there when your dad lost his job?

HH: No, my mother moved to Elko with 5 of us kids in '35, and he was still working in Palisade. We moved into the house up here and he used to come up on weekends.

RM: Was that so you could go to school?

HH: Yes.

RM: Why don't we mention your brothers and sisters?

HH: OK. I had one brother and 3 sisters. I was the oldest in the family, and then there was Lois Picchinni — they own a big sporting goods store in Reno. The next one was Roy; he's living in Reno, too, and working for the school system. And my next sister is Rosie Hendrickson. She's living in Park City, Utah. And my youngest sister, Jeannine Silicchi, died about 10 years ago.

RM: How long did you live in Elko?

HH: I've lived here ever since; about 60 years. I've never moved out of Elko.

RM: Did you ever live in Eureka?

HH: It practically was my home town down there.

RM: When did you go to Eureka?

HH: All the time. I was in the car business and I used to go up to sell cars.

RM: But you went to high school here in Elko?

HH: Yes.

RM: Then what?

HH: Then I went to the service.

RM: Which branch of the service?

HH: Naval air corps.

RM: What did you do there?

HH: Flew dive bombers.

CHAPTER THREE

RM: Did you live in Eureka prior to your graduation?

HH: No. I lived with my grandmother up there when I was little.

RM: Let's talk about your mother's grandfather then. You said he ran the mines? What was his name again?

HH: My great-grandfather's name was Henry Quick.

RM: Where did he come from?

HH: He come from Cornwall, England. They brought him over here. I guess he had a lot of engineering and [other experience] for these underground mines.

RM: So he was not just a digger.

HH: Oh, no. And my grandfather (on the other side of the family) was a Jurey. There were 3 brothers and they were all foremen in the mine. They came from Cornwall, England, too.

RM: So they weren't related to Quick?

HH: No, they were another bunch. Jurey married into the Quick family; that's how that happened.

RM: So Quick was an engineer and they brought him over here because he knew what he was doing?

HH: Yes. He had to, on a big operation like that.

RM: They've got big tin mines in Cornwall, don't they?

HH: Coal and tin, yes. They're all miners there.

RM: Yes. They're best miners in the world, really.

HH: Nevada City had a bunch of them who came from Cornwall.

RM: Yes. There were a lot of them in Tonopah too. Do you recall much about your great-grandfather Quick?

HH: No, I don't. I do my grandfather. He died there in Eureka.

RM: Now, this would be Grandfather Jurey. Tell me about him.

HH: He was one of the underground foremen. There were 3 brothers and they were all foremen. Dick Jurey was my grandfather, and one of them was Jim Jurey. I'm not sure of the name of the one who moved to Salt Lake. The 3 brothers all married Eureka girls.

RM: Did they come from Cornwall right to Eureka?

HH: Right.

RM: They must have had jobs here?

HH: I guess Henry Quick hired them. He had to, because they were all top foremen. The town of Eureka has miles and miles of tunnels under it. It's a historic site.

RM: Did your great-grandfather Quick spend his whole life in the mines of Eureka?

HH: Ever since he came over here.

RM: How old was he when he came over, do you know?

HH: I don't know. He was in his 80s when he died.

RM: When did he die?

HH: He must have died before I was born, because I didn't know him. Grandma

was all alone then. Her husband, Dick Jurey, died and she was all alone.

RM: Was she a local girl, or was she from Cornwall?

HH: Grandma came from some place back east. I can't think of her maiden name.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: Were there any Masons from Cornwall here?

HH: There were Masons. They used to come to Elko or go to Eureka.

RM: Were there any community groups besides the volunteer firemen in Palisade?

HH: No.

RM: Were there any unions?

HH: No. They struck one time down at the narrow gauge and they quit right away.

RM: So your grandfather Jurey died and your grandmother was a widow there in Eureka? Did she then live out her years in Eureka?

HH: Yes, until she got cancer and we brought her to Elko. She lived to be about 85.

RM: And then your mother was born in Eureka?

HH: Yes.

RM: And what was her name?

HH: Gertrude Mabel Jurey.

RM: So she grew up and went to school there?

HH: Right.

RM: Do you recall any stories she would tell about growing up in Eureka?

HH: No, but I sure liked my grandmother; that's all I know. She did all the cooking for the family and she did all her sewing herself. She was just a wonderful person.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

HH: Living with my grandmother in Eureka was in part of the Depression.

RM: When would this have been?

HH: Oh, probably in the '30s. Eureka was in bad shape.

RM: Would you go down and live with her in the summers?

HH: Yes, I spent the summers with her. I'd go down on the train and come back on the train.

RM: Why didn't you stay in Palisade for the summer?

HH: I don't know. My uncle had an ice cream fountain in Eureka, and there was more to do there.

RM: What do you recall about Eureka at this time?

HH: It wasn't any bigger then than it is right now — a lot of bars, one bank, clothing goods stores and hotels.

RM: What was supporting the town?

HH: The county and state.

RM: The government kept it going?

HH: Yes.

RM: Was there much traffic on Highway 50 at that time?

HH: No. We used to sit there on the street. In those days, they'd have benches on the street, you know, and the old-timers would sit there and talk. There might be 100 cars a day go through; that's about all.

RM: So you got out of the Navy in '45?

HH: In 1946. I went in under 18 when I was only a junior, so I had to stay a full 4 years — 4 years and 2 months.

RM: And then what did you do?

HH: Then I came to town and got into the car business here in Elko. They hired me the first night I got off the train.

RM: How did that happen?

HH: I don't know. I always worked. I had to help my mother. I was driving a laundry truck when I was in the eighth grade, and I sold booze when I was a freshman.

RM: Bootlegged booze?

HH: Yes. And I worked for Robert F. Caudill. If you're from Vegas, you know Doby Doc [Caudill].

RM: Oh, tell me about Doby Doc.

HH: He raised me.

RM: No kidding.

HH: He helped me. When my mother came up here and my folks got divorced, we had nothing. Doby Doc raised me.

RM: Tell me about him!

HH: When Doby Doc came to this country, he went to work for the Spanish Ranch up there. That's where he got his name. He was a bookkeeper and he came from Texas. Well, they pretty near hung him up there. He was flirting with the boss's wife or something at the Independence Valley north of Elko here. They let him go and he moved to Elko. And he's the one who bought the railroad when it closed.

RM: He bought the Palisade?

HH: He bought the engines, the boxcars, the railroad tracks and all the ties and everything.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: He was having a problem with a guy's wife up north?

HH: The foreman's wife up there. They were going to hang him at a bar there called the Bloody Bucket. [Laughter] Cleshie Laucirica was telling me this story; he worked up there. He was a shepherd there at the time. Anyway, Doby Doc moved to Elko and he started buying stuff and he ended up being the richest guy in Elko. And he bought this railroad. He was going to make a museum out of it right down west of town. Oh, he had everything.

RM: He had all the western stuff too.

HH: He had chariots . . . even stole the jail out of Palisade! And Sexton accused me of taking it! I was working for Doby. I'll tell you, he was the sharpest man I ever knew in my life.

RM: He sold a lot of his antique collection to Bill Moore, who ran the Frontier in

Las Vegas.

HH: That was all Doby's. Then he got in with Binion, and then Binion had to go to prison or something and they built that place up in Pahrump.

RM: I heard a story on why he went to Pahrump. Let me see if it makes sense to you. He heard about fallout shelters back in the '50s and he said, "Well, hell, I better build me one."

HH: Baloney.

RM: So he went out on the Strip across from where the Tropicana is now and he had a bulldozer and he was digging a hole. And a county person came up and said, "Hey have you got a permit for that?"

Doby Doc said, "I don't buy a permit for nothing." And he moved to Pahrump.

HH: Yes. You know what he was digging that hole for?

RM: What?

HH: Burying the money.

RM: To bury money?

HH: My cousin and he went together, Delta Joe. She was telling me up in the office, "Do you know what that crazy son of a bitch is doing now?"

I said, "What?"

"Digging a hole out there in the desert. He's going to bury that money."

RM: Well, everybody knew he was digging the hole.

HH: He was going to put the money in it and cover it.

RM: He must have had a lot of money.

HH: Oh, Christ. You know those old-time trunks, those round ones? There are hidden basements over there. This one down there had 3 trunks with nothing but Chinese gold in them — dollars and all from these Chinese mining towns. Nothing but gold. And he had brand-new chariots. He had every old-time slot machine, and those old ferris wheels . . . he had everything. And if he didn't have it, he had it in the morning. During the war, he furnished this town with everything.

RM: How did he get it?

HH: Off the railroad. One time it was a load of ladies' lace boots. I thought to myself, "That old son of a bitch is going crazy." [Laughter] And you know, there's that store there in Eureka — Kitchen's. In Wells' grocery store, they're still in the basement — those ladies' lace boots. And they brought all that sugar and he put the stuff in big warehouses there (he had big warehouses).

And they couldn't keep anybody out herding sheep without sugar; the Basques have to have sugar. So they'd come in and they'd get their sugar. For every pound of sugar, they had to pay \$13 for a pair of those ladies's lace boots. [Laughter] All these stores were selling those boots.

And you talk about gas stamps — you know the "A" stamps and "B" stamps. Are you old enough to remember that?

RM: Well, no. But I remember rationing.

HH: He had enough stamps to buy all the gas for Elko; and tires.

RM: Where was he getting them?

HH: I don't know where he got them. He had anything.

RM: Why did he leave Elko?

HH: They kicked him out of town. This town lost 3 good people: Newt Crumley, who owned the Commercial Hotel; Dick Warren, the fellow I worked the Ford Garage for; and Doby Doc.

RM: And the town kicked all 3 of them out?

HH: No, just Doby.

RM: They told him to get out of town?

HH: That's right.

RM: Whatever became of all of this stuff?

HH: He took it. He sold one of those trains — I believe it is in Apple Valley. He sold it to Roy Rogers. Who built Apple Valley?

RM: I think it was Roy Rogers; I'm not sure.

HH: Whoever built Apple Valley got one of the trains.

RM: You know where one of them is? It's been totally restored. A guy in Vegas has it.

HH: Yes, I read that in the paper. Another one's in Florida. And I think the other's at Tahoe.

RM: And Doby Doc had all of them?

HH: Yes. He had all the boxcars and all the steel.

RM: What did he do with the rest of the stuff?

HH: All the railroad tracks and things like that went to Japan. And he sold all the ties wherever he could sell them — he had ties for 85 miles.

RM: What did he pay for all of that, do you know?

HH: I heard he got it for less than \$5000.

RM: The engines and everything?

HH: Engines, and everything.

RM: [Whistles] What a buy. What about the right-of-way of the railroad? I wonder who owns that.

HH: I don't have any idea.

Other Voice: It usually reverts back to the ranchers who own the range.

RM: Yes, I think to get the railroad through the ranchers gave them that right-of-way to use, so that's probably what happened. But a lot of that was over federal ground. I wonder what the status of that is.

HH: Most of that ground was BLM land, so that would revert back to them. I know they had the right-of-way over the Southern Pacific on the main tracks, but I don't know what happened to the right-of-ways. The ranchers had to let them have it, because I know they went right through their stockyards and everything just to have this service. And when he bought the railroad, those ranches were selling for nothing. It was the Depression.

RM: Yes, it was '38, wasn't it?

HH: The big ranches were going for \$17,000 then, so you can see that nobody wanted the railroad. And he was smart enough to know that he could resell it. Japan was getting ready for war, and he got [the rails] up and shipped them to Frisco, and away they went to Japan.

RM: And then you got some of it back in bullets?

HH: That's what I told him. [Laughter] And he went to Vegas and he did nothing but good.

RM: What kind of a guy was Doby Doc?

HH: He was a heck of a nice guy. He sure was good to me.

RM: Well, he had a knack of making money.

HH: He had a knack. I don't know how he did it.

RM: So then you came back to Elko after the war and stayed here?

HH: Yes. He got me a job with General Motors. I know damn well it was Doby who got me the job. They were waiting for me when I got off the train.

RM: You mentioned that you owned a lot of property in Eureka. How did you come by all of that?

HH: I was in the First National Bank over here — I had a trailer court (I got the ground from Doby Doc; he gave it to me). I built a trailer court on it and I was in the bank about that. And the mother of the gal who was waiting on me owned the Brown Hotel in Eureka, and they knew me. Hell, I used to go up there all the time. She said, "Why don't you buy Mom out?"

I said, "What? Hell, I don't want no damn hotel."

Her husband had died and she was getting so old she said she couldn't walk upstairs. (She had a big room upstairs and everything.) She said, "We've got to do something for Mama."

Well, I didn't say anything. The next time I went up, I went and talked to her. She made me a deal on it.

CHAPTER FOUR

HH: I bought the [Brown] Hotel from her.

RM: What did you pay for it?

HH: I'm ashamed to tell you.

RM: Because it was so little?

HH: Yes — \$17,000.

RM: When was that?

HH: In about 1969. And then I bought the Opera House for \$13,000 and the Sentinel building for \$10,000.

RM: So you had a little money. You were doing all right here in town.

HH: Well, I had a guy who backed me on anything I wanted to do. I bought the Cadillac, Pontiac GMC garage here in town. And then I owned a big hardware store here. Anyway, the Brown Hotel had 22 rooms in it. Every room had a brass bed . . . you should have seen the antiques in that place — grandfather clocks, hand-mitered bar of solid walnut 2 inches thick. When you'd shine that thing you could see yourself in it. And it had 2 National cash registers — you used to open the tops to read them, you know. One was bronze and the other was solid silver. My daughter's got both of those. And oh, you can't imagine the stuff.

RM: What happened to all of it? What happened to the building? How long did you hold it?

HH: About 10 years.

RM: And did you just close it up or did it run as a hotel?

HH: No, I leased it to some people. He was advertising manager for the *San Francisco Examiner*. He married a madam from down around Minden or some damn place, and they had troubles and he left her. She was running a brothel upstairs and the police caught them — 13- and 14-year-old girls, some of them. But they didn't have their license in their names yet and I thought, no problem with this — just use mine until they clear you. Jesus Christ, I get a call from Eureka and I was in court 3 days on that thing.

RM: Is that right? Because then you were the responsible party, weren't you?

HH: Yes. And they closed me down for 3 years.

RM: No kidding?

HH: Yes. Finally a bunch of lawyers from Reno and Carson come in there and wanted to buy it. One guy owned the State Farm [insurance] business. They bought it from me and then I donated the Sentinel building so I wouldn't have to pay all the taxes. I took all the good stuff out of the hotel.

RM: What did you do with all those antiques?

HH: My daughter's got them. Oh, I had antiques you couldn't believe. Furniture . . .

RM: What was in the Sentinel building when you sold it?

HH: It was just like it was the day they closed it — old printing machines and

-
- long typewriters. Everything was original. They had newspapers. If I'd had any brains, I'd have kept them. They kept them day to day.
- RM: What year did you buy it and what year did you sell it?
- HH: I must have given it to the town 10 years later, and I bought it about the same time I bought the Brown. I bought it from some people I knew real well. It was closed and they wanted the money out of it. I went over there and looked at it, but I didn't have the heart . . . That's when they were starting this Historical Society. One lady whose husband is a game warden is the one who talked me into leaving everything to the society. I don't know what they did with it because I've been in there and I don't see any of that stuff.
- RM: Oh, all the equipment?
- HH: They've got it in some warehouse or something. And the newspapers are worth a fortune. They went back to the 1890s.
- RM: They were still publishing the newspaper in Eureka, weren't they?
- HH: Later on they had it out of Tonopah. But when I had the Brown Hotel, they leased it there. They were putting a paper out there. They used a lot of that stuff from the *Sentinel*.
- RM: What other antiques were there in the Brown Hotel that you recall?
- HH: There was a solid couch that made into a hide-a-bed. It would take 4 guys to lift it. Solid cow leather — it looked like it was still brand new. I don't know what ever happened to that. And there were poker tables and 4 or 5 of those old slot machines; I kept those. Dick Wright has those here in town. Every room had a marble-top dresser from Italy. Every room had a different dresser.
- RM: You couldn't buy things like that now.
- HH: My daughter's got it all. She's got a beautiful home in Reno. She's an attorney down there.
- RM: What's her name?
- HH: Charlotte Hase now.
- RM: Who did you marry?
- HH: First I married a gal from Daytona Beach. We stayed married for 18 years and got divorced. I stayed divorced for 5 years and got married to an Elko girl and we stayed married for 12 years, and that's what broke me.
- RM: She got all your money?
- HH: A fortune.
- RM: How did she manage that?
- HH: Lawyers — went through 13 damn lawyers.
- RM: Wow. And your children were by your first wife?
- HH: No, I had 3 by the first wife and 2 by the second.
- RM: Do you want to mention their names in order of birth?
- HH: Yes, starting with Charlotte Hase. She's 44.
- RM: She's the attorney?
- HH: Yes. And then there's one named after me: Herbert R. Hawkins; he's 41.

Then there's Joseph Brian Hawkins; he's 38. And Jeffrey R. Hawkins, 26, and then Steven Hawkins, 22. Two children live in town here and the rest of them live in Reno and Carson.

RM: Can you think of anything else about the railroad or life in the area or anything that we should record?

HH: Well, on the Fourth of July they used to run the railroad train with all the people in Palisade. They used to go out and they'd meet all the ranchers about 10 miles out in a big grove (the railroad used to run right through it). They used to have their Fourth of July celebrations there.

RM: About 10 miles south of Palisade?

HH: Yes, in Pine Valley. They had the Fourth of July celebration there every year. Sexton let them take the whole railroad out there and all the people in Palisade would go out and they'd have tug-of-wars.

RM: Describe what went on there.

HH: Well, ice cream used to come in canvas bags in those days. They'd take out the ice cream and all the ranch ladies would make their cakes and they'd have a 2-day celebration out there, Saturday and Sunday. They'd run the train in at night and then back out Sunday morning.

RM: And then on the Fourth of July, everybody would ride the train home again?

HH: Yes, all the ranchers and all the people from Palisade from that side would get on the train and go home. They'd go home about 5:00 Saturday night and come back out about 9:00 Sunday morning and go back 5:00 Sunday night. During the Fourth they took those days off. All they did was run the motor car for the mail.

RM: What if the Fourth of July wasn't on a weekend?

HH: They still took 2 days off — the Fourth and the day after. And it was quite a deal, just like a basketball game. They played each other for years that way.

RM: Oh, they have contests between the ranchers and the townspeople?

HH: Yes, that's what it was.

RM: Like a ball game and things like that?

HH: That's right — they had ball games out there, foot races for the kids, gunny sack races, pie-eating contests, pancake-eating contests . . .

RM: And then a lot of food and booze?

HH: My family didn't drink and the ranchers never drank.

RM: They didn't drink that much?

HH: They never drank at all. Never.

RM: It wasn't because they were Mormons, was it?

HH: No, they just didn't drink. I have one uncle who drank. (I took after him, I guess.) But that's the only one in the family who drank.

RM: What's at Alpha now? How would I know when I'm at Alpha?

HH: When you come through you've seen that bar off to the side that's closed where they're pumping oil?

RM: Yes.

HH: Back there about 6 miles, there's a flat up on top going toward Eureka, and just before you go down the hill to the other side, when you go down the hill, there's a little road that turns to the right there. It says Alpha, and it's a sheep ranch. Below that there's another ranch, a big ranch — the Dameles.

RM: The railroad didn't follow where the road is now, did it?

HH: Well, when you get up on top there at Alpha, and down by that building that's standing out there by that oil well, the railroad went right through there. And then when you get up the canyon from Alpha, it followed up that canyon until you start up Garden Pass. It went up the canyon — just as you go up the hills there, it went up the canyon.

RM: Which way would the canyon be?

HH: It would be going south; it would be on the left.

CHAPTER FIVE

RM: You were going to recount some stories that you heard from old-timers in Eureka.

HH: When I was first born, I stayed most of the time with my grandmother Jurey in Eureka until I was old enough to go to school; then I moved to Palisade. She lived right on Spring Creek, a block from town. And I had an uncle on the main street who had a bar and cafe and boardinghouse — his name was Earl Cobb. He used to feed a lot of the old-timers for free.

When I was little I remember when Prohibition was on and they were selling bootleg whiskey behind the bar. A lot of the old-timers would come over there. A big shot of whiskey then was probably 25 cents, and there was no water back or anything. I can remember a time when the Pro-his came in. They used to have a wood stove with 3 big ovens in it; it was probably 12 feet long. His wife came in one time to build a fire to cook dinner for everybody. In the meantime the Pro-his had been there. (I guess the sheriff was paid off, because they came and told my uncle to get rid of everything behind the bar.) So they just took it out and put it in those ovens. Then she came in — and they started fires with cedar wood. She started a fire and about half an hour later, all the oven doors blew off and everybody got the hell out of there. They had a parrot in there that could talk just as well as any person I've ever seen, and they had a heck of a time getting him back in that cage to stay in that bar (he was right in the middle of the bar). It took them months to get him back in there. [Laughter]

Anyway, these old-timers would come over to dinner. They were retired miners — fellows with nicknames like Billy Whiskers and Poker Bill. Then there were some other miners there who'd tell stories about the old days when they were mining — Tilio Vaccaro, Charlie Vaccaro, Louie Gibellini. They'd tell stories of the old days — how the mining was and how hot the water was down below.

They were working 2 mines then. One was called the Diamond Mine and the one was on Ruby Hill. At the Diamond Mine, the ore hung in caves; they'd go down at the top of the caves. It was just pretty near solid lead ore and silver. They said that they'd put their lights on it down there and it would glisten just like diamonds. There were always a lot of specimens around there, and they'd put compressed air on it and it would look just like a diamond, it was so rich. Beautiful ore.

RM: Was it galena?

HH: Yes, pure galena. It was on top of the caves. They'd stope it and drop it down.

RM: There were underground caves and it was lining the caves?

HH: Yes. They'd go down in tunnels and hit these caves.

RM: And the galena was lining the cave on top?

HH: Yes. And it was a pretty good-size mine. The Italian people worked at the

Diamond Mine. And what they called the Cornwall, England, miners and the white miners and that (they were called Cousin Jacks) worked at Ruby Hill. When I bought the Brown Hotel, in the safe was a school census — Italian census — of the different people. (My daughter's got that in Reno.) The only one that wasn't Italian on there was a man by the name of Gross; he was a foreman up at the Diamond Mine. The Italians were from Switzerland, too; there were a lot of Swiss Italians.

To cut the wood there, they had these kilns built. They'd cut mostly cedar wood [juniper], and there was a lot of mahogany and so forth, and that's where they made the charcoal for the furnaces. There were quite a few Italians out in the hills cutting wood, bringing it in and making charcoal. There was an old guy who lived up above my grandmother, an Italian named Augustine Picchinni. He must have had 20 of those big freight wagons.

RM: Those big heavy ones?

HH: Yes. The wheels would probably be 8 feet high. And they were there for years, even after they quit. I don't know whatever happened to them. Once in a while you'll see one on a ranch or something.

RM: But when you were a kid this guy had 20 of them?

HH: Yes, he had at least 20. And that's what they used to bring the wood in.

When I got older, there was a gentleman, the sheriff's dad, Minoletti, and his son — they had about 35 or 36 Fords they'd use to haul the coal in from Ely after they quit using the wagons. They used Highway 50, but they used to bring all the stuff in wagons. And before the railroad, they used to get a lot of their food and supplies from Jiggs, Nevada, which is about 40 miles south of Elko. And Ruby Valley used to have vegetable gardens and so on out there. People used to go through Overland Pass into Railroad Pass and take the groceries and meat and things to the town of Eureka.

RM: From Jiggs and Ruby Valley?

HH: Yes.

RM: That was before the Palisade Railroad?

HH: Yes. And at the time, there were 3 grocery stores. One of them was owned by Biale; it was later converted to a hardware business. Then there was the Kitchen brothers. There were 2 brothers, Hiram and Joe Kitchen, and they had the store right next door to the First National Bank in Eureka. There was another grocery store at the other side of the Opera House. The Raines bought the Kitchen store out. I believe Hiram and Joe are both dead now.

RM: So the Kitchen store was where the Raines Market is now?

HH: Yes. And they had it for years. These guys would come in there and tell us about the big mule teams. They used to have big mule teams to haul the ore out. There are pictures of those teams in the courthouse to this day.

RM: Yes, I've seen that.

HH: That courthouse is beautiful. They restored it. It's one in a million.

RM: It is. And they're restoring the Opera House.

HH: Yes, right. I think it's supposed to be finished in April or something, I was

reading in the paper. And on the Fourth of July or any celebration they had horse races, sack races, greased pigs . . . all the ranchers and everybody from all around would come in there. There was a big celebration every Fourth of July. They had nickel scrambles for the kids, and bicycle races. It went on all day long. And like I told you before, they'd bring ice cream. I think it was the Louis Brothers Stage that came through there, and they brought the ice cream in those canvas sacks.

RM: How did that work?

HH: They were about the size of a potato sack, a gunny sack, and they were wrapped with canvas — just like they use out on these camps, like the Ellison ranch here in Elko (they still have a wagon). In the daytime, they put all their meat under canvas and then at night they remove the canvas and it'll just stay beautiful.

RM: But the ice cream wasn't in a package or anything?

HH: No, it was solid ice cream in a canvas. And what lined inside the canvas, I don't know. You had to eat the ice cream right away because it would melt. There was a place on the corner across the street from the Brown Hotel where all the kids used to go to. It was a nice ice cream store. It was owned by the barber and his wife — I think her name was Kate — and her husband cut hair in one of the buildings there. (My uncle had a little ice cream place too.)

RM: Did they make their own ice cream or did they bring it in?

HH: Oh, if you wanted ice cream in the old days you had to make your own — churn it. But on occasions like that they brought it in. And the stage brought it in from Ely for that ice cream store on the corner. It was quite a place. Later on they opened a drugstore next to the Nevada Hotel and it stayed open for years. It had a marble-top fountain in it and everything like that. There was a lot of brand-new marble in Eureka. In the old days, they used to have tunnels in Eureka — Chinese tunnels — and they'd haul freight in these tunnels. Some of them I've been down in go down 20 feet. They used to keep their supplies in there. We went down in one of these tunnels close to where the Masons meet after World War II. We went down a ladder (I didn't have any idea what was down there). There must have been 100 slabs of Italian marble in boxes. In the old days they probably sold it, and later on they just left them there.

RM: Was it polished?

HH: Oh, yes — all polished, with black and brown in it.

RM: How big were the slabs?

HH: They were about 24 inches wide by about 30 inches long. They were all in wooden boxes. They kept them for people who wanted to buy them to build furniture and anything like that. The old furniture was mostly all hardwood. There are still a lot of oak tables and bedroom sets in people's houses with the claws and so on. Charlie Estella's house was full of nothing but antiques.

When I was little my uncle lit the saloon and the bar and all with carbide lights before they had electricity.

RM: It came to the lamp in a pipe, didn't it? They had a central carbide distribution system, didn't they?

HH: Yes. Then later on Rebaleati and Kelley, I guess, built a power plant — I think it was DC originally. And the houses started to get electricity. When I was little, there were only about 1200 people in Eureka. There was no work. People around there worked for the county or the state or they went out and mined for themselves, taking up what other people left over. I remember them working around where the old smelters were —they'd be out sifting in the ground. A couple of them might work on screens and that. They'd get maybe one car [of ore] a month and they'd put it in bags.

RM: They were screening ore out of the slag out there?

HH: Not the slag, but what they poured off.

RM: Oh, where the ore bins had been?

HH: Yes. I know my uncle, Wallis Jurey, and Bert Robinson worked one right there by the railroad station. They worked it for years. It was during the Depression and they made a fair living doing that.

RM: Just screening out from where those old ore bins had been?

HH: Yes.

RM: So they spilled a lot of ore there in the early days.

HH: Well, not a lot, but enough for them to go in there. And then later on my uncle took a mule and went into the tunnels of what they called the O'Conner Mine. It was on the other side of Ruby Hill. He'd go every day on that mule, pulling an ore cart back and forth.

RM: So he had a little streak in there?

HH: Yes. It wasn't high grade enough for them in the old days, but they worked that during the Depression.

RM: Where were they shipping it?

HH: It went to Magma, Utah. They put it on a railroad car, but they had to get 20 tons. When they got 20 tons, they paid the freight from there to Palisade and from Palisade to Magma. They had a big smelter at Magma. And then they'd get their checks. I remember a 20-ton car check for both of them would probably clear about \$800 or \$900. That was a lot of money in those days. When I was there they had some people working on the WPA and that. But a lot of them went out and did their own mining. Charlie Vaccaro, Bob McKay and Louie Gibellini did. That's how they made their living around there.

RM: So Charlie Vaccaro was an old miner? He dug out in the hills?

HH: Yes, I guess he and Louie Gibellini are just like geologists.

RM: I talked to Louie. Do you think I ought to interview Charlie?

HH: It wouldn't hurt a bit. He was county commissioner there for years. Another one you ought to talk to if you haven't yet is Al Biale. He's probably one of the oldest guys there now.

-
- RM: Yes, we've got some interview material with him.
- HH: His dad used to sell Model Ts there. They'd come in in crates on the railroad.
- RM: Do you remember much about the sheep business or any of the Basque herders?
- HH: Yes, there were a lot when I was young. There was the Eureka Livestock Company with old man Isadore Sara, Sr.
- RM: What do you remember about him?
- HH: I don't, but I know his boy real well.
- RM: Isadore?
- HH: Yes, he's probably 75 or 80.
- RM: Yes, I've been talking to him.
- HH: Isadore was foreman for Phil Etcheverry for years at Alpha. That was the railroad stop where they had the stockyards and they got water there.
- RM: And Isadore worked there?
- HH: Yes, Phil Etcheverry from Bakersfield later bought it and Isadore worked for him as foreman up there. Phil Etcheverry still has that ranch. Then there was Beltcher and Aaron Bell. He had a big sheep outfit there. Then there was Fred Etchegaray, the father of LeRoy Etchegaray, who is a county commissioner. His dad had a cattle ranch out there — Three-Bar. And the Damele family had a big ranch. There were 3 brothers — Charlie Damele, Leo Damele and Johnny Damele. And they had the JD Ranch, the Three-Bar and . . . they had a big cattle outfit.
- And when I was young, Pete Laborde and his brother were in the sheep business. Pete later owned the Eureka Hotel and had a boardinghouse there, and that's where a lot of the railroaders stayed when they went to Eureka. And there was a bar and boarding place at what is now the Alpine. And there was the Brown Hotel and the Colonnade Hotel, which is still there.
- RM: Did the various groups like the Basques and the Italians and Cousin Jacks get along OK, or was there friction between them?
- HH: No friction at all. To this day, they call the Italians up there "macaronis" and the white guys "Cousin Jacks."
- RM: The Italians are called macaronis.
- HH: Well, that's slang. If you'd go anywhere else in the United States and say that to them, you'd have a fight, but not in Eureka. And they all drank together. They were the most wonderful people I ever met in my life, the people in Eureka.
- RM: Why do you say that?
- HH: They were friendly people and they raised their children right. It was a small county but they got some brilliant brains out of that county — Pete Merialdo was state controller . . . a lot of guys who hold big offices [come from Eureka County]. The first governor, Sadler, was from Diamond Valley.
- RM: He had a house there in town, didn't he?

HH: Yes. It was bought by a Basque boy by the name of Albert Sorholus. He was sheriff of Eureka, too. His father owned the Gold Bar in Eureka. I don't know whether that's still open or not, but there's a safe back in there in a door right off the bar with probably 100 boxes. It looks like a safety deposit box. It's not gold, but it looks like gold. A lot of the miners in the old days would put their gold dust or gold coins or whatever they had in there. There were a lot of gold coins in Eureka in the old days.

And then they had a bank right next to the courthouse — the Farmer's Merchant Bank. It's the only bank, I think, in the state of Nevada during the Depression that never closed. I had 2 \$100 bills and 3 \$50 bills out of there and I gave them to my sons for Christmas; they've still got them. They're gold certificates; they're not silver. And they're on that bank.

RM: They had gold certificates on individual banks?

HH: I'm not sure, but I think it was something like Austin at the time — I think a lot of the rich shepherders and cattlemen started their bank there. Later on, the First National came in. When First National came in, Farmer's Merchant closed.

RM: Do you remember A. C. Florio well?

HH: You bet. Do you mind if I tell a story about A. C. Florio?

RM: No. I wish you would.

HH: A. C. Florio went to court in Ely in 1928. I've got the papers somewhere, or my daughter has them. In 1928 there were 2 brothers running sheep — Alan Carter and Les Carter. One of them ended up being the city manager here and the other owned a big building over here where Roy's Market is in Elko now; Les Carter. And they went to court over in Ely, Nevada. Now, when I was little the sheepmen and the cattlemen never got along.

RM: They were fighting over the range?

HH: Yes, the cattlemen claimed the sheep ate all the grass down too low. They never got along at all. So they went to court over in Ely and Florio pulled his gun out and shot Alan Carter in the leg at the courthouse. I don't believe they ever did anything to him. A. C. Florio had the Hay Ranch about 7 miles towards Austin out of Eureka on Highway 40. One time he was out at Alpha (that's where the train stopped with the stockyards), and then he had a ranch they called the Romano Ranch in Diamond Valley. At the end the Romano Ranch was his biggest operation, because I sold him pickups later. He owned the water works in Eureka, too.

I always got along well with him. I drove up there one day with a pickup (he wouldn't come to Elko, I had to deliver it down there). He was cutting wood with an old wood saw and he cut his fingers off when I drove up. I believe he married Louie Gibellini's sister, but I'm not positive. And they used to have trouble with water in Eureka.

CHAPTER SIX

HH: One lady in Eureka, Mrs. Morrison (she was Italian and her husband was county clerk), taught school at the Diamond Mine up there at the time. There were about 25 kids at school. I don't believe she ever had an education, but she taught school up there. She was a person who could tell you stories about Eureka you couldn't believe. I used to just love to go over and talk to her. She'd make me a cup of coffee . . . and she could really tell stories. In fact, I still make my own raviolis. I've got a ravioli cutter right up there that came from her.

RM: It's from Italy?

HH: Yes, and she taught me the recipe and how to make raviolis and pasta — all that.

All these guys would tell stories about how they used to go down in those mines and how terrible it was down there working in the old days.

RM: How was it?

HH: They were working down probably around 800 feet, and there's so much water pressure down there. I went down in the Ruby Hill one time with Morrison's son (he was an electrician there at the mine). I went down to the 800-level and we had rain jackets on. They had big electric pumps about 4 feet around and 4 feet high. They had them at all the stations — about every 500 feet. I got as far as 800 feet and it was just like a cloudburst down there.

RM: It was just coming out of the rock?

HH: And they were pumping water out of that mine. I believe they had about a 16-inch pipe and it was shooting water out into the canyon. It would throw it out there 300 or 400 feet.

RM: When was that?

HH: That was after the war. They brought in big diesels — truck and trailer cement. They were trying to grout it. I believe that after the war there were 5 big companies in there — Geneva Steel and a Canadian outfit and an English outfit. They were big companies and they told me that there are still millions and millions of dollars worth of ore down there, but they can't get it; they believe there's an underground river or something that goes through there.

RM: But when you were down there it was like the water was just raining out of the rock?

HH: It was just coming down. I told Jim Morrison that that was as far as I wanted to go. That's the only time I was ever down in there. I told him I had enough. How they work around that voltage and everything — and that kind of water! I asked him when I came out, and he said, "It doesn't bother me a bit." Jim Morrison is still alive in Eureka. He's one of the grandsons of the old-timers who worked there originally. He's the son of the one who was a schoolteacher at the Diamond Mine.

-
- RM: How old would he be?
- HH: Same age as I am. Most of the kids my age worked in the mines in those days. And they died.
- RM: They didn't last long.
- HH: No.
- RM: That's a tough life.
- HH: One person who just died, Charlie Estella, worked there all his life. So did his brother Pierre. They didn't have any cars in those days; they'd walk all the way from Eureka clear up to Ruby Hill and walk home — take their lunch buckets with them.
- RM: Isn't that amazing — especially in bad weather. Those guys were tough.
- HH: They had to be. After I came back from the war they tried to reopen it. That's when they were grouting and going down that 4-compartment shaft. I think it's the only 4-compartment shaft in the state of Nevada.
- RM: They had 2 compartments for . . .
- HH: They were alongside of each other.
- RM: But it was 2 compartments where they had a double skip thing?
- HH: Well, they had 2 hoists.
- RM: They had a man hoist and then a regular hoist and muck?
- HH: Yes. And they had 2 guys in there. One of them that ran it right after the war was Joe Borgna, and I believe his brother ran the other one. People trusted him.
- RM: You had to trust the hoist operator.
- HH: Yes. And I don't think there was ever an accident.
- RM: I'm interested in your experiences in the military. In the dive bomber.
- HH: I don't want to talk about it; I don't like it. I don't even watch it on TV.
- RM: It was just too horrible?
- HH: Yes, it was. We were just kids. If we'd been just 5 years younger we wouldn't have even gotten in. We would have washed out — except those that had been in there before the war started; like the flight commanders.
- RM: You had your car dealership in Elko?
- HH: Right. I had Pontiac, Cadillac, Buick, GMC. Then I had a used-car lot right across the street here on 9th Street and a recreational lot where I sold boats and copra trailers and off-wheeled vehicles.
- Well, in these 4 counties I'm probably the only guy who knows pretty near everybody. I don't think there's a rancher in these 4 counties I haven't sold something to. In the old days you had to get out to sell cars; nowadays they're on the showroom floor.
- RM: What would you do?
- HH: I started out as a salesman and then I got to be sales manager; we'd just take off and go to Eureka and sell some cars.
- RM: How would you approach it?
- HH: Well, you'd talk to people — say in bars. And they would say, "Well, why

don't you go and see him — he's talking about buying a new car." So you'd go up and see him and talk to him. Then you'd stop in on the way to every ranch and see if you could sell them a truck or a car.

RM: When you went into the ranch, what would you do? What would you say?

HH: I'd knock on the door . . . because I knew everybody. I knew everybody in Ruby Valley, Kobeh Valley, Battle Mountain — all the ranchers. At one time I had Pete Petan at the Petan Ranch — I was selling him about 50 new trucks every other year. I sold the Marvel Ranches in Battle Mountain probably 25 or 30 units a year; they were sheep and cattle. Then in Eureka the biggest one I had was the Damele family — I'd probably sell them 20 trucks a year.

RM: Was there a rancher up here by the name of Reed that had a big ranch in the Elko area?

HH: Years ago.

RM: Did you know him?

HH: Yes, he used to live right across from the trailer court I built right after the war — H. E. Reed. He was up from Chicken Creek Summit.

RM: Did he have a big ranch?

HH: He had a big ranch.

RM: Did he have brothers that had a big ranch down by Tonopah?

HH: Not that I know of. This Hage kid may have bought some people out. They moved to Oregon and . . .

RM: The Reeds?

HH: No, it was the Caseys. They ran all the way from Tonopah and all those flats and everything clear to the Mammoth Mountains and California. They were picked up here in Elko. They were leasing ground out here a couple of years ago and they let a bunch of the cattle starve.

RM: It wasn't Hage?

HH: No, it was the ones before Hage. There was another guy down around there who had a pretty good-size ranch. He used to bring race horses up here to the fair but I can't think of his name.

RM: That wasn't down at Railroad Valley at Currant, was it?

HH: A heavy-set guy.

RM: He was at Currant, below Duckwater. I believe his name was Callaway.

HH: He used to bring race horses up. He had quite a cattle place. They ran them out on that white sage in the wintertime; the same thing they did with the sheep. They'd bring them down to Duckwater and then they'd go clear south and into Nye County. At one time there were a lot of sheep in this country. When I came back from the service and before, the railroad used to bring them in. There are no sheep anymore.

RM: No. How do you think that came to be?

HH: Well, troubles with BLM grazing permits, coyotes and so on. If there was still any money in it the Basques would be in it yet. Peter China here in Elko

County ran through Ely south. Then there was Robertson in Ely — he had a big sheep outfit down in Spring Creek. And there was Arambel in Eureka later, and Phil Etcheverry. They all had big outfits, but not anymore. There are not the sheep.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: There was a big still out in Diamond Valley?

HH: Yes.

RM: Who had it?

HH: My uncle Earl Cobb. He used to make whiskey out there and there used to be an old Italian — his name was de Bernardi — and he made a damn good living just with feeding his pigs the mash that came out of the still. They always let them run around the sagebrush drunk — the pigs were drunk all the time, squealing and rolling over.

RM: And your uncle Cobb had 4 Model T trucks that he was hauling his booze in?

HH: Yes. [Shows picture] That's him right there. This is the first quarter horse to ever come to the state of Nevada. There's a picture of the old courthouse in Palisade.

RM: Are those all Palisade?

HH: Yes. This is a hotel that burned down.

RM: Where was he taking his booze?

HH: All over the state.

RM: In these Model T trucks?

HH: Yes. They were brand new Model Ts. They called them "ton-and-a-half," but they were the same size as the one-ton truck is now.

RM: How many gallons could he get on one of those?

HH: Four kegs — 50 gallons in a wooden keg.

RM: And was it corn mash?

HH: Yes, corn or whatever they used.

RM: And sugar. And it was coming in on the railroad?

HH: Yes. There was no trouble in Eureka like there was around most of these places; they could make all the booze they wanted. I don't think it was ever raided.

One of de Bernardi's daughters is the one that had the Sentinel building.

RM: And de Bernardi was making a good living just feeding this mash?

HH: Hell, was he! It didn't cost him anything. He didn't even have a fence; those pigs wouldn't leave. [Laughter] It was a big operation.

RM: And that was all during Prohibition?

HH: Yes.

RM: Then when Prohibition went off, it folded?

HH: Yes.

RM: What did Cobb do then?

HH: He retired. [Laughter] He died while I was in the service. A lot of these

-
- pictures, like the quarter horse, came from his house.
- RM: He must have had a hell of a still down there.
- HH: It was one of the biggest I think there was in the state of Nevada. There were about 7 people working there.
- RM: Did he have a building?
- HH: Nothing.
- RM: He just had a big still out there in the sagebrush?
- HH: It wasn't sagebrush; the still was right at the foothills at Joe Flynn's ranch. There was a canvas strung from tree to tree, and there was no trouble with smoke or anything. Nobody ever went out there and checked it.
- RM: Is that at the foot of the Diamond Mountain?
- HH: It's the last ranch from Eureka coming back toward Union Pass. There's a spring there — they say there's no bottom to it. It's about 150 feet long and 150 wide and they use that to irrigate the hayfields. It's still there.
- RM: How did they keep their mash warm so it would ferment? They worked all year, right?
- HH: I guess. I was only out there with him twice. He was the first guy in Eureka who ever bought a car, and he put it in the middle of the street out there before the highways. He put a rope around the steering wheel and let it go around in circles, and people would watch it.

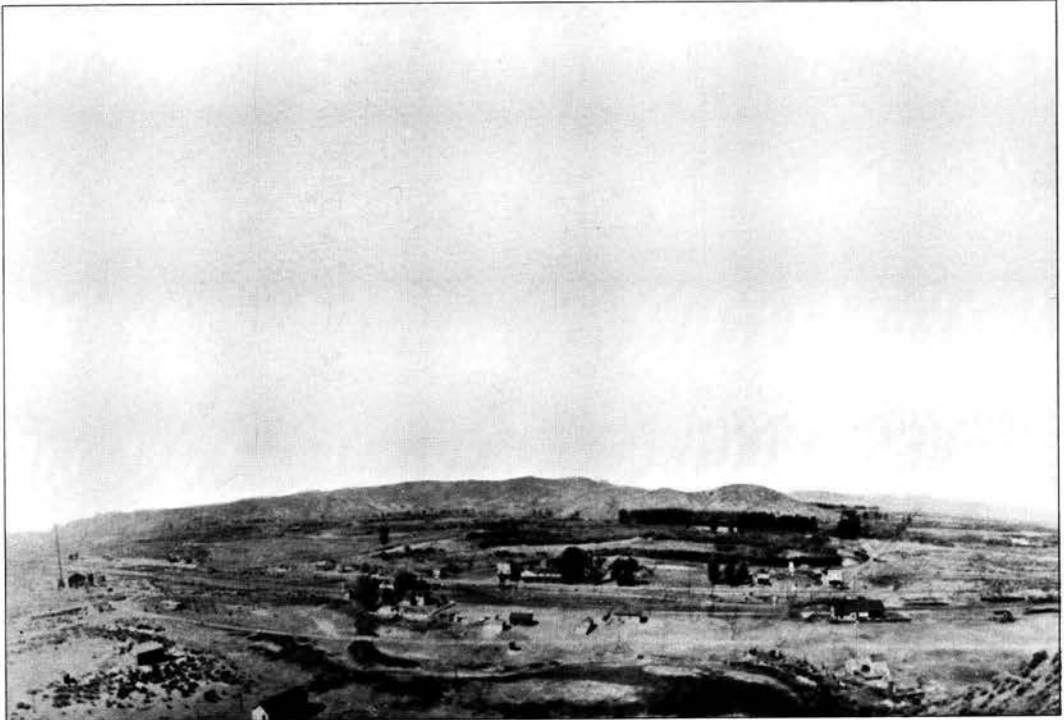
An Interview with MARTIN MILANO



Martin Milano, Elko, Nevada, 1993

*An Oral History conducted and edited by
Robert D. McCracken
1993*

Photographs from Martin Milano



1: Beowawe, Nevada, 1914.



2: Geysers near Beowawe, Eureka County, Nevada, 1974.



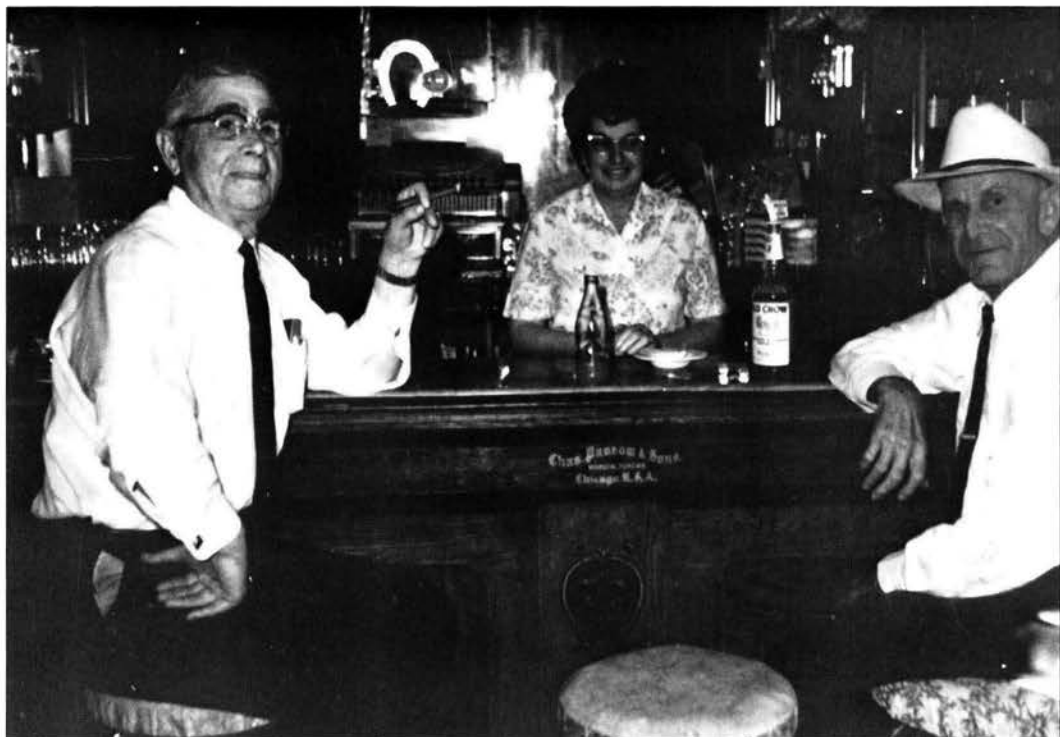
3: Martin and Ethel "Babe" Milano at their fiftieth wedding anniversary, 1987.



4: Martin Milano's band playing at Wells, Nevada, circa 1980. From left: Martin Milano (saxophone), Steve Damele (piano), and Dwayne Smith. Martin Milano had a number of bands throughout the years, and they played for dances in the area.



5: Members of the Beowawe Sagebrush Club, a women's social group in Beowawe, Eureka County, Nevada, 1955.



6: Interior of bar owned by Martin and Ethel "Babe" Milano, Beowawe, Nevada. From left: E. Smiraldo, Babe Milano, and Dan Fillippini. Undated

CONTENTS
An Interview with Martin Milano

- CHAPTER ONE** 3
On Martin's father, Dominic, who came to the U.S. from Italy and worked his way west, then mined coal in Colorado (where he met and married Margaret) and Utah; some skills and techniques involved in coal mining; Martin works in the coal mines, then for the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad as a gandy dancer; how hiring was done during the Great Depression; Martin's involvement with a dance band as a saxophone player; Martin's sister and brother-in-law, Ann and Leo, move to Beowawe to work for the Western Pacific Railroad and invite Martin to join them; Martin moves to Beowawe, then joins a dance band in Carlin; dance halls in Carlin and Beowawe; Martin gets a job with the Western Pacific working on a section gang, first at Beowawe, then at Cluro.
- CHAPTER TWO** 16
Martin returns to Utah and works in a coal mine, then moves to Ely and plays in a dance band — and meets "Babe," his future wife; Martin and Babe are married in Elko, and Martin rejoins the Western Pacific; the art and sweat of laying railroad ties; Martin is promoted to student foreman; some remarks on track maintenance; the 2 sets of tracks going through Beowawe; how a broken rail is detected.
- CHAPTER THREE** 20
Martin takes up the saxophone again and joins a band in Carlin; guarding railroad tunnels during World War II; working in a section camp; the water stops steam engines made; the old mail carrier and constable in Beowawe; ranches near Beowawe in the 1930s; remarks on the area in northern Eureka County occupied by the Newmont mine in 1993; the barite mine near the Newmont property; remembering old-timers from the Dunphy/Lynn Creek/Maggie Creek area; further discussion of the Newmont Mine; how Martin left the railroad and, with Babe, bought Joe Andreozzi's bar in Beowawe.
- CHAPTER FOUR** 28
A description of the Milanos' bar in Beowawe, and some of the improvements they made there; the economy of Beowawe in the early 1950s — railroad maintenance, mines and ranches; a detailed description of Beowawe and the surrounding area; contrasting Beowawe of the 1950s with the town it was during the 1930s; the routes of the Southern Pacific and Western Pacific railroads; a discussion of the ranches near Beowawe; how the railroads began to reduce their holdings in Beowawe in the 1950s with the advent of diesel engines; shipping barite from Dunphy.
- CHAPTER FIVE** 37
Further recollections about old-timers from Beowawe; the mosquitoes in town; in-

cidents involving overindulgence in liquor; the roundhouse at Carlin, and taking a payroll to the bank there; a discussion of gold mines currently operating in the area; the geothermal plant and geysers near Beowawe; further discussion of gold in the region north of Beowawe; Martin's work with the county road department, and the economic slowdown in Beowawe as the railroads cut back on their operations in the 1950s; the barite mine near Beowawe, where Martin worked on a crusher; working for the Eureka County roads department; Martin is elected a Eureka County commissioner in 1970 and serves for 8 years; contributions the TS Ranch made to the economy of the Eureka County.

CHAPTER SIX

46

The financial power of the north end of Eureka County; the development of the farms in Diamond Valley; the oil in Pine Valley; the Milanos open a store in Beowawe; Martin's "other" career, playing for dances from Winnemucca to Elko, and at small places like Jiggs; an episode while playing at a ranch in Taylor Canyon; the Milanos sell the bar and move to Elko after Martin suffers a heart attack; a description of the geysers before the geothermal plant was built; Babe's involvement with the Sagebrush Ladies Club, and the club's contributions to the community of Beowawe.

CHAPTER SEVEN

55

The story of the maiden's grave — the beginning of the Beowawe cemetery; remembering the Buckhorn Mine; the meaning of the word "Beowawe"; remarks regarding the old Dunphy Ranch; further discussion of the maiden's grave and the trails of the pioneers; Martin's arrowhead collection.

ADDENDUM

59

Remembering more of the old-timers from Beowawe.

This is Robert McCracken talking to Martin and Ethel "Babe" Milano at their home in Elko, Nevada, February 16, 1993.

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Martin, why don't we start with your name as it reads on your birth certificate.

MM: My name on my birth certificate is Martino Milano.

RM: And when and where were you born?

MM: I was born in Kenilworth, Utah. That's a coal-mining town between Helper and Price, Utah.

RM: And what was your birth date?

MM: October 23rd, 1914.

RM: What was your father's name?

MM: My father's name was Dominic Milano.

RM: And do you know when and where he was born?

MM: My dad was born in Italy, and he came to this country when he was 17 years old. I'm not sure of his birth date. He came to New York and then he worked in Chicago as a bartender for a while. He picked up the English language fairly well. Then he went into coal mining in Colorado. In those days, that was a big business.

RM: Where was he in Colorado?

MM: In Rockville, Colorado. I guess that town is gone, now. It wasn't too far from Florence, Colorado.

RM: How long did he stay there?

MM: Well, he married my mother there. She came to this country from Italy when she was 3 years old.

RM: And her family went to Rockville?

MM: Yes, they were there. Her father was more or less a gunsmith, and he had a store and did different things.

RM: Do you know where in Italy your father was born?

MM: I think Dad was born in Milan, Italy.

RM: And what was your mother's full name?

MM: Her maiden name was Margaret Milano.

RM: They weren't related in Italy, were they?

MM: No, they weren't related. That's a fairly common name in Italy.

RM: Where was your mother from in Italy?

MM: I think she was from Florence, Italy. It's more in the north. She was blonde and blue eyed; my dad was a little darker, with brown eyes.

RM: Do you recall her birth date?

EM: It was February the 10th, but I don't know the year.

RM: And they got married in Rockville, Colorado?

MM: Yes. Then they moved to Utah. I think that is when he moved to Kenilworth to work at the mine they had there, and that's where I was born.

-
- RM: Were you the first child?
- MM: No, I had a sister. She was born in Colorado. She's 6 years older than I am.
- RM: What's her name?
- MM: Ann — Antoinette.
- RM: Did you grow up in Utah?
- MM: Yes. I don't remember too much about Kenilworth. My dad moved from there and he went to work for a mine they called Rollap Coal Company. That was above where Castlegate was. I first went to school, the first grade, at Rollap. I remember I was just a kid. It's in a kind of a canyon. I don't think I went to school there for over one year — maybe a year and a half. Then Dad got a different job, I think for Castlegate Coal Company, and at that time we moved into Helper, Utah. Dad built his own home in Helper and they lived there till they came out here. When did Dad and Mother come out, Babe? It was after we were married, wasn't it?
- EM: Yes, quite a while after we were married. Your sister Ann and her husband Leo had bought the store from Andy Allen.
- MM: In about the '40s — 1941 or 1942.
- RM: Did the coal mining take a toll on his health?
- MM: Not too badly. He never had black lung. There were a lot of miners who did, but he worked in a coal mine for over 43 years.
- RM: He must have been tough.
- MM: He was still working, digging coal, when he was 68 years old.
- RM: That was hand labor back then, wasn't it?
- MM: Oh, yes, it was pick and shovel. About the only machine they had in those days was a cutting machine that would cut a groove under your face of coal. It would cut about a 4- or 5- or 6-inch groove, and your miners had to drill the holes. I worked in the coal mines with my dad when I was 15, 16 years old. [Laughs] You had to drill your own blasting holes in the coal with an auger-type drill by hand.
- RM: Is it hard to work that auger?
- MM: No, it goes pretty well, especially in the soft coal. They were working soft coal there.
- RM: How deep a hole do they make?
- MM: You'd go in maybe 5 to 6 feet. This undercut would be in the floor approximately 6 feet. So when they'd shoot this coal, it would break to the cut. Then you had to lay your track up to the middle of the face. The face would be anywhere from 15 to 20 feet wide.
- RM: How tall would it be?
- MM: They differed. Some mines were 5 foot, some 8, some 7. There would be solid rock on your ceiling.
- RM: They would take the full seam of coal?
- MM: Yes.
- RM: And if the seam was thin then they had a shorter . . .
- MM: Oh, yes, that was tough work in those days. You had to hand-shovel it, pick

-
- it, break it and load it.
- RM: My dad was a hard-rock miner and he worked a couple of weeks once in the coal mines around Cañon City, Colorado. He said he never worked so hard in his life.
- MM: You had to work hard to make any money because you got paid for the tonnage that you got out of the mine.
- RM: So it was contract work, not hourly pay? What were you paid a ton?
- MM: If I remember right, it was around 55 cents a ton.
- RM: How many tons could you get out per day?
- MM: If you had a good spot where you could really shovel and your coal was broken down where you wouldn't have to stop and break it up, you could get out 4 to 6 cars a day that would run 4 to 5 tons each.
- RM: That much? So that was pretty good money.
- MM: Oh, yes.
- RM: Was it dusty?
- MM: Not really, because you kept it wetted down. And then we used what they call a rock powder. You'd rock powder the walls; it turns them white. Then your visibility is a lot better. But you had to lay your own track and run it up to the face. In the mines I worked they used to give us 2 cars at a whack. There were 2 men working and it was one for you, one for me, you know. So between 2 of you, you could make 10 to 12 cars a day.
- RM: So you were working those mines out of Helper?
- MM: Yes. There were several mines out there.
- RM: How long did you do that?
- MM: I worked in the mines there approximately 3 or 4 winters. In those days, you'd go into the fall when the call for coal was heavy, and then about the middle of the winter, they'd say, "Well, all you young guys —[whistles] out you go, you're laid off."
- RM: Because you didn't have the seniority?
- MM: You wouldn't have seniority, and then they would cut down; they'd only work maybe 1 or 2 or 3 days a week. And when spring came, it would just be about one day a week during the summer, if you were lucky.
- RM: Is that right? And that would be for the guys who had seniority.
- MM: The older people, yes.
- RM: So it wasn't a full-time job, was it?
- MM: No, it never was, not even for Dad. A lot of times he'd get to work clear up in the middle of summer, maybe, but he'd be working one or two days a week.
- RM: So a guy had to make his money when he was working well, didn't he?
- MM: That's right. [Laughs] It would be pretty good there if you could make \$14 or \$15 a day. In those days, that was a lot of money. When I worked for the railroad, gandy dancing [working on a section crew], it was 35 cents an hour on the Rio Grande. When I came out here to the Western Pacific I was getting 37 cents.

-
- RM: When did you quit coal mining and start gandy dancing?
- MM: It was really a slack time. I quit high school. I went one year —I went through the ninth grade — and the second year came up and [chuckles] I couldn't get money enough to get the books to go to the tenth grade. So, I said, "Well, this year, I'll be out." That's when I went to work up on Soldier Summit, Utah.
- RM: That's a steep grade, isn't it?
- MM: Oh, yes. The D&RG [Denver & Rio Grande Railroad] had sections up in there. There was a tunnel up in there, and the foreman was a guy by the name of Art Banner. He was a real nice fellow. And boy, I never shoveled so many cinders in my life. [Laughing] I worked there all that summer.
- RM: Did they use the cinders?
- MM: No. They were all coal locomotives in those days, and pushing up that mountain they'd just blow cinders out there, and they'd get deep along the tracks. You'd have to clean them away — shove them over the bank.
- RM: They actually blew that many cinders?
- MM: Yes, it was surprising. I worked in Castlegate in the yard one time, and those yards were just black with cinders.
- RM: Is that right? They're coming out the stack?
- MM: Yes, out of the stacks of the coal burners. It's surprising, the stuff that comes out of them.
- RM: When did you start gandy dancing?
- MM: I think I was only about 17 or 18.
- RM: So that was just about the time the Depression hit.
- MM: Yes, things were really tough. When I went up where they were hiring, there was a bunch of men there looking for jobs. In those days, all they'd do is, the boss would come up and look at you and say, "How old are you?" "Twenty-one."
- "Get a shovel." That was the way they hired you. You didn't have any social security number in those days, it was just your name and that was it.
- RM: Was it union or nonunion?
- MM: There was no union in those days. The coal mines were the same way. That was about the time they started to form the unions in the coal mines. John L. Lewis started that union. I was working in the mines at that time. Finally, they got so . . . before that, you'd be in the mine working and you'd get what we used to call rock in your coal. It's a bony stuff, and you can't use it; it won't burn. It's black, but it's more of a rock. You'd have to take that out of your coal because if your car got up there and it had any in it, they'd dock you the whole car. You had to be careful what you loaded.
- RM: Did some seams have a lot more of it than others?
- MM: Yes. One there in Castlegate had about a 4-inch seam right in the middle of the vein, and it was about a 7-foot ceiling in that mine. They were trying to shoot that with what they called cardox blasting. You drilled a hole there and then they'd put the pipe in and it was loaded with carbon dioxide. When

they'd blow it, it would release a gas pressure. I've seen them move the whole thing out in one chunk. You could dig your way around it and walk all around that. Then you really had to work to break it up. Imagine a chunk of coal 20 feet long and 7 feet deep and 7 feet high.

RM: My goodness. They didn't use regular powder down there?

MM: They did at times, yes.

RM: It wouldn't set the coal on fire?

MM: No, they'd blast it out. But they would use the cardox so they could get more chunk coal. And it was terrible, because you really had to work to break it up to load it. It wouldn't break up enough.

RM: How long did you gandy dance there?

MM: I worked at Kyune — that was just below Soldier Summit — and then I worked on a railroad in Castlegate for 2 or 3 years.

RM: Gandy dancing is hard work, isn't it?

MM: Yes. And we used to have a little band and we played for dances. [Laughing] I was a saxophone player.

RM: Is that right?

MM: On Saturday nights we'd go out and play for dances, and we were lucky if we'd make \$2 or \$3 on a dance night. We'd play all night, too. There were a lot of Austrians around there, in Spring Glen. They would put on a big shindig down there sometimes, and they'd hire us to play for it.

RM: They were from Austria?

MM: Yes. And boy, when they threw a party, it was all night. We would play until the sun came up.

RM: For 2 bucks?

MM: [Laughs] Yes, \$2 or \$3; sometimes we'd get \$5 out of them. That was a lot of money, to get \$5.

RM: Did your group have a name?

MM: We called that group The Troubadours. I played with one outfit there called the Utah Nighthawks. I can't remember the leader's name. During the Depression it was tough. We'd line up some jobs — we'd go out on Tuesday night, like, and we would end up in Moab, Utah. There was a little open-air dance hall before you got to Moab, right along the highway at Thompson, Utah. We'd play there one night and the next night we'd go over to Moab. Then the next night we'd go over to Monticello, Utah, I think (it's close to the Colorado border). Then we'd work back, and on Saturday nights we'd end up either in Helper or Price.

RM: Was this the band, or the gandy dancing?

MM: No, the orchestra. That was when I wasn't working.

RM: So you didn't work steadily as a gandy dancer?

MM: No. It was the same way as in mining, only they'd do most of their work in the summertime, and then in the fall they'd lay you off. They'd only keep a 2- or 3-man crew in the winter. They used to do that out here, too.

RM: What brought you to Nevada?

MM: My sister, Ann, and her husband got married, and he was working for the Western Pacific here. He used to work for the Union Pacific. They came out here to Nevada, and he was a section foreman.

RM: What was his name?

MM: Leo J. Bogus. When they were out here they said, "Why don't you come out here, they're paying a little more money up here." (It was 2 cents more.) You'd work 8 hours a day. And they had gangs — you could go to work on a gang. I didn't stay at the camp in Utah. We used to drive back to Helper every night and then go out and work in the mornings. If you stayed out there, you had to pay \$1 a day, I think, for your room and board.

RM: They had boxcars, didn't they?

MM: Yes, they had boxcars made into bunkhouses.

RM: Were those comfortable?

MM: Oh, yes. They were warm, too. Most of them used the refrigerator cars that are lined. If you ate there — they had a cook and everything — it would cost you \$1 a day for your board. That didn't leave you too much at 35 cents an hour. When I got laid off from the section gang [at Helper] they said, "Well, you can go over here to Soldier Summit and go to work on this extra gang." They had extra gangs there. They paid 20 cents per hour and you worked a 10-hour day. And they had floating boxcars. The ones at Kyune were already set out on tracks. And there, they charged you \$2 a day. I said I didn't want any of that. [Laughs] Anyhow, my sister and brother-in-law said, "Oh, why don't you come out here?"

So I decided, "Well, I'll go out there." At that time I was playing with an orchestra called Wiebel's Rainbow Orchestra. We had about a 12-or 14-piece orchestra. In those days they used to have dance halls. I don't know if you remember back then, but they were huge. They'd have dances on Saturday night, and they always had a big orchestra - a 12 to 15-piece band, or something like that.

RM: Even small towns did that, didn't they?

MM: Yes. In Helper they had the Rainbow Hall, and in Price they had what they called the Silver Moon Hall. We'd play in Helper once and then we'd play . . . these were mostly on Saturday nights because they couldn't afford a big orchestra like that all the time. But it was surprising how many people used to go to those dances. It was really nice. I had to quit his orchestra, and he didn't want me to go, but I said, "Well, I've got to change." And Mr. Wiebel of Wiebel's Rainbow Orchestra gave me a real good write-up. I think I've got the letter yet. [Laughs] He said, "Maybe you can get a job [in an orchestra] somewhere else."

I said, "Well, it's pretty hard to get on a good circuit." Today it's different. Now you've got TV and everything and a person gets a pretty good break. But in those days you didn't; you had to make your own. So I came out to Nevada in February 1935, and I lit right there at Beowawe.

RM: How did you happen to light at Beowawe?

MM: That's where my sister and brother-in-law were. When I got off the train it was dark and cold — oh, man, was it cold. It was about like the weather we've got right now, but not this much snow. And a little town like that was kind of new to me. So we went down to their home — they had a nice house there. The railroad had pretty nice section houses. My brother-in-law was a foreman over a gang.

There were 2 sections — one went west and one went east. He had the west section and a Japanese man had the east section, and that's where I was supposed to go to work. Well, when I got there they weren't hiring anybody. They only had 2 men apiece, I think, for winter work, and they weren't going to do any hiring till March. In the meantime I went to Carlin and I got acquainted around there. There was a kid there by the name of Bud Eastman who played the piano. He was a good piano player.

The constable in Carlin was a Mr. Burning, and he played the drums. His daughter Marguerite played the piano and her husband played the banjo. They said, "Well, we need a saxophone player," so I played with them for several dances down there. Bud had a little better orchestra going, so I went over and started playing with Bud. We had a piano, a drummer and a trombone player there.

RM: And where were you playing?

MM: They'd have dances at Carlin, Battle Mountain, Beowawe and Elko.

RM: How much could you make a night?

MM: In those days around here you could make \$10, \$12 apiece. It was a lot better than you could do in Utah. [Laughs]

RM: How many people would show up for one of these dances?

MM: Oh, you'd be surprised; the crowds would really come. They'd come from all over.

RM: Were there a couple hundred people?

MM: Oh, yes, especially at Carlin. They had a nice hall in Carlin, and it would really get loaded.

RM: What was it called?

MM: The Eagle Hall. It's burned down since then. They used to hold shows in there and they had a stand where we could put the orchestra.

RM: What was the hall in Beowawe?

MM: In Beowawe it was the place we owned. We had the bar and, at the time we had the bar, there was just a bar and the other end was a hall. The hall was about 50 feet long and 25 feet wide and the bar was 25-by-25. During the time we were playing with Bud, we'd play down there, and Joe Androsi had the place then. Then there was another hall (there were 2 halls in Beowawe). There was one down the street — we used to call the owner "Gumshoe" Smyth. I don't know what his first name would have been, because we'd either call him Smyth or Gumshoe, and that was it. He had been a railroad bull at one time. He had a bar in Beowawe too. And there was a bar at the other place, where Joe was. Next to that there was a building that had a

pretty good hall in it. It was in a stuccoed building . . . I think it was made out of ties. They'd have dances there once in a while, but most of them were at Joe's place on the corner. They used to have pretty good crowds.

RM: Would people come from Crescent Valley and all around?

MM: Battle Mountain and Carlin and . . .

EM: Eureka.

MM: Yes, even Eureka. The sheriff would come down and bring a whole carload with him. After the dance the sheriff would say, "OK, let's all go to Battle Mountain." Jim Rattazzi was the sheriff.

RM: Were you making a living as a musician there?

MM: No, that was mostly on the side. In March I went back on the railroad, but every Saturday night we were playing someplace.

RM: And you were working with the Japanese foreman?

MM: Yes.

RM: How long was a section?

MM: On this paired track, they would run 8 to 9 miles in those days.

RM: So you had 2 lines of track 8 to 9 miles long?

MM: Yes. Below that there was the Cluro section, and I think he had only 7 miles on that, but that was all through a canyon, with curves; it was pretty bad.

RM: How many were in a crew?

MM: In the summertime the crew would go up to anywhere from 6 to 8 men. In the wintertime, they'd cut them down to one and two — a foreman and one man, or a foreman and two men. I worked that summer with this Japanese fellow named Seno. And, boy, he was a tough one to work for. He was strong, too. I'd see him pick up two ties and put them on one shoulder and take off with them.

RM: What does a tie weigh?

MM: In those days, you could figure anywhere from 85 to 90 pounds.

RM: And he'd put 2 on his shoulder?

MM: Yes. Those were plain ties; they weren't creosoted. Later they started creosoting all the ties. Now they're heavier; they run 100, 110 pounds and some of them are heavier than that. They've got the creosote oil poured into them under pressure and they can get pretty heavy.

Anyhow, I worked that summer and then that fall they laid me off. They sent me to Cluro, just 8 miles down the track in the canyon. I went down and worked for a man named Paddock — a real nice fellow. He was the foreman there. There were just 2 of us working with him, and then they wanted to cut the crew down to one man and the foreman. Actually, they wanted to work one man 2 days a week and the other man 3 days a week and then alternate the next week. I said, "Well, I'm single and I don't have any business staying here," and the other fellow who worked there was married; his name was Earl Elliot. I said, "I'm going to let you go ahead and work the full 5 days and I'm going to take off," and I went back to Utah.

CHAPTER TWO

MM: I went back to Utah and I went to work in the coal mine again. I wanted to make a little money, so I went to work in the Standardville Coal Company. There was a kid named Leroy Smith — we called him Snigs Smith. He was a real good trumpet player. He went with me and we went to work in the coal mines there. We were working in one low coal mine — it was only about 4-1/2 to 5 feet high. You had to stay stooped over all day; that was pretty rough. Leroy had been hurt one time before and broken a hip and he couldn't make it in there. He worked there about 2 or 3 weeks, and then he got them to transfer him over to the bigger mine, where there was higher coal — there was 6- and 7-foot coal over there. And there was an Englishman there named Phillips; he must have taken a liking to me. I'd go to work, and I was taking both coal cars. When Leroy was in the low mine with me one was Leroy's and one was mine. But I would take 2 cars; Phillips never put anybody with me. I made some pretty good money at that time. This was in the winter of 1935-36.

Then we went to Ely. There were Snigs and I, and Bud Eastman played piano, and we went to Ely and we were playing for dances there in the winter of 1936-37. We played in a nightclub and my wife was a hat check girl there — that's where I met her. [Laughs]

EM: Yes, I was a waitress and hat check girl.

RM: Where were you playing in Ely?

MM: It was a nightclub in east Ely. They've made an apartment out of it now.

EM: Before they made it into a nightclub, it was a laundry.

MM: It was a big building. We played there every night except Monday.

RM: Was Ely going strong because of the mines?

MM: Yes, it was doing pretty well in those days. That was a rough winter, that winter of '36.

EM: But we were married in '37.

MM: We got married in '37. Anyhow, Snigs and I left there right after Christmas. We got on a pretty good binge and decided, "Aw, the hell with this, let's go home." So we took off for Utah, because his folks lived in Helper also. We made it back there and then we went to work in the coal mine. And in the meantime, I told Babe, "Well, we're going to get married, just as soon as I get some money." [Laughter]

EM: We got married in February; it'll be 56 years the 22nd of this month.

RM: What was your maiden name?

EM: Ethel Delilah Nichols.

RM: Were you from Ely?

EM: No, I'm from Ogden, but I was working in Ely.

MM: She was working there at the time. So Snigs and I went back, and I'd call her 2 or 3 times a week, or better. And I said, "As soon as I get enough money ahead, I'm going to pick you up and we'll go to Beowawe."

RM: Was your sister still there?

MM: Yes, they were still there. So I did. I had a little bankroll about that time, didn't we, love? She was back in Ogden then and I called her and I said, "I'm going to be coming through there (on such-and-such a day). Be ready." We came through and picked up blankets and cooking pans, and away we went to Beowawe.

RM: Were you already married?

EM: No, we got married in Elko.

MM: We came to Beowawe and I got my sister and brother-in-law and I said, "We want to go to Elko and get married, and we want you to stand up for us." So we all came to Elko on the 22nd. That's a holiday, you know. We got over to the courthouse, and we had to go find a judge. The jailer there showed us the jail and everything and he said, "I'm [not] going to let you get away"; he'd put us in jail if we tried to get away. Then finally the judge came and we got married. [Chuckles]

EM: And we went to Beowawe.

MM: It only cost you \$5 to get married in those days. Then we went back to Beowawe, and . . . let's see, did I get to work right away then?

EM: Yes.

RM: You went to work on the railroad?

MM: Yes, right away.

RM: What railroad did you go with when you came back?

MM: It was the Western Pacific again. I worked under my brother-in-law for a while. And I was a pretty good worker — I could do a lot of work. In those days they used to say, "We want you to put in at least 10 ties a day" per man. You would dig this out and dig the other one out, and put the new one in.

RM: Oh, my god.

MM: Well, I got pretty good at it. I could put in 10 ties in about 4 hours and they were in good. One morning I had all 10 ties in and the other guys were still working, putting theirs in. Sometimes they'd go to 2:00 p.m. to get their 10 ties in. I had mine in, and I was putting plates on and dressing them off and the big boss, the roadmaster, came by. He looked and he asked my brother-in-law, "What's he supposed to be doing?" He thought I was just playing around.

My brother-in-law told him, "He got his 10 ties in already."

The boss said, "Aw, I don't believe it."

He said, "Well, go check him." He came over and he checked — tapped them to see if they were tight, and they were tight. He went through and shook his head. He said, "Well, I'll be back here tomorrow; I'm going to see how you do that." The next day he was there, and I put my 10 ties in and I got them in a little quicker than I did the day before.

RM: How did you do it so fast?

MM: Sometimes you couldn't do it, but if you were in the right place and the dirt wasn't too tight, the best way was go right along the edge of the tie with your

pick and just dig her down as deep as you could. Then you'd take your shovel and put it in against the tie and push the dirt away. That way you didn't have to shovel through, you'd just jerk it away. Then when you'd take your tie plates off, you'd pull your spikes, pull your tie plates off; you knock it over in this little hole you'd have and pull it out. Then all you've got to do is level it, shove the new tie in, tamp it up and you've got it. Throw a little dirt in and go to the next one.

RM: So you had a little method there.

MM: I had a method, all right.

RM: But you must have been a heck of a worker.

MM: Oh, ask her how I'd come home at night. Honest to god, in the summertime my shirts would be complete salt. Across my shoulders it just turned to salt. She'd have to wash them out every night.

EM: In an old-fashioned wash tub.

MM: Yes, with a scrubbing board. [Laughs] But you had to work like that, or there was somebody else there waiting for a job; there weren't that many jobs available, [even at] 37 cents an hour. Well, this roadmaster kind of took a liking to me. He said, "I'm going to send you out as a student foreman." So I liked that.

RM: Now, the foreman is the section boss? So he was going to make you a student section boss?

MM: Yes, he was going to break me in.

RM: That's great. Why don't you explain what the roadmaster is?

MM: He's the boss over a whole stretch, like the run from Elko to Winnemucca. That's his district. Then from Winnemucca, say on to Gerlach, I think, that was another district, then Gerlach to Portola. They had so many districts.

RM: So a district is divided into sections?

MM: That's right.

RM: And the workers live at the section, don't they?

MM: Yes. They have houses and everything there. The foreman had a nice big home.

EM: They weren't modern, now.

MM: Well, they were modern in those days.

EM: They didn't have any running water or anything.

MM: But nobody had running water then. If you had your own pump you could have running water, otherwise they used to haul it in at places where they couldn't get water. Anyhow, when I went out as a student foreman they sent me to Hogan tunnels. That was quite a deal. I went over there and there was a gang there and their foreman was from Salt Lake. He had a pet crew of about 8 men, and the rest of the men weren't pets. So I went to work over there as a student foreman.

RM: And the pets weren't working hard?

MM: No, they did whatever they pleased. Over at Hogan there's a tunnel that's over a mile long. We were going to redo this tunnel and take all the gravel

out and put new rock in it for the roadbed. That was the dirtiest, dustiest job you ever saw. You'd get so dusty, you couldn't even see the headlight on the engine.

RM: Oh, my god.

MM: There were 70 or 80 men working there and he had this pet crew of 6 or 8 who wouldn't do anything that you'd tell them to. And he put me in a box-car with the men. I was supposed to be in a student foreman's car, but they didn't have one. They had a bath car; this foreman wouldn't even hook it up.

RM: So you couldn't take a bath?

MM: That's for sure. So this timekeeper came out. (He's in Winnemucca; his name's Herb Bosh.) He was a young fellow. He said, "We're going to get this bath car hooked up."

And I said, "Good, we'll get the water car over here and we can get some heat in there and heat the water." (They had a heater and everything in there.) He hollered and hollered and went to the main office, and finally they made [that foreman] hook up the bath car. But in the meantime, in the morning when we'd go to work, I'd go to the foreman, and he was supposed to tell me what he wanted me to do each day — give me so many men and tell me to do this or do that. Well, I'd be standing there waiting for orders and he'd be telling these pets, "Penrod, you go get this, and Charlie, you go get that, and you get this and you get that," and I'd stand and he'd never tell me anything.

So I'd go out and get on the motorcar, and we'd ride on out to the tunnel where the job was. Then I'd ask him, "What do you want me to do?"

"Well," he'd say, "you can take 3 or 4 men and go down the other end of the tunnel and start digging them ties out down there." He didn't want me around; I could see that.

So I got down there, and I ended up with 8 men, and by god, they were good workers, too. And I'd get in and work with them — "Hell, we'll just show him we can do as much as the whole gang he's got on that other end . . ." And we were doing it.

As we got into the tunnel we had to have gas lanterns. They were like these camp lanterns; they were the same thing. Well, all these pets took care of the lanterns. I was there one day and the foreman said, "All the big shots are going to be coming in the red motorcar, so you want to keep the track clean and everything, and don't get anybody hurt." In the tunnel there were little spots dug out to set the push car off the track. We were there and the pets were fixing the lanterns and I told them, "Now you guys, before you leave, put that push car off in this tunnel here. Get it off the track." And I figured they would. Of course, they were his men. Then I went down with my crew and I looked back and here came the red motorcar (it was an automobile). And there was the push car on the track, and that crew was gone.

RM:~ Oh!

MM: You know who got the blame for that? Me. Well, I ran down there. I had to stop their car and I took a couple of my men and we set the push car off. The roadmaster was in the car and he got off and, oh boy, he gave me a good chewing. And I said, "Well, I'll take [the blame] this time." And that's all I told him. That night I went in there and I told that foreman off. I said, "You keep your pets down there with you; don't you bring them up there where I am."

RM: What did he say?

MM: He didn't say anything. I said, "They were supposed to take that push car off the track, and they didn't do it. I got the blame for it, and I'm taking it." Boy, the next time I saw that roadmaster, I told him exactly what happened. And he didn't like me too well either.

Anyhow, the dust was so bad in the tunnel that about that time I developed a real bad cough in the lungs, like a pneumonia. I said, "Well, I've got to go home. I'm going to get the hell out of here to go see a doctor." I came on into Elko and I saw the doctor there, and hell, I had pneumonia — he called it dust pneumonia. This stuff was all stuck in there. So I was off about a week and he gave me some kind of medicine to loosen the phlegm. You'd cough this black stuff out of your throat. Then he gave me a whole bottle. He said, "Have the guys take this every night — a good, big spoonful will loosen that stuff up." Because they were all getting sick down there.

RM: Yes, working in that dust.

MM: And they wouldn't water it down. About that time an assistant foreman came up there; his name was Ray Kaiser. Now Ray Kaiser is one hell of a good guy, and he and I got along real well. We'd run this train in with the flatcars, and then they'd have to shovel this loose stuff back up on the flatcar. It'd get so bad you couldn't see. The engine would be there, and you know how bright those lights are. When you can't see that light, it's got to be terrible dust. We'd wrap a bandanna around our face to try to keep the dust out, and Ray said, "We're going to have to get them to wet this down; we can't stand this."

In the meantime, they brought us a bunch of lamps that were carbide lamps. You've never seen anything like it. You had a square box, and it was about 2-by-2 and about 4 feet high. Then you had a pipe that went down in there and there was a big lantern on top of the pipe. And there was a burner there. You put carbide down in the bottom in your water, and then you'd have to cover this wet sack over the top, and then this would ferment — you know, the gas would come up and you'd light that light. They'd show up a pretty good light because they had a big foot-and-a-half dome on them. But when the dust got bad, they didn't help. One day we had one light that wouldn't go. We ran up there and Kaiser said, "I wonder what the hell's the matter with this lamp; it ain't burning right," and he pulled the sack off, put the lamp up, and it blew up. It blew us both off of that flatcar. [Laughs] I'm hollering, "Hey Ray, you all right?"

“Yeah, I’m all right.”

“Where are you?”

“Over here.” It was so dark you couldn’t see. He said, “Where are you?” “I’m over on this other side.” So we finally got together. And he had burned all his eyebrows off. Oh, I laughed. [Laughs] I didn’t get that much; I wasn’t that close to it. He’s the one who put up the lamp and looked in, and boy, when it blew up . . .

RM: Were you a student foreman then?

MM: Let’s see. I didn’t even help finish that job. I finally got the hell out of there and I came back in to Elko and went right to the top man in the office. I said, “I’ve got to go someplace else. This foreman and I don’t get along at all, and I just can’t work there. Send me someplace else.” So he sent me out to Jungo, Nevada.

RM: Where’s that?

MM: It’s west of Winnemucca, about 30 miles.

RM: Meanwhile, your new bride is back in Beowawe?

MM: Yes, she’s in Beowawe. Of course, I’m coming home every weekend, going back and forth. So I went out to Jungo, and there was an extra gang. The foreman on that was a fellow by the name of Jim McKenna, an Irishman. And I mean, he was Irish. I knocked on the door and, [in an Irish brogue], “Come in, lad, come in, lad.”

I went in and told him, “I’m supposed to be your assistant foreman” (they had promoted me then to assistant).

“Good lad, good!”

I said, “Where’s the assistant foreman’s car?” They had a car for the assistant foreman — they called it the J-car.

“Well,” he said, “you see that bed over there?” At the other end of his car. “That’s yours, right over there.” And that’s where I stayed, right in his car with him. He was a real good man. I worked with him all that summer. In fact, Babe came out and stayed a couple of nights. Oh, he was a swell guy.

RM: How long did you work for the railroad then?

MM: Practically 18 years in all — for the Western Pacific and the D&RG.

RM: Were you doing any music on the side?

MM: Yes, but not during this period.

RM: You were too busy out there?

MM: And we were running all over, so I wasn’t playing anyplace at that time. From there we went from Winnemucca and did some jobs there, and then we had to go to Flanagan, California. We were over at this new section doing work and they brought in another gang — the one I had been with at the tunnel. They brought them in and they threw us all together. Well, Jim knew what the history was with me with this other gang. He said, “You stay away from them. We don’t want to get mixed up with them anyhow.”

I said, “That’s a good idea.” Down there I was doing most of the track lining and things like that. That was when they were changing over to the creosoted

ties; they were also putting in new ballast.

RM: When did they make that change?

MM: Back in the '30s, starting about in '35, '36.

RM: How long does a regular tie last in this country?

MM: Without creosote? Some of them could last at least 10, 12 years, and some longer.

RM: How long would a creosote tie last?

MM: A creosote tie would never rot out. In time it would just break apart, but it takes it a long time. I've seen them take ties out off the Southern Pacific here (they used to date their ties with a little date mark) and I saw some ties that were put in in '42 and were still in service in 1972.

RM: That's amazing.

MM: They're pretty well split up, but they were still in pretty good shape. Of course, the trains are getting heavier and they use bigger rail now. They used to use what they called a 85-pound rail.

RM: Is that 85 pounds to the foot?

MM: Yes, 85 pounds to the foot.

RM: What do they use now?

MM: Now they use 112, and some is bigger than that; I heard they have 130-pound rail, too. Over the years they just kept changing them. Anyhow, we worked in California and then I came back to Beowawe when we finished that job and I worked on the section there, laboring. Then I went out as a relief section foreman. If a foreman was going to take a vacation I'd take his place. I was all over the railroad during that time. Later on, I bid in a job at what they called Cluro; that's just out of Beowawe. I had been at CalaNeve — that's just over the California-Nevada line — for a couple of years.

RM: What do you mean, you bid in a job?

MM: Well, the foremen go by seniority. If the foreman on a certain section quits, they have to put it up for bid. And if you have the seniority, you will get that job.

RM: You put your name in the hat, in effect?

MM: Yes. They'd send out applications and you'd fill one out. And Cluro is about 9 miles east of Beowawe itself; it's in the canyon.

RM: Did you move to Cluro, then?

MM: Yes, we moved to Cluro.

RM: How long did you live there?

MM: We went there in '40 or '41, and we were there about 2 years. Then I bid in with a job in the canyon here, on the Tonka section just between here and Carlin. And we were there 6 or 7 years, until '51.

RM: How did the track maintenance work change in the years that you were there?

MM: It changed quite a bit. They started getting more machinery. Before, your tamping was all done by hand. You had a tamping pick with a big head on one end, and you had tamping bars, with a head on one end and a spear on the other. You would raise your tie and tamp the dirt under the tie that way.

Then they came out with automatic tampers that were like a jack hammer. And you had a compressor. And they got more and more advanced as they went along. They had machinery that would run along and level your track and tamp it at the same time. They would put ribbon up there — it was like an electric eye — and it was focused in there. Then they came out with machinery that would even dig a tie out and cut the ties.

RM: I've seen that. It was amazing to see them work.

MM: There's no more digging ties like we used to, with a pick and shovel.

RM: When did the digging finally end?

MM: It's never ended as far as that goes, but on changing ties, I think it was mostly about in the '50s on the Western Pacific. The D&RG and some of them were already going (the Union Pacific was one of the first ones) even in the late '40s.

RM: And there were 2 lines going through Beowawe?

MM: That's right. Everything went east on the Western Pacific and west on the Southern Pacific. They used each other's tracks. That was what they called the pair track section. It began over here at this side of Wells.

RM: Oh, each one of them had a set of tracks? Did you maintain tracks for both railroads?

MM: No, just the Western. The Southern Pacific had their own crews and we had nothing to do with them. The pair tracks started this side of Wells and went this side of Winnemucca to Weso. Then each one went their own way. Between the Western and Southern Pacific, they had a lot of trains.

RM: How do you work on those tracks when there's a lot of traffic on the line?

MM: You get a lineup in the morning before you go to work. You get on the phone with the dispatcher (there's a dispatcher who dispatches all the trains) and he'll tell you where they are and what time they may be where you are. It's more or less a guess, because they could be late or they could be a little ahead of time. So you have a lineup of all the trains — Number 8's going east, would be there at 11:00 and the second section would be there at 11:30, and so on.

RM: If you're going to take out some ties, what happens if you don't get it done in time?

MM: You can leave so many out, but you don't leave too many out in one spot. You're only changing one here, two here, and one there, so it doesn't bother them.

RM: How do you decide which ties to change?

MM: You have to go along, dig the ends and see if they're rotting (for the old, plain ties). You dig out the end and then push it with a pick. If it's soft or rotten, if it's starting to fall apart, you know that one has to be changed.

RM: And when the roadbed gets wavy?

MM: Yes, that was our maintenance job.

RM: Is that the foreman's job, or is it the roadmaster's?

MM: No, that's the foreman's job. He has to level all that up. Your roadmaster

will come by and say, “Hey, you’ve got a rotten, rough spot at milepost so-and-so.” So you’d better get over there and fix it.

RM: Do bad spots ever cause accidents?

MM: We never had problems like that. Unless there’s something that’s real bad — or you break a rail or something; that could derail a train.

RM: What would break a rail?

MM: After rail’s been in there a long time it gets crystallized. And if there’s a spot from when the rail was put together and there’s a little air in there, that rail can break. I noticed that in most of the ones we found that were broken there was always a black spot in the rail. As the years went by, they developed a machine that would detect bad rails; it’s called a rail detector. Even today, this rail detector will come through once a year. Their guy comes out and he has a hand deal that he’ll run across the rail and he can spot it right on the spot. He’ll mark that and when you take that rail out, you’ll break it open and sure enough, there is the bad spot. Those spots are called fissures.

CHAPTER THREE

MM: Nowadays that's the way they take care of that. They don't have the troubles with broken rail. Once in a while they'll have one, but most generally the rail detector will catch them all.

RM: What did you do when you got back to Cluro?

MM: I hadn't played the saxophone for years because I was running around the railroad. I had my teeth pulled, and I thought, "I'll never be able to blow a horn again." We were at Cluro and there was a rancher about a mile, mile and a half from us. Old Joe Bell was his name. He was an old-timer. He invited us — "Come on over," he said, "we'll have a party, we'll have some food and a little bit to drink," and all of this. We all went over there, the wife and I and my sister and brother-in-law. We'd had a few drinks and he said, "Do you think you could blow that horn?"

"I don't know, I never tried it." And I did, and I could do it. So I started practicing up again. Then, when we moved from Cluro we were close to Carlin, and there was a Mrs. Wood who played the piano there. A man named Quellig had a hotel that had a nice big dance hall in the back and a big bar in the front, a little bit of gaming and a restaurant over on the other side. He had a real nice place there. They would throw dances once in a while, but I hadn't been playing any. This was during World War II, and there were troop trains going through. Carlin was quite a busy place. Anyhow, I did play a few dances here and there, and then this one club decided they wanted to put dances on twice a week. They came to me and asked if I would play. Well, Mrs. Woods played the piano, and Snigs played the trumpet — he was working here in Elko as a baker. (This was the same Snigs I played with before.) And Al Visna was a drummer. We played there for a couple of years, I guess.

RM: And meanwhile you were still a foreman?

MM: Yes. We'd play at night and I could take care of the job in the daytime. We were at Tonka 7 years.

RM: Is Tonka in Eureka or Elko County?

MM: It's in Elko County. It's on this side of Carlin, and Carlin is just inside Elko County. We used to go to Beowawe a lot. We played for a lot of dances down there at that time.

EM: His sister still lived there.

MM: Yes, my sister and brother-in-law had quit the railroad and they had the grocery store in Beowawe.

RM: When did he quit the railroad?

MM: It was while we were at Tonka, in 1943.

EM: It's when he got to be constable.

MM: Yes he was the constable at Beowawe at the time, too. This was still in the '40s, right during World War II.

-
- RM: There was a tremendous amount of traffic on the railroad during the war, wasn't there?
- MM: Oh, yes. We had to have guards on all the bridges and I had 2 tunnels there at Tonka — a small tunnel, and a long tunnel that was about a little over a half-mile long. We had a guard on each end 24 hours a day.
- RM: To prevent sabotage?
- MM: That's right. And they had guard shacks, and if anybody came around, they'd have to check them out.
- RM: Were the guards military?
- MM: No, they were civilian guards.
- RM: Did they live in Beowawe?
- MM: No. Some lived here in Elko. The ones I had at Tonka lived in Elko, and when I was at Cluro, some of them lived in Beowawe.
- RM: Tell me about the life of a section foreman. You lived at section camps, didn't you? What were they like?
- MM: At Tonka, for instance, there was the foreman's house, which we had, and 4 bunkhouses. You put 3 to 4 men in each one, so that would give you up to 18 men, if you needed that many.
- RM: Could the men keep their families there?
- MM: Some of them had families.
- RM: In the bunkhouse?
- MM: Oh, yes.
- EM: There were 2 rooms.
- MM: We'd give them 2 rooms and that would be theirs. At Beowawe we had a lot of them like that. In fact, when we got married and we were living at Beowawe, they had what they called the pumphouse for the pumpers, and they were 2 rooms separate from the others, with a back porch on it. We lived in there for a long time.
- RM: Who were the pumpers?
- MM: They were working for the railroad. We had one old fellow there named Bill Conley. He was an old-timer, and all he had to do was start the pumps. They had big old diesel-type one-cylinder motors for pumping water. They'd run these pumps and fill the tanks, and whenever the steam engines needed water, they'd water up. Beowawe also had fuel — crude oil. In those days, on the Western, they used crude oil.
- RM: They weren't burning coal?
- MM: Not here. They were oil-burning steam engines.
- RM: I'll be darned. Did they put out a lot of smoke?
- MM: Not too much.
- RM: I didn't realize they burned oil.
- MM: Yes, it was a crude oil. He had a big boiler furnace, and he'd have to fire that up and heat the oil in the winter.
- RM: Otherwise, it wouldn't run?
- MM: Yes, they couldn't run it in there. Of course, Beowawe was more or less an

emergency filling station; it wasn't a regular fueling stop, but it was a water stop. Those steam engines used a lot of water. There was another pumphouse at Kampos and they'd come on to Beowawe and water up there, then they'd make it on into Elko. That was on the Western Pacific. The Southern Pacific had watering on their side, too, at Beowawe. They had a water tank in between the 2 tracks. I think in the picture a guy could probably spot it.

RM: Was the Southern Pacific using your water and oil?

MM: No, they had their own. But if they were coming east on WP track, they could use our water and oil, and it was the same way on the other side. Sometimes they'd have to keep the pumphouse going for 2 or 3 8-hour shifts, especially in the wintertime. Old Conley was always there. They just had the one pump, so we lived in one of the pumpers' houses. It was a pretty good little house, wasn't it?

EM: Yes.

MM: Right across from us was the old Western Pacific depot. They had a big loading platform — it was at least 75 or 80 feet long. They weren't using that anymore; they did away with that depot. The depot on the Southern Pacific was in between the 2 tracks and it was used for both the Western and the Southern Pacific.

RM: How far apart were the tracks?

MM: I'd say it's about 100 to 150, 200 feet over to the Western Pacific at Beowawe. At other locations along the line they may be miles apart.

RM: Were they unloading and loading much freight at Beowawe?

MM: In those days, they did quite a bit.

RM: What were they loading?

MM: They were loading a lot of barite out of there.

RM: Where was that coming from?

MM: From west of Beowawe in what they called Tenabo and that area.

RM: Is that in Eureka County?

MM: Some of it's in Eureka, and some of it's in Lander County.

RM: Were they big operations?

MM: Not too big, but they were producing.

Old Bill Rutledge was the constable and the mail carrier. There was a good old guy. He was an old-timer and an old bachelor. He had a little house down close to the Western Pacific, and he would cook up these big old Irish stews and invite everybody in town to come down. He'd come and meet the passenger trains at the depot. The passenger trains, when they'd come through Beowawe, would never stop unless they had a specific order. They just went through at high speed. We had a post office, and it was Bill's job to pick up the mail; he'd take the sacks up. Then they had racks by the side of the tracks where they hung the sacks. They've got a little spring around the bottom, and when the train would come by, he'd stick this iron arm out and it would pull the mail in.

In the meantime, they'd throw the other mail out. Of course, that would

bounce along the track, and Bill would have to pick it up. He had an old Model A Ford, and it was a coupe. The back end was open. He'd throw the sacks in the back end, and he'd always face the track when he'd come to get the mail. It was always there by the depot and he'd just back up. He wouldn't even look; he'd just back up and take off for the post office. It was comical. [Laughs] One day he was there, and a guy from the depot came out and was standing around there, and he wasn't watching Bill. And Bill backed up on him. You ought to have heard him holler. He said, "Old man, going to run over me."

I said, "Oh, you just have to watch because he doesn't look back; he can't turn his neck." [Laughs]

RM: When you first went to Beowawe in 1935, what did it look like? What was there?

MM: There was quite a bit there. There are 3 ranches right there close. The Horseshoe Ranch was the big ranch. In those days, that was an enormous ranch. The one that crossed on the other side of Beowawe was the Sansinena Ranch. Then there was the Strickland Ranch, which was sold to Mahoney from Dunphy. That now belongs to Theresa Mahoney Sansinena, but the other one belongs to the Horseshoe. At that time the Horseshoe owned all that land in there, and then they had a ranch on the west side, in Beowawe. They also had a place at Carlin and they had a place at what they called Red House — it was way out north. It's broken up now; it's not that big a ranch anymore

RM: Who owned the Horseshoe at that time?

MM: When I first went there the guy's name was W. C. Grayson.

RM: And it was a big operation?

MM: Oh, it was a big ranch.

RM: How many acres did it have?

MM: I don't know, but they carried a lot of cattle.

EM: And then Dean Witter owned it.

MM: Yes, but Grayson was there at the time we were there. He had a nice ranch. In the summertime they would cut the hay, and they would have 50 to 60 men down there cutting hay. Of course, everything was done with horses and scythes and things like that. Nowadays everything's modern. When Grayson sold it, he sold the ranch to Dean Witter.

RM: Is Dean Witter the stockbroker?

MM: The Dean Witter who used to be the broker, yes.

RM: Was Dean Witter from around here?

MM: He was from Reno. He had places in Reno and San Francisco. They used to come up to the ranch every once in a while. He was regular people.

EM: They were lovely people.

MM: They'd invite us and we'd go over there and have lunch.

EM: They'd invite the whole town over.

MM: Yes, everybody came. Bill Rutledge would have his stew in his little cabin,

-
- and they'd go down there. Mrs. Witter used to like his stew.
- RM: Is there a ranch called the TS?
- MM: The TS Ranch is partly in Eureka County and partly in Lander County. It's in the north end of Eureka County.
- RM: The Carlin mine is on the TS, isn't it?
- MM: Yes. Also the Newmont mine. The Barrick Mine is also in Eureka County.
- RM: When you first came to this county, what was happening where the Newmont mine is now?
- MM: There were a lot of prospectors in there. A guy would go up there and pan a little gold here and there on what they called Lynn Creek. At one time there was a voting district up there, up where the Newmont mine is today. There was a Eureka voting district there called Leesville.
- RM: Was this in the 19th or 20th century?
- MM: This was in the 1920s, '30s and '40s — right around in there.
- RM: How many people were living up there, do you think?
- MM: I'd say in the '20s and before World War II broke out there were quite a few people up there — maybe 60 or 70. There were little shacks all over the place. Coming down Lynn Creek you could see where this guy had a claim and another guy had a claim, all the way down the creek.
- RM: Were they hard-rock operations, or placer?
- MM: Mostly placer. They'd dig a tunnel too, and get some ore out. But they used to pan most of it.
- RM: Are there any people up there who stand out in your mind?
- MM: There were 2 brothers — they're both dead now — who used to do a lot of prospecting up in that area, the Hanson brothers. In fact, they prospected all around the area where Newmont's got their new mine — the Quarry Mine is the latest one that they've opened close to Carlin. I don't think the Hanson brothers ever found that; it was found by a drilling crew. It's funny; they lived right there on Maggie Creek. Of course, they were real old, even in those days. But nothing was up on Lynn Creek — just a few prospectors who lived in Carlin who would go out there now and then.
- RM: Were there any stores or anything on Lynn Creek?
- MM: No.
- RM: Were there any families up there with a school or anything?
- MM: I think most of them went to Carlin, but they might have had a small school there at one time. This was right up at the head of Lynn Creek Canyon. There was still a building there a few years ago. There was a bunch of trees up there and little shacks down the other side and up above. Some of them are still there. They're pretty old. Simon Canyon is the main canyon and runs parallel to Lynn Creek.
- RM: Were the prospectors digging on little seams of gold?
- MM: I don't know; I think they were just working placer. They had little dams built along Lynn and Simon creeks. Sometimes they'd use shakers or something and run the water through it.

RM: But nobody was making any money, to speak of?

MM: Some of them probably made some pretty good money, but they wouldn't let you know it. [Laughs] But a lot of these people held claims. When Newmont went in there, Newmont bought most of them up. Newmont was in there doing their exploration work in the '60s sometime — I had worked now and then on a barite mine that was just above Newmont's place. They were using the same road that we hauled the barite on.

RM: Was that a pretty good barite mine up there?

MM: Yes, real good.

RM: Is it still there?

MM: It's still there, but the high grade stuff is about all gone. They've got a lot of low grade. They've put a mill at Dunphy now.

During that time, at Lynn Creek, and when Newmont went in there, all the roads were gravel or dirt; most of them were mud. You didn't go to Lynn Creek when it was wet, because you'd never get up there. I remember back when we used to grade that road. It's in Eureka County, and we used to blade the road up there. Some of the old prospectors would go up in there and some of them stayed up there for a month or so. Some of them had some cabins. Of course, most of the cabins are about shot now, or gone — fallen apart.

RM: Who were some more people up in there in those days? Do you remember any other names?

MM: There were the Pacinis and the Bilboas. Charles Burning was the constable at Carlin, and he had some claims up there. There was another outfit that went in there in the early '50s — the Morris brothers. They put a little mill up, but they were in another canyon over from that. I know we went in there and fixed a road for them one time. They were doing pretty well, but I don't know how much money they ever made. They were pretty close in those days; they wouldn't let you know. [Laughs]

RM: Who was the first to go in there seriously, besides these little operators?

MM: That was Newmont.

RM: How did Newmont know to go there?

MM: I guess they were doing some exploration. The Scott brothers at Carlin used to have claims up there. Newmont went in there and did some drilling and then they started finding some pretty good prospects.

RM: And this would have been in the '50s?

MM: Yes, or early '60s. I ran into some of Newmont's big men, because I used to blade the road for them going out to [the mine].

RM: Were you were working for the highway department?

MM: I was working for the county at that time, and I was still running the bar at Beowawe. I got to be a pretty good grader-man. [Chuckles] One day I ran into a guy who was coming down the road and he stopped. He was telling me, "We're finding some pretty good deposits up there. We may get a good mine in there some day." I don't remember exactly when they opened that

mine, but I think it was in the early '60s when they first started in with the mill and everything up there.

RM: They were milling it initially?

MM: Yes, when they first started.

RM: Do they mill it now?

MM: Yes, they still mill it.

RM: I thought it was a heap leach operation.

MM: They do both. Your real low-grade stuff is leached, and they mill the high grade. You'd lose a lot if you tried to leach the high grade.

RM: What are they calling high grade up there?

MM: High grade's got to be about 05 or 10, something like that. When you get down to an 04 or an 03, you can't see it; that's straight heap leaching. If you get a 10 or 12-grade ore, you're getting pretty good stuff.

RM: Did any of those early guys in there have any idea how much gold there was there?

MM: No, because they had to go down and get it. They opened this big pit up there at Newmont. It's amazing, the amount of stuff they have taken out of there. Then they opened the other mine down close to Carlin, and that's the Quarry Mine.

RM: And they're both Newmont?

MM: They're both Newmont.

RM: What do they call the upper pit?

MM: They used to call it the Carlin Gold. They have one on the other side of Carlin that they call the Rain Mine. They just opened that up a couple of years ago. Newmont hires around 2000 people today all together.

RM: It's having a big impact on Elko, isn't it?

MM: Oh, absolutely. And then you have the Barrick Gold Company.

RM: Is that a big operation?

MM: Oh, yes. I'll bet they have 1200 men working there.

RM: Is that right? Is it a heap leach operation?

MM: They do a little milling, but most of theirs is heap leaching.

RM: And this is all on the old TS Ranch, isn't it?

MM: Most of that was, yes. The Barrick is just below Newmont. When you go up to Newmont, Carlin Gold is on the hill, and you go down the other side and here's Barrick. Newmont's got some [ore] that runs right in next to Barrick. Now they're working together. They've run into some real high-grade stuff, so Barrick is going underground for that. (These are all in Eureka County.) Then there was a mine above that they used to call the Bootstrap. Now, Bootstrap was just out of Eureka County. That's kind of played out; they don't do much in there.

RM: And Eureka gets taxes from all that, don't they?

MM: Oh, yes — especially Barrick and the 2 Newmont mines. (The Rain Mine, I think, is in Elko County.)

RM: When did you quit the railroad?

MM: Well, let's see. When I went to Tonka, I was there about 7 years, something like that. Then in '51, I happened to be in Beowawe — we'd played for a dance down there the night before. The next day was Sunday and we went in the bar. Joe Androsi, an old Italian fellow, [owned the bar]. Of course, I'd known Joe for a long time. He'd been in a little trouble of some kind with somebody in there, and they were getting ready to shut him down; they were going to take his license and everything. Well, Babe and I happened to be in the bar having a drink, and he said, "Why don't you buy my bar?" I said, "What the hell am I going to buy your bar with? I got no money to buy a bar." [Laughs]

"Well, you take it; you take it over." And he just kept insisting that I take it over. He said, "I'll make you a good deal; you pay when you want." He threw me the keys and counted the money in the cash register. He said, "You got money here, you take over, right now." Well, OK, we took over. So I went down and did a lot of work and I gave the railroad notice that I was quitting. [Laughs]

RM: I'll be darned. Just like that?

MM: Yes, I gave them 2 weeks. They said, "You've got to give us 30 days." "I don't give you anything; 2 weeks is enough, I'm gone." In the meantime, we just kept moving stuff down. And that's when we moved from Tonka down to Beowawe; that was in '51.

The thing that was going around in Beowawe in the '50s was an iron mine kind of south of Beowawe. They had quite a deposit. J. R. Simplot from Idaho had a construction outfit, and he had a contract to get so much iron out to ship to Japan. And at that time they were thinking of building the road into Beowawe to load their iron out of Beowawe. Some way or another, that all got twisted around out of shape, so they hauled into Palisade and we lost out on that deal. But that was still coming in at that time. When Joe wanted us to take the bar, I said, "Hey, this is going over here; I might have a real good place here." So I said, OK, and we took over the bar. [Laughs]

CHAPTER FOUR

RM: What was the name of the bar?

MM: At that time they called it the Silver State Saloon.

RM: And it was one of two in town? What was the other one called?

MM: What did Gumshoe call his place down there? I don't think he ever had a name on it.

EM: They used to just say Gumshoe's.

RM: What did you end up paying for the bar?

MM: What was it we give him?

EM: Ten thousand dollars.

RM: Is it still there?

MM: Yes, we just sold it recently. Of course, I built a house on it.

EM: It was just one long building.

MM: Yes, the building was about 75 feet long. You had a 25-foot bar and then a 50-foot dance hall.

EM: There was no water or electricity.

MM: It had a pump in the back; you had to go out there and pump a hand pump.

RM: So you didn't have electricity there in the '50s? You do now, though, don't you?

MM: Oh, yes.

RM: When did electricity come in?

MM: In the '60s.

MM: We never had any television there until '64, I guess. Beowawe was just by itself — there was nothing there.

But when we bought the place and moved down there we had a building in the back that was for an icehouse. It was a double-walled tie building, and he had built a room on one end. So I went ahead and built another room onto that so we could live there. I made it all out of ties. Part of the other icehouse was our stockroom. Then we'd throw a dance about every 2 or 3 weeks, or once a month.

RM: Did you play for your own dances?

MM: Yes. There was Bill Manca, and Bob Stenovich was the drummer, and I played the saxophone; there were only 3 of us, but we made enough music to fill the place.

RM: Did you ever run across a guy name Joe Andre from Beatty? He was a musician back in the '30s.

MM: No, I don't remember him.

RM: How about Bert Acree and his wife out of Austin?

MM: I remember him; he used to be in Austin, yes. They used to play for all the dances up around Austin. Somebody called me one time and wanted to know if I wanted to come play in a dance at Austin and I said, no, I don't

think so. I didn't want to interfere in his territory.

RM: What was it like, running a bar — was that a big switch for you?

MM: It was quite a switch, all right. Anyhow, we got into the bar there and I thought, "Some way or another I've got to pay this guy off. We'd better borrow a little money someplace and pay him off." And that's just what we did. We paid him off and that made it good, and then we went ahead and built it up. I dug a well by hand.

RM: Is that right? How deep was it?

MM: That first well was 14 feet. It was good water, too.

RM: Of course, you're right on the river there, aren't you?

MM: Right; it's all gravel bed down there. We had a hard time digging that. I used oil drums they used to make in those days out of galvanized steel. Nowadays they don't have them, but in those days you could use heavy galvanized drums, knock both ends out, and then you'd just keep going down when you dug.

RM: That's what you lined the well with?

MM: Yes. It was hard to dig a well there because it kept caving in as we were going down. I'd have to box it out and then put the drum down there and dig out of the inside and work it down and put another drum on top of it and then wire it together so it would stay, get it down some more, and put another drum on top of it. We got the well in and then I bought a little piston pump from Sears Roebuck. It pumped water quite a ways. We set that in that well and that way we put water into the bar and into the house, and that was our first water. Then we put in a hot water tank; we modernized it.

RM: What was supporting Beowawe then?

MM: At that time you had a railroad depot. They had a full crew working 24 hours a day at the depot.

RM: What were they doing?

MM: They were working from the dispatcher. The trains did a lot of switching in there. There was a cross-over there too. You could cross over from the Western to the Southern Pacific or back.

RM: Why would they cross over?

MM: Sometimes you'd get a wreck down in the canyon or something. They were busy. They were always hauling ore into here. They were hauling a lot of barite into Beowawe — they had a loading ramp where the trucks would back up and dump ore into the railroad cars. And Gold Acres was working at that time; they had a gold mine at Gold Acres.

RM: Where's that?

MM: Gold Acres is 28 miles southwest of Beowawe in Lander County. I guess they had 60 or 70 men out there, or more. They had homes and a store out there then.

EM: And a commissary, a restaurant . . .

RM: How many people were living in Beowawe when you took over the bar?

-
- MM: I would say around 75 to 100 people. There were also people on the ranches.
- RM: And you could make a living there?
- MM: Oh, yes. And you had railroad sections. There was a section over on the Southern Pacific and those people lived right there in Beowawe. They had anywhere from 6 to 10 men.
- EM: And we got a lot of business from tourists coming to see the geysers.
- RM: Oh, there are geysers there?
- EM: There were geysers; there aren't any now.
- RM: What happened to them?
- MM: They're still there, but they've drilled around them so much that they took off the pressure.
But anyhow, you had a section gang on the Southern Pacific and you had the depot running 24 hours a day with 4 dispatchers or agents working there (one agent and the crew). They worked 8-hour shifts. Then you had 2 sections on the Western Pacific and they had anywhere from 6 to 10 men each. And then there was a Cluro section, which was down the track. They had a pretty good crew — 5, 6, 8 men. And then you had Dunphy; that's also in Eureka County.
- RM: Which way is Dunphy?
- MM: It's about 8 miles west; it's the next section up. They always had a crew there. When we'd throw dances, they'd come from all over — Carlin, Battle Mountain, and [laughs] all these sections.
- RM: Would you have a dance every week?
- MM: It would depend. In the summer we'd try to have one every 2 or 3 weeks, or once a month. And it would surprise you, what we used to draw in there. I don't know if you've ever been in Beowawe?
- RM: No, not yet.
- MM: Well, when you go in, you'll go by the Horseshoe Ranch; that's the first thing you're going to see. It got the name because when Grayson had it he built a horseshoe of trees there. They're about the first thing you'll see. (Of course, a lot of the trees have died.) He had an alfalfa field in there — it was put in later. From there, when you come into town you'll come off the hill and drive down and come to the river. There's a river bridge there. You cross the Humboldt River and our place is right up on the corner on the left side of the highway.
From the bridge up to where we were, there would be cars parked on both sides of the road. The depot used to be right across the track; they'd be parked in there, they would park all the way down the street where we were and all in around. We used to take the stools out of the bar because somebody would be sitting there and people couldn't get up to get a drink. They'd be 4 deep up to that bar at times when we'd have a dance.
- RM: That's amazing.
- EM: We had 2 grocery stores in town then.

-
- RM: Tell me about the grocery stores. Who ran them?
- MM: My brother-in-law had one. Before he bought it, it belonged to Allens — Andy Allen. I think it was called Beowawe Mercantile. Andy had had it for years and years. Then the little grocery store across the street belonged to an old fellow named Jack Tyler.
- RM: Were they grocery stores or general stores?
- MM: You would call them mostly groceries. Allen's store had a little more general stuff, but Jack Tyler's was mostly groceries. And they sold beer and liquor and things like that.
- RM: What else was there in town?
- MM: Gumshoe's was down the street. He had a bar there and he had the post office; the post office was built on the outside of the bar. Then he had a building that they lived in — kind of a Spanish-type stucco building. It was nice looking. And that was it for [stores]. Then the depot, of course, was there.
- RM: And then there were homes scattered around?
- MM: Yes. And over on the south side was what we used to call the Indian camp. There was Pifferro's — he built a home there (I think his home is still sitting there). And then there were the Murphys and Harry Buffalo; that was another Indian family there. There were quite a few of them. And then there were the Johnnys and the Mattys . . . a lot of them did laundry and other work for people around there, and the men worked on the nearby ranches.
- RM: Were they all Shoshone Indians?
- MM: Yes.
- RM: Did they have a school in Beowawe?
- MM: Yes, there was a school there even when this picture was taken.
- RM: You're showing me a picture of Beowawe in 1914.
- MM: Yes, and I think this was where the school was, on the far right-hand side. Now, this is your Southern Pacific pumphouse.
- RM: It's in the right middle of the picture.
- MM: Yes. And here's our place, right over here.
- RM: OK, your place is the big white-front building on the left side of the picture.
- MM: Yes. As the road comes in, it used to come in right to the side of the building there.
- RM: Which way are we looking in this picture?
- MM: We're looking northeast.
- RM: So this is your bar. Where was the other bar?
- MM: Right down here in these trees.
- RM: OK. There's a long building there.
- MM: Yes, that was kind of a Spanish-built building.
- RM: And it looks like there's another building here with a big white front. What's that one?
- MM: That used to be Lee Lakin's. I don't know if there was ever a store in there

or not. At one time they had had a post office there. Lee Lakin was an old prospector, and he was living there at that time. And Bill Rutledge's place was down in here somewhere.

RM: On down the road from the white-front building on the right.

MM: Yes. He was the constable. He'd been there for years and years and years. And he'd tell tales. We used to visit with him and he'd say, "Well, when we got a drunk and we didn't want to put him in jail, we'd just handcuff him to the telephone pole." [Laughs]

RM: Is that right? They probably didn't have a jail then.

MM: No, but later they built one; I think it was here.

RM: That's this building on the lower right-hand side of the picture.

MM: That was the jail and courthouse; it's still there. The jail was in the back end. Later on they built the school right next to it, but they tore that down; the school is gone now.

RM: It probably went just to the first 8 grades, didn't it?

MM: Yes. And where you're sitting is Red Hill.

RM: OK, the camera is sitting on Red Hill.

MM: When you come driving into town, you'll see Red Hill — it's just a knoll right in here. It goes straight down to the town.

RM: Where's the river in this picture?

MM: The river is over here where these trees are. It runs right in behind here and then goes down around like that, and then turns and goes back around. There's a bridge down here where it goes under. It comes from way up here, down, and then it turns right in here. You see where it comes up here, makes a bend and runs in right behind these buildings.

RM: It really snakes along, doesn't it?

MM: Oh, yes. Over here, this was all willows. In about '83 we had a big water year. The ranch sits right around the hill over here on the left. When you come around the hill, the ranch is to the left. They own all of this property clear down the river. They own the west side ranch also.

RM: That's the Horseshoe?

MM: Yes.

EM: Lucky Baldwin owned that ranch, too.

MM: Yes, Baldwin bought it from the Witters. Anyhow, after we got the bar, and in the summer, you'd be surprised at the business we'd have. The Horseshoe would have 40 or 50 men out there cutting hay, and on payday we got all that business. [Chuckles] Some of these guys came in and they'd spend their whole check. They never thought anything about it; they'd just spend it.

RM: You didn't have gaming, did you?

MM: I got a few slot machines later. They were stolen from me once. At that time, we had a house that burned down since then.

RM: OK, that white spot kind of in the middle of the picture.

- MM: Yes, right in there. We had a house there that had been built by a guy by the name of Denny Welch; he lives in Battle Mountain. Doc Smithwick used to have the trucking line here and Denny worked for Doc, driving trucks.
- RM: Was he trucking from the mines?
- MM: Yes, he'd truck stuff out to Gold Acres and haul in things from Gold Acres. Of course, they always needed something. If it wasn't mill balls, he was hauling cyanide or something else.
- RM: Is that Marianne Smithwick's husband?
- MM: That's right. We used to call him old Doc Smithwick. You can't see his place on this map; it was down around the hill there. He built a nice big garage there and everything. He used to haul in barite; he did a lot of hauling. The loading ramp was right in here someplace.
- RM: Where's the depot in the picture?
- MM: Well, this isn't where it was. This is the old depot. They later moved the depot over between the 2 tracks, right about up here. The Western Pacific track is the one over here.
- RM: So it was going from left to right on this picture?
- MM: Yes. It would go down here. Cluro was way down in this end, and Tonka was on down from that.
- RM: What was the next section from Beowawe going the other way?
- MM: Dunphy. If I had a magnifying glass, you could see the railroad toolhouse; I think this is it. There were 2 toolhouses there. One section went east and one went west.
- RM: Then in the foreground was the Southern Pacific, and it went to the left.
- MM: That's right.
- RM: Did Beowawe look pretty much like this when you got there in '35?
- MM: No, it changed quite a bit. There were a lot more buildings there; the school was built over here and there was some stuff in here. Then Smithwick had the place here, and Tyler had a grocery store at the bottom of this hill, right in here. Then there was a loading ramp; it was just about where that depot is, straight off from the store there.
- Then there's a ranch down here and another one below there, and there used to be houses over on this side. And there was a house over here that belonged to a family named Ryan. Then there was Bill Rutledge's home and then Strickland's — Mrs. Strickland had a home right about in this area.
- RM: In '51, was Beowawe still more built up from what it was in '35?
- MM: Oh, yes. They had more houses in here — the Indians were over here.
- RM: OK, the Indians were over in the far right-hand corner.
- MM: That's right, right back up in this area.
- RM: Off of the picture.
- MM: Yes. The road used to come in and cross the track. It used to run down here and around this way; it would wind around over here someplace and then follow the hill out. The new road comes in this way and comes right straight

through like that. And the new school sits right about in here.

RM: Beowawe probably was established when the railroad came through, wasn't it?

MM: Yes, that's what started it.

RM: Why did they build the Western Pacific when there was already a line through there?

MM: When the Southern Pacific came through, they came from Ogden, Utah, and across into Wells. There were no tracks that went from Wells that would go east around the other side of the Salt Lake. You see, the Western Pacific goes around the southeast edge of the lake. When the Southern Pacific leaves Wells, it takes off in a straight easterly direction. The Western Pacific goes southeast, and then goes around the other way, over through Wendover and that way, and that's a long ways from the Southern Pacific. The Western Pacific connects with the D&RG in Salt Lake, and the Southern Pacific goes straight on [to Cheyenne, Wyoming].

RM: Oh, otherwise the D&RG would have ended in Salt Lake?

MM: That's right. And then when you get to the west, when you leave Winnemucca . . . the Southern Pacific takes off for Reno and the Western Pacific takes off for the Black Rock Desert. It goes through Black Rock Desert and then services all the northern part of California.

RM: Oh, I see. Over to Susanville and that way.

MM: Yes. They go through Flanagan and Portola, then down into Sacramento, while the SP's over on this other side.

RM: Were they a good outfit to work for?

MM: Oh, they were good. In those days, it was about the best outfit I ever saw to work for. They used to take care of us real fine. They'd always bring us Christmas trees. When we ordered tools, you could order a saw, hammers . . . whatever you needed, with no fuss about it.

EM: And they brought us ice.

RM: So the ice was coming in on the railroad for your coolers.

MM: Yes. Of course, we didn't have refrigerators in those days — we didn't have electricity in those days, as far as that goes.

RM: What did you use, kerosene?

MM: Yes.

RM: And then you went to Aladdin lamps, probably?

MM: Yes, we bought some of those Aladdin gas lamps when we wanted a real good light. [Laughs] This was quite a town. Then there was a little ranch over here on the far right-hand side. The picture doesn't get that far down, but it's right in behind this. There are some buildings all along here that the Southern Pacific has.

There's a ranch over here that they used to call the Johnson Ranch. It's quite a little ranch. Now it belongs to the Horseshoe Ranch; they bought it.

RM: So the Horseshoe has consolidated a lot of ranches around there?

MM: They have this one and they own one down at Cluro. And back around the hill there's another ranch and they own that one. The next one over from that one is the Sansinena Ranch. And then down the track here, if you go out west, they have what they call the West Side Ranch; that belongs to the Horseshoe also.

RM: Where is the TS Ranch?

MM: The TS is on west. When you leave Dunphy going west, the TS range starts right there. That's still in Eureka County. In fact, there was one time when the TS paid more county taxes than the whole city of Eureka.

RM: Is that right?

MM: I remember that because we used to argue with Eureka. We'd say we wanted something at Beowawe. Well, they can't do that; there are not enough people down there. "What do you mean? We're paying 90 percent of your taxes. [Chuckles] Let's get something done!"

Later on there was a county shop here. That was built when I was commissioner; I got that put in here.

RM: Now, you moved in in '51 and took over the bar. What happened then? You built up the business in the bar, didn't you?

MM: Oh, yes. Then I built the home onto the back of the bar. But then the railroad started cutting crews. When they started cutting, they cut off most of the sections.

RM: Why did they do that?

MM: I guess they just wanted to use roving gangs. And then, they wanted to get away from paying taxes on all the buildings they had there. So they tore all the buildings down or moved them out.

RM: Oh, there are no buildings left at those sections?

MM: No, not on the railroads. The only thing they have on the railroad up there now is a small pumphouse. That belongs to the Union Pacific now. The Union Pacific took over the Western Pacific.

RM: When did they do that?

MM: They've been in there at least 10 or 12 years now.

RM: And the Southern Pacific is still there?

MM: Yes, the Southern Pacific's still on this side.

RM: Do they still share the tracks?

MM: Yes, it's still shared from Wells to Winnemucca — then they separate. The SP goes this way and the WP goes through Black Rock Desert and up through that area.

RM: Did the diesel engines make a difference to Beowawe?

MM: Yes. They did away with the pumphouse and the fueling depot and they cut the depot down to one operator per 8-hour shift.

RM: Why did they do that?

MM: They didn't need to service the trains there anymore.

RM: Were they shipping any ore out of there?

-
- MM: They loaded a lot of cars of barite out of Dunphy. I worked down there at one time and I used to ship 16 to 20 cars a week out of there. We shipped it all through Beowawe. Now you have to phone it in to Battle Mountain or Carlin.
- RM: Why did they close the loading operation at Beowawe?
- MM: I don't know. I think they just wanted to get rid of everything they could so they weren't paying taxes on it. They were paying taxes on a lot of these houses down here — they had 2 foreman's houses and 4 bunkhouses, besides the pumphouse and all the machinery.
- RM: So then they started using roving crews to keep up the tracks?
- MM: Yes. Now they have a crew in Elko that will go as far as Beowawe. Even on the Southern Pacific now they work clear out of Battle Mountain, up into Beowawe. And they have little [roving] gangs.
- RM: Do they still have the roadmaster?
- MM: Oh, yes, but the section foreman now has a truck and a crew of men (I don't know how many men they have). Some of them are stationed in Carlin and some of them are stationed in Elko, and they drive out to their job. There's practically a road built all along the track now, and they can drive along; they don't have to go with a motorcar. They take their tools and everything in the truck.
- RM: What other impacts did the diesels have?
- MM: That was about the biggest impact, right there. On top of that, if you want to catch a diesel, you don't catch it in Beowawe — you've got to make a date in Carlin to catch it.
- RM: But with the old steamers, they'd stop?
- MM: That's right.
- RM: Was there a reason why the diesel couldn't stop, or was it just that they didn't want to?
- MM: They just wanted to make time. In fact, when you'd get on that train at San Francisco, they didn't want to stop until they got to Portola. [Laughs] Then they didn't want to stop again until they got to Elko. That was on the Western Pacific — it had dome passenger cars and all that.

CHAPTER FIVE

RM: Tell me about some of the people you remember from Beowawe.

MM: There were a lot of good old-timers there. In this area there was the judge, Harris. He was the Justice of the Peace for Beowawe at that time and he was in his 60s or 70s.

RM: He had been the JP for a long time?

MM: Oh, yes, a long time. In those days they had a courthouse and jail here, and they had a constable. At that time old Bill Rutledge was the constable. And then there was Gumshoe Smyth. They called him Gumshoe because at one time he used to be a railroad bull — that's what they call a railroad detective.

RM: Did they have any railroad bulls there?

MM: No, not there; he worked out of Carlin at that time. He was a big man. He was all right — kind of grouchy, but . . .

RM: Did the railroad bulls used to beat up guys and that kind of thing?

MM: I don't think so. Most of the time they'd just run them off — just tell them to get away. If they got out of town a person could still get on a train. In those days you could see the guys riding the trains.

Beowawe, in the spring, was really bad. We had mosquitos there that could just about carry you off.

RM: Because it was so swampy there?

MM: All of this was swamp, especially in the spring when the river came up. It used to run up against the track here in front of Smyth's place. You'd have to have a walk built across to get over there. At the section place we were kind of high up. I remember you'd go downtown in the evening and you just had to get a big handkerchief and keep swatting all the way downtown. If you didn't do it, the mosquitos would eat you alive. And they were thick. There were a lot of sloughs in there.

At one time I was working down on this side, and we used to wear nets to keep the mosquitos out. Of course, the gnats sometimes would make it through there, but those mosquitos . . . and they could bite right through your shirt. We used what they called citronella, and it smells like hell.

RM: I don't know what that is.

MM: It's a lotion of some kind, but it stinks. It would kind of keep the mosquitos away. I never used it — I couldn't stand the smell of it —but a lot of the workers used it. I remember one day when they were real thick. A train was coming, so we had to get off the track. I ran off the track, and I was standing there, and I looked down, and I couldn't see the color of my pants. It looked just like wool.

RM: From that many mosquitos!

MM: Yes, they were that thick. Later, when I was working for the railroad in '37 and '38, I said, "Well, some way or another we've got to do something about these mosquitos." Old Bill Conley was the one who had the pumphouse. We'd go down there and get a lot of oil from him and mix it with kerosene or

diesel, or something, to thin it down. Then we'd go to all these ponds and throw a bucketful in there and let it spread. We really knocked them out of Beowawe. And it lasted for years.

RM: Did it hurt the fish or anything?

MM: There were no fish in those ponds; they were just sloughs. When the water would get up, they would fill up and, oh, man, the mosquitos would just breed. It was terrible. They were big ones, too, and they were really mean.

RM: Who were some other characters you remember from Beowawe?

MM: I kind of remember an old fellow there, a carpenter — his name was Fred Vael. And there was an old cowboy named McCoy. [Laughs] He was a regular old cowboy and a drinking man. He was a good worker, but he liked his whiskey. One time he was there at Joe's and he got so drunk that he went out and laid out on the side and passed out outside of the saloon. Everybody checked him and they said he was dead. [Laughs] This is true. They called the doctor from up in Carlin to come over, and he came over and said he was dead. So they put him in a shed. A couple of hours later, he came walking out of the shed. They thought he was a ghost or something. [Laughter]

RM: That's funny.

MM: I went downtown and saw him at the bar, and I said, "Hell, you're supposed to be dead."

"Aw, hell," he said, "I was dead drunk, is all." [Laughter] I saw a guy one time that I really thought was dead, too. He fell in a pond at Carlin. Carlin used to put up ice for the railroad. In those days, they used it for the refrigerator cars. At each end of the cars they had compartments where they dumped the ice. They had this icehouse at Carlin. When they put up the ice in the winter, they'd plug the ponds and cut the ice and store it in the shed in sawdust. Then in the summer when the trains would pull in, they'd ice them up at Carlin. Both the Southern and Western Pacific did that.

Anyhow, I was working there one time and it was real cold. In fact, one night it went 52 below in Carlin and broke the thermometer. And the ice on the pond was about 2 feet thick. You had to keep a crew on it all night or it would freeze over. Well, we got this one guy there one night — he fell in. He was really drunk. He was on the lower end of the pond when we pulled him out, and he froze right there. His clothes . . . I'll tell you, he was stiff as a board. We got him up to the powerhouse and I would have sworn he was dead. We laid him in there on the bench and called old Doc Eastman — he was the doctor at Carlin — and he came down there. He said, "Hell, no, he's all right. There's nothing wrong with him, he's just cold." And, by god, he really got all right. Next day, he was up at the bars, drinking again.

RM: Is that right?

MM: I think the alcohol kept him alive. But he turned purple and everything.

RM: What was Carlin like at this time? Was it a pretty good-size place?

MM: Carlin was booming good in those days. They had the roundhouse there and everything.

-
- RM: They had a big repair station there?
- MM: Oh, they had a big place there. There were a lot of people in Carlin.
- RM: Was that Carlin's claim to fame?
- MM: Yes, really, at that time.
- RM: This was in the '30s?
- MM: Well, the '30s, '40s, and even in the '50s.
- RM: Did they shut that down when they put the diesels in?
- MM: Yes, when the diesels came in they started doing away with a lot of that. Carlin used to be the change point for the train crews and everything, so most of your conductors and firemen and so on lived right there — they had homes all over the place there. And when they'd call you for a run, you'd head for Sparks, maybe; you'd run from Carlin to Sparks. Now they don't have that anymore — they either live in Sparks or in Ogden. There are a few at Carlin, but most of them are just inspecting trains and things like that.
- RM: So Carlin now is much smaller than it used to be.
- MM: Oh, yes, it's nothing like it was. There used to be a big payroll there, especially during World War II — the troop trains would come in there at that time. I remember one time when I was in Carlin the head policeman there, a guy by the name of Al Drennam, said, "I want you to come with me. We've got to go get some money off the train." He took about 4 of us, deputized us, and we met this passenger train that came in, and there was about a half a million dollars in cash.
- RM: Just for the payroll there?
- MM: Just to cash checks for the people there in Carlin, right.
- RM: That is something.
- MM: That was something in those days.
- RM: When they went to diesel, did they close the repair shops there?
- MM: Oh, yes, everything went down. The roundhouse is still there, but it's not used; most of the trains are just in and out. They do a little servicing there.
- RM: So Carlin was much bigger when you came in the mid-'30s?
- MM: Oh, yes. It's getting bigger now on account of the mines. Really, I think it's bigger now than it was then.
- RM: What's the life expectancy of the mine at Carlin; have you heard?
- MM: It depends on a lot of factors. Some of them figure they've got 20 years or more of ore, but then they find more. Newmont figured they were going to run out in the '80s, but they found more — they've got 20 to 30 years more. And Barrick has got a bunch of stuff; they keep finding more. Cortez just found a new deposit — that's out of Beowawe . . .
- RM: Out in the Cortez Mountains?
- MM: Yes.
- RM: So there's a big mine at Cortez now?
- MM: Well, the mine's been there all along, but they found another deposit on the other side, over by the Gold Acres. Gold Acres played out in the '60s. And when Gold Acres played out, they sold everything out — the homes, all the

-
- equipment, everything. I think they had one building left there. But then Cortez opened on the other side, over by what they call Mill Canyon. Mill Canyon used to have a mine in it, too, and it had a mill and everything. When I first came out here in the '30s, Mill Canyon was still working.
- RM: Where is Mill Canyon?
- MM: Mill Canyon is south of Beowawe about 30 miles. Cortez would also be 30 miles away, and Mill Canyon is right next to it. There's nothing left there. They had a fire in there back in the late '40s or early '50s, and it burned most all the buildings. There used to be a school in there, too, at one time. But in between Mill Canyon on this side was where Cortez opened their new mine. Then they ran out of ore and they went over the mountain and they were getting ore up at what they used to call Horse Canyon Mine, but that kind of played out. Then they were trying to get carbon ore from Gold Acres, and they had to change their mill and everything. It made it pretty rough on them; they weren't doing too well. In fact, I think they were getting pretty close to closing down. That was about a year and a half or so ago. But then they were drilling over what they used to call Pipeline. They had drilled a well down in the flat for the old Gold Acres Mine. There's a pumphouse down there and they'd pump the water up to the mine. I'd say it's a good 2 or 3 miles from the pumphouse up to where the mine was. Well, this pipeline runs right through this one area, and this is where they found this new deposit.
- RM: Is it a big one?
- MM: It's a good one, yes. It's good ore. When you get over here, around this hill, on this side, you're over here at the geysers. There's a new mine going in over there run by Goldfield Mining.
- RM: At the geysers?
- MM: Just past the geysers a little way.
- RM: Is it gold?
- MM: Yes.
- RM: Is it a big deposit?
- MM: I think so, pretty big. They figure they've got 12 to 14 years of ore, but they'll probably find more before they're through. They're figuring on putting a mill and stuff out there. It's all been laid out already. And right out by them is this steam power plant.
- RM: Is it working?
- MM: Yes. It's a geothermal plant.
- RM: Is that what shut down the geysers?
- MM: Yes, a lot of the drilling around there hurt them because they took pressure from this and put pressure to there.
- RM: But there is an active geothermal plant up?
- MM: Oh, yes.
- EM: They're planning on building another one.
- MM: They're producing 5000 KW, or whatever they call it. I think Sierra Pacific

buys power from them. I don't know what they're doing with it, but Sierra Pacific came through there with a power line. We never had any electricity here until the late '60s.

RM: Where did it come from? And how did you get it in here?

MM: Well, the Tracy Power Plant is in Reno, and that's Sierra Pacific. They decided they were going to put a new line in because Newmont needed power. So they were going to put this line in and they brought it in from Battle Mountain. They came right into Dunphy and then into Beowawe. Dunphy's got a mill; they figured that mill needed power, too. They brought that line right into Beowawe. It dead-ends right over here. [Laughs]

RM: Is it a trunk line coming off of the line to Newmont?

MM: When they came in, they came straight on down, and then they built this other line from the geysers straight over to Newmont. Newmont sits back over in here north of Beowawe.

RM: How far away is Newmont by way of the crow?

MM: It would have to be 12 or 15 miles — at the best, 15 miles.

RM: So Newmont is almost due north of Beowawe.

MM: Yes. In fact, when you go out here, there's a road that takes off from Dunphy. It goes out back this way, and there's another range of hills back there; you can't see them [on this map]. When you get out there, there's the TS Ranch — they have a big farm out there, also. When you get out by the farm (I don't remember this years ago) you go driving along and you can look up at the hills and see the mill way up there.

RM: Is there big gold between Beowawe and Newmont?

MM: Some has been found in there. In fact, right in back of the ranch, just over the hill there, there was an old fellow named Billy Griffin. He was 80, 90 years old, I guess. He told me about this mine out here where they'd dug a tunnel in the mountain there. I went in it a few times, but I never went all the way back in, so I didn't know what was in there. But he said they used to get a little gold out of there.

Anyhow, I went up in there and I thought I was going to stake those claims, but somebody had already staked them, so I had to go pull mine off. [Laughs] But there's gold there. I took a lot of samples and ran them, and it was running pretty good.

RM: What were the values?

MM: Oh, some of it was running about an 05, 06, 04, 02 — and that was just surface samples.

RM: Do you know anybody who had claims up there where the mines are now?

MM: Yes, the Scott brothers, and Pirotti, I think, had some claims in there. Puccini is a millionaire now, the kid. He had claims up there and he sold them all to Newmont. He lives in Carlin. Even here on Red Hill — there are all kind of prospects in here.

RM: Is there gold there?

MM: Nobody's ever found gold, but there was mercury and they found some cop-

-
- per.
- RM: The red comes from the copper?
- MM: Yes. This is what we call Red Hill, and there are 2 or 3 diggings around it. And even back further, there's one up on top where old man Sansinena fell in this shaft. That was in about '62 or '63. He had the ranch there, and he was in his 70s and he'd had a little stroke.
- RM: Did the fall kill him?
- MM: Oh, yes. He lived on the ranch and I guess he was looking for his sheep. I guess he went over there, and the shaft went straight down, with no fence around it. One of his sons was looking for him and he got up on the hill and saw him. He said he was looking down the pit and then he fell in.
- RM: Oh, no.
- MM: I guess that was down about 80 or 90 feet.
- RM: Now, you had your bar there at Beowawe and you had started grading roads for the county. Was that to supplement your income?
- MM: Yes, because when they cut all these jobs off from the railroad, there wasn't much income coming in. It got pretty short. They cut the depot out, they cut all the sections out, they cut the signal maintainers out — they cut them all out. They cut Dunphy off, they cut Cluro off . . . that was our biggest payroll. Those guys got paid every 2 weeks and the ranch used to get paid once a month. So for those 2 weeks we did real well. They'd come in from Cluro and Dunphy, and there were 3 crews over here besides your depot crew, and your pump crews; there was a lot of payroll.
- RM: So you started blading roads.
- MM: Before I went to work for the county, I went to work out at the Rossi mine — it's a barite mine out here. I ran the crusher for them.
- RM: Was it a big deposit of barite?
- MM: It's a big deposit, yes. It was discovered by this old fellow, Rossi. He had cabins way back in Beowawe, and he also had one at Horse Canyon. He was an old prospector; he prospected all over. He found the Rossi mine and sold it to National Lead Company and National Lead was mining it. I went to work for a guy by the name of Hunt, who had the contract for mining barite for National Lead.
- That was the first time I went on a contract job like that. I was driving a truck. Of course, I wasn't a truck driver, but I thought, "Well, if I can find out where low is, and reverse, I can cut it." So I ran a dump truck down the pit and drove it under the shovel. They'd load it up and I'd run her up there and weigh it, and then dump it in the bin in the crusher. Well, a lot of times the crusher would break down.
- Now, I'm not the kind of guy to sit and watch somebody work. The crusher would break and all these other truck drivers would sit in their truck, but I'd get out and run over there and help the guy out. Something would be stuck and I'd shovel the belt off and help him, and when they got things going, I'd go back and get in the truck. One day I went over there and the guy who ran

the crusher said, "How'd you like to come over here and work on this crusher?" And, hell, I'd like that fine. I don't like truck driving — you run enough of these pits and proom, proom, proom, you're just always going . . . I didn't care for much of that. He said, "Well, you come over here and you be the oiler on the crusher." So I went over and I'd oil the crusher. And most of the time you'd have to sit around when everything's running well. I'd go up and run the crusher for him while he'd rest up, and then he'd run it, and we'd trade off. Well, I got so I could handle it better than he could.

One day he said, "How'd you like to be the operator on this crusher?" Hell, that's all right. That's fine. I'd do that. So he went someplace on a job for old man Hunt with a 'dozer. He was a good Cat skinner. So he ran a 'dozer for them and I took over the crusher.

RM: How big was the jaw on the crusher?

MM: It was about 24 by 30 inches wide and 6 to 8 feet deep.

RM: Was it diesel powered?

MM: Yes, it had a Cummings diesel motor. Boy, I used to love to listen to that thing run. It was just smooth . . . Anyhow, I got to running the crusher and one day old man Hunt said, "I want this thing running, and don't let it break down. Whatever you have to do, you do it." At night, when I'd shut that thing down, I'd go over every belt and chain drive and everything to make sure that everything was going to go. If there was a pin missing, I'd put a new pin in there. And I never broke down. Boy, I crushed more rock . . . in fact, I'd stand there and wave at the trucks, "Come on, bring your stuff up here . . ." [Laughs]

RM: Was it an 8-hour day or a 24-hour operation?

MM: We used to work 8 hours; it was a day shift only.

RM: And how many tons were you crushing a day?

MM: If I remember correctly, I used to make right around 700 to 800 tons a day.

RM: That's a lot.

MM: Oh, that crusher would really eat it. If they could bring it, I could crush it. [Chuckles] So I worked for Hunt all that summer, and then I think I worked for him the next year. And then he had a job in Palisade crushing rock for the railroad; that was railroad ballast for the tracks.

RM: From that quarry there?

MM: Yes, the rock quarry there. Now, there was a crusher!

RM: It was a big one?

MM: It was about a 40-by-40-by-50, something like that. Oh, it was a big one. We had a pan feeder, and I'd just shove the brake and let her drop it in there. And boy, I had rocks come out of there . . . That was a rough job. In the winter-time I used to go an hour early to get everything running. You had your primary crusher motor, and that had to get warmed up. And you had to get your belts warmed and your power plant going. And then you had to get your gyratory crusher going; that was on a separate motor. I'd have it running so when the crew came, I was ready — just bring rock. [Laughs]

-
- RM: I'll be darned. When did you become a county commissioner?
- MM: I finally got on the county crew and I started blading roads all over the place. I'd make roads for anybody who wanted a road. If the guy was a taxpayer, why not? [Laughs]
- RM: That's the way they used to do it, wasn't it?
- MM: Nowadays they holler like hell . . .
- RM: We used to mine down in Nye County, and that was the way they did it there, too.
- MM: You'd be on the road and some old prospector would say, "Hey, you think you could make a pass up here?"
"Yes, we'll do it." It didn't cost me anything, didn't cost him anything. And we'd get the job done.
Anyhow, I finally went to work for the county and I had this old fellow working with me — old Burt Wheeler. And the roads were in awful shape when I went to work for them. The weeds and sagebrush were growing right up to the edge and there was no ditch on the edge of the road. I said, "Well, we're going to change all this," so I just went along and ditched everything. We pulled all the gravel up on the road. Burt would haul gravel on the truck; we had a little gravel pit. I took it all, then I'd have to get up there and take all the sagebrush out of it, and I built it all up. And boy, we had good-looking roads when I was in there. And everybody liked me along here, so in time I said, "Hell, I'm going to run for county commissioner." This was in 1970.
- RM: And you ran by districts, didn't you? What was your district?
- MM: Mine was the Palisade-Beowawe District — that's the north end of the county. But the whole county votes on you, so you've got to go and see everybody.
- RM: What was it like to run for office?
- MM: It takes a lot of time. You've got to go around and visit people and tell them what you think. For instance, I'd say, "I'm the kind of a guy, I don't believe in taxes. As long as I'll be in there, I'll fight like hell to keep the taxes off. I don't think they need them." The guy I was running against said we were going to need a 25-cent tax and all that. What for? Anyhow, I made it. We didn't raise taxes, either.
- RM: How many terms did you serve?
- MM: Two terms.
- RM: From '70 to '78?
- EM: Yes. He would have done it again, but I wouldn't let him.
- MM: She wouldn't let me run again.
- RM: Why?
- MM: You get a lot of flack from everybody. Crescent Valley was really bad.
- EM: And they pick on the wives.
- RM: Where is Crescent Valley?
- MM: It's right out here about 10 or 12 miles from Beowawe.
- RM: And they were giving you static?
- MM: Oh! They'd try to get things going. They had a water district there and we

were trying to help them. One time a guy called me at 4:00 in the morning. He said, "I got water all over my floor." In his house.

I said, "What the hell do you want me to do?"

"We don't know where to turn the water off."

"Well, I sure don't know where your water turns off." You know, I couldn't run out there at 4:00 in the morning. I said, "You've got somebody that takes care of the water, get them to turn it off, or you go find a valve someplace and shut it off."

RM: Oh, my god. [Laughs]

MM: He said, "Hot water heater went to hell, and it's going to ruin our floor."

You just got all kind of static like that. "Well, what're you going to do about this? What're you going to do about that?" God, while I was in there, I got the town fenced off, because the cattle were going in there and eating their lawns and flowers. I got the fences for them, I got a building for them for the fire truck and all of that kind of thing.

RM: The county was poor in the old days, wasn't it?

MM: It was tough, because your tax rate . . . as I said, the TS Ranch was one of the biggest taxpayers they had because they owned so much territory in Eureka County — practically the whole north end. I looked it up one time; their valuation was the highest of anybody's. And then the mines — like in Eureka, the big mine they used to have there — the Ruby Hill Mine was closed, so there was no tax coming in there. (I think they're going to open that again, from what I heard.) And Eureka itself . . . you can't tax those people that much. And you only have one or two ranches on the south end of the county that pay pretty good taxes.

RM: And Diamond Valley wasn't going that much then, was it?

MM: No, at that time Diamond Valley wasn't even developing yet. Crescent Valley started to develop before Diamond Valley. But there wasn't much at Crescent Valley, either. Between the Horseshoe, the Dunphy mill, the TS Ranch and the railroad, that's where their tax money came from.

RM: Did the railroad pay much taxes?

MM: In those days, they did.

RM: But they don't so much now?

MM: No, because they don't have the buildings. They've taken out all the buildings — even at Palisade. There used to be a depot and section houses in Palisade, and they're all gone. There's nothing there now.

RM: Tell me some more of your recollections of being commissioner.

MM: [Chuckles] Well, we'd only meet about twice a month.

CHAPTER SIX

MM: When I went in as county commissioner, Newmont was working and Eureka got good tax money from them. Between Newmont, the TS Ranch, the railroad, Dunphy mill, and all of that on the north end, I'd say about 90 percent of the tax money was coming from the north end of Eureka County. We figured up one time that it was 87 percent and I said, "It's better than 87 percent because you've got nothing here." And they didn't. The mines were all closed around Eureka at that time. Then later, still during my time in there, they opened a little mine — I think the Atlas Mine — in Eureka. Then they opened this other mine lately — the one over in Roberts Creek Mountains. But they're having a hard time, I guess. From what I understand, they've got a go-ahead now, but they just don't have the money to do it. That's what I read in the paper a while back. But if that goes, that'll help them.

RM: Where are the majority of the people in the county — are they mainly in Eureka?

MM: Yes.

RM: So the people are down there and the money's up north?

MM: Yes, Eureka's got a lot of people. Eureka's not a bad place to live.

RM: Right, it's a nice place.

MM: It's a nice place and the people are nice. And there are some people on the little ranches and farms out through Diamond Valley.

RM: When did those hay farms out there start?

MM: They were doing a little bit out in there in the '50s.

RM: They're Desert Land Entry properties, aren't they?

MM: Yes. In the '60s they started going pretty good. There were some that settled south of Beowawe, too — they had some land out there — but they never did prove out to be anything. There are still some out there. There are a couple of them out where the Dean Ranch is, but it's too deserty, and there's not enough water for them. (Of course, they had wells.) Pine Valley is good ranching country. They grow a lot of hay, and they've got plenty of water; those guys never hurt that I know of. [Laughs]

RM: Has the oil made a big difference to the county?

MM: Yes.

RM: When did that come in?

MM: The oil came in in about 1980. It's been about 9 years ago.

RM: After you were commissioner, then.

MM: They were drilling around there when I was commissioner, because when I'd drive by I'd see their drill rigs. There was one fellow drilling in there in the '50s, but he wasn't in the right spot. He was drilling over more behind the old Buckhorn mines. Every once in a while they'd find a showing of oil, but when this present outfit went in there, they started getting some good wells. They're still pumping oil there today; they're doing well.

RM: Are they hopeful that more oil will be found there?

MM: I think so. I think they've got some locations that they're not saying anything about. From where they are, they go across the road, up towards the hills over there. They've done a lot of drilling over there, but they don't tell you anything.

RM: When you were commissioner, did you still have your bar?

MM: Oh, yes. Babe would run the store and bar in the daytime when I wasn't there and then I'd take over at night. During that time I was working for Cortez gold mine also, as the maintenance and repair person.

RM: You had a store in Beowawe too? When did you add the store?

MM: When did we put that in, Babe?

EM: When Ann sold hers.

MM: Oh, yes, they sold their grocery store and moved it to Carlin, so I decided, "Well, I'd better put in a few groceries there." That must have been sometime in the '70s, wasn't it?

EM: Yes.

RM: Was it a pretty big store?

MM: No.

RM: Was it right next to the bar?

MM: Yes, it joined the bar.

EM: We changed the dance hall into the store.

RM: When did you quit giving dances?

MM: It was about that same time, wasn't it?

EM: Yes.

RM: Why?

MM: Well, everybody was gone. The depot had closed down. [Chuckles] You'd have to depend on outside people coming in, and it wasn't working.

But in the meantime, I was playing for dances, too. We had another orchestra. We had a rancher out in Pine Valley who had the Sheep Creek Ranch — his name was Steve Damele. The Dameles used to have a big ranch out in there, and this was the boy.

EM: And his father was a county commissioner.

MM: Yes, his dad was a county commissioner when I first went in there. Of course, his dad was pretty old at that time. Anyhow, Steve played piano and I helped him really get going good. He turned out to be a hell of a good piano player. Then the signal maintainer who used to be in Beowawe, Duane, is a guitar player, so we used him. And our drummer was Bob Stenovich. He came from Elko, here. He was a good drummer.

RM: Where did you play?

MM: We'd play at Battle Mountain, Carlin, Elko, Eureka, Wells, Crescent Valley and so on. Every New Year's we'd have some job someplace. We even played for the Elks in Winnemucca a couple of times. [Chuckles] They wanted us to go to Ely a couple of times, but I said, "Oh, that's a little too far." But we were doing well. The orchestra held together until '83.

-
- RM: So that would have been about 10 years?
- MM: Oh, yes, all of that.
- RM: I'll be darned. What were you getting on a gig?
- MM: It depended. When we first started in the '70s, we used to figure \$25 apiece was good money. Then we kind of hoisted it up and we used to get around \$40. In the '80s we'd get a little more. It depended on the dance and the place, too. If we figured a place couldn't afford so much, we'd say, "Well, how about 30 bucks apiece," or something. We used to like to play.
- RM: Tell me about the kind of music that you played in the '30s.
- MM: I can't remember all the names of the tunes, but it was mostly swing and a little jazz. Way back in those days, we used to play a song called "Pink Elephants," and "Dreams"; all the old standards. Later we played "Solidude" and "In the Mood."
- RM: Oh, OK — Glen Miller and Tommy Dorsey and those types of songs.
- MM: Any of that material. And we'd play lots of western music, like "Release Me," "Born To Lose," "Wabash Cannonball" and so forth.
- RM: What music do you prefer?
- MM: I like the western songs a lot, and I like the old ones, like "Stardust," "Rose Room," "Sweet Sue," "Jambalaya" and etc.
- RM: Do you play by ear?
- MM: No, I can play by music. I used to be real good at reading music —I could throw a piece up there and just take right off with it. Of course, then I was younger, too. Now I can't see as well.
- RM: Do you still play?
- MM: Well, I'm hoping to.
- EM: He hasn't played since he had the heart attack.
- MM: I had a heart attack in '83 and had triple bypass surgery.
- RM: So you kind of gave up the music after that?
- MM: Yes. But I've been feeling pretty good, so if I can get together with Steve, I'd sure like to [go back to it].

What kind of broke us up there was our drummer. Some of those drummers are funny people; they're not as dependable. I had a bunch of dances lined up in about 1980, '81 — around in there. I had a dance in Winnemucca, a dance at Battle Mountain, a dance at Eureka, a dance at Carlin and another dance over here at what they call Taylor Canyon Club.

I liked to play out at those country places better than any. They enjoy your music, they like you better and they treat you well. When you get in town, they get a little picky. But they seemed to enjoy our music. We'd never give them time to holler, we'd just keep playing. [Laughs] But then in '83 I had the heart attack. And our drummer stood us up. We had to play I don't know how many dances without a drummer, and that's pretty hard to do. Your rhythm's gone. Of course, Duane is good on the guitar. He would thump it out pretty good and keep the rhythm up. But I don't know, it seemed vacant without the drums.

RM: You could get an electric drummer now. Did you ever use a singer or anything like that?

MM: No, we just played. If somebody wanted to sing, that was all right with us [laughs] if they could sing. If they couldn't, oh, god!

I even played out at Jiggs. Years ago, in the '40s, we used to play out at Jiggs a lot. Jiggs is south of Elko here. It's just a little town. I think they have one little bar, but I don't think there's even a store there. There's no school. There are mostly ranches there. We used to go out there and play for dances and then we'd end up going to some ranch and eating breakfast, or going down along South Fork and fishing. [Laughs]

RM: How can you blow for hours on end? You must have strong lungs.

MM: The lungs never bothered me; it was the lip. Sometimes it would swell right out. You use your lip more than anything. If you want to get a good tone, you'd better have a good lip.

RM: Is that right? What do you do with your lip?

MM: You have to hold your lip over your lower teeth. You kind of cover your teeth with it and then your mouthpiece goes there. And you've got a reed; you've got to keep that reed just right. You don't want it to vibrate too much, but you've got to get enough out of it so that it sounds right.

RM: You've seen a lot of dances, and a lot of people at dances. Do you have any generalizations you can make about that?

MM: [Laughs] Oh, we played for dances, I'll tell you, from one end of this area to the other. They used to love to dance in Eureka. Eureka's a good place, but it's hard to get there — it's 90 miles from Carlin, and it's 100-and-some miles from Beowawe. And if you get over there and have a few drinks and have to drive home you've got to be careful or you're not going to make it. Taylor Canyon is north of Elko, here. One time we were playing for a dance there; remember that night, Babe? It was during deer season. We went over there, and we were playing for this dance and they ran out of booze, they ran out of water . . . they ran out of everything. You never saw so many people. I don't know where they all came from — deer hunters and all the ranchers and everybody. Boy, we had a crowd there. They asked us if we would come once every other month. "Oh, yes, sure, we'll do that."

Then we went out and played. They had a little orchestra from Elko going out there. They said, "Will you come back next time? We don't want that other bunch." [Laughs] They dismissed them. So we played there pretty steadily. But the people who had the bar were more or less leasing it from a rancher out there and the rancher decided to take over the bar because it was doing business, and he was going to get this money himself. So he ran those people out.

Well, we had a job out there for a certain night but the people who hired us weren't there. The rancher was quite a drinker, and he had a young wife. We went out and started playing and we gave them the music we liked, and most of the ranchers out there liked it. They came from Mountain City and

other places and the crowd hadn't really got there yet. We were just starting; it was around 10:00. We'd play for an hour to an hour and a half, then we'd take a break for 15 minutes and go have a drink or something. Well, when we played for places like that they used to always buy our drinks.

But when I went over there, I had to pay for my drink. I thought, "Hell, this isn't going to work out too well." They were playing the jukebox while we were taking our break, and they had this boom, boom, boom, stuff — all drums and big noise, just louder than hell. And you've got to jump like hell to dance to it. And I walked back . . . of course, I didn't say anything. There was a young guy there and he said, "That's the kind of music I like," and he looked at me.

I said, "Fine; doesn't bother me a damn bit." Then he got a little smart. And I thought to myself, "If I was just 20 years younger, I'd have punched him right in the mouth." Well, we were getting ready to play, and we went over to the piano.

By the way, the first time we went out there to play at Taylor Canyon, the piano wouldn't work. The keys would stick. Remember?

EM: I remember.

MM: Oh, god. We pulled all the boards off the piano and looked inside and it was full of dog food — pack rats had carried dog food in there. We tipped that piano upside down and got all the dog food out. I'll bet you there was about a 10- or 15-pound sack of dog food in that piano. We got it all out and some of the keys were still sticking, so we got some WD-40 and sprayed it in there, and we got the keys to working so Steve could play the piano; then we got going. After that, we had no problems with the piano.

But this was the last time we ever played out there because this new owner . . . well, he was drunk. He didn't know what was going on. But his wife was jumping and flitting around with this loud-mouthed guy who kind of insulted me. They turned the jukebox up as loud as they could, and they were out there jumping around. Well, we were ready to play. It was about 10:30 or something like that, and the crowd was just beginning to come. I looked at Duane and I looked at Steve, and I said, "I'm not going to put up with this crap at all. We came out here to play, and I'm not going to run competition to a jukebox that's playing that kind of music. So we'll wait a few more minutes. If they don't stop, I'm going to put my horn up." They just kept a-going.

I packed up my horn and I said, "Well, let's get the hell out of here." And we left. There was a bunch from Elko — 2 gals who worked at Stockmans and a couple of guys who were with them. They came running out and they said, "What are you going to do?"

I said, "We're leaving."

"Oh, we want to hear your music, we like your music."

I said, "Well, those people won't let us play, so we're leaving. I didn't come out here to run competition to a jukebox." So we left.

-
- RM: That rancher probably ruined the business there, didn't he?
- MM: Yes, he did. He didn't make anything. Somebody bought it out; I know somebody else is there now. A rancher out there who I know, Wright, used to come to all our dances; he loved our music. I ran into him in Stockmans about a week or two later and he said, "Oh, those people owe you an apology."
- I said, "Well, I'm not going to get it from them, that's for sure."
- He said, "I told them that, too. They're not doing any good out there." We never went back and that was the end of that.
- RM: When did you sell the store and bar in Beowawe? Did you sell it with regret?
- MM: Well, in a way.
- RM: Did you keep running it all those years?
- EM: No, for 10 years we didn't run it.
- MM: You see, in '83 I had the heart attack and I ended up in Reno and had open heart surgery.
- EM: That's when we bought this place [in Elko].
- MM: They said I should move where there's a doctor and a hospital. Of course, this is not much better here. So we bought this place and moved up here and we rented out the place in Beowawe. But nobody opened the bar; they just lived in the house. We rented it a few times and then these people, with all these mines going, decided they wanted to buy it, so we decided to sell it. It was kind of dragging on. They haven't opened it yet, but they're living there. The last time I talked to her, she said she had all their licenses. She wants to open the store and then later the bar.
- RM: What's happening at Beowawe now?
- MM: Right now, with all that exploration work going in there there's a lot of activity going back and forth. They're drilling test holes to find the body of ore.
- EM: On past the geysers, there's a new gold mine.
- MM: Yes, I told him about that. Goldfield is putting that mine in. You go out to the geysers and pass them and then there'll be the thermal plant. The road that comes from Beowawe goes out there. Now Battle Mountain, this area here, is in Lander County. The Battle Mountain commissioners want them to build a road over the hill to Battle Mountain. But you've already got a road here, and it's a good one; you don't have to go over any summit. In the wintertime, they'd have one funny time with a summit. They want to build 22 miles of road . . . well, I can't see it. The last I heard, the guy said that they're going to use the road from Beowawe. They've been drilling there for the last year or two to see how much gold they have. They figure they'll start this July if all the BLM papers get settled out.
- RM: Are there quite a few people living at Beowawe now?
- MM: Not too many, because there's no place for them to live.
- RM: Did they haul off all the railroad buildings?
- MM: Yes.

RM: So Beowawe began to fold up in the '60s?

MM: That's right, when the diesels came in and the railroad started cutting back. And it never did come back. Most of our business after the railroads went was from the ranches. We'd get a little railroad business if somebody would come through. And then driving through, and they'd always stop.

RM: Is there still a post office there?

MM: Yes, there is.

EM: The tourist business went down the tubes when they started drilling for the power plant.

MM: Yes, they kind of knocked the geysers out.

RM: What did the geysers look like before they did that?

EM: They were comparable to Yellowstone.

RM: How high would they shoot?

MM: Some would go 40, 50 feet.

RM: Did they go up every so often?

MM: Yes, they were periodic.

EM: But you couldn't tell when they would blow.

MM: There was one that used to go up about 30, 40 feet, but I don't know if it did it twice a day, or once a day. I never stayed out there that long.

RM: How many geysers were there?

MM: There were a lot of them — a whole shelf. There's a whole shelf above, and then there was one down in the creek bed — a good one. That's the one that used to shoot up 40 to 50 feet.

RM: And when did they start drilling?

EM: In '56 or '57, I think.

RM: And that was the end of the geysers?

MM: Yes.

EM: I tried to get the state to make a state park of the geyser area.

MM: The Beowawe Sagebrush Ladies Club did a lot for the area. That was a pretty good group.

RM: What did they do?

MM: They wanted help to get the road in there.

EM: We got the Catholic church in there.

RM: When did they bring that church in?

EM: It was in the '60s.

RM: And when did it fold?

MM: In the last 8 or 10 years it got so they never used it.

RM: Is the building still there?

MM: They made the post office out of it now.

RM: What else did the ladies' society do?

EM: We had a big barbecue to raise money to build the church.

MM: And they fought to get the oiled road from Beowawe to Gold Acres.

RM: When did they oil the road?

MM: The one that goes from the highway to Beowawe was oiled in 1938. It

stopped right at the railroad tracks. That's as far as they hauled — into Beowawe to the railroad and they quit. And they fought and fought. Gold Acres was going and, boy, that was 28 miles of road to Gold Acres and you swore you went 50 or 60, it was that rough. It was terrible. And they were trying to get that road in. Dan Phillippini had the ranch out there and he was helping them get it.

EM: My sister-in-law and I got a petition up and took it around and had everybody sign it — even the railroad officials in Carlin.

MM: And that road went in in what year?

EM: In '57.

RM: So it went from Beowawe on to Gold Acres.

MM: Yes. It was '56 or '57 when they oiled that, wasn't it?

EM: Yes.

RM: When did you start the ladies' club?

EM: In '39.

RM: What was its function?

EM: Just to get all the ladies together to do things. We would raise money and buy all the children presents every Christmas. And we would have the Christmas party in the dance hall.

MM: They'd have me play for dances, too. Of course, they had to pay me.

RM: And you helped start the club?

EM: Yes, and Marianne Smithwick, and Ann Bogus — that's my sister — and Ann Baumann and Ethel Tyler.

MM: Yes, there were a lot of them.

EM: There were about 35 women. The school teachers belonged, Mrs. Rios, and the guy who sold the insurance, Mr. Upwall — his wife was teaching school there. Old lady Sullivan belonged to it and Norma Bianchini — she was the postmistress here, and her husband was a foreman on the Southern Pacific Railroad.

MM: And Mrs. Wilburs belonged to it, and the other woman whose husband worked for the depot — Hutchison. He was a signal maintainer on the SP. And who was the signal maintainer at that time on the WP — Williams? There used to be an old fellow who was depot agent there — Williams was his name. I think he's probably dead now, but he retired and went to Sacramento. And he'd always send me a card or something. [Chuckles] He'd have them made out especially, and he called it the Western Beowawe Southern Railroad, or something like that. [Laughs] I don't know if I have any of his cards left or not, but he was quite a character.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

MM: Jess Harris was the Justice of the Peace in Beowawe back in the '30s. He had a little cabin close to the school. Then the courthouse was like I showed you there. One incident involved Joe Androsi. He was married to a full-blooded Indian woman. They had a fight one time, and Harris had to be the judge. Joe had gone home, and I guess he was drunk, and he wanted to beat

her up. But she pulled a shotgun out of the closet, so Joe started running for the front door and she let him have it and got him in the back. Well, Andy Allen, who had the store, and Jess Harris, took him to Elko to Dr. Ronetree. At that time I knew Dr. Ronetree really well. Dr. Ronetree told me, "I'm working on him. He's thinking he's going to die, and here I pull a piece of rag out, and some BBs fall out, and I pull another piece of rag out, and more BBs" . . . he had holes in his back. Joe thought he was going to die. [Laughs] The doctor said, "You aren't going to die. [Laughs] You're too tough to die." So they had court over that.

At court, Jess Harris asked her what happened. She said, "He came to beat me up, and this time I wasn't going to let him beat me. So, I grabbed the shotgun and he started running, and I shot." [Laughter] Of course, they didn't put anybody in jail. [Laughs]

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: So you played for all the mine dances?

MM: Yes, Cortez Gold, Carlin Gold, and we played in Eureka for some of the mines. At the mine every year they'd have dances around Christmastime, and then they'd have them some time during the summer, and they'd have picnics and things.

RM: And they'd always hire you?

MM: Yes.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RM: You were telling the story of the maiden's grave.

MM: When the pioneers came through they [crossed the Humboldt River] about 4 miles east of Beowawe, at what they call Gravelly Ford. And there was a grave out at Gravelly Ford that I found in 1935, when I was first out here. The sagebrush was real high — 6 or 7 feet high, and thick. And we were looking for arrowheads. There was another fellow with me. (We were young then.) I came in and found this grave and it had a picket fence around it and rocks on the grave. I got to looking around and there was a name on there — Ezra something — and a can in under the rocks, which I pulled out, and the paper [in it] was real old. But it had the name of the man who was buried there.

RM: I'll be darned.

MM: And it told the year when they were coming through there — it was right around 1849. This was part of the Donner party.

RM: Is that right?

MM: This spot is where they had some trouble. Some guy by the name of Reed or Reese was barred out of the camp, and they sent him on. He went ahead of the wagon train to Sacramento and he made it over there. Then the Donner party, when they left here, [left] this grave and 5 other graves. I remember I counted 5 graves [from the line-up of the rocks].

RM: And they were all Donner party?

MM: They could have been all Donner party. I couldn't find anything in there about the other graves. If I'd have had any sense, I would have taken the paper with me, but I didn't; I put it back in the rocks. I felt it belonged there. And I've cussed myself ever since.

Anyhow, this is where they crossed the Humboldt River — it's wide, and it's gravelly. They crossed the river there, and then they went down towards Beowawe. It's open there, and there are little hills off to the left. They were going towards Beowawe and they headed down there and went through Whirlwind Valley. (Whirlwind Valley in the one that connects into the geysers.) There was a person who died. We don't know if it was a woman or a child, but the name was Lucinda Duncan. She was buried over there on the other side of the river, going towards Beowawe.

RM: Down toward Whirlwind?

MM: That's right. I'd say it was about a mile or a mile and a half east of Beowawe. Lucinda Duncan's grave was there when the Central Pacific Railroad came through — that's the first railroad that came through the state. And when it came through there, their line was running right over where the grave was. So the Central Pacific removed the body and put it up on a hill and they put up a big white cross with the name Lucinda Duncan.

RM: Is that right? And that's where she's buried now?

MM: She's buried there. So this made a graveyard for Beowawe and there's a

graveyard yet today, and it's still used.

RM: Oh, that's how Beowawe's graveyard got started?

MM: That's the way the graveyard got started. And I think the railroad is supposed to keep painting that cross and keep it up.

RM: Is that right? How many people are buried up there?

MM: There are a lot of graves that you can't distinguish anymore — there have been a lot of people buried there. Smithwicks are buried up there, and a brother of Smithwick's wife and a lot of other people who used to live in Beowawe. They just buried somebody up there not too long ago.

RM: Beowawe must have got started with the Central Pacific.

MM: That's really when it started. But after they started that, the Buckhorn Mine, which is also in Eureka County, [got going]. Buckhorn is south of Beowawe and they went up through a canyon there — I think they call it Brock Canyon. They put in a power plant at Beowawe and ran a power line to the Buckhorn Mine.

RM: Oh — this was in the early days?

MM: Yes, back in the early 1900s.

RM: What kind of power plant was it?

MM: It was some kind of electrical plant. The foundation and everything is still there. It was on Southern Pacific property.

RM: Was the Buckhorn a successful mine?

MM: It was successful for quite a few years, but it didn't pan out. They were going for gold, but the silver, I think, ran them out of there. In recent years, you know, Buckhorn's been running, but I understand they are going to close now. Their gold take is very small; there's more silver than gold. Caminco Mining, I think, has it.

RM: What's your understanding of the origin of the word "Beowawe"?

MM: I've heard a lot of different meanings, and the best one I found is when I talked to an Indian and asked him what it meant. He said it means "gateway."

RM: What is it the gateway to?

MM: Beowawe is in a little narrow spot — the railroad goes through it —with a hill on the right and a hill on the left. So it's an opening —gateway. He said it means "opening" or a "gateway."

RM: In Shoshone, probably.

MM: Yes, that was Shoshone.

RM: What are some of the other versions you've heard?

MM: Oh, somebody says, "big hole," and "wide hole," and "squaw" —they've got all kinds of ideas. But I think that is the right name, because it is an opening. A lot of times I've sat there and looked and thought, "If they put a dam from that hill to this hill, you could have a natural dam and back water all the way to Carlin." [Chuckles] Of course, the railroad's all there too.

RM: What's it like on west of Beowawe? What was the trail like for the pioneers?

MM: They stayed on the south side of the river. They passed through [what is now] Beowawe and went on down through what they called Whirlwind Valley, and that goes on into Dunphy. Then from Dunphy they headed right for Battle Mountain. There's another grave down there, and it's a pioneer grave — it's marked — where the TS Ranch turns off from the old highway, right by the old Highway 40. It's been kept up pretty well.

RM: Who founded the TS Ranch?

MM: I don't know who founded that ranch. The person who was there when I first got acquainted with them . . . there was a ranch at Dunphy, but that belonged to old man Mahoney. They used to call it the Mahoney Ranch. Dunphy used to have a school and the railroad had a depot there. This was when I first came to Nevada. They didn't have too many kids in the school; maybe 5 or 6. There were a lot of those little rural schools in those days. Later they did away with the schools and brought the kids to Beowawe and over to Battle Mountain, so the school situation has changed.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: So they don't know anything about the person who's buried there?

MM: No, we don't know if it's an older woman or a child. At first they said it was a young girl, and you hear all kinds of stories, but I don't think anybody really knows.

RM: But they did find bones there?

MM: They found the grave, yes. And they found the name, too — Lucinda Duncan. They believed she was with the Donner party because that's the way they came. After they crossed Gravelly Ford they came right up [the river].

RM: But other parties came that way too, didn't they?

MM: Oh, yes, there were a lot of parties, but a lot of them went on the other side, too. There's another trail that goes on the other side and comes into the Horseshoe Ranch. I think they followed the river on the north side, because you can go a long ways on that north side. Of course, you can go clear on down to Winnemucca.

RM: Were there any significant Indian ruins or anything along the Humboldt?

MM: I've never seen anything like that, but I found a lot of arrowheads. I've got oodles of arrowheads that I found around the Humboldt River — all within a 40-mile radius of Beowawe. I've got plaques of them here on the wall.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: You've found a lot of arrowheads over the years. And you were saying you found some Clovis points?

MM: I've got about 3 someplace.

RM: Did you find them along the river?

MM: I think I found one along the river, and I found another one over by what they call Boulder Creek — it's north of Beowawe, close to the Newmont mine, but down in the flat. They must have stayed in there, because there are chips all over the place. It's hard to find a good arrowhead, but you find a million chips; they made them in there. And I found one I call an "Alley

Oop axe.” I have one of them and then I have a large spear point about 4-1/2 inches long, white, and about 3 inches wide.

RM: And you say that you don’t find obsidian here, but you find obsidian points?

MM: Right. Most of the obsidian that I’ve seen comes out of the Black Rock Desert; that’s north of Winnemucca. When I worked for the railroad, I went out there relieving the section foremen who went on vacation. There is a place they call Chalona, and then there’s a little ranch before you get to Gerlach. There’s a cut there, and off on the left side of the cut there’s a spring. That country’s sandy — the wind blows and the sand blows this way. We were working on the track and I’d kind of mosey around out there, and I’d always find 2 or 3 obsidian points. They were beautiful.

I never kept those points. (I guess I was a little bit foolish in those days.) I’d get the passenger train coming home to Beowawe (because the wife would stay in Beowawe when I’d work out like that) and on the train, we used to have what was called the “news butch.” I don’t know if they have them nowadays, or not.

RM: I don’t what that is.

MM: He was a man on the train who went along with a basket. He’d have magazines and candy bars and all these things, and he’d come along and sell them. He’d sell you an orange or an apple, or a newspaper or a magazine. On top of that, he’d announce different places along the railroad, like: “Well, you’re coming into Winnemucca, and off to the right you’ll see this, and off to the left you’ll see that.” And he was pretty good. I knew him real well. Well, when I get on the train, I’d give him an arrowhead and he’d give me an orange or something. I guess he’d sell them to passengers or something; I don’t know. [Chuckles] He’d give me a magazine or something — “You want a magazine?” “Yeah.” But all those arrowheads were obsidian. Up here you find a lot of arrowheads, but they’re made out of . . .

RM: Chert?

MM: A lot of chert, but most of it’s agate — kind of a flintstone called opalite; a volcanic rock. You can find a lot of that around the geysers; it’s a real hard rock. And how they do it, I don’t know. I’ve made arrowheads, but I always have to find a chip that’s thin. I don’t know how they thinned them down. I guess they just banged on them until they got a thin chip.

This section contains some further remembrances from Martin Milano of people who lived in and around Beowawe through the years.

ADDENDUM

The old-timers around Beowawe in the 1930s included Ben Swingle. This man was a character. He was a bachelor, and he made his living trapping. He trapped along the river for coyotes, beavers, muskrats and bobcats and he lived in a dugout on the side of Red Hill. He was in his 60s when I came to Beowawe.

Jack Scott was an old-time prospector and miner. He was in his 70s and was a bachelor.

Billy Griffin was another man in his 70s. He worked on ranches and mines and was also a prospector. I don't know if he ever had a family.

The Modarellis had a ranch about 7 miles east of Beowawe. He was quite old and he had 3 sons — Angelo, Vincent and Joe. They also had a mine. All are gone now except Vincent.

Sam Quellici was in his late 60s. He worked for ranches and mines and had some cabins he rented out. He must have been married at one time, because I met his son when he passed away.

Jess Harris was the Justice of the Peace when I came to Beowawe, and was in his 60s then. He had 2 sons — one was in the navy and the other worked on ranches.

We had another character, a Mr. Hess. He was called "The Hermit." This man was in his late 50s. He had served in World War I. He came in in the 1920s and settled in the middle of Palisade Canyon, away from everybody. He lived there alone. He built a dugout along the river and fished and hunted and bothered no one. He would pass the time of day with you but never did say much. He died about 1959 or '60.

The Strickland family moved to the Butler Ranch, about a mile out of Beowawe, in the 1930s. Mrs. Strickland had 2 sons, Hugh and Edward, and 3 or 4 daughters. She later sold the ranch to the Mahoneys from Dunphy. She then opened a boardinghouse and lived in Beowawe till she passed away.

There was also Mike Mullens. He was in his late 50s and worked at mines and ranches. Gumshoe Smyth described him as "the lowest of the low." He was quite a storyteller.

Pete Sansinena was a sheepman in the 1930s. He had a home in Beowawe with his wife and they had 2 sons and 2 daughters. They were one of the nicest families ever.

Bill and Minnie Howe also had a home in Beowawe. He was retired when I knew him, but he had worked at mines. I believe he had an interest in the Mill Canyon Mine. They went back to Ireland in the late 1940s.

Joe O'Connors came to Beowawe in the late '40s or early '50s. He was a brother to Minnie Howe. She and Bill died in Ireland and he was their heir. He sold their house and built a cabin. He was the Justice of the Peace at Beowawe for several years. He was a heavy snuff chewer and a good-hearted man. He was killed by a train near Beowawe.

**An Interview with
J. N. REBALEATI**

*An Oral History conducted and edited by
Robert D. McCracken
1993*

CONTENTS
An Interview with Norman Rebaleati

- CHAPTER ONE** 2
Background information on Norman's grandfather, Luigi, who came to Eureka from Italy to run a boardinghouse and then began a hotel; Luigi's marriage to Mary Romano of the Romano Ranch; Mary is widowed and later marries Bolo Merialdo; on Norman's father, J. B., and his background as a blacksmith; memories of assisting in the blacksmith shop — how to set a wagon wheel; the scope of the blacksmithing business in the 1910s and 1920s; an evolution from blacksmith shop to automotive garage; on J. B.'s long career, first as a blacksmith, then as a proprietor of the Kelley and Rebaleati Garage; the garage becomes a local utility company; J. B.'s experience with a Ford dealership.
- CHAPTER TWO** 8
A description of the early-day roads around Eureka, and the number of flat tires a traveler could expect on even a short trip; observations on the improvements in automobiles from the Models Ts to the cars of the 1920s and then to the cars of the 1950s; improvements in tires with the advent of rayon and nylon; explaining how the Rebaleati garage business led to the founding of a power company; the gradual increase in the use of electricity in Eureka; the advent of telephones in Eureka.
- CHAPTER THREE** 14
Regulation of power companies in Nevada in the late 1930s; how the Rebaleatis' power company developed more powerful and more sophisticated generating systems; refrigeration before the days of refrigerators; various household uses of electricity; further discussion on the improvement in power generators over the years; remarks on Eureka's population size through the years, and on mining activity in 1993; how Eureka got TV reception.
- CHAPTER FOUR** 21
Further discussion of TV reception in Eureka; the sale of the Rebaleatis' power company to the REA in the 1970s; remarks on the volunteer fire department of Eureka, and on health care in the community; observations on the farms in Diamond Valley and on the oil wells in Pine Valley.

This is Robert McCracken talking to Norman Rebaleati at his home in Eureka, Nevada, August 21, 1992.

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Norman, why don't we begin by you telling me your name as it reads on your birth certificate.

NR: My name is Norman Rebaleati. I was born May 4th, 1924, in Eureka, Nevada.

RM: And what was your father's name?

NR: His name was J. B. Rebaleati. He was born in Eureka April the 5th, 1885.

RM: And what was your father's occupation?

NR: He started out as a young man as a blacksmith here in Eureka. He served his apprenticeship under an old-time blacksmith, then he purchased his blacksmith shop and then later he went into the garage business. Then in 1917 or 1918 he branched out and started an electric utility service in Eureka with his brother-in-law, R. C. Kelley. My father's father emigrated from Italy.

RM: And what was his name?

NR: Luigi Rebaleati.

RM: Do you know when and where he was born?

NR: He was born in the province of Stella near Genoa in Italy, and he came to this country in the 1870s. (I still have his naturalization papers.) He came to Eureka in about 1870.

RM: Did he come directly to Eureka from Italy?

NR: He came to take over the proprietorship of a boardinghouse at Alpha for the old Eureka Palisade Railroad.

RM: Did he make that connection prior to coming over here?

NR: I don't know.

RM: Did he come as a young man?

NR: He came as a fairly young man.

RM: And he started off as the proprietor of a boardinghouse?

NR: Yes, right. He was a businessman. Then he moved into Eureka and started a hotel.

RM: Where was the hotel?

NR: We still have the property where it was located — it's where the old Rebaleati garage is, right across the street from where he used to live. It's one block from the courthouse.

RM: And what else did he do here in town?

NR: He died as a young man. He was in his early 40s when he passed away.

RM: Who did your grandfather marry?

NR: He married Mary Romano.

RM: Was she Italian?

NR: Yes, she came here as a young lady and they were married here.

-
- RM: What was her family involved in here?
- NR: Ranching. Their first property was called the Romano Ranch, and it is still in existence in north Diamond Valley, on the west side.
- RM: And then your father grew up here. Do you remember any stories about your grandfather? For instance, did they talk about how hard or easy it was to make a living in your grandparents' time?
- NR: No. The way I interpreted it was that they always made a very good living up until the early part of the Depression. Then I think this became a very depressed area. But that was more concerned with my father rather than with my grandfather.
- RM: Did you know your grandfather?
- NR: No. But my grandmother died much later.
- RM: What do you recall about her?
- NR: She was a typical little grandmother. [Laughs] She was very concerned with her grandchildren. We were always watched pretty closely.
- RM: Did she grow up on the ranch?
- NR: No, she grew up in town.
- RM: Did they maintain the ranch out there through the years?
- NR: Her brother did for years, yes. His name was Tony Romano. Later on he sold it and that part of the family moved to Elko. My grandmother married Bolo Merialdo later on.
- RM: Was he a rancher?
- NR: No, he was connected with the mines and he was also a businessman. As I recall, they always made a very good and thriving living. I can't say there were any financial hardships that I can remember up until the Depression.
- RM: Did your dad go to school here?
- NR: Yes. He went to school and graduated from high school here. He was married in 1910. He graduated around 1904, and as a young man he had to take time off between the eighth grade and high school. He had to work a year and then he went back to high school.
- RM: You mentioned that he had an apprenticeship as a blacksmith. What did that consist of?
- NR: As far as I can tell, it was just working with an old-time blacksmith named Kromer. As I said, when he got older and retired and died, my dad took his shop over.
- RM: Was it known as Kromer's Blacksmith Shop?
- NR: That's right.
- RM: Did your dad keep the name?
- NR: No, he changed it to his own name.
- RM: Where was it located?
- NR: Just one block down on Main Street, on the east side. He worked very hard; as a young child I always remember being around the blacksmith's shop.
- RM: What are your recollections about the blacksmith business?
- NR: He used to say that the only thing he regretted was that the iron was always

-
- too cold and he never charged enough. [Laughs]
- RM: [Laughs] He used charcoal, didn't he?
- NR: Right. I was always a husky young boy — I was large for my age, and I used to have to haul water for him and work the bellows for him before they had power. And then later on, because I was husky, I used to have to swing a sledge[hammer] for them and set wagon tires and things like that.
- RM: How do you set a wagon tire?
- NR: You have to put the rim around it, because that's what would wear.
- RM: Is that tricky?
- NR: Oh, very tricky.
- RM: What's involved?
- NR: They take a plain, flat iron and they start to roll it to make the hoop. Then they have to forge-weld it. It has to be quite precise because it's a shrink fit onto the old wooden wheel. And I was husky enough that I could handle the rims.
- RM: When they make the circle, do they have to heat it at each point?
- NR: No, it's cold-rolled. But then they have to heat the rim to expand it to set on the wagon wheel and to make it tight.
- RM: And did they weld it on the tire?
- NR: No. You have to make a precise measurement, then allow for the shrinkage to set it; then you heat it all. Then you get your wagon wheel down and you have a special tool to grab the rim and you set it on there. As soon as it's set on, the wood starts to burn because it's very hot. Then as you apply the water, it shrinks and gets very tight.
- RM: I see. Were the blacksmiths well developed in their upper body? I think of a blacksmith as having large biceps.
- NR: No. I can remember my dad would have 6 or 8 men helping him all the time. They were strong and big, but not particularly well muscled.
- RM: Did they have one person for the bellows? The forge was going all the time, wasn't it?
- NR: Well, in the '30s they started to get power — then they put an electric blower on the bellows, so that eliminated one chore.
- RM: So there was a guy who was running the bellows?
- NR: Yes. The blacksmith used to do it, too, to control his own fire. It usually was kids who helped on the bellows and water.
- RM: And they would just pay them probably a minimal wage? [Laughs]
- NR: I can't remember the scale then.
- RM: What are the jobs that the blacksmith did besides setting wagon wheels?
- NR: They worked on wagons for the ranchers — wagon wheels and the wagons themselves. The hardware on the wagons took an awful lot of welding. They used to break tongues, axles, wheels . . . things like that.
- RM: Was he doing much mining business, or did the mines do their own forging?
- NR: The mine would do a lot of their forging, but he used to do an awful lot of work for the mines like sharpening picks. I remember armfuls of picks com-

ing in to be sharpened. They were going all the time, sharpening picks.

RM: And sharpening [drilling] steel too?

NR: Yes, steel too.

RM: I talked to Louis Gibellini and he's still got his own forge down there — he sharpened his own steel for the drilling contests.

NR: Right. The mines usually had their own forge, but a lot of them didn't because there was a lot of leasing. In other words, the small operations with only one or two men brought their picks and steel into town.

RM: And he had 7 or 8 men working there?

NR: I would guess at one time he had at least that. Then as the Model Ts started to come in in the late '20s, everything started to go into becoming a garage business rather than the blacksmithing. And being a local blacksmith, they were naturals to do a lot of sheet iron work, building stovepipe and rain gutters and so on.

RM: Oh, you didn't go down and buy stovepipe and that kind of thing?

NR: Oh, no. That was made. And he used to make tanks and watering troughs for sheep.

RM: Were they metal, or wood with bands around them?

NR: Both, but the later troughs were mostly metal.

RM: Did each hand there have his own anvil, and was there one forge or several?

NR: There were several forges. And each person did not have an individual anvil. If some job required 3 guys, they'd work 3 guys, and so forth. One of the biggest jobs was horseshoeing. They'd have teams [of horses] to take care of. And they used to have to make a lot of their own horseshoes. Then the mines would require special things. In wintertime, for instance, they'd have to cog the shoes — put cleats on their shoes and things like that.

RM: Were they using animals underground here at all?

NR: Yes. They used to use mules a lot underground.

RM: Did they stay underground or did they come to the surface at night?

NR: I've heard both stories. I remember just one mine that had about 3 mules, and they kept them underground. They would use the mules for tramping — in other words, to haul the ore cars out.

RM: Did the blacksmith make parts at all?

NR: Oh, yes, they did everything.

RM: So they were kind of a machine shop and a horseshoeing shop and a lot of different things combined, weren't they?

NR: Yes. In later years he even got into having a lathe. It got a little more sophisticated as time went on until we were into a full garage business.

RM: A blacksmith was really kind of a metallurgist in a way. He knew his metal, didn't he?

NR: Yes, he sure did. One of the biggest jobs was making branding irons. They would wear out through heating and cooling. And they'd have to have different brands for different things — sheep would have a different iron than a cow iron. Then a horse brand would be different too. There was always

something going on. [Laughs]

RM: When did he give up the blacksmithing work?

NR: It just gradually became less and less of the business, because of the garage. Everything went into automotive. The blacksmithing didn't actually fold until he quit.

RM: When did he quit?

NR: He quit in the early '50s, when he was in his 70s.

RM: Oh, he operated clear up until then?

NR: On a part-time basis, yes.

RM: What kind of blacksmithing work was he doing towards the end?

NR: Branding irons. There was no shoeing then; ranchers were doing their own shoeing. But the branding iron was a big thing, and making camp stoves for sheep camps. They used to have to make their own stoves. And as I said, there was a lot of tinsmithing.

RM: And then he moved from blacksmithing to the garage? What was the garage called?

NR: It was called Kelley and Rebaleati — he went into partners with his brother-in-law Robert C. Kelley, and they started the garage and the power plant.

RM: When did they start the garage?

NR: They started in about 1917 and they quit the garage in 1940, and my dad bought out his brother-in-law and ran it until 1948. He and I went into partners then and we were a partnership from 1948 until 1968. Then I purchased it and I ran it until 1972.

RM: I see. Was it always at the same location?

NR: Yes.

RM: And when did you quit it?

NR: Well, when I first entered it in '48, it was a combination garage and power company. But as time went on, it became mostly power — there was more demand on generating power for the utility. I ran it until the REA came in in 1972.

RM: When did your dad get started with the garage?

NR: Right around 1914.

RM: So, basically, he had a garage from 1914 or so until 1968. Cars really changed during that time.

NR: That's right.

RM: Would you discuss the evolution of the garage business?

NR: He started out repairing them through the blacksmith shop, then he gradually went into the car repair business and developed it into a garage. He also became a car dealer and he sold Fords for years and years.

RM: When did he get his dealership?

NR: In the early '20s. It went until the war in 1941.

RM: So he didn't reactivate it after World War II?

NR: As a car dealer, no. It was just as a garage then.

RM: What was involved in getting a car dealership in those days?

NR: If you had a going business, you just naturally went towards one brand to develop into a dealership.

RM: Did you have to pay Ford for a franchise?

NR: No, you'd just sell the product and handle their line.

RM: And would you have to have the cash to purchase the inventory?

NR: You're correct — you had to have a substantial business running in order to acquire a dealership.

RM: Was it cash up front? Let's say you wanted to put 4 or 5 cars in stock, did you have to pay Ford in cash?

NR: Mostly everything was cash in those days.

RM: Not 30 days [credit] or anything like that?

NR: There was quite a bit of credit, but no extended credit.

RM: Did a dealer get bank loans to purchase his inventory?

NR: I don't think banks entered into the garaging business too much until after the war. Then they started to get more active.

RM: How many cars a year were you selling?

NR: At one time he was selling as high as 40 or 50 a year.

RM: So almost one a week?

NR: Yes, but the years varied — one year might be a poor one.

RM: He started with Model Ts, didn't he?

NR: Yes. That was in the '20s. The Model Ts ended when the Model As came out, and the first Model A was '31. Then he sold Model As until the V-8s came out in '36. So the Model As weren't out as long as the Model Ts were.

RM: So the Model A was only sold for 5 years? I didn't realize that. What were the trials and tribulations of dealing with cars in those days?

NR: [Laughs] To keep them running, because the roads weren't that good. That was the big thing.

RM: Did they hold up pretty well?

NR: Nothing like they do now. You couldn't get the extended mileage you do now. If you got 20,000 miles before a valve job, you were doing well. If you got 5000 miles on a tire, that was excellent.

RM: They were cotton tires, weren't they?

NR: No, rubber. When the first rayon tires came out that was a big improvement. They came out pretty close to World War II. They called it neoprene; that was the first rayon. Before that I think they were mainly just rubber, and I think they weren't very good. [Chuckles]

CHAPTER TWO

- RM: When you changed the tire on the Model A, you took the rim off, didn't you?
- NR: Right.
- RM: People in rural Nevada have told me that you could judge a trip by how many flats you would have.
- NR: [Laughs] Right. Before the highways were built, roads were almost impossible because of rocks.
- RM: Was a road basically just a trail?
- NR: Yes. Later they started to gravel them, and that was a big improvement. When they started to grade them, that was the biggest improvement.
- RM: Oh, they didn't even grade them?
- NR: Oh, no. All the work was done by Fresno. The first grading was a big improvement because they had better drainage.
- RM: When did they start graveling them?
- NR: I'd say in the '20s.
- RM: So before that it was just 2 ruts out across the country?
- NR: That's right.
- RM: And where did the roads lead?
- NR: We always had main roads through here — west was Austin, east was Ely, north was towards Carlin and Elko and south was towards Tonopah and Duckwater.
- RM: So the route south was through Duckwater and down to what is now Highway 6?
- NR: As far as I can remember, yes.
- RM: When did the grading begin?
- NR: The first graders I can remember were in the '30s. They started to grade them, and that's when the graveling started. Then the roads became quite good. And naturally when they started to pave them, that was wonderful.
- RM: Before they graded them, how long would it take to get to Ely?
- NR: I remember it was 6 or 7 hours to Ely and I know it was 10 or 12 hours to Elko or Carlin.
- RM: Wow. So you went about 10 miles an hour?
- NR: Your average was that. You went faster than that but then you'd have to stop.
- RM: Did you used to have a couple of flats along the way?
- NR: You used to have a lot of flats. Everybody carried his own tire pumps, patches and spare tubes.
- RM: When did the rim come in?
- NR: Well, they had the split rims. The first rims that I can remember came in with the Model A, which was in '35, '36.
- RM: Did people do their own patching after the rims came in?
- NR: When the rims came in, yes, they still did their own tire changing — especially the ranchers, the people who were on the road a lot.

RM: Say between here and Ely, would you have to fix a couple of tires, or could you make it with a spare?

NR: Everybody used to carry 2 spares, and sometimes you'd make it and sometimes you wouldn't. [Chuckles]

RM: When did they start paving the main roads?

NR: The first paving I knew of was in the early '30s. It was paved just narrow. The first paved road I remember was to Austin and to Ely.

RM: And you say it was paved narrow. Was it one lane?

NR: They said it was 2-lane, but it wasn't wide.

RM: Could you pass a car?

NR: Yes, you could pass a car, but just barely; nothing like it is now.

RM: When did they pave the road going up to Carlin?

NR: That wasn't paved until after the war — I would say it was around '48 or '49. That was the first north-south paved road.

RM: When did they start paving the east-west highway?

NR: That was the start of the Lincoln Highway, and that was in the '30s, probably the early '30s.

RM: Before that, was Eureka relatively isolated?

NR: No, because they had the train then. Everything was railroad —everything came in by the train. If you wanted to go out, you went by train too.

RM: When did the train shut down?

NR: In 1939.

RM: When did you first start working in the garage?

NR: I used to help my dad when I was 10 or 12 years old.

RM: What were the most common things you would see that were wrong with cars that broke down?

NR: Just common repairs. There was a lot of work on springs. And the wear on engines wasn't anything like it is now. There was always something to do on an engine, mainly valves and a lot of ring jobs.

RM: They were easy to do, weren't they?

NR: They were much easier, yes. Nothing was complicated to the extent that it is now.

RM: What would be a high-mileage Model T in this country?

NR: I'd say when it got around 10,000.

RM: Was it considered old and ready for junk at that point?

NR: No, it would just be repaired and go on. Some of them were kept running and some of them were replaced.

RM: What was a high-mileage Model A?

NR: You started to get into the 20- and 30,000 miles. I remember you'd take a very large, luxurious car in those days, like the Buicks and the Nash, and they'd get up into the 40,000 miles. But they were a very high-priced car; the Cadillac of their day.

RM: The Nash was?

NR: Oh, yes. And the Hudson. There were lots of Hudsons. The Hudson Super

Six was the big car then. And there were a lot of the big Buicks. Those late model 20 cars were quite developed. They were good.

RM: How did the cars' bodies hold up on these bad roads?

NR: They took a lot of maintenance. Incidentally, I remember the only color of cars then was either dark blue or black.

RM: Yes, there's the old joke that Henry Ford said, "You can have any color you want as long as it's black." [Laughter] When the Ford V-8 came out, what was a high-mileage car then?

NR: They started to get up into the 40,000s and 50,000s and 60,000s then. They became quite good.

RM: And then what was the next jump in terms of durability?

NR: After the war they progressed very fast — in the late '50s. The early '50 models started to make big changes like they make now.

RM: I remember the '55 Chevrolet changed their oil system.

NR: That's right. The big change, I think, started to come around '54, '55, '56.

RM: What was associated with those changes?

NR: The big thing with Ford was that they changed the valves. Instead of being a valve in block, they went into the valve in head. That was their big advance.

RM: And that made a big difference out here in terms of durability?

NR: Right. And repair.

RM: And I remember in the middle '50s or somewhere along in there nylon tires came out.

NR: That's right. And radials came out in the '60s. They were a big advance. They were a truer tire and you could get more wear.

RM: How many miles did you get on a Model T tire?

NR: They were 30-by-3-1/2, and most Model T speedometers didn't work, so I don't know. [Chuckles] I'd say it wasn't very much — 2000 to 3000 miles or something like that at the most.

RM: What did you get on a Model A tire?

NR: I'd say it was less than 5000 miles.

RM: That isn't very many trips to Ely, is it?

NR: No, it isn't.

RM: When the rayon tires came out, what were you getting on them?

NR: You were getting up around 10- and 15,000. I remember when the first 600-by-16 tires came out, they had a 10,000-mile guarantee, which they thought was really something. That was in the late '30s or early '40s. Then after the war they made big advances, I think because of the development of nylon and rayon — neoprene.

RM: You mentioned in the mid-'50s that the overhead valves were a big improvement. What was another innovation that made a difference out here?

NR: They were getting higher compression ratios that developed much snappier engines. Everything improved so rapidly then.

RM: And the automatic transmission was really coming in then, wasn't it?

NR: Yes, that came in in the late '50s and the '60s.

RM: Tell me about how the whole concept of a power company began here.

NR: It was strictly on demand. The garage was a natural place to start it because it was the only place that could keep engines running. [Chuckles] It first started with the smaller engines — they were all gasoline engines.

RM: What kind of engines did you start with?

NR: They were mostly Kohler gas engines. Then they got a diesel. The first diesel they had was called a Waukesha diesel; then they went into a Caterpillar diesel. During the war they went into Continental diesels, and after the war they went into Fairbanks-Morse and then engines like Cooper-Bessemer and so on.

RM: It's a big step, going from the idea of a power company to actually stringing the lines and getting customers. How did that aspect of it evolve?

NR: Again, it was strictly on demand. The first lines that were run into Eureka were for commercial purposes — mainly for the courthouse. There were just 2 main lines on the Main Street for business. And then the houses started to go [on line]. But it started primarily not as power; it started as lighting.

RM: When did you really start supplying power?

NR: It was after World War I, about 1919 to 1920, but it was mainly as lighting. There was no power concept then.

RM: Was it your father who started it?

NR: It was started by my father and his brother-in-law R. C. Kelley.

RM: Did he ever tell you how he came up with the idea?

NR: I think it primarily started because the garage wanted a generator for themselves. Then somebody right next door said, "Well, run a line over to us." Then being close to the courthouse, they supplied it to the city. Then the first thing they wanted was street lights and that was the start. [Laughs]

RM: Did he meter it?

NR: Yes, they were metered. And the first current generated was direct current because of the simplicity of DC. It wasn't converted to AC until after World War II. The conversion started in 1946 and was completed in 1948, when the town went on an AC system.

RM: And where were the generators?

NR: They were all in the back part of the garage.

RM: Initially you just probably ran during the day, didn't you?

NR: When they first started, they ran during the day and they used to have batteries for the night.

RM: What kind of batteries were they using?

NR: They were just large 2-volt batteries — big commercial batteries.

RM: Were they physically big?

NR: They were physically big and they used to keep 55 of them, at 2 volts each, which would give you 110-volt DC at night.

RM: Could they take much of a draw down?

NR: Oh, yes.

RM: How many people could use them?

NR: It didn't take them long to outgrow them, but they were in operation for several years.

RM: About when did they use them?

NR: I would say this was in the early '20s. Then they went into generating on a 24-hour basis.

RM: When did they start generating 24 hours a day?

NR: I'd say in the early '20s.

RM: In the early '20s? So it grew fast?

NR: Yes.

RM: And the commercial establishments were just using it for lighting?

NR: Correct, because refrigeration wasn't even out then. Refrigerators were the first appliances that actually came on, and that didn't start until the early '30s.

RM: So for 10 years they were just using the electricity for lighting.

NR: Yes, it was primarily lighting.

RM: When did residential use begin?

NR: That didn't start to grow too much until the late '30s and the '40s.

RM: Through the '20s people were lighting their houses with lamps?

NR: I'd say kerosene and gas; kerosene was the big thing.

RM: When did the Coleman lantern come in?

NR: I think the Coleman was in then.

RM: So there was essentially no electricity in the homes in Eureka prior to 1930?

NR: There were a few, but very few.

RM: And those few were hooked on to your system?

NR: Yes. Then in the early '30s more and more came on, but it was strictly lighting up until, as I said, the early '30s.

RM: And what triggered it in the '30s — because by then you're in the Depression.

NR: Yes, but they still wanted to have lights.

RM: But they saw street lights on Main Street and in the commercial buildings in the '20s; why the long delay, I wonder?

NR: That's a good question. I really don't know. It just didn't happen. It was a gradual development, because I remember when I first went to work wiring houses for the first time for lighting, and that was in the late '30s. I remember wiring a lot of houses for the first time.

RM: So a lot of people still didn't have electricity in their homes by the late '30s?

NR: Correct. But the businesses, as far as I can remember, always had it.

RM: Was it expensive to string lines in town?

NR: Well, yes. It was quite an undertaking.

RM: If Joe Blow over at one end of town wanted lights and you didn't have a line going over his way, what did you do?

NR: We tried to get over there sooner or later, and we usually did. And there was no phone system. The railroad had a telegraph, but we didn't get a telephone

system here until 1945.

RM: And the telegraph probably went down when the railroad left in '39?

NR: That's right. They did have one rural line that came in here. I remember when there were only 4 phones in town.

RM: That was the rural line?

NR: Yes.

RM: Where was it coming from?

NR: It came from Ely. That was before the war, I would say in the '30s.

RM: Who had the phones, just out of curiosity?

NR: I don't know all of them — the main business, and the county had one in the courthouse. And everybody was on the long-short ring, like 1 long and 2 shorts, 2 longs and 2 shorts and so on; different rings for different people.

RM: So the courthouse was on a party line?

NR: It was one party line for the whole town. The hotel had one.

RM: Which hotel was that?

NR: The Eureka Hotel.

RM: Where was that located?

NR: That's where the Eureka Cafe was, across from the bank.

RM: Were they all commercial or did any private person have one?

NR: They were all commercial.

RM: What would happen if somebody had a call at night?

NR: They'd have to go down to wake them up. And the operator was in Ely; you had to ring her with the phone.

RM: Was there a booster or anything between here and Ely?

NR: I think it would go all the way.

RM: And while the railroad was going you had the telegraph?

NR: Right. And the first phone that came into town as we know it now, with a primitive dial, was started in '45 and it was completed in about '48. That was Nevada Bell.

RM: So you only had one line prior to World War II?

NR: Right. And we had just a telegraph until that party line came in.

RM: Do you recall the circumstances under which Nevada Bell came in here?

NR: They came into Ely, I know, and they went into Austin. I think they were interested in developing this part of the state.

RM: And it was a dial system?

NR: The first phones that came in were the first rotary dial, that's right.

RM: Did each person have their own private line with the dial system?

NR: Yes.

RM: And then it's just been an upgrading of that ever since?

NR: Right.

CHAPTER THREE

- RM: Was your family financing the whole electric distribution system in Eureka itself? That is, did the power company supply the line and everything?
- NR: Not exactly. In the late '30s the state of Nevada created the Public Service Commission and we got a utility permit to operate a utility. Then we came under the jurisdiction of the Nevada Public Service Commission. We had our extension rules, and that's how we were able to expand.
- RM: What did the rules involve?
- NR: They were created on a statewide basis because there were other towns in the state just like Eureka that had to develop their utilities.
- RM: Were there any regulations prior to that?
- NR: There was a short period of time with no regulation, but the Public Service Commission came in in the early '30s.
- RM: So you were regulated early on.
- NR: Yes, by the state.
- RM: Did they regulate the rates that you charged and everything?
- NR: Yes.
- RM: How were the rates determined — by your costs?
- NR: Yes, income to cost.
- RM: And then who paid for the stringing of the lines in town?
- NR: It was taken out of the operating income for expansion. You were allowed so much for expansion and growth.
- RM: Did you solicit hookups, or how did that work?
- NR: No, it just came as people wanted it.
- RM: What did you do if somebody requested power and it was a long way from a present hook-up?
- NR: If it was practical we did it and if it was impractical we just didn't do it.
- RM: Were there problems in getting people to pay their bills and things like that?
- NR: No, not as a rule. They were always very, very good.
- RM: You said that early on, you went to 24-hours-a-day generation.
- NR: It was very early. It had to be in the early '20s.
- RM: Was your generating equipment always at the garage?
- NR: Yes.
- RM: You must have had some pretty big engines in there.
- NR: Towards the last we had some very big ones, yes.
- RM: Was it all automatic?
- NR: In later years, we went more and more automatic. But initially it was all manual.
- RM: Did you have to have somebody down there all the time?
- NR: Maybe not all the time, but somebody was always close by.
- RM: And how would you know if there was a problem?
- NR: There were safety controls that you developed yourself. And they became

quite sophisticated in later years — the engine operating safety controls, water temperature and voltage and frequency were critical things.

RM: And did you have to crank up more engines after dark?

NR: That's right. During the day we usually ran just one engine and the load would be coming on as it got dark. They would have to run sometimes 2, sometimes 3, sometimes 4 engines during the peak of the evening. Then as it got later at night we'd start shutting them down.

RM: And this was all manual early on?

NR: Yes, and all the switching had to be manual.

RM: What was involved in switching from 2 to 3 engines as the load increased?

NR: It's manual starting and stopping.

RM: How did you know when to do it?

NR: You'd watch your load.

RM: So you had to have somebody there watching the gauges pretty much all time. Did you have gauges in your homes or anything?

NR: No, that wasn't necessary.

RM: The Revert family in Beatty ran the power company there, and apparently one of them had some gauges in his home, and he could then run over and kick in another engine. How did you folks handle it?

NR: We were always close by enough that we knew what was going on.

RM: Did you ever have any catastrophic engine failures or anything like that?

NR: Oh, yes, something was always going on. The biggest problems were lightning and bad storms. They tore down lines and created lightning damage to the generating equipment and the poles.

RM: Lightning would damage your generating equipment?

NR: Yes.

RM: And what would happen?

NR: We usually would burn out a generator or a coil, things like that.

RM: That could be very expensive, couldn't it?

NR: Yes.

RM: Did you ever have to shut down in town because of a failure?

NR: It was very rare — we'd have spot outages, but they were never extended because we'd always have a generator handy that we could start. But we would have our natural outages from time to time.

RM: How much capacity did you have?

NR: At the last we had about 800 horsepower available diesel generating capacity. We had them in 3 generating units.

RM: At about 250 each?

NR: Yes, that's right.

RM: What was your capacity in the '20s?

NR: In the '20s it was less than 50 horsepower. In the '30s, it went up to about 100. In the '40s it jumped quite a bit, up to as high as 300 and 400. Then from the '40s until '72, it went up to 800.

RM: You can see the growth of the role of electricity in American society from

-
- those figures, can't you?
- NR: Right, people started to use more when the appliances came in.
- RM: What were the appliances that made a big difference as far as your business was concerned?
- NR: Hot water heating and electric cooking and refrigeration were the 3 biggest ones.
- RM: Which came on first?
- NR: Refrigeration. That was the big increase.
- RM: Before that, how did people keep things cool?
- NR: They had ice boxes. [Laughs]
- RM: Was there an ice plant in town?
- NR: A rancher used to deliver ice.
- RM: Who was that rancher?
- NR: John Hunter. He was out here 5 miles. There were 2 ranches —Pastorino used to do it too. They would cut ice in the winter and store it in a cave and then deliver it in town.
- RM: So there was never an ice plant in Eureka?
- NR: Not that I know of.
- RM: And did people ever use Servel gas refrigerators?
- NR: Yes. They were very common here.
- RM: When do you think they started becoming common here?
- NR: In the mid-'30s, I'd say.
- RM: And when did they finally give way to the electric refrigerator?
- NR: After the war.
- RM: So refrigeration was the first big electric appliance. What was the next one?
- NR: I'd say the small hand appliances in the house like irons and mixers — kitchen appliances.
- RM: When did they start coming in?
- NR: In the late '30s.
- RM: Before that women were using the old hand iron, weren't they?
- NR: Right.
- RM: What was the next appliance that came in?
- NR: After the war the biggest things that came in were hot water heating and electric cooking. Before World War II it was all coal stoves, so they had a water jacket in their firebox. They had the stand-up water heater right beside the stove. As the water heated, the hot water would go to the top and the cold water kept feeding it. It was natural gravitation.
- RM: And you had pipes from there into the sink?
- NR: That's right.
- RM: Did people have bathtubs in those days?
- NR: Yes, they were 40-gallon tanks. They were pretty good.
- RM: Would they cool off overnight? I imagine that they would.
- NR: Oh, sure. When you quit your fire in the stove, that was the end of the hot water.

RM: When you got up in the morning, was the water cold?
NR: You bet it was. [Laughs]
RM: How long did it take to heat a tank?
NR: I'd say an hour. You'd just feel the tank and you could tell right away when it was hot.
RM: There were no electric washing machines or anything at this time?
NR: That was the next thing that came in. They all started to come in at the same time.
RM: Really after World War II, wasn't it? Or was it before?
NR: Well, just before. And then there was a big hiatus with the war. The automatic washing machines came in after the war but the old Maytag wringer-type was in before the war.
RM: Were there a lot of people who had electric stoves?
NR: There were more people who had electric stoves than hot water heating because a lot of people converted their space heating into oil and gas; and that's when they went into changing from wood to hot water heating.
RM: So actually from the founding of the town, people had heated with wood or coal?
NR: Right.
RM: Which was it, mainly?
NR: I'd say both. The town always had coal because of the railroad.
RM: And then when did people convert to oil?
NR: That started in the '30s. I remember the first oil stoves that were stand-up-alone units with a little tank in behind. And a lot of people went into kerosene heaters.
RM: Oh, you mean the tank was right behind the stove?
NR: It was just a 1-or 2-gallon tank.
RM: When did those come in?
NR: I'd say it was in the early '30s.
RM: And oil was more convenient than coal for heating?
NR: That's right. It was cheaper then too. When oil first came out, it was cheap. Bottled gas started to come in then too. Remember how you used to get your cylinders?
RM: Yes.
NR: You used to buy your cylinders and put them up against your house. I'd say that started to come in in the '30s.
RM: Did people start heating their homes with electricity?
NR: That isn't too common up here because the cost of generating made space heating with oil, gas and wood cheaper than electric.
RM: What kinds of problems did you run into with maintaining all those engines that you had generating the power? Did they last a long time?
NR: They were continually improving their generating capabilities. Towards the last they were getting to be just excellent. The lubricating properties of the oil improved and the engines themselves were getting better and better all

the time.

RM: In the '20s, how long would an engine last before you had to overhaul it?

NR: Not too long. You could just get a few months out of them and you'd have to grind valves and re-ring them. Then the first diesels came out and we'd get as high as 18 months on them.

RM: Twenty-four hours a day?

NR: Sometimes 24 hours a day. They continually improved.

RM: When you finally quit, how long was an engine lasting?

NR: We'd have a regular preventive maintenance schedule on an engine. You couldn't just let them run and run — it was a continual preventive maintenance schedule.

RM: Which would involve valve jobs and things like that?

NR: Going through one cylinder at a time on the bigger engines . . . you'd have to keep them up that way.

RM: Were they going longer than 18 months by then?

NR: Yes. Towards the last, the equipment was getting better and better and preventive maintenance was getting less and less.

RM: What did a big 250-horse engine cost by the time of the last ones you were buying?

NR: The 200-and-some-odd horsepower size was in the \$40,000 bracket.

RM: In the '20s, how many times could you overhaul an engine before it finally was just junk, versus in the '30s?

NR: The biggest development was when we went into Caterpillar. You could replace all the moving parts in a Caterpillar and keep them always going. And that holds true with any engine.

RM: So it would essentially last forever if you keep replacing the parts?

NR: Right.

RM: You'd put sleeves in the cylinder and . . . ?

NR: Sometimes, yes. You could replace all the moving parts.

RM: Do you know anything about the water company in Eureka?

NR: Well, the first water companies were individually owned. There was more than one, but I can only remember when there was only one water company.

RM: And who owned that?

NR: I can't remember the first owners. They were all individuals and they were sold periodically throughout the years, so they had numerous owners. Finally it was taken over by the county. This is an unincorporated town, so the county did it.

RM: What about the sewer system? Did people have septic tanks originally?

NR: Originally they had outhouses, and then they developed into the septic tanks.

RM: When did septic tanks come in?

NR: I would say in the early '30s. And people used to build their own septic tanks.

RM: What would building one involve?

NR: They were usually made either of concrete or of heavy timber like railroad

ties — and lots of iron.

RM: And now there's a municipal sewer system. When did that start?

NR: I'd say it started in the '50s. They had to change the treating plant several times because it grew.

RM: Did they move it or did they just expand it?

NR: Both. They just moved it further out. It's at the lower end of town.

RM: When did they pave the roads in town?

NR: Main Street was paved, I think, in the early '30s. There was no paving on the side streets of town until after the war, I'd say in the early '50s.

RM: Did they start paving a few streets at a time?

NR: Yes, the most-used streets were paved first.

RM: What's your perception of how Eureka's population has changed through the years?

NR: It hasn't grown that much. I remember in the early '40s when there were as many men working in the mines as there are now. It went down when the Ruby Hill Mine shut down and for years it was quite dormant. For years it was up and down, up and down. But the population didn't change at all until these later years, and now it's been in a steady growth.

RM: And what's driving this steady growth?

NR: The surrounding gold mining.

RM: Where are the gold mines?

NR: There have been several — the Windfall Mine and the latest one has been Atlas.

RM: Are they working quite a few men at those places?

NR: The Windfall is shut down right now, but Atlas is quite active.

RM: And some of those workers live here?

NR: Yes, they all live here locally.

RM: And you say there have been periods of boom and bust here as far as population goes?

NR: Yes. In the early '50s and some parts of the '60s the town was way down. There were very few men working and it was very quiet.

RM: You were associated with the development of the TV reception here, weren't you?

NR: Yes.

RM: Could you talk about how that got started and give me some details on that?

NR: It started in about 1955 as a community effort to get television when it first came out. There was no chance of ever getting a signal here until Ely put up a translator on a mountain peak called Cave Mountain. They beamed the signal towards Ely and we were able to get to a mountain peak that could intercept that signal. We purchased a translator in '57 and when they went on the air we were able to intercept that signal to get the first channel into Eureka.

RM: And what mountain does that come off of?

NR: It's off what they call the Prospect Mountain Range. We had to get to a

mountain range where you could intercept the signal and yet cover the town, and the only mountain range that we could get to do both in Eureka is called Prospect Mountain.

RM: And where is that located?

NR: It's 5 miles southwest of Eureka.

RM: Initially were you taking a generator and a TV on top of every hill in the area?

NR: Yes, and we found this one spot up there on Prospect. We developed that and it's been the site ever since.

RM: And that was just one channel?

NR: That was Channel 5 out of Salt Lake — CBS. Then Ely went on the air with Channel 4 out of Salt Lake, which is ABC, so we had 2 channels. Shortly after that we got the third channel, NBC from Salt Lake.

RM: And those are all coming out of Ely?

NR: Yes.

RM: And all off of the same translator?

NR: It's the same site, but you could only use one translator per channel.

RM: So you've got 3 translators up on Prospect Mountain?

NR: Yes, we went along for years with 3 translators.

RM: Did you form a local TV district?

NR: That's right. We financed it just through donations; it was strictly voluntary. And we made out very well for many years — at least 10 or 15 years. Then because some other communities were running into problems on financing, they created a state statute through the legislature so that small communities could add TV service to the tax district. After that it was off and running, because we had a steady income through a property tax roll.

RM: Were you the primary moving force behind all this?

NR: I'm told I was, but we had a lot of help. [Laughs] Everything was a community effort.

RM: How have you expanded from there?

NR: Well, the state came in later. In about '59 they wanted to cover some of the outlying areas other than Las Vegas and Reno that could carry Nevada channels for the news. They created a microwave system that went from Reno to Winnemucca to Elko, and then to Ely, and we were able to get in on a state microwave system; we got several more channels that way. That's when we started to get the Nevada channels.

CHAPTER FOUR

- RM: And where is your microwave?
NR: The same site — Prospect Mountain.
RM: How high is it?
NR: Just 10,000 feet.
RM: Are they good signals?
NR: Several channels are station quality. We've got 8 channels now and I'd say 5 of them are not the station quality that city people have, but they're very watchable and they're good.
RM: Are you pulling anything off of satellite now?
NR: Yes, we're pulling 2 channels off of satellite.
RM: And where is your dish?
NR: One dish is here locally, behind the courthouse, and the other dish is on top of Prospect Mountain.
RM: How do you get up there in bad weather? Is it difficult?
NR: Yes. We've got a snow cat.
RM: How deep is the snow up there in the winter?
NR: It can drift pretty good — to 5 or 10 feet or more. It depends upon the winters. The last few winters have been very mild with all this drought.
RM: Are there times when you can't get up there and you have no TV?
NR: Yes. You just have to wait around.
RM: And it's paid for out of people's property taxes?
NR: Right now it's financed through what they call the tax district, and the income is regulated by the county commissioners.
RM: How does a person hook on?
NR: Actually, it's free. It's just your local antenna.
RM: Which channels are you picking up off of satellite dishes?
NR: We're picking up WGN out of Chicago, and we're picking up PBS — the Public Broadcasting System.
RM: Where do you pick them up?
NR: We go to Spacenet 4 for PBS and G5 for WGN.
RM: Is the PBS a national thing?
NR: It's a national deal, yes.
RM: How does it work when you pick up something like WGN? Do you have to pay them?
NR: Yes. We have to pay them 18 cents a month per household.
RM: And how do you determine your viewers?
NR: From the number of households. From the taxes we determine how many residents we might have in a viewing area, and then we estimate how many households would be watching WGN.
RM: That works out as a pretty good deal for WGN, doesn't it, when you figure it on a nationwide basis?

NR: Boy, I'll say. [Laughs] We picked Chicago because it's kind of sports-affiliated and it's a pretty good channel.

RM: You didn't take Atlanta?

NR: We didn't take Atlanta, no. We felt a little more oriented to Chicago. But since then L.A. has come on and there are several others that are available to us now that weren't available at the time. We followed other communities, too. Winnemucca picked WGN and we kind of followed their steps because they had such a good experience with it.

RM: Do you have trouble pulling the signal or is it pretty cut and dried?

NR: It's pretty cut and dried. The biggest problem is maintenance. It's pretty high on maintenance because of the weather conditions — we get so much icing.

RM: You're broadcasting the satellite stations — they're not coming down by cable?

NR: That's right. Since that time, a cable company did come into Eureka. They're serving the populated part of Eureka now, but not the outlying areas like Diamond Valley and so on. It's just where there's a concentration of houses.

RM: How's that working out with the cable company?

NR: As far as I know, it's excellent.

RM: Did you have a difficult time getting power up to Prospect Mountain?

NR: Yes. [Chuckles]

RM: What was involved in that?

NR: A lot of donated efforts.

RM: Putting the wire and poles in must have been a big job.

NR: Yes, it was. We wouldn't have made it if we hadn't had the help of the local mines and the county, with the equipment and things like that. But since then, the REA extended one of their lines to Prospect Peak and now it's primary power up there.

RM: When did you finally sell out your power company?

NR: We sold out in 1972 to the REA.

RM: And what was your motive for selling?

NR: It was just when the oil shortage came in, so there was no way that you could compete with high power lines and power networks. It was strictly an economic decision; we were priced out.

RM: REA couldn't have come in with you here, could they?

NR: No. If we didn't go, they couldn't come in.

RM: Can you say how much you sold it for?

NR: We didn't sell any property. We just sold the distribution lines for \$110,000.

RM: How did REA finance that?

NR: REA financed it through a 30-year loan at 2 percent interest.

RM: And now do you have an REA district?

NR: It's a co-op. It serves the lower part of Eureka County and Diamond Valley.

RM: Is it up at Pine Valley?

NR: Not this co-op, but another co-op is there. The Wells co-op serves Pine

-
- Valley and Carlin. The one here is the same co-op that serves White Pine County and the north part of Nye County — Duckwater and Currant Creek
- RM: Oh, Railroad Valley. So it's Mount Wheeler power?
- NR: That's correct.
- RM: And where does the power come from now?
- NR: The biggest allocation they have is from Glen Canyon Dam through the Western Power administrative pool at Glen Canyon.
- RM: So you basically worked between the electric company and the garage?
- NR: That's right.
- RM: Do you have a fire department here?
- NR: Yes.
- RM: Have you ever been associated with that?
- NR: You bet. And the fire department was the main community-minded organization when the television system first started.
- RM: When did the fire department begin?
- NR: It goes way back to the earliest mines.
- RM: When did you become associated with it?
- NR: When I got back out of the service in '45 or '46.
- RM: Was it a community-spirited organization?
- NR: Yes, just a group of fellows. And the fire department formed the first ambulance service.
- RM: When was that?
- NR: I'd say it was after the war, in '46, '47, '48.
- RM: I've been told a lot of people are killed on the highway west of here, about 25 miles out. Is that true?
- NR: Yes, it is. It's a long stretch of lonely road, I think, and people get hypnotised and go to sleep.
- RM: I think it's also the embankment. If you go off that embankment, you're going to have a serious accident. If you didn't have that high drop, you could go off the road if you fell asleep or something and you'd have a chance. But if you go off that, you're going to roll.
- NR: That could be true, but I think, too, it's just a long way of long stretches. I think people just get tired.
- RM: What have people done historically for health care in Eureka? Has there been a local doctor, and do you have a clinic and that kind of thing?
- NR: Right now we have a clinic and the doctors are available on a regular basis. Before we had the clinic, we always had a community doctor who lived here locally.
- RM: When was the clinic established?
- NR: I would say in the '60s.
- RM: Any there any physicians you remember — people who were here for a long time?
- NR: I can recall all of them. Some of them wouldn't stay here very long, and others resided here for a long time. One was Doctor Dan Hurley — he was

here for years and years.

RM: Was there ever a hospital here in your time?

NR: There was a hospital here, but it was more a county-run health facility for older people. They called it a hospital but it really wasn't. Right now they call them day-care centers.

RM: What happens if a person is seriously injured in an automobile accident, say to the west? Where do they take them?

NR: Mostly to Elko.

RM: And if they're in bad shape, they probably have another ambulance that meets them?

NR: Well, the air ambulance would now, but that wasn't available until just these last few years.

RM: What about in the '20s and '30s and '40s when a person needed help fast. What happened?

NR: I can't remember too much in the '20s, but in the '30s and '40s we always had a local doctor here. And they transported [the victim] as best they could. We always had an ambulance in the '40s, and then in the '70s, '80s and '90s they had started the air ambulance.

RM: Has Eureka ever had periods where they didn't have a physician?

NR: Oh yes, but not for too long a time. Somebody always seems to come in eventually.

RM: Are new physicians readily accepted or do people say, "Well, I've been going to my doctor in Elko. I'm going to go there."

NR: Yes and no. They have to be here a while, I think, before they're fully accepted.

RM: They were generating tremendous amounts of electricity up at the mine to pump water back in the past. Was there ever any thought of buying power from them?

NR: Yes, but they were reluctant to even talk because they knew their generation wasn't on a permanent basis. So they never did consider it very seriously. They had as high as 7000 or 8000 horsepower capability, but only for a short duration and they never did generate too long. But Ely did that. In fact, that was Ely's source of power for years and years, because Kennecott was on a stable basis. Ely purchased their power from Kennecott's generating plants.

RM: And where was that?

NR: That was at McGill.

RM: Oh, McGill was generating its own power for the smelter there?

NR: That's right.

RM: And then was Ely distributing it up to Ruth and Kimberly and all those other places?

NR: Yes, they did that for 40 or 50 years.

RM: Did the Mount Wheeler power company come in when that shut down?

NR: Mount Wheeler had preceded that.

RM: What about the mines at Carlin? How have they affected Eureka?

- NR: There's not any direct effect that I can tell. It affects the county as a whole, but for Eureka as a community there's not much connection.
- RM: At areas like Round Mountain there were people working for a long time trying to get them going on a shoestring. But it wasn't until the big companies came in that they became mammoth operations. Are there people here in town who were trying to develop those deposits up there prior to Newmont and other companies coming in?
- NR: I'm not aware of anyone who's connected with that property up at Carlin. All our development had been to the south and in the immediate vicinity. Mount Hope is about the farthest north, I think.
- RM: How far away is Mount Hope?
- NR: Thirty miles.
- RM: The development of Diamond Valley has made a big difference to Eureka, hasn't it? When did that begin?
- NR: The biggest development of Diamond Valley started when the power came in, in the early '70s.
- RM: Because they had the power to pump water then?
- NR: That's right. Up to that time they just had diesel, and it made it very expensive for them to farm. It was just running on a very trial basis until power came in. When power came in, it was quite a boost.
- RM: Were those properties out there in Diamond Valley Desert Land Entry acquisitions?
- NR: Yes.
- RM: Were they done in the '50s, or were they done later, after the power came in?
- NR: The first ones I was aware of were in '57 and '59, and then a little bit in the '60s. But there wasn't any development until power came in. They started with diesel, but you could tell it wasn't a very profitable deal until the power did come in.
- RM: In your experience, has the Ruby Hill Mine been an important thing in the community?
- NR: Yes. It still is the main mine.
- RM: But it's not working now, is it?
- NR: Right, but up until 1950, it was primary. And since '50 it's been up and down. But it's still the primary holding in Eureka.
- RM: What about the community at Ruby Hill? What was there when you were a kid?
- NR: I can remember it operating and the railroad going up to Ruby Hill, and shipping all the ore by railroad, but I can't remember the community there. The people who worked there mostly lived in Eureka. I remember a few families still living there and I remember many more houses, but they were vacant.
- RM: You didn't supply power to Ruby Hill, did you?
- NR: We never did.
- RM: I know Isadore Sara told me that the Eureka Land and Livestock Company

owned the water company in Ruby Hill, but it didn't sound like it amounted to much by that time.

Is there anything else that you'd like to add about the history of the Eureka area?

NR: No, I feel I'm pretty recent for what you're after. [Laughs] The only thing I can think of that might be of interest is the development of the oil wells in the Eureka vicinity — the oil drilling in Pine Valley. (I'm not too knowledgeable on them, but if you want to research the area, you've got to go into the oil). They've been drilling in this neck of the woods since the '60s. I feel it's going to be a big part of the development of this whole part of the state.

RM: Do you think they're going to find more oil here?

NR: Yes. It's yet to come, but it's gradually creeping up on us between Railroad Valley and Pine Valley, which are the only producing areas now. It's going to be more significant as time goes on.

RM: Are the wells in Pine Valley good ones?

NR: Yes. And they're getting better all the time.

RM: Do you expect the oil to be spotty like it is in Railroad Valley?

NR: Until they know the source of it, yes, it will be, but eventually I think it will be significant to the state and to this whole region.

RM: I was talking to somebody down in Railroad Valley, and they told me that that big well down there is the largest-producing well in the continental United States.

NR: That's right.

RM: But they drilled another well 40 acres over and hit a granite dome. [Laughs] So you've got to be right on it to hit it. It's not a big pool.

NR: But eventually they'll find it and it will be significant to the state, I think. It's going to be quite a part of the state and its history.

RM: Do you feel the mines at Carlin have helped the economy of the county a lot?

NR: Oh, yes.

RM: Have they made a big difference in terms of what the county can do?

NR: Yes, the county and the county functions. It helps the state too. But I don't think they'd been too significant to Eureka.

An Interview with ISADORE SARA, JR.



Alice and Isadore Sara, Jr., Eureka, 1992

*An Oral History conducted and edited by
Robert D. McCracken
1993*

Photographs from Isadore Sara, Jr.

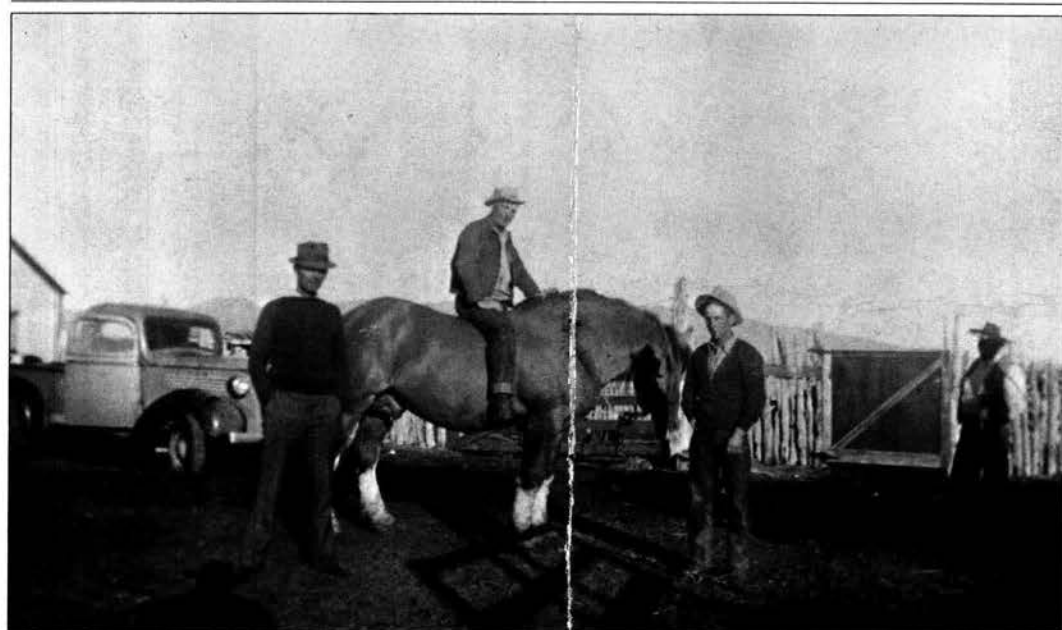


1: Unidentified people at the Roberts Creek Ranch, Eureka County, Nevada, 1919.

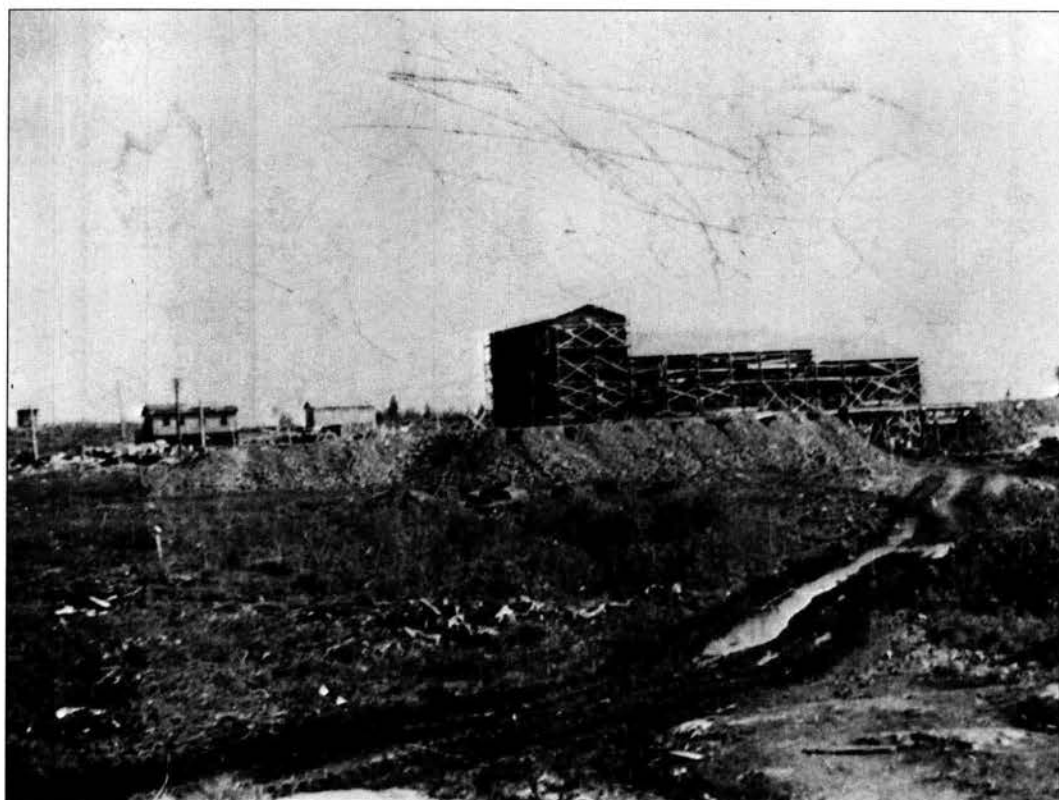


Left 2: Isadore Sara, Jr., Fish Creek Ranch, late 1930s.

Right 3: Isadore Sara, Sr., Fish Creek Ranch, circa 1930.



4: Isadore Sara's ranch at Fish Creek, Nevada. The Belgian stallion was brought to Nevada from Canada. Ed Pratt, a cow buyer, is sitting on the horse; on the far right is Cooney Clifford. Peter Sara is third from left. Others are unidentified. Circa 1938.



5: Sinking the Locan shaft at Ruby Hill, Eureka County, Nevada, circa 1942.



Left 6: Isadore Sara, Sr., with an unidentified woman, at the back of the theater building, Eureka, Nevada, circa 1950.

Right 7: Sheepdog belonging to Isadore Sara, Jr.'s, uncle. Photo taken in the 1930s behind the Eureka Hotel, Eureka, Nevada. The dog was typical of the sheepdogs used by shepherders used in Eureka County, Nevada, during the first half of the twentieth century.



8: Peter and Isadore III, sons of Alice Laborde Sara and Isadore Sara, Jr., playing in the snow on a sled near their home in Eureka, Nevada, 1948. The puppy is a shepherd and was a very smart animal who had certain toys he preferred to play with.

9: Wedding picture of Peter Laborde and Mary Epherre, parents of Alice Laborde Sara, 1916. They were married in Soda Springs, Idaho, and were both born in Bygorry, France.

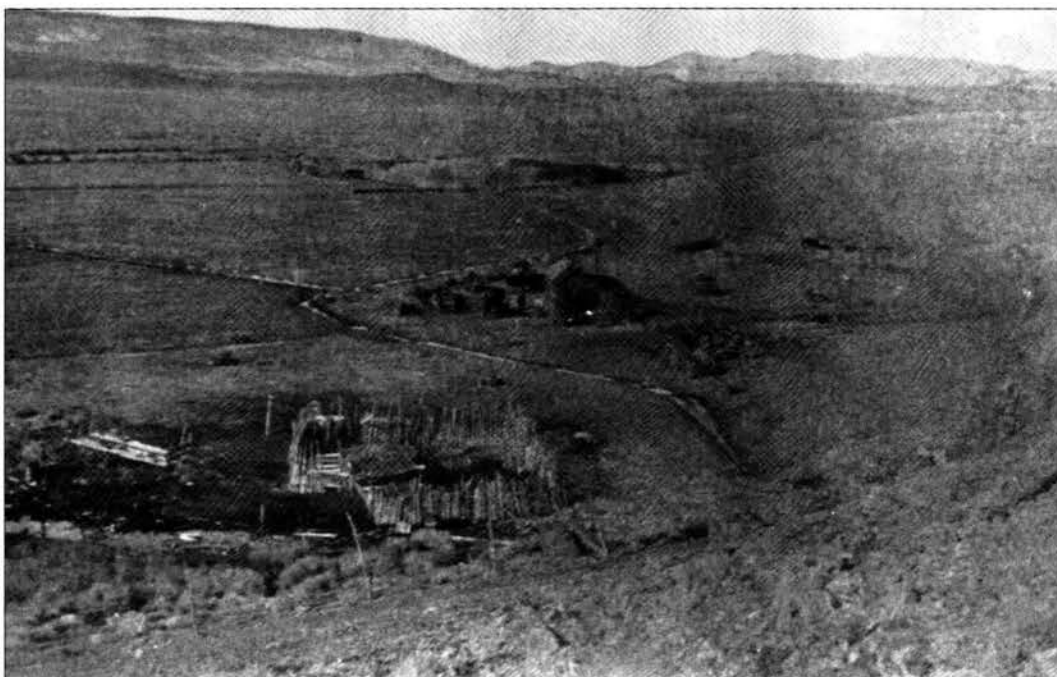


10: Wedding picture of Mary Ardans and Isadore Sara, Sr., parents of Isadore Sara, Jr., circa 1910. The couple was married in Reno, Nevada, at St. Thomas Aquinas Church.

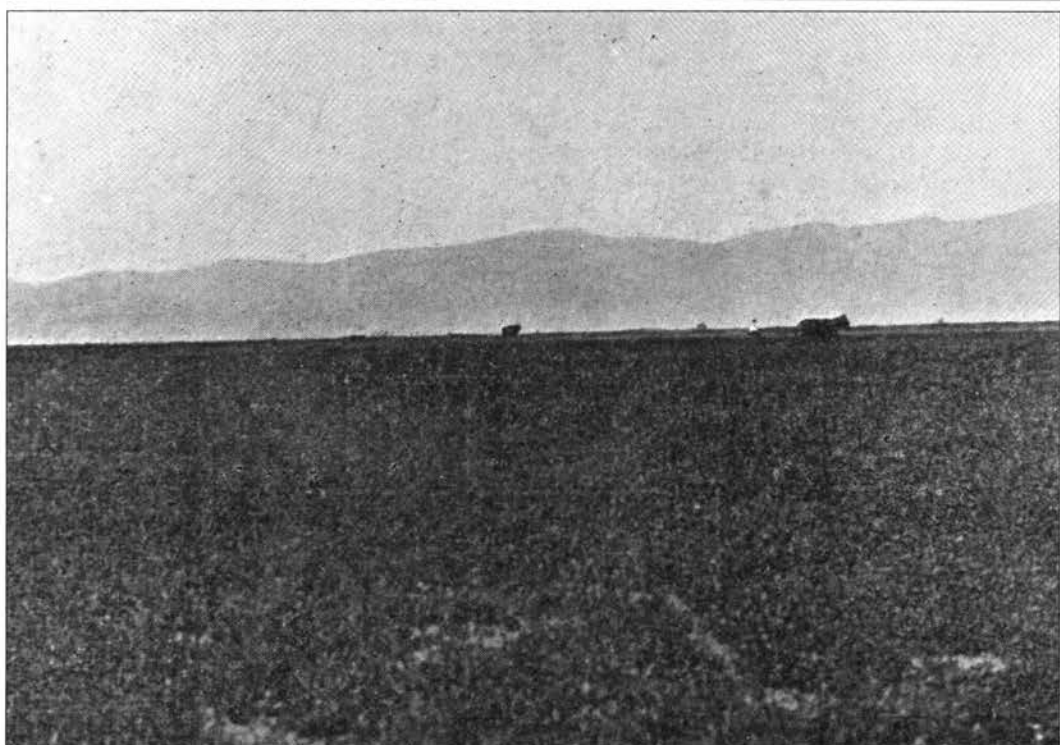


11: In 1904 the Eureka Livestock Company, Eureka, Nevada, published a stock promotion brochure that included reproductions of 10 photographs of company operations in Eureka County. Those photographs are here numbered 11 through 20. The photographs were not identified in the brochure. Isadore Sara, Jr., whose father was later a part-owner of the company, has identified the photos to the best of his ability (the brochure was printed before he was born).

First picture(11): Shearing sheep in Eureka County, unidentified location, prior to 1904.



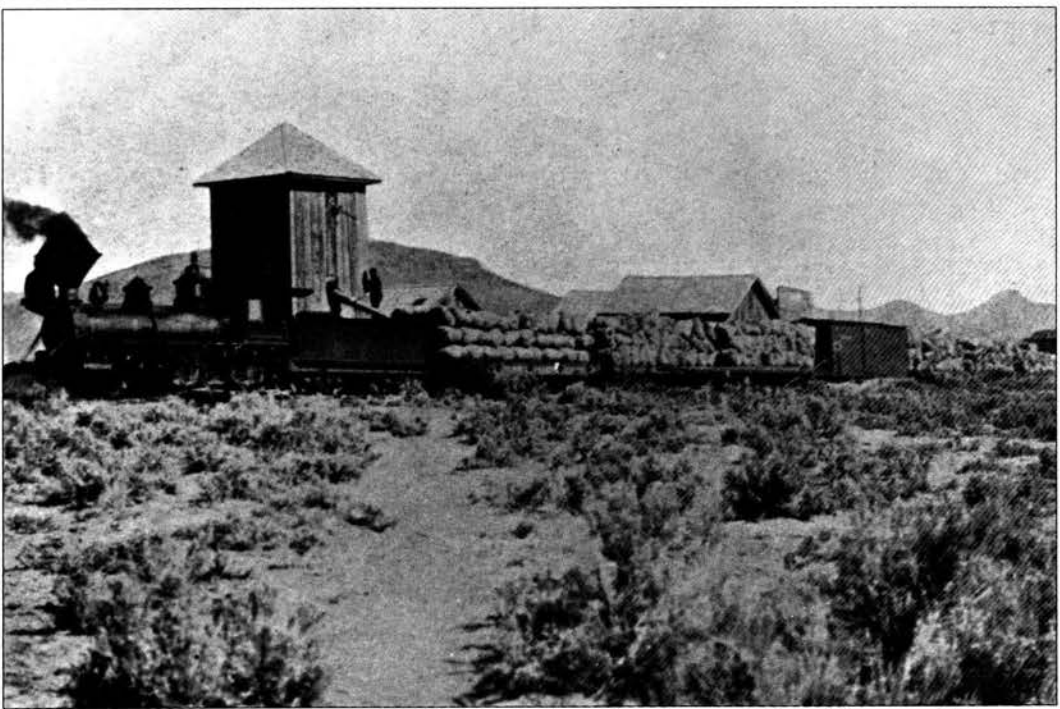
12: Bull Creek Ranch, looking southeast, prior to 1904. The house was in Nye County and the stable in White Pine County, Nevada.



13: Haying at Fish Creek Ranch, 20 miles southwest of Eureka, in Eureka County, Nevada, prior to 1904. Isadore Sara, Sr., took the Fish Creek Ranch as his interest in the Eureka Livestock Company when he separated from it in 1932.



14: Shearing corrals, unidentified location, Eureka County, Nevada, prior to 1904.



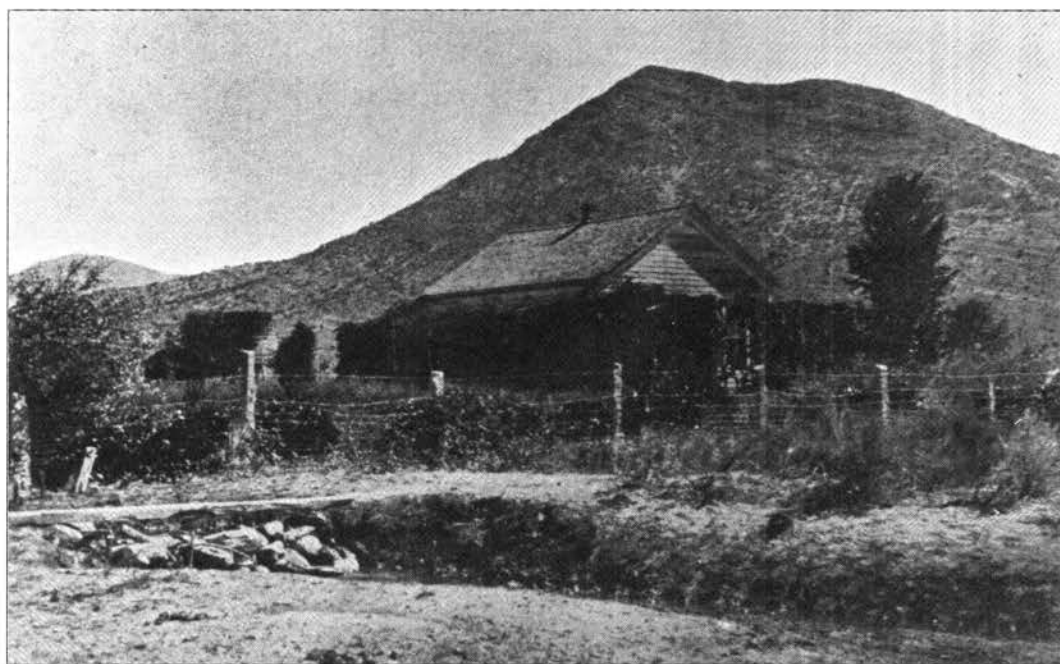
15: Oak Station, Eureka and Palisade Railroad, prior to 1904. The wool bags as pictured here were seldom carried in open cars because of the danger from sparks from the engine.



16: Breaking a horse, Eureka County, Nevada, prior to 1904.



17: Roberts Creek Ranch, base of Roberts Mountain, Eureka County, Nevada, prior to 1904. The old ranch house is pictured here. A new house was built to the right and the old one used as a school. Isadore Sara, Jr., attended school there. Not a trace of the schoolhouse remains, though the new house still stands.



18: Fish Creek Ranch, Eureka County, Nevada, prior to 1904. The brick house burned down about 1915.



19: Fish Creek Ranch, Eureka County, Nevada, prior to 1904. Pictured is a quality Hereford bull.



20: Branding at Fish Creek Ranch, Eureka County, Nevada, prior to 1904. Cow-boys unidentified.

Photograph ID with Isadore and Alice Sara, August 5, 1992.

- RM: We've got picture number one, here. (What'd I do with my pen?) OK, we got photo number one. Could you identify that?
- IS: Roberts Creek Ranch.
- RM: Could you . . . standing in back: Who would that be?
- IS: I haven't got the faintest idea.
- RM: You don't know any of those people?
- IS: That may be our mother.
- RM: That may be your mother, holding the baby?
- IS: Maybe! But I ain't go- . . . going that far with it.
- RM: OK. You don't know any of the women sitting down?
- IS: I don't know any. I don't remember any of them. I probably knew them all.
- RM: But that'd be the Roberts Creek Ranch.
- IS: Roberts Creek Ranch.
- AS: Somebody gave us that, and . . .
- RM: Yeah. But you say that this was later converted to your schoolhouse at the Roberts Creek Ranch?
- IS: Absolutely; yeah.
- RM: What . . . I wonder when this picture is . . . about when?
- IS: Well, that'd have to be in the '20s sometime.
- RM: The '20s? Well, it'd be before that.
- AS: Oh, earlier. Gosh, when you kids were little. I think it's some of your family.
- IS: I doubt it very much.
- RM: Well, what year would go to school there? How old were you when you were going to school there?
- IS: Oh, god, I went to school there for a lot of years.
- AS: When did you start?
- IS: Imagine about fifth, sixth grade.
- AS: When you were 6?
- RM: So fifth grade? You would've been 10. So that'd be 19- . . . by 1920, it was converted to a school. Right? So this'd be before 1920.
- IS: Well, I wouldn't even say that.
- AS: Nineteen twenty — that's when your mother died, right? Nineteen.
- IS: Nineteen-nineteen.
- RM: OK, this'd be . . . let's try photo number 2 here — this one right here.
- IS: That's me.
- AS: That's his . . .
- RM: And where are you at?
- IS: Fish Creek Ranch.
- RM: Fish Creek Ranch. And how old are you there? Thirty?
- IS: No, not quite. Late 20s, though.
-

RM: OK, so that'd be . . . you were born in '11?
IS: Twelve.
RM: Twelve. OK, so that'd be '22, '32 . . . probably late 1930s.
IS: Well, it could be, yeah.
RM: OK, we got picture number 3 here. There's . . .
IS: Isadore Sara, Sr.
RM: And when . . . where is that? Fish Creek?
IS: Fish . . . Fish Creek.
RM: And what . . . about what year would you say that was? How old is he there?
IS: Oh, I'd say '30.
RM: Nineteen thirty? OK. And let's see, we got picture number 4. Could you identify that?
IS: That's the Fish Creek Ranch.
RM: And that's a big Belgian stallion you said you had. Where'd he come from?
IS: Three Mountain [or Tremontain], Canada. That's me out there.
RM: That's you in front, huh?
IS: Yeah. This is an Ed Pratt sitting on top.
RM: Who? Ed who?
IS: Pratt — P.r.a.t.t.
RM: OK. Ed Pratt. Who's behind — who's at the rear of the horse?
IS: I wouldn't . . . don't know. That's Cooney Clifford, there.
RM: Cooney Clifford is on the far right. OK.
IS: Yeah. Big-bellied thing.
RM: What . . . where's this picture?
IS: I got a hunch that that's Ruby Hill when they were sinking that shaft.
RM: Oh, OK. This is Ruby Hill, and they're sinking the shaft, about when?
IS: Forty-two or '43.
RM: OK. Which shaft would it be?
IS: That would be the Locan.
RM: The Lo- . . . what do they call it — L.o.- . . .
IS: L.o.c.a.n.
RM: OK. It looks like there's water there, huh?
IS: Yeah. I think that's why. I'm not absolutely positive about that.
RM: OK. Well, we'll call that number 5. I think we ought to make a copy of this picture; that's a nice picture.
IS: Alice? Come here. Who's that with the old man? That woman.
AS: I don't know, some la- . . . some woman from California who was . . . I don't . . .
IS: Oh, from Santa _____?
AS: I don't know where she was from. But she just went through and was visiting your dad and my dad, and they took some pictures.
IS: I don't know her, I'm telling you.

AS: But I don't know her name.
RM: OK. Well, about what year would that be, do you think?
IS: Oh, that would be in the '40s sometime, don't you think? Ain't that back of the . . .
RM: Fifties, maybe? He died in '65, you said?
IS: . . . ain't that the back of the theater?
AS: Yeah, that's where . . .
RM: OK, this is . . . picture number 6 is the back of the theater in Eureka?
IS: Yeah. That's what that is.
RM: OK. And it's . . . pictured is Isadore Sara, Sr. . . .
IS: That's right.
RM: And unidentified woman.
AS: Just say a friend.
RM: About when?
AS: Must . . . you know, I don't know, exactly. Say '50, that's close enough.
RM: Nineteen . . . about 1950. OK. Good enough. You got any other . . .

Addendum to photograph ID from Isadore Sara, June 1993.

- RM: We're going to discuss the photos from the Eureka Land and Livestock promotional brochure that came out in 1904.
- IS: Yes. That's a shearing.
- RM: Do you know where that is? Do you recognize those hills?
- IS: I don't have an inkling.
- IS: This photo is of the Bull Creek Ranch, looking southeast.
- RM: And where is the Bull Creek Ranch now?
- IS: The house is in Nye County and the stable is in White Pine. It opens right into Duckwater. And that is the White Pine Range.
- RM: OK, we've got photo number 3 [13 in present volume] here.
- IS: That's haying at Fish Creek. Fish Creek is in Eureka County. 20 miles west of Eureka.
- RM: And that's the ranch your father took as his interest in the Eureka Land and Livestock?
- IS: Yes.
- RM: We've got photo number 4 [14] here.
- RM: Do you know where that is?
- IS: No. That's shearing. Those are your shearing corrals, right under those canvases. They had numerous shearing.
- RM: Sure. OK, photo number 5 [15].
- IS: I think that's right at Oak Station down here.
- RM: And where is that?
- IS: About 28 miles north of here on the Eureka Palisade Railroad.
- RM: And you mentioned earlier that they never carried the wool in open cars like that.
- IS: No! Here's your engine up here, and the sparks are flying and the wool bags are there? No, you wouldn't fool around a can of gasoline with a match. I can't see any brains or sense to that picture. That's all it amounts to.
- RM: [Laughs] Yes.
- RM: OK, we've got photo number 6 [16] here. That's a buckaroo doing something with a horse, isn't it?
- IS: Yes. He's throwing it. Yeah. But I don't know where it is.
- RM: OK, photo number 7 [17].
- IS: That's the Roberts Creek ranch house.
- RM: Is that the Roberts Creek Mountain in the back?
- IS: No, that's a spur that comes down off the mountain opposite the ranch.
- RM: And this is the ranch where you were raised?
- IS: They built another house over here, the big one. This is the old house. They made a schoolhouse out of that and we went to school in it. The big house is standing there today.
- RM: Is that right? Is the schoolhouse still there?
- IS: No! Not a trace of it.
-

RM: How long did your father own that ranch?
IS: From 1910 'till '32.
RM: And then he sold the Eureka Land and Livestock?
AS: They split it up.
RM: Now we've got photo number 8 [18].
IS: This is the Fish Creek Ranch. This place burnt down. There isn't a vestige of it now.
RM: When did it burn?
IS: About 1914 or '15. They moved it up there about a mile up to the ranch.
RM: How could they move it if it burned down?
IS: They didn't move it. They moved one or two old houses that didn't burn. That one burned to the ground. That was a brick house.
RM: What happened to the bricks?
IS: Everybody has toted them off. You might find some remnants or something.
RM: When did they build that ranch?
IS: I have no idea. The Pages owned the Ranch before the Eureka Livestock Company did, so I presume the Pages built it.
RM: Then we have photo number 9 [19].
IS: That shows one of their bulls.
RM: That'd be a good, prize bull, probably, in those days?
IS: Yes, but he isn't much of one, I can tell you.
RM: What is he? A Hereford?
IS: Part Hereford. I don't know what the other part is.
RM: And then we've got photo number 10 [20].
IS: That's branding at Fish Creek.
RM: Notice how they built the corral, Isadore. They used posts . . .
IS: Upright poles. All over this country there were corrals like that.
RM: What kind of poles were they?
IS: Cedar.
RM: And how deep would they bury those?
IS: They'd be down there 2-1/2 or 3 feet. They'd dig a trench and set them up.
RM: They'd set them up and pack them in there?
IS: That's right. And then most of them would run a cable around there. Lots of them were tied with rawhide.
RM: To the cable?
IS: Well, or tied to the crosspole.
RM: And was it pretty sturdy?
IS: Oh, yes. It lasted for years. There are remnants of them yet around the country.
RM: I'll bet it took a lot of work.
IS: You bet it did.

CONTENTS

An Interview with Isadore Sara, Jr.

- CHAPTER ONE 5
On Isadore's parents, who came to the U.S. from Spain (Isadore Sara, Sr.) and France (Mary Ardans Sara); how Isadore, Sr., who was in Tonopah at the time of its discovery, owned a butcher shop with Bill Thomas; Isadore, Sr., and a banker purchase the Eureka Land and Livestock Company; remembering Bill Thomas; Isadore's parents meet and are married in Reno; on Isadore, Sr.'s, life-long involvement with the sheep business; the task of the shepherd; Isadore, Sr., finds and discards specimens of rock that led to the discovery of Tonopah; how animals can find water; remarks on the overgrazing of the range caused by sheep; Isadore's recollections of O. K. and Ed Reed; feed on the range that sheep prefer; a shepherd's typical day.
- CHAPTER TWO 12
Remembering the Reed family, Bill Thomas, Jack Longstreet and Jim Butler; the Basques' skill with sheep; remembering a Chinese shepherd; the job of a camp tender; the size of the Eureka Land and Livestock Company operation; a description of the ranches that belonged to the Eureka Land and Livestock Company; the drought of the mid-1930s and its effect on O. K. Reed's operation; the economics of selling lambs and wool; sheep-shearing crews.
- CHAPTER THREE 20
The history of the Eureka Land and Livestock Company; how Isadore, Sr., sold off most of the Eureka Land and Livestock Company in 1932; the death of Isadore's mother; Isadore's trip to France as a child and attendance in school there for 9 months; school at the Roberts Creek Ranch; Isadore works with cattle on the Fish Creek Ranch, then moves to working with the diesel engines used to pump water out of the Ruby Hill Mine; the ore at the Ruby Hill Mine; a description of the system of pumps in the Ruby Hill and adjacent mines.
- CHAPTER FOUR 29
On Isadore, Sr.'s, work in Austin and trips to Oregon and Idaho; Isadore's work drilling oil and remarks on the oil in Pine Valley; working on roads for Eureka County; remarks on hard-working ranchers, and remembering the Reed family and other old-timers from Nye County, particularly Bill Thomas; remembering people who raised sheep in the Eureka area.
- CHAPTER FIVE 36
Further remembrances about old-time sheep owners; Isadore's memories of old-time Eureka; Isadore's work in mines in the Ely area; recalling the area around Reveille Valley; a discussion of the gold mines near Carlin; some of the people who live (and lived) at Duckwater; mountain lions and coyotes killing sheep; Isadore, Sr., and Bill Thomas drive 500 pigs from Tonopah to Goldfield; how Isadore, Sr.,

would sleep in the open by digging a hole in the desert; more recollections of Isadore, Sr., and Bill Thomas's butcher shop; 2 Indians who were adopted by area ranchers; O. K. Reed defends a cook.

CHAPTER SIX 44

The rough characters at the Dean Ranch in its early days; tales of shootings; rattlesnakes; the careers Basque people followed when they left shepherding; the current owner of the Eureka Land and Livestock Company.

CHAPTER SEVEN 47

The Shoshone Indians at Duckwater; some of the ranchers at Duckwater and Curren Creek in the 1930s and 1940s, particularly Frank Callaway; the winter of 1932; the effects of alkali on cattle; further memories of Railroad Valley; remarks concerning the enmity between cattlemen and sheepmen on the open range; the lack of water in the Diamond Mountains.

CHAPTER EIGHT 54

Dry conditions in the Diamond Mountains, and a plant with a high moisture content; memories of the sunflowers on the Roberts Creek mountain; the changes overgrazing has brought to the range; remarks on the 1992 drought; the different feeds preferred by sheep and cattle; the terrible effects of cold on livestock; other differences between sheep and cattle; the ranchers in Pine Valley during the 1920s and 1930s; memories of Beowawe; making trips to Omaha with the sheep, and a memorable trip during the Great Depression.

CHAPTER NINE 61

Isadore goes through a 1904 brochure from the Eureka Land and Livestock Company; fruits, vegetables, hay and grain grown at the Roberts Creek Ranch; the dryness of the Eureka area in 1992; the Pony Express station on the Roberts Creek Ranch; making wine at Roberts Creek in Isadore's youth; other Pony Express stations in Eureka County; remarks on overgrazing and the destruction of the sunflowers on Roberts Creek mountain.

CHAPTER TEN 68

How ranching will change as a result of overgrazing; trailing sheep through Millers to Austin; Isadore, Sr., fights with the Forest Service over his Austin range and loses; a description of white sage in the 1920s; a discussion of the mustangs on the Nevada range; remembering Dewey Dann; further recollections of Beowawe, and of shipping lambs from there; how to drive sheep; the welcome Eureka Land and Livestock Company workers were given in the desert to the south of Eureka; further memories of Railroad Valley; how place names are changed.

CHAPTER ELEVEN 76

An examination of a number of receipts from stores and offices in Eureka in the

1920s; a description of the Eureka Water Works; more on the Eureka Land and Livestock Company's 1904 brochure.

CHAPTER TWELVE 81
Further remarks on the Eureka Land and Livestock Company brochure; a discussion of mules.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN 83
A tour of the Eureka area, beginning with the Fad shaft on Ruby Hill, where water eventually forced the miners to stop; a description of the motors used to pump water at Ruby Hill; the ore at Ruby Hill; further examination of the machinery at the site.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN 90
Touring the country near Eureka; the high lead content of the Holly Mine; at the Thayer-Lindsley shaft, which Isadore helped sink; the many tunnels under Ruby Hill; some remarks concerning Jim Butler's background; Mexican prospectors in the San Antonio area before the 1860s; Mexican ranchers in the Elko area; a look at the Croesus and Diamond mines; the pipeline running from the Windmill Mine to Ruby Hill; visiting a seismograph station.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN 98
A trip to the Windfall Mine, and sighting a band of sheep; general remarks on the landscape near the Windfall, which once was full of sunflowers; examining an old catalog from a tent company from which sheepherders bought tents and other items; the tunnels under some Eureka buildings; remarks on the Sadler Ranch; further discussion of the pumping operation at Ruby Hill.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN 106
Pumping water at Ruby Hill, and how to whipstock a hole; the cycle of pumping water from the Ruby Hill Mine, mining, then seeing the waters return to the mine; a glance at the defunct Eureka smelters.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN 112
Surviving the cold on the range while herding sheep, and keeping the sheep from freezing; how sheep will bunch up and smother; the Basque hotels in Eureka and some Basque customs — drinking and telling tales; the sheepherders' time away from the sheep; different types of Basque speech.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN 119
A discussion of the origin of the Basque people; development of the Newmont gold mine on the TS Ranch; remarks on different breeds of sheep and the life span of a sheep; remarks on sheep dogs and how they are trained.

CHAPTER NINETEEN	126
The relationship between the shepherd and his burro; the use of goats in a band of sheep; observations on the purchase and use of rams in a herd of sheep; the Saras' sons; Isadore and Alice remember a remarkable sheep dog.	
CHAPTER TWENTY	131
Further recollections about Bill Thomas; a list of sheepmen who operated in Eureka County from the 1920s through 1993, and a discussion of the individuals on the list; the breakup of the Eureka Land and Livestock Company.	
CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE	138
Additional discussion of the list in Chapter 20; dangerous lightning strikes on the range.	
CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO	143
A discussion of the Eureka Land and Livestock Company and the various owners it has had through the years; how sheep are raised in 1993; remarks regarding some area ranches, and the Eureka and Palisade Railroad.	
CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE	150
Observations on recent mining at Roberts Creek, Cortez, Carlin and Newmont; the man who got Newmont interested in the TS Ranch; recalling Bill Mahoney of the Dunphy Ranch; further memories regarding Beowawe and Palisade; selling sheep and wool; how a sheep is induced to adopt an orphaned lamb.	
CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR	157
The large Schendel and Shaw cattle operation at the turn of the century; observations on the weather, and on how animals are attuned to the weather and the seasons; a story of being lost on the range; recalling rattlesnake and tick bites, as well as rabid coyotes and cricket infestations; the wonders of the Roberts Creek Ranch.	

This is Robert McCracken talking to Isadore and Alice Sara at their home in Eureka, Nevada, on August 5, 6 and 21, and September 16, 1992; and January 20 and June 2, 1993.

CHAPTER ONE

- RM: Isadore, what is your name as it reads on your birth certificate?
IS: It's Isadore Sara, Jr.
RM: And what is your birth date?
IS: I was born March 18, 1912.
RM: And what was your father's name, and when was he born?
IS: He was Isadore Sara, Sr. He was born January 3rd, 1871, in Miscrits, Spain.
RM: And what was your mother's name?
IS: My mother's name was Mary Ardans.
RM: When and where was she born?
IS: Aldudes, France, April 13th, 1883.
RM: When did your dad come over here?
IS: He jumped ship in New Orleans [chuckles] when he was 16 years old.
RM: Is that right? He was working on a ship?
IS: He worked his way across the Atlantic in 28 days or something.
RM: Why was he on the ship?
IS: He wanted to come to this country to make a living.
RM: Were things tough there in the old country?
IS: They wanted him to be a priest and he didn't want it.
RM: How did he end up in Nevada?
IS: He went from New Orleans to California and herded sheep in Fresno, Bakersfield — all that area. Then he went to Tonopah during the strike there in 1902 and 1903, when the boom was on, or before.
RM: What did he do there?
IS: He opened a butcher shop with Bill Thomas.
RM: Do you remember where the butcher shop was located?
IS: Right on the hill there by the courthouse. There are lot of natives there who can still tell you where it is. The Fallinis and many others will show you.
RM: How did your father meet Thomas?
IS: I don't know; he never said anything about that. After they closed the butcher shop he met a guy by the name of A. E. Kimball, who came up from Mexico. He had a cattle outfit there, and the government changed around and they took everything away from him. He and my dad got together and they bought the Eureka Land and Livestock [Company] up here in 1910.
RM: Who did they buy it from?
IS: Claude Ford was the owner of it at that time. He died in Bishop. A. E. Kimball was director of the Elko National Bank and he and his wife lived in the Hotel Utah in Salt Lake all his life, on the upper story. He had the Utah Clay Foundry

and he was director of the Walker Brothers National Bank in Salt Lake.

RM: So he had a lot of money.

IS: Right. He and my dad bought Eureka livestock because the bank in Tonopah had run short of money, and they came up and got a wad of money from the Paxton outfit here — right where that woman has that glass shop now. Well, the bank went short of money when they shipped it all down to Tonopah, and Eureka Livestock owed them some money. Eureka Livestock was the most tangible thing they owned that they could get a few bucks out of right away, so they dropped the axe on it and sold it to my dad and Kimball. They had to get a few bucks quick, so that was the deal.

RM: How long was your dad in business with Bill Thomas?

IS: They only lasted there about 2 or 3 years — it must have been about 1903 or 1904.

RM: I think Thomas then went on to have his own butcher shop, didn't he?

IS: He ran it for a little while, I think.

RM: And then about 1915 or so he became sheriff . . .

IS: Sheriff of Nye County — he was sheriff for something like 50 years.

RM: Tell me what you know about Bill Thomas.

IS: He was always a great friend of ours. He'd come up to the ranch duck hunting and what not every fall. We got in trouble once in a while over losing sheep or something when we would run in Nye County, and we always got ahold of him. We never went to Tonopah to winter all those sheep down in the desert or got to town that we didn't go see Bill or Edie, and he'd come see us.

RM: You said that Bill came from Idaho?

IS: Idaho is what the old man always told me. That was when the Wobblies and all had that big strike at Goldfield and raided all the houses. That's when they brought Bill Thomas down from Idaho.

RM: Because he was a Socialist, wasn't he?

IS: Yes, he was.

RM: Was your dad a Socialist?

IS: No, but I don't know what he was. He'd take it as it came.

RM: Tell me a little bit about your mother. How did she come over here?

IS: She came over to Reno and worked in the Indart Hotel there. She and my dad were married in Reno at the St. Thomas Aquinas Cathedral in 1910.

RM: How old was she when she came over here?

IS: She was about 18.

RM: Did she come over here alone or with a family?

IS: I presume that they brought over 2 and 3 at a time when they'd bring them over in those days. We brought a lot of people over to herd sheep and what not from [the Basque country]. The old man got a lot of people that way. He'd bring them over in bunches.

RM: And your dad herded sheep in the Fresno area. Did he make some money there? What brought him over to Nevada?

- IS: He ran sheep all his life, afterwards. He ran sheep over here in Austin and by Bishop, in the mountains, and up north of Reno to Donner. He was a sheepman all his life.
- RM: Was his family involved in sheep in the old country?
- IS: They had a few, but no big amount.
- RM: Did he kind of take to sheep when he got over here, then?
- IS: He herded till he had enough to buy some, and that was it — he took off from there. He had a partner by the name of Augustine Garcia in the sheep business with him.
- RM: Was that in Bakersfield and Fresno?
- IS: No, that was in Tonopah and Austin.
- RM: Did he have his own herd when he came to Tonopah?
- IS: He had a bunch of sheep that he'd acquired somewhere in the Bishop area. They came down and ran in the Reese River area, then he moved up into Austin. Then he moved back into the Sierras above Reno.
- RM: Was he herding them himself?
- IS: Hell, no. He had a herd of 22,000 here that went down the desert in 1928 with Eureka Land and Livestock.
- RM: Was Eureka Land and Livestock a big outfit when he bought it?
- IS: They had the Bull Creek Ranch down here, the Fish Creek Ranch, the Roberts Creek Ranch, the Henderson Ranch, the Vinini Creek Ranch, the Alpha Ranch and the Squaw Mountain up here. They went right in to Carlin, and they went every inch on their own ground.
- RM: Wow. They went from here to Carlin on their own ground?
- IS: Oh, god, yes, and they wintered down here on the desert, down into Reveille and Golden Arrow and all over.
- RM: I used to live in Silver Bow.
- IS: Were you there when Fallinis made the strike there in Stone Cabin?
- RM: No. That was before my time, I think. We were there in the '50s.
- IS: Oh, hell, you were a newcomer.
- RM: Right. Tell me about the shepherding business. How did it function?
- IS: They had about 2000 sheep to every herder and they had 2 bands for every camp tender.
- RM: Describe the herder's job.
- IS: All he did was herd those sheep and keep track of them — see that he didn't lose them, keep the coyotes away from them and put them on the best feed that was available. He moved every day when feed was scarce.
- RM: Did he have dogs and things like that?
- IS: He always had 2 or 3 dogs.
- RM: And what kind of dogs were they?
- IS: All good shepherds.
[Tape is turned off for a while.]
- IS: He picked up the first rock before Tonopah was discovered.
- RM: Oh, my god! Is your father the Isadore Sara who did that?

-
- IS: Now, listen to this. It was a bad winter. They were trailing those sheep north and there was so much mud all the mules could pack were their camps, so he finally dumped that rock. You inquire about it over there in Austin.
- RM: I know, it's in the history books. The rocks wore a hole in the packs . . .
- IS: Yes, and he told me time and again that the mules were so tired he just felt sorry for them and he dumped all that rock.
- RM: Good lord. Did he have a big herd down there at Tonopah?
- IS: Well, he had a band — I don't know how many.
- RM: But that was before he bought the Eureka Land and Livestock Company.
- IS: Yes. That was in 1901 and 1902. He and Bill Thomas trailed 500 hogs from Tonopah to Goldfield. They had 3 slop wagons on the way. One of the old guys who herded for him died right over here on the point of this hill about 15 years ago.
- RM: First, let's talk about your dad finding Tonopah. He really discovered Tonopah in a way, didn't he?
- IS: Yes, but he didn't know he had. So just forget it. That's the way it's always been.
- RM: Did he ever speak with regret about that?
- IS: Not a blink. He took a homestead down on one of those places in the Sierra Range. He filed on it and proved the homestead, then got in a beef with the Forest Service and just walked off and left it. I've had 2 or 3 old-timers tell me the water rights for that place sold for either \$250,000 or \$350,000 to the city of Los Angeles.
- RM: Wow. There were a lot of opportunities that were going by then, wasn't there?
- IS: Yes, but it was a hard way. Don't ever underrate that.
- RM: Tell me again about how he found the rock at Tonopah.
- IS: He just went there and camped, he said, and saw this rock, picked it up and that was it. He was going to have it assayed in Austin, but before they got to Austin the mules got too tired and he threw it away. Those old-timers like old Unc Francis and Bert Acree worked for him. They all knew about it and they all used to kid him.
- RM: Bert Acree from Austin?
- IS: He used to tend camp for him.
- RM: Is that right? So a sheepherder had 2000 head of sheep, roughly, and he had 2 or 3 dogs.
- IS: And a burro and a tent. All the livestock herders had tents. (Some of the old boys here sent them out with no tents.)
- RM: Tell me some more about the sheepherder and his job. How does he find feed?
- IS: He could tell by looking at it. That's what made the good herder and the bad one. He grew up with those animals and he knew what they had to have and if they had enough or they didn't have it.
- RM: What was the best feed that he was looking for?
- IS: Grass, mostly, and shrubs. They eat a lot of shrubs.

RM: How often did he have to get them to water?

IS: In the summertime when it's real hot they go every day. In the fall, if there's a little rain or something, sometimes they go 2 weeks up on the mountain without going to water. They get enough moisture off the rain and the green plants and what not.

RM: How does a sheepherder know when they're thirsty?

IS: They let you know in a hurry! They get so restless and they just go, and you'd better be there!

RM: You mean they take off?

IS: They take off, yes. They know where that water is and they go for it.

RM: A sheep knows where to find water?

IS: Any animal does. A cow, for god's sake, could sniff a few times and smell water 3, 4, or 5 miles away. A horse is better yet.

RM: Is that right? So if he didn't take them to water, they'd just take off?

IS: You're damn right they would. If you'd try and hold them back [so they'd stay with] their lambs in getting to that water . . . they'd just drop those lambs and take off in a stream! I've seen a few of those mixed up.

RM: You mean they would abandon the lambs?

IS: Yes. The lambs get tired just like kids, and that's it.

RM: Did they range the sheep way up in the high country?

IS: Right up to the top, according to how that feed was drying and what condition it was in. At one time they said they had 50,000 head on the Diamond Range. Sometime you take a look at that, and remember what I've told you.

RM: I will. I'll do it tomorrow.

IS: Today that place wouldn't support 5000.

RM: Because it's drier?

IS: There's less water, and they've just milled it out. They've killed the feed in there.

RM: You mean they've overgrazed it?

IS: Why, certainly. That's what hurt the biggest part of this country. You put 50,000 sheep in an area like that — my god — how far is it in there? It's a little over 20 miles, and there was a bend in every canyon there. What they didn't eat, they'd tramp out.

RM: Is that right? And did they do that all over this area, from here to Tonopah?

IS: Anywhere where the good productive ranges are.

RM: When I hear about sheep being down around Tonopah and that area, I can't imagine a sheep herd there because [it seems like it couldn't support a large number of animals].

IS: Well, they'd winter down there and then run onto the Smokies. They'd summer them up in the Toiyabes there.

RM: Is there less feed in those ranges too?

IS: Hell, yes. They've cut it all way down. There are very few sheep there anymore.

RM: So in your view the BLM [Bureau of Land Management] would be right to

-
- say that this area has been overgrazed.
- IS: Yes. You have to give them that distinction anyway, as much as I hate them. The Forest Service did the same thing. If they let that horde of sheepmen loose there wouldn't be anything left of this country.
- RM: So you say the Diamond Range couldn't support 50,000 sheep.
- IS: It can't support 5000.
- RM: But is that also because it's drier? It's dried up a lot, hasn't it?
- IS: Well, certainly — your climatic conditions have changed, but just the same, they've tramped everything out of there. It would probably take 30 or 50 years to come back to what it was originally if they rested it —didn't let any grazing on it.
- RM: When I was a kid, I heard of an area east of Tonopah. Before you cross that first range there, there's a paved road that goes down to the Test Site that would go on down to Silver Bow. It would take you on a diagonal over to Silver Bow.
- IS: We used to winter down in Silver Bow.
- RM: I heard that when the ranchers first came in there, there was grass up to a cow's belly in that flat out there.
- IS: There was. And there are several other instances [like that] I can name you around here. One is Hicks Station. There was one ranch on that — Dick McKay. He's there today. He's running about 150 head of cattle. Before my time there was a Schendle and Shaw who ran cattle there. The old Indians who worked for him told me about it. They said that grass was up to a horse's stirrup. Schendle and Shaw were running 2000 to 3000 head of cattle, all slick as butterball. Go from that.
- RM: Is that right! When would that have been? In the 1890s or '80s?
- IS: It had to be right close to 1900.
- RM: What do you know about the United Cattle and Packing Company, and the Reeds who ran it?
- IS: I knew O. K. and Ed Reed very well. I ate their grub at Five Mile more than once. And they had another brother up here north of Elko —Lawrence.
- RM: He had a big ranch too, didn't he?
- IS: Yes. Since then the Y.P. bought that — Jacksons.
- RM: What was it that made the Reeds put together big ranches, do you think?
- IS: You'd have to have known them — you could find out damn quick. There was just one thing: Go straight ahead and get as much as they could for those cows and raise as many as they possibly could.
- RM: I've talked to Ed Slavin, who married O. K.'s daughter, Helen. Ed said that that ranch was 100 miles on a side.
- IS: Why, hell, it was clear up here into Monitor Valley to the Arcularius place.
- RM: Yes. And clear over into Sand Springs and clear down onto the Test Site.
- IS: They'd even go clear down below the Test Site with those cattle in the wintertime, when it snowed.
- RM: How far down would they go, do you think?

IS: I have no idea. I rode with them when they were up around Five Mile, but I never was down in that area when they were down there.

RM: So you've been around Five Mile and everything?

IS: Oh, Christ, yes. We old guys worked there — Cooney Clifford, Ed McConnell and a few of them.

RM: Did you know the Cliffords pretty well?

IS: Not too well. I knew the women — the ones who had the hotel. And we had a couple Cliffords up here. Liberty Clifford was a daughter of Christina's. She was married to the Cliffords.

AS: She was a Laird.

RM: I still wonder how a shepherd knew where to take the sheep. Here you are with 2000 sheep — where do you go?

IS: Well, you get an idea of a country after you've lived there a little while. You know the best spots in it real quickly when you're in that business. And you get on a horse and look for it. That feed just doesn't jump up and hit you, you've got to look for it. You've got to know the right kind, too — not salt brush or shad scale or greasewood, you want white sage or something else that's got a little substance to it.

RM: And you're moving south as the winter comes on?

IS: Sure. You have to get out of that snow belt but keep enough for the sheep so they don't need water. You've got to have that snow to take those sheep down that kind of place. There's no water in Silver Bow, Golden Arrow and so on for a band of sheep. You go down on the snow.

RM: So they had to go where there was enough snow so they could get water but still feed.

IS: Absolutely. You have those 2 conditions you always fought.

RM: There was water up here, wasn't there?

IS: Well, yes. They had water here through the summertime with creeks and troughs and what not.

RM: Tell me about the life of a shepherd.

IS: It wasn't easy, man. You're by yourself and you get up around 4:00 every morning, make that coffee and start those sheep out. You see that there is not a bunch of coyotes around the bed ground and go back and get yourself a little something to eat, pack that burro, put that bed and tent on him and go another 2 to 4 miles, wherever you can find a good bed ground.

RM: What makes a good bed ground?

IS: Something halfway dry, where sheep can stay on the south side of a hill, which is common sense. That's the first thing you'd look for if you were out in the same circumstance.

RM: If I knew what I was doing. [Laughs]

IS: You'd figure it out in a hurry, don't worry! When that old weather gets after you, there's no guessing.

CHAPTER TWO

- IS: O. K. Reed's wife divorced him, you know. She married a George Bruno, who worked for Reed.
- RM: Right, he was one of the hands.
- IS: And she had 3 daughters with Reed, Florence, Lucille and Helen.
- RM: And they lived over there at Hawes Canyon.
- IS: That's right. I saw them when they were girls. They had a coyote they'd raised, and they had it riding in a buckboard. He'd ride right in that buckboard with them and never leave them.
- RM: [Laughs] I'll be darned. Did you know Jack Longstreet?
- IS: No. I knew his squaw, old Fannie, though. She died there in Tonopah—burned up in a cabin.
- AS: Did your dad know Longstreet?
- IS: Oh hell, he and the old man were good friends.
- RM: Do you remember any stories about Jack Longstreet that your dad told?
- IS: Yes. The old man and Bill Thomas fed steers for the butcher shop in Duckwater, and anytime they were short of meat, he'd go over and get a bunch of steers at old Bill Mendez's place. And he'd ride a mule.
- RM: Your dad would do this?
- IS: Yes. Thomas stayed in Tonopah and ran the butcher shop. You didn't get Thomas out. But if the mule would get too tired [because] some of those cattle gave him a bad time, he'd go up to Longstreet, and old Longstreet had a bunch of thoroughbreds. I mean, they were right out of Kentucky. He'd tell my dad, "Take any you want, just bring him back when you get through. Leave the mule here, let him rest up." He never had a minute's problem. I guess he was just welcome any time. (Longstreet had a ear lopped off, you know.)
- RM: Right.
- IS: Old Longstreet killed his brother-in-law up there on McCann Summit, for beating up on a team.
- RM: Oh, that's what the fight was about?
- IS: That's what all the old-timers told me; and my dad told me the same thing. But nobody ever found that Indian. He buried him up there.
- RM: Where is McCann Summit?
- IS: Right back of Hunts Canyon there.
- RM: What did Fannie think about that, I wonder?
- IS: Who knows? Squaws will not talk to you, or let you know any of their feelings. I've had guys come and ask me, "Well Fannie had a daughter and did you ever . . ." I said, "I never knew anything about Fannie having a daughter or anything." Count me out on that.
- RM: You mean a daughter by Jack Longstreet?
- IS: I don't know who by.

RM: Well, Longstreet never had any children, did he?
IS: Not that I know of.
RM: I heard an interesting story about Jim Butler. Did you ever cross his trail?
IS: No, that was before my time. He lived right here in Antelope Valley at the old Segura Ranch. They say that he lived in Monitor Valley and all that. Well, just tell them they're liars. That was their home ranch, right there.
RM: You mean when he found Tonopah, he wasn't living in Monitor?
IS: He wasn't living in Monitor, he went down for something. He was just like an Indian, they tell me. And nobody knows the reason either. They say he was prospecting, they say he picked that rock up and threw it at a burro or something. My dad knew him well.
[Tape is turned off for a while.]
RM: Tell me some more about the sheepherder's life.
IS: It was just one day after another for them till they made a stake to go back home or got enough money to buy sheep for themselves or start out for themselves.
RM: Did a lot of them go back home?
IS: Not too many of them. A lot of them stayed right here and bought their own sheep and went to town. Idaho was the same deal.
RM: Why did so many Basques get into sheepherding?
IS: Well, Bob, where they came from, that's the only thing they knew or really could get to.
RM: So it was their tradition.
IS: That's exactly right.
RM: And they knew sheep?
IS: Yes, now you've said it. Nobody ever took a Basque's place with those sheep. When my dad and his partner bought the Eureka Livestock they had Portuguese and [other nationalities] working there, and they just mucked them out. It was a Basco outfit all the time.
RM: How long would it take a guy to get his stake herding sheep?
IS: When they first started they were making 75 bucks a month and grub. They got around to \$150 or so up in the '30s. They saved every nickel of that they possibly could, darned their own clothes . . . they didn't have it easy.
RM: When did they start herding sheep in this part of Nevada?
IS: I know there were some older sheepmen like old Dan Wheeler — they were great friends of my old man's. And there was an outfit over in Fallon - what was the outfit in Fallon that had all the sheep? Old John G. Taylor and those guys started it all. It had to be right in the late 1890s or somewhere, but I surmise that. I wasn't around to corroborate it.
RM: How old was your dad when you were born?
IS: He was 86 when he died, and he died in 1965.
RM: Then he would have come here in about 1895. Were there a lot of other sheepherders here when he got here?
IS: Not too many, but right in the years afterwards there were a lot of them.

When I got into circulation good, in the 1920s, there were a lot of sheepmen in here, all Basque.

AS: Tell him about the Chinese man who was herding for your dad.

IS: He had a Chinese who herded for him for 6 years. He said he was the best sheepherder he ever had. The camp tender would take him groceries every week, and that man ate nothing but rice. He'd go to the trash pile and resurrect all the old overalls and patch his clothes. The old man said that he was the best herder he ever had — he had no losses.

RM: Do you remember his name?

IS: No. He told me too, a dozen times.

RM: Whatever became of him, I wonder.

IS: He went back to China. He had a wife back there. The old man told me that outside of maybe \$150 or \$200, in those 6 years he had every nickel of what he made.

RM: Is that right? Tell about the camp tender, now. What was his job, and who did that?

IS: He packed the groceries and set up camp for the herders in the wintertime. They didn't have to set their camp — they stayed right at what they called the big camp. [It was made up of] the camp tender and the 2 bands. One herder would be probably south and the other would be north. They'd walk in, and he'd have supper all cooked for them and everything. He just kept watch of the herders and the 2 bands.

RM: Oh, you mean the camp tender kept a camp?

IS: Absolutely. He was the big mogul there, and he told those sheepherders more or less what to do most of the time. Generally he was an old-timer with the outfit.

RM: Where was the sheepherder's tent?

IS: He'd have his bed and stuff right at the main camp with that camp tender and he slept with him.

RM: So there were 2 guys there plus the camp tender?

IS: Yes. One was working north and one was working south. They'd keep those bands from mixing.

RM: Who would decide where to go?

IS: The camp tender was the one who generally told them. Sometimes they'd have 2 new herders who didn't know anything about the area. They always put them with the old camp tender.

RM: Oh — till they learned the ropes there?

IS: You're darned right they learned the ropes, and the hard way too.

RM: That's interesting. Then who supplied the camp?

IS: A truck or wagon. They had big teams. The old man had a big 6-horse team going back and forth all winter taking groceries and salt. Sheep have to have salt — their nature demands it.

RM: If you don't feed them salt, what happens?

IS: They don't do too well.

RM: Do you give them a salt lick?

IS: No, you just put salt on the rocks and call those sheep, and they come just like flies. Then go drink water, and they're all right for a week or two.

RM: So you've got to give them salt about every week or two?

IS: Yes. Especially when they're on green feed — fresh feed.

RM: Is that right. So the camp tender was usually an older fellow who had been with the camp?

IS: Generally, yes. And somebody who knew how to handle a mule. He had pack mules, and some of them were pretty raunchy.

RM: What was he packing?

IS: He was packing grub for him and the other 2 guys and all their other loose stuff besides his own, and grain for the pack train, and everything else that goes with it. They all had stoves to go in the big tent.

RM: How long did they stay in a camp?

IS: It depended on the condition of the feed. If they were running short of feed they just had to pull out.

RM: Typically, would they stay there a day or two days or a week?

IS: Sometimes a week, if everything was just right, but most of the time 3 or 4 days. And they always tried to outgun the other, have a better-looking band than the other guy, and they always wanted the best feed. That was the one thing that you had trouble with, them competing for the best feed. Eureka Livestock at one time would have 5 of these camps trucking out there, and that takes a lot of territory.

RM: So Eureka Livestock had 10 herders and 5 camps?

IS: Yes — 5 camp tenders.

RM: So that would be 20,000 sheep.

IS: In 1928 they took 22,000 head down on that desert. It was a hell of a bad winter, too. They took a hell of a whipping the next spring.

RM: Was that down in the Ralston desert?

IS: Yes, clear down to Cedar pipeline, Wild Horse pipeline and Silver Bow. I've been over every inch of that country. Of course, we didn't bother Reed. When we used to go through his territory we'd go over and tell him [and he'd say], "Help yourself, bring us some lambs."

RM: So there wasn't any hostility, was there?

IS: No. And old man Fallini lived over there at Adaven. You know where Adaven is, south of Warm Springs on that big hill.

RM: You mean up in the Kawich?

IS: Yes. Old man Fallini used to live there.

RM: It was a farmhouse up in the Kawich Mountains?

IS: Yes.

RM: I used to live there! My dad and I lived there in the late '50s.

IS: Fallini was a long time ago. Christ, he died way . . .

RM: Yes. I did an interview with Helen Fallini.

IS: Is she the one who taught school?

RM: I think she did, yes.

IS: Kind of big husky gal.

RM: Right. She was Bill Fallini's wife. Her son Joe now runs the thing.

IS: Then they had that little place below Warm Springs, out in the flat there. What the hell did they call that? It's just below Warm Springs, where that field is.

RM: I didn't know it had a name. Tell me some more about the sheep business. How did they find the Basque shepherders?

IS: Out of the same towns where they came from, like where my mother came from and where my dad was raised.

RM: You mean in the Pyrenees?

IS: Yes — France and Spain. They were right in the heart of the Pyrenees.

RM: How did they know to come to your ranch?

IS: You had a congressional permit to go through here and you mailed it to them.

RM: Tell me about the permit.

IS: I haven't seen one for 40 or 50 years. They put a restriction on them, afterwards — they would only stay a year or 2.

RM: How did a man in the Pyrenees know that there was a job over here for him?

IS: They had a contact back there. They'd call him up from here and tell him, "We want so many herders, and get the boys ready," and that's all there was to it.

RM: I see. And they were young when they came over here, weren't they?

IS: Most of them were. My dad was 16.

AS: He came to Fresno and herded sheep.

IS: Alice's father went to Idaho afterwards.

AS: Yes, Yukon, Idaho.

IS: He worked for Servell there, out of Mountain Home. In Boise, and that area.

RM: Sixteen was the age when they left the old country?

IS: I guess that was when they were a little dumb. They didn't have too many smarts.

RM: [Laughs] Tell me about your growing up. What are your first recollections about the sheep business?

IS: We grew up on Roberts Creek Ranch. We'd stay there in the summer and in the winter we went to Fish Creek. That's where all the cattle were and what not. They were running about 1800 head of cattle along with the sheep.

RM: Where is Fish Creek?

IS: It's just 20 miles south of here — south and west. Dan Russell's got it now.

RM: So your father had a ranch out at Roberts Creek?

IS: Roberts Creek, Fish Creek, Bull Creek, Alpha, Henderson, Vinini Creek and the Porter Ranch.

RM: Did you move from one place to another?

IS: When you got old enough to work we sure as hell did. We had our share of the load right from the start.

RM: What was it like when you were real little? Where did you spend most of your time?

IS: Up here at Roberts Creek.

RM: That's where your mother was?

IS: Yes. She died there. The house still stands.

RM: Were there a lot of acres at Roberts Creek?

IS: No, not too many — possibly 500 or 600 acres — but it was a productive place. But it was a snow water ranch, so of course when you had a dry year you didn't do too well.

RM: So there was a creek there that was snow water?

IS: Oh, yes. All snow water. Part of the sheep and cattle summered there. The rest went up to Porter. Then they owned both sides of the Pine Valley; it was all lease ground from the Southern Pacific. That was a grant from when they built the railroad — the government turned it over to the railroad.

RM: And the Eureka Land and Livestock Company was leasing that?

IS: Absolutely. Of course the Porter Ranch and all was privately owned by the outfit itself.

RM: At what age did your father put you to work?

IS: Plenty early — 9 or 10.

RM: What were you doing at that age?

IS: We'd milk cows and raise bummer lambs and do everything you do around a ranch. When we got big enough, we were out in that hayfield.

RM: They were raising hay there for the cows.

IS: All the ranchers raised hay.

RM: In this area they don't leave the cattle on the range in the winter, do they?

IS: No, but two-thirds of our cattle used to winter out in those hills. They were better than the ones you were feeding.

RM: And as you move farther south, they left them in the hills, didn't they? The Fallinis and the Cliffords did.

IS: Well, look at O. K. and Ed — they never fed anything. I was there in 1934 when they got wiped out. We went down to Pine Creek Number One well to buy some of their cattle. That's below McKinny Tanks over there. The old man sent us down and said, "You better get a few more, but don't bring any that can't make it home." We went down there and those calves were standing in miles of dead cows. They didn't have any milk. Those old cows trailed so far from feed they had their toes worn off — they were squirting blood.

RM: Oh, my god!

IS: They shipped a lot of those cattle to Wabuska, but that finished the Reeds.

RM: Was it a drought that did them in?

IS: Yes, a dry year.

RM: It was several dry years, wasn't it?

IS: Well, yes. The one before it was dry, but '34 was the worst one ever in this valley. They had to ship all the sheep out of here and everything. They couldn't make it.

RM: Is it worse than the drought now?

IS: Oh, yes. It affected the water so badly in this country that there was just no water left. The springs and everything dried up.

RM: How long did the drought last?

IS: It lasted all that year and part of the next. It took a long time to recover; you don't just bounce right back like that.

RM: The sheepherder didn't use a horse, did he?

IS: Now they all do, but in those days they never allowed a herder to have a horse.

RM: Why was that?

IS: Don't ask me. My old man said, "Anybody can't get out there and herd them sheep afoot, without messing with a horse, I don't want him," and that was it. And when you went to work you'd better not ask for a horse. A lot of outfits would turn around and take you back to town, and say, "You don't belong here. You better go to a cow outfit so you can ride a horse."

RM: [Laughs] Were you on a horse in the early days?

IS: Christ, I grew up on one. In my time, all you got by in this country with was horses.

RM: There weren't that many cars, were there?

IS: Hell, no. My old man had 2 or 3 old Dodge trucks and a stake rack — a Graham Page or something like that. But it was all horse work — teams and everything. Those teams would go to all these ranches loaded with grub and leave the winter supplies there.

RM: Where was the headquarters of your operation? Was it Eureka?

IS: Yes. Roberts Creek was the head ranch.

RM: So your father was employing 20 sheepherders at its peak?

IS: And at lambing time and shearing time there were a hell of a lot more than that.

RM: When did they shear?

IS: In the month of April.

RM: What did they do with the wool?

IS: They shipped it out on the railroad — it went clear to Boston. Eisman Brothers bought the wool. Some of it went in the warehouse if the price wasn't right.

RM: Do you remember what the price was in those days?

IS: I saw it go up to 40-some cents and they were saying what a good price it was. Then it went down to 18 or 20 cents — that broke old Moffat and a hell of a bunch of them around here.

RM: What does a sheep rancher make his money on — the wool or the lambs or what?

IS: It depends. In 1932 we shipped the lambs back to Omaha. I went with that trip, and they had to pay freight on them after they got them there. They didn't make quite \$5 a head. That was a plumb bust deal. You couldn't sell them around here; nobody wanted to look at them.

-
- RM: So whether you made you money on the lambs or the wool depends on the market?
- IS: Every commodity in this country operates the same way. Most of the time it's chicken and feathers — most of the time, the feathers.
- RM: [Laughs] Right. Who did the shearing?
- IS: Mexican crews would come in here — big crews.
- RM: Did they go from one sheep camp to another?
- IS: Well, one sheep outfit to the other.
- RM: Were they hand-operated clippers?
- IS: Hand blades. There were no electric clippers at that time.
- RM: How many sheep could a man shear in a day?
- IS: There was a man from Fallon who sheared 252 or 253 yearlings for us one time at Oak Station in one day.
- RM: Wow. Using hand clippers?
- IS: Hand clippers.
- RM: What could a typical fellow do?
- IS: He'd average around 110, 115.
- RM: What were they making?
- IS: They were making around 6 or 7 cents a head. You gave them a certain number of strings to tie the fleeces with and that night you went back and checked them.
- RM: Would you tie a string on to the fleece that you'd shear?
- IS: No, you'd wrap that fleece up and knot it — you made a bundle out of that. It was paper string so it wouldn't adhere to the wool. You made a bundle with that fleece and it went into a bag then.
- RM: But how did they keep a tally?
- IS: The guy stood right there and waited for you to come. He already knew how many strings he had, but you'd check with him after he'd finished his day's work. You'd count how many strings he had left from what you gave him in the morning.
- RM: Did they cut the sheep very much when they sheared them?
- IS: Oh, some of them were bad butchers. The old man or somebody was there and if he would see somebody who was butchering, he'd walk over and maybe tell him once. The crew had a captain, and [if he] didn't stop he told that captain, "Get that bastard out of here."

CHAPTER THREE

- RM: You're showing me a book here by Clel Georgetta. It's called *The Golden Fleece in Nevada* and it's about the sheep business in Nevada?
- IS: It's about my dad and the sheep. And it's just a flat lie! It said that he said he was running 30,000 sheep, but that he was possibly running twice that many. What would that mean on your tax returns and what not? You can't get by with stuff like that! Did you ever read this thing?
- RM: I've never seen that book before.
- IS: Well, you didn't miss a hell of a lot.
- RM: When did it come out?
- AS: It's been out for quite a while.
- RM: Let's see, it's put out by the Venture Publishing Company, 10 State Street, Reno, Nevada, and it was published in 1972. But you're not happy with that book?
- IS: Oh, come on!! There are things in here that I know are just wrong!
- AS: [To RM] He never ran into that guy. [Laughs]
- RM: [Laughs]
- IS: Yes, he died before I could get to him.
- RM: [Laughs]
- RM: Are you looking for Eureka Land and Livestock in here?
- IS: It's got the breeds and a section on the brands.
- RM: It says, "November 15th, 1920. Eureka Land and Stock Company, Isadore Sara."
- IS: Brand owned by several other Basque partners. In 1926 they were assessed for 20,000 sheep and probably had 3 times that many." Now, anybody who publishes anything like that and knew as little about it as he did, they ought to chop his head off! That burns me to a crisp, man.
- RM: It's interesting how they make those mistakes, isn't it?
- IS: Yes. I don't know how to describe it. It sure isn't very popular in some places.
- RM: Let's go through the history of the Eureka Land and Livestock again. Who started the company, again?
- IS: A guy by the name of Claude Ford, and they had a guy from Rhode Island — his name was Smith. I think he was a big money backer. This brick house on the corner here was built by Claude Ford when he was at the Eureka Livestock. Smith and Ford got into financial problems when they took all that money out of the bank. Old Ford was a pretty decent person. I remember him real well. I never did know Smith. And they had 3 Basques with them, Augustine Garcia and Fernando Pelotegui and Pedro Urqisa. Eureka Land and Livestock was the name at that time; it's Eureka Livestock today. There's very little left of it.
- RM: When did they start the company?
- IS: I have no idea when it was started — that was way before my time. My dad bought it in 1910.

RM: Because they had fallen on hard times?
IS: There was no money in the bank. That was the only tangible asset that bank could grab onto, and they peddled it.
RM: And then how long did your father hold it?
IS: He was there until 1932. He ran it for 22 years.
RM: Who were his partners?
IS: Fermine Espinal, Julian Duffer and Martin Essaine were stockholders.
RM: Were they all Basques?
IS: Yes. It was a strictly Basque outfit, outside of A. E. Kimball.
RM: Were they all partners up to the end?
IS: Augustine Garcia left Roberts Creek in 1918. Kimball divided up in about 1932. He got bedridden and just wanted out of it.
RM: Why did your dad fold it up in '32?
IS: The Depression. He owed \$72,000 on the lousy outfit. We took the Fish Creek end of it and that's the way we wound up with that.
RM: The market for wool and lamb probably just died, didn't it?
IS: It worse than died. Your wool was a little over 20 cents and if your lambs were good, you'd get \$5 a head for them. You couldn't raise them. You can't operate that way.
RM: That was about the same time as the United Cattle folded.
IS: United Cattle folded after '34.
RM: But it was only 2 years' difference in those 2 big outfits folding. Did the drought also hurt Eureka Land and Livestock?
IS: Yes. They could operate, though. They didn't have to ship anything out of here, but those cattle of the Reeds' just couldn't make it. And there was no price on them. Did you ever run into any of the Barnes from Hot Creek? Bessie Barnes?
RM: No, I don't know too much about Hot Creek. I haven't gotten into that area too much.
IS: She had a sister, Helen Williams. Her son was a barber there in Tonopah.
RM: Bob Williams?
IS: Bob Williams! Come on!
RM: I know Bob Williams from the 1950s, yes!
IS: All right! Bessie was his aunt. Bob was raised in Hot Creek. He had a brother, too. His brother's dead.
RM: Bob's dead too. He died about 7 or 8 years ago. He lived right up the street from me in Tonopah.
IS: I thought you'd run into someone I know down there.
RM: We used to get our hair cut in there. [Laughs]
IS: He's nothing but good people. I liked him.
AS: Then he moved to Reno, I guess. He used to cut our son's hair in Reno. Our son's a veterinarian.
RM: Bob Williams lived in Reno for a time?
IS: He went to Oregon for a while.

RM: So your dad sold it out in '32?
IS: He didn't sell it, he moved out. We took a section of the outfit, the Fish Creek Ranch.
RM: He just lost it to the bank?
IS: Hell, he had to. For 72,000 lousy bucks.
RM: Tell me about the Fish Creek Ranch.
IS: We sold that to Bill Bartholemew, an oil man from Orange County, California, in 1941. He got killed afterwards and it changed hands another time. The present owner is Dan Russell.
RM: Did Frank Arcularias ever run that?
IS: No. Arcularias was great friends of ours. The old man is a French Canadian.
RM: I didn't know him at all. I know the name.
IS: Bill Mendez came here the other day and told me that Frank had just had bypass surgery. He's living in Gardnerville. I know Frank very well; Frank and Howard were brothers.
RM: They put together a big ranch, didn't they?
IS: Yes, the Pine Creek. They owned half of Owens Valley at one time —Mammoth and all of that.
RM: I'll be darned.
AS: The sister is still up there, isn't she?
IS: No, the government bought that out. I don't think Howard is on Rock Creek, either, anymore. We stayed at Rock Creek that time when we went down there.
RM: Did you work for your dad on the ranch up until 1932?
IS: Oh, yes. Mostly buckarooing — riding.
RM: You weren't herding sheep?
IS: Hell, no.
RM: He had a lot of sheep up until '32.
IS: Yes, too many of them.
RM: But you didn't like sheep?
IS: Well, after you get into that kind of a deal with him, you just change your ideas on values, too.
RM: What do you mean?
IS: [If you work with the sheep you have to] join the chain gang, the sweat gang. You've got to take and have them right and run them right. You haven't got a minute to spare.
AS: His dad had him as kind of a boss, running things.
RM: How many years did you go to school, and where did you go to school?
IS: I went to school 9 months in France. Dad took us over there in 1924 and we learned French and Spanish. I was 12 years old, and my sister and brother went with us. Did you ever hear of the Noriegas in Bakersfield?
RM: No.
IS: Frank Noriega was a justice of the peace for years in Bakersfield. He has a brother by the name of Albert who's an attorney down there and a sister,

- Laura. They were over there with us. I never saw them from that day to this, but I had a phone call from them a time or two.
- RM: How many brothers and sisters did you have?
- IS: One brother, and I've got a sister in San Diego. She was up here about 3 weeks ago. She's a year older than I.
- RM: And your mother died in 1919, so you were just 8 years old when she died. And you say she died in childbirth, giving birth to your brother?
- AS: It was another child, and it died too.
- RM: That was very common in those days, wasn't it?
- IS: That was a common occurrence.
- RM: Did your father ever remarry?
- IS: No.
- RM: Did they have a ranch school for you kids on Roberts Creek Ranch?
- IS: Always. I had a schoolteacher right on the ranch.
- RM: Do you remember any of your schoolteachers?
- IS: Heck, yes. One was a Sibyl Kyle. Another was Elizabeth Holdren. And we had a Gates, and . . .
- RM: How many kids were in the school?
- IS: You had to have 4 to have a school in those days. And we always had an outsider that the old man would pick up to make the school legal. You heard of that lots of times in other places.
- RM: It was common all over this country, isn't it?
- AS: They had Paco Herrera, who went to school with these kids to learn English, and instead they learned Spanish. [Laughs]
- IS: He couldn't speak a word of English and we couldn't speak a word of Spanish, so we started in on the Spanish, and we learned Spanish from him. He's still alive and living in Reno.
- RM: Is that right? Then your father took you back to the old country to go to school.
- IS: We were there 9 months.
- RM: Did you like it?
- IS: I hated every day of it; I'll be truthful with you.
- RM: Why?
- IS: I just didn't like the weather, didn't like the conditions — for kids raised in this country, that was an entirely foreign world.
- RM: And then he brought you back?
- IS: Oh, yes. We were real glad to come back, too.
- RM: So you were kind of a ramrod on the ranch while it was going?
- IS: Yes, all my life.
- RM: But you were working more the cattle end than the sheep?
- IS: The biggest part of it was cattle.
- RM: Why do you like the cattle better?
- IS: Well, god, it's just like anything else, you like one thing better than something else and they're not going to change you. It's something that grows in

-
- you. On Fish Creek toward the last we ran straight cattle. We always ran cattle.
- RM: How many cattle were you running?
- IS: Eight hundred to 1000 down on Fish Creek Ranch.
- RM: When did the enforcement of the Taylor Grazing Act come in? It came in in the '30s, didn't it?
- IS: It was in the '40s in this area here.
- RM: So that didn't have anything to do with the closing of the ranch.
- IS: No, we didn't have anything to do with the Taylor Grazing at any time. And we sold out in 1941.
- RM: What did you do after you sold out Fish Creek?
- IS: I worked many of these mines up here.
- RM: Which mine did you work in?
- IS: The Ruby Hill Mine.
- RM: How long did you work there?
- IS: About 10 years. I was a diesel operator up there.
- RM: You mean in the power plants?
- IS: Yes. They had a tremendous power plant. They were pumping about 11,000 gallons of water a minute out of that hole up there — the Fad shaft — from 2200 feet down.
- RM: Oh, my god. It must have been a river under there?!
- IS: Why, sure. They had 6 or 7 small engines — Internationals, Cats and what not. And 3 big 1446-horsepower Worthingtons and 3 big 12-cylinder Detroit diesels and 3 Mackintosh diesels all running at one time. Twenty-one pieces of equipment.
- RM: It was a big job keeping them running, wasn't it?
- IS: Oh, god.
- RM: And you operated them?
- IS: Yes. Then toward the last I was the boss up there.
- RM: Where did the water go when it was pumped?
- IS: It went down the Diamond Valley. It was just a great big creek. And about every 2 or 3 months they'd go down and change the course of that water so nobody who was using it would get a right to it, so when they wanted to shut down they'd be able to shut it down. That's some of the do's and don't's you see in this country.
- RM: If you'd have kept the water flowing then they could have made you . . .
- IS: They'd acquire the right to it and you could never have turned it off. That's one thing you always remember in this state — that's one of the laws.
- RM: How long do you have to use it before you acquire that right?
- IS: It wasn't too long, I think right close to a year. But we used to change the course on it. Those bosses would come down and tell you when they were going to change the course.
- RM: Did you ever see the water in the mine? Was it coming out of the rocks, or was it a stream?

IS: It was all over, just like a terrible cloudburst.

RM: Was it just coming down out of the rocks?

IS: Out in all directions. It finally drowned them out of there. The last outfit went back in there and brought a grouting outfit from Canada. They drilled holes and grouted all those sections off before they could move ahead a few feet to mine that.

RM: Did it work?

IS: Well, they went in as far as the ore but they couldn't separate the ore. It's a complex ore. And furthermore with that terrible expense, that grouting, it couldn't be made to pay. Homestake bought it just a while back. I'm interested to see what they're going to do with it. You'd think as dry as it is and everything, they'd take a shot at it to see if it's affected the water table. I presume it has, but . . .

RM: Were they still in ore when they shut her down?

IS: There's all kinds of ore up there — there's a mountain of it. I've drilled into it and everything else.

RM: Was the ore in lenses or veins, or what?

IS: Just big gobs. You'd go through 30 to 40 feet of it every time you drilled a hole. It was a solid mass.

RM: What did it run?

IS: I wouldn't even hazard a guess on it. I never saw any of the figures on it, but I've got a pretty good idea what's in there.

RM: It was mainly lead, wasn't it?

IS: Lead, a little silver, zinc, some copper and a trace of gold.

RM: And where were you shipping it then?

IS: They didn't ship it. They never shipped a pound of ore out of there till an outfit came in last summer and worked the dumps out. We never shipped any of that.

RM: Did you mill it?

IS: No, we just piled it.

RM: You never shipped any ore out of here?

IS: No, we never shipped a pound for 10 years. Not while I was there.

RM: How did they keep it going?

IS: That was all big money from Canada. Thayer Lindsley, that big mining mogul, that was his bingo. And the Eureka Smelting Company.

RM: So you were just pulling muck out of there and stockpiling it?

IS: Just stockpiling it, and we didn't make a very big pile, either.

RM: How many men were they working there when you were there?

IS: A hundred and fifty.

RM: And they didn't make a big pile of muck?

IS: No way. When you're combating that kind of water and that kind of situation you just don't make progress.

RM: It sounds like a real losing deal.

IS: They've got to have a different method. They had big Byron Jackson pumps

down there and a great big cylinder motor that must be 25 feet long. And it takes all that power . . . they couldn't jerk that water up from the bottom in one stage. It went up to different stages.

RM: How many stages did you use?

IS: There was one on the 2200, one on the 1700 and one on the 800. They had different sets of pumps [on those levels]. And they were all controlled automatically. When one sump would go down it would kick those pumps in and bring it up there.

RM: And it was electric, wasn't it?

IS: Every bit of it was electric.

RM: So those diesels were producing electricity?

IS: That's what they were there for.

RM: Tell me about the challenges of keeping all of those engines running.

IS: It was a nightmare. And they had some good men up there — I mean, some good men.

RM: In what sense was it a nightmare?

IS: There were breakdowns and everything else. And you had all those men down that hole — my god, if you had looked over on that board and seen that one or two of those pumps hadn't come on or something they could have drowned them like rats in a hole. They wouldn't hold a prayer.

RM: How long would it take to drown out a level down there?

IS: There were thousands of gallons that came in one rush there. I'll bet it went up that shaft 40 or 50 feet every 10 minutes.

RM: That's amazing. There's a lot of water under the ground here, isn't there? My dad worked at the Ruth and Kalinsky shafts in Ely, and they had horrible water there.

IS: I know they did. I worked in the Starpointer shaft in the winter.

RM: Did you! They said that when they'd hit that water it just came out of there like an explosion.

IS: Yes. They came over here from Ely one time and got some of the big Byron Jacksons. I helped load some of that.

RM: How big were those Byron Jackson pumps?

IS: It's about 2 feet around but 30 feet long. And nobody fools with those pumps. Anytime anything went bad with one of those motors you sent to the factory and you'd get a crew to come work on it.

RM: You said they were cylinders. Did they operate on centrifugal force?

IS: No, they were strictly a suction deal. They built up suction from those veins in there.

RM: They must have had a terrible diesel bill.

IS: There'd be a fuel truck with 10,000 to 12,000 gallons every 2 hours there. Every 24 hours each one of the Worthingtons used to go through 1100 gallons of fuel.

RM: Oh my god! How could they afford to do that?

IS: Don't ask me. They put millions in up there.

RM: Eureka didn't have its own electricity that they could tie into, did it?

IS: The Rebaleatis had the power plant down here, but that little dinky thing wouldn't even start one of those pumps that were up there.

RM: [Laughs] Is that right?

IS: Then they sunk another shaft down below there — the Thayer-Lindsley, they called it. I drilled for that ore and then I operated the powerhouse when we were pumping from there. They had water down there, but that slacked off pretty well. One of the big Worthingtons was handling it toward the last.

RM: There wasn't as much water there?

IS: Oh, no. It was only making 600 or 700 gallons a minute or something like that.

RM: How deep was it?

IS: Just 1100 feet. There were others down to 2200.

RM: Where did they hit the bad water in Ruby Hill?

IS: Down on the 2200 level, where they started to drift west on it. They put a water door in there and everything but it just blew everything out — it finally built up pressure enough.

RM: So they didn't really hit that much water until they were at 2200 feet?

IS: They had a lot of water before that. Every time they'd hit another jolt of water, they'd get 3 or 4 more big motors back in there.

RM: [Whistles] I guess they thought that they could control that water, and that there was enough ore there to justify it.

IS: I don't think they were thinking, because, god almighty, I was no magician but I remember how I used to think, "If they can mine this thing with the lick they're going here and make it pay, they're way smarter than I am."

RM: [Laughs] And they had mined it all out up above, hadn't they? That is, the higher levels were stoped out, weren't they?

IS: All the surface, yes.

RM: So they needed this ore down below to make it operate.

IS: Yes. There was another shaft up above there, the Locan. That was down to the 800 and they had some pretty fair ore, but they hit water in there and it drowned them out. And there was a monstrous steam pump. You've heard of these steam pumps, haven't you?

RM: Yes, I have.

IS: There's one down there yet. I defy anybody to even picture the size of that steam pump.

RM: How big was it?

IS: Oh, it's a giant. They took it down there piece by piece. It's down there on the 800 level.

RM: And it's still there?

IS: Just like the day it was bought. It was the most beautiful thing you ever looked at.

RM: How big is it?

IS: It's as high as that stovepipe up there — about 7 feet high and about 10 feet

wide and maybe 18 feet long; just one big mass of iron. It has a giant fly wheel. You know how they used to make everything — the fly wheel is that big, a foot-wide steel fly wheel.

RM: And it was a pump?

IS: Yes. I never saw it run or had anything to do with it.

RM: How could they run a steam thing down a mine?

IS: They fired that thing up and they made its own steam.

RM: How would it get air? Wouldn't it gas everybody out down there?

IS: The air couldn't have been too good, but it's right close to the shaft. I imagine they vented the biggest part of it out of the shaft.

RM: What did it burn — coal?

IS: I think it burned wood originally, when it started.

RM: When did they take it there?

IS: I have no idea. That was way before my time.

RM: When did you start at the Ruby Hill?

IS: In 1942.

RM: After you sold the Fish Creek, then?

IS: Yes. I went up there in '42 and worked for McClintock, drilling up there.

CHAPTER FOUR

- AS: My sister-in-law said that when Isadore's dad went to Austin he went to work for an outfit named Jensen.
- IS: Yes, the Jensen Sheep Company. He had his own sheep, though, that he brought with him.
- AS: He worked for them but he also had his own sheep.
- IS: During the Cleveland administration in 1912 he sold a band of big 3-and 4-year old wethers for 50 cents a head. I showed you where he wintered them there on Cape Horn.
- RM: What's a wether?
- IS: A wether is a castrated male, 3 or 4 years old.
- AS: Isadore's sister also mentioned that he went to Oregon and Idaho and bought she didn't know how many sheep, but she knew that he wrote a check for \$89,000, which was a lot of money in those days.
- RM: [Laughs] It's a lot of money these days.
- IS: And one time he was going to St. George to buy 2 bands of sheep and he walked into the Walker Bank and borrowed \$45,000 dollars right on his face.
- RM: Is that right?
- IS: Well, he was pretty well known around the country.
- RM: So you worked up at the Ruby Hill about 10 years?
- IS: Off and on. I helped close it down 5 times. They'd bring a new outfit and they'd reorganize and go again with it till they ran out of money.
- RM: And these outfits would just keep pouring money into it?
- IS: Just like pouring sand in a rat hole.
- RM: [Laughs]
- IS: Now you laugh, but you check it out.
- RM: I believe you! I think it is like pouring sand in a rat hole. I come from a long line of miners. I know what it's like.
- IS: All right, you've heard it before, then.
- RM: [Laughs] Yes. We've chased a few rainbows ourselves, Isadore.
- AS: [Laughs] I guess he just wasn't meant to be rich, because he certainly had plenty of opportunities. [Laughter]
- RM: What did you do after you ended your career up there?
- IS: I worked for Coastal Drilling on some of these dry oil wells here.
- RM: Oh, really? They were drilling for oil here? When was that — in the '50s?
- IS: Yes. Then I went to work for Eureka County and I also worked at the Eureka Livestock Company for the people who own it now.
- RM: Tell me about the oil drilling.
- IS: They were all dry holes — went down 10,000-some feet. All except one, and we had to abandon it.
- RM: Did they find something in the one?
- IS: No. It went down about 5000 feet and we lost circulation; never could get it

back. We poured down tons of coal and wood bark and you name it. I worked for them a little better than 2 years. It was the best outfit I ever worked for, both pay-wise and because they had good personnel. They're the ones that started these oil wells down here at Currant Creek, in Railroad Valley. The first well they brought in . . . Frank Dyer was up here supervising the drilling at Ruby Hill. I was working for him and he came over and told me, "Well, they hit oil down there, let's go down and look at it." It was one of the first ones down there. Of course they didn't want anybody around there. But they knew Dyer — he'd worked for the outfit and they knew who he was.

RM: I remember when they hit that oil. They thought there was going to be oil everywhere, didn't they?

IS: Yes. And it looked just like shoe polish. The awfulest looking stuff you ever saw. You couldn't even pour it out of a jar. It was brown. That was that first well right on the edge of the [dry] lake in Railroad Valley.

RM: How did they get the oil out of there, if it was so thick?

IS: They pumped it out. They had Schlumberger and all those outfits with big pumps. The minute they call them they're right there.

RM: Did they have good indications where you were drilling here in Eureka County?

IS: No, not right in this area; they were just exploring. They've hit a few wells up in Pine Valley now; there are 4 or 5 producers out there. One well there has been pumping for maybe 7 years already.

RM: They say one of those wells down in Railroad Valley is the most productive wells in the United States.

IS: What is it — 3000 barrels or something a day?

RM: Something like that, yes. I don't know if it's still doing it.

IS: Yes, it is. But that's down south of there. There's original exploration quite a little ways.

RM: The oil is in pockets, isn't it?

IS: We used to talk to all these geologists and they said that oil flowed through here, and some places where it got a dike in front of it built up a pool. That's what they're shooting for anymore. There are no big flat areas or anything. They say that even the oil that's in Long Beach, California, went through here at one time. That's what I been told. And there's a lot of guesswork to that.

RM: That's right. Then you worked on the oil for a couple of years. What else did you do?

IS: I worked for Eureka County 11 years on the road department. I drove a truck a while, then I ran a loader and then I was boss of the crew there for a couple of years.

RM: Did you like it?

IS: Well, I didn't love it, let's put it that way.

RM: But it was a living?

IS: That's right. I wasn't too choosy; it was work.

RM: So when did you quit that?
IS: In '77, I think.
AS: He retired in '77. Then he had prostate surgery and discovered he had cancer, and he was over 65.
RM: So you just took the retirement?
IS: There was no other way out.
RM: Have you done anything on the side — any mining or ranching or anything?
IS: No, I haven't done anything; just taking up space.
RM: Do you ever wish you were back on the ranch?
IS: Oh, sometimes. Those were the best days of my life.
RM: Out there buckarooing?
IS: That's right.
RM: It's hard for a rancher to make it now, isn't it?
IS: I don't see anybody that really applies themselves. When we had those outfits, we worked at them. And it wasn't just part-time, it wasn't Saturday or Sunday off. It was 7 days a week, with 30-some days a month and 365 days in a year. And you worked every one of them. And we had a dad [for whom] that was the only way he knew.
RM: Ed Slavin told me that the Reeds dug a lot of their wells down there east of Tonopah by hand. They'd be 100 feet deep, and they'd be digging them by hand.
IS: Oh, I don't doubt that. Those Reeds had a crew there. They were mostly all old men — all of them had been there with Reed for years — Pigeon [Sam], Ed McConnell, Cooney Clifford, Dart Bruno . . . Of course, Bruno ran off with old O. K.'s wife. And the Walshes . . . It takes me a little while to remember all of them, but old O. K. Reed was top of the line!
RM: That's what everybody says.
IS: Old Ed was just the same, but he was kind of glum and he never spoke much. They forgot more than I'd ever learn in 2 more lifetimes.
RM: Was their brother up here similar to them?
IS: He was different entirely. He was more talkative and had a different style entirely.
RM: Neither Ed or O. K. were very talkative, then?
IS: Not too much, but they were good-hearted men. They'd give you anything they had or do anything in the world within reason for you. But you couldn't counteract them or anything like that.
RM: Did it break O. K.'s heart when Bruno ran off with his wife?
IS: You'd never know it. And his daughter went over here in Little Fish Lake, and she committed suicide.
RM: That was tragic, wasn't it? And his little son died of leukemia. Kind of a tragic life in a way.
AS: Yes, sad.
IS: And Jim Butler was a hell of a good man.
RM: You're talking about O. K.'s son-in-law, the guy who was married to Flo-

rence?

IS: Yes. I didn't know him too well. He had miner's con [silicosis]. He took over the remnants of the outfit when old O. K. and Ed left. Jim Butler was nothing but a good egg.

RM: Tell me some more about Bill Thomas. Have we left out anything that you remember?

IS: He was just a fine old man.

RM: They say he never carried a gun.

IS: No, I don't believe I ever saw him with a gun, and I've been out with him. (That is, except for hunting ducks or something.) He had an old Cherokee deputy from Gabbs he used to bring up here with him.

RM: A Cherokee Indian? What was his name, do you remember?

IS: It was Balto. He'd come up here every fall to hunt deer — he was all stooped over, and an olive color. He was deputy up there in Gabbs for a long time for old Bill.

RM: Thomas had a lot of territory to cover, didn't he?

IS: With Nye County? Come on!

AS: It's the largest county in Nevada.

RM: Oh, yes. [Laughs] It's 200-and-some miles from north to south.

RM: Were you around when A. C. Florio sold his ranch in Duckwater to the government?

IS: We were on Fish Creek when he sold it. That became the Duckwater Reservation.

RM: Did Florio live down there?

IS: He lived here in Eureka. They had 2 daughters and a son. The son was the same age I was — we went to school together. The son got appendicitis and they didn't get him to the hospital in time. It ruptured, he got peritonitis and he died. One of the daughters is living yet in Reno, the youngest one. The other one's dead. She married Louis Gibellini.

RM: Yes, I talked to him. What other characters and people do you know? Did you ever run into George Wingfield?

IS: I met him. My dad knew him well from the Tonopah days. He had the Nevada Stock Farm up there, and you'd buy bulls from him. I was going to school at Reno Business College and my dad told me to go over and see old George and pick out 12 bulls and pick them out.

RM: Nixon was before your time, wasn't he?

IS: Yes. Then there was a Bob Turinten up there. He was one of Wingfield's right-hand men. And the other one was receiver of the bank here — Leo Schmitt.

RM: What do you remember about Bill Thomas and the Wobblies and the Socialists and all that?

IS: He wouldn't talk about it. Bill never confided anything. Old Bill was just a happy-go-lucky guy. He liked to hunt, and he always wanted to know how we were doing, how we were getting along. But as far as mentioning any-

body . . . he got married again.

RM: You mean his first wife died?

IS: His second wife was named Rosie Cocheras or something like that.

RM: About when did he marry her?

IS: It was way towards the last there. I don't think he lived 4 or 5 years after he married her.

RM: You said he had a heart attack or something up at your place in Fish Creek Valley?

IS: Right at the table while we were eating supper.

RM: And that would have been in the '30s?

IS: That was in the late '30s.

RM: Did you take him into the hospital?

IS: We brought him in here [to Eureka], and from here they called Tonopah and they had a car meet him and take him back to Tonopah.

RM: It must not have hurt him too badly, then, because he was still sherriffing till the '50s, I think.

IS: He was in a hell of a shape then. He was just gray. That's the last time I saw Bill Thomas. And he never got out much toward the last. He always told me that when they had that butcher shop they had a keg of whiskey sitting in the corner with a tin cup hanging on it. He said, "That's what we drank."

RM: Is that right! So he drank his share, I imagine.

IS: Oh, come on! Of course, towards the last I don't think he ever drank. But I never did see him.

RM: Tell me some more about your dad.

IS: He handled millions, but it never stuck to him. And he was a pretty good drinking man.

RM: Did he ever talk much about the old country?

IS: Hardly ever. He didn't care for that. They were going to make a priest out of him, and he just wouldn't stand for that.

RM: So he wasn't very religious?

IS: Well, he was religious, but not to the point of being a priest. He had a brother named Martin who came over here. He was in the sheep business a while and he went back, but he made a little money here.

RM: It's so interesting to run into the son of the man who found that ore at Tonopah.
[Laughs]

IS: Think nothing about that.

AS: In our days he never talked much about his youth.

IS: I ran into a lot of those old-timers and they were always the same. What they'd gone through was gone, forgotten, past. They didn't look for yesterday; they looked for tomorrow.

RM: That's interesting. Even when they were old?

IS: Yes. They might tell you they might have had some hard times or something, but . . . and there were a lot of them around here, mister. Let me name a few to you.

-
- RM: Great.
- IS: The Mariluches had sheep here. And there were the Elorgas. And the Fergersons and the Baumanns had sheep, too.
- RM: Was Walt Baumann related to them?
- IS: Yes. His father was down in Tonopah when the boom was on. And over here on this side of the valley were the Handleys and the Jacobsens. They had sheep; the Handleys had the most. And then afterwards came the Labarrys. Bill Moore was over at Warm Springs — he and Galgaorta. And Cadet Anxo ran here for a lot of years.
- RM: Were many of these people Basques?
- IS: Yes, but Baumann wasn't, and neither were the Handleys or the Walters or the Fergersons. They're all Americans.
- AS: Well, so were we, but we were Basque at first.
- RM: Yes, right. [Laughs]
- IS: Then there was an Arambel here who ran sheep for a long time.
- RM: Were these people big operators, or small?
- IS: The Handleys might have run 8000 head. You've heard of the Pottses in Monitor Valley?
- RM: Yes.
- IS: They're brother-in-laws with the Handleys. Now, I don't know what the hookup was. Some years Pottses would have some sheep over here, others they wouldn't. I don't know which were Handleys' and which were Pottses'. And Cadet Anxo always had 6000 or 8000.
- RM: Were they running them in the Diamond Range or . . . ?
- IS: Well, there were some of them up on Roberts Creek, there was lambing up close to Crescent Valley, all that range by Cortez — Buckhorn and all that country. And in the wintertime they all went on the desert down here.
- RM: Which would include what?
- IS: Sand Springs Valley . . .
- RM: Oh, clear down to Sand Springs!
- IS: All the way to Sand Springs — Ralston and all of those valleys. Those boys would hit every one of them.
- RM: Sand Springs is a long ways over.
- IS: Yes and it's a big valley, but there were lots of sheep, too, besides what came from Elko County — Corta Sustacha Sheep Company, the Carters, the Goicocheas. They all wintered there from Elko County, as did Noble and Smith.
- RM: Were the Etchegarays running any?
- IS: Etchegarays were running over here in Monitor Valley at that time, when they first came to this country. Then they went in partners with the Dameles in the sheep business over here.
- RM: What breed of sheep were they using?
- IS: Merino, and a few blackfaces and Hampshires.
- RM: You said that they went to a certain place to lamb. What does a sheepherder

-
- look for in a lambing area?
- IS: Low country with feed. Not too high — higher feed takes longer to mature and come up, you see. Mostly they lambed in the foothills. And you've got to have water and everything else to go with it.
- RM: How do you handle coyotes?
- IS: We always had government trappers out here. You shot what you could and put out strychnine baits in the fall, but the coyote always survived a hell of a lot better than the sheepman.
- RM: [Laughs] That's a good saying. So the coyote's still here and the sheepman's gone?
- IS: Right. It doesn't take a mathematician to figure that one out.
- RM: Are there any sheep left?
- IS: In this country? This Russell outfit had a couple bands down here this winter, and those were the only sheep in this country.
- RM: Why is that? Because they can't make money?
- IS: Well, and there are so many restrictions and the range is so poor and dry and everything. Nobody wants to fight a losing proposition.

CHAPTER FIVE

- IS: Do you want to go on with the sheep owners who were here?
- RM: Sure.
- IS: The Labarrys came in here and they bought the Handley outfit. They ran quite a bunch of sheep for a while. I think that covers the biggest part of this county. I told you about the Mariluches, the Elorgas, and the Arambels.
- RM: Was your father the biggest?
- IS: Oh, hell, yes. Eureka Livestock was a kingpin in this county.
- RM: Did he have a house here in town?
- IS: No, we used to rent houses. Of course, he had some afterwards that he took. You know how those old-timers were. If somebody was in need, they'd go buy them a house.
- RM: It's a different world now, isn't it?
- IS: Different entirely. There are a few bucks of his scattered around this town.
- RM: He helped a lot of people out?
- IS: Yes. Too many of them.
- RM: Where did you buy your supplies?
- IS: Eureka Cash Store here in Eureka. The Biales owned it.
- RM: You'd buy all the supplies for all the sheep camps and everything?
- IS: Everything. We'd pay the bill once a year. Biale's son is still down there, Albert Biale. You ought to go talk to him.
- RM: People have mentioned that, yes.
- IS: He's got a good memory and everything's straight on the level with him.
- RM: That's the older man?
- IS: Yes. His son is Arthur.
- RM: What is your first recollection of Eureka?
- IS: There was a schoolhouse right next door to us here.
- RM: You mean where the church is?
- IS: Right in that lot — a big brick schoolhouse. I went to school there for fifth and sixth grades, I think. Then I went to school in the high school after they built that in '25 or '26.
- AS: That's what used to be the combined grammar and high school?
- IS: Yes.
- RM: Did they build the church next door later?
- IS: The church was there. The school was next door to the church.
- RM: Did you work in any other mines in the area?
- IS: No, Ruby Hill is the only place I worked [in Eureka]. Then I worked the Star Pointer shaft, and Ruth.
- RM: What were you doing there, at the Star Pointer?
- IS: I was the wire tapper there.
- RM: What does that job entail?
- IS: They've got big ore trains underground there, and there's a 3000-volt electric line that goes through there just like a trolley line. You had a hardwood

stick and you'd tap that car to either come back or go ahead. They'd load the train, take it out and dump it at the tipple [and there were different signals that you tapped for those things].

RM: I went to Ely about 10 years ago to try to find the old Kalinsky and Ruth shafts, and I asked a guy where they were and he pointed to the middle of an open pit and he said that's where they were. Is that true?

IS: The only one left standing that I remember is the deep Ruth — the head frame is still there. It's right where you make the turn to go up to Ruth.

RM: Is the head frame by the pit?

IS: The head frame is not too far from the Kalinsky.

RM: The Kalinsky's still there?

IS: Yes.

RM: That's what I thought.

IS: But it's all caved in.

RM: I'd like to go back there sometime and just look at them. My dad took me to work with him one time at the Kalinsky.

IS: And then there's the Alpha up there at Kimberly.

RM: Yes, I didn't know that one. My dad worked for Foley Brothers Construction.

IS: I remember the Foley Brothers being in here. How about the mines in Tonopah — did you ever fool around there?

RM: No, but we worked the Reveille lead mine, out in the Reveille Range. Do you know where the Reveille mill is?

IS: Yes.

RM: We lived there.

IS: I told you I used to go to Wild Horse and Cedar pipeline, I don't know how many times, to get water.

RM: So you would take herds of sheep down Stone Cabin Valley and down Reveille Valley?

IS: Yes, and Ralston Valley and clear over to Silver Bow.

RM: And you would be going way down past Silver Bow. We went out to the Reveille lead mine this past weekend. It was kind of fun.

IS: How is the road getting out there?

RM: Not that bad. We went in a car.

IS: Who's maintaining it?

RM: I don't know.

IS: What happened to all the rocks that were in there?

RM: It's not that bad. The road coming down to the old Reveille mill is more like a freeway than it was when we were there. [Laughs] I guess they keep it open for Fallini, because that's where he has his cows.

IS: That's right. How about all those holes around Golden Arrow and in that country? Did you ever look down through that slope? That's pretty well pockmarked.

RM: Well, do you know Roy Neighbors?

-
- IS: No.
- RM: He owns a couple of claims down at Golden Arrow. He says they've drilled 300,000 ounces of gold there.
- IS: Yes, I was just going to tell you, there were guys — even a couple of sheepherders from Eureka Livestock — who had nuggets that big that they picked out of badger holes there at Golden Arrow and in that area. I know they weren't lying; they couldn't move those sheep. So there's something in that country.
- RM: Oh, yes.
- IS: They didn't sink all those holes just for the fun of it, either. They had something to go with.
- RM: Yes. There's gold there. And Roy told me just the other day that they've drilled it now and they found 300,000 ounces of gold. But a big company won't come in for that much gold.
- IS: I know. And I imagine there are so many private claims in there that that would botch up the deal.
- RM: It could be.
- IS: For instance, look at Round Mountain over here. How many years did that lie there, and people fooled around with those treasures and what not. And god, look at it today. The outfit that's got ahold of it is still nothing but making money with it.
- RM: That's right. What do you know about the big gold mines up north here at Carlin?
- IS: Not too much. I was raised on those Roberts Mountains where Atlas is operating now, where they're getting the gold. I've ridden over that ground a million times. And I remember the Newmont operation when there was nothing, just a few claims on the creek there. We ran sheep up in that country.
- RM: Little knowing you were going right over gold!
- IS: Come on! I went over a few billion dollars worth of gold and never knew it. That's the best part of it.
- AS: He was never much of a prospector.
- RM: [Laughs] I interviewed a guy who knew a lot about the Round Mountain Mine and had made a lot of money there when Lou Gordon had it. When the present company first started going out there, they went to him and said, "Do you think we could make money on that Round Mountain mine?" And he said, "Well, I think if you find a big chunk of gold about 10 feet square down in the bottom of the pit, you might be able to make a little." [Laughs]
- IS: I knew a couple of Indians from down there in Duckwater who worked in the mill at Round Mountain. They're both dead now. One was Norm Allison's father. They said that there were guys high grading enough gold out of there . . . they said some of those nuggets were as big as chicken eggs.
- RM: That's right.
- IS: I said, "You get some?"

- He says, "I got a little." He had it hidden though. I know how an Indian operates.
- RM: Sure. Well, the whites were high grading too. Down at Round Mountain in those days they said whenever you would find some gold down in the mine, what you would do is throw it up in the air, and that that stuck to the ceiling belonged to the company. [Laughter] Of course, you had to leave some for the company, because otherwise the mine would shut down.
- IS: You know, an Indian is just not too much of a liar. He's going to tell it the way it is. Those 2 Indians said, "Well, we'd take enough. Just enough to keep us going." He said, "They watch you too close."
- RM: Sure. They had all kinds of things — you had to strip naked and then go to get your clothes when you changed, and things like that.
- IS: Yes. But when they monkey with those 2 Indians, they're going to lose . . . it might take them a while, but they'll figure out a way. They might not take a big amount so you'd notice it or anything, but they'd keep at it.
- RM: How much do you know about the history of Duckwater?
- IS: I was around Fish Creek and Bull Creek all my life.
- RM: Tell me about the people that you knew there.
- IS: I knew them all. If you ever get down there, go and look up Frank Roberts. He's got a house down at Duckwater.
- RM: I interviewed Martha Hawkins [his sister], and I met him.
- IS: She's got a sister here in Eureka — Isabelle Kitchen. There was a Mendez who came to see me, a Bill Mendez. He's a son of Old Bill Mendez's. Edna Jean Forsgren is living at the old Mendez Ranch now. I knew all the Mendez girls: Irene, Ina, Dugan . . . Martha Hawkins comes to Eureka once every 2 or 3 weeks.
- RM: Have you seen her lately?
- IS: Yes, driving that red Ford pickup.
- AS: She has a daughter who lives here — Ethel Buffington.
- RM: What do you remember about Railroad Valley?
- IS: I remember Emery Garret and old Frank Callaway (he was one of the best friends I ever had) at Currant Creek. I knew all the outfit across the valley.
- RM: Sharps?
- IS: I knew the Sharps too. In fact, one of the Sharp girls is married to a Tognoni son here. The mother was a schoolteacher. And then there were the Bordolis down there. They sold out; their kid got cancer. She wound up in Carson. And the Martettis were there at Anglemorm, just up this side of Currant Creek. That little place in the canyon is Anglemorm. And I knew all the Ramseys.
- RM: They were ranchers, weren't they?
- IS: All ranchers.
- RM: There weren't that many sheep ranchers down there, were there?
- IS: No, it was all cattle. But Domingo Azemende in Duckwater had 400 or 500 sheep and old Roberts had 200 to 300 at one time. They didn't have any luck

-
- with them. They'd take them up on that mountain, and hell . . .
- RM: There wasn't enough feed down that far south, is that it?
- IS: No. And for another thing, there were a lot of lions out on that range.
- RM: What do you do about lions and bobcats here?
- IS: They used to send for the government trapper with the dogs for the lions here. They still keep one here for predator control.
- RM: Were the sheep here bothered by lions?
- IS: Oh, god — 32, 34, 26, 28 killed in one night sometimes. I've seen 52 rams on Moody Mountain killed in one night by a lion.
- RM: The lion will go in and just kill?
- IS: Just go crazy and butcher.
- RM: He doesn't just kill one and eat it?
- IS: No, he doesn't touch them. On some of them he'd paw their head, jerk all their scalp back . . .
- RM: Oh!
- IS: They're cruel animals, the lion.
- RM: It sounds like they kind of go crazy.
- IS: They just go nuts. Look at house cats sometimes when they get started. You've seen house cats around little birds and so on.
- RM: What about bobcats? Were they ever a problem?
- IS: You'd get a few kills at lambing time, but no real problem. And since the price of fur went up, they're really thinned out.
- RM: Were coyotes your worst problem?
- IS: Yes.
- RM: How does a coyote kill? Does he go after the lamb or the sheep or what?
- IS: He goes after the first thing that looks right to him. He gets them by the throat.
- RM: Do they have a hard time killing the sheep when they have a lot of wool?
- IS: Not too bad. One time in Fish Creek we had about 50 to 60 sheep there. This coyote started on them that spring. They'd be right below the house, and all of a sudden you'd see them all bunched up. You'd walk by, and there'd be one lying there dead. When you'd take a look, it was the throat. That coyote would wait till dark, then come back and eat a little. Two or 3 days later he'd get another one. I spent more time after that coyote than anything I ever . . . I finally got him, though — got a shot at him one morning and tore his leg off. Then I got on a horse and took the dogs and got him. That ended that. But when they get started . . . I've seen them come in a pigpen where a sow'd have pigs. They'd jump over that fence, and jump out of there with one of the little pigs in his mouth. Then he'd come back the next day for another one. When they start, they don't stop.
- RM: Speaking of pigs, you mentioned that Bill Thomas and your dad drove a herd of pigs from Tonopah to Goldfield?
- IS: Five hundred pigs, and 3 slop wagons.
- RM: Were they taking them to the packinghouse in Goldfield?

- IS: No, they had them sold in Goldfield. There was a boom going there. They got there, and the cholera had gotten those pigs and they saved 15 out of the 500. This old Penola who was here was on that ride. He told me about it every time he'd see me. He'd say, "You ain't seen nothing yet, boy. You take 500 pigs to . . ." I said, "How were they handled?" "Oh," he said, "we got them pretty well started with our dogs. They'd go till they got tired. We'd let them rest, lay down, slop wagons'd come feed them. Ready to get up. Push them on again." I think he told me they were 3 days getting them from Tonopah to Goldfield.
- RM: But the hog cholera hit when they got to Goldfield?
- IS: And they didn't have vaccine or anything for them in those days. It just went through them like wildfire.
- RM: About what year would that have been?
- IS: It had to be '03 or '04.
- RM: You probably didn't get down much south of Tonopah, did you? You didn't get down to Beatty?
- IS: No, we didn't have any reason to go. What was that store in Tonopah? Coleman's. I packed more groceries out of that store! By god, anytime you hit Coleman's you were home and you were welcome to the place. And Lee Henderson had the garage down there. He was taking care of Old Fannie Longstreet at one time.
- My dad had lots to do with old Longstreet. As I told you, he said he'd be short of steers by 3 or 4, and he'd go get them from Longstreet. Longstreet would say, "You pay me next time when I see you," or something. The old man thought the world of him. He said, "They can say what they want to. He did what he was supposed to do and that was his business. He never bothered me."
- The old man would drive those steers from Duckwater to Tonopah with no bedroll or grub except a little barley for the mule. He'd dig a hole in the ground and set fire to it and warm it up and crawl in and sleep a few hours, and go on.
- RM: Now, how did he do that? He dug a hole in the ground . . .
- IS: Yes, and built a fire in the hole to warm it up, then crawled in the hole and used his saddle blanket to cover him, and that was it.
- RM: Did he put dirt over the coals?
- IS: No, he kicked them plumb out.
- RM: How long will the ground stay warm?
- IS: He said 2 to 3 hours. That's what he told me a lot of times.
- RM: I'll be darned.
- IS: He said, "[If] you ever get caught, scratch out a hole or get some ground. [If] you got no place to stay that night, you remember that. You might need it sometime."
- RM: That's a good thing to remember, yes.
- IS: It used to be a long way and far between places with no water. Of course,

-
- those cattle were used to traveling. You'd knock 30 miles out in one day with a bunch of good steers.
- RM: How many hours would that take?
- IS: It'd take you 8 or 10 hours, and that's not stopping, that's moving. And you'd be pushing them, too, a little bit. If you get over 2-1/2 miles an hour out of a cow, you're moving. Old Bill Mendez used to feed for my dad and Bill Thomas at his ranch in Duckwater. My dad always said he and Bill Thomas had 100 to 150 head on feed there. He'd come up and pick 30 to 35 steers.
- RM: And then they would take the cows to Tonopah?
- IS: Yes.
- RM: So they were getting their meat out of Duckwater?
- IS: Yes, out of Duckwater and then Smoky Valley — they bought quite a bit there, too.
- RM: Were they selling a lot of meat out of that butcher shop?
- IS: They must have been. He said he left \$28,000 on the books, and you figure 28,000 bucks in those days was plenty of money.
- RM: That was money they hadn't been paid, you mean.
- IS: Yes.
- RM: So they were giving credit?
- IS: Yes. They never refused a woman and kids meat. And I heard a guy say, "Well, he'd bother you if you ever tried to . . ."
- He said, "Go on. What the hell you talking." He said, "That's the way we did business." Frank McBride and Cooney Clifford worked for Dad and Bill Thomas there. Cooney was just a kid.
- RM: He was a baby the Cliffords had found, wasn't he? An Indian baby.
- IS: Yes. I never could get the straight story on that. He was up in this country a long time when I was here, and when he died, there were about 40 Indians that all came up here and were related to him.
- RM: What about Johnny Reed? Supposedly he also was an Indian — a guy who was adopted by the Reeds.
- IS: Johnny Reed was nothing but a good Indian, and his word was good. He had a good wife. They worked for O. K. Reed and he worked for us.
- RM: Do you remember a guy named Wayne Cutlet, an old guy with a white beard?
- IS: Yes.
- RM: Ed Slavin told me that he was the only guy that Jack Longstreet was afraid of.
- IS: I don't believe that. I don't think old Longstreet was afraid of anything that walked on 2 legs.
- RM: Ed described Cutlet as a residue from the Civil War. [Laughs]
- IS: Well, he was from the southern United States somewhere, but I don't remember where. I've heard and I've forgotten.
- RM: Was he a tough customer?
- IS: He never was around me. Old O. K. Reed had a cook from Wyoming who

was wanted on murder in Wyoming. He cooked for O. K. Reed all the time. I didn't see any of this, but they sent a couple of deputies to get him. They said those deputies came over and told O. K., "We're after your cook."

Old O. K. Reed said, "Well, one of you better get ready to die, because you're not going to take him out of here, I'm telling you."

They walked right over and the cook came over and he said, "You looking for me?"

They said, "Yeah. We're going to take you back."

He said, "You better go back while you're able to. You ain't taking me anyplace." They left him.

RM: And O. K. was going to defend him?

IS: Sure. He worked for O. K. all those years. He never bothered O. K., so he protected him. He wouldn't let that pair of clowns haul him off.

RM: So that was the end of it right there?

IS: Right there it ended. They say they never came after him either. And this cook then got to own [a joint in] the red-light district in Tonopah.

RM: I'll be darned. He made enough money to buy a joint. Do you remember his name?

IS: Jackson, I think it was. I don't remember for sure.

RM: That's a fascinating story. When would that have been?

IS: In the late '20s or early '30s.

RM: Was there any area in Eureka County that was lawless, where the police wouldn't want to go?

IS: There were some rough characters around the Dean Ranch and that section of the county.

RM: Where's that?

IS: That's going into Crescent Valley, this side of Beowawe.

CHAPTER SIX

RM: Why were all these characters at the Dean Ranch?

IS: There were 2 women there — Floradene Hobart and her sister, Ethel Hussey. Their father was killed by Jenkins up there in Sod House Canyon over an argument about water and sheep. Her father was a McGee. Then she had this son, Dick McGee, and he took over. He was kind of a wild boy — he ran into a streetcar in Sacramento and broke both legs. Then he went down to Woodland, California, and they had to amputate the legs. He died down here a couple of years ago. I was good friends with him all my life. But they were all a pretty rough outfit. They hired Texans and brought them up here, and you know what that involved.

RM: What did it involve?

IS: Well, some rough characters.

RM: Why did they bring in rough characters?

IS: They hated the sheep.

RM: Oh — they didn't want sheep?

IS: Yes. My old man owned all that country up there. There were lots of feuds between the cattlemen and the sheepmen.

RM: Tell me about the feuding.

IS: They'd burn the corrals and all that. It was generally small stuff but they always kept it going. The old man, of course, leased all the range on both sides of Pine Valley, and she hated that. He had the bingos to go with it for the lease, and she didn't.

RM: Her name, again, was . . . ?

IS: Floradene Hobart. She married a guy by the name of Hobart afterwards.

RM: Were there any famous gunmen in the area besides Longstreet?

IS: Harry Ivaster up here killed a saloon man in Beowawe, Fred Hurd, and then somebody found him dead over at the gold mine. They looked in one of the bins and saw something sticking out — a man's hair — and dug him up. They'd caved his head in with a shovel. He shot another guy in the face over here at Willow Creek with a shotgun.

RM: So somebody got him with a shovel?

IS: Yes. Caved his skull in. He worked for us for a couple of years. He'd go to bed and stick his gun under his pillow. He never went without it. Did you ever hear mention of a guy by the name of Charlie Gilbert up in Hot Creek?

RM: No, I don't think so.

IS: He carried 2 guns - one on each side. He got to feuding with a Charlie Williams who was up here at Hicks Station. [Gilbert] got a kind of a dingie Indian boy about 18 or 19 years old, gave him shells and I don't know how much money and got him to go up and kill him. He went up and started to shoot at Charlie Williams. Charlie Williams ran in the chicken house, shut the door and fired a few shots back. His wife came over to see what all it was about, and he got her in the chicken house; she had her baby in her arms. He

was running low on ammunition, down to one shell. He sent her across the yard over to where they were living to get some more ammunition, and that Indian shot her right between the 2 breasts, with her baby in her arms.

RM: Oh, my god.

IS: That happened in the early '20s. They sent that Indian to the penitentiary, and he contracted tuberculosis there and they let him out. He went down to Hicks Station and died. He was old Moray Jack's son.

RM: Who was Moray Jack?

IS: Another Indian up there. Not a good Indian, either.

RM: What were Gilbert and Williams fighting about?

IS: They were just fighting to be fighting. They didn't like the way one gentleman combed his hair or something; or didn't. They didn't need a reason. Old Moray Jack didn't get along with the other Indians. They had another Indian here, George McQueen, and he was pretty smart. (He said he was half Irish.) The other Indians all were scared of this Moray Jack. They said he used to pour something in their tracks and they'd die. George McQueen was broke one winter, and he got to thinking. He went down to Duckwater and collected 5 bucks off of every Indian to buy this Indian off so he wouldn't pour that oil in their tracks. He went to Ely and he was drunk for a couple of weeks over there with that couple of hundred bucks. Boy, those other Indians used to hate him for that.

RM: [Laughs] Is that right. You mean, pouring stuff in the tracks?

IS: Yes.

RM: What did he pour?

IS: Who knows? They wouldn't tell you; they probably wouldn't know. I learned a long time ago that you never ask one of those people any questions like that. They will never give you an answer; maybe they'll give you a grunt and walk off. I knew lots of them; worked lots of them.

RM: Are there many rattlesnakes in these mountains?

IS: There's a pretty good population.

RM: What do you do about rattlesnakes and sheep?

IS: Every once in a while some lamb sees one and he goes over and sticks his nose down — the snake will spear him, and he dies.

RM: Is there any treatment you can give a sheep to keep it from dying?

IS: Well, if you got him in time and got him segregated and quieted down and lanced it, you might save him; maybe. Let's not be positive on it.

RM: Were you ever bitten?

IS: I never was.

RM: Do know anybody that was?

IS: No. And I've stepped on them and everything else.

RM: Oh, my god!

IS: I didn't know they were there, but . . .

RM: What did they do?

IS: They tried to get away from me, and I tried to get away from them and get

something to kill them with.

RM: How about spiders, or anything like that? Is that a hazard out in the hills?

IS: No. There are a few black widows, though, showing up around here now where there never were before. I've seen a couple in the last 2 years.

RM: Do you ever have the brown recluse spider?

IS: I don't know what one looks like.

RM: I don't either, but I hear they're really bad.

IS: Yes, worse than the black widow. But all there is that's harmful is that rattlesnake, and I never had any problems with them.

RM: Tell me some more stories that show what life was like, and the local characters and everything.

IS: There were a lot of characters around this country. And they raised a lot of sheep in this country.

RM: When did the sheep business die out here?

IS: It just went down gradually; it's never recuperated from the early '40s. It didn't go off in a bust or anything, it just gradually . . .

RM: Did it start dying off in the late '20s or '30s?

IS: No, in the '40s. It was pretty good up here through the '30s, even through the Depression years. A lot of guys hung onto them. For instance, the Etchegarays were over with the Laxagues in Monitor Valley, and they moved out and went to Bishop.

RM: What did the Basque herders do when the sheep business folded up?

IS: They went to California and went to gardening, bartending and everything else. You'll find very few of them who fool with the sheep anymore. There's one sheep outfit in here from California now; they have all Mexican help. Phil Etcheverry's got the Eureka Livestock and it's all Mexican help with him, too.

RM: Whatever happened to the Eureka Land and Livestock Company?

IS: It's still the same Eureka Livestock, but there's nothing left to it — it's all been sold out. Phil Etcheverry sold the range in Pine Valley and a lot of the ranches. He's down to Three-Bar, Alpha, Roberts Creek and Henderson. That's nothing to what that outfit was. That wouldn't make a drop in a bucket. He brings his lambs up in the spring and summers the mothers up here, then takes them back to Bakersfield in the winter; it's an entirely different operation.

RM: And they feed down there, I suppose?

IS: Yes. And they have to rent alfalfa land.

CHAPTER SEVEN

- IS: Those 2 Indians that I was talking about yesterday were Milletts from Smoky Valley.
- RM: I've heard of them, yes. One of them lives up in Austin.
- IS: The daughter lives here in Eureka. Their mother was a white woman, a school-teacher.
- RM: Tell me some more about the history of Duckwater.
- IS: The Blackeyes were the kingpins down there. There were 4 — Mike, Willy, Tabbitts and one more. Willy died here just a while back.
- RM: Oh, dear.
- IS: He was one of the best Indians I ever knew.
- RM: He was a medicine man, wasn't he?
- IS: That's right. He was their medicine man.
- RM: I tried to talk to him but he wouldn't talk to me.
- IS: That's what I told you here last night. You've got to know them thoroughly, and even then you aren't going to extract anything out of them that they don't want to give you.
- RM: Did you know Andy Thompson?
- IS: Yes. There's a whole wad of those Thompsons; one of them works for the highway department.
- RM: Tell me a little bit about the Blackeyes.
- IS: That old chief, Blackeye, was one of the best people I ever knew. They all worked for us at one time or another. There was another old man there, Jenks, who used to work for us. Johnny Reed also came up and worked for us. He was real good. And I'd put his wife against any woman ever came down the line. She was a good cook. And there was another bunch there, the Blairs and the McQueens and 2 brothers — one was related to . . . that's what being 80 years old does to you.
- RM: Before Duckwater was an Indian reservation, it was Florio's ranch?
- IS: Florio's, Mendezes', Halsteads', Azemendes' and Roberts' and Irvins'.
- RM: Was Ike Irvin the first white man down there?
- IS: Ralph and Paul were the 2 Irvins that I knew. And they had a sister, Imogene. She was married to Azemende.
- RM: All right. Who else is on that creek?
- IS: A Basque had the Bank Ranch for a long time.
- RM: Who was on down the valley, then?
- IS: Nobody. That was the last of the ranches.
- RM: When was Currant Creek founded?
- IS: I have no idea. Currant was there when I came onto this circuit. Frank Callaway and his wife owned it.
- RM: Who was he?
- IS: He was from Idaho. He was just a smart old gambler, and a real fine old gentleman. He ran cattle and raised racehorses.

-
- RM: What was at Carrant?
- IS: They had a bar there, part of a store and lodging. And they'd give meals there.
- RM: And was this in the 1920s?
- IS: No. This was in the '30s. The first winter I was down there was 1932.
- RM: The road wasn't paved, was it?
- IS: Oh, hell no. It was all gravel and mean road from here to Duckwater.
- RM: It's still not paved, is it?
- IS: Not over that mountain — heck, no.
- RM: So they would just make money off of travelers coming through there?
- IS: Yes, and they had a little store there in Duckwater. The old guy who ran the store right above the Mendez place was named McGeary. He sold gas and knick-knacks and just lived off those Indians, off of knick-knacks. Oh, he was quite a character. Man, [if you'd] bring him back to life he could make a million bucks the first year. You never saw anyone like that.
- RM: What was he like?
- IS: Oh, god. He was just here, there, everywhere and nowhere. And everything was for Ike and for McGeary — it was a hell of a feud.
- RM: What did he look like?
- IS: He was a real short, dumpy Irishman — florid and grey-haired.
- RM: Did he have a wife?
- IS: No, he was single. And of course the Halsteads were all there — Ed and Charlie and Judd and their families.
- RM: What do you remember about the Halsteads?
- IS: They were the best people that I ever knew. His wife Beedie was a Rosevear from up at Green Springs. There's another little ranch there west of Duckwater. She and her brother Joe were raised there. I never knew her father, but I knew her mother real well. She was a very good person. She was Edna Jean Forsgren's mother; Ed and Beedie were her parents. And there's a boy in there. He's at Ely and he's a Halstead.
- RM: When did McGeary leave?
- IS: He died down there a long time ago.
- RM: Would this be the '30s or the '40s?
- IS: He was still there in '37. He still had the store. That's the last I remember him.
- RM: So really this McGeary was kind of an old Indian trader.
- IS: You covered it. And an old horse trader along with it.
- RM: What do you remember about Frank Callaway at Duckwater?
- IS: Well, he had 2 sons and a daughter and his wife, Mrs. Callaway. He was interested in raising race horses. He made all the races around. He got sick, and when we lived on Spring Street he came after me and wanted me to take his horses to Mexico. And he was an old gambler. He'd bet you for peanuts or for a thousand, either way you wanted to go.
- RM: What did he look like?

- IS: He looked like a typical old westerner, kind of a weathered old guy. He, Bill Goodman, Tom Wheelwright and a bunch of guys promoted all the racing over in Ely at that time. They'd go to the Kentucky Derby every year and they always wanted me to go with them, but I didn't have more brains; I just stayed and worked. They used to beg me to go and I never went. And of course, there was the Northern Hotel in Ely. Ole Elliot had that, and he was in that scene. He came out of Goldfield, too. He had the first place in Goldfield, he and Tex Riccard and the whole outfit. He came to Goldfield from the Klondike in Alaska. He was a big old Norwegian, one of the finest old men you'd ever meet.
- RM: Tell me more about Frank Callaway.
- IS: He'd just been all over. He was a gambler by instinct, by trade and everything else. And just as sharp as a razor. And a good-hearted person. You couldn't beat him — he was one of the best friends I ever had.
- RM: Did he raise cattle?
- IS: Yes. He always had cattle; nothing else.
- RM: Was his ranch up from where the station is?
- IS: Exactly where that station is. He had a store there along with it. He sold groceries and he had a bar and he had rooms there. Any time you went there, you were home. Nineteen thirty-seven was the last time I really had anything to do with him. We bought a lot of hay and stuff and went and moved cattle down there and fed them on his place. We were short of hay in Fish Creek; it was a real bad winter.
- RM: Yes — '37 was a bad winter, wasn't it?
- IS: The worst I ever saw in this country.
- RM: Worse than '47 or '48?
- IS: No. Now wait a minute. In 1932 this highway was closed for 17 days. I'd been sick and I was in hospital in Ely. We were snowed in for 17 days. Jake Borgna down the street was over there with me; you can verify it with him. But '37 was the crowning blow.
- RM: What was it — heavy snow or cold or what?
- IS: Bitter cold — 45 below at Fish Creek for a week straight.
- RM: Oh, my lord.
- IS: Every cow we had had ears and tails frozen off. We had a couple of drillers drilling a well for us in Antelope. They couldn't start their vehicle and they started out on foot and both of them froze to death. Do you remember Winchester? He was one of the guys. I forget the other one's name. And Eastman crawled in the haystack at the Hay Ranch and froze both feet trying to walk out. They amputated both feet. He's still alive; he's in circulation.
- RM: What was the last you saw of Frank Callaway?
- IS: He died in a hospital in Ely in the '40s. He had 2 sons, Douglas and Dougan, and a daughter, Virginia. She married Rusty Allred.
- RM: What happened to Currant then?
- IS: It changed hands 2 or 3 times and progressively went downhill after Frank

-
- Callaway. He was an operator. If you turned him loose amongst a bunch of people, he'd own the biggest part of their assets if they fooled with him.
- RM: And he had a store and a bar and cabins and everything?
- IS: Yes. And good rooms. Everything was clean. Everything he said [included the words] "Holy Christ, mother."
- RM: So he cussed a lot?
- AS: That was the extent of his cussing, I think.
- IS: Yes, just "Holy, Christ, mother." He'd sit at the head table and boy, [his wife would] get after him. He'd say, "Holy Christ, I'd never thought about it."
- RM: Moving on down the valley, what was there?
- IS: A batch of Sharps and Emery Garret. He was one-handed; had an arm blown off by powder. And then on down below were the Bordolis.
- RM: Were the Sharps and Bordolis large operations?
- IS: No. That's not real cattle country; that's just a borderline operation. In 1937 I moved a bunch of cattle down there and Mrs. Callaway was over at their place in Duckwater. She said, "Frank's in the hospital. Our cattle are all out." I bought part of the hay. She said, "I'll send a man over here to feed the cattle if you come over and gather our cattle. Frank won't have anybody else." So I spent about a week over there and gathered up their cattle. She sent an Indian named Ted Williams over to take care of my cattle while I gathered hers. It was bitter cold. They never forgot that. I've gathered quite a few of Sharps' cattle there too.
- RM: How many cattle did Sharp have down there?
- IS: Just a marginal bunch, I know — around 150, 200 head. Everything they owned was alkalied. They had all the hair off of them and . . . oh, god.
- RM: Alkali will take the hair off a cow?
- IS: Oh, god, yes. It takes a couple of years and good feed to recover from it. That alkali is wicked stuff, man. That's all alkali country, even where those oil wells are. All there is there is salt brush and shad scale and a little greasewood. And when they get on that greasewood, after they eat so much of it, they die.
- RM: Oh, greasewood will kill them?
- IS: It perforates all their intestines. You can see the blood going through them. If you put them on good feed some recover and some don't. We had some of that trouble in Fish Creek in '34.
- RM: Is that right? I guess greasewood must be a last resort for them.
- IS: It is. It's the bottom of the barrel — when there's nothing else to eat.
- RM: Who were the Sharps who were there?
- IS: I remember Mrs. Sharp and the man, but I don't remember his first name. I never had too much to do with the Sharps. Currant Creek was my extreme border, and when I went there, Callaways' was the only place I ever went. I couldn't go anyplace else. If Frank Callaway ever found I did, there'd have been trouble, I tell you.
- RM: What do you mean?

IS: Well, he wanted me to stay with him, not be gandering off. And I was welcome to anything on the place. I could have taken the place.

RM: Do you remember Mrs. Sharp's name?

IS: No, but I can find out. There's a Tognoni down here at the service station, and his son is married to one of the Sharp girls. If you stop down there to gas up, tell him who you are and tell him I told you, and that you want to know the older Mrs. Sharp's name. He knows them all. This woman is retired from school and she's been traveling in Europe. She's asked about me quite a few times. She's the only one that I really know.

RM: Did you know any of the Bordolis?

IS: I knew Mrs. Bordoli. When they had all those [atomic] tests her kid got cancer down there. She moved to Gardnerville and since then she's remarried.

RM: Were you ever down at Nyala?

IS: Yes, lot of times.

RM: What was there?

IS: Emery Garret and the post office.

RM: What do you know about Garret?

IS: I knew him real well. He had one arm. He'd come up and work for Callaway.

AS: Didn't he own the Callaway Ranch after Callaway died?

IS: No, nobody owned the Callaway Ranch but Callaway. After he died, some outfit went in there and was going to make a big gambling operation. That's when they were drilling for oil; they figured they had a boom. They didn't last but a short while.

AS: But I thought Garret was on the ranch after Callaway.

IS: He'd come down and take care of the place. And when anybody was gone, of course, Garret was the kingpin.

RM: Did he do pretty well with only arm?

IS: He could do anything; he could fight like hell. I never did see him, but they tell me he was death. His wife was a sister of Dart Bruno's.

RM: Oh — Bruno was the guy who ran off with O. K. Reed's wife.

IS: I think she's still living. I've never heard of her dying, and I knew her pretty well.

RM: I wonder where she is.

IS: I imagine she'd be in that area, somewhere. Or somebody would know about her. So if you go through, you ask.

RM: Was Bruno from around here?

IS: The first time I ran into Bruno, he was working for O. K. Reed. And he worked for us a while. I don't remember where he came from exactly.

RM: Ed Slavin told me that he had made a try as a movie cowboy but it didn't work out.

IS: Well, he was one of the best you ever saw. He was a top cowboy. But he was a bleeder, too — had hemophilia. Any little cut or anything, he'd never stop.

RM: Is that right? How could he be a cowboy and be a bleeder?

-
- IS: You had to know him to figure that one out. He was a big tall straight guy.
- RM: There was nothing south of Garret, was there?
- IS: No. Then on the other side of the Grant Range you had Cherry Creek. There's lots of rough and bad country there. Quite a bit of mineral has been found down there — gold. Ralph and Paul Irvin from Duckwater had mines down there.
- Now, there was a pair that you ought to know. They were kind of geniuses. They could make a motor run out of a scrap pile. Ralph at one time had a bicycle. He decided he was going to put wings on that bicycle and take off from the roof of the house. [Laughter] He got everything built, got up there and took off. And old Paul, his brother, bored a hole in the ground. [Laughter] He damn near killed him. You could fill a book with what those 2 did.
- RM: How were they related to Ike Irvin? Were they his sons?
- IS: I don't know anything about their folks, but I knew them real well, and their sister, Imogene. She was married to Domingo Azemende.
- AS: She recently died, didn't she?
- IS: Yes. And Domingo died in Elko a while back. He was up to see [Alice's] dad when he was in the hospital one time. That's the last time I saw him.
- RM: What else do you remember about Duckwater?
- IS: Oh, god. A lot of feuds went on over water and what not. They had a water master down there. Some shootings took place. Tognoni shot old Mendez in the foot and leg. Mendez's son was here not 2 weeks ago, and I told him, "Remember when Tognoni shot your old man in the . . . ?"
- RM: The water runs down the valley from that spring, doesn't it?
- IS: Right straight down the valley. They all had rights on that ditch and they all stole from one another. One would go up at night and turn the water on, and the other guy got short. Water's a big thing in this state. Remember that. That was the lifeline. No water, nothing.
- RM: Tell me about how the cattlemen and the sheepmen got along in Eureka County.
- IS: It wasn't too bad. Of course, a lot of people had it in for the Eureka Livestock Company because it was a big outfit with sheep all over the country and what not. It's just like any other business — you have friends and you have detractors, too.
- RM: What would the detractors do?
- IS: They were always sniping about you verbally. They'd say, "You're eating all the feed in the country and leaving none for us and you've taken the country over."
- RM: What would the sheepmen say?
- IS: The sheepmen would say, "Well, we've got a right to go there. We're going there and we go through there." That's it.
- RM: And then what would the cattlemen say?
- IS: They had to take it.
- RM: Basically the range was first come first served, wasn't it?

-
- IS: Yes, outside of the patented areas. For instance, the Eureka Livestock had all the holdings here. Your small outfits are the ones that suffered off of it.
- RM: How's that?
- IS: They'd eat the feed right down to the fence, some of them. There were lots of sheep in this county at one time. As I told you, there were 50,000 sheep on that Diamond Range.
- RM: Incredible.
- IS: You look it over some day and remember what I told you and you're going to say, "He's the biggest liar ever came . . . I can't imagine that." They had a band in every canyon.
- RM: And there was water in every canyon, wasn't there?
- IS: Yes, or moisture. I've worked on the Diamond Mountains some. There's a 3-leaf plant that comes up at a certain elevation — over halfway up — in the spring there. When that's good and in its prime, you can take a band of sheep and they will stay off of water for 2 to 3 weeks. They get their moisture out of that plant.
- RM: Wow! Is that the only place that plant grows?
- IS: It's the only place that I've ever seen it.
- RM: Do you know what the plant is called?
- IS: No, I don't. It grows about 6 inches high, in patches. They grow and grow thick and when those sheep got to a certain elevation those herders told me a lot of times those sheep never went to water for 2 or 3 weeks.
- RM: You were telling me how the herder knows when the sheep are thirsty . . .
- IS: When they start to move, they don't stand. They just take off.
- RM: So the herder doesn't have to take them to water?
- IS: He has to be there, though, to keep track of all the lambs at the tail end and so on. On those Diamonds, toward the last, they were hauling water by the truckload. There isn't too much water on that mountain range; it is not a watered mountain, you know.
- RM: But at one time it was?
- IS: Yes, if you got the right kind of winter and the right snowfall.

CHAPTER EIGHT

- IS: Mother Nature controlled your water needs.
- RM: The water must have been good when they had 50,000 head there.
- IS: Or else they ran short a lot, too. I know that happened.
- RM: What would happen to the sheep then?
- IS: They just had to go someplace where the water was. Down on the flat there are always springs on both sides. It's really hard to bring a bunch of sheep down off a mountain just to water them, but a lot of them had to go through that.
- RM: Did you ever see a flower on that plant that had so much moisture?
- IS: No. I only ever saw it about 2 times in my life.
- RM: It doesn't come up every year, then?
- IS: No. Conditions have to be just right, and I never fooled around those Diamonds. That wasn't my turf.
- RM: Where was your turf?
- IS: Roberts Creek mountain, both sides of the Pine Valley and all of Railroad Valley.
- RM: Tell me about the Roberts Creek mountain.
- IS: That was a fine mountain. We could summer 8 bands of sheep up there — 16,000 sheep at one time. And there was pretty near an equal amount over in Porter Ranch.
- RM: What stands out in your mind about the Roberts Creek Mountains?
- IS: What stands out is the awful change in it. That used to just be one big mass of sunflowers. My dad would tell the herders, "Don't ever dog those sheep when they're on those sunflowers." They'd go through there and flatten them — just cut a swath through. He wouldn't stand for that.
- RM: He liked the sunflowers?
- IS: That's the best feed there was. And if those sheep would go through and knock all the flowers off they just destroyed the plant. [The right way was to] just let them ooze in there, take a little patch at a time, get in front of the band, stop and let them feed, then take them back out. You'd see their noses all yellow from the flower.
- RM: And don't let them stay there too long?
- IS: No way.
- RM: And the mountain was covered with them?
- IS: Well, the east side of it was all sheep range, and it was 90 percent sunflowers, with, of course, a lot of grass in with it, and your herbs. Those lambs would weigh around 70, 72 pounds in the fall. Now they're shipping lambs that were raised there and they're in the 60-pound range.
- RM: Is that right? There's that much difference?
- IS: Well, you figure it out. There have been some awful changes in my time in this country. Mostly it's gone for the bad. They've lost the biggest part of their native grasses, even their bunch grasses and what not. Everything has

been on the decline, even the lamb brush. There's a brush there they call lamb brush — it grows in all these mountains about 3 feet high. It's really a prolific thing. The sheep love it and do well on it. There's a little patch up here above the Hunter place yet, but Roberts mountain had a lot of it. Nineteenths of that is gone. It's just overgrazing.

RM: It's not because it's not as wet as it used to be?

IS: Well, that's a combining factor. You've got everything going against it. And that plant isn't surviving. Of course, a lot of your perennials just aren't producing like they did.

RM: Do you know the names of any of the plants that we're talking about here, the perennials and so on?

IS: Well, the buck brush and what not. That's all we paid attention to. The only thing that really survives is your rye grass. That's kind of coarse, but it's dropped way back from what it was. You'd see it 5 to 6 feet high; you couldn't see out of it. Now it'll grow maybe 3 or 4 feet, but it's not as thick or in profusion the way it grew then. It was always used as filler feed in the wintertime. When the heads are just ripe, the stock did well on it — horses and what not. But that's just at a certain time. Otherwise, they're not crazy about it. It's kind of a secondary feed.

RM: Tell me some more about Roberts Creek mountain.

IS: Oh, that was the best place in this country — it was tops in running sheep per acre, lambs produced and everything. There was nothing around to beat it.

RM: Was it better than the Diamond Mountain?

IS: Oh, no comparison. It has more water and easier terrain. Diamond is a pretty rough mountain. It's steep and its canyons are deep and hard to climb. Roberts Creek is just a big slope. Cadet Anxo was right next door at Willow Creek. He was an awful good neighbor. He's got a son, Joe, who travels through here selling machinery. He lost a leg right down at that house. He was sitting on a cement pile — just a kid — and a pickup backed into him and crushed . . . he lost that leg. He married a local girl here, a DePaoli girl. They were good people; good neighbors.

RM: What has happened to those ranches in the Roberts Creek area now?

IS: Most of them, except the Three-Bar on the west side, have just deteriorated to the point where they've got no water and no snow flow. Those were once generally good creeks to irrigate those ranches. It was all snow water, but now there isn't a drop. They're just as dry as that floor. The Willow Creek Ranch, the Roberts Creek Ranch, the Henderson Ranch and the Vinini Creek place are all dry.

RM: That's because they don't get the snow now?

IS: That's it, right there. The drought caused that. And of course your terrain dries out so badly that no one single year ever brings it back. It'd take years.

RM: When did it start drying out?

IS: This is the fifth year now.

RM: Did it start drying out in the '40s?

-
- IS: Before that too. The last good year here was in the early '40s.
- RM: Is that right?
- IS: Yes, the consistent ones with halfway decent snowfall and what not.
- RM: How much less snow is there now than there used to be, would you say — half as much?
- IS: Way less than half. Not even a quarter of it.
- RM: You don't get a quarter of the snow you used to?
- IS: I didn't last winter. And few of these rains. Think of the rain we had yesterday, and look at the terrain around the place — it's just as dry. You can't see a puddle, even, or a mud hole. It just sopped it up. And they say that Tonopah . . . of course, Vegas has got some good jolts [of moisture].
- RM: Well, they had a good one in March, but it's dryer than a bone down there now. It hasn't rained all summer.
- IS: That's a terrible place when it dries up. I had to move there one winter because our son was having asthma here, and I just really didn't like it. Then we moved to Twenty-Nine Palms, where it was a little dryer and a little worse yet.
- RM: Yes. You mentioned you were on both sides of Pine Valley. What was it like up there?
- IS: It was the same conditions as the rest of the area, but that's more grass country up there. By the same token, it dries up early in June and everything's over with. It wasn't as good a sheep range as this Roberts Creek. But if they had that many sheep there I'd have had a place to put them.
- RM: How many sheep were up on Pine Valley?
- IS: They were running around 6000 to 7000 all through the summer; sometimes they had 8000.
- RM: Was that just the Eureka Land and Livestock?
- IS: That's the Eureka Livestock. Nobody else ran sheep there.
- RM: Oh, because they had the lease.
- IS: They had everything sewed up and tied up. That was strictly Eureka Land and Livestock. Of course, all the cattle ranchers in Pine Valley growled about all those sheep coming in there. Phil Etcheverry sold all that range for \$350,000 or something 20 years ago; cattlemen bought all of it. They had to, to stay in business. That's the way it is today.
- RM: What's the difference between the cattle and sheep business in terms of operation?
- IS: The cow is a bigger animal, and they'll eat coarser feed. But that cow's got to have hay in the wintertime, and if that water doesn't come down to irrigate those meadows and you don't get any hay, you're S.O.L. Your sheep used to all go on the desert. They'd never look back. In the month of October they'd be all trailing south, waiting for the snow to come so there'd be enough moisture for the sheep.
- RM: But the sheep requires a lighter food? He can't eat the coarser food that the cattle eat?

- IS: Right. The cow will eat something coarse, tumbleweeds or anything. Sheep have to be dying to look at tumbleweed. But an old cow can take rye grass or something coarse, and she'll chew on it. She'll get something out of it — not too much nutrition, but she gets a belly full, so she's partly satisfied.
- RM: So could you say a cow will make it where a sheep won't?
- IS: Absolutely. I've seen cattle snowed in here all winter and some of them come out alive. Sheep bunch up; they are just an entirely different type of animal.
- RM: Do they bunch up and smother?
- IS: No, they just die. They just stay there and they can't get out. The cow will always make an effort, somewhere. As a last resort, I've seen cows eat mustangs' manure and survive the winter.
- RM: Cows will eat the mustang manure?
- IS: Yes, and survive the winter. I saw it happen right here in '51 and '52. You tell a lot of guys that and they think you're blowing smoke at them.
- RM: But a sheep won't do that?
- IS: Oh, god, no. That sheep's got to have something to eat. I've seen it so cold at night, down in those camps, that the sheep were trying to come in the tent with you.
- RM: Is that right? So all that wool doesn't keep them that warm?
- IS: Oh, come on! In the morning after a snowstorm they'd be frozen down to the bed ground and you'd have to lift them up. That wool would be frozen so they couldn't get up off the ground.
- RM: A cow won't freeze to the ground, though, will it?
- IS: No. I've seen them out and out die, though, and I've seen them frozen standing up. That cold's a terrible thing when it starts in. And that old cow's only got a hair on it about one inch thick. The sheep's got that wool, but that doesn't make her less vulnerable than the cow.
- RM: You'd think the sheep would have more resistance, but they don't?
- IS: No. Their nature is not to resist anything. If a coyote or something corners them, they won't fight. If you corner a cow, she'll battle to the last ditch.
- RM: Even a ram won't fight?
- IS: No, heck. As I told you, I saw a lion get in a band of rams and kill 52 head in one night. Besides what died, 15 to 20 died in the next 2 or 3 days. He hooked them with that paw and just scalped them.
- RM: Are sheep really dumb?
- IS: Well, in a way they are, and in a way they're not.
- RM: How are they dumb and how are they smart?
- IS: They'll take off sometimes for just no reason at all and open themselves up to the predators and everything else. A cow will find a good place to summer and she'll stay right there and raise her calf and get in the shade and live a life of content. That sheep never does; it's always on the move.
- RM: Oh, they're moving all the time?
- IS: They're looking for something else, for somewhere else to go. That's the

way the animal's created. That's instinct.

RM: How are sheep smart?

IS: They let you know the time of year when it's time to go on the desert. All you do is point them and they're off just like that. A cow will do that, too. We used to summer them up on Roberts Creek and take them down to Fish Creek, a trip of 2 days — about 50 miles. You'd start those cows out and it'd be just one rope of cows 3 or 4 miles long in a trail about a foot wide. [Laughter] And all you could do was follow that cab. We'd cross that highway and all the traffic would stop. [People in cars were] always asking, "Where are they going?"

I'd say, "They're going to the next stop where there's feed and water."

RM: And they knew what direction to go?

IS: Yes, and coming back in the spring, all you did was point them and follow them. Of course, there'd be a lot of mud holes and things in the way that they had to encounter. They'd get stuck and what not. The calves would be all behind and you had to see that they didn't lie down. Those calves were something else; they'd find a good place or be tired and they'd just lie down flop, and go to sleep and pay no attention to mother. Mother would go get a drink and walk back there 8 or 10 miles to get that calf.

RM: I've heard that cows will baby-sit. Is that right?

IS: Why, hell. You see a cow with 7, 8, 10 calves — all the rest of the mothers have gone to water and this old cow is baby-sitting. Their mothers come in and boy, these calves all run over to them and then [the baby-sitter] goes and gets a drink.

RM: Do sheep do that?

IS: Oh, come on! If that sheep loses that lamb, she hardly ever goes back to look for it. When there's something wrong, she'll look for the lamb a lot of times — if the lamb crawls in a badger hole or something.

RM: But if she leaves, she doesn't go back for it?

IS: No, she doesn't get excited about it. But sometimes if she has twins she'll have one trying to suck and she won't let him because she's looking for the other one. That's the exception to the rule. She knows she had 2 and she wants that second one before she'll give them both a drink.

RM: I'll be darned.

IS: They tell you how dumb they are. Well, the people who handle them are a damn sight dumber in some ways.

RM: Yes. In what other ways are they smart?

IS: Well, feed-wise. They're always pointed in the right direction on those mountains. They know that mountain just like you know your backyard. They get that good feed, fill up, lie down, take a rest, go to water . . .

RM: What do you recall about Pine Valley? Who was living up there and what kind of community was there?

IS: That was a ranching community. The ones who have the grocery store here, Bob Raines, was raised there. His dad owned that place. The next place

down was the Rands; they were quite a clan. It was a big outfit. And the next place down was Goodfellow. He was related to oil people in California. He owned that place and had a lease on the Hay Ranch. The next place was Pete Carletti's; he was on there a number of years. He was first on Willow Creek. Cadet Anxo bought him out and then he moved over there. He was married to a Buckskin.

One of his sons came here about 3 or 4 months ago — he has rectal cancer. I'd worked him on Fish Creek. Their mother's a Buckskin, a part Indian. He came here and I didn't know him for a minute. He told me then how he just didn't look the same. He said, "Well, I came to see you." I know what he had in mind. He came to say goodbye to me. He made me take a picture out here. He said, "You straightened both of us boys out. I had a lot of bosses." Now, that's the nicest compliment I ever had. But he said, "You stand up here." (He died just about a month ago; I saw it in the paper.)

Alice said, "That's funny."

I said, "Boy, I'm going to tell you something. That Indian's saying goodbye to me." That's their way.

He said, "My mother's 96 years old. My dad bought that place that's over there in Dry Creek. She wants to go see that this summer and she wants you to take her. You're the only one anymore that knows where the buildings were." He said, "Will you do it?" And he had his sister with him.

I said, "I will on one condition — that she be with her mother. I've got a four-wheel drive. I'll take her up." She never came. Well, that son died. She in turn married another guy by the name of Clark, a railroad man. She's living in Sparks now.

RM: Was there a town or store or anything in Pine Valley?

IS: No. The Eureka Nevada Railroad went right down the middle of the valley. That kept some of it going. Palisade was the first store.

RM: And that was on the main line up there?

IS: That's on the main line. Then of course Carlin is up there. But most of them traded at Palisade.

RM: What was happening at Beowawe?

IS: The Horseshoe Ranch was a big operator there. I had an uncle and cousin who had an outfit there, the Sansinenas. The wife and the 2 sons are still there. They own the McConnell place and the Johnson place at Beowawe. Beowawe was just a railroad section; the railroad kept it going. It had a few saloons and so forth. Old Joe Androsi was married to a squaw.

RM: So it was basically a railroad town.

IS: That's all, a stop. They had shipping corrals — we shipped a lot of stock out of there, lambs and cattle both. This was a narrow gauge railroad — a small line; they couldn't handle too many. At that time Eureka Livestock was one of the biggest shippers in the West. It was nothing for them to ship 8000 lambs off of Roberts Creek in this area and 6000 or 7000 out of Palisade. They went directly to Omaha for slaughter.

RM: That must have been good lamb — good feed and no chemicals or anything.

IS: Right. You'd just load them and go — crawl in that caboose and go.

RM: So you would ride back with them?

IS: You had to; the shipper always went. The railroad insisted on that.

RM: Why was that?

IS: To keep away from lawsuits. And you had a time limit to unload them, feed them, water them and have everything ready for them.

RM: Did you have to unload them before you got to Omaha?

IS: Hell, yes. You unloaded in Cheyenne and in Grand Island, Nebraska, for rest and feed and water.

RM: And if you didn't they'd die?

IS: They'd pile up in those cars.

RM: Why would they pile up?

IS: That's instinct; they were trying to get out. That wasn't home to them. Those lambs were raised out free and when you'd confine them in a place like that, you know what they were going to do.

AS: And they were probably hungry and thirsty too.

IS: Oh, god, yes — just taken off their mothers, weaned. And I've seen it so hot in Grand Island that when they had pigs out there they had hoses turned on them to keep them from dying.

That was during the tough years, the Depression years. The FHA owned half of the United States at that time. Farms were painted red and the houses were for sale. You always had a bunch of cripples when you got there — their legs were bummed up. Some poor old homesteader would come along . . . I remember one old guy at Omaha who had 4 kids, about that high. "Mister," he said, "I want to buy 3 or 4 of those lambs." I think he said he had \$7, and lambs were selling for \$5 at that time. He said, "These kids all want a lamb." You know how kids are. He was a hell of a nice old guy.

I had about 15 of the broken-legged ones penned up, and they were going to be destroyed. I told him, "You take those kids in there and let them each pick one."

"How much is it going to cost?"

I said, "It isn't going to cost you a dime. Just pick them and get them out of there. And if you've got any more friends, come and get them." (I had 2 or 3 more.) The old boy had tears.

RM: And they would go clear to Cheyenne without unloading?

IS: Yes. You cross the Continental Divide after you leave Cheyenne, and it took you quite a while to get over it. They had 2 engines with a pusher on in back and big sign on it, "Stock Train." They'd sidetrack all the passenger trains for that train, too. At every crossing, all the school kids and cops and all would be standing there to watch it go by. That whistle would start a-moaning about half a mile back, and they never slowed up or missed a lick. Those kids were waving their flags. There'd be 150 or 200 kids out there some-times.

CHAPTER NINE

- RM: Isadore, since the last time I saw you, you've found an interesting brochure.
- IS: Yes. It's for the Eureka Livestock Company. At that time it was called Eureka Livestock. When we got on there, the name was the Eureka Land and Livestock. The date on the brochure is July 1, 1904.
- RM: It's in a red cover. It's a promotional thing to sell stock for the company, isn't it?
- IS: Sure. This was put out before my dad acquired the company. He didn't acquire it till 1910.
- RM: Yes. Your dad was down in Tonopah with Bill Thomas in 1904, wasn't he?
- IS: Yes, running sheep.
- RM: Was he running sheep for Bill Thomas?
- IS: No, he was running them himself. Bill Thomas was never mixed up with the sheep that I know of. He and Bill Thomas had a butcher shop. Now, here was the old Roberts Creek ranch house, where we were raised.
- RM: OK. This is page 8.
- IS: And this is the Fish Creek Ranch on page 9. That house was destroyed by fire. The buildings and things were moved up to their original place, but this was down at the lower end of the ranch.
- RM: Describe the interior of the house on page 8 where you were raised, at Roberts Creek.
- IS: Afterwards it was turned into a schoolhouse; we went to school there. The house that's there now was moved from Alpha in either 1917 or '18. This was torn down 4 or 5 years afterwards.
- RM: How many rooms were in the house where you grew up?
- IS: I think that was about an 8-room house. It had at least 2 or 3 bedrooms.
- RM: Was it cold in the winter?
- IS: You bet it was cold. That's a cold place, that ranch.
- RM: Can you grow a garden there?
- IS: Yes, we had a wonderful garden. They could practically feed the town. They used to give everybody who went out there ripe vegetables. They'd raise around 1200 sacks of potatoes every year for their own supply. That was a productive ranch at that time. And cabbage — my god! They'd have racks of them in those cellars. I couldn't estimate how many head, but there must have been 1000. The old man would get us out there and make us help him plant the garden.
- RM: Did you pull them and hang them upside down?
- IS: They had a screen on boards and turned them upside down on that. The potatoes were in the same cellar. Likewise, carrots. My god! Tons of carrots, dirt-hoed. They kept them all winter there, along with ham, bacon and everything else. They raised a lot of pigs on that place.
- RM: You say it was productive at that time. It's not productive now?
- IS: It's dried up. The trees have all died. They had a big, beautiful orchard right

over to the left of the picture. There were some tremendous poplars that were irrigated from the sink water from the other house. The other house sits right about here. And that place produced on an average 600 to 700 tons of alfalfa a year and sometimes more.

RM: How many cuttings?

IS: Sometimes 3, but most the time, 2. And that's besides the grain. They harvested grain enough to feed all their pack trains and everything else for the sheep outfit. They had a grain shed and they'd get anywhere from 1000 to 1500 sacks of grain every year, besides for all the chickens on the outfit.

RM: Wow! What kind of grain were they raising?

IS: Wheat, oats and barley.

RM: How many hands did they have? They must have had a lot of hands putting up all that.

IS: No, but they always had a crew there [at harvest time]. There'd be 7, 8, 10 men besides the thresher machine. They ran their own thresher and everything else. I put a lot of hours in that old thresher.

RM: How many men would they have working there more or less permanently?

IS: Steady among the ranks they had 2 to 3 men.

RM: How did they put up potatoes in those days?

IS: They had a regular potato digger that had a shaker on it and you picked them by hand.

RM: Did you pick them off the shaker screen then?

IS: No, you picked them off the ground. That would run right under them and you had a fork and hoe to go through what it covered while it was going through.

RM: Was the potato digger pulled by horses?

IS: Yes, it was all horsemen. There were no tractors on that ranch in my time till later years.

RM: Were the crops irrigated?

IS: Yes. They irrigated there continuously from the creek from snow water. They had about 2 irrigators. They had a tremendous garden and we'd hoe weeds — you know what that entails.

RM: Did the creek run all the time?

IS: At that time it did. Of course, when the years dried up . . . there was a big drying-up in this country in my time. It kept getting a little less, a little less — not all at once, but all the time. Right now that creek doesn't come within 2 miles of the ranch. It's dried up completely this summer.

They had no [spring] water on that ranch. There's a pipeline that brings water down to the ranch. There was an old man from Grass Valley named Pop Allen and he told me he helped put that pipeline in in 1889 and 1890. I remember that distinctly, old boy.

RM: So they did need the pipelines at times?

IS: That's from a permanent spring up in the canyon, above the ranch about 3 miles.

RM: But when you were a kid the creek was running all the time?

IS: That was a beautiful creek. And the place has the best soil in the country. Also, that was the old Pony Express station.

RM: Oh, it was?

IS: There was a bunkhouse where the Pony Express station is, made out of adobe brick.

RM: Is it still there?

IS: They wiped it off years ago, in the late '20s or early '30s.

RM: They just knocked it down?

IS: Yes. Every joker that buys a place in this country comes in and eliminates what's there originally. That includes sheds and everything else. That's the history of these people.

RM: So he wants to do his own thing, then?

IS: Right.

RM: How many deeded acres were there?

IS: It's listed right here . . . there was some question on title on that place. It was in our mother's name for years after my dad bought it. But I think they've got something like 600 acres. Now here's your list: "Mill Creek; Stone Cabin; Hawes . . . Roberts Creek, 314."

RM: How many acres would you say were irrigated?

IS: I'll say it was more than shown in that figure. It had to be. I'd say it was maybe 500 to 600 acres. It's a good-sized place, but it's gone back to brush.

RM: Where did the hands stay?

IS: That old Pony Express station was the original bunkhouse. There were 2 fireplaces, one on each end of it.

RM: How big was the station, would you say?

IS: It was a good-sized station. I'd say it was 60 feet long and maybe 20 feet wide.

RM: What kind of beds did the hands sleep in?

IS: They had their own bedrolls, a canvas tarp on it and blankets in it. They threw it down on cots.

There was another big shed on that place to store their machinery in and what not. It had gates in the front of it, and it was a huge old place. They tore that down. There were about 4 storage cellars on the place — big walk-down cellars with locks on the doors. One was for meats — pork and what not — and the others were for vegetables. And the old gent, my dad, would make himself some wine, and he had a wine cellar there.

RM: Was he growing grapes there too?

IS: No. He bought the grapes in Petaluma, California, and pressed them at the ranch.

RM: Did they come in on the railroad?

IS: Yes, they were shipped here in town on the narrow gauge. At times, afterwards, grape sellers would come around. Usually they'd order the grapes, and they'd bring them in here by truck toward the last. There were some pretty heavy wine drinkers around here.

-
- RM: So he'd make a good bunch of it?
- IS: You bet he would.
- RM: How many gallons would you say he'd make?
- IS: I'd say around 500 — 10 of those 50-gallon drums.
- RM: What kind of grapes would he use?
- IS: I don't even remember, but he'd make red wine.
- RM: Did they ever sell any of their wine in town?
- IS: No way. That was for private use. They gave a heck of a lot of it away to people who'd come through, but not to sell.
- RM: What other Pony Express remnants were there on the place at that time?
- IS: That's all there was. Of course, that was a big Indian camp at one time. They had trouble with the Indians; they even had the military come in there. That happened around the Pony Express time. The old-timers told me those Indians used to go awfully hungry. They'd go through piles of horse manure, the green that went through, and pull that green out and use it for human consumption.
- RM: Is that right. Were Indians living there when you were there?
- IS: No, not right then. We always had Indians working for us and there was one who worked there all the time. But there were always Indians around, back and forth and what not. Their main camp was over here on Henderson Summit, about 10 miles from Roberts Creek. They'd get hungry and come for meat, and of course, the old gent fed them all.
- RM: There was never any trouble with Indians while you were . . . ?
- IS: Never. I can name you the old Indians. The old man was Whiskey Joe. He had a squaw by the name of Susie.
- RM: Who was the permanent hand you had there?
- IS: George Pogue.
- RM: Did he have a wife?
- IS: He was married to an Ida Richardson, but he was a drunken old poop and it didn't last too long. He got killed in an automobile accident right out in the flat here. Mince Pie and Susie were the 2 squaws.
- RM: Were they Whiskey Joe's wives?
- IS: I can't tell you a thing about their relationship. And if you can extract that out of any of these Indians, you're way ahead of me.
- RM: Did they have a camp?
- IS: They had a permanent camp at Henderson Summit. In the wintertime they moved down here to Sulphur and so on. They got on a big drunk and all 3 of them burned up in a fire in Sulphur.
- RM: Oh, boy. Were there any other Pony Express stations that you have knowledge of through here?
- IS: Yes.
- RM: What were the other ones?
- IS: Let's talk about west of Roberts Creek. The first stop was Grubbs Flat. The next one is the Hicks Station.

RM: What was at Grubbs Flat?

IS: Just an old adobe building. It was partly falling down — there were just remnants of it left when I first remember.

RM: How far was it from Roberts Creek?

IS: About 13 or 14 miles.

RM: Was there anybody living there?

IS: No, not permanently. Afterwards there was.

RM: There was water, of course, wasn't there?

IS: Yes. There was kind of a hole dug there. They had a well there afterwards, but when I first remember it, it was just a seep hole of poor water. And over this way, Sulphur was the one east of Roberts Creek. The next one over was over at the Jacobsens'.

RM: Tell me about Sulphur Springs.

IS: There was just a little meadow and this post. The old building was made out of cedar post; I remember that distinctly. That's what those people burned up in when they got drunk.

RM: About when did they burn in that?

IS: I think it was in the early '30s. You could get the data down here at the courthouse, or from the *Sentinel*. They've got a whole wad of old *Sentinels*.

RM: OK. Now, was there just this cedar post building in Sulphur?

IS: Yes. And the corrals and stuff for the horses. In the winters the Indians would move down there, but not all the time, either. It isn't too far from where they summered — maybe 7 or 8 miles away.

RM: Oh — it's just lower in elevation?

IS: Right. And they stayed by the main road. The place where they summered had kind of a mean road going up to it.

RM: What was the main road you mentioned?

IS: That went down Diamond Valley, through Union to Palisade.

RM: Does the main highway follow that road now?

IS: No. It's west of it. Your highway turns up here and goes over the summit.

RM: What valley does it go into then? Is that Pine Valley?

IS: Pine Valley, yes sir. That's Pine Creek.

RM: But the old road went clear up Diamond Valley?

IS: Yes, into Union and down the canyon and out right where the Union turnoff comes off the main highway now.

RM: Would that be east of Carlin?

IS: No, that's south of Carlin by quite a bit, but a little on the east side.

RM: That road is still there, isn't it?

IS: Yes, it's maintained. It's a county road; that's the main road.

RM: How far is Sulphur from Roberts Creek?

IS: You mean straight across like you'd go horseback?

RM: Yes.

IS: About 8 or 10 miles.

RM: What was the next station east of Sulphur?

IS: That was in the Jacobsen Ranch over here at the foot of the summit that goes over Diamond — Immigrant Pass or something.

RM: Do you remember what was there?

IS: I do not remember that.

RM: And that would take you over the Diamond Mountains, wouldn't it?

IS: Over to the Ruby Station. That went to Fort Ruby.

RM: OK. The next stop was Fort Ruby, after the Jacobson place?

IS: After the next one.

RM: OK, and going west from Roberts Creek, you said there was Grubbs Flat and Hickison Ranch. What was at the Hickison Ranch then?

IS: I wasn't around. I've seen it from a distance a million times and never was up there.

RM: Is that in Eureka County?

IS: It's in Lander County. Not too far into Lander, but that's where those graves are and where they had that shooting with the Indians.

RM: Do you know how Roberts Creek got its name?

IS: No. They say that Captain Roberts came there with the troops and it was named after him. I couldn't prove or disprove any of it.

RM: How do you get there?

IS: You go right out on the highway here about 14 miles and you'll see a sign for Roberts Creek. After about 6 or 8 miles you can see the ranch.

RM: Is it that mountain kind of standing up there all alone?

IS: Yes. It's a big mountain. But you can see the ranch from the highway. You can see those old poplar trees if you know where to look.

RM: How many sheep did you say were on that mountain in the old days?

IS: As I told you, my dad went down on the desert with 22,000 head in 1928.

RM: And he had 22,000 on that mountain?

IS: No, it and Squaw Mountain. That mountain couldn't support 22,000.

RM: Where's Squaw Mountain?

IS: That's the old Porter Ranch. It's on the jig side of that range across from Pine Valley. He owned all that range. Eureka Livestock used all the range on both sides of Pine Valley, as I told you.

RM: We were talking last time about how the range has gone downhill. How much of that is drought and how much of it is overgrazing?

IS: Well, that's a matter of opinion, but your overgrazing contributed more to the damaging of all this country than anything else: horses, cattle, sheep and drought.

RM: How would you respond to ranchers who say, "Well, we're caretakers of the land and we have an investment here and we're not abusing the land."

IS: I've been all through that. I've seen it all my life, and all I've ever seen is a decline everywhere, except for this forest reserve. With the stringent rules they've got, they've managed to do a little better with it. But all you have to do is go over there and look at that and then look at the land they've been operating on and you can see the answer staring you right in the face.

Here's another deal. I didn't see it, as I said before, but they told me they ran 50,000 head of sheep on the Diamond Mountain Range. You don't have to be a mathematician — just look at the range. Today, you couldn't run 5000. And it wasn't all drought. Whenever you eliminate that grass and everything, it doesn't bounce back and come back next year — it takes years. And some of it never ever comes back.

Roberts Creek mountain was just a mass of sunflowers when I was growing up. As I told you, the old man would tell all those herders, "Now, you guys go on in there with those sheep. Don't you put a dog on those sheep. You're fired if you do."

"Why?" they'd say.

"All they do is tear those sunflowers up."

You'd see those sheep with a big yellow ring around their nose from eating sunflowers.

RM: And they did well on it?

IS: Oh, god — 72-, 73-pound lambs. You can't equal that under the same conditions today, even with one band.

RM: What did the dog do? Why did he say to not put a dog on them?

IS: They'd send a dog up there to turn them and those sheep would just whip back. They were terrified of that dog. They'd get in a dead run and you know what they'll do. Those sunflowers are kind of brittle; they just don't stand it.

RM: How high did the sunflowers get?

IS: Oh, about a foot high.

RM: How big was the flower?

IS: A couple of inches across. And they are a different variety of sunflower from these that you see here. They've got a dark green leaf on them and when they're good, they're a top sheep feed.

CHAPTER TEN

- RM: With the range overgrazed and degraded and suffering from drought, how do you see the role of the rancher in rural Nevada now?
- IS: It's going to get less and less. With the restrictions they're putting on them . . . but that's like shutting the barn door after the horse is gone. The damage is already done. Let's look it right square in the eye — there's no way you're going to change that. If there is, I wish somebody would come tell me. I'd be glad to listen to them.
- RM: Do you see ranching as coming to an end?
- IS: It will be severely restricted; let's put it that way. I can't see that far into the future. And I haven't got that much time left.
- RM: Does it make you nostalgic or sad to think of the end of the ranching era?
- IS: When you see a terrible change in something you knew or grew up with, if you've got any compunctions or any feelings it doesn't make you happy. You know things that you grew up with are gone and you just wonder if there's something wrong with your head.
- RM: Now, the era that we're talking about when you were out at the Roberts Creek Ranch and so on was in the teens or the '20s?
- IS: I was on Robert's Creek in 1932, and I was born there. That's a 20-year period.
- RM: And the Pony Express station was still there when you left?
- IS: That's right. But remember, the Pony Express only ran in 1860 and '61. It was an old building then, made out of sod and adobe brick, but they tore it down. Well, you know, that's progress. Then afterwards somebody else comes in and tears down what you built.
- RM: Too bad they do that, isn't it?
- IS: My god. Well, you've been around Tonopah long enough and you've inquired down there. There are a lot of old things nobody knows a thing about, but you run into someone once in a while who remembers or is old enough to know what he's talking about. Some building used to be in a spot and now it's gone.
- RM: Yes. I have a place in Tonopah and the area where we made a little parking spot is just filled with old nails.
- IS: Square nails?
- RM: No, they're not square. They're round. But they're old and rusty and they say there used to be a house there, and the only thing left are the nails that I have to pick up.
- IS: Did you inquire about the old butcher shop in Tonopah?
- RM: Yes. I think it was down from the Mizpah Hotel.
- IS: From what I've been told, it's on that point opposite the Mizpah.
- RM: Oh, you mean up the street where the Y used to be?
- IS: That's it. But I never had anybody say, "Well, here's where that butcher shop was." And I was around Bill Thomas. I could have found out a million times,

-
- but I didn't even think about it.
- RM: Tell me about lower Big Smoky Valley, down there at Millers. That would have been where your father was raising sheep.
- IS: He used to trail up through there to Austin. He ran in Austin first. When the Forest Service came in, he got into a lawsuit with the federal government and they finally broke him over it.
- RM: When was that?
- IS: Prior to 1910. That's when he came over here to Eureka and bought this.
- RM: What was his lawsuit about?
- IS: About running sheep on the Toiyabes. He had the Birch Creek Ranch right off the highway for a while.
- RM: Where is that?
- IS: Do you know where the Tonopah sign is, going toward Austin where the Tonopah highway . . .
- RM: OK — that goes down Smoky Valley.
- IS: Right. That first ranch on the right is the Birch Creek.
- RM: And he was running sheep in the Toiyabes?
- IS: Why, sure. One time in Tonopah he told me he ran his sheep up by Arc Dome and all that country. Of course, he didn't ask anybody. He just went where he wanted.
- RM: That's the way they did it in those days. And he had the lawsuit with the federal government. What were they suing him about?
- IS: He wouldn't pay for running the sheep up there, I presume.
- RM: But they didn't make them pay in those days, did they?
- IS: No. They had everything for nothing. But when the federal government clamped down it was a different story. But you tell one of those old-timers that and he'd tell you to go fly a kite.
- RM: And that's what he did?
- IS: That's what he did.
- RM: So after he lost the lawsuit he just moved out of there?
- IS: He just got plumb out of there. He had to, because he didn't have any range. They clamped right down on him.
- RM: They gave the range to the cattlemen there, didn't they?
- IS: Yes, some of it. And he moved some of the sheep he had there into the Reno area and ran up there for a while.
- RM: But he would winter them down at the lower end of Smoky Valley?
- IS: Yes — San Antone and all that country down through there. Wherever he saw feed, that's where they went. They always kept track of feed and of where the moisture was; where the rains were.
- RM: You never herded or anything down in there, did you?
- IS: I never herded, no. I never herded in my life except a little bit in lambing time. But I've taken grub down; the old man would send me there. We used to go clear down to Golden Arrow and all that country.
- RM: What do you recall about down below San Antone and down in that area?

- IS: It's not the same country that I knew when I first went there. I saw sand grass waving up there 3 feet high.
- RM: Sand grass 3 feet high!
- IS: The seeds on it were just like grain — you'd see the pods . . . the sheep looked just like they were on grain. Ask any of the old-timers about that.
- RM: And it was all over down there?
- IS: In the biggest part of it, yes. If you look for it today . . .
- RM: You can't find it. And what little sand grass you see would be less than a foot high.
- IS: Yes. Now you know what we mean when we're talking about changes. Just go down there and talk to one of those good old-timers who has any sense down there and see what he tells you.
- RM: What other plants were down there?
- IS: White sage. It would be up almost 2 feet high. In Fish Creek they used to mow it and stack it. The Pages had the Fish Creek Ranch and they used to come up occasionally to visit us and they told us that they even mowed it.
- RM: I wonder how high it was when they would cut it.
- IS: The highest I ever saw white sage was about 16 to 18 inches high. Not everywhere, just in spots.
- RM: And they would mow it. What would they do, cut the tops off?
- IS: No, they'd cut it right off and just stack it like hay.
- RM: Wouldn't that damage it?
- IS: Well, they'd dry it, but the animals would eat it. It's better than a snowbank.
- RM: Would the mowing damage the plant?
- IS: No, it would come back the next year. What damages that white sage is when you get stock on it and they tromp on it and eat it when it is growing.
- RM: So there was a lot of white sage down below San Antone?
- IS: All that country had white sage in it — Ralston and so on.
- RM: It doesn't have that much white sage now, does it?
- IS: No. It has nothing. Now it has another plant that's all over Fish Creek here, too — halogeton. Nothing eats it; it's just like a weed. It's a plant that came into this country about 20 years ago. It never was here before. It just crowds that white sage right out. I can show it to you all over the place.
- RM: Where did it come from?
- IS: Who knows. But it's like Russian thistles; they're not native either. At certain times, it's poisonous as hell on sheep. I've seen big sheep killed on that — 500, 600 in one night.
- RM: Wow! But only at certain times?
- IS: Yes — fall and early spring.
- RM: If it's all over now, a person would have trouble, wouldn't he?
- IS: Yes, but it doesn't grow everywhere; it's just in spots.
- RM: Was the vegetation in Ralston Valley the same in the '20s and '30s as this valley — rye grass and white sage and everything?
- IS: Yes, all that country was like that. Look at the amount of cattle O. K. Reed

-
- and Ed Reed ran there. Those cattle were doing well up till '34. That's when the hammer dropped, as I told you before.
- RM: Basically they just overgrazed the whole thing, didn't they, along with drought?
- IS: Yes, everything combined. You can't pin it on one specific thing. But if a person could think back and remember every little thing and then compare it to today, boy, there have been some terrible changes.
- RM: I know we've talked about them, but why don't you just mention them specifically here again. One is the drought.
- IS: Yes. The next big problem is overgrazing. You can take an area where the mustangs were for a number of years, and you can still see those spots in this country. You know the country. You know what it's like now, but you've got to know what it was like before.
- RM: And that's the trouble — most people don't know what it was like.
- IS: That's what you're bucking, mister. And that's one of the things I won't embellish and I won't lie about.
- RM: Yes. The mustang are degrading things too, aren't they?
- IS: Oh! You read about these people who want to keep the mustangs and eliminate the cattle. That's disgusting to me. That is not in the realm of good sense.
- RM: Right. They're doing as much damage as the cows and sheep did back then, aren't they?
- IS: Why, sure. And your water areas are scarce. There are just a limited number of water holes, and they're where those mustangs congregate, and they just beat hell out of that. And then they tell you how they're suffering — they haven't got water and they've got to go 8 or 10 miles for water. Well, I've seen them go 17 to 18 miles for water every day — maybe 20 — and still survive.
- RM: Did you know the Dann sisters?
- IS: They went to school here. I knew their father, old Dewey, real well. He was a good Indian. He was a fine old man — honest. You could put his word in the bank down there. And he never harmed anybody.
- RM: How do you feel about the daughters' claim that Indians own all this land and everything?
- IS: Well, they made a deal for that. You know as well as I do that years ago they never stuck by their deals, and now some of the consequences are coming up and they don't want to accept the money. Well, be that as it may. That's their privilege. But I'll not uphold them in any way in that situation.
- RM: Where was Dewey's ranch?
- IS: He started out in Grass Valley, at Cowboy's Rest.
- RM: Now, where's Grass Valley?
- IS: Well, you know Smoky Valley. Grass Valley is the big valley north of that. It goes clear through Cortez.
- RM: Is it north of Austin?

IS: No, it's west of Austin, but it winds up quite a ways north.
RM: Oh, it's north of Reese River Valley?
IS: No, west — right over the Shoshone Mountain Range.
RM: How did he get over here?
IS: He homesteaded that place by the Dean Ranch. His place is just a little north of that.
RM: And what valley is that in?
IS: That's Crescent Valley.
RM: When did he come in there?
IS: I don't remember. I remember him the best in the '30s, running when Beowawe . . . he always had that and he always liked me. I liked him.
RM: What do you remember about Beowawe?
IS: It was just a railroad stop, a whistle stop. There were a few ranches there, the Horseshoe, the McConnell place and the Johnson place. And there's a woman who's married to a cousin of mine, Sansinena, and they've got a ranch right on the north edge of town.
RM: Were there stores in Beowawe?
IS: There were stores and a couple of saloons. One was the Big Humboldt and Androsi had the other one; I forget what he called it.
RM: Did it have a couple of grocery stores?
IS: Jack Tyler had a store, Tyler's Grocery. That's the only one I remember.
RM: And what else was there?
IS: The railroad depot and 2 sets of stockyards, one at the lower end and one up above. I shipped a lot of lamb out of there.
RM: Did you take them up on the narrow gauge or did you drive them up there?
IS: Sometimes we drove them up there.
RM: Tell me about driving sheep. How many miles can you go a day?
IS: That all depends on the conditions, but normally when they're traveling and they get good feed and all, they go 3 to 4 miles. You just let them feed along. If you're pushing them and have somewhere to take them, you might get 10 miles out of them.
RM: Ten would be a good day?
IS: You bet it would.
RM: So sheep are slower than cows?
IS: Oh, yes.
RM: Do they dally along?
IS: Well, they eat as they go. They get tired about noon and lie down and rest for an hour or two. You've got to let them rest. Then they get up and feed and go on until pretty near sundown, and then they start to bunch up and look for a place to bed down.
RM: They don't have the endurance that a cow has?
IS: Oh, hell no.
RM: Do you remember any specific water holes in lower Smoky Valley?
IS: The only one I remember was Twin Rivers.

RM: I mean below that, going down towards San Antone.

IS: There's a seep or so on one side of that. I was just there for a few minutes once on horseback looking for some sheep, so I don't remember too much about that. The Stevensons had a ranch at San Antone.

RM: Did you run your sheep clear on down to the lower end of Lone Mountain?

IS: Oh, god, way past it. Lone Mountain's the mountain this side of Tonopah?

RM: Yes, that big one sitting out there alone.

IS: I told you those sheep went into Silver Bow.

RM: That would have been east, though.

IS: Yes, but quite a long way south too — Cedar pipeline, Wild Horse pipeline . . . There was always a bunch of wild bulls running at Cedar pipeline.

RM: So you were running your sheep clear down in there?

IS: Anywhere where the feed was.

RM: And that was in the '20s?

IS: And the early '30s, too. Of course, you had to have snow to get down there; those sheep had to have moisture. So if it was a dry winter or you had a hard time, you stuck with the hilly part of the country and didn't get down right flat.

RM: How long can a sheep go without water?

IS: After a couple of days it depends on the condition of the feed. They've got to have moisture. Everything hinges on that feed.

RM: What was the feed down there? Was it rye grass and white sage?

IS: And black sage. If the sheep eat that short black sage they do well on it. All those things made sheep feed. They'll browse, too, you know.

RM: You couldn't run sheep down there now, could you, even if the bombing range wasn't there?

IS: They say the horses can't make it down there, so how could a sheep make it?

RM: A horse can make it where a sheep can't, then?

IS: Absolutely, because he can travel. He's more mobile.

RM: How about a cow? Can he make it where a sheep can't?

IS: It's an iffy situation. They're both hurting when they get to that stage of the game. I told you the other day I've seen cows to 3 and 4 miles from feed to water — wear the ends of their toes off, squirting blood. I saw that in '34. That finished old O. K. and Ed Reed.

RM: Did the Reeds ever give you a bad time for taking sheep down on that country?

IS: Never. Eureka Livestock was welcome anywhere. I'd go see Reed or somebody, and he'd say, "Don't tell me. Bring me a lamb after you get down." Old man Fallini was the same. You'd stay overnight with him and he'd say, "You got any meat, [I'm] always looking for lamb."
"Yeah, I got some good meat."
"Oh, good. You go."
You'd hear about them growling or something how that damn Eureka Livestock was taking the country over, but there was never any out-and-out trouble

or anything.

RM: Did you ever get down to Railroad Valley?

IS: Nyala? Yes. Emery Garret was in Nyala at that time; he had the post office. Sharps had the ranch. And the Bordolis were there.

RM: The Sharps were up at Blue Eagle, weren't they?

IS: Yes. They had all the alkalied cows in the world.

RM: What does that mean?

IS: The hair all peels off their necks and they don't get fat. The alkali content is too great.

RM: And Blue Eagle had a lot of that?

IS: They've got it there right today.

RM: Did you take your sheep clear on down to Nyala and that way?

IS: No, we never fooled with that side. You know the range opposite Nyala? They call it Mesquite — Mosquito Flat. Go down to the edge of that and look down below and then towards Stormy and that country. Then there was Clark Station alongside the road. A little bootlegger named Clark ran that.

RM: Where was Clark Station?

IS: Do you know where Stormy is?

RM: No, I don't.

IS: When you make the turn to go toward Warm Springs and start south, you know how the highway bends down that way and makes a turn against that big hill . . .

RM: Yes.

IS: Clark Station was right alongside the highway there.

RM: Oh, it was a highway maintenance station.

IS: Yes, they used it for a while.

RM: OK, where you go out across that flat from Warm Springs down below Morey Peak?

IS: On this opposite side of the valley, though — on the east side of the valley. That was Clark's Station.

RM: Down below what they used to call Rattlesnake. They call it Sand Pass or something now, you know.

IS: Oh, these turkeys come along here and say, "Well, we hear you were raised here. Where's such-and-such a peak?"

I tell them, "I've never heard of it in my life." Well, they describe it. I say, "They didn't call it that."

They have a name for this big mountain here back of Fish Creek. Some turkey asked me a few years ago, "Where's that mountain?"

I said, "I don't know."

He said, "I understand you used to own the Fish Creek Ranch."

"Yes."

"What's the name of that mountain?"

I said, "That's Dave Kean Mountain. Now remember that."

"Well, it don't say it in my book."

I said, "You stay with your book, I'm telling you mine."

Then those 2 sons of Fenstermaker's came to Fish Creek looking for their dad's grave. He's buried there. They'd had these big old square posts and they'd all been knocked down — guys burn them for firewood. They came and looked us up and they asked me, "Do you know where that grave is?"

"I know exactly where it's at."

"Can you show us that?"

"Come on." It had an iron stake driven there. I said, "You see where that stake is? That's your dad's grave." He died there, and both of those boys said they buried him in an old well. I wasn't there to see it or anything.

And they looked at those 2 peaks. They said, "Do you know the name of those 2 peaks?"

I said, "No."

"That's Victor's Peak (that's one of the boy's names) and that's Henry's Peak, the next one above there. One for each boy."

I said, "Well, that's the first time I heard that."

RM: Is that right? And where is that?

IS: Right at the head of the Fish Creek Ranch. There's a big white gravestone there: "With Grant in Shiloh. Henry Clay Fenstermaker."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

- RM: Isadore and I are discussing some papers found by Ron Carrion in an old building in Eureka. Isadore, we have a letterhead here.
- IS: Yes. Eather and Flavin — Fred Eather and Will J. Flavin.
- RM: And who are they?
- IS: They were the owners of a grocery store here in town.
- RM: And where was it located?
- IS: Next to this building.
- RM: We're inside the Owl Club and Steak House. So it would have been just east of here.
- IS: The next building is the old bank, and the next building was Eather's.
- RM: And this next item is a receipt from J. W. Lambert of Lambert and Company. It says "general merchandise."
- IS: I know nothing about that. You'd have to go to Albert Biale to get information on that.
- RM: Oh, my lord. The date here is 1890-something.
- IS: We've hit pay dirt here — F. J. Eather, June 11, 1927.
- RM: Now, here's another statement.
- IS: This I know nothing about.
- RM: This is the Conklin Sampling Works of Salt Lake City, Utah. That's an assay office, isn't it?
- IS: Yes. Here, I've got some more of it here — all Conklin Sampling Works.
- RM: Here's a Eureka Dry Goods Store by Fred Eather.
- IS: That's where all this stuff was found; right next door to the old bank building.
- RM: It says: "Dry Goods. Ladies' and childrens' underwear, hosiery and gents' furnishings."
- IS: Yes. Here's another one I knew nothing about.
- RM: A. C. L. Haase and Sons Fish Company, St. Louis, Missouri. It was shipped to Fred Eather. So he was getting fish shipped in from St. Louis.
- IS: That's right.
- RM: I'll be darned. He's getting Norway mackerel or fat mackerel — I can't quite decipher that. And "peerless codfish" shipped in from this company in St. Louis in 1924.
- IS: John Holly Company to Fred Eather.
- RM: Sold to Fred Eather, 19 turkeys December 18, 1923. He shipped 19 turkeys for \$63.69. [Laughs]
- IS: Here's one I know nothing about, and it's the one I'd like to see. I know there was a store up on Ruby Hill — the Ruby Hill Mercantile Company, Ruby Hill, Nevada. Look at the date on it! It's 190- . . . it goes back there. This is from the Reno Brewing Company, Reno, Nevada — New Style Lager. That's to Fred Eather, too.
- Here's one from Du Pont Pharmacy in Elko. I knew that very well. The date

on this is October 28, 1925.

RM: He's shipping down an atomizer and other things to Fred Eather. And here's a Frank Boskowitz, Cigar Manufacturer, 329 Clay Street, San Francisco. This is dated 1924.

This is the Farmer's Merchants National Bank, 1925.

IS: Oh, god. Angelo Berolo had a grocery store right up the street, just above the theater building. You can't make out the date, though.

RM: It's '21 or '22 — July the 3rd, 1922. Angelo Berolo.

IS: He had a son named Galileo — they called him "Pig" — and he had a daughter, Tranquilla.

RM: This paper is from the Fallon-Ely Stage Company, July of 1926. It says, "Auto freight and passenger service. Home office, Fallon."

IS: They all drove big Cadillac cars for buses. This was all gravel highway.

RM: How long did the Fallon-Ely operate?

IS: I've no idea. There were several owners in it, and then Hiskey took it and they called it Hiskey Stage.

RM: Here's another one from the Frank Boskowitz Cigar Company in San Francisco in 1926 for \$45 worth of cigars. That would have been a lot of cigars in those days.

IS: There were a lot of cigar smokers in those days.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: Here's a little newspaper clipping, undated, that says that a rancher was "... guilty of possession of liquor-distilling apparatus and of the manufacture of liquor and sentenced to serve 6 months in a Washoe County jail and pay a fine of \$500." That was Raine. "Indicted again today was J. H. Bright on charges of using deadly weapon and resisting a revenue officer and bond fixed at \$5000."

IS: He didn't have a thing to do with that. He didn't want to shoot anybody.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: There's a bill here dated 1927 from Fletcher and Bartine Water Works. Tell me about them.

IS: They had the water works and a trucking establishment, and they had a stable right across the street where that station stands. That was the Croesus Stable. They hauled all the ore from the mines with big draft horses. Mel M. Fletcher was justice of peace afterwards. Fred Bartine had a gas station and some cabins down at the lower end of town. Fletcher lived in that house right straight below me — that first white house.

RM: Where did they get the water for the water works?

IS: All the springs up on the mountain to the south.

RM: There are springs up there?

IS: Yes, a number of springs.

RM: Does the town still get its water there?

IS: Some, but most of it is pumped in from the flat now. The springs weren't adequate during this drought.

RM: Have the springs dried up?
IS: They've shortened up, but they're still there and they're still running.
RM: And they collected that water and then distributed it through the town?
IS: Yes. There was a tank up there on the hill and they had pipelines in from the tank.
RM: And they owned the pipe in the ground and everything?
IS: They owned every bit of it. And that was the Eureka Water Works.
RM: And they would just send people a monthly bill for their water?
IS: Absolutely.
RM: Was it good water?
IS: Yes.
RM: Did they start the water works or did they buy it from somebody?
IS: It was in private ownership. Fletcher and Bartine got it from Antone Peroni. A. C. Florio had it afterwards; he bought them out.
RM: When do you think Fletcher and Bartine acquired the water works?
IS: In the '20s sometime, but I can't fix all those dates.
RM: Sure. Nobody can. How long did Florio have it? Did he own it quite a while?
IS: Oh, quite a while. But I don't remember when he got rid of it. I'd say that it was in the '40s.
RM: Who did he sell it to?
IS: To an association and the county.
RM: Who did Peroni get it from?
IS: I can't remember.
RM: It must go way back.
IS: Oh, hell, you're going back to 1860, practically.
RM: And it comes from springs up south of the town, up on the hill?
IS: South of Eureka, yes. Mostly along the highway going toward Ely or right close to it. Then there was the Ruby Hill Water Works. My dad, as the Eureka Livestock Company, had that. He in turn sold that to Florio. That was the Shepherd Water Works, Ruby Hill Water Works.
RM: Tell me about Ruby Hill. Was there a pretty good town up there?
IS: Oh, yes, but that was a little before my time. There were quite a few buildings up there — schools, stores and you name it.
RM: When you came on the scene, what was there?
IS: Boardinghouses and some living houses. The Kitchens lived up there. That's all. But you know how a kid is — he doesn't pay attention.
RM: Yes. And your father had bought the water works there?
IS: That was owned by the Eureka Livestock when he bought the company.
RM: What other things did the Eureka Livestock own, besides land and livestock? Did they have any other utilities or things like that?
IS: No. Theirs was a livestock operation and they didn't fool with anything else. I don't know how the previous owners acquired that water company — who, where, or who from.

RM: It probably wasn't that profitable, was it?

IS: Heck, no. And in those days there were a lot of poor people around, too. Well, they didn't pay.

RM: Yes. Now, this bill that we have dated August 9, 1927, from Fletcher and Bartine Water Works is for ice. They're delivering ice every 3 or 4 days for 50 cents.

IS: The Hunters had an ice cellar here and they used to cut ice. They had an ice pond up here above town, but I don't remember that producing too much. They packed the ice in sawdust and kept it till they run out.

RM: And there wasn't an ice plant here in town?

IS: No, they just had that pond. When it froze, if it froze solid enough, they'd go in and cut it. They'd put it in their cellar and cover it with sawdust.

RM: And then Fletcher and Bartine were buying that ice?

IS: I don't know how they acquired it.

RM: You've got a letter here from Hiram Johnson — June 7th, from Redwood City. Who was he?

IS: All I can tell you is that he lived down on that corner by the bank. He was a white-haired old gentleman. What he did around here, I do not know.

RM: OK. Now, the Eureka Cash Store is the Biales. Tell me about them.

IS: There was old John B. Biale and his wife Laura Bonnetti, son Albert and daughter Clotilde. They owned the Eureka Cash Store.

RM: And where was it located?

IS: Right at the lower end of town on the right side. Right now Jerry White owns it.

RM: And J. B. Biale would be the present Mr. Biale's . . .

IS: Father.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: We're looking at a booklet, *Eureka Livestock Company*, 1904. IS: I've ordered a lot of wool, but never on cars like [the one in that picture]. They were enclosed. That engine would set those wool bags afire.

RM: We're looking at a picture here on page 6 of this booklet, showing a narrow gauge engine, isn't it?

IS: Yes, and coal cars.

RM: Flat cars loaded with wool.

IS: Yes, from the Eureka Livestock.

RM: And you wouldn't do that, would you, because the engine would set the wool on fire.

IS: No way. We lost a whole crop of wool in 1919 — seventy-some thousand dollars' worth, 500 bags — at that old station. It was set on fire by that thing. We had no insurance.

RM: Is that right! How did you load that wool?

IS: You'd stand them up in boxcars.

RM: What did the bales weigh?

IS: They'd average about 380 pounds.

RM: How did you handle them?
IS: Brute strength and awkward.
RM: How many guys would it take?
IS: There'd be a whole crew — 7-8 men.
RM: Why didn't they put them in smaller bales?
IS: Well, when you're getting that wool off those sheep, you're putting it in a bag and you've got to tromp her to tighten it up. If not, you couldn't get 30 fleeces in the sack.
RM: Oh! And it's shipped in that bag?
IS: Yes. And that wool used to go clear to Boston, to Eisman Brothers.
RM: Now, this is a clearer picture than in that other one.
IS: All right. That's the ranch house in Roberts Creek — a better picture.
RM: Let's go through this pamphlet and have you talk about each one of these pictures. On page one . . .
IS: I see a band of sheep, about 3000. That's bigger than the average band we handled. They're getting ready to shear them.
Here's the old Bull Creek Ranch. We used to go through there in the fall when the sheep would be going south. They raised hay on the ranch and fed cattle there some winters.
RM: Where is the Bull Creek Ranch?
IS: It's in Nye County, right off of Duckwater on the right side —northeast.
RM: Up in that mountain there?
IS: Yes, right at the foot at that mountain. There are 2 big springs there — Big Bull and Little Bull.
RM: Was that good range down there?
IS: That was fall and winter range if conditions were right. If.
RM: Which way are we looking in this picture?
IS: You're approaching from the north to the south, from the right.
RM: Are we looking down Railroad Valley?
IS: No, not quite. That's a separate valley. There's a low range between Duckwater and that valley. Bull Creek is to the east of that range, right in that valley.

CHAPTER TWELVE

- RM: OK. We've got the picture on page 3.
- IS: This is looking from west to east at Fish Creek Ranch. Those are the alfalfa fields.
- RM: Where is the Fish Creek Ranch from here?
- IS: It's 20 miles out here. Ten miles toward Ely, and then turn right 10 more miles and you're in Fish Creek Ranch.
- RM: And what was there?
- IS: It's a good-size ranch — 2500 acres. It was originally 3 different ranches — the Fenstermaker Ranch, the Barney place and the Page place.
- RM: And they consolidated it?
- IS: Yes. All of it.
- RM: Who consolidated it — Eureka Livestock?
- IS: No. It was consolidated before that.
- RM: What's on page 5?
- IS: A bunch of sheared sheep. I can't tell you where they are; nothing is familiar to me. Page 6 shows a trainload of wool. We talked about that one. Page 7 is a picture of horses and mules. They raised quite a few horses and mules at Eureka Livestock. My dad did in fact, too. He had 8 jacks at one time.
- RM: Are they donkeys?
- IS: No. They're the big Missouri jacks. They all came from Missouri. They raised mules off those jacks. They bred the jacks to the mares and got the mules.
- RM: What were they doing with the mules?
- IS: They had regular mule buyers who came up here looking for the cotton mules, as they called them. They used to take them into Missouri and all that. They were mean. I shipped part of them.
- RM: So your dad had 8 jack studs there, basically?
- IS: That's right — for breeding purposes.
- RM: How many mules were they shipping a year?
- IS: That posed kind of an iffy proposition, but they'd sell 50 and 60 at a time. Jacks aren't very good breeders.
- RM: You mean they won't breed?
- IS: They just pay no attention.
- RM: They don't get a fertile take?
- IS: No.
- RM: What was a mule worth?
- IS: It says here \$45, but at that time, if I remember right, they were getting a little more than that.
- RM: Where were they raising the mules?
- IS: At the Roberts Creek Ranch.
- RM: But they had buyers who would come in here and buy them and take them back to Missouri?

IS: It's right in here, yes. One of the buyers' names was Libby. He was a Missouri mule buyer.

RM: And then they would ship them back there on the railroad?

IS: Yes. We took them to the railroad and loaded them.

RM: They weren't broke or anything, were they?

IS: Hell, no. All you did was trim their manes and their tails. You had to throw them down to do it.

RM: How old were they when they bought them?

IS: Three or 4 years old.

RM: Was the mule hard to handle?

IS: Some of them were nasty. Big dumb mules, god!

RM: How big would they be?

IS: The cotton mules were around 1000 to 1100 pounds. Anything bigger than that, they didn't want.

RM: And how big were the jacks?

IS: They were huge jacks. Some of those jacks weighed right around 1000 pounds.

RM: Wow! So they're not like our little desert donkeys.

IS: There's no comparison, man. They had those big long heads and long ears. The buyers always looked at the heads the first thing. They wanted a mule head, not the burro head — your burros are short-headed. They didn't want that. The jack had to have it, too, or they didn't want it.

RM: That's fascinating. OK. Page 9 has a photo of passing the Fish Creek house.

IS: Yes. That's the one that burnt down, the one that was there originally. Then my dad moved it up there about a mile. That's where it is today.

RM: OK. And then we've got page 11. What do you see there?

IS: A Hereford bull.

RM: There's no telling where that is?

IS: I have no conception.

RM: Yes. He's not nearly as big as our bulls nowadays, is he?

IS: Well, and he's no prize, just to take a look at him. [Laughter] Look at that head, in fact. You couldn't sell him. They'd laugh at you.

RM: He'd make soup nowadays, wouldn't he?

IS: Now you're talking my language.

RM: And then the last page, page 12, is branding calves.

IS: Yes. I don't know where that is.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

RM: OK, we're going to the Fad shaft. Has it always been called the Fad shaft?

IS: Yes. It was sunk in the '40s here, and the depth is around 2300 feet. There are a million holes around here.

RM: OK, the big mine west of Eureka on Ruby Hill is the Fad shaft, the big building with the iron gallows frame. Just where was the old town of Ruby Hill? Was it right up where you see those old houses?

IS: Yes, all up through there were houses, on the other side of that. That was the town of Ruby Hill. There were schools, stores and everything up there when I was a kid.

Now, this was done last year. They made a leaching plant where there was a pile of ore there. I'll show you where they moved it from. I could show you 50 holes in the ground right here in this area, but I know nothing about them. They were before my time.

RM: Did they pull much ore out of the Fad Shaft?

IS: They got run out of there by water. We pumped 11,000 gallons a minute out of that hole.

RM: So they really never took any ore out?

IS: Well, they had this little dump here. Toward the last they had an outfit from Canada that grouted every inch of ground that they tore up to keep the water out.

RM: OK. You said they had 22 or 23 pieces of power equipment running. Was it all run on electricity?

IS: It was electricity the whole time. They made their own power —there was no other power available. The power went here from Eureka.

RM: OK, what is this first one?

IS: A Mackintosh Seymore diesel made in Auburn, New York. They had 3 of those. They shipped 2 of those to Uruguay. They had a mine deal going there and they had some revolution in the government so they had to get out of there and they left those 2.

RM: That was the company that did that?

IS: Yes.

RM: They ran 24 hours a day, didn't they?

IS: Twenty-four hours a day, yes. They had 3 Worthington diesel generators of 1432 horsepower up here. That's what I wanted to show you. Look on the side of that.

RM: Yes — 1432 horsepower, 1000 kilowatts. Made in the USA. The Worthington Pump and Machinery Company, Buffalo, New York. And it's got a big General Electric generator on it.

IS: A thousand-kilowatt generator.

RM: The generator operates at 360 rpm.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

IS: During this last operation I was the boss here for Hecla.

RM: What years were that?

IS: That was '58 or '59, I think. We pumped the hole out — dried it out. That's when they had this Canadian corporation grout the head, trying to drift over to the ore.

RM: Oh, so they had originally come here in the '40s and they got driven out by the water?

IS: Yes, this shaft was sunk here in the '40s.
You synchronized all these engines when you put one on the line. If you didn't, it'd kick them right back off and blow your generator.

RM: Did they start sinking the shaft in the early '40s?

IS: Let's see. I was working at the Locan in '43. They started around '44 or '45.

RM: Was that when they brought these engines in?

IS: No. That was after, when they got it sunk and were encountering the water all the time. They put big Byron Jackson pumps in the hole.

RM: And when did they move the generators in?

IS: This one was in quite a while before the other 2; I can't remember the dates. It was in that period, though.

RM: At what level did they hit all that water?

IS: It must have been down round 1000 feet.

RM: And when did they put these big engines in?

IS: Well, there's a span there. Let's see. (I helped close this thing down 3 or 4 different times.) It must have been the early '50s when they got those other 2; the other one was already in.

RM: But they still couldn't pump it out?

IS: There was 11,000 gallons a minute coming out of that hole and it finally ran them out. It was just a big wall of water; they barely got out of there in time. It was never pumped out again till Hecla came in here. And I ran it for Hecla.

RM: And when did Hecla come in — the '50s?

IS: The late '50s.

RM: Did you get it pumped out then?

IS: We got it down. Bill Anderson and I were the first 2 men down that hole after it was pumped out. I came off a shift here and he said, "Hey! You're going down the hole with me."
I said, "I don't belong down there."
He said, "You're the only one I trust. Come on." We went down, and here were these massive steel girders, all twisted up like corkscrews. They had a lot of equipment and machinery down there, and they got everything out of there.

RM: That had been under water before?

IS: Yes. Let's look. I'll show you all those generators; there are about 5 of them.

RM: Were they trying to drift under something?

IS: They were trying to get to that ore over there.

RM: Is the ore back to the west?
IS: No. That's south. They wanted to get that big ore body I was telling you about before. It's down over 2000 feet.
RM: And it's still there?
IS: You bet it is. It's going to stay there.
RM: How thick was the ore body?
IS: Well, you can't tell. I drilled on it, and some places were 30 to 40 feet deep.
RM: And what did it run?
IS: Who knows. They didn't tell you.
RM: But it was good ore?
IS: Yes, but it was complex ore — lead, silver, zinc, you name it. RM: N o w , these are the big Worthingtons here too?
IS: Yes. These 2 came late.
RM: How many cylinders do they have?
IS: Those have 8.
RM: The pistons must be the size of a 5-gallon bucket!
IS: I'll show you a piston. Let me go down there; if I remember right . . .
[Tape is turned off for a while.]
RM: The pistons weigh 700 pounds apiece.
IS: Yes. There have to be 21 or 22 of them around here.
RM: Big pumps that are 3 feet in diameter.
IS: Yes. Alice Chalmers and other brands. The sumps that hooked onto . . . 22. The next one's only 17. The next one's on the 800-foot level.
RM: Wow. This is a piston?
IS: A 16-cylinder Jimmy — 1000 kilowatts.
RM: A "Jimmy" is a GMC, isn't it?
IS: Right.
RM: They're gone, aren't they?
IS: Yes. They've stripped it all. There's the outside of the generator.
[Tape is turned off for a while.]
IS: The head . . .
RM: Oh, this is the head, with the valves. It's 30 inches square. Look at those big old springs for the valves. How much fuel did one of these big Worthingtons use a day?
IS: They took 1300 gallons every morning.
RM: Oh, my god.
IS: They had a string of fuel trucks coming in here.
[Tape is turned off for a while.]
RM: When you had 50 or 100 men underground, that was a responsibility.
IS: Yes, that was on your back.
RM: How long would it take it to flood if things broke down?
IS: When it finally came in, it was just 30 minutes or so.
[Tape is turned off for a while.]
IS: The water level in the shaft is right at the 800 level now, right in that neigh-

borhood.

RM: And it was 2200 feet deep, so it's got 1500 feet of water?

IS: Or better. The depth was around 2300 when they got through sinking it, because there's a lot of silt and stuff.

RM: Where was the lowest level in the shaft? Was there a sump?

IS: [The lowest level was] 2200 feet.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

IS: [Looking at the big diesels' cooling systems:] Water came through here and you cooled it and returned it back.

RM: Then basically it was a big radiator?

IS: Yes. They say there was a mile of tubing in each one of these

RM: I bet it was warm down here in the winter, wasn't it?

IS: Not too warm. There's a lot of concrete here, Bob.

There's the outfit that made the air for the whole works — a compressor. You had to have 240 pounds of air to start these motors.

RM: Do you want to go back there?

IS: I don't think we'd better.

RM: Right; it's too hard to see.

IS: And it's all stripped down. I was going to show you one of the receivers, the air tanks. There are 2 of them down here.

RM: Oh, for this little compressor?

IS: Yes, but that's used to start the engines. That's what you do with it.

RM: This compressor is not very big, is it, to put out that kind of poundage?

IS: Yes, and to put out that amount of air.

RM: How often would you shut one of the engines down?

IS: You never shut one down unless you had problems. You couldn't do it.

RM: How long would they go between problems?

IS: [Laughs] Well, who knows? I had 2 of them I never did have any problems with. And I've told you about that Number 3 — that was the only one that had big problems. I was telling you about that bearing. And I changed the head on that engine. The rest of them were trouble-free all those years.

RM: How long, 10 years?

IS: No. They'd run a period of 8 or 9 or 10 months, then they'd shut down, then get refinanced again. I helped close this thing down 4 or 5 different times over a period of about 10 years.

RM: From when to when?

IS: From the late '40s to the late '50s.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: Isadore, how much of it was just a boondoggle? Was somebody just promoting money or . . . ?

IS: No, they had the ore; they intended to get the ore. There's your first tank — the receiver. That's the air tank. There's another one just like it down there.

RM: You mean for starting them?

IS: Yes.

RM: Wow. This tank is 4 feet across and 10 feet high. And that was the receiver from this little compressor here, the starter.

IS: Yes. And it had a mate to it over there — 2 of them.

RM: So it took a lot of air to turn one over?

IS: Yes, but it just kept that air. It was automatic. When it would drop down to a certain stage, it would tick right back on.

RM: What did they pay for those engines, Isadore?

IS: They always told me they paid \$150,000 for the first Worthington. The other 2 were more. There is one of the pistons. I wanted to show you one of those. You can see the size of it.

RM: Here's one of the big pistons for the Worthington with the bearings in the background. Did you have to change a bearing very often?

IS: When they overhauled them they'd change them all. They were pretty rough on bearings.

RM: How often did you have to overhaul them?

IS: They'd been overhauled twice in the span of time that I was here.

RM: These bearings are made of steel, aren't they?

IS: Absolutely.

RM: They didn't make them out of babbitt?

IS: No. That's babbitt inside of them.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: Now we're in the hoist house and we've got 4 big compressors in here. They're all electric, right?

IS: Yes, sir.

RM: There's a compressor from the Ingersoll-Rand Company, New York — its Imperial Type 10 Compressor. And then we've got one here.

IS: I think by Denver.

RM: And here's one from the Madison-Kipp Corporation, Madison, Wisconsin. OK, a Sullivan compressor. How many machines would one of these compressors run down in a mine?

IS: Oh, 3 or 4 big drills besides air for the mine itself — circulating the fresh air down there.

RM: Oh, so they were pushing air down here with these?

IS: Oh, good lord. You had to have constant air down that mine. There was no ventilation.

RM: OK, and then we have another big Ingersoll-Rand, and then the other one has the initials "CP."

IS: Chicago Pneumatic.

RM: The switch is for the compressors?

IS: Yes.

RM: And then the hoist is . . .

IS: One down below it; I forget what this is.

RM: The one at the Fad is a Nordberg?

IS: A Nordberg.

RM: OK. And what we have here is a big double-drum hoist. So when one bucket is coming up, the other bucket's going down, right?

IS: Right.

RM: And it was an inch and a quarter cable?

IS: And inch and an eighth, I believe.

RM: Oh — you've got another little hoist that lets the men down the hole?

IS: Yes.

RM: So you had 3 compartments in the shaft — a man compartment and then 2 big buckets? And the little hoist is called a Chippy hoist.

IS: Yes.

RM: And what's that, about a three-quarter inch cable?

IS: Five-eighths . . .

RM: Did you have 2 hoistmen here, Isadore? One for the Chippy and one for the big one?

IS: At one time they did. But they never ran that Chippy much. (By god, they took all the bracing out of these things.)

RM: So that the men really came up on the big hoist?

IS: Oh, yes — they didn't use the Chippy one except for some repairman or something.

RM: OK, it's by a Lidgerwood Manufacturing Company, 96 Liberty Street, New York. You say that the hoist had touchy controls?

IS: Yes, it did. I was here one time when it got away from a man and it dunked the men underwater. It was pretty near drained; there was about 7 feet of water.

RM: And he's got a little board here with pegs.

IS: That's for their trips for the hoist — that's how they marked them.

RM: How did the hoist get away when he dunked those men?

IS: There's a rod that hooks onto the brakes, and it snapped and broke on one side.

RM: Oh!

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: How many men were working up here when things were going good at the Fad Shaft?

IS: A hundred and fifty, or maybe a few more.

RM: Was it a 3-shift operation?

IS: Sure — it was continuous.

RM: What were they doing basically underground?

IS: Mining; trying to drift over to that ore.

RM: How long was the drift going to be?

IS: I have no idea. It depends what route they took with it.

[Tape is turned off for a long while.]

IS: Here at the Locan they made the steam that drove the pump.

RM: Oh, they piped the steam down.

IS: Why, sure. I've seen a lot of things in my life, but I never saw anything to

compare to that pump.

RM: That was probably in the days before they had electricity, wasn't it?

IS: Well, certainly.

RM: What level was it on?

IS: On the 800.

RM: So they were pumping a lot of water out of the Locan?

IS: Yes, and the water beat them. They just couldn't handle it.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: We're looking at the fuel tanks of the Worthington diesels, and they're huge. What are they — they're 10 feet in diameter . . .

IS: I'd say they're approximately 15,000 gallons each.

RM: Four 15,000-gallon tanks.

IS: Yes, besides the ones on the other side. You've got another batch over here.

RM: Do I see the remains of an old observation station up there?

IS: They tell me there's something up there, but it was put in after I'd been there. There was nothing there when I was there except for an old rock monument. Of course, I'm talking back in the early '40s. Now, here's your other tanks; see them?

RM: So you had 8 15,000-gallon tanks.

IS: Yes.

RM: Good lord. How many gallons of fuel would a truck bring in?

IS: Most trucks in those days held around 10,000 gallons.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

- RM: Was Whistler Peak good sheep country?
- IS: No, it never was. There was no water but 2 little springs. One of them is owned by the railroad.
- RM: As we drive along, Isadore, would you point out plants that the sheep used to eat and what was good feed for them and what wasn't?
- IS: Everything's gone - dried up - now; the season's over. You'd have to get down on the flats now. They'd be getting ready to get those sheep moving.
- RM: What about this plant that turns yellow at the tops?
- IS: That's rabbit brush.
- RM: Did the sheep like that?
- IS: No. If they have to they might eat it, but it would have to be under dire circumstances. And this other stuff is buck brush. Ewes, deer and everything live on that. Rabbit brush is kind of a worthless thing. It's got a high rubber content.
- I'll take you over here where you can really see the pipelines from these 2 pumps down here. Do you see it?
- RM: Good God! You're showing me pipe here that the water used to run out of. What is that, a . . . ?
- IS: . . . 24-inch pipe. As I told you before, they'd change [the area where they drained the shaft] so nobody could use any of it for too long and get a perpetual [water] right. If they did, they'd have to keep pumping it. The water just roared down through the pipe at 11,000 gallons a minute. It went all the way down to T-L.
- [Tape is turned off for a while.]
- IS: Some of it's been taken, but I'm just giving you a slant, so you can get a pretty good picture of the damn thing. That's where your pipe went.
- RM: What is the plant growing right here?
- IS: Rye grass.
- RM: There used to be a lot of that, didn't there, in a lot of areas?
- IS: Oh, god. But it got so it couldn't stand the overgrazing and what not.
- [Tape is turned off for a while.]
- RM: They got leaded from the Holly Mine?
- IS: Yes. Their teeth all fell out . . .
- RM: Did they get leaded more at the Holly Mine than the others?
- IS: Oh, yes. That was a killer.
- RM: Why was it worse than the others?
- IS: It had more lead in it.
- RM: Was it a richer ore?
- IS: It wasn't richer, it just had that lead content and a terrific arsenic content. See that single line over there? That was the Holly Mine. It operated in my day.
- RM: Was it an old mine?

IS: Yes, it went back quite a few years.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: And white sage is in the lower elevations?

IS: Yes. White sage grows in the bottom of the valley.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: OK, we're at the T-L shaft.

IS: Named after the Thayer Lindsley of Canada.

RM: Was the T-L producing in your day?

IS: I helped drill the hole that caused this T-L. It isn't too deep a shaft — around 1100 feet. And its water content wasn't so bad. We used 2 engines for a while and it slacked up to where we were using 1.

RM: I wonder why there's so much water up there and then down here there isn't.

IS: Who knows. Those breaks are structured down below Mother Earth . . .

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: And Lindsley was a promoter in Canada?

IS: Yes. Have you heard of the Yellow Knife Mine in Canada?

RM: Oh, yes.

IS: Well, he was the instigator of the big production in that mine. They all write reams about Virginia City. That's lower grade ore, but it's produced more than Virginia City ever thought of producing, from what they all tell me. Now, that's hearsay.

RM: Yes. I think you're right. When did they sink the shaft?

IS: That shaft was sunk in the '40s sometime — the late '40s or the early '50s.

RM: They were doing a lot of work around here, weren't they?

IS: Oh, a lot of work.

RM: They produced quite a little bit of ore here at the T-L?

IS: Yes, but it was so complex that it was unprofitable to mine it. They couldn't separate that ore. It was ferrogenous . . .

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

IS: Here's your hoist. That's a double-drum Nordberg hoist. It came from Grass Valley, California. I was here when they put it in.

RM: So it was an old gold mine hoist?

IS: Yes.

RM: And does that cable look to be an inch and an eighth like the other one?

IS: No, that's a little smaller.

RM: How many men were working here back in the heyday of the T-L shaft?

IS: I think there were about 50-60 men here, working 3 shifts.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: Now, you say this whole mountain — Ruby Hill — is drilled so much it's like swiss cheese?

IS: And they've been manually sunk holes. The old-timers did that. [The holes go] clear up to the Silver Conner. That's the Silver Conner, that big canyon in there. I'm going to take you to a mine up there, the Diamond Mine, where there's a tunnel that goes clear through that mountain and comes out here.

RM: Does the tunnel go clear through Ruby Hill?
IS: No. That's at the Diamond Mine — Prospect Mountain.
RM: Basically, the mines that you're showing me here kept the town going in the '40s, didn't they?
IS: Yes, and everybody lived with the expectations that those mines would produce.
RM: And basically they never did, did they?
IS: No. Of course, the Civil War was fought on lead from this town.
[Tape is turned off for a while.]
IS: You watch on your side of the road. You're going see a little hole there. It was the Stella — that was straight gold. They were in there just like gophers. There were leasers there, but what they got out of there and what they didn't is beyond me.
RM: Basically there were only a couple of gold mines in here, weren't there?
IS: Yes, where they were going for straight gold. They just gophered that . . .
RM: So the Holly Mine is a big workings. I wonder how deep it is.
IS: I've no idea now.
RM: It has a pretty good-sized dump.
IS: Yes, look at that dump; that tells you something.
RM: There are just a solitary gallows frame and a couple of old cement foundation blocks there now, aren't there?
IS: That's all that remains.
[Tape is turned off for a while.]
RM: This mine predates your time, doesn't it?
IS: Yes, by quite a bit. But it was worked in my time. When I was going to school in the early '30s and the late '20s it was working.
RM: Was it also worked back before 1900?
IS: I couldn't tell you.
RM: The Albion shaft is just a hole along here?
IS: Yes. It isn't even worth going through. It's fenced in; there's just a big hole.
RM: What do they call this big mountain up here?
IS: That's Prospect Peak.
[Tape is turned off for a while.]
RM: You say that black sage doesn't grow in timber, it grows in the open, and that the animals don't care that much for the regular sage. What feed makes the sheep rancher the happiest?
IS: You mean in the desert here?
RM: Yes, in this country. What would you be most happy about?
IS: Mainly white sage, bunch grass and black sage.
RM: Was rye grass good feed?
IS: Yes, in its time. But when it gets older, it's awfully coarse and hard. It has certain seasons.
[Tape is turned off for a while.]
RM: So old Jim Butler of Tonopah fame was in Antelope.

IS: Yes. He owned the Antelope Ranch; Russell owns it now, and the Seguras owned it for years. And there's a place there they call the Butler Mine.

RM: He was in Tybo at one time, wasn't he?

IS: No. They say he was in Monitor, but that's completely erroneous. He came out of Antelope. Now, I've been told that. I didn't see it.

RM: Antelope's in Nye County, isn't it?

IS: The ranch is just barely over the line.

RM: When Butler discovered Tonopah, he was the district attorney of Nye County.

IS: No.

RM: That's what I've read.

IS: They're wrong.

RM: You don't believe that?

IS: I didn't know him — I didn't see him.

RM: The Indians told him where the ore was at Tonopah, didn't they?

IS: Why, certainly.

RM: Did your dad ever have many regrets that he didn't have that sample assayed?

IS: He told me one time. I asked him. Two men in Austin — Bert Acree and Walt Francis — tended camp for him when he had fever. They were working with him when [that happened]. One time I asked him, and he said, "Yes, I threw it away. It got too tough on the mule." He said, "The hell with it."

RM: Did he ever express regret?

IS: No. Not once.

RM: Of course, he went on to do pretty well himself, so why would he? Did he look back on it with humor?

IS: Oh, he just laughed about it. But as far as verifying it, that was before I was born, man.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: There's something else I wanted to ask you about. When you go back to the old history books, they say that the San Antonio and Lone Mountain districts were discovered by Mexicans. Now, where were those Mexicans coming from?

IS: I presume they came out of old Mexico.

RM: Aurora was a big town over there, and it was going a couple of years before Austin, too.

IS: Yes. There were Mexicans here in this country, I've been told, prospecting all over and doing some mining. That was way before my time.

RM: This would be before the Pony Express?

IS: Yes. Your Pony Express came through in 1860 and '61.

RM: And you've been told that Mexicans were in here earlier than that?

IS: Yes. You know, this was Mexican territory at one time. That's where you get your names — your Sierra Nevada and everything else.

RM: Yes. I'm just wondering if San Antonio and Lone Mountain and that south-

ern area of Smoky Valley weren't explored first by Mexicans, coming out of Aurora. What do you think of that idea?

IS: Well, I'd *presume* that, but as far as having any facts or any data to go on it, that's out.

RM: Also, the Mexicans discovered the Barcelona district around Belmont. But that was by a Mexican who came out of California.

IS: Well, California was all Mexicans at that time, so there you go. And now we're guessing again. That's just hazardous guessing, and I try to stay as close to the truth as possible.

RM: Have you ever heard of any Mexican influence in here in the way of old-timers or people who told you about old Mexican things they found or anything?

IS: The only old Mexican that I knew in this area was a businessman by the name of G. S. Garcia, who had the Elko Saddlery. He was one of the real old-timers here. He had ground here in Diamond Valley, ran horses and used to put on all the rodeos in Elko. His name was Guadalupe Garcia. He did real well. He had 2 sons — Leslie and Bobby. They were real good silversmiths — made bridles, spurs and everything.

RM: Did you ever hear people tell tales of finding an old Mexican arrastra or anything like that?

IS: No. But the Y.P. up there was owned by the Garats — and the Spanish Ranch. Each ranch had a couple or 3 old Mexicans here. They were real old men when I first saw them when I was a kid of 12 years old. But I presume that they brought the Mexicans at the Spanish Ranch out from California because they drove those cattle from California. In fact, Garats drove some of them too. The Spanish Ranch was owned by the Altubes — Pedro Altube (they called him "Palo Alto"). He was a long pole, a big guy. They came from South America to California.

RM: Now, where is the Spanish Ranch?

IS: Northwest of Elko. It's owned by the Ellison Ranching Company today.

RM: So there were Mexicans in there early on around Elko?

IS: And at the YP, when the Garats owned it.

RM: And where's the YP?

IS: Right north of Elko. That was a famous outfit. They had around 12,000 head of cattle. The Spanish Ranch at one time ran over 20,000. I worked some of the men that worked for them — they hayed this job. They hayed the 4th of July and they hayed till the snow came.

RM: Wow! They were feeding in the winter, weren't they?

IS: Yes. This right here, old boy, was the Croesus Mine.

RM: What canyon did we come up?

IS: The Diamond Canyon.

RM: They've got some big ore bins, don't they?

IS: Look up in back of there.

RM: Wow!

IS: But it's all in pieces now. This mine produced in my time.

RM: Did it start in your time?

IS: No, it was in production when I first [was aware of it]. Do you know where Hammond [Service] Station is [here in Eureka] — where it's all torn up right next to the motel?

RM: Sure.

IS: They had a big stable there where they took care of horses. That was the Croesus Stable.

RM: And they had this mine too?

IS: Yes. And they hauled with teams here. Had all kinds of teams. There's . . .

RM: A wild apple bush. Do they have little apples on them?

IS: Yes. And there's a stand of chokecherry bushes.

RM: I bet the Indians lived off of them, didn't they?

IS: Why, come on, you know it. They made jelly, syrups and everything; cooked with them.

RM: People have already picked them, haven't they?

IS: Well, they're falling off. I don't think they have too good a crop. Now, there's your Diamond Mine; it's above the Croesus. And before they went through the mountain, the old-timers told me they had 65 miles of tunnel in there.

RM: So they drove under the mountain from this Diamond Mine.

IS: Clear across to that canyon, I'm told.

RM: Tell me about the Diamond Mine. What do you remember about it?

IS: That's the richest ore that I ever saw in Eureka County.

RM: Did they find it when they were driving over through the mountain?

IS: No, they were mining for it. That was the producer. The ore was found in pockets.

RM: I see. It's a tunnel and not a shaft?

IS: It's a tunnel, but there are a lot of shafts in there, too. and you don't ever want to go in there without somebody knowing about it. There are drifts going off in every direction.

RM: And there are 65 miles of workings in there?

IS: Yes, but that was before they went clear through the mountain. That's what the old-timers told me.

RM: They've got an awfully big dump, don't they?

IS: Yes. And that's just the minuscule part of it. They dumped their waste on a lot of those shafts they sunk in there.

RM: Did you ever work in the Diamond?

IS: Never. And this was a regular town — quite a few people lived up here.

RM: Was there a store and so on here?

IS: Oh, I don't know. That was before my time. But there's a banker over at the Ely National Bank who was born and raised right here.

RM: Is that right? And what was the town called?

IS: Just Diamond.

RM: Does it date back to before 1900?

IS: Yes, it had to. I'm not certain of that, but it was an old big workings when I first remember. Quite a few men worked at that — I couldn't hazard a guess how many. I was pretty young.

RM: Was it operating in the '40s?

IS: Off and on. It operated up till right in the '50s. Leasers and what not tried it — different outfits.

You know the definition of mining: "A hole in the ground owned by a goddamn liar." [Laughter] Now, you remember that.

RM: I will. That's a good one. [Laughs]

IS: I just thought I'd bring it to your attention. You tell somebody some day you met an old bastard that told you that.

See the chokecherries through here, Bob?

RM: Yes, but I don't see any chokecherries on them, just the bushes.

IS: Get up close to them and see if there are any berries left on them. Look on the ground, too — any black berries?

RM: I don't really see any.

IS: I don't see a one either. If they had anything . . . unless the birds got them, but those birds are gentle. They've got a pit in them and they're tart as hell.

RM: Where does that road go? Up to the Croesus?

IS: Yes. This building behind the road was a pump station. They pumped water up there.

RM: They had to pump their water up here? Then they wouldn't have had much water in the Diamond Mine, would they?

IS: No, there was no water in the Diamond. From the Windfall there's a pipeline that comes clear over here and goes to Ruby Hill, and that's why this pump station is here.

RM: Oh — water's coming from Ruby Hill?

IS: No, from the Windfall.

RM: Why are they taking water to Ruby Hill? For the town?

IS: Yes. That was before they ever sunk that shaft, you see. That was piped clear up in the canyon for stock water. The pipeline comes right through there. Do you see where that road is?

RM: Yes.

RM: Was it a gravity flow?

IS: Yes, it's all gravity.

RM: Is there a big spring at Windfall or something?

IS: Yes, but you can't see the spring; it comes right out of a tunnel. They've got it all closed up. It's a 2-inch pipe, a 2-inch line. It had a good amount of water in it. And they have tanks up there in Ruby Hill. They are still part of the remains of that — I could find [the spot] where they dumped into those tanks. So now you know what I'm telling you about this country and what there is here.

RM: Yes, definitely!

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: It had to be in the ground or it would have frozen in the winter, wouldn't it?

IS: Oh, sure. It's down there around 36 inches deep.

RM: Imagine doing that by hand.

IS: Yes. There was lots of rock work, too.

RM: Back-breaking.

IS: Poor Mr. Folly was the operator on it and he'd be gone . . .

RM: Whose seismograph was it?

IS: It was for the whole United States and part of Europe — one of the best seismographs they ever had. I recorded that Mt. Saint Helens eruption right there.

RM: Is that right?

RM: For the tape, you've just shown me a seismograph station here in Diamond Canyon.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

- RM: When did they put the seismograph in?
IS: That was in Ruby Hill when I first worked there in the '40s, and they transferred it from Ruby Hill to Diamond Canyon.
RM: And you were the tender of it?
IS: No. Willie DePaoli was an operator of it. He broke me in because he wanted somebody to take his place when he'd have to go somewhere. That's how I came to be part of that. He's an old friend.
RM: And then they ran out of money and pulled it out? When did they shut it down?
IS: Just last year.
[Tape is turned off for a while.]
RM: Sagebrush generates a lot of heat, you say?
IS: Yes. It burns real hot.
RM: It must have a lot of oil in it or something.
IS: Well, it has something. I've never had it analyzed.
[Tape is turned off for a while.]
RM: We're going south out of Eureka on Highway 50, and you pointed out part of the old water works. Where does Eureka get its water — right up here?
IS: No. They've drilled a well down the flat. They've got some coming from here, but these springs are badly in need of repair. Imagine the age of that piping. Some of it is wooden piping. Did you ever see any wooden pipes?
RM: Yes, I have — bound with wire. What are those big mines up there?
IS: That's the Windfall; that's where we're going.
RM: What does the Windfall date to?
IS: It's way before my time. It's an old producer, going way back before 1900. They had families raised up here. I'd surmise it dates from 1860 on, but your guess is good as mine.
RM: What did they call the little community up here?
IS: They just called it the Windfall.
RM: Are there shafts there?
IS: Yes, there are some. But there's an open pit here now — a good-sized one.
RM: Was it pretty good ore here?
IS: It was very good ore; lots of gold. Lots of high grading went on here and what not.
RM: So the Stella and the Windfall were where they had gold?
IS: Yes. That Stella was a minute proposition. I don't know how much this Windfall produced or how much was high graded, but a hell of a lot of it was stolen.
RM: It was so rich that they were high grading a lot of it?
IS: That's what the old-timers told me.
RM: So the miners would find high grade gold in the ore and just carry it out of there?

IS: That's right. I'll show you where at the bottom. [This canyon was] all sunflowers. Look what they've done to it.

RM: What do we call this, Windfall Canyon?

IS: Yes.

RM: And it was filled with sunflowers and everything?

IS: Oh, just a solid yellow mass — that hillside where those dumps are. They ran sheep up here. Florio went all up and it was a real good sheep ranch.

RM: Did they overgraze it and kill the sunflowers?

IS: No, they just went out of business. It dried up. The country dried up and there were changes of ownership, too — they split it up to 2 or 3 different owners. Some wanted cattle running, the others wanted to run sheep.

RM: What happened to the sunflowers?

IS: There are a few of them left. I'll show you the remains of them up here.

RM: You told me the sheep really like the sunflowers, don't they?

IS: Oh, god! They get to feeding on them and they get a big yellow circle right around their nose.

RM: How deep is the Windfall? Did you work there?

IS: No, I never worked a day in the Windfall.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

IS: You're going to get a good first-hand look at some sheep.

RM: It's a band from California, you say?

IS: Yes.

RM: There they are. How big a band do you think that is?

IS: That's not too big — about 800.

RM: You can just look and make a good estimate, can't you?

IS: Sure.

RM: What are they eating here?

IS: They're eating that buck brush, lamb brush. He's driving them out of the short stuff. There is cyanide here, so he's got to stay out of there.

RM: Do they have cyanide because they had a mill here, or were they heap leaching?

IS: Heap leaching. These are all their piles up here.

RM: When were they doing this heap leaching?

IS: About 15 years ago. I worked here a few days after I'd been operated on. These over there are leach piles. Now let's go up here to where they were excavating ore.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: Were they heap leaching the dump, or what?

IS: Oh, they were hauling that ore. I'm going to show you where they dumped it.

RM: Oh — they were open pitting it and heap leaching it for the gold?

IS: Yes.

RM: Was there lead in the ore?

IS: I don't know. I never was that familiar with the Windfall, but I surmise

they'd have some arsenic in the ore too.

RM: Yes, this country is noted for the arsenic. Was that harmful to the miners' health?

IS: That's a deadly poison I know; I don't know how it affected them. A lot of them were crippled up.

RM: There wasn't much silicosis here, was there?

IS: Not too much. A few of them used to say they had it. They used to call it "rock on your chest." There's been a lot of work done here too, old boy.

RM: Oh, yes. You can see huge dumps and everything. There is the pit.

IS: That's what I wanted to show you. Look at the tiers there.

RM: It was a cut, wasn't it? It looks like they were following a big vein.

IS: They had a spot. They finally pinched it down to where it got so narrow that they couldn't get enough to work, but there's still ore. The original diggings where they did all the high grading was right here.

RM: Over on the hillside there?

IS: I think that's more prospecting holes, old boy.

RM: But this whole hillside was covered with sunflowers? I'll bet it was beautiful.

IS: It's just too bad that a person hasn't got a picture of it to show you. You wouldn't believe it was the same place.

RM: There's been extensive work, hasn't there?

IS: Ah!

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

IS: Millions wouldn't begin to cover it. And men's lifetimes were spent here. There's no more of it here, unless we go on the other side of the mountain, and there are no diggings there.

RM: Where does this road lead?

IS: It goes clear around the mountain and over to Ratto. They had another discovery there when they closed down.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: Now, where was the spring that went to Ruby Hill?

IS: Right off here somewhere. You have to get on the dump to see it.

RM: It must have been a good spring. Are there many snakes in these hills?

IS: There are quite a few rattlers. It is a good spring right today.

IS: Florio had a big sheep camp right where I'm going to take you.

RM: Right down near the water?

IS: Yes, right there.

RM: We're now at the spring in Windfall Canyon from which they piped water over to Ruby Hill. And that was the initial Ruby Hill water supply. And Florio had a sheep camp here?

IS: Yes, a big camp. It was always a beautiful camp.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

IS: Water in that dam back there. See that moisture?

RM: Yes. What are these little trees here?

IS: Mahoganies.

RM: Does mahogany make good firewood?

IS: It's real good firewood, but it's a hard wood — a mean wood to handle. It's heavy and hard to cut. It takes a hell of a saw to cut it.
That used to be the old corral where they'd keep the horses for that summer camp of Florio's.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: There are a lot of wild apple trees growing here in this Windfall Canyon, and they produce a little apple. Is it kind of like a crab apple?

IS: Well, the biggest ones are only about as big as a marble. It's a tart damn thing.

RM: How long were they doing heap leaching here?

IS: Oh, quite a while — 7 or 8 years at least.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: We're looking at the band of sheep in Windfall Canyon.

IS: Yes. And they're in very good shape. They're very white and fat —it's a productive band of sheep.

RM: When they're white they're better? Does that mean they're in better health?

IS: Yes, and they're eating well, because they haven't got dirt all over them.

RM: And this band comes up from California, you said?

IS: Yes, they're shipped up from California. Lambs were finished off here and they were sold right to . . .

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

IS: In this country the sheep business hinges on the seasons.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

IS: Cheat grass isn't native to this country.

RM: There was no cheat grass here when you were a kid?

IS: No!

RM: Oh my god! It's everywhere now. Do the sheep like it?

IS: At a certain period. It comes early and it dries early. It's very flammable, and it's got bad stickers on it that stick in animals' mouths. It's got a lot of things against it.

RM: Yes. It sticks on your socks when you walk through it.

IS: Right, and then it irritates you the rest of the day till you pull it out. And you can't pull it all out, because it's got barbs.

RM: When did it come in here?

IS: It really started to show up heavily here in the early '30s. We had no fires when I was growing up in this country and today they've got fire crews, and the cheat grass is what caused it all.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

IS: The Tognini brothers had that.

RM: You're pointing out to me this little house that sits on a brick foundation and looks kind of Victorian.

IS: Yes. They ranched in Ruby Valley all their lives and when they retired they

came there. They died right after they left there. One of them was Tilio and the other one was Joe. They were real old-timers. They lived on the Ruby marshes and trapped the muskrats there every winter. They also ran some sheep.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: We've got an old catalog here. We don't know how old it is, but it's the Denver Tent and Awning Company at 1428 Larimer Street, Denver, Colorado. You say you did a lot of business with them?

IS: Yes. We bought tents and wool bags for the sheep business. [Flipping through catalog] There are your tents. The other outfit [we traded with] was Ames Harris Nevell of San Francisco.

RM: How long would a tent last out in the countryside?

IS: It all depends. Sparks are always flying and lightning [hits], and you know your weather. And sometimes the burro or mule it was on would hook a limb with it and tear it. That's what you had to contend with.

RM: Which tent would you order?

IS: Mostly the shepherd tents and the 4-man tents.

RM: Here's a herder tent. "Herder, miner and pyramid tents." What size would you get?

IS: A 10-by-10 tent, which was 7 feet 3 inches in the center, 8-ounce material, \$7.43. They were called tipi tents at that time.

RM: A 10-ounce tent would be \$8.04 and a 12-ounce one would be \$11.76.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: We're looking at this same Denver Tent and Awning catalog. What are those?

IS: Pack saddles — \$4.50.

RM: And you purchased a lot of those?

IS: God, yes. And you had a lot of men working there that used to make these ribs when they broke out and what. And they had bags to go with them, but they were a different type of bag than these. They had 2 holes that slip over those forks.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: Most of the herders just slept on the sagebrush that they pulled up?

IS: Yes. They made a sagebrush mattress.

RM: Wasn't it lumpy and rough?

IS: It'd surprise you — when guys pull that brush all the same length, and you lay it right, you lay the other one about halfway up and in tiers . . . some of the best nights' sleeps I ever had were on some of those.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: There's a tunnel under the bar next to the Sundown Lounge that goes where?

IS: To the Colonnade Hotel from the Eureka Hotel. I don't know if it's caved in. Now we're talking about ancient history.

RM: And a Chinese used to own that?

IS: A man by the name of Mueller built that and a Chinese man owns it now. He went to Frisco and his father passed away there. I haven't seen any of them

since.

RM: What was the tunnel for? Was it so they didn't have to go outdoors in the winter?

IS: They had a tunnel from the Sadler house up here where the tilings are down to Main Street.

RM: What did they use those tunnels for?

IS: Who knows! Hot, dope . . . there was a tunnel from there down to Main Street. It caves in once in a while.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: Who were the Sadlers?

IS: One of them was a governor of the state of Nevada at one time. Two of his sons had a big ranch down here in Diamond Valley, and then his grandsons had it. They both died.

RM: And that was his home?

IS: Yes.

RM: When did they build this Catholic church?

IS: Way before my time. That history of Nevada will tell you when it was built. I know it was around 1870-something.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: We were just talking about the Fad Shaft. You said the 3 Mackintoshes were putting out how many kilowatts total?

IS: About 1500 kilowatts — about 500 each. The 3 Worthingtons put out 1000 each.

RM: So we're up to 4500 kilowatts.

IS: And then your GMCs were putting out 700 or 800.

RM: So that's another 2400.

IS: Yes. Then you had 1150-kilowatt ones. And the others were 275.

RM: OK. And then you had . . .

IS: Six 50s with the Internationals. And there were 2 Caterpillar V-8s. They put out 150 kilowatts.

RM: So you get about 7500 kilowatts.

IS: Yes, total. That was 24 hours a day.

RM: My god. You had to have a right steady delivery of oil or fuel.

IS: All night long and through the day there'd be trucks coming in up there.

RM: Where was the fuel coming from?

IS: The biggest part of it came from Bakersfield, California. Afterwards, they made kind of a deal with Redlands in California, I think. They had a refinery there.

RM: And it was number 2 diesel, you said? And you said it was spotless in there, that they wiped up every speck of oil.

IS: They kept it that way.

RM: And there was a big rubber mat in front of the control panel that was mopped every day.

IS: Yes. It ran the full length of that building. They had cleanup men around the

entrance and all over there.

RM: You said there were some near disasters.

IS: Well, breakdowns on your pumps or the motors that were driving the pump. You had smaller pumps off those sumps.

RM: So were there times when you came close to losing the water?

IS: There were times there when we lost it, but we were always fortunate enough to get it repaired and get it back.

RM: The water would start rising in the . . . ?

IS: Oh, certainly. And you have all those men down that hole. You had a lot of responsibility when you stripped that powerhouse.

RM: Yes, because you said 30 minutes could be disaster down in the mines.

IS: Oh, certainly. And those are big Byron Jackson pumps in that hole, there. They're all in stages. Those pumps are about 18 feet long and 12 inches in diameter. And you didn't mess with one of those pumps. Whenever something went wrong with one, you had to have a Byron Jackson factory man repair it. Of course, you always had a replacement; that's what they used to go on.

RM: One would go bad and you'd just put a new one in?

IS: Yes. And when it came time to put it in . . . they're so heavy. It was an art, and awkward. You'd thread them down that shaft — that was a big problem.

RM: When a pump went out in a sump, wouldn't it start filling up right away?

IS: It'd start building up, but you'd cut back on the others to overcome it. All of them had automatic controls — there was a big float in that sump.

RM: Oh, you had more than one pump in a sump.

IS: They had about 21 or 22 pumps just on the sumps down there.

RM: How many sumps were there?

IS: Three. The electric motors I showed you were all hooked in there.

RM: Were the sumps off of the shaft, or what?

IS: Yes, in a separate room with steps going up to it. There was a big old pond there, a hole dug in the rock.

RM: Was the water coming into the sump?

IS: No, it was pumped in there.

RM: Oh, it was pumped into the sump. Where was it being pumped from?

IS: From the bottom up. It went to the top in 3 stages.

RM: Oh, I see — there was a sump on 3 different levels.

IS: Yes — the 2200, the 1700 and the 800.

RM: Down in the mine on the 2200-foot level, was the water coming out of the back . . .

IS: It was seeping in from all over. That's when they bought that grouting outfit in there.

RM: And the water then would run in ditches to the main sump on the 2200 . . .

IS: Yes, or go down to the bottom where the main Byron Jackson, the big pump, was. The big pumps were all the way up that shaft. You didn't have room for those Byron Jacksons. They were all interconnected to the sumps in the

stages.

RM: Was there more water the deeper you went, or was it just a lot of water?

IS: They couldn't move anymore on account of that water. They put a water door in and hit a stream, and that's when it blew through and flooded everything out of there.

RM: Did they drill into that stream?

IS: Sure — they drifted right into it.

RM: And was it just a gush of water?

IS: Why, sure. Water came from all over.

RM: And it blew out a water door?

IS: It didn't blow it out. The water door stayed there, but it blew around it. On that water door there's a dial, 245 pounds pressure to the square inch. Figure that one out.

RM: Did it flood the mine when it blew out around the door?

IS: It flooded it up to the 800-foot level. They shut everything down; they couldn't operate any more. That's when Hecla came in. They pumped that hole out and used a grouting system to go toward that ore. That grout was going in, if I remember rightly, at around 3000 pounds a square inch pressure, pushing it in there and still making lots of water.

RM: It didn't stop it?

IS: Hell, no. It's just like being in a big heavy rainstorm down there all the time.

RM: My dad worked at the Kalinsky shaft and the deep Ruth shaft in Ely, and they hit water like that there.

IS: Yes, they came over and got some of these Byron Jacksons at the time. That didn't solve their problems either.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

- RM: So those Byron Jacksons were huge things?
- IS: Oh, yes. They looked like a big old cigar lying there. If they hadn't taken them over to the Kalinsky shaft you'd have a couple of extras there and I'd have showed you one.
- RM: Did they work on a vacuum or . . . ?
- IS: I never saw the internal working of one of those pumps. They wouldn't allow you to touch it. As I said, whenever something happened to one, they got the Byron Jackson people in there. Nobody messed with those pumps.
- RM: Where did the Byron Jackson people have to come out of?
- IS: I don't even remember.
- RM: And they could repair it there, typically?
- IS: Some they repaired, some they hauled back.
- RM: Were they pretty reliable?
- IS: Oh, yes. I've only seen trouble with them 2 or 3 times in all that time, which is when they were putting out that stream of water.
- RM: So each time the mine shut down, it filled up with water?
- IS: Yes, it came back up that 800-foot level from the dirt.
- RM: How in the world could they pump all that water out of there to drop back down so much?
- IS: They just had to pump more till the pressure kept easing off; it took months to pump it down with 5 pumps on it.
- RM: What did the water do to the timber and everything in the mine?
- IS: Well, I just made one trip. I told you that Bill Anderson came to me and said, "You're coming down the hole with me."
- I was an operator in that powerhouse, and if he hadn't been such a swell person I'd have just told him to go fly a kite, but I went down with him. I said, "How come you're picking on me?"
- He said, "Well, you're the only one I really trust here."
- I said, "I haven't been down there for years."
- "Well," he said, "what are we going to do?"
- I said, "Let me walk over to that hoistman. I want to give him a few instructions." There's a bell cord that goes down that hole and you give signals about what landing you want, when you want to move the cage. I told that hoistman (I knew him very well; he just died here not too long ago), "I'm going hold my hand on that bell cord. Remember that. And if you just hear one ring, you stop that thing and [bring it] up out of there."
- He said that he understood, "What business have you got down there?" I told him. He said, "Don't go down there, man. You aren't tired of living, are you?"
- I said, "Well, it was just one of those things that you get into the . . ."
- Well, we went down. And as I told you, those big old 8-by-8 steel girders were all twisted up and wrapped up; they looked like corkscrews.

RM: My god.

IS: And there was muck and silt about 4 inches deep.

RM: That's from when it blew around the water door?

IS: Yes. And it sat there all those years. It's still right there. That water door is right there yet. Of course, they shored it up and plugged it off.

RM: Was the bell cord mechanical?

IS: Yes, it was just a regular cord.

RM: Two thousand feet long?

IS: Yes. It went right by the cage. That's the only thing you have to signal with.

RM: Did you have to really give it a tug?

IS: Not too hard; you'd just touch it to signal that operator where you were.

RM: And when the mine would flood and they would pump it back out again, all the wires to the motors and everything were . . . ?

IS: All shot. They had to redo everything.

RM: If you get one of those motors wet it's fouled up, isn't it?

IS: They were all piled up in the front. I told you that in the building where the GMCs were, there was just a solid row of motors that knocked out of there after they'd been in that water all the time.

RM: So when you wanted to pump it out again, you had to go down to the 800-foot level and put in a pump and then start working your way down again?

IS: Yes, after you lowered the water level to where it was sufficiently safe to get down there.

RM: You couldn't just flip a switch and it would start the pumps going again, could you?

IS: No.

RM: Were they submersible pumps?

IS: Sure. The motor's sealed in there, as I told you. It's like a cigar.

RM: So they would still work if they'd been flooded?

IS: They did. They had to have them to operate. But the others were electric motors that sat right on the bank of that sump with an intake going in. They were controlled by a big float.

RM: They weren't Byron Jacksons.

IS: No, they were Pamonas, Alice Chalmers and some other brand. They were all different brands. And they had big motors.

RM: So they started sinking the Fad shaft in the 1940s?

IS: About '42 or '43, right around through there.

RM: And you say they hit water at about 800 feet?

IS: If I remember rightly, yes.

RM: So they started having trouble then?

IS: Well, they got the shaft sunk; it wasn't too bad. They just started to drift out of that shaft and that's when they hit the big water.

RM: So they sunk a 2300-foot shaft and the water wasn't that bad?

IS: Right. It wasn't a very big amount; they could handle it.

RM: But as soon as they opened up any ground with a drift, in it came?

IS: That was the end of the hunt.

RM: Was it just more area where water could come in or did they hit a river or what?

IS: Who knows! You can't see under that ground. When you run into that water, you run into it and that's it. You don't know what direction it's coming from for sure. Then they ran a drift from that 800 over to that Locan shaft. There's a drift connecting that with that . . .

RM: Would that drift be under water now?

IS: No, it's right above the water level.

RM: Was it good water or was it pretty mineralized?

IS: It's mineralized; not too cold, either, but it's drinkable and all that. I've drunk it lots of times. But there's a tremendous body of ore under there, mister. Don't you ever believe any different.

RM: Out to the south there, you mean?

IS: Yes. I drilled on that hole too and then they whip stocked that one hole we drilled. Do you know what whip stocking is?

RM: No.

IS: They get their hole made and then they've got a tool that'll angle a drift off. We sank about 6 of those angle holes in there, all in solid ore.

RM: And how thick did you say the ore was?

IS: I've no idea. The first cores I remember pulling were around 30 feet.

RM: Wow! And then it went out in all directions?

IS: You can't see under there, Bob. That's down 2000 feet and you've no idea. All we had were all those core samples you pulled out of there.

RM: When were you doing the drilling?

IS: I was working for Coastal in '52 or '53, so it was about '54 or '55. They called me back up there to run the drill.

RM: So they'd already sunk the shaft and they knew ore was there anyway? Was it a continuation of ore that they'd previously found here or what?

IS: Who knows.

RM: What made them know there was ore there to put the shaft in to begin with?

IS: They'd originally pecked around with a few short holes. They got oil rigs up here to drill that hole. I drilled on one of these oil rigs — it was a Franks rig. And that was ore — chunks like that. Heavy, oh, god.

RM: I wonder how many tons they thought were down there.

IS: I've no idea. Nobody has.

RM: But they can make estimates based on the drill holes.

IS: Yes, but when you're down 2000 feet and you hit a mass like that, it's pretty tough picking.

RM: It must have been a hell of an ore body for them to go down that far. Was the ore galena?

IS: Yes, it would just shine like diamonds.

RM: What kind of country rock is it?

IS: Mostly limestone and some quartz.

RM: Lot of the lead mines in Nevada are in limestone.
IS: Yes, lots of them.
RM: When did the water first run them out of there?
IS: I don't even remember what year it was. I told you I helped shut that place down 4 or 5 times, and I don't remember which time it was.
RM: So something would happen and they'd have to shut it down and it would fill up again? And then they'd get some more money or whatever and they'd come in and pump it out again?
IS: Yes. I remember them pumping it out this one last time. That's the one I really remember — I was on every inch of that. That was in '58 or '59. They just walked off and left it. It was a little more than they could chew. They had that tremendous expense of pumping, and I imagine the value of the ore didn't compensate for the pumping.
RM: Did they get into the ore in '59?
IS: Yes, they got into some ore. They had a dump out there; I showed you where it was. And this outfit was there last year and they hauled every bit of it away.
RM: But they got into the ore and pretty soon they just tossed in the towel?
IS: That's right. They had to do every inch of this grouting in there.
RM: So the grouting didn't prove to be effective?
IS: The grouting was effective enough, but look at the cost of it. That was just a terrible undertaking. You'd drill all those holes and then press all that cement in ahead of you — haul all that cement in.
RM: When they initially broke into that thing that blew around the water door, were any men killed?
IS: They all got out of there.
RM: Of course, they weren't there when they blasted, were they?
IS: No, but they were there right shortly afterwards and they saw that the water was coming.
RM: Was it just flushing down the tunnel?
IS: I wasn't down there, boy, but I know it ran them all out of there like a bunch of rats out of a hole. And they were damned glad to get out of there. They left machines, tools and everything under there.
RM: Did it take out the bottom of the shaft?
IS: Nobody ever went down to look. Where we landed on the 2200, there's more shaft down in under there. I never went down there, and I have no interest in going.
RM: Oh, you mean the blowout came down below 2200 feet?
IS: Right in 2200-and-some-feet. There's more shaft down below that —the bottom of the sump.
RM: And you finally shut it down in '59?
IS: Yes. They battled it for right close to a year, and they were at the extreme limit of their power and everything else.
RM: When did they put the pipeline in that you showed me?

- IS: I don't remember what year; that was when we started pumping —around the late '40's or early '50s, when they got the shaft down. It took them a few years to put that shaft down.
- RM: They were pumping in a lot of mines around here, weren't they?
- IS: Well, not a lot. The Locan was another one, and the T-L had water in it. I ran 2 motors there for a long time. They finally slacked off to where I was running one motor. But 11,000 gallons a minute is lots of water. You've got to see the kind of a stream that it's blowing out of there.
- RM: Yes. And you're pushing it up 2000 feet.
- IS: And they were talking about starting drifts from the valley. That's 500 feet below that level. A tunnel right into that Fad shaft would take a 500-foot head off those pumps and eliminate a lot of power. But then they figured, I guess, that the cost of the drift . . . it would be about a 3-mile drift.
- RM: Yes. If they could have got to the bottom of it, it would have been worth it. You were 1500 feet below the valley.
- IS: Yes. Still a pretty good lift, but it cuts a lot of lift off of it. That 500 feet might not sound like much, but with a head of water like that, it's a hell of a lot.
- RM: But a 3-mile tunnel is a lot too.
- IS: Well, that's a lot of bingos — timber and track and everything. But this outfit here is not going to do anything with that; they're just going to scrap it out.
- RM: So a new outfit has got it?
- IS: Yes. Homestake Mining.
- RM: When did they acquire it?
- IS: Last summer sometime. They're not going to do nothing with it, old boy.
- RM: Who did they buy it from, Hecla?
- IS: No, Hecla just had a buy/lease deal or something from Eureka Consolidated.
- RM: Is that a local outfit?
- IS: No, that was all eastern stock.
- RM: Are they patented claims?
- IS: Everything's patented up there.
- RM: Did they patent it in the '40's, or were they older claims?
- IS: They go way back.
- RM: All of those mines you showed me today are patented, probably.
- IS: Why, sure. I forgot to show you — just as you come into town, did you notice that big old black dump? That was the Richmond Smelter. They've scattered all those tailings. Of course, those on that side are there yet. This other pile of slag down here was Metamorus. There were 17 smelters going here at one time.
- RM: That's what I hear. They were gone by the time you came on the scene, though, weren't they?
- IS: Yes. But I bought ground down there and sold it again at one time.
- RM: Why did you buy it? Just for property in town?

IS: Yes. I went partners with a guy who had a garage here. It's a trailer park now.
But that's a good deal for you to look at before you leave. There's lots more here yet, old boy. You haven't even put a nick in it.

RM: Oh, I know that. It's deep here.

IS: It's really deep.

RM: You've got a lot of history here; you folks go way back.

IS: Oh, god. Of course they picked on me . . . they said they can't get anybody else.

RM: To talk to me, you mean? You got the short straw? [Chuckles]

IS: Yes, I picked the short straw. It's all right. You're good company, old boy. I enjoyed every bit of it.

RM: I did too.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

- RM: How in the world did the sheepherders survive in the cold? You've had about 3 feet of snow here and it's not bitter cold today, but it's cold.
- IS: It's cold. And it's cold at night. It's one of the coldest Januarys I believe I've ever seen; it's been consistently cold. I've seen colder, yes. I've seen 45 degrees below zero in Fish Creek Ranch.
- RM: Tell me how a sheepherder survived in this.
- IS: He did it the hard way. He unpacked that burro and pitched that tent. Of course, at this time of the year he was at the main camp with a camp tender and the camp tender took care of the tent and all that.
- RM: And they were down on the desert, but it's still cold down there.
- IS: Well, you've been down there in Warm Springs and that country — that can be bitter.
- RM: So the sheepherder stayed in the main camp?
- IS: The sheepherder always had that camp tender with him, and the camp tender took care of the cooking and feeding the mules and what not.
- RM: And the camp tender looked after 2 herders?
- IS: Right — 2 herds of sheep. That was the limit for any camp tender — 2 herds, one on each side of him.
- RM: Tell me how they dealt with the cold.
- IS: They had a sheepskin coat, and they were walking all the time — they'd keep moving, so no frozen feet or fingers. And those boys were tough!
- RM: And basically you never got real warm.
- IS: Well, you got warm when you came to the tent and fired up the tent stove with brush. You'd have to feed it pretty often, but those tents were really comfortable when their fires were going.
- RM: But close to the stove it's hot, and over on the tent wall it's freezing, isn't it?
- IS: Yes, but the beds were inside too, or the sheepherder had his tent up and had his little fire or something.
- RM: Did the camp tender have the main tent and each sheepherder had his own tent?
- IS: Well, the camp tender had a bigger tent than the sheepherder. That's where he cooked and kept his provisions. Each of those herders had his own tent; it's pretty hard to crowd all that stuff and 3 men into one of those tents. Maybe one sheepherder slept in the main tent, but one of them would surely have his own tent up.
- RM: And the fire would go out at night, wouldn't it?
- IS: Why, certainly. They'd lie right in bed, jerk that door open, put sagebrush in there and light that stove. And the matches were ready and the coffee pot was on.
- RM: And they were outdoors all day long when it was snowing and the wind was blowing . . .
- IS: That meant nothing to them! They had to be out. And sometimes the sheep

would bunch up and they'd get to drifting with a storm. They had to be there to watch that. When they started to drift, they'd split up and go a long ways.

RM: How far?

IS: It depended on conditions. Sometimes they might go half a mile or a mile; some of them would just start stringing out and going south.

RM: They wouldn't head north?

IS: No, not too easily. Your big storms generally came from the north.

RM: And so they would head away from the storm?

IS: Yes — drifting down. They knew the country. They say they're senseless, but they're a hell of a lot smarter than a lot of the people. But the sheepherders were accustomed to it; they lived in it and they thrived on it.

RM: And they probably didn't get to take a bath or anything like that in the winter.

IS: Come on! Where — in a snowdrift?

RM: [Laughs] What about washing up and things like that?

IS: Well, they'd do their laundry. They'd have an old wash tub and washboard with them, and they'd melt enough snow to do the washing. They'd dry it in the tent or string it out on the sagebrush if it was dry enough and the weather was good enough.

RM: What happened when a blizzard rolled in?

IS: They made the best of it; humped up and took it till the sheep got settled down, then went into camp.

RM: So they had to be out there with the sheep when the blizzard was going.

IS: Oh, yes. They were there all the time; somewhere right close to them, where they were in sight or where they could keep track of them.

RM: What kind of shoes did they wear for this winter weather?

IS: Rubber shoes — the lace kind.

RM: So their feet didn't get wet.

IS: Yes. I've seen those good sheepherders — I'm talking about the good ones — take a brand new pair of shoes out of a store and wear them out completely in a week's time. They didn't wear them out sitting down, either.

RM: They'd wear a pair of shoes out in a week just by walking?

IS: Yes — walking over rough country.

RM: How many miles a day would they walk?

IS: A lot of them would make 20 or 25 miles. When they weren't driving the sheep, they were still walking around the flock and so on. There were no horses in those camps; just the camp tender had a horse.

RM: Why no horses?

IS: These old-timers didn't want them to have horses. My old man used to say, "Any man can't herd my sheep afoot isn't going to get a horse, and he'd better go someplace else."

If it was snowing real hard, they'd get out there and build the fire. When they got in a pretty good place with lots of brush and the sheep in sight they'd stay by the fire for a while.

RM: How about when it rained? They had to be out in the rain, didn't they?

IS: They had to be out there all the time, man!

RM: How did they keep dry in the rain?

IS: They didn't. They had rubber coats and rubber pants, but at that they'd get pretty wet.

RM: And it's cold. How do you dry out?

IS: You get by the fire somewhere.

RM: How did the shepherders look at sheep? Did they like sheep, or did they just look at them as a way to make a living?

IS: Well, certainly they liked them. My god, that was their livelihood, from where they came from. They all had that inherited, I think.

RM: So they had a real fondness for them.

IS: Why, yes. And that was their life. They guarded them better than the owner himself would.

RM: Basically they were full-time baby sitters.

IS: Worse than that. In the summertime, though, it was a different story. The sheep would go out to feed and in a little while they were filled up. And those sheep follow that sun. When the sun would hit them, they'd turn and go back to find the shady places.

RM: But in the winter they had to go out and pull them up off of the ice and everything.

IS: Oh, heck, yes. Their wool would be frozen to the ground and they'd be a little weak or something. And they might leave one back or something if she couldn't follow, so he'd maybe walk back 2 or 3 miles go look for her. They knew in their own mind right where they left her. They might bring her up a little farther, might get her to the band that day, and maybe not. They might have to go back the next day to get her.

And you talk about cold. When it got cold enough, the sheep would try to get in the tent with you at night. I saw this 2 different times. They'd push right through the door and come in. They had no respect for anything.

RM: And you had 2000 head there; what happens then?

IS: They just piled up around that tent, and piled up on each other; they were raising hell. You'd be up half the night.

RM: [Laughs] Is that right. What would happen when one would try to come through the door?

IS: You'd see him come right into where it's warm and stand there. And maybe the next day you couldn't get within 40 feet of that sheep.

RM: Why?

IS: It was her instinct. She didn't like you that much; all she was worried about was personal comfort — to get warm.

RM: Does a sheep basically live in fear all the time?

IS: No, I wouldn't say that.

RM: Why do they move when the dog moves?

IS: That dog's bark and what not controls them. But I've seen a coyote come

after a lamb, and that old ewe would throw her head down and take a run at him; take a butt at him and try and protect that lamb. So they're not inherently too afraid of anything when it comes to their young.

RM: What are the conditions that make them go into a big pile?

IS: I saw 3000 head dead in one pile down here at the mouth of this canyon. The first ones shiver and hump up and get next to each other. Another bunch comes along and gets on top of them, and they keep piling up and they smother all the ones down under them.

RM: And it's cold that makes them do that?

IS: Why, certainly.

RM: Will anything else make them do that?

IS: Well, if they got scared somewhere and made a run and got caught in the corner of a fence or something — I've seen some awful pileups there. And something like a lion might get in at night and spook them, and they'll pile into a big ditch if they happen be in a canyon or something. They might smother 40, 50, 60 head of them.

RM: What did the sheep owner make his money on — the wool or the lambs?

IS: You had to have them both, and top price on both of them. My old man always told me that for 10 years he made money by the bucket. But then it dried up and the lambs got lighter, the prices dropped and they had all that to combat.

RM: When did he make such good money?

IS: It was from 1915 on to about '25.

RM: That was about the time the United Cattle and Packing Company was at its peak, too, wasn't it?

IS: Oh, they were at their peak, man.

RM: So those were good time on the range in this part of the country.

IS: Yes. Weather was the big key factor in everything. Someone down there told me that one year O. K. Reed ironed 12,000 head of calves. That's a pretty fair-sized outfit.

RM: That's remarkable. Tell me about some of the Basque social customs that the herders and the women who came over here kept as they became adjusted to America.

IS: There were 3 Basque hotels here, and Alice's father and mother owned them at different times.

RM: Which ones were they?

IS: The French Hotel first, then the Eureka Hotel and the Nevada Club. And the Landas up here were of Basque heritage; they ran a little place. The husband might be out there working the sheep and the wife would run the hotel or be working at the hotel.

RM: Were the Basques Catholics?

IS: All the ones I knew of were Catholics.

RM: What other kinds of things about their culture did they bring from the old country?

-
- IS: That wine sack that they would hold up in the air and squirt from. It's called a *bota*.
- RM: And what was it made out of?
- IS: It was made out of goatskin turned inside out. They tell me the inside was tar; I never looked in one, but that's what the old Basques always told me. I've seen a million of those *botas* handled a lot, but I've never opened one up.
- RM: How much did one hold?
- IS: Oh, I'd say in the neighborhood of half a gallon. And they packed that with them all the time.
- RM: So a herder would be taking a little wine all day long?
- IS: Right along. Some of them drank damn little water.
- RM: So they had a little buzz on all the time?
- IS: Don't ask me. They must have, by the amount they used. My dad never allowed it in his camps. Now, this last outfit, the one Phil Etcheverry owns, takes grub to the herders every 5 days, and they take them a gallon of wine every 5 days.
- RM: Is that right. Why didn't your dad allow it?
- IS: He just didn't want them buzzed up. He wanted the best out of every one of them, or they didn't last.
- RM: Do you think it caused problems?
- IS: It did in some ways, certainly. I've had trouble with it too. I ran that outfit a few times. I don't care for it; I never cared for it myself, and I don't approve of it. You give a human that much leeway, and what does he wind up taking?
- RM: He takes an arm. [Isadore pointed to the end of his finger, then to his whole arm.]
- IS: That's right. That's human nature, and you're not going to combat it.
- RM: What other customs did the Basques maintain?
- AS: The Basques got together and had big dinners. After dinner they had their coffee royales, and then they sang. They were great for singing.
- IS: And they'd make up words to music.
- RM: What is a coffee royale?
- IS: Coffee and whiskey or cognac or something. That always topped everything off after a good meal.
- RM: They didn't have coffee royale after every meal, did they?
- AS: Some of them did. But when there was a group, they usually had coffee royales after dinner and then a lot of singing. When they were singing they were really telling stories to each other.
- RM: Were they stories that they'd told before, or were they new stories?
- AS: I think they were just making them up.
- IS: They made them up as they went along.
- RM: Were they fiction?
- AS: Well, they might have been true facts, but . . .

IS: . . . they rhymed, and everything else.

RM: What would a story consist of?

IS: Oh, girls, or their life — anything you wanted to name.

RM: When they were singing, was somebody playing a musical instrument?

AS: No. They were singing stories. One would be singing a story, another would pick it up and they'd keep going.

IS: What one did this summer, the other one did better, and the other one had bigger lambs and heavier lambs; the feed here was no good; land was better over there where the other one was and so on.

AS: They even referred to things back home, singing about people they knew . . .

IS: Yes, when they were kids, and everything else.

RM: Did the women participate in the coffee royale, or was it just men?

AS: Usually the men. The women were usually working. [Laughs]

RM: What were some more of their customs that they practiced here?

AS: I don't know. We always looked forward to my uncle coming in from the sheep camp. He'd stay with us and he always bought us new shoes.

RM: Was he a sheep owner?

AS: Yes, he herded sheep too.

RM: Yet he could afford to buy you kids shoes?

AS: Oh, yes.

RM: How often did he come in?

IS: After they shipped the lambs in the fall. That was their big vacation time. They'd come to town and raise hell and get on a big drunk.

RM: How long did the vacation last?

IS: A week or 2 weeks, and sometimes I think they went a month; providing they had a replacement. If not, you had to get back to work.

AS: Sometimes they'd make a trip to the city — Reno or San Francisco, Elko, Ely, Salt Lake . . . [Chuckles]

IS: They had gathering places for the Basques in every one of those places — for instance, the Hogar Hotel in Salt Lake.

RM: I suppose it was just a big party?

IS: Sure.

AS: And then a lot of them had medical appointments, and Mr. Landa — John Landa — would drive them to all their appointments. He took good care of them.

RM: Can you think of any other old customs people brought here?

IS: I speak Basque and Spanish, you know, and I speak them fluently.

RM: Say, "It is a very nice day."

IS: *Dembora ederra lagau.*

RM: Say, "It is going to be warm today."

IS: *Gaur den sacha nu deru kiau isai nera.*

AS: That's French Basque.

RM: Are there differences?

AS: Oh, yes. I don't understand Viscayno Basque; it's like a foreign language to

-
- me.
- RM: And that's Spanish Basque?
- IS: Yes.
- RM: What is French Basque called?
- IS: Just French Basque.
- AS: Some of the Spanish Basque is like French Basque. I understand that, but I don't understand Viscayno Basque. Isadore's father spoke Spanish Basque and I could understand him. But Viscayno Basque is like a foreign language to me. I don't understand it. Isadore can.
- IS: Up to a point.
- RM: Did the Basques who came over here tend to speak one type more than the other?
- IS: No.
- RM: Were the Viscayno speakers from a different culture?
- IS: No, they were all more or less the same; it was just a different pronunciation in their language.
- RM: Were they different physically in any way?
- IS: Yes — a little darker complected, I believe, on an average.
- AS: Isadore says that for one word, if you ask 6 different Viscaynos how to say it, they'll all tell you something different.
- IS: It's just like your Mexican and Spanish. I speak good Spanish, but when it comes to that Mexican lingo, no. Here's one illustration. They call those cattle down there *corrientes*. That signifies "plain, common and mediocre." That's in the Mexican language. That's just like the mustangs in this country. There are all kinds of different breeds in there; you've got no special breeds. All the riders from the Texas end say that *mustang* originated from the Spanish word *mesteño*.
- RM: What did that mean?
- IS: That meant "mustang." Now, I've been to Mexico quite a bit, but I never heard that word used.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

- IS: All right, we'll go back to those Mexican cattle. They're a mixture of every possible breed; there's no distinction in any one breed. That's why they call them a *corriente*.
- RM: So a *corriente* for a cow is a same thing as a *musteño* for a horse.
- IS: That's what I'm driving at. You get every breed of horse somewhere in the mustang line.
- RM: Isadore, what is your understanding, and the understanding of the Basque people that you grew up with, about the origin of the Basque people?
- IS: I never found anybody who could discuss that in any true form. They all originated in the Basque country, they speak Basque, they lived Basque . . .
- RM: I think researchers are not sure where the Basque came from, and the Basque language is a little island in all of these Indo-European languages; it's not related to any of them.
- IS: And you're just like me; you read reams about where the Basques sprung from and where their language comes from, and I'd never seen one that I go along with or can actually fix myself on.
- RM: Yes. So you don't recall your father talking about his idea of where the Basque came from — or your father, Alice?
- IS: He never mentioned it. And her folks were just as Basque as he was and they never mentioned it. That was just a moot subject.
- AS: Nobody really knew, I guess.
- IS: And they don't know today, Alice. They have not figured that out.
- AS: They have different theories, I guess, but . . .
- IS: The original Basque were fishermen; they'll tell you that. They talk about their Norwegians and all, but the Basques were just as much on the fish end of it as all that northern part of that hemisphere. Now, that is a known fact — originally they were fishermen and boatmen. They came out of the Basque country and went to Newfoundland and all that country and bolted out of there. And lots of them were lost at sea. And they did some whaling, to boot.
- AS: One theory said that they might have come from Ireland, didn't it?
- IS: Oh, god, yes, and I've seen articles where they thought they might have originated in the southern part of Europe. But they have no definite conclusions. You can tell just by the way it's written. And they want to secede from the Spanish government — you know that.
- RM: Yes. Do you think they'll ever succeed in that?
- IS: I don't know. They've got some tough old boys over there; don't underrate them. They were always noted as some of the fiercest fighters on the continent.
- RM: Would you describe the Basque people as short or medium or tall as compared to the other people of Europe?
- IS: Standard, I'd say.
- AS: They're all different — there are blonds, brunettes . . .

-
- RM: The Basque as a group are not necessarily dark?
- AS: I think predominantly they probably are, but there are light blond people too.
- IS: On the Spanish side, you know that the Moors took Spain over. I think there was an infusion of some of them into the Basque because I've seen some Basques who are pretty dark. And I've seen some who were just as fair as any Norwegian.
- AS: My mother was blond. Her hair got darker, but . . .
- RM: What color were her eyes?
- AS: Brown.
- IS: There's a picture of her right there.
- AS: Yes, this is my mother and dad.
- RM: You're showing me a wedding picture of your mother and father. What was your mother's name?
- AS: Mary Epherre.
- RM: And she was born in the old country?
- AS: She was born in Bygorry, France.
- RM: And do you know her birth date?
- AS: Yes. Her birthday's March the 28th, 1893.
- RM: And then your father's name was . . .
- AS: Peter Laborde. He was born March the 12th, 1886, also in Bygorry, France.
- RM: And this picture was taken when and where?
- AS: When they were married — it was probably 1916. They were in Soda Springs, Idaho, at that time.
- RM: Was he herding sheep there?
- AS: He owned some sheep, I believe.
- RM: And Isadore, you're showing me a picture of your mother and father. And when was this picture taken?
- IS: That picture had to be about 1910.
- RM: Was it taken here in Eureka?
- IS: I surmise that was taken in Reno, where they were married. This is their wedding picture.
- AS: They were married at the cathedral in Reno — St. Thomas Aquinas Church.
[Tape is turned off for a while.]
- RM: Why don't you tell me what you know about the Newmont gold mine?
- IS: In the early part of my time there were a couple of old men who lived on that little creek just below the Newmont mine. They found some gold. And there was intermittent prospecting around there. John Livermore, who managed the Ruby Hill Mine, went up there and he told them what they were sitting on there, and he was right in every feature.
- RM: What year would that have been, approximately?
- IS: It was in the '40s.
- AS: Yes. Because he was up there when they had that one driver in the '40s, I think.
- RM: So before the '40s it was just little diggings up there?

- IS: Yes. Prospectors had claims taken up around there, but there were no big digs. But they all found a little gold; they all had a smell that gold was there.
- RM: Was there a town or anything there?
- IS: No, just these 2 little guys in that shack, and then there was a camp maybe somewhere on Maggie Creek — some old duffer had a camp there with a trailer or something.
- AS: Fifty-seven, I think, was when they had that blood drive, because I was working at the school.
- IS: I don't remember that much about it.
- AS: John Livermore was up here then.
- IS: Yes. And I was working for the Eureka Livestock then — that's when your dad brought them out there hunting that time; do you remember that? We hunted some sage hens.
- RM: What was going on there in '57?
- IS: The boom was partially on by then. They were moving lots of equipment in there and they did a lot of drilling. That's what really fired that place up. That's off the Roberts thrust, as they call it.
- RM: So those old guys were sitting on top of one of the largest deposits in the world.
- IS: I guess it actually is, right at the time, the biggest.
- RM: I think it is, yes. A million and a half ounces a year; you can't even believe it.
- IS: That's right. You talk about how much Homestake produced in the long run but this thing, in production, is ahead of Homestake at any time.
- RM: I imagine it's outproduced Homestake. It doesn't take very many years of a million and a half ounces . . .
- IS: But of course, your Homestake's been going how many years?
- RM: A long time.
- IS: The Hearst family fired that up. And then there's the Yellow Knife up in Canada. That's another big one. Low grade ore, but continuous production.
- RM: My relatives came out of Cripple Creek, Colorado — they were diggers in Cripple Creek.
- IS: And they were in digging country, and it produced.
- RM: Yes, it did.
- IS: All the old-timers I knew in Carlin have passed on — Griffins and Aiazzis — the people I knew real well. Long John Griffin. I tell you who I'd go see — the Tomeras.
- RM: Are they in Carlin?
- IS: They're in Pine Valley now. But they've been sitting next to all this activity all their life.
- RM: Were they miners?
- IS: They're all ranchers. But they've been there at all times; they've owned property in Carlin, and they were sitting right next to the gold property.
- RM: Was there any ranching going on up there where the mine is now?
- IS: Maggie Creek was always there — the TS. The TS Cattle Company owned

all of that. Of course, Newmont owns it now.

RM: Who owned the TS 40 to 50 years ago?

IS: I don't recall all the owners, but I know one was the Hibernia Bank of California.

RM: Was the TS a big ranch?

IS: Yes, they were running around 12,000 head of cattle. They had all these ranches — the White House, the Blue House, the Red House and the River ranches.

RM: So we have another huge ranch up there, like United Cattle and Packing Company.

IS: Yes.

RM: Do the Tomeras have a ranch in Pine Valley?

IS: Yes, they own it.

RM: Where are they in relation to the Slagowskis?

IS: They're right up the valley. The next ranch is Rands, owned by Tomera. The next ranch is the Stone House.

RM: The TS must have encompassed a huge area, then.

IS: They did. That was a tremendous outfit.

RM: What happened to the TS?

IS: They just went down through different hands, and it's wound up in Newmont's hands.

RM: Oh. So Newmont owns the whole ranch?

IS: They own every bit of it.

RM: They must own a vast area up there, then.

IS: They do.

AS: They call themselves Elko Land and Cattle now.

IS: Yes. And they've got 2 more ranches — Coyote and Jack Creek.

AS: And that happened in fairly recent years, because they made all those transactions while I was still working in the recorder's office.

IS: Yes, but the TS owned Coyote and Jack in my time.

AS: Yes. But I mean, they bought all that country.

IS: Oh, yes. Thornton had the TS for a while, and he sold that to the Elko Land and Cattle Company, which is Newmont.

RM: So you worked in the recorder's office, Alice?

IS: Yes, for 15 years.

RM: That must have been interesting. Tell me some more about the sheep, Isadore.

IS: I'm going to make you a list of all the sheep owners that I remember. Of course, I'm not going to get them all; there were a lot of sheepmen in this country.

RM: Tell me some more about sheep behavior. The shepherd was an expert on their behavior, wasn't he?

IS: Yes, but I don't think anybody ever figured that out exactly. Different breeds operated different ways. You had your Blackface, your Merinos, you had your Hamps and a whole bunch of distinctive breeds.

RM: And they behaved differently?

IS: Well, there was a difference in those breeds. That's for the guy who knew what he was looking for.

RM: They didn't use many Merinos in the early days, did they?

IS: Yes, Merino was your top sheep — the best wool-producer. But your Hamp and things produced heavier lambs in that space of time. Of course, they were shorter-lived than the Merinos.

RM: How long does a sheep live?

IS: That depends on the conditions that they were run in, the condition of their teeth and how they were taken care of.

RM: What was the useful life span of a ewe?

IS: About 4 years or 5. Some would go longer on a ranch or something.

RM: At what age can you breed them?

IS: They'll breed when they're yearlings.

RM: So basically you get about 4 lambs out of them?

IS: Yes, and they also produce twins and some triplets. It took 2 good years to make a top producing ewe — one year was a breeding year and the next year when that ewe lambed.

RM: So her first lamb wasn't that good? The second breeding was better?

IS: Yes. And a 3-year-old was the best. The first one was a little smaller and lighter. Her milk production wasn't up to par like the old 3-year-old.

RM: Did the shepherd drink the sheep milk?

IS: No. They might keep a goat or two to milk, but not the sheep.

RM: Why? Didn't they like it?

IS: They were raised on it back home, so you can't attribute that as a factor.

AS: They saved it for the lambs.

RM: Did they make cheese or yoghurt or anything like that?

IS: No. He didn't have time to mess around with anything but the bare necessities. He'd cook, go to bed and take care of the sheep.

RM: Was the shepherd with the sheep about 18 hours a day?

IS: They didn't have any hours. A lot of them would go to bed, hear a bell tinkle, and the sheep would be moving, so they'd get up and turn those sheep back. We're talking about at night.

RM: They never could rest, could they?

IS: Yes, they slept with one eye open. Those old-timers used to flabbergast me. I'd hear a noise and wake up and he'd be going out to tend the sheep. That's an instinct that you create after a while.

RM: Did the dog sleep in the tent?

IS: Most of them slept out but I know of at least one that went in the tent.

RM: Did a shepherd get real friendly with his dog?

IS: Some of them treated them really well and others didn't. They had a lot of good dogs on the outfit. My god, they were all the top. I've stood at the Fish Creek ranch house and seen some sheep about 3 miles from the ranch, at what was called the corner. I saw a herder send a dog from that house. It turned those sheep and brought them back.

RM: Three miles!

IS: The sheepherder stayed right there and when the dog got close enough, he controlled him by whistling. A blast out of him, and that dog would stop like that.

RM: Is that right. How did the whistle signals work?

IS: The whistle told the dog to stop and look. Then they'd wave their arms. To go left, you'd wave your left arm. You generally had a hat in your hand.

RM: And then he would wave it right, and they would drive right?

IS: Yes. Well, a top dog would.

RM: What were the other signals he'd give his dog?

IS: That was about it. And when he was herding them, or driving them, if a ewe was back there dragging her ass, he'd just give a little whistle and point and the dog would go get her and push her right up in the band.

RM: They almost understood sign language, didn't they?

IS: They understood; not almost, they understood.

RM: I'll be darned. Did you breed your own dogs?

IS: Yes, they were all raised on the outfit.

RM: Did a good dog tend to produce good dogs?

IS: Absolutely. But after all the different owners and different dogs were in there, they just ran the breed out, just like your Mexican cattle and your mustang.

RM: What was the original dog?

IS: A shepherd.

RM: From where?

IS: I don't know. They were here when I came.

RM: But people brought in other breeds and they got mongrelized?

IS: Yes. The old man never allowed any other breeds in here.

RM: What did the dog look like?

IS: A beautiful shepherd was black with medium hair, white strip down the face, white spot on the chest, white under the belly, speckled legs. Just a genuine shepherd.

RM: How old would a dog be when it started working?

IS: Oh, they'd start work when they were 5 or 6 months old.

RM: And how long were they good for?

IS: I've seen dogs that were there 7 or 8 years — old dogs. I once saw a herder leave and go back to France. This dog would make a circle of every ranch on that outfit about every 2 weeks, looking for that herder. That dog went from the Bull Creek Ranch to Roberts Creek — 80 miles. That was one of your good shepherds. We finally had to destroy him.

RM: My god; what a story. He was attached to the herder and he couldn't get attached to another one?

IS: No other herder could work that dog.

RM: Was that true of most of the dogs?

IS: I'd say, 80 or 90 percent of them were one-man dogs.

RM: Would a herder start working the dog as a pup?

IS: Yes, he'd start him as a pup, and when he finished with him he was the top of

the line. Those dogs would get sore-footed from working so much in the spring, so they'd make boots to put on them. They took care of those dogs.

RM: And a herder would have 2 or 3 dogs?

IS: Most of them had 2.

RM: Was there a lead dog or were they both kind of equal?

IS: When he wanted a certain job done he sent one dog, and when he wanted another kind of job done he sent the other dog.

RM: So each dog had its specialty?

IS: Yes. This wasn't just "sic 'em" or anything like that.

RM: How did they train a dog?

IS: They just trained him by using this. Also, they had a lot of instinct.

RM: Were they kind of copying the older dogs?

IS: Yes, they'd go down that same track. Some of them would be too rough and go to biting, and they'd stop them right now. And some they'd kill.

RM: Is that right? How did you pick a good dog out of a litter?

IS: You could just go through the litter and go eeny meeny miny mo —nobody can see what's in that dog's head.

RM: That is really interesting. When a herder arrived from France, would they give him a couple of dogs?

IS: They'd give him a couple of dogs before they started him with the sheep, to let the dogs get used to him first. And maybe the dog would work for him and maybe it wouldn't. But a lot of those old herders had been there 10, 12, 14 years, and they had their own dogs and they never let anybody fool with them. And they wouldn't work for anybody else.

RM: What would they do with their dog when they were on vacation?

IS: They'd take them to the ranch and lock them up to hold them till they got back.

RM: And probably the dogs were really glad to see them when they got back, weren't they?

IS: Oh, god, yes.

RM: You're showing me a picture of a shepherd. When was this picture taken?

AS: I'd say in the '30s.

IS: That was your uncle's dog.

AS: It's taken at the Eureka Hotel, in the back yard.

RM: So that's what they looked like.

IS: That's what they looked like. She had a white strip down this way and white on her chest.

RM: What did the sheepherder feed the dog?

IS: He cooked for it — meat, potatoes, macaroni, beans — just what they were eating.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

- RM: You were going to tell me about burros, Isadore.
- IS: That burro was the shepherd's partner with those sheep. He had to stay with those sheep and the shepherd had to be able to catch him. Some of them would get ornery and a herder might abuse a burro a little bit, and he'd have trouble catching him. He was out of luck if he didn't catch that burro. He needed to move his camp with that burro _ pack his bags, his camp, his tent and everything. I've seen herders who had burros, and they'd walk out there with a piece of bread, put a lot of sugar on it, give one call and that burro would throw up his head and come right over. So you could tell who knew what he was doing and who didn't.
- RM: Because the burro liked the sugar.
- IS: The sugar, and he knew that he was going to be treated kindly.
- RM: Was the burro hobbled or anything?
- IS: Some, but some never hobbled them; they stayed right with those sheep, right beside that tent. And those sheep more or less used that burro as a leader. He'd lead those sheep to water, get right in front and they'd follow him. He was part of the herd. He always slept with those sheep, right in the middle of them.
- RM: But if the shepherd mishandled the burro, he would have a hard time?
- IS: Yes, I've seen herders who had a lot of problems with burros, let me tell you.
- RM: But the burro would be kind of the leader of the sheep?
- IS: Yes. He'd start out somewhere, and those old sheep would follow him.
- RM: Did the sheep follow the goat that the herders had?
- IS: The goats were a problem in the bands. They had goats in every band. A goat always got up in front where the best feed was, and he led those sheep into some of the worst places that a man can imagine. A lot of herders didn't want any goats in their band, and there were some that eliminated them; they'd kill them.
- RM: Oh. Because the goat would lead them to bad places?
- IS: If there were any rocks around, he'd crawl up in those rocks; he was always looking for a high place. And they're a snoopy animal compared to a sheep.
- RM: So he'd be out snooping around and the sheep would follow him?
- IS: Yes.
- RM: And the burro wouldn't lead the sheep to dangerous places?
- IS: No. That burro always took care of himself pretty well and stayed in good feed, and he'd take them right to water _ where the troughs were.
- RM: How did the burro respond to the dogs?
- IS: They had nothing to do with them. They weren't too friendly; the dogs would just look at them and ignore them.
- RM: Now, the shepherd always had a camp tender, didn't he?
- IS: He had to have, to get his grub. He got his supplies from the camp tender every 5 days. In summertime the camp tender stayed at the summer camp

and took care of 5 to 6 men. But in the wintertime when they were in the south they moved in with the camp tender.

RM: So the camp tender would be at one place, and there would be 5 or 6 bands around him in the summertime.

IS: Yes.

RM: Where would the sheepherder have his tent?

IS: Right with the sheep. The camp tender only came out on grub days, every 5 days or so.

RM: Who became a camp tender?

IS: Generally an older herder. He knew the country, knew where the feed was and where the water was.

RM: So that's how you could bring in new guys.

IS: Yes. You gave them a band in the summertime and they hooked up with a camp tender in the wintertime and he told them what to do.

RM: I see. But the camp tender could also tell a new man about the summer range.

IS: That's right. They sectioned that mountain range off _ went out there and told each what section he had to stay in. That's how they managed it.

RM: Were there any herders who were so incompetent that they had a disaster?

IS: Oh, heck, yes.

RM: What would happen?

IS: Well, mixed bands. You can't do that when a ewe's got lambs on _ that leppies [orphans] a lot of lambs.

RM: So a sheep can't find her own lamb?

IS: Well, if the lamb has the same idea she has, they might get together, but some of them won't. They go by smell on those lambs.

RM: And they could keep it straight in a band of 2000?

IS: The summer band was 1000 ewes. You made your big band to go south with in the winter _ mixed 2 summer bands together.

RM: I see. And by then they didn't get mixed up.

IS: Yes, that was breeding season.

RM: The rams didn't run with the sheep, did they?

IS: No. They were distinctly herded apart and had their own special country. They had a ram herder too _ a buck band.

RM: How many rams would you have in a band?

IS: Well, the old man was raising them to sell, too, so he had about 1100 rams _ Blackface Merinos.

RM: Do they castrate the lambs?

IS: Absolutely; every one of them.

RM: At what age does that take place?

IS: Oh, when they're about 3 or 4 weeks old. They earmark and brand them.

RM: Do you keep any out for rams?

IS: You always had a stud ram. The old man would make these fairs and buy 4 or 5 rams or maybe 10 or 15, 20, whatever he needed. He had quite a few

- thousand-dollar rams. He had a purebred band of sheep there; he called it the Blackface band. They raised those rams to sell, and for his own use. That was a thoroughbred band.
- RM: How many ewes were there per ram?
- IS: For a band of ewes of 2000 you turned in 20 bucks.
- RM: Did you get many barren ewes?
- IS: It depended on the year. If your ewe wasn't in shape, she wouldn't breed. That's what controls everything on this old earth. The following year, she'd better have a good year to help her raise her twins.
- RM: Was the buck band a tough band to handle?
- IS: No, that was the easiest band to handle. They're the laziest creatures of all. He had one buck herder who did nothing but herd bucks.
- RM: And the bucks are lazy?
- IS: Oh, god, yes. They get fat.
- RM: They're not mean?
- IS: No, they're not mean. They had a special place for that buck band on Roberts Creek mountain. And in the fall, before breeding season, they brought them down here to Fish Creek and Bull Creek and they cut out what went to each band.
- RM: When did they turn the bucks in with the ewes?
- IS: About the 20th of November, and they took them out in December.
- RM: How many ewes does a ram breed in a day?
- IS: They can breed 60 to 70 a day. I've seen them pick one buck up. Of course, the herder hobbled him or something when he could get ahold of him, but a couple of months before they were supposed to lamb, 60 to 70 ewes started dropping lambs _ right in the worst time of the year.
- RM: Is that right. So he did it that in just one night. Do the ewe and the ram go through a lot of preliminaries?
- IS: No way. You turn that ram loose and all the ewes in heat bunch up around him and he starts to work on them.
- [Tape is turned off for a while.]
- RM: Senator Laxalt's father was a Basque sheepherder?
- IS: That's all he lived by. And their mother, Theresa Laxalt, had a hotel in Carson. They named the Ormsby House [Hotel] after her when they built that.
- [Tape is turned off for a while.]
- RM: The Eureka Land and Livestock Company ran about 1500 head of cattle. What kind of cattle were they running?
- IS: First Durhams, and then Herefords.
- RM: Why did they switch to Herefords?
- IS: You couldn't get any Durham bulls. They quit bringing them into this country.
- RM: People didn't breed their own bulls, did they?
- IS: No way, because of inbreeding.

AS: They wanted a purer strain.

RM: And you always brought the rams in from the outside too?

AS: Absolutely. My dad used to go to the Salt Lake fair and he'd hit somewhere in Wisconsin where they had a big fair. He always came back with a batch of those bucks _ 15 to 20. Some Basques always went with him, too.

RM: What was a ram worth?

IS: He had 4 or 5 \$1000 rams for that purebred work, and lots of the others were worth around \$250 to \$300.

RM: That was a lot of money then, wasn't it?

IS: That was big money.

RM: How long was a ram good for?

IS: Oh, 3 or 4 years, if that.

RM: How old are they effective breeders?

IS: I'd say 4 to 5 years old. Then they start downhill.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: You've shown me a picture of 2 boys on a sled with a dog. That was taken in Eureka, right?

AS: In our front yard.

RM: And about what year?

IS: It was '48 or '49 _ that's when I brought that pup in from Henderson.

RM: And the boy in back is . . . ?

AS: Peter.

IS: He's a vet now. He's got the Truckee Meadows Veterinary Hospital in Reno.

RM: I'll be darned. And then the boy in front is . . . ?

IS: Isadore Sara, III.

RM: And the little dog is named . . . ?

AS & IS: Danny.

RM: And he's a sheep dog?

AS: A shepherd, yes.

IS: This may sound unbelievable to you, but they're just like ordinary kids. Our children had a basket of toys, and in those toys there were 3 or 4 different-colored cars, and they started to play with that dog with those cars, and then put them back in the basket. They'd tell that dog, "Go get your car, Danny." He'd go get that car.

AS: The red one.

IS: It was the red car. He never fooled with anything else. And in playing horseshoes and what not, they'd tell him to go out and retrieve the horseshoes and he'd retrieve all the horseshoes.

AS: This was just as a puppy. He died when he was about 11 months old.

IS: Yes, we lost him.

RM: Too bad.

AS: He'd go in the bedroom where they had the toys and just start shoveling out all the things until he found his toy.

IS: His red car.

-
- RM: Isn't that something? They're really smart, aren't they? I'm still not clear how the sheepherder taught his dog. At what age would he turn them loose with the sheep?
- IS: Maybe 6 months old _ when he could travel and follow that herder. Up to that point, he couldn't stay with him; he'd have to pack him.
- RM: And when would the herder start keeping him to that whistle and all that?
- IS: He'd just keep pointing and what not. The dog acquired it, just like that dog did that with that red car. That's something that I never could figure.
- AS: Some of our lady neighbors were afraid to go by the yard, because this pup would be barking at them.
- IS: He meant to tackle them.
- AS: Yes. He didn't want anybody coming in here.
- IS: And nobody taught him that; he just acquired that. That's what I mean about the difference between teaching and instincts.
- RM: Does a dog bark at sheep?
- IS: Absolutely. When he goes to turn them or something he barks 2 or 3 times.
- RM: And they'd go?
- IS: Oh, they walked!

CHAPTER TWENTY

- RM: I was mentioning that [on a tape recording I listened to] Bill Thomas said that your dad gave him his first job when Bill Thomas landed in Tonopah about 1904 or '02.
- IS: Right, after Tonopah was discovered in 1902.
- RM: Tell me about how there wasn't a hungry kid in Tonopah when they had their butcher shop.
- IS: Yes, my dad and Bill Thomas were partners in the butcher shop. (In all due respect to old Bill Thomas, he's one of the best people I ever met.) They operated that shop for not too long — I don't know exactly, but for a few years, I presume. And when they closed up and left the place, they had \$28,000 on the books. They'd always made the statement that there were no hungry women or kids in Tonopah that came to that butchershop that didn't get all the supplies they wanted. That's where some of that big debt was accumulated.
- RM: Oh, just giving it to people who were needy?
- IS: They came in there all the time and needed it. And that's the way they wound up.
- RM: Do you remember anything else about either your dad or Bill Thomas that we haven't discussed before?
- IS: Bill Thomas and my dad were similar in one characteristic: They were ore-hungry. They invested in a lot of holes around Tonopah, but they never produced anything. Goldfield was the same way.
- RM: [Laughs] Is that right?
- IS: To his last, that's all Bill Thomas would talk about. He'd come to the ranch and hunt ducks and things with us, and the first thing he and the old man would discuss was the holes there — the mines in Tonopah. Bill Thomas told me they had a keg of whisky that always stood in the butcher shop with a tin cup hanging off it, and anybody was welcome to it. That's the way they operated. And they were both good drinking men!
- RM: Do you know anything more about Thomas or your dad?
- IS: They made numerous investments and sunk quite a few holes around Tonopah, but [the holes] never produced. Even after we were in Fish Creek our dad went down one of the holes that they'd fooled with. They had that bug . . . you knew about the old man throwing that ore away at Tonopah before they ever discovered the silver there.
- RM: Yes, your dad really discovered Tonopah. He just didn't get it assayed. [Laughed]
Isodore, you've made a list here of people who ran sheep in Eureka County in your time.

Sheepmen Who Operated in Eureka County
List Compiled by Isadore Sara, Jr.

Domingo and John Mariluch	Duborgh Sheep Company
Martin and Joe Elorga	Sansinena Sheep Company
Martin and Fernando Segura	Pete Elia Sheep Company
John Jaurequito	Pete Corta Sheep Company
Palma Brothers	Laborde Brothers Sheep Company
Gaston Uhalde	Leon Acorda
Martin Etchemendy	Martin Sara
Cadet Anxo	Carter Brothers
John Biscay	Fritz Walti
George Ardans	Emil Baumann
Zubieta Brothers	Louis Goyhenetche
A. C. Florio	N. Hachquet
T. Bidart	Domingo Recatone
Schaeffer Sheep Company	Jack Ferguson
Handley Brothers	Raymond Labarry
Potts Brothers	Jean Sallaberry
John Irateabal	Martin Amestoy
Charles Vaccaro	Phil and Mick Etcheverry
James Morrison	Oscar Rudnick
Jorgan Jacobsen	Leon Ardans
Mike Etchegaray	Fermin Espinal
Damele and Etchegaray Brothers	James Ithurralde
Pete Etcheverry	Fernando Goicoechea
Bertrand Arambel	Elias Goicoechea
Noble and Smith Sheep Company	Jess Goicoechea
Pete Goicoechea	Bert Robinson
Eureka Land and Livestock Company	Cadet Mendiburu

IS: Yes — people that I knew personally.

RM: OK. Let's go down that list and you'll talk about each one of them. The first on the list is Domingo Mariluch.

IS: They were 2 Basque brothers who ran sheep here in Eureka County for a number of years. The Depression finally broke them. John moved to Bakersfield and did very well down there. Domingo moved to Reno and got a boardinghouse. His wife, in fact, is still alive there. She was a very good friend of Alice's mother's.

RM: Where did they run their sheep?

IS: They ran them mostly on the Diamond Range.

RM: Did they have a lot of sheep?

IS: No, just a band or two, if I remember right — that's 2000 to 4000 sheep.

RM: What would you call small?

IS: One band.

RM: And a band is 2,000?

IS: Yes.

RM: What would be a big operator?

IS: Well, 6000 to 12,000 sheep.

RM: OK. The next one on the list is Martin and Joe Elorga.

IS: Both of them were Spanish Basques. Martin Elorga was in partners with the Seguras, and Joe Elorga ran his separately. The Depression broke him, too.

RM: Did it break Martin?

IS: Well, he went to work for the Seguras. He was working for wages, I presume. He was a partner there at one time.

RM: The Depression apparently broke a lot of people?

IS: Of this list here it broke nine-tenths of them.

RM: Because the wool and the mutton weren't worth anything?

IS: No! And besides, those were dry years. Everything went against them.

RM: So they had a bad economy and dry years?

IS: Yes — bad years and scarce feed. Nineteen thirty-four was one of the worst years I ever saw in this country. All these guys had to ship the sheep out of here in July - they went to Colorado and California and Idaho with them. They couldn't keep the sheep here.

RM: It was that bad — no feed at all?

IS: Well, and no water either.

RM: Tell me about Martin and Fernando Segura.

IS: They lived here in Antelope Valley and they ranged their sheep in the Antelope Range. They were in the sheep business for a lot of years. They weathered the Depression, both of them, and stayed right here.

RM: How were they able to weather it?

IS: They just had a different type of country. They had enough country that they could go over it without being crowded by somebody else. At one time, each canyon in these Diamond Mountains had a band of sheep in it. One band of sheep can clean a canyon out pretty fast, and then they had nowhere to go.

RM: Was Joe Elorga in the Diamonds, too?

IS: Yes. And John Jaureguito also ran sheep in the Diamonds. He didn't have too many — one band or so — and he didn't hang on to it too long. These Palma brothers were of Italian descent; they were not Basques. They ran in Antelope and Diamond both. There were 4 brothers, but 2 ran the sheep business — Henry and Riley Palma.

RM: Did they go bust in the Depression?

IS: Well, they went bust, but it was a little bit after the Depression.

RM: Did any of these people have home base property or were they just out on the open range?

IS: They had a ranch. The Palmas had one ranch over here in Antelope and another one in the Diamonds. They ran sheep in both places — Diamonds

and Antelope.

RM: How about the other people you mentioned? Did they have home base property?

IS: These Seguras did — they owned their ranch. That's the old Butler Ranch in Antelope Valley. Gaston Uhalde was married to a Palma girl. He was in partners on the sheep with the Palmas at one time.

RM: Down in Antelope?

IS: Yes, and Diamond too.

RM: And what happened to them?

IS: He pulled out of there. He went to mining afterwards and he just dropped the 2 brothers. I don't know what the split-up was, but I remember they split up.

Martin Etchemendey ran sheep on some of the Antelope Range and some of the Diamond Range. He wasn't a very big operator, but he never had a home base. He went from one place to wherever he could get a range.

RM: Did these people herd the sheep themselves or did they hire herders?

IS: They had herders. They had to bring the grub out and all. Cadet Anxo was a good operator. (I was talking to his son the day before yesterday.) He ran 3 and 4 bands of sheep. He owned the Willow Creek Ranch, so he had a permanent base. He ran sheep on the Roberts Mountains and he did some on the Buckhorn area too.

RM: What happened to him?

IS: He sold out and moved to Reno, bought an apartment house and passed away from a heart attack.

RM: About when did he move out of the sheep business?

IS: Dan Clark moved over there right afterwards and I worked for Dan Clark that spring. I can't remember what year that was — some time in the '40s. John Biscay and George Ardans acquired the Palma outfit. They ran the same range as the Palmas, but they didn't last too long.

RM: They acquired it in the Depression?

IS: No, after that.

RM: Why didn't they last?

IS: I have no idea. They just sold everything and one went one way and the other went the other. How old was that George? Was he older than you, Alice?

AS: Yes, he was older.

IS: The Zubieta brothers ran up here in Spring Valley for about 2 years and then they sold out. One got married; the other one went back home to Spain.

RM: When did they run?

IS: In the late '40s.

RM: Were they Basque?

IS: Spanish Basque. Then A. C. Florio and T. Bidart ran about 12,000 head.

RM: Where did they run?

IS: They run up here — all this was Florio range back here on this mountain.

RM: What's the name of the area?

IS: Spring Valley and Prospect [Peak] and all of that. They used all that. They lambled up in Buckhorn. That's the outfit I told you about where I saw 3000 head of dead sheep. That finished him. He owed money to the Reconstruction Finance Company and they took the remnants of those sheep and turned them over to Eureka Livestock.

RM: That was Florio and Bidart?

IS: Bidart had gone back to France just before that, so Florio owned them.

RM: Florio was Italian, wasn't he?

IS: Yes, of Italian descent. Mrs. Pete Schaeffer ran the Schaeffer Sheep Company. She had 3 sons and 2 daughters and the old man. She and the old man had the Willow Creek Ranch in Nye County, but they ran the sheep right on the summit back of Eureka. They ran them for years. She finally took the sheep out of here and went over to Fallon. Somebody over there had range in California and told her it was Forest Service land and she'd have to put the sheep in his name, I guess. I heard that that was the end of it — she lost those sheep.

RM: When was she running her sheep here?

IS: In the late '40s and early '50s. The Handley brothers were two Englishmen, Isaac and Walter. They had 2 ranches here on the Diamond. They were working for the Eureka Livestock when my dad bought it, running sheep there, so that was 1910. They were old-timers and they ran sheep here way into the '50s, I think. And these Potts brothers were in Monitor Valley. They had around 8,000 head of sheep. It was nothing but a good operation — they were good cowmen; good people.

RM: And when were they running?

IS: They ran into the late '50s too. They were there before I ever came on the circle. This John Iratcabal was over here — he had the Pinto Creek Ranch leased. He ran sheep there for 3 or 4 years. He may have had 2 bands.

RM: He ran them in the Diamonds?

IS: Yes. This Charles Vaccaro came over there and picked that lease up and ran there for a couple of years. He also ran over here on Prospect —brought those sheep over there.

RM: So Vaccaro took over Iratcabal's operation?

IS: Yes, and ran sheep. James Morrison ran sheep in the Antelopes and over in the Toiyabes. That was in the late '20s and early '30s. Jorgan Jacobsen had a ranch here in Diamond Valley. He ran for a band of sheep there down on the Diamonds for 2 or 3 years.

RM: Jacobsen and Morrison were not Basque, were they?

IS: No sir!

RM: Was Vaccaro Basque?

IS: No, he was of Italian descent. John Iratcabal was Basque. The Potts brothers and Handleys were all Englishmen. Mike Etchegaray was Basque. He ran on the Diamonds for about 2 years and had a saloon in town. He got

ahold of a band of sheep and ran them down on the Diamonds.

RM: How is he related to LeRoy Etchegaray?

IS: He's an uncle. LeRoy's father was a twin. The Etchegaray twins were his brothers. They were partners with the Dameles.

RM: What were the twins' names?

IS: John and Fred.

RM: And was Damele Italian?

IS: Yes. There were 4 Dameles — Pete Damele, Bernard Damele, Steve Damele and Tony Damele. They ran in the Three-Bar and Tonkin area off the Roberts Mountain.

RM: When did they end?

IS: I think in the '40s, but that's thinking. Pete Etcheverry ran sheep here and over in Churchill County. He ran sheep in the Diamonds and various other places in this country too numerous for me to mention.

RM: Was he a big operator?

IS: No, he always had a band or two at the most.

RM: Were there any big operators among the names that you've mentioned?

IS: No, Pottses' is the biggest one, and they had about 8,000 head of sheep. And Florio had 12,000. The rest of them had one or two bands.

Bertrand Arambel and Etcheverry had a partnership or something going. They ran clear over in Churchill County and Alpine and part of Nye County here. They were in Willow Creek and all of that, and part of Nye County.

RM: When was Arambel?

IS: He was in business here in the '50s, but he had been there before. I don't know when he started. Noble and Smith Sheep Company had their base in Elko County. They came down here in the wintertime and trailed through.

RM: When was that?

IS: All through the '30s and even the early '40s. Pete Goicoechea was the same way.

RM: Was he the father of the Pete Goicoechea I know? The county commissioner?

IS: That's his grandfather.

RM: And where was he running?

IS: He was running in White Pine County and part of the Diamonds.

RM: Was it a small operation?

IS: Yes. Eureka Land and Livestock is on the list. You have that information already.

RM: Let's just mention them here. They were the biggest of all of them, weren't they?

IS: That was the kingpin of Eureka County!

RM: How many do you think they were running at their peak?

IS: I told you my dad took 22,000 head onto that desert in 1929.

RM: And what made them fold?

IS: Well, they split up. It was a corporation and we took the Fish Creek Ranch

and separated it from Eureka Livestock.

RM: What ranches did they have again (just so we have it on this list)?

IS: They had the Bull Creek Ranch, the Fish Creek Ranch, the Roberts Creek Ranch, the Vinini Creek Ranch, the Henderson Ranch, the Alpha Ranch, the Thomas place and the Little Porter in Elko County.

RM: So it was huge.

IS: Well, look at the territory it encompassed.

RM: And when did you split off from it?

IS: In 1932.

RM: What made your dad do that?

IS: The Reconstruction Finance Company. He owed \$70-some-thousand to the bank, which was a drop in the bucket, but everybody was screaming for money and those banks just shut him down. You couldn't operate that outfit without money. He bought the Thomas Ranch and all their sheep from the Duborgh Sheep Company in 1924 and gave the sheep to my uncle. He didn't take the real estate — the ranch — but he took all the range.

RM: Where was the Thomas Ranch?

IS: The Thomas Ranch is southeast of Beowawe. All that range was railroad land — the biggest part of it is a lease. The Sansinena Sheep Company took those sheep from the Duborgh Sheep Company. That was an uncle of mine.

RM: Sansinena was an uncle of yours?

IS: Certainly.

AS: My mother and Mrs. Sansinena were sisters.

RM: So you're related to Mrs. Sansinena out there now?

AS: Teresa Sansinena. She's married to his cousin, Paul Sansinena.

IS: He's dead now.

AS: Yes, he died recently.

RM: I see. When was the Duborgh Sheep Company operating?

IS: They were just there; I couldn't tell you a thing about them. The old man bought them out in 1924.

RM: And when did he give Sansinena the sheep?

IS: I don't know what the arrangement was. That's too far back for me to get into.

Then you've got the Pete Elia Sheep Company here. They ran sheep in the upper end of the Crescent Valley around Beowawe. He was a real big operator and a real good operator. Elko County was his forte. He must have had 6 or 7 bands of sheep at one time. He never came this way in the wintertime; he went on the other side of Austin, down through Berlin and all that country.

RM: Oh, he went down toward Reese River and over toward Gabbs?

IS: And on the other side of that; that was all his ground. On the Eureka side, he had the Strathern lease, just below the Thomas Ranch.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

IS: The Pete Corta Sheep Company's headquarters were in Elko County, but they lambled and ran sheep on the Diamonds.

RM: Were they small?

IS: No, they were a good-sized outfit with 6000 or 8000 head of sheep.

RM: Approximately what era was that?

IS: It was still running in the '50s, I believe. That's one thing — I can't separate those periods. Then the Laborde Brothers Sheep Company — that was Alice's dad and her uncle.

AS: My dad was Pete and my uncle was Morris.

IS: Do you remember what years you used to go to sheep camp?

AS: We were in that area in the 1930s.

RM: And where was that?

IS: The Diamonds. Maggini Canyon, wasn't it?

AS: Yes.

IS: These girls used to go over there.

AS: In summertime my sisters and I went up to the sheep camp.

IS: Right.

IS: Then Leon Acorda ran here in the wintertime. He and Martin Sara got snowed in in 1916 or 1918. They didn't last too long. They only had about a band each.

RM: Where were they snowed in?

IS: Down here in Fish Creek flat — Pogue's, they called it. They took an awful beating. Martin was a brother of my dad.

RM: I was wondering about that. He apparently wasn't as prosperous economically

...

IS: No, he took off and went home. He had a family back there.

The Carter brothers were from Lee, Nevada. They came down here every fall and winter to the Sand Springs and Duckwater area.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: You said Carter would come down from Elko into Duckwater in the winter?

IS: Yes, he would come through Fish Creek every year. They were very good friends of ours. Fritz Walti had a ranch in Grass Valley. He ran cattle and he acquired a band of sheep, but he had them for a very short time. That was in 1934 and '35. Emil Baumann had sheep, but not for long.

RM: How was he related to Walt Baumann?

IS: He was his father.

RM: Where were they?

IS: Over here, on the other side of McCluskey Summit. They had a cattle ranch there. Fritz Walti and Emil Baumann were neighbors; they were only 8 or 9 miles apart. Then we have Louis Goyhenetche. He leased sheep from the Eureka Livestock and ran them on the Eureka Livestock range.

RM: Why did they lease them out like that?

IS: I never did figure that out.

RM: When would that have been? In the '30s or the '20s?

IS: In the late '30s and early '40s. N. Hachquet was another leaser from the Eureka Livestock. He leased a band or two in the same period. Domingo Recatune ran on the Eureka Livestock [range] till they had a big [dispute] going on.

RM: When would that have been?

IS: That was about 1912 or 1914.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

IS: Jack Ferguson had a ranch over here right on this valley that goes up the Three-Bar, Kobeh flat. He ran for a little while, not too long. Then Raymond Labarry acquired the Handley outfit. He had a good bunch of sheep and had a good operation.

RM: Where was the Handley outfit located?

IS: One ranch was on this side of the Diamond and the other one was on the other side.

RM: So he was running in the Diamonds?

IS: Right in the Diamonds. Of course, they'd go on the desert in the winter just like everybody else.

RM: When was Labarry working?

IS: Oh, god. I think in the '50s, wasn't it?

AS: Yes, I think it was in the '50s.

IS: He was up in Idaho with Alice's dad.

RM: Was Labarry Basque?

IS: Yes. Recatune, Hachquet and Goyhenetche are Basque. Emil Baumann and Fritz Walti were of German descent. The Carter brothers were just American born.

This Jean Sallaberry had a band of sheep that he acquired from Mike Etchegaray, if I remember right. Then he moved over and bought the Willow Creek Ranch, part of the Cadet Anxo holdings. That must have been in the '40s. Martin Amestoy had an Elko County base, but he was a tramp sheepman with no specific base. He was just jackrabbitting.

RM: That's what you call it? "Jackrabbit-ing"?

IS: I do.

RM: And it was a small operation?

IS: Yes. Phil and Mick Etcheverry have the Eureka Livestock Company now. They land their sheep in California. He shipped up 3 bands the other day. They're here right now.

RM: Where do they range them?

IS: On Eureka Livestock land — Roberts Mountains.

RM: Did they buy it after your father had left the Eureka Livestock Company?

IS: Right, my father had left the company and he just took the Fish Creek Ranch. Oscar Rudnick had the Eureka Livestock and the Etcheverrys made a deal with Oscar Rudnick — they went in partners with him. But Oscar Rudnick

was the original buyer.

RM: When did Etcheverry join Rudnick?

IS: It was '48 or '49; I don't remember exactly.

RM: Rudnick is German, isn't it?

IS: Russian Jewish — that's what he told me. I worked for him. Leon Ardans was an uncle of mine and he was in the Eureka Livestock for years. He finally got his own sheep and ran those sheep up here in Spring Valley one year. Next year I think he was on the Diamonds. He was in sheepherding for 2 years.

RM: When was that?

IS: About '50 to '52, I think. Fermin Espinal was another one of those old Eureka Livestock men. He got his own sheep and I don't remember . . . he died before Leon did that.

AS: He died after Leon did.

IS: After? OK. James Ithurralde moved over to Pinto Creek and ran sheep in the Diamonds.

RM: About when?

AS: In the '50s.

IS: I think Iratcabal was still there when we sold Fish Creek; that was '42, so it would have to be after that sometime. Make it '50. And Fernando Goicoechea was an Elko County operator.

RM: What about Elias Goicoechea?

IS: These are 2 brothers — all the same outfit.

RM: And then who was Jess Goicoechea?

IS: He was a half-brother to Elias. Old Fernando was the father.

RM: And the other 2 are brothers?

IS: Half-brothers.

RM: And they were Elko outfits?

IS: Yes, and they came down here on the desert every fall. They had to come around the Bull Creek Ranch and if it snowed, they were stuck in those hills.

RM: And that was when?

IS: My god, they ran that for 30 or 40 years, I think. He died here not too long ago.

AS: He was married to a good friend who graduated from nursing school with me.

IS: Bert Robinson was a White Pine County operator. He bought Damele sheep here; that's the only way I got acquainted with him. I knew him before, but he didn't operate in Eureka County, only when he bought those sheep. He moved them back to the White Pine County.

RM: When was that?

IS: That was before we sold in '42 — around '39 or '40. Cadet Mendiburu was a latecomer. He operated on the Diamonds in the '80s for about 3 years.

AS: He's from Bakersfield.

IS: Marcos Legarra — ran sheep on Pinto Creek in the Diamonds.

RM: When?

IS: He was way back in the '30s or probably earlier. Laralde Sheep Company is just a newcomer. I think this is probably his third year here. We saw him the other day down the flat unloading them.

RM: That's quite a list.

IS: I'm going to just count them, just for duck soup. I'm just curious. There are 57.

RM: Now, were most of them small operators who would hire a herder?

IS: Yes. There were a lot of Basques in this town at one time and Basque hotels. Her mom fed many a hundred of them there.

RM: Isadore, I wanted to ask you a couple of questions about herding. What did the shepherders do about lightning?

IS: They weathered it; they just stayed there. You can't run away from it.

RM: Did they get hit occasionally?

IS: Probably some of them got knocked around.

AS: My dad did. He was on horseback and lightning killed his horse, but it just knocked him out. My dad was deaf and he always blamed that lightning strike.

RM: Weren't they afraid of it?

AS: I imagine they were. [Laughs]

IS: You were out there. It didn't do any good to be afraid of it; you had to stay there and take it.

RM: What about the sheep? Did they ever get hit?

IS: I saw 250 in a pile that got lightning hit; it killed them.

RM: Did it just fry them or what?

IS: All you'd see were lines on them — that's all.

RM: Burn lines on the sheep where the bolt followed them?

IS: Why, certainly. I've been around lots of it too. I would smell it. You smell that ozone and you never forget it.

RM: Is it like an electric motor?

IS: You get a stronger smell than that. You hear it crackle in the trees and you see trees blow up.

RM: You've seen that?

IS: Why, certainly. I lived outside all my life, and I was in it all the time.

RM: When it started to thunder and everything, you didn't get scared?

IS: What good did it do you? There was no place to go! You had to stay out there and take it. You didn't have any recourse.

RM: Did you ever know of a shepherd around in this country who got killed by lightning?

IS: I know of 2 men who got killed. Boitano got killed in Alpha right on the ridge, and one of the Siris on that pass back of McCloud Springs. They were both driving a wagon.

RM: So there was nothing the ranchers and the sheepmen could do about it?

IS: No. You'd get out in the hayfield and that lightning would start. You might

go for the haystack, but sometimes you didn't even have a stack up. You stood out there and took it. There was no shelter or anything.

RM: When it started striking around them, was there anything they did? Did they put down the pitchfork or get in a ditch or something?

IS: Try and cover their head up, that's all. They just laughed.

RM: I was recently up on Robison Summit, and it had real tall sagebrush. Would that be good sheep country?

IS: The Uhaldes run sheep there from Ely right now. They call that 30 Mile Road. They ran up on the mountain there and on Duck Creek. There were 2 brothers. One of them died afterwards. I knew their dad. Hell, we all grew up together.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

- RM: Isadore, you were going to name the owners of the Eureka Land and Live-stock Company?
- IS: The buyers.
- RM: OK. First of all, your dad bought it when?
- IS: In 1910.
- RM: And who did he purchase it from?
- IS: He purchased it from the Eureka bank here, the Paxton Bank, for \$78,000.
- RM: What did it consist of then?
- IS: It consisted of around 12,000 head of sheep, and I think around 1200 head of cattle and the Fish Creek, Bull Creek and Roberts Creek ranches.
- RM: How did the bank happen to have it?
- IS: They said the Tonopah bank ran short of money and came up and took a big bunch of money from here. The Eureka Livestock owed some money here at the bank, and it was the most tangible and workable asset at the time, so they peddled it.
- RM: Did your dad pay cash? I wonder where he would have got that kind of money?
- IS: Well, Kimball was his partner. A. E. — Albert Edward — Kimball was a kind of a financier; he had a lot of money.
- RM: And where was he from?
- IS: Salt Lake. He had property in Mexico before that. The Mexican government ran him out of there.
- RM: Who were his other partners?
- IS: Augustine Garcia.
- RM: Was he a financier too?
- IS: No, he was just a working man, a sheepman.
- RM: But he and your dad were partners?
- IS: Yes, they became partners together in Austin and Tonopah.
- RM: Years before, or shortly before?
- IS: Well, between that span of 1902 and 1910 he was in Austin, Reese River and . . .
- RM: Your dad had left Tonopah by then?
- IS: Yes! He'd been in the Owens Valley and that country and around the Reno area running sheep.
- RM: Oh, he was still running sheep.
- IS: Always.
- RM: Why did he give up the butcher shop in Tonopah?
- IS: He never did tell me. I guess the town just kind of folded up when they got that big strike in Goldfield.
- RM: But Tonopah was going strong in 1902. It was the second-biggest city in the state.
- IS: I know it was at that time, but they just had a periodical boom and it went

down. He told us that.

RM: So he pulled up stakes and he and Thomas sold the butcher shop and he went back to raising sheep?

IS: Sure.

RM: Did he have any other partners when he bought the Eureka Land?

IS: Yes, Fernando Petotegui and Pedro Urquiza. They'd both worked the sheep too.

RM: Why did he have all these sheepmen as partners? What were they contributing to the deal?

IS: I'm sure they put up some money, but, by god, he had to have help at that time, too. You don't just jiggle 14,000 sheep around. You've got to have men who'll handle them. When they bought the outfit, herders were mostly Portuguese. He got rid of them.

RM: Because he didn't think they were good herders?

IS: He didn't want them.

RM: Was your dad the ramrod?

IS: He was the kingpin. He was the president of the Eureka Livestock.

RM: And how much interest did he have?

IS: He had the controlling interest.

RM: Kimball didn't have the controlling interest?

IS: No, he just came over here periodically and stayed a while.

RM: And they bought it in 1910 and then sold it in '32? So he ran it all those years?

IS: Yes, all those years.

RM: Those were basically the years when you were growing up and becoming a young adult.

IS: I was grown.

AS: He was 20 in 1932.

RM: So you were young when he sold out. Were you glad to see him sell out, or were you disappointed?

IS: Oh, that was home to us, just like any other kid — that was all that was owned.

RM: You had to move off of the Roberts Creek then, didn't you?

IS: Yes, we moved to Fish Creek. We used to move there every winter and stay there.

RM: Why at Fish Creek? Was it warmer?

IS: All the stock was down there. That was the big end of the operation in the wintertime.

RM: Was it milder down there?

IS: It was no milder, but everything is handier and closer. In the summertime we went to Roberts Creek.

RM: What was handier? Fish Creek is still out of the way, isn't it?

IS: Well, the desert and the sheep — they moved all the cattle down closer to the desert.

RM: And your father took the Fish Creek Ranch as his interest free and clear, then they kept the rest?

IS: That's right. Petotegui and Urquisa lasted about 2 years as partners. They left the Eureka Livestock and went to South America in about '12 or '13.

RM: Did you ever hear from them?

IS: Never heard from them.

RM: I wonder what happened to them.

IS: Well, they were still going in the sheep business in Argentina.

RM: What about the other sheepmen?

IS: Augustine Garcia left here in 1918. He got married and went back to France. Kimball died; I don't remember what year. He lived in the Hotel Utah for years and he had the Utah Clay Foundry there. He was a director of a bank there and he was a director of the Elko National Bank.

RM: You said your dad bought Kimball out before Kimball died?

IS: Yes. That happened about '31 or '32.

RM: So then your dad owned the whole thing.

IS: Well, he was running the whole thing.

RM: Was part of it owned by the bank?

IS: No, that was paid off. They made money by the bucketful.

RM: How did your dad just end up with the Fish Creek then?

IS: Because you couldn't get any money to run that outfit. You can't travel with this.

RM: Right. (You can't travel with your mouth, which you just pointed to.) So he took the Fish Creek Ranch as his interest. Who took the rest of the outfit?

IS: Leon Ardans and Fermine Espinal had it for a year or two. They promoted a big loan with the Reconstruction Finance Company to operate with and they, in turn, got in trouble. They ran short of funds and that's when Rudnick stepped in.

RM: Where did Rudnick get his money?

IS: He made it from packinghouses and what not in California.

RM: What did Rudnick do?

IS: He kept it for a few years, then he died of cancer.

RM: Who got it then?

IS: The Etcheverrys.

RM: And they've had it ever since?

IS: Yes.

RM: Tell me about Ardans and Espinal. Where did they come from?

IS: One came from France, the other from Spain. They worked for the Eureka Livestock — spent all their years there.

RM: Oh, so he basically sold it to 2 workers there?

IS: Well, they're the ones that wound up with it.

RM: Tell me some more about Rudnick.

IS: He was a very wealthy man. He was in partners with [an outfit that owned] 100,000 sheep in the Bakersfield area. He had an open credit account with

old Gianini and the Bank of America for \$3 million, so you figure what he was worth.

RM: And he came into this for the sheep?

IS: Sure. And he was a partner in over 100,000 sheep. He had all kinds of partners.

RM: But he was coming in in the Depression. I thought things were really tough in the Depression.

IS: He came in just right — just when they were starting up again and things were down at their lowest.

RM: And then he had the Eureka Livestock for how long?

IS: Till he died. I was working for him in '51, and that's when he died.

RM: Oh, and he had it all that time?

IS: Yes. He had turned it over to Etcheverrys; they were running it and he was back down in Bakersfield.

RM: Oh, Etcheverrys were running it for Rudnick?

IS: Yes. I don't know what kind of a deal they had, but the Etcheverrys wound up with it.

RM: Did Rudnick spend much time around here?

IS: No, very little. He had the Paiute Packing Company there in Bakersfield and had the Kern Valley — 2 big packinghouses besides all the feedlots there at Cant Hill and everything else. Do you know where Cant Hill is?

RM: No.

IS: Going down to Los Angeles, you know where Red Rock Canyon is. You get out of the mouth of the canyon and all that, that's Cant Hill over there.

RM: Oh, I've been by there, yes.

IS: He had a hell of a big feed yard over there and what not.

RM: But the Etcheverrys were running the Eureka Livestock for him?

IS: I don't know what the hookup was. They were running it, paying the bills, buying, selling and everything. Rudnick bought a lot of land. He was mostly a hog man. He had the Fontana Hog Ranch - it had 65,000 hogs on it.

RM: Is that right?

IS: Oh, he was a big operator. He had 11 kids. His wife died and he married another woman and she had a kid by him. That's the 12th one.

AS: She was a doctor.

IS: What was her name? Goldstein?

AS: I honestly don't remember.

RM: When did the Etcheverrys begin managing the Eureka Livestock for him?

IS: In 1948 or '49.

RM: Who ran it between '35 and '49?

IS: Oh, he ran it himself. He had a partner, John Brown. They broke up there in '48. John Brown sold some outfit in Bakersfield for \$78,000. He always told me he made the original payment on the Eureka Livestock deal. I don't know, you hear a lot of things out here.

RM: Then when Rudnick died, did the Etcheverrys buy it from his estate?

IS: They acquired it.

RM: Are the Etcheverrys Basques?

IS: They're of Basque descent. They were born and raised in Bakersfield.

RM: And they've still got the company?

IS: Yes.

RM: So they still have the Roberts Creek Ranch and . . .

IS: They bought Three-Bar afterwards, and they have the Alpha, the Henderson and the Vinini Creek. The other day they leased the JD and the Tonkin Ranch and the Willow Creek with an option to buy, I understand.

RM: So it's a huge land deal right now?

IS: Why, certainly. But now it's nothing to what it was. He sold the ranges up there in Elko County a number of years back for \$350,000.

RM: Is that right? How many sheep are they running now, would you say?

IS: I've no idea. They tell me the other day they brought up 3 bands. He runs pretty small; I'd say he has about 900 to the band.

RM: So about 2700 sheep — nothing compared to what it was?

IS: Oh, god.

RM: Are they running cattle?

IS: Yes, they run quite a few cattle.

RM: Do they still herd sheep in the same way as they used to?

IS: No, he's got these little trailers for them. They don't even pack burros now in the summertime, hardly. They've got roads all over the mountain and they move that camp with a truck. If the herder doesn't have a truck, the camp tender goes out and moves them.

RM: And the herder is only taking care of about 900 head? So they only have 3 herders?

IS: That's all.

RM: Do they use Basque herders?

IS: He did, but he tells me he's got quite a few Peruvians now. Those Basque boys won't mess with the sheep.

RM: I wonder why.

IS: They found easier ways to make a living.

AS: They've got better opportunities, probably, than they had at one time.

IS: Lots of them have moved to San Francisco or the Reno area and got in the gardening and landscaping business.

RM: And they can't get them to come over from the old country?

IS: Well, they won't go for shepherding. This town was half Basque at one time.

RM: And in the old days a Basque herder was taking care of 2,000 head with a burro and a tent, and now they're only doing 900 head.

IS: Yes, and shipping them in the fields, lambing them in the fields, and herding them in the fields — alfalfa fields. They only bring them up here to finish the lambs on the summer range. Of course if you've got heavier lambs, there's a lot more expense dragging them back and forth. And it's expensive

renting those alfalfa fields.

RM: Do they put them on the alfalfa fields after they've hayed them?

IS: Well, they get 6 crops down there. And they pay through the nose for that 5th or 6th crop.

RM: Who started the Eureka Land and Livestock Company?

IS: Oscar Smith from Rhode Island.

RM: What's his story?

IS: He was a banker, lawyer and everything else.

RM: When did he start it? Was it before the turn of the century?

IS: It had to be before the turn of the century.

RM: Did he come out and buy up those ranches?

IS: He must have.

RM: He bought up those ranches and at that time it was open range. He also got the railroad grazing, didn't he?

IS: Yes, and in this country the Eureka Livestock owned land all over the country. They ran in the Diamonds, they ran in Antelope, they ran in Roberts Creek, they ran up by the Porter Ranch — all these different sections.

RM: And those ranches, like the Roberts Creek Ranch, were probably homesteaded much earlier, weren't they?

IS: Roberts Creek was a stop for the Pony Express, and they had a big Indian camp there. They even had to bring the troops in there at one time.

RM: What's the history of the Three-Bar?

IS: That was the old Coyle place. The Dameles had that and Phil Etcheverry bought it in 1955 or something.

RM: What about the Alpha Ranch? Alpha was a stop on the railroad, wasn't it?

IS: Yes, and a railroad section house. For a lot of years, that was the end of the line on the railroad. There was a post office there and a schoolhouse.

RM: And there were some big stock corrals there, weren't there?

IS: Yes, that was a shipping point, too.

RM: Was there any mining or anything at Alpha besides stock?

IS: Not right at Alpha. At Eureka there was. They were freighting the ore from Eureka to Palisade with teams.

RM: Oh, yes, before they built the railroad. But for a while the railroad ended at Alpha?

IS: Right.

RM: So they were probably freighting the ore to Alpha then?

IS: Yes. They had a mill at Alpha too.

RM: What's at Alpha now?

IS: Just a ranch.

RM: When did they start that ranch? Was that in your lifetime?

IS: It was before. My dad bought it in 1924 from the Modarellis.

RM: What do you remember about Modarelli?

IS: I knew the 3 boys (they had 3 sons) and a couple of the girls; I knew them real well. The boys were Vinnie, Angelo and Joe, and the girls were Theresa,

and I think Rose. We're going too far back now.

RM: What's the history of the Fish Creek?

IS: The Fish Creek was 3 different ranches at one time — the Fenstermaker place, the Page place and the Barney place. But when my dad bought it, it was already all one ranch.

RM: When did he buy it?

IS: In 1910, when he bought the Eureka Livestock.

RM: What do you know about Fenstermaker? Anything?

IS: All I know is his gravestone. As I told you before, I met his 2 sons. They came down there looking for the grave and asked me if I could locate it for them, and I showed it to them. There's a big stone there now: "Henry Clay Fenstermaker. With Grant At Shiloh."

RM: Then he must have come out and started his ranch [after the Civil War].

IS: He must have.

RM: What do you know about the Page Ranch?

IS: I met Lou Page twice. He came up from San Diego to look at the place.

RM: Were the 3 ranches right together, or were they scattered out?

IS: They were scattered. From where Fenstermaker was to the original Fish Creek house is 2 miles.

RM: Where did you make your headquarters then?

IS: Right at the Fish Creek Ranch — right where it is now.

RM: Was your house at one of the 3 old ranches?

IS: No, it was in a separate place, the middle place. The old man started that.

RM: What's the history of the Henderson Ranch? Where is it?

IS: That's about 9 miles northeast of Roberts Creek.

RM: By Roberts Creek mountain?

IS: Yes. He bought that from the Sadlers. He bought Vinini Creek from Sam Carter. Sam Carter had a few cattle. He died of cancer afterwards. There's nothing left there now. And they had the Porter Ranch up in Elko County, and they had a big summer camp in Bullion, right at the head of the town of Bullion, in a grove of cottonwoods.

RM: Where is Bullion?

IS: Bullion's the old mining town south of Elko.

RM: So he had range clear up there.

IS: That was his range. He ran 5 or 6 bands up there in the summer. Lots of it was railroad lease, too. The Porter family owned that. We always called that the Squaw Mountain. But the Porter ranch is the right name for it — the little Porter.

RM: And when your dad bought these places, nobody was getting rich on them, were they?

IS: No, but by god they were operating.

RM: They were making a living for a family?

IS: Yes.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

- IS: No, although there's a gold mine up there now — Atlas Gold.
- RM: But there were no mines there when you were growing up?
- IS: No mining whatsoever. The Carters at Vinini Creek had a hole punched in the hill, but I don't know what kind of ore they had. I saw the drift there and what not, but I don't think they had much of anything. The next mine was the Mount Hope down below. That's never produced much, and they spent a hell of a pile of money there, but they haven't done a thing with it. They still have a watchman there.
- RM: When did they start really working the Atlas Mine?
- IS: About 3 years ago.
- RM: Before that there was nothing there?
- IS: It was never scratched.
- RM: So that was a virgin mine when they started.
- IS: That's a virgin mine, just like your Newmont is.
- RM: And then the Mount Hope was down below that?
- IS: Yes, due east of Roberts Creek. That's molybdenum.
- RM: Was it a virgin mine, too?
- IS: Well, they did a lot of digging there, but I know it wasn't much related to making money — there wasn't history attached to it, I don't think.
- RM: Is the Atlas Mine a good mine?
- IS: They're in trouble right now.
- RM: It's not a big ore deposit like Carlin or Round Mountain or anything?
- IS: Oh, no, nothing like that.
- RM: What about Cortez?
- IS: You're talking about a different deal there. They've claimed they've made another hell of a find up there now.
- RM: Is Cortez an old camp?
- IS: It's an old one, yes. That was mostly silver in those days, but now they've got that gold at Gold Acre. They've got a pit up there on top of the mountain. They've worked that out. But they say they've made an awful big strike there just lately. And that's a gung-ho outfit; that's a good outfit.
- RM: And they're working a lot of men up there and everything right now, aren't they?
- IS: Sure.
- RM: And then the next mine would be at Carlin. Are there any others?
- IS: No, Battle Mountain is the next one — Battle Mountain gold and what not.
- RM: That's over at Battle Mountain, though, in Lander County.
- IS: And Gold Acre is Lander County. There's been a lot of digging up in those hills back there. I don't know what they produced at Gold Acres, but there are a lot of holes up there.
- RM: But the next mine in Eureka County after Cortez is Carlin?
- IS: Newmont.

RM: When did you first go up into what is now the Newmont area? What ranch was that?

IS: The TS. It was in the early '30s.

RM: What do you recall seeing there then?

IS: As I told you earlier, there were 2 old prospectors on that creek. That's all there was there — a few scratchings and dumps around there.

RM: Is that right? So there had been workings there before 1930?

IS: Well, they found traces of gold, but it's so microscopic that you've got to work so much of it to get anything out of it that they just couldn't make it.

AS: They had to wait for the price of gold to go up, didn't they?

IS: It was around \$24 a ton at that time, if I remember rightly.

RM: You mean the ore was running \$24?

IS: Yes.

RM: Were those 2 diggers older men?

IS: Yes, they were real old.

RM: Had they been there a long time?

IS: Quite a while, I think. I think they told me they'd been there 10 or 12 years.

RM: Did they live in old cabins or shacks?

IS: No, they just had wickiups. People were always staking claims up there and they weren't producing anything.

RM: What happened to those 2 old diggers?

IS: I have no idea. I never saw them again and never heard of them.

RM: Were they nice fellows?

IS: They were always nice to me. They were having lean times.

AS: Tell him about John Livermore, who got Newmont interested in that operation.

IS: John Livermore was at Three-Bar that time with Alice's dad, when I was working with Etcheverry in '51 and '52. That started up after '51 and '52. He's the one who started that Newmont mine.

RM: Was John Livermore working for the TS?

IS: No, he was the manager up here at Ruby Hill. He was an engineer. He told them there was gold up there on that Roberts Creek thrust and proved it to them.

RM: Did he have claims up there?

IS: I have no idea. He's still around; he lives in Reno.

RM: And he was the guy who really got it started, then?

IS: He's the guy who fired the pot up. He was a regular mining engineer — all business.

RM: You knew him.

IS: I met him, but I never worked for him. I worked up there a lot, but he wasn't around there when I was there.

RM: And he got Newmont interested and they came out and started drilling?

IS: They went to drilling and that was big business. They hit it right away.

RM: But they didn't start heap leaching right then, did they? They didn't have

heap leaching then, I don't think.

IS: I don't remember that. When I was with the road department, Eureka County would send a snowplow up there for them for the winter, and I always managed to be on that somewhere, to take it up or bring it back or something.

RM: And that would have been in the '50s?

IS: That was in the '50s.

RM: So you saw it begin to grow up there?

IS: Why, it just leaped. Overnight it sprang up.

RM: There was never a town there, was there?

IS: No. They just ran those buses back and forth from Elko and Carlin. We went up and worked on the road when I was with the county. We oiled a lot of it.

RM: The gold is scattered up there, isn't it?

IS: It's spotted just like every other ore. You generally work out one spot and you're generally through, but they just go from one to another and keep hitting it. They bought the TS Ranch, and they say it's all along that foothill clear to the Red House Ranch. That was the Red House and the Blue House up there, those 2 ranches, and the White House was on the other side. They own that, too. The Red House and Blue House and White House were all part of the TS.

RM: Did you know the Irishman who was the superintendent at the TS?

IS: Oh, Bill Mahoney? My god, Paul Sansinena, my cousin, is married to his daughter.

RM: I interviewed her sister Aileen Schlager.

IS: She's a good person to interview.

RM: Did you know Mahoney?

IS: Heck, yes. He was an old Irishman, a working Irishman. He had 3 daughters and a son. The son got killed and the 3 daughters are still living. Their mother was a Callahan from Austin.

RM: And who owned the TS Ranch? Who was he running it for?

IS: The Hibernia Bank was in there one time. The ranch changed hands a few-odd times. That was a big outfit. They were running 12,000 or 13,000 head of cattle.

AS: Charles Thornton's the one that Newmont bought the TS from. They called it the Elko Land and Livestock Company.

RM: Was Thornton from California?

AS: Yes.

RM: He bought the ranch and then Newmont bought it from him?

IS: Yes. There were a number of ranches there — Jack Creek, Coyote, the White House, the Red House, the Blue House.

RM: And they were all part of the TS?

IS: Yes, and the River Ranch. That's all TS.

RM: Why did they call it the TS?

IS: That's their brand — "T", lazy "S". "T" straight, "S" crossways.

RM: Do you know what Newmont paid for it?

- IS: I've no idea, but I saw the price — it was way up in the millions.. Were you working at the courthouse when they made that deal, Alice?
- AS: Yes, I was there, but I don't remember. It doesn't even state the exact figures. You know how these deeds are.
- RM: What year would it have been when Newmont bought it?
- AS: I was still working at the courthouse — it was about 1984.
- RM: Oh, they didn't buy it until late?
- AS: Oh, no. It's been rather recent.
- RM: What do you recall about Beowawe?
- IS: It was just a wide place in the road and a railroad stop.
- RM: You didn't spend much time there?
- IS: Oh, I loaded and unloaded stock there, or I'd be going through or something. And my aunt Mary Sansinena used to live there. Sometimes I'd get caught late or something and stay overnight. She and Pete owned 2 ranches there.
- RM: And what was her maiden name?
- IS: Mary Louise Ardans. She was the sister of my mother and she was married to Pete Sansinena.
- RM: What do you recall about Palisade?
- IS: We used to do a lot of shipping there and I stayed there quite a few times. There was nothing there but the narrow gauge quarters and a saloon keeper. He rented a few rooms and they had a little store, and that's all there was at Palisade. But that narrow gauge kept it going for a while.
- RM: Did shutting down the narrow gauge hurt the county at all?
- IS: That was the only cheap transportation they had in the old days, and your roads weren't in too good a condition, so you figure it out.
- RM: Did you know Doby Doc Caudill?
- IS: Yes, I knew Doby Doc. He had a saloon in Elko and that's as far as I ever got with him.
- [Tape is turned off for a while.]
- RM: You were talking about the sheepmen in your list here. Repeat what you just said about prosperity.
- IS: Well, they contributed to the prosperity of Eureka. When the mines closed down, they had a big doings in the prosperity of this town.
- RM: Yes. It was a constant source of revenue for the county, wasn't it?
- IS: That's right.
- AS: They had to come in and purchase supplies and that kind of thing.
- IS: And the people were trafficking back and forth through there.
- RM: Who bought the mutton here, Isadore? When they were selling the lambs, who bought them?
- IS: We generally took them to Omaha. We shipped them. Eureka Livestock was one of the biggest shippers in the West at that time. There would be approximately 8000 at a crack from Porter Ranch and 8000 from Roberts Creek.
- RM: So you were shipping 16,000 lambs a year? And who was buying them?

IS: Armour, Swift, Cudahay — all your big Western meat packers.
RM: How did they buy lambs?
IS: They auctioned them off.
RM: Where would they auction them?
IS: Right where you delivered them — at the stockyards in Omaha.
RM: So you would put them on the train and ship them to Omaha.
IS: Yes, and go with them.
RM: That was a lot of risk, wasn't it? Something could happen on the way. And also, you'd get back there and you wouldn't know what price you were going to get, would you?
IS: No. But at one time, Eureka Livestock was one of the biggest shippers in the Western area.
RM: What did a lamb go for in those days?
IS: Around \$7, \$8, or \$9 was good money. During the Depression, in 1934, I saw them go for 5 bucks. It didn't quite pay the freight on them.
RM: So it cost \$5 to freight them to Omaha? So you only made \$2 on a lamb if you sold it for \$7?
IS: Well, they went for \$10, \$12 — they would fluctuate. You had different grades of lambs and they all bought different prices.
RM: How did they grade a lamb?
IS: Fat was very good.
RM: So if it was skinny that brought a bad price? The fatter they were the better?
IS: Right — if they had no wrinkles or anything; were smooth.
RM: How old was a lamb when you sold him?
IS: They were lambled in May and they went out of here in September, so they were about 4 or 5 months old.
RM: How did you sell the wool?
IS: The wool generally went to Boston. Eisman Brothers there used to buy it. They were a Jewish outfit. They'd hold it there — if [the price of wool] was going to go up, they'd store it in the warehouse and finally they'd put it on the market.
RM: Who did the shearing?
IS: We had crews come in here from New Mexico and Arizona and California. They were mostly Mexicans.
RM: How many would be in a crew?
IS: Twenty-two, 24, 28 men.
RM: How long would they stay?
IS: They'd run through a band a day — 2000 sheep.
RM: [Whistles] Boy!
IS: They worked at them too.
RM: With hand clippers, right?
IS: Yes!
RM: Did they have big, powerful forearms?
IS: I don't know. They'd just take those shears and push them through that wool

and just rip it off of them.

AS: Cutting up the sheep?

IS: Yes, they'd get a little too rough. The old man would walk over and tell the captain, "Get that bird out of there."

RM: They put tar on the cuts, didn't they?

IS: Yes, they had what they called "sheep dip." It's strong, volatile medicine.

RM: And what did they have to pay for shearing?

IS: I don't remember — just a few cents a head when they started out. I remember when they were shearing for 12 and 14 cents apiece.

RM: Is that right? And then would they bale up the wool?

IS: They'd sack it. They didn't have balers at that time. They'd sack it up, tighten it down and sew the sack up.

RM: And then ship it where?

IS: To Boston.

RM: Did people bid on the wool or anything?

IS: No, they came out here and looked at it, and they'd contract it.

RM: Did other buyers come out and look?

IS: Oh, yes.

RM: But they usually went with Eisman Brothers?

IS: Well, they did business with them for years. They'd take a sample of the wool. There's lots connected to that wool business. That was a big item at one time.

RM: When did they shear?

IS: In April mostly. It depended on how the weather was and how the feed was.

RM: Did the sheep suffer after they'd been sheared?

IS: Certainly. It's just like taking your clothes off in cold weather. That's what piled up those 3,000 sheep down there. It snowed and they just crawled on top of one another and mounded up there.

RM: Where was that again?

IS: Right at the mouth of the canyon at Pinto Summit. That's the awfulest slaughter I ever saw.

RM: So basically you got money twice a year: when you sold the wool and when you sold the lambs?

IS: And that Old Boy up there [pointing to the sky] made sure whether you got any bingos or not.

RM: Who did they sell the ewes and rams to when they were done with them?

IS: All the old ewes generally died off. When they're about 5 years old, they've gotten over their most productive years.

RM: Oh, so they would just die?

IS: Well, a lot of them wouldn't. Sometimes somebody would want to buy some fat old sheep for mutton. They didn't bring much — \$3 or \$4. But you'd see thousands come and thousands go.

RM: Did the sheepmen want to see twins?

IS: Sure. The more twins they had the better. And if it was a good year, that's

more money.

RM: Would you select the ewes for twins?

IS: No! You'd take that as it comes.

RM: Do they ever make triplets?

IS: Oh, yes.

RM: Did they like to see that?

IS: No, that was a loss.

RM: Would you take one of the triplets away?

IS: If you had something to give him to or a mother to put on. If not, you batted him in the head.

RM: What did you do with the lamb when the mother died?

IS: Generally you lost the lamb unless you were close to a ranch or something and they could put him on milk.

RM: What did you do with the ewe when the lamb died?

IS: Gave her another lamb — try to find one that twinned that didn't have too good a milk or too good a bag.

RM: Did you have to put the hide of the dead lamb on the substitute lamb when you were introducing it to the mother of the dead one?

IS: That's right. You skinned him and tied that hide on him. Sometimes they'd take him right away; sometimes it would take a little over a day or two.

RM: But if you didn't put the hide on him, the mother wouldn't take him?

IS: Some of them would, but it was just a risky business and wasting too much time. You could do it a lot quicker the other way.

RM: How long did you have to keep the hide on him?

IS: Some of them would have a piece of that hide on him a month later. The hide would dry and crack and break off.

RM: Did you tie it around his neck?

IS: No, just slip it over his neck.

RM: The whole hide? But he'd be dragging it, wouldn't he?

IS: Well, you'd cut those extras off.

RM: [Laughs] It's kind of grisly, isn't it, to think a sheep is so stupid?

IS: Yes, there are a lot of things that man has to do.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

- RM: Isadore, you were talking about the area down around Snowball in Nye County. Where is that?
- IS: Hicks Station. They operated from Hicks Station to Snowball and in the Willow Creek area in Nye County.
- RM: Was this before the turn of the century?
- IS: Well, right at the turn of the century.
- RM: And what was their name?
- IS: Schendle and Shaw. They were partners on those cattle.
- RM: And they were a big operation?
- IS: A big operation. How many? I have no idea. But the Indians claim (this is all hearsay) that it was in the thousands. If you were on horseback, the grass would reach up to your stirrups. Today that same area couldn't support 150 head.
- RM: There's just no feed there?
- IS: No feed and no water.
- RM: What happened to the grass, in your opinion? Why did it disappear?
- IS: Well, Mother Nature, and overgrazing, along with the growth of the pine trees and the cedar trees.
- RM: And they just crowded out the grass?
- IS: Crowded it out and dried it up; sucked the moisture out.
- RM: So now it's not fit for grazing at all?
- IS: No, there's just a little winter feed in there. But Dick McKay stays at Snowball and runs a bunch of cattle there, about 180 or 200. It's nothing like the Schendle and Shaw operation.
- RM: Who followed Schendle and Shaw in there?
- IS: Nobody ran any cattle after them, just little bunches. Snowball had 40 or 50 and Willow Creek had a little bunch, but just little dabs. They could not support them.
- RM: I thought of something this morning I wanted to ask you, Isadore. A sheepherder spends a lot of time outdoors and he gets to know the weather. Do you know much about that?
- IS: It's mostly guesswork. You look for the clouds and the direction of the wind.
- RM: In this country what do you look for?
- IS: That north wind mostly, in the wintertime.
- RM: What happens with the north wind?
- IS: Storms. Of course, the storm pattern has even changed in my time. I've seen it in the spring of the year where on the 20th of March we'd be going north with the sheep and the grass would be 2 or 3 inches high and they'd be filling up on it. I've never seen it again since that time. What happened to it? Old Mother Nature controls that.
- RM: What other things does a sheepherder look for as weather indicators?
- IS: The way your animals act. Your sheep and everything else sense it — they get nervous and start a move and then go south if they can.

-
- RM: And they'll head south?
- IS: They will, even at night.
- RM: Do they head down off a mountain if they can?
- IS: They're generally down on the flat, but they get down along that foothill. An animal's a peculiar thing. Nobody's figured out what they think.
- RM: But they know when a storm's coming?
- IS: They've got a good idea. If you know your stock — even your cattle — you can see them bunch up and what not, getting prepared for a storm. You've got to live out there with them to even get an inkling of what it's like.
- RM: There's an old saying, "Red sky at night, sailor's delight." Does that mean anything out here?
- IS: Not to me. I look at those animals. And watch your birds too. You can see your birds all flocking up and moving.
- RM: And that means storm?
- IS: That means storm. After you've lived with them for a while, you get to know them.
- RM: How do you know when a storm is ending? Are there any indications?
- IS: No! It just comes and it goes and it quits when it's ready to. You've got no control on it.
- RM: So you can't anticipate when it's about to end?
- IS: I never could.
- RM: Can you tell if it's going to rain in the morning when you're out on the range?
- IS: You look at the sky and see how cloudy it is and how black and heavy the clouds are and what kind of wind is blowing, and you grab another coat and go.
- RM: Do the animals get restless in the spring and want to head north?
- IS: Absolutely. It's the same way when they come down in the fall when you take them down in the desert and bring them south.
- RM: They're ready to go on the desert?
- IS: You bet they are. You don't need to drive them; just point them and they go.
- RM: And how do they act when they want to head back north?
- IS: They turn around and head back north.
- RM: Do they start getting restless and pointing that way and everything?
- IS: They all do. People don't give them credit for having that much know-how, but the more you see them, the more you respect them. I always did; I lived with lots of them. I mean lived with them. I didn't stay in a house, either. I was right out there.
- Even a saddle horse, when a big storm is coming, will shake his head. He wants to go toward home. He wants to go to that barn. And you better listen to him. I've been lost a lot of times, but turn that horse loose and he always took me right straight home.
- RM: You mean, you've been lost out there?
- IS: Oh, right in that snow, as a matter of fact.
- RM: But you turn a horse loose and he can find his way home?
- IS: Get off him, turn him around, get on him and give him his head and he'll go right

straight home. I don't care how bad the weather is. Don't mess with that bridle; just let him have his head. It happened a number of times. This Fish Creek flat is bad for that.

RM: You couldn't see where you were going?

IS: The only indication you'd get that you were lost was when you'd run into a horse track after a while and know it was yours and finally figure you were going in a circle. I had that happen to me a number of times. But the horse is never mixed up. Never. You tell people that and they think you're blowing smoke at them. Well, I just bypass them. Ignorance is bliss in a lot of ways. In the spring of the year we'd move those old cows to Roberts Creek. About the first of the April you see them all start a-bunching up, pointing north. You'd better grab ahold of them or they would take off.

RM: They were out in front?

IS: They were out in front. And then we had leaders in that herd.

RM: Cows have leaders, don't they?

IS: You bet they do. You'd point them toward Fish Creek and they went for Fish Creek. If you'd point them toward Roberts Creek they'd go straight to Roberts Creek.

RM: I'll be damned.

IS: Then people tell you that they can't think and this and that.

RM: Are there many rattlesnakes in this country?

IS: Oh, a few. In the last few years I've seen very few.

RM: Were there more when you were young?

IS: I didn't see any when I was young. It was the same way with deer—I was 18 years old before I saw a deer. There were no deer in this country.

RM: Why was that?

IS: That was beyond my comprehension. They just weren't there.

RM: Did you every know a buckaroo or anybody who got bit by a snake?

IS: No. A couple of farmers got bit down in Diamond Valley here.

RM: Did the cattle or sheep ever get bit?

IS: Oh, yes. You'd see a lamb lots of times with its head all swelled up. You'd see those marks right on the nose. I had a dog that got bit 3 or 4 times. He'd go crawl in a ditch and lie in the mud for a couple of days and come home and he was well.

RM: It didn't kill him?

IS: Hell no, it didn't kill him. I had that dog after we were married. We brought him to town with us. He was a shepherd.

RM: Will a rattlesnake kill a lamb?

IS: It killed quite a few lambs.

RM: Will it kill a grown sheep?

IS: I don't remember any grown sheep dying.

RM: How about cows? Do they get bit?

IS: I surmise they do, but I don't know. I had a horse that got bit right on the nose. I was riding him from Antelope to Fish Creek and his mouth all swelled up and

what not. He took me home and got over it.

RM: He was bit while you were riding him?

IS: No, he was bit somewhere in the corral when I turned him loose. But I knew it was a snake bite — his lips all overhung the bridle and swelled.

RM: Do you remember what people did when they got bit by a snake?

IS: They all talk about how they'd cut it open and suck it out and what not. That's all I heard about it.

RM: There weren't many mosquitos in this area, were there?

IS: Oh, yes. A lot more than there are now.

RM: Oh, because there was water?

IS: That's right. That Fish Creek Ranch was a hellish place to live in the summer. Even up in these mountains [they'd come] off the snowbanks. You'd be up there horsebacking and those mosquitoes would torture you.

RM: What did the shearpherders do about mosquitos?

IS: They lived with them. They took that as a matter of course.

RM: Didn't they put something on?

IS: They didn't have anything to put on — just clothes.

RM: Did the shearpherders have any cures or anything that they used?

IS: They might have some Vaseline in a jar. That's the extent of it. They weren't near any drugstores to get to medicine.

RM: And no herbs or Indian cures or anything?

IS: No way.

RM: Did most of the herders stay in this country or did they go back to the Old Country?

IS: A lot of them went back. A lot of them are up on that hill in the cemetery.

RM: What did they die of?

IS: Some died of tick fever, others of pneumonia or heart attack.

RM: They have tick fever out here?

IS: Sure they did.

RM: Was it common to get tick fever?

IS: I've seen quite a bit of it. I've seen a half a dozen of them have tick fever.

RM: Does it usually kill them?

IS: I've seen a couple here die with it.

RM: How did they treat it?

IS: I don't know. They went to a doctor, but I don't know what he did. There were no antibiotics or anything in those days. What he prescribed is beyond me.

RM: They'd get it in the spring, wouldn't they?

IS: Yes.

RM: Do the sheep get ticks on them?

IS: They get covered with ticks. So do horses and everything else.

RM: What do you do?

IS: You just pull off what you can of them. I had one on me the other day. You ask Alice — she had to get the tweezers to get it out of me. It was a big tick too. I've no idea where I got it. I went down to a farm when Frank Arcularius was here

and a few days later I had a big one. And he was really fastened on me; left a spot.

RM: How did they get a tick off a sheepherder?

IS: Pull him off.

RM: What about the head? They say the head gets stuck.

IS: Oh, hell. I've pulled a million off of me. This was the worst one. Alice pulled a chunk of skin off about as big as match head with the one I got the other day.

RM: He'd been on there a while?

IS: Yes, he had, and I'd never noticed it.

RM: So tick fever was a hazard of sheepherding. I didn't realize that.

IS: Well, some of them got it. A couple of men who worked for Eureka Livestock died from it. And then of course there was your rabies. You had some rabies occasionally in coyotes and dogs and other animals.

RM: Would they shoot the rabid animal?

IS: If they got a chance, they killed him immediately.

RM: Did you ever know a person who got rabies?

IS: No, but my brother and sister took the Pasteur treatment. Both of them had to take it because of that dog we had.

RM: Did he get bit by a coyote or something?

IS: He did. Coyotes with rabies were common here. If they didn't bite the stallions, the milk cow calves, and the pigs there at that Roberts Creek Ranch, they'd get in among the dogs at night. There were a couple of men here who got bit and they took the Pasteur treatment. Bert Arambel, a guy that's on that list you've got, took it.

RM: Did you ever have locust plagues here, or grasshoppers?

IS: No, the worst plague here was your Mormon crickets.

RM: Were they pretty bad at one time?

IS: Yes, but then the government took to them with sprays and controlled them more or less. The Carlin highway and the railroad got stopped by them a couple different times, they were that thick. Did you ever see a Mormon cricket?

RM: No, I don't think I have.

IS: They're great big black things about 3 inches long. Last year they had quite an outbreak around Winnemucca and that way.

RM: They just eat everything, don't they?

IS: They come to a house and go up one side and down the other and eat everything on their way, too. They don't turn around for anything.

RM: Did you grow fruit at the Fish Creek Ranch?

IS: No. Roberts Creek had a nice orchard.

RM: Was it too cold at Fish Creek?

IS: No, they just never planted them.

RM: What did you grow at Roberts Creek?

IS: Apples, blueberries . . . there were 10 or 12 big apple trees there. Not a vestige of one in sight today; not an indication there's ever been anything there.

RM: Is the house still there?

IS: Yes.

RM: What else did you grow? Any other fruit?

IS: No. We always a huge vegetable garden there with potatoes, cabbage, grain. It was really a productive place. A lot of people would go out from Eureka when they figured the vegetables were ripe. Dad always told them, "Help yourself."

RM: It was a good life, wasn't it?

IS: Yes! But a person was too ignorant to know it.

RM: So they didn't appreciate it?

IS: All right! Now you covered it, right in that mouthful.

**An Interview with
AILEEN MAHONEY SCHLAGER**



Aileen Mahoney Schlager, 1990

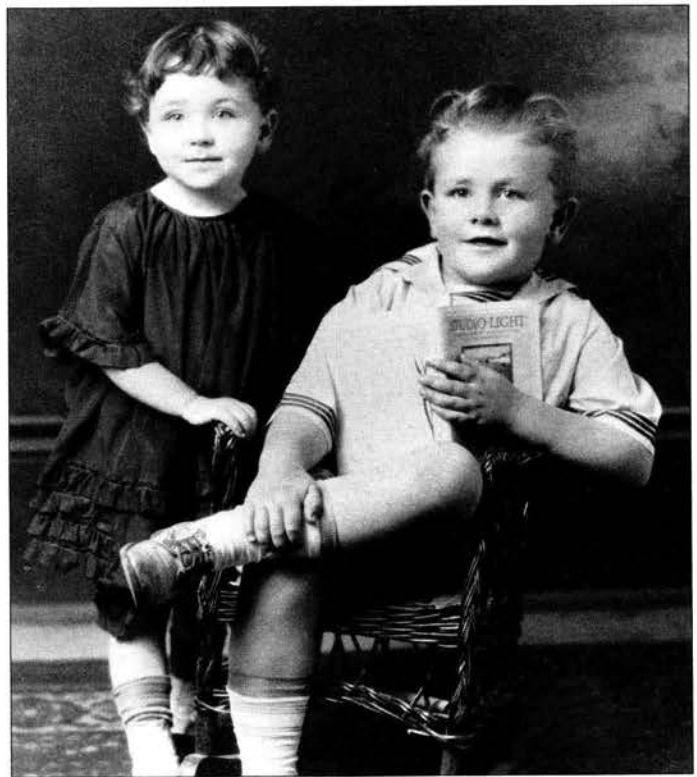
*An Oral History conducted and edited by
Robert D. McCracken
1993*

Photographs from Aileen Mahoney Schlager

1: Mary Mahoney Guisti, Dan Mahoney, and Aileen Mahoney Schlager, circa 1924. Photo was taken at Scott Studio, Elko, Nevada. The children resided at the White House, Dunphy Ranch, Eureka County, Nevada.



2: Teresa Mahoney Sansinena and Dan Mahoney, circa 1926, White House, Dunphy Ranch, Eureka County, Nevada.





3: William Joseph Mahoney, manager of the White House, Dunphy Ranch, Dunphy, Eureka County, Nevada, circa 1915.

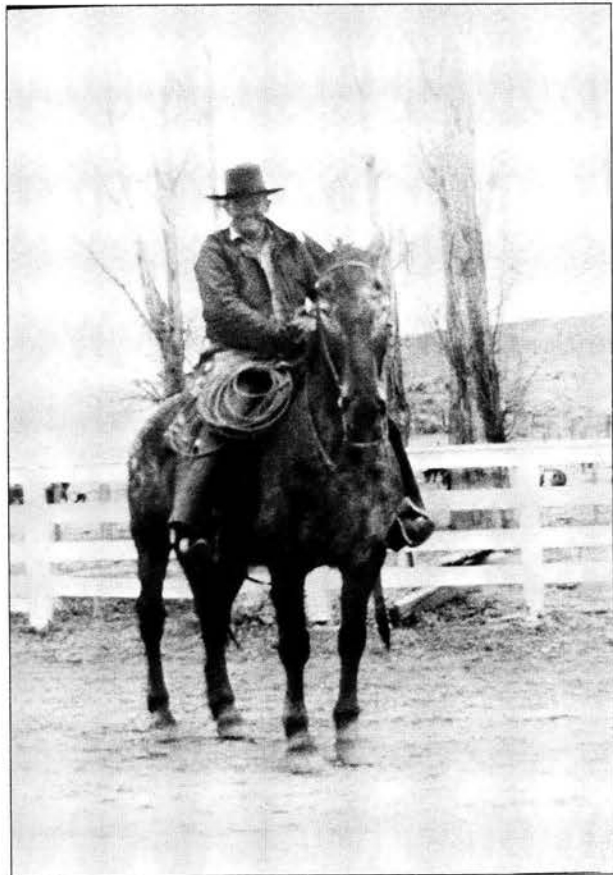


4: William Joseph Mahoney and his bride Jessie Callahan of the Callahan Ranch, Lander County, Nevada, circa 1915.

5: Teresa Mahoney Sansinena at White House, a ranch within the larger Dunphy Ranch, Eureka County, Nevada, circa 1938.



6: Dan Mahoney in the lane at White House, Dunphy Ranch, Eureka County, Nevada, circa 1937.





7: Mary Mahoney Guisti on her palomino mustang "Hopalong," White House, Dunphy Ranch, Eureka County, circa 1936.

CONTENTS

An Interview with Aileen Schlager

- CHAPTER ONE 3
Remarks on Aileen's parents — her father, Bill Mahoney's, arrival in the U.S. and his sojourns in California and the Austin area; Bill Mahoney's lifelong contacts with his native Ireland; how Aileen's mother's grandparents left Ireland, settling first in Argentina and later in San Francisco; how Aileen's mother's parents, Dan Callahan and Eliza Farrell, met in Sacramento; remarks on the Callahans' ranch near Austin; Eliza is widowed and remarries; on Dan and Eliza's daughter Jessie Callahan's youth on the Callahan Ranch.
- CHAPTER TWO 11
Aileen tells of her parents' memories of early-day Austin and of the Walsh Ranch near Austin; Bill Mahoney's early jobs, then a highly responsible position with the enormous Dunphy Ranch; background information on the Dunphy Ranch — the smaller ranches it incorporated, and remarks on the members of the Dunphy family; the sale of the Dunphy Ranch in 1932; a description of the White House Ranch, the Mahoneys' residence on the Dunphy Ranch.
- CHAPTER THREE 19
Aileen's memories of her wonderful childhood, including lots of visits from family friends, many of them Irish; remarks on the Indian people who lived on the Callahan Ranch; day-to-day life at the White House Ranch; remarks on the Callahan and Mahoney names in Ireland; remembering the safety and freedom of a rural Nevada childhood in the 1920s and 1930s; the cattle raised on the Dunphy Ranch; trips to San Francisco in the 1920s and 1930s; Aileen, her mother and her siblings spend a year in San Francisco while Aileen recovers from rheumatic fever; memories of a one-room schoolhouse.
- CHAPTER FOUR 27
Further memories of San Francisco, and of a happy childhood; recalling the Chinese cooks who worked for the Dunphy Ranch; the reading matter at the White House Ranch in the 1930s; discussion of some other large Nevada ranches in the 1920s; friends and acquaintances who stopped at the White House Ranch over the years.
- CHAPTER FIVE 35
How holidays were celebrated at the White House Ranch and trips to Austin for July Fourth and Memorial Day; mail delivery at the Dunphy Ranch; a description of the settlement at Dunphy; further discussion of the holdings of the Dunphy Ranch and of the buckaroos who worked there; observations on the politics of Bill Mahoney and his Irish friends.

CHAPTER SIX

43

Aileen and her sister Mary attend a convent school in San Rafael and surprise the nuns by their acquaintance with an august archbishop; on attending church at Battle Mountain and Carlin; Aileen's husband, Wes, serves in the Pacific during World War II; Aileen's teaching jobs in Ely in Carlin; Bill Mahoney leaves the Dunphy Ranch when it is sold and acquires his own property, now known as the Sansinena Ranch; Aileen's mother, brother Dan and sister Theresa stay with the ranch after Bill's death; on the death of Dan Mahoney; reflections on Jessie Mahoney's great strength of character.

CHAPTER SEVEN

51

Remembering the Hinckleys of the Horseshoe Ranch; further description of the White House Ranch; an incident in which Bill Mahoney breaks trail in Tonopah; Jessie Mahoney's experiences teaching at Waltis' ranch; Aileen and Wes's married years in Elko, then Sparks (where both were teachers); further recollections about Jessie Mahoney and a wonderful childhood at the Dunphy Ranch; keeping warm in the days before electricity; the dangerous lightning storms on the Dunphy Ranch.

CHAPTER EIGHT

58

A story of a fight between a cattleman and a sheepman; Aileen's parents — first Bill and, after his death, Jessie — serve as Eureka County commissioners in the 1940s.

ADDENDUM

60

A chronicle of Bill and Jessie Mahoney and their children after leaving the Dunphy Ranch: Aileen and Mary begin teaching careers; Dan and Theresa join their parents on the new ranch (now the Sansinena Ranch) outside Beowawe; Bill and Jessie's service in politics; happy days on the new ranch, then the tragic death of Dan; Theresa's marriage to Paul Sansinena and the loss of Paul, then of their son, John.

This is Robert McCracken talking to Aileen Schlager at her home in Sparks, Nevada, February 19, 1993.

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Aileen, tell me your name as it reads on your birth certificate.

AS: Aileen Elizabeth Mahoney.

RM: When and where were you born?

AS: In San Francisco on December 17, 1918.

RM: What was your father's name?

AS: William J. Mahoney.

RM: When and where was he born?

AS: He was born in County Cork, Ireland, and he was 78 when he died in June of 1945. That was an estimate, because he would never say how old he was. That was a state secret. They went back trying to research when he had been there, but he left Ireland when he was 17.

RM: So he was born in about 1867. What was your mother's full maiden name?

AS: Jessie Callahan.

RM: When and where was she born?

AS: She was born in Austin May 17, 1887.

RM: Where did your mother and father meet?

AS: They met up at Austin. My father came to Austin to work for his uncle Pat Walsh out in the Reese River Valley. This group of young Irishmen left Bantry Bay in Cork County in Ireland and they sailed to Castle Gardens in Boston. They stayed there for a while and then came out to Benicia in the San Francisco Bay and worked as longshoremen and enjoyed the hustle-bustle of San Francisco in those early days. They used to tell great stories about street fights. They weren't vicious things like the gang fights that we have now, but fisticuffs over which came from the better county or something like that. They always asked — these young Irishmen — "Was it a free fight?" Could they join in? So they fought for fun rather than for malice like we do now.

After they worked as longshoremen at Benicia (they decided they weren't getting anywhere doing that) and this group of men — I don't know the other young men's names — flipped a coin. Some of them went to Australia and my dad, Bill Mahoney, came up to Austin to work for his uncle Pat Walsh.

Pat Walsh was a very wealthy rancher in Lander County in the Reese River Valley right west of Austin. He took up a lot of mortgages — you know, loaned people money and foreclosed on them. He was very wealthy and very prominent. He had a large family and my dad was related to him through marriage. Walsh's first wife was my father's aunt from Ireland.

RM: Why did your father leave Ireland?

AS: His mother died when he must have been about 9 or 10. He had one sister, Julia Hourihan (her married name was Hourihan). I remember years later when we were growing up that he paid off her mortgage on her farm in Ireland. Her son came out to work for my father at Dunphy. After he had saved up so much money he went down to San Francisco and became a very respected member and highly placed member of the San Francisco Fire Department.

And these men were all so good looking. They were all tall, like you, 6'4", with ruddy cheeks — very straight. They were extremely good looking. I grew up with all what you would call Irish immigrants. My dad would guarantee a job and pay passage for these young men from Ireland. I was born in 1918 and these men may have been involved in the 1916 rebellion in Ireland.

RM: Where they kicked the British out?

AS: They were attempting to kick the British out, but of course they lost one battle after the other. When I became a young woman I realized who I had grown up with. These were the boys who wanted Ireland to be free. And can you imagine the homesickness? To be transferred from Ireland to this barren Nevada desert!

Every Christmas we used to move all of our toys away from the Christmas tree because all the men working on the ranch would gather for drinks and visiting. As they drank more and more and more — remember, these are all Irish — they would toast Robert Emmett and the fallen Irish heroes, and someone always fell in the Christmas tree. [Laughter] And it was a big old tree.

But until I was older — as a girl — I didn't realize the aching homesickness. And they were all Catholics. All of the bishops and priests traveling through stopped there because we had a big house and all this Irish faith. They could pass the hat and they could always get their suits pressed and their cars filled with gas and be on their way.

RM: So your father was basically giving refuge to these Irishmen on the ranch?

AS: Yes. After they worked at the ranch a few of them went home. One lovely foreman, Jim Barry, went home. When my daughter went to Ireland in '81 she went to see Jim Barry and he was a little old man. He went home and got married and had a family.

RM: What part of Ireland is Cork in?

AS: In west Ireland.

RM: It's in Ireland and not Northern Ireland?

AS: No. It's in west Ireland, right down on the coast. It wasn't bothered so much by the occupation of the English as the more wealthy, productive counties were — it was harder soil and harder living, so they escaped some of the domination. Growing up at Dunphy we had a huge flagpole and every morning my dad would raise the Stars and Stripes and assure us how lucky we were that we weren't under a Johnny Bull [the British

flag]. Now all this is blended away. But this was a little Irish colony in there.

RM: I'll be darned. Tell a little bit about your mother's family's background.

AS: Her mother's family came from Wicklow and they left Ireland in dark cloaks and small boats in the middle of the night. So you have to suspect this is political persecution too. They came to the Argentine and my grandmother was born in Buenos Aires. In the old census figures she always put her name as Eliza Farrell, born in Buenos Aires. Her father then — this Irish immigrant — was so wealthy that she had a solid silver cradle. Then they had a revolution in Argentina and they confiscated all of his holdings.

So they left the Argentine and came around Cape Horn on a clipper ship. They landed on North Beach and they lived next to Ghiradellis —they were the people at the adjoining tent. (Now you go to San Francisco and visit Ghiradelli Square.) Quite a few years later — after the Depression — my mother's grandfather got a certain amount on the dollar from the Argentinean government.

Now, my great-grandmother and her children could do nice needlework and they were gently raised people, but being so wealthy in Argentina they hadn't gone out and done floors and things like your traditional Irish immigrant. Well, my great-grandfather got some money and he bought a ship's cargo hold of molasses and tea biscuits. I remember my aunt telling me, "We were going [on with] our present way of life thinking this would always be there and then it's gone."

There was a deep path [a foot deep] worn to their house in San Francisco with people bringing their pitchers to get molasses and tea biscuits. To do that with your money? Can you imagine the murder in a wife's eyes? [Laughter]

RM: But he probably prospered from it?

AS: I don't know. It was never very apparent. And my grandmother, Eliza Farrell Callahan [had quite an education]. They must have gone to school somewhere. I don't know when UC Berkeley started, but she had a great interest in astronomy. When I was a little girl she was always taking me out and showing me the stars and identifying constellations. She also read the classics. Even with no money they had this wonderfully high opinion of themselves — this very high social status was just like [people who live in] Virginia.

When I was in Virginia with Wes when we were first married in 1945 we lived in Fredericksburg and I was walking down the street on these beautiful brick-lined sidewalks. A black man was sweeping it in front of some fancy fences and he got off the sidewalk for me to pass. I almost cried. I had been raised with all these Indians as my blood sisters. And Chinese men practically raised me; we always had Chinese cooks at Dunphy. They were my dearest friends. My father had no prejudice against any man —

color, religion, or status. He loved the local laborer as much as the most prominent politician in the early days. There was no racial prejudice at all. For being such staunch Irish Catholics he didn't care what you were; if you were a good man, he didn't care.

RM: What was your grandmother Eliza's father's name?

AS: I don't recall. It could have been John.

RM: He was the one who bought the molasses and the biscuits?

AS: Yes. Then, as a young woman, she went to the California State Fair at Sacramento and met my grandfather, Dan Callahan. He had come down from Austin where he had staked his homestead in 1862.

RM: Right when Austin began. In the Reese River?

AS: No, it's on the other side of the Reese River, going northwest toward Battle Mountain.

RM: It's up the valley?

AS: Yes, going out of Austin toward Beowawe. He was down there looking for rams for his sheep.

RM: He was a sheepman?

AS: He had sheep in the first early days. My aunt told me that he was a friend of Dan de Quill; that they got drunk and wrote poetry together. I have a little diary with a few entries about the weather, but none of the poetry. He always drank too much, and he was about 25 years older than my grandmother. Their first 2 children died at less than a year of age. Everyone else in the family had headstones up there but these first 2 babies. My aunt Addie, who was the leading spokesman for the family and a very articulate, very intelligent woman, never wanted to acknowledge there was anybody older than she was, so there was no mention of these children. I heard them called Lillie and Georgie.

After I got older I often thought of my grandmother that I had adored so much . . . She was little — I was in sixth grade and I was towering over her like you would. I just adored this woman. I thought, "That's something I must do before I die; I must get a headstone for these children." So I started looking in the archives for the *Territorial Enterprise*. They printed the same things in those days, in the 1870s, when those children were born, that the *Austin Reveille* did. They were the 2 main cities in Nevada. The depth of information between these 2 is just fascinating; once you start reading these old microfilms, you can't go home to get dinner. You read about the people that I heard my grandmother talk about, and the terrible death rate among children from diphtheria.

RM: The grandfather that started the Reese-area ranch . . .

AS: This grandfather, Dan Callahan, was on the other side of the mountain from my father's uncle Pat Walsh. Dan Callahan was from County Kerry in Ireland. He took up a homestead in 1862 located northwest of Austin about 20 miles, on the east side of the Toiyabes.

RM: How did he come to Austin?

AS: Probably the way everybody came to Austin.

RM: He came out of California?

AS: Yes. They must have, but I know so little about him. I think everybody came here initially prospecting. These Irishmen were all basically farmers and when they saw a good piece of land, what was valuable to them was the land. Everyone knows that mining is a sporadic thing, but the land will always be there. So [he saw] this beautiful little creek . . . There's a very high mountain there, Mount Callaghan, named after my grandfather. His ranch is right at the foot of it.

RM: Had he been in Virginia City at all?

AS: I don't know.

RM: The first knowledge you have of him is showing up in Austin in 1862?

AS: Yes. He took up the homestead in 1862, went to the Sacramento State Fair quite a bit later — 5 or 6 years later, probably — and met my grandmother, Eliza Farrell.

RM: She had been born in Argentina?

AS: Yes.

RM: What happened then?

AS: She married him and moved out to the ranch at Austin. Their first houses must have been made out of willows or cottonwoods and mud. Then they had a pretty part-clapboard and part-rock farmhouse. Molly McGee Knudtsen, the great Nevada writer, owns it now and she's working to get it on the historic registry. Somewhere I think I have a picture of my grandfather and grandmother, but I don't know where it is. Here is one of Molly's books.

RM: *Here Is Our Valley* by Molly Flagg Knudtsen.

AS: Flagg is her maiden name; she was Molly Flagg McGee. You might want to talk to her sometime.

RM: This is put out by the University of Nevada at Reno 1985. What a fascinating story — from a silver cradle to a wattle-and-daub house out of Austin.

AS: Yes. You can't believe these people. That's why I go back to [speak about] Virginia — I had never been exposed to such social class [distinction]. Where I was with my husband up at the Marine Corps base, I happened to meet this Miss Edmo Lee back in Virginia who was a direct descendant of Robert E. [Lee]. You talk about antiques! They had silver as thin as tissue paper; it was used every day.

Some of these people were poor, and the [new] people who had come into Fredericksburg, Virginia, were very wealthy, but they were "poor white trash." Money had nothing to do with it; it was "breeding." This grandmother Eliza Farrell Callahan wouldn't wear a wedding ring that didn't come from Shreves of San Francisco. Shreves and Tiffany's were the two jewelry stores in the United States. You might have no money, but you wouldn't wear a ring from just any [old jeweler].

After Dan Callahan was killed she got married to try to save the ranch. This man didn't work out but she refused to get a divorce. (He lived.) She had one child by him — my youngest aunt, Mercedes McAfee. So now Eliza Farrell Callahan, Dan's widow, had married Hugh McAfee, and she died carrying the name McAfee. She didn't insert Callahan like you would now, when you put in your previous name to establish your identity.

RM: How did your great-grandfather make his money in Argentina?

AS: It must have been ranching if they took all his property. (They took all his land; they were always after the land.) After that, in San Francisco, I don't know what he did; I think it was very little. They had very little money.

RM: You knew your grandmother, right?

AS: Yes. I was 14 years old when she died.

RM: Do you recall her telling stories about what it was like as a young married woman on the ranch there?

AS: No, it was always just visiting and family. She and my mother were very close. We lived just 90 miles from the Callahan Ranch down at Dunphy, right below Beowawe.

RM: What do you recall your mother saying about growing up on the Callahan Ranch?

AS: Dan Callahan was killed coming home. He had gone into Austin to sell potatoes and he was killed in about 1887. My mother was 3 months old when he was killed coming out of Austin.

RM: When her father was killed? So she never knew him?

AS: No. And the ranch was heavily mortgaged. This charming man drank too much. So my grandmother, Eliza Farrell Callahan, was in dire financial straits — this little woman. They were coming out to foreclose on something of the ranch and there was a beautiful row of those Lombard poplars — those early-day things. Beautiful. She went out with a shotgun and stood off the county officials who were coming to foreclose on her ranch and said that she would bar the road, but she would pay off her debts. And she got away with it. If you'd do that today . . .

RM: Yes, right.

AS: She had 2 brothers, John and Joe Farrell. They were both professional engineers. (They must have graduated from Cal.) Uncle John loaned her the money to pay off the ranch. Uncle John was so successful — he engineered the first railroad across South Africa. So part of the family was doing great and the other part had nothing — this little widowed woman with 4 children.

RM: Do you remember the names of her children?

AS: Yes. The oldest was Gertrude, and then Adelaide. Then John, my uncle, and then my mother Jessie and the child by Hugh McAfee was Mercedes McAfee, as I said.

RM: So there she was, a young widow out there with 4 children and deeply in debt.

AS: And this brother John who was so successful loaned her the money to pay it off.

RM: How much, do you know?

AS: About \$10,000 I think. He was so successful that his wife and daughters lived very close to Buckingham Palace in London while he was in South Africa. They were presented at court and everything. You know what that entails — white gloves to a certain length and the proper hairdo. I can hear my father saying, “I bow to no English Queen.” [Laughter]

RM: What do you recall your mother saying about life on the ranch there?

AS: How poor they were. And how my grandmother was so little. She had to stand on a box to harness the horses to haul grain down to the Cortez Mine (that this Winbaum family owned). They also sold pork and vegetables. All the Chinese workers there were especially eager for fresh pork. My mother also said it was always fun. This was a fun-loving family. The kids were always having parties and even if there wasn't very much of material things around they had some lovely linen tablecloths and some crystal pitchers. They would put out pie with the crystal pitchers and the white tablecloth, and that's all there was. [Laughter] And still this awful, upscale attitude.

RM: That was still carrying on from her upbringing?

AS: I remember being in college and I was going riding down here with a young man who has since become very prominent in this area. Of course, he's old now too. I was delighted to get to go out and ride in the hills around here. I wrote a letter home and told them about it. I got a telegram that said no one of our family should go riding with anyone of that family.

RM: When did your grandmother remarry?

AS: About 2 years later.

RM: Who was Hugh McAfee?

AS: He was working on ranches here and there, and apparently was very good looking. My aunt Mercedes, his daughter, was a beautiful girl.

RM: Is McAfee also Irish?

AS: No, his name was Scotch. He was French Canadian (this is a great mix of people). Then they didn't live together, but they never did get divorced. He lived on the ranch and worked it but they never lived together as man and wife.

RM: You mean he had his own quarters?

AS: His own separate house.

RM: They didn't get along? Was that because she was still attached to her first husband?

AS: My aunt Addie told me that every Christmas Grammie would go and cut pine boughs and haul them in and just cover Dan Callahan's grave. It

was a great love story.

RM: And kind of tragic because he died when she was so young.

AS: It was tragic. He would have been about 25 years older than my grandmother. He was in his 50s when she was 25.

RM: And how was he killed?

AS: The team ran away, threw him out, and he was killed. I came across [an account of his death when] looking for the dates of these first 2 children's deaths so I could fix the tombstone. There's a piece in the Austin paper I didn't copy that describes his death in detail. I'm always meaning to go back to see what [articles] come up about his death.

CHAPTER TWO

AS: At the time of her father's death my mother was only 3 months old and my grandmother was in poor health. In the newspaper article it said that this woman who was very prominent in Austin, a Mrs. Cresenzo, was a dear friend of my grandmother's and that my grandmother was going to stay with her for a few days. Then in another issue of the paper that I never did get to [it said that] my grandmother's mother, my great-grandmother, who was also named Eliza Farrell, was coming from San Francisco to be with her daughter.

RM: Did your grandmother live out her life on the Callahan Ranch?

AS: Yes. They had it in the family 100 years when they sold it in 1962.

RM: So she passed on and one of the children took it over?

AS: Yes, my uncle Doc Callahan and my aunts Addie and Gertrude Callahan.

RM: And then how did your mother and father meet? Refresh my memory. Your father had come from Ireland; how did he spend his first years in the area?

AS: He came out to Austin to work for his uncle Pat Walsh on the Reese River ranch. That was a very big ranching operation. And they had wonderful times in the early days in Austin. He and Mike Malloy, a young man who had married Pat Walsh's daughter, used to ring a bell going up and down the street in Austin to announce a free dance. Austin was a very social, happy place with lots of dances and plays and get-togethers. And the Walsh Ranch was right west of Austin, close to town.

RM: It's kind of the first ranch as you go south down the . . .

AS: As you go south toward Fallon. It's a big ranch off to the left.

RM: Would it be part of the Yomba Shoshone Reservation now?

AS: I don't know how much of that they bought. Then northwest of the highway was Malloy's ranch — they called it the Racetrack. That was the Malloy who used to ring the bells for the free dances. They always went to big dances down Smoky Valley. I remember Mother saying that they took all the kids and everybody in wagons and they just slept in blankets on the benches and stuff. And they partied and had breakfast there.

RM: Where would the dances be held in Smoky Valley? Down at Darroughs Hot Springs?

AS: Yes, and ranches; just wherever.

RM: This would have been before Round Mountain, wouldn't it? What years were these?

AS: Right around the 1890s and the turn of the century.

RM: It seems that there were quite a few Irishmen in there. I interviewed Bart and Lillie O'Toole in Reese River Valley.

AS: Yes, the Reese River Valley was Irish in the early days. I think many Basques have bought so much property up around Austin now [that it's no longer predominantly Irish]. There was O'Toole and Wholey and Malloy and Walsh . . . I'm probably skipping some because I'm not so good on remembering

who lived there.

RM: Were there a lot of Irish who came into Austin?

AS: Yes, there were a lot of Irish miners. Remember, the Irish and the Chinese built the railroad, so these Irishmen were already out in Utah. The Irish built it coming west and the Chinese built it going east. That's how we got all the Chinese in the early-day mining camps and cooking on ranches. Growing up, there were always Chinese cooks at [our ranch]. Some of my best memories are of these Chinese cooks.

RM: So your father was working at the Walsh Ranch, and your mother was growing up at the Callahan Ranch. Did they go to school together in Austin?

AS: No. My mother went to school in Austin, then she went to St. Mary's of the Wasatch Academy in Salt Lake and then she taught for a while. My aunt Addie was a teacher, and Aunt Gertie was a teacher, and then they came back to the ranch. In the early days my aunt Gertie Callahan got paid in cows for teaching on these ranches, so as an older woman she ended up with a nice herd of cows. It worked out. [Laughter]

My dad was at the Walshes' Reese River ranch for some years, and they had a wonderful time there. Pat Walsh had young sons my father's age — young men like John and Joe Walsh. These people loved each other. My dad saved up enough and Pat Walsh apparently helped him, and he bought the ranch over at Tonkin out of Eureka that the Dameles own now.

RM: What's the ranch called?

AS: Tonkin. And this is all very vague — it's just hearsay and bit by bit; I haven't researched or documented any of this. But he became tired of this ranch, which was so out of the way. There was none of the social life of Austin and the fun all these people always had. And my father was very social. He liked lots of company, lots of friends; he liked to be in the thick of things. He always wanted to be at the seat at the head of the table and this was not for him, so he sold out, but I don't know if he sold to Dameles or not.

RM: How long did he have the ranch?

AS: I don't know.

RM: He wasn't married when he bought it?

AS: No. Then he had always known these girls who were women by this time — Flora McGee Hobart and her sister Ethel Hussey. They were the Dean girls from the Dean Ranch in Eureka County, and their grandfather had owned the Cortez Mine. I think Flora was the older of the two girls; she was the more dominant one and Ethel was very beautiful and much quieter. My father and Flora Dean McGee Hobart (she was married twice) were always good friends. So he went to work for her managing the Dean Ranch, and he also did freighting from the mines with big mule teams from Cortez, hauling freight wagons of ore from Cortez to Beowawe.

From there he went to work for Miller and Lux at the Horseshoe Ranch out at Beowawe. Miller and Lux had an enormous amount of steers, and they leased the Horseshoe Ranch from Hinkley for the purpose of pasturing these

steers. He worked for them for a while — I don't know how long — and from there he went down to the Dunphy estate, which was a huge ranch owned by an Irishman from California named William Dunphy, who had a beautiful Spanish wife.

RM: What was her name?

AS: I don't know. I know the daughter's name was Jenny Dunphy; she was married to Rodwell Meyer. Dunphy's children all had parts of this huge ranch. Starting in Lander County there was the Blue House Ranch and then there was the Star Ranch and the DU Ranch and a White House Ranch, and then you went up off Maggie Creek to the Carlin field and then there was Simon's Ranch and Coyote Creek and the Red House and Stampede.

RM: And these are all different parts of the huge Dunphy ranch?

AS: All one ranch.

RM: What do you know about Dunphy? Was he Irish?

AS: Yes.

RM: And when did he come into the country?

AS: I don't know. But he was from California and he married a beautiful Spanish woman — Carmel, California, is named after her.

RM: Her name was Carmel?

AS: Yes, a given name. The one I knew was Jenny Carmen Meyer — she was William Dunphy's youngest daughter. I know about that because down in the Nugget, up on the second floor, they have a branding iron exhibit. I was there for lunch and I was dreaming over the branding irons, and it showed the TS and it said that Carmel, California, was named for Carmen Dunphy.

RM: So the TS Ranch was part of the Dunphy Ranch?

AS: Yes, Dunphy owned it.

RM: And the TS is this huge ranch that now is where the Carlin mines are.

AS: Yes. It's split into many parts. John Marvel owned the home ranch at Dunphy for a while.

RM: So Dunphy put together this huge ranching operation?

AS: Yes. It went from Lander County to Eureka County and into Elko County.

RM: How far north in Eureka did it go? Clear up to the Newmont mine, now?

AS: Yes. And that's in Elko County. It went from Lander into Eureka into Elko County, up as far as Stampede. Now Stampede, out at the Red House, is getting pretty far north.

RM: What valleys did it take in? I wonder how many square miles it took in.

AS: I don't know, but I remember him saying, when I was growing up in the early '20s, that they were running 12,000 head of cattle. I remember growing up that we were encouraged not to go over to the bunkhouse. I was always escaping because I was so fascinated with the cowboys. I said I was such a lucky person that I'd lived then. You can figure 30 buckaroos and the clank of the rowls on their spurs on a wood floor! I was so lucky to live in that time.

RM: Do you know anything about Dunphy's background? Could he have been a

-
- worker on the railroad?
- AS: Well, these were very high society people who traveled with all their own maids. This would have been maybe up in the social standards of Flood and Mackay and up in there. I doubt that you would come off a railroad and marry a daughter of one of the dons in California. Their social standards would be very strict.
- RM: How was it he was able to put together that huge empire?
- AS: A lot of those ranches in the early days started . . . they drove herds in and bought water rights and just camped on them and so on.
- RM: He must have had a lot of titled land as well as pasture, didn't he?
- AS: Oh, they had loads — the hay crews worked from the beginning of summer until the snow would fly.
- RM: When did Dunphy start all this enterprise?
- AS: It would have to be in the 1870s.
- RM: So there were people in there before him?
- AS: I don't know who was before him. He may have come in — like the Horseshoe — to people who would be just squatters. I really have no idea; I just know that he was a very wealthy man. He never concerned me that much except for hearing how beautiful his wife was. I never knew him.
- RM: And she was a Mexican woman?
- AS: She would be [the daughter of] one of the Spanish dons. I knew her when I was a little girl. They would visit at Dunphy. Each of the Dunphy children had one of these ranches as their own little separate thing, but all in a main holding.
- RM: Do you recall the Dunphy children's names? Could you go down the list in order of birth? If not, just give me the names that you recall.
- AS: Mrs. Flood owned the DU, and she was married to a Flood who . . . the San Francisco financial district has a Flood Building in it. And there's a Flood from Virginia City. They were very wealthy socialites; they spent part of the year in Paris.
- RM: So she was one of Dunphy's daughters and she married a Flood?
- AS: Yes. And they were very socially and financially prominent.
- RM: Who was another one?
- AS: William Dunphy was at the ranch quite often when he was growing up. That would be the son. And the other daughter owned the Star; I can't remember her name. The Star Ranch is out of the Blue House down in the valley in Lander County right out of Battle Mountain. There's the Blue House and then the Star and then the DU that was Mrs. Flood's and the White House.
- RM: Which ones were in Eureka County?
- AS: The DU — Mrs. Flood's — and the White House and the Carlin field. When you get up there . . .
- WS: Carlin field would be Elko County.
- AS: Then part of the north area, where the range is going from Dunphy up over the range of mountains into the ranches along Maggie Creek, is all Eureka

County. That's why they have all this problem in Elko where the mines are in Eureka County. They're right over the line — Eureka's getting the money and Elko is getting the financial load from schools and police and housing and so on.

RM: It sounds like Dunphy had more ranches than he had children.

AS: Yes. Each got his share. None of them ever lived there; they were all social-ites.

RM: Where did they live?

AS: San Francisco and the Bay Area.

RM: Dunphy never lived there either?

AS: As far as I know. He may have lived there in the real early days like in the 1800s. When you're young and growing up, you care about the here and now — what we're going to do tomorrow and what's for dinner and who's coming to visit.

RM: Right. Everybody's going to live forever when you're little.

AS: None of us were ever going to go away. Now we're getting to be the end.

RM: I know. So he had managers on this huge ranch?

AS: My dad was the superintendent.

RM: Of the whole huge enterprise? When did he take that position?

AS: Maybe 1911 or 1910.

RM: So this ranch is still intact in 1910?

AS: Oh, yes.

RM: It hadn't been divided up among the children?

AS: No. It was divided in about '32, after that really bad winter.

RM: Was Dunphy still alive then?

AS: The children had it in a corporate estate. It was all one [property].

RM: When did Dunphy pass out of the scene?

AS: I don't know. The only one I really knew was this youngest daughter, Jessie Carmen Meyer. She married an Englishman who had fought in the Boer War and who was my friend. He was the one I knew — Captain Rodwell Xavier Meyer. They had a neat brand with the two of them — X/C. The "X" is for Xavier and the "C" is for Carmen.

RM: That's nice.

AS: There was romance in these old ranches. This was a very great love affair.

RM: Tell me about it.

AS: This man was an elegant English officer type. I remember always being impressed with his incredibly erect posture. One of the pictures in my old photo book there is of Captain Rodwell X. Meyer sitting on that porch with the buckaroos with my dad. And he always wore something like a campaign hat with a peaked crown. He was just an enchanting man. Later, when my sister and I were growing up and going to school in San Francisco, or when we were down there, Captain Meyer would have his car call for us and have us to lunch at his home.

I was ill a lot when I was little; I had rheumatic fever. I was a great scourge

to my parents. They had to move Christmas up because I was going to die and all this and all that. I had rheumatic fever and everything that came along, I got it.

I always felt guilty because I ruined such a good portion of my mother's life. She was a great horsewoman. She got a saddle for a wedding present. They rode together. My mother used to run mustangs when she was a young girl with my uncle, Doc Callahan. (We call John Callahan, my uncle, "Doc" Callahan.) He used to run mustangs. She was a beautiful rider. She loved the outdoors — fishing and ranching . . . my mother was a real westerner.

RM: She grew up on the Callahan Ranch?

AS: Yes, and then moved down to Dunphy when she married my father. We had so much fun. She was the most beautiful and wonderful woman.

RM: Describe what she looked like. Was she a tall woman or was she small like your grandmother?

AS: She was in between; just average height. She had dark straight hair where my father had white Irish skin. You know, cowboys and buckaroos never wore short sleeves; you never saw one that didn't have their cuffs buttoned. And they wore a scarf around their neck so they could pull it up.

RM: Oh, they wore the scarf around their neck so they could pull it up in the dust?

AS: Yes. It also looks great.

RM: I thought maybe it was to keep the sun off of their neck.

AS: Right. And it's comfortable. Remember the old western movies? They used it to wipe their faces after they washed in the creek. It was a handy item and this is where they'd carry it. (I lost my train of thought.)

RM: You were talking about Captain Rodwell.

AS: Yes; and his wife died in the '20s.

RM: And he married one of the Dunphy girls? What was he doing out here?

AS: I don't know how he got out here. But he carried his military bearing to his death. I remember hearing stories that when Jenny Dunphy Meyer was buried in a mausoleum in San Francisco, she was buried with her finest jewelry, like diamond tiaras. These people had incredibly magnificent jewelry. After her death, because my mother's name was Jessie, he gave her a little gold bracelet with a large diamond "J" hanging. I have a couple of bracelets in the safe deposit box that he gave my mother; one is black cloisonné enamel with little glass balls with the Eiffel Tower on it in the brass, and the other has diamonds around a horseshoe with a large pearl.

RM: Did he have his own money, or was it all his wife's?

AS: I don't know. These people would all have to be wealthy, because there would be no way they would even meet each other unless they belonged to this social class. They were not like the immigrants who came to North Beach because they were fleeing another place.

RM: Then Dunphy's daughter married the captain. Did they live there?

AS: No, they visited. And they were the ones I knew best. And she died earlier, in the '20s, apparently. But when I was a girl I graduated from high school in

San Rafael in 1936 and he lived in San Francisco. He always had a maid and a chauffeur and he would take us for rides.

RM: But you knew her?

AS: Just vaguely.

RM: What do you recall about her?

AS: She was a very dark, beautiful little woman.

RM: She was dark like her mother?

AS: Yes. Bothersome little kids weren't encouraged around. They never did have any children. And where they'd always travel with their maids and their trunks and so on, I'm sure we were banished. It was after her death that I knew him, when he would come up to see about the ranch. He was the one I knew the best.

RM: Was he running the whole ranch or just a part of it?

AS: Their ranch would have been the White House at Dunphy. But he was the primary one . . . of course this [family] corporation was in back of him, but he was the one we knew.

After that winter in '32 when the drought was so bad and they lost so much money, the ranch was sold and divided. He kept Dunphy and kept my father on, and Herbert Fleischaker from San Francisco was the leader of a group of investors from San Francisco that bought the other parts of the Dunphy ranch. So it was divided some time after '32. Captain Meyer kept Dunphy and the Red House and . . . I'm not sure. (I remember going up there as a young woman.) Fleischaker was a prominent businessman from San Francisco. A big park in San Francisco, Fleischaker Park, was named after him. And his is the name I remember of this group of men who bought the rest of the ranch.

RM: Your father must have been a heck of a rancher to have been the superintendent of this huge ranch. He must have really known his business. How old a man was he when he became superintendent?

AS: He would have been in his 40s, probably the middle 40s.

RM: And he was reporting directly to William Dunphy.

AS: Yes. They had lots of superintendents and ranch managers and so on under him — cow bosses and ranch bosses and hay crews and so on.

RM: Were they divided up into kind of individual operations? There's a foreman here and a foreman here, and a foreman here . . . how did it work?

AS: No. This was a foreman at Dunphy. Jim Barry was the foreman that I knew growing up who went back to Ireland.

RM: Was your father superintendent of the Dunphy Ranch when he married your mother, then?

AS: Yes.

RM: So your mother grew up on the Callahan Ranch and moved to the Dunphy Ranch. What do you recall about their first years living there? What kind of a house did they live in and so on?

AS: They had a pretty house there at the White House. I took a picture out. The Dunphy Ranch went with a red, white and blue theme for their 3 main ranches.

The Blue House is the one 15 miles or so east of Battle Mountain and all the buildings were blue. They fed cattle there in the winter and the buckaroos stayed there during the winter. At the White House where we grew up at Dunphy, right across the highway there, everything was white. And when you got to the Red House up on Maggie Creek, all those buildings were painted red.

RM: Maggie Creek is where?

AS: It runs north of Carlin. All those Newmont holdings are along Maggie Creek.

RM: And that was the Red House?

AS: Yes. And it was a wonderful, patriotic thing with my dad raising that flag every morning and thanking God that a Johnny Bull wasn't flying over him. I think now that when kids at school don't want to get up to salute the flag . . . my father would have been fired so fast, were he the teacher. I mean, he would have jerked you out of your seat if you didn't bare your head when the flag went by or stand straight to give a proper salute!

CHAPTER THREE

AS: We grew up with so much “jocularity,” as that Irish priest on M*A*S*H used to say. My dad was really tall and he was really social. Daddy was always laughing and whistling; he had a great sense of humor. We always had company, including people from Ireland. He would go out at Thanksgiving and gather in everybody he didn’t think was being invited anywhere for dinner. To get back to your question — did he hire primarily Irish — the answer is no. We had everybody. [Other people] used to get upset with us, but we had all these North Dakota and Oklahoma cowboys; they were great ropers. And we would pick up their accent. It was just a great mix of people. There were always lots of Indians at Dunphy — old Grandfather Tom and the Tom family. The Indians had helped my grandmother, Eliza Farrell McAfee, keep the ranch. She would have never made it without the Indians who were living around there. Those were the really early days — near the 1870s. And as my mother moved down to Dunphy and married my dad, Bill Mahoney, many of the Indians worked down there.

The Irishmen we had were people my dad knew some way; people he was helping get out of Ireland to achieve freedom and a chance to make more of their lives.

RM: Did some of the Irish people just cycle through the ranch — would they be there a while and then move on to something else?

AS: Yes, they’d cycle through the ranch and on to San Francisco, or to some Nevada town. The early-day police and fire departments in San Francisco were all Irish. If you go down an old roster it’s all Irish names.

RM: Tell me about the Indians that your grandmother Callahan hired.

AS: They lived and worked near the ranch. They had regular Indian camps out of there. In the early days a young Indian man went across the mountains to where the Austin-Battle Mountain [railroad] tracks were. He murdered a woman who was living in a section house along this early-day railroad (I can’t remember all the details. The incident is well written up in Nevada history). And then he came back over the mountain. And my mother and the other children on the Callahan Ranch used to slide down stacks of straw. They raised a lot of grain to sell to the mining communities — it was good hard cash — and the straw was slick. (I explained that to my daughter, a real city girl. It was fun to slide down straw because it’s slippery.)

This young Indian man was sliding down the straw with them. He couldn’t have been very old. He had blood on his pants and they inquired about where it had come from. And you can imagine the shape this young man was in — he had hiked right over these big mountains. But he said that he had killed a deer, so they just dismissed it at that. Then he was found to be the murderer and he was to be hanged in Austin. Some of the tribe got in to see him and they took him some wild parsnip, which is a very effective, immediate poison. This is all written up in Harold’s Club’s Nevada book.

RM: What else do you recall about the Indians? Your mother's experiences or your father's or anything?

AS: One time when my dad was working for Pat Walsh up on the Reese River ranch out of Austin there was word of some Indian uprising at some camp, or a gathering of Indians. They loaded a wagon with beef and flour and other things to take up to mollify the Indians and prevent an uprising. Of course, they would have been small raids in those days. But there were always very friendly relations [with my family and the Indians].

RM: There were a lot of Indians in the Reese River Valley, weren't there?

AS: Yes. They were lovely Indian families.

RM: What else do you recall about the Indians?

AS: Just the girls I grew up with at Dunphy. One was Florence Wood — Florence Gonzales. She just died in Elko. And there was a lovely Indian family, the Tybos — Bert Tybo, and Ed Tybo is in Wells now. They were handsome people.

RM: Where did they live?

AS: They lived in little cabins and tents across the little ditch from our house.

RM: Were the men buckaroos?

AS: Yes, and the women did laundry and housekeeping. We always went to school at the little school on the ranch with Indian children.

RM: Tell me about your parents' first few years of marriage living on the Dunphy Ranch. What was life like then?

AS: I'm sure it was very busy. My dad was always going somewhere, for instance to Wyoming or California to buy bulls. He was always off on trips, and with that many ranches to supervise I don't imagine he was home that much. I don't think he ever helped change diapers or do things like fathers do now. I remember Daddy getting out and going in a truck; he was always coming and going.

And he was magnificent on horseback. He was an absolutely beautiful rider with an erect carriage, and he could rope like pure magic. He said in the early days on the Reese River they had to pop the steers out of the brush in the Toiyabes. The cattle must have been really wild, and they had to be excellent riders.

RM: How did he learn to be such a good cowboy? He didn't grow up with it, after all.

AS: No, he left Ireland when he was 17. His mother died when he was young, as I said — I'm guessing he was age 9 or 10. I remember him saying that he could turn around and see the shadow of his mother on the stairs. He just adored his mother; he carried her in his heart. They had a pretty 2-story house in County Cork, right out of Kealkil, in Ireland.

Some of the Mahoneys still live in this house, but in Ireland their name is O'Mahony. They dropped the "O" when they came over here and added the "E". Some of the Mahoneys still have the farm and live in this house. In those days in Ireland the oldest son got the property and one went to the law

and one went to the priesthood, and I imagine the more independent and adventurous ones thought, "I'll try it in America." He used to say, when somebody would be pretty dependent or couldn't take care of themselves, "Well, I left Bantry Bay when I was 17, and I made it just fine." He was very confident.

Incidentally, there were 2 spellings for my mother's maiden name too. Where I looked up in the old issues of the *Reveille* and the *Territorial Enterprise*, in the '70s Dan Callaghan had his name spelled with a "G". Later, late in the '80s, the "G" is dropped and it's C-a-l-l-a-h-a-n. But I believe Callaghan Mountain preserves the original spelling with the "G".

RM: Callaghan Mountain is a tall mountain, isn't it?

AS: Yes, it's the tallest around there. It has a crater at the top.

RM: What kind of pay did your father get as superintendent of the Dunphy Ranch?

AS: It must have been pretty good, but I don't know a dollar amount. And then you figure in what we would call today the perks — a nice house, room, board. We all had horses. We had a very pleasant living.

RM: Who is the oldest in your family?

AS: I am the oldest.

RM: Why don't you state your mother and father's children in birth order?

AS: I am the oldest. My sister Mary Mahoney Guisti in Elko is the second; my brother Dan, who was killed in 1952, was the third; and my sister Teresa Mahoney Sansenina at Beowawe is the youngest daughter.

RM: Would you describe exactly where the Dunphy Ranch is. It was the White House?

AS: Yes, the White House. And they call that the Dunphy Ranch. We used to have a billboard-size sign out near the highway.

RM: Are we talking about Highway 40?

AS: Yes, Highway 40, [now] I-80. I would laugh and tell my children how old I was — I remember watching in fascination while they built Highway 40 with mules and scrapers.

RM: You remember that?

AS: Yes. I was in love with horses. They always said I was the child who caused my mother the most worry; I was always being disobedient. I had to go check out the buckaroos' spurs and things like that. They didn't want little girls over there, but their spurs sounded so wonderful; I was always in love with cowboys.

RM: But little girls were safe around the cowboys. It wasn't because they were worried about you being molested — that kind of thing didn't go on back then, did it?

AS: No, it didn't. You had no worry at all. You were absolutely safe anywhere. But you were a pest. The men had ridden all day. They started at 4:30 in the morning, and little kids can be [a nuisance] unless they're your own. But I'll never forget the sound of the spurs on the wooden floors of the bunkhouse.

RM: Women were treated with more respect in those days, weren't they? For

instance, your grandmother, a widow, was alone on the Callahan Ranch. Today she probably wouldn't be safe.

AS: Right. Our whole world has changed. You were safe anywhere. I remember in the middle '30s going to the Red House with my dad in a pickup and getting sick at my stomach and not feeling well. He dropped me off at a junction in a sagebrush road because he knew somebody else was coming through and I could hitch a ride back to the ranch. Everybody was totally safe. By the same token, we grew up with loaded guns. You know how you're urged now to lock your guns and separate your ammunition? Well, there were always loaded rifles in the corner at Dunphy.

We grew up as free-wheeling children. As I say, my mother was interested in riding and ranching and [the outdoors]. She was the most wonderful, perfect mother anyone could ever have. She just didn't want to be tied down to all this baby stuff. I'm sure we had more freedom than most kids ever dare to dream of. We did our own thing and we had so much room to roam in. There were so many employees that there was always someone who could look out for us on the ranch.

RM: What kind of childhood activities did you engage in?

AS: Oh, we all had horses and we were always tramping in the hills and in the fields. We caught gophers. We generally just roamed as much as possible. There was always someone we could go to or someone had an idea where we were. My dad always slept with a loaded .45 under his pillow.

RM: Why?

AS: You always had coyotes. That's what the rifles were for. I remember the rabid coyotes coming into the ranch yard when I was a pretty young girl; they shot them right in the yard. And there were horses that had died with rabies — I remember that trauma. We always had loads of horses. They had remount stallions. The government had a program where they provided blooded stallions to ranches. They were beautiful horses.

RM: What kind of horses were they?

AS: Saddle horses and work horses . . . all blooded horses. I can't remember the specific breed. I remember the stallion that we got. I was very young (my aunt told me about this) and I begged to stay up so I could go and see the stallion unloaded. He came in a boxcar with the straw very deep, up around his legs.

RM: Was he a saddle horse or a work horse?

AS: A work horse. And there were always saddle horses. We had pretty Appaloosas, and there were loads of work horses. Everything was done by teams then. You had all these hay mowers . . . it was incredible.

RM: Did you have Percherons or Clydesdales as work horses?

AS: Not that huge of a breed. They would be very cumbersome.

RM: When your dad first came on the scene at the Dunphy Ranch in 1911, what kind of cattle were they running?

AS: They always had Herefords. I'm sure they all started with Longhorns they

drove up from Texas; that's how all the cattle got here. They may have added some Shorthorns from California, but most of the early herds were from Texas. And then through the years they improved the breed. That's why he was always going to buy bulls in Wyoming and elsewhere.

RM: Were there Herefords as long as you were on the ranch?

AS: Yes.

RM: They didn't go into Shorthorn or any of the other breeds?

AS: No. And they didn't start to dehorn until much later, when they started shipping them with trucks.

RM: Why was that?

AS: They were safer. Remember, this is a wild country.

RM: And they probably wanted the cows to have the horns, didn't they?

AS: Yes, it's a protective device. And they were shipped in rail cars and driven to the railhead. I remember the lovely drives they had, and the shipping chutes and corrals at Dunphy and Carlin where they used to drive the steers. They weren't crammed in like they are in trucks now.

RM: Tell me some more about your childhood and what it was like growing up on the ranch.

AS: I remember an utterly delightful, almost Cinderella-type existence. My dad must have been doing very well, because when I was a little girl I remember that our clothes all came from a store in San Francisco. This was a long time ago. We always went to San Francisco a lot. My grandmother's sister, Aunt Maggie, lived in Burlingame, and Daddy's main business was with the Dunphy estate that was headquartered in San Francisco. So we were always going to the city. My mother and father were married in San Francisco at the old cathedral that has since been demolished.

RM: How often did you go to San Francisco?

AS: Oh, several times a year.

RM: Is that right? You'd go up and get on the train?

AS: Yes, just hop over and go on the train.

RM: How long did it take you to get to San Francisco on the train?

AS: I can't remember. I remember berths and sleeping overnight. It was fun growing up as kids out there because the main house, White House, at Dunphy was only about a mile from the railroad track. And my father had been through this part of Nevada since the 1880s. He was always interested in mining too. (That's how we had the claims at Tenabo, and he had some mines up Carlin Canyon.) So he knew everybody. They had worked together, they'd politicked around together, they'd buckarooed together. They knew each other socially. And the conductors on the trains up until pretty near when I was married in 1945 had all been buckaroos with my dad.

RM: Were they Irishmen?

AS: Not necessarily. But all these people were old buckaroos. There's a great story in [this manuscript of mine] in here. My father bought a lovely car in Reno. And of course Daddy always drove like he was driving a team of

mules. And fast! Fast, fast, fast! I remember driving over Austin Summit with him. He would pick me up where I was teaching in McGill my first year out of college in 1941-42, and we'd go through Eureka. We would come through Austin for a little visit with somebody or to see my aunt and uncle out at the ranch, and then go down home to Beowawe. (We were living in Beowawe then. Dunphy had been sold and we had the ranch my sister Teresa Mahoney Sansenina has now.) I remember being so terrified after coming over Austin Summit. [Laughter] We were sailing! And he was pointing out — “. . . the 9th of June in 1890, I was on that peak over there.” And we were going 80 miles an hour.

RM: Was it a paved road?

AS: If it was paved then it was just barely paved. And it was very narrow, but traffic was not a problem. I remember getting out at the gas pump in Austin and holding on to it to stand up, I was so absolutely terrified.

The people who survived in those days in Nevada had such incredible physiques. Your life expectancy then was very low, and the ones who lived and played so hard were tremendously strong people.

RM: And your dad was tall?

AS: Yes, over 6 feet.

RM: And what do you think he weighed?

AS: Over 200. He was a big man with an incredible sense of humor. And there was always music some way or another.

RM: Was he a talker? (Because the Irish are talkers.)

AS: Oh, they told wonderful stories — ghost stories — that we were banished from. That's where you needed a tape recorder.

RM: The kids weren't allowed in on it?

AS: Well, it was getting late.

RM: Were they off color?

AS: No, it was just getting late. I never remember my dad swearing around the house.

RM: Do you think he did out on the ranch?

AS: I'm sure they had a wide vocabulary down at the corrals and on the range. But on a big ranch, women weren't encouraged down there. That was men's business.

RM: What about the girls who were buckarooing and riding and things like that? They were working side-by-side with the men, weren't they?

AS: On small ranches they did. On the big ranches, it got to be crews like a big business, and they were separate. On the little ranches they worked side by side.

RM: When you went to San Francisco, where did you stay?

AS: Downtown on Powell Street in a hotel.

RM: Was that a big thrill for you?

AS: Oh, we loved the flower stands and the shopping and the elephants that used to parade . . . they still had vaudeville at the theaters. San Francisco then was

an incredibly beautiful city. All around Union Square the shops were so pretty and the people . . . they said, "San Francisco was the Paris of the West." Now when you see it, it is still pretty, but . . .

RM: It's deteriorated now?

AS: It's still an exquisite city. Maybe through a child's eyes you see everything as beautiful and magical.

RM: How long would you usually stay in San Francisco?

AS: A few days to a week. And then we lived down there. My mother took all 4 of us children and we stayed down there and went to school in San Francisco for a year. When I was recovering from rheumatic fever, I had to be near the doctor. I know I broke my poor father because there was no such thing as health insurance in those days. I remember being in the Stanford Hospital for an incredible length of time. In recovering from it I had to learn to walk again. It had been a year of bed rest. I was treated by a wonderful physician — Dr. Faber was one of the pioneers in the treatment of rheumatic fever.

RM: How did they treat rheumatic fever in the pre-antibiotic days?

AS: With bed rest. I don't remember medications so much. But he pioneered bed rest; I remember being in bed for a whole year.

RM: You were in bed for a year?

AS: On a ranch.

RM: Was that to rest the heart?

AS: Yes. I remember reading everything I could get my hands on. And I was out of school for 2 or 3 years. When I went back to school, I could read so well because I'd read everything. There was no limit. I didn't know anything about math, but I knew all about the airplanes in World War I. [Laughs] I'd read all these French novels. I read all these historical novels. So it was a miracle kind of fifth grade. Even now, I guess, if you can read and spell, you'll get promoted even if you can't do anything else and you have no idea what's going on.

RM: You went to school on the ranch, didn't you?

AS: Yes, in a one—room schoolhouse. We had Indian children and children from the section gang of the railroad over on Dunphy — I remember some Japanese and all other nationalities.

RM: Describe the school.

AS: It was a one-room tie building close to our main house. And it was small. You had to have a certain number of children enrolled . . .

RM: I think it was 5 to set it up and 3 to hold it.

AS: I forget what the ratio was, but it was always a problem to keep it going.

RM: They probably had to establish the school for you, because you were the oldest.

AS: Yes.

RM: Did they have a school there before you were old enough?

AS: I don't know. If there had been, it probably had gone out of use. It would depend on who were the managers and the superintendents before my dad

and if they had families with school-age children. And we were born in San Francisco, all 4 of us. (I remember always being so ashamed that I was born in California. They would kid us about being prune pickers, and we wished we were Nevadans.) In those days, when my dad would be gone so much and the roads were very poor, all the women whose husbands could afford it went to San Francisco to have their babies.

RM: The husbands didn't go with them, did they?

AS: No. They came down when the baby was born depending on their business commitments — were they shipping steers or was there a blizzard. They needed to coordinate the feeding process for the cattle. I remember this apartment building . . .

CHAPTER FOUR

AS: I remember an apartment building on California Street (it might have been Bush). In the early days, when I was born, all the women from mines and little towns and ranches in Nevada whose husbands could afford it didn't want to be bothered with any late night scares, or worrying about getting (a doctor in time), so they went to San Francisco prior to the expected birth and for a reasonable time afterwards. And many of them stayed in the same apartment house. I remember my mother talking about Mabel Hiskey from Austin, whose husband owned the Hiskey Stages. She was one of the ones who stayed there.

RM: How long did a woman typically stay down there when she went for delivery?

AS: I don't know, but it must have been quite expensive. I remember my mother taking us to a park — San Francisco had little neighborhood parks that were so beautiful. And I remember the sailboats on the bay, and how San Francisco was. Of course, when you're coming from the flats and sagebrush at Dunphy . . .

RM: It must have been a real treat in the winter. It was cold out at Dunphy, wasn't it?

AS: Right. But I could never put my childhood into words. A friend of mine wrote to me after my dad died and he said it was too good to last. This was a young man from Winnemucca whose father had been ranch manager down there for the Bliss ranches. He worked for the ag department or the Humboldt Water District or something through high school and college and was in and out of the ranch. I remember he wrote to me saying how sorry he was that Daddy had died and that he remembered the times we spent together in the summers before we all went back to school. He said it was just like Cinderella; it was too good to last. You can't imagine growing up with so much fun. I think of the childhood my own children had with working mothers and financial considerations: "Are we going to do this? Can we do that? Can we afford this? Can we go there?" We had incredible, free-spirited fun.

My daughter and I went to Mass down here one St. Patrick's Day. At our local church, the priests are all Palletines — an order from Ireland. And in honor of the Father Costigan . . . he was a handsome man. He had the same build as my father and my father's nephew, his only sister's son from Ireland — my cousin John Hourihan. He was also an incredibly tall, handsome man. You don't see that build anymore except maybe in young black men — the broad shoulders and narrow hips. And these Irish men had beautiful faces with high coloring. They played "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling" [at the Mass] and I burst out crying. [Fights back tears.] It reminded me of how happy we had been growing up.

I grew up with constant music and laughter and these hordes of people. And think how hard my mother worked. And my dad, of course, worked 18 hours

a day to keep this going. As a child, you don't see any of this; you begin to appreciate it when you get old and tired yourself —how did they do it? My mother always said the Chinese cooks quit or something happened just when they had a hay crew of 40 men.

RM: Oh, boy.

AS: And that is a lot of biscuits.

RM: Were most of the Irish who came through there pretty tall in stature?

AS: No, just my father and John Hourihan. The others were all smaller, as I remember.

RM: Was your father's family fair complected?

AS: Yes. My dad had blue eyes and very white skin — just milk white. They'd be prime candidates for the present worry with skin cancer. But my dad always wore a big hat.

RM: Did they get skin cancer?

AS: It never showed if it did. They were very tan, and they had their scarf up and they wore gloves most of the time.

RM: When they were buckarooing.

AS: Yes. They'd lose their hands otherwise.

RM: So really the only part of their face that was uncovered was around their chin?

AS: Yes.

RM: Did they wear mustaches or beards?

AS: My dad had a beautiful street-sweeper mustache. Oh, I just loved that.

RM: What color hair did his family have?

AS: His was dark brown. Mine was very dark. I could show you my wedding picture, and it's almost a black-brown, and it gets grey. My father's mother was a Sullivan and their hair all gets white in their late 20s and early 30s. I was 25 when I began pulling white hairs out. My daughter was born when I was 42 and I had a whole white forelock on top here. There was grey through my hair, but the front was all white.

RM: Tell me about the Chinese cooks.

AS: There were always Chinese cooks at Dunphy. We had one for many, many years named Louie and we had a little one, Georgie. Then we had one — and this is a ruination of a Chinese name — they called "Gee Whiz." Gee Whiz cooked for the hay crews.

I remember in the '30s when they had the cricket infestations up north on the Maggie Creek ranches, where Newmont has all their holdings now. I was maybe beginning college and I remember wishing could I just break my leg a little bit. I wanted to stay up at the ranch, you know, and just be outdoors. [Laughter] I wasn't working hard; I was just having fun. Teresa works now from dawn to dark, but I wasn't doing this. All the other people were. Gee Whiz used to go down to the little spring where they got the water right by the Red House ranch house. This is up in Elko County near the head of Maggie Creek. He'd scoop up water in these great big black camp coffee

pots from the creek. And how many crickets he got — who looked? Gee Whiz would be old by then, and you can't see that well when you get old.

RM: So there were probably crickets in the coffee?

AS: Maybe, maybe not. And if it boiled long enough . . . [Laughter]

My favorite Chinese cook was there when I was a little girl — in the first, second, third or fourth grade. The buckaroos had a tall Chinese cook we called Lo Buck. (Can you imagine the Chinese name we did that to?) He was the only one I ever remember being very tall.

RM: How tall?

AS: Well over 6 feet. The others were little and they all had their queues and wore Chinese slippers. We had one (I forget his name) who was obviously pretty well hooked on opium, because he would play little games where he would kick his little slippers across the kitchen, run over and put on them, and kick them back. He was very jolly. Lo Buck was one of the great loves in my life. He was the cook for the buckaroo wagon. And they said he was a wonderful gambler — he regularly took everybody's paycheck. [Laughter] He was very selective about who got to come into his kitchen. He wouldn't allow anyone in; and he was very dangerous with a knife — nobody fooled with him. This was in the days when people tormented and taunted Chinese — the treatment was terrible. But I remember adoring all of these Chinese. They were my dearest friends.

RM: What kind of food did they cook?

AS: Regular American.

RM: Describe the ranch food.

AS: There was a lot of meats, steaks, eggs.

RM: What did breakfast consist of?

AS: Breakfast would be a lot of steak, bacon, biscuits, hotcakes. They were big breakfasts.

RM: Cereal?

AS: Yes, oatmeal. And a lot of meat. But for some reason Lo Buck came to cook at the ranch instead of on the buckaroo wagon. And he wouldn't let anyone in the kitchen. And I was probably the naughty one in my family. (I was reminded quite constantly that I certainly was. [Chuckles] I said there's a hole in the corner of the dining room down at Dunphy where I grew up standing in the corner.) I got to be friends with Lo Buck and I have some lovely old things I gave my daughter that he got for me from China.

RM: Would he go back to China?

AS: No, but they all dreamed of going back to be buried. And they sent their money home. But I had these lovely little slippers. And my feet were too big by the time . . . I was saving these slippers to wear and I wear size 9s! And he got a parasol and scarves and silk handkerchief that he was sent from China and gave to me. I don't remember when he left Dunphy. By then I would have been really sick with rheumatic fever.

I remember loving to watch him cook. He must have had some great train-

-
- ing. Some of these men had come from San Francisco — maybe the Palace Hotel. He would mold mashed potatoes into a fish curled with all the scales and the fins showing and raisins for eyes. And I remember chocolate cakes that were just beautifully iced and had a flag on top of red, white and blue.
- RM: How interesting. What did a typical lunch consist of?
- AS: It would be some kind of stew or boiled beef — more meat and potatoes — and vegetables. There was a lot of dried fruit — dried apricots, dried apples, dried peaches, prunes.
- RM: And then what about dinner?
- AS: Roast, probably, and more potatoes. This was very hearty fare for people who worked hard. And there were always lots of eggs, because they always had chickens and cows. Lots of custard pies and bread puddings and rice puddings. Of course the Chinese cooks made all their own bread — wonderful dinner rolls that would just fly off the plate.
- RM: It sounds as if the Chinese cooks stayed quite a while.
- AS: Yes, they did.
- RM: I wonder how they found a new cook?
- AS: From one of the Chinese restaurants in town. Carlin, Austin and Elko always had Chinese restaurants. My dad used to laugh and say that when a Chinese man opened canned milk at a restaurant in China he opened it with an ice pick and when he came to work [at Dunphy] he opened it with a cleaver. [Laughter] But they used everything and no matter how much they had they were very careful. Nothing was wasted. I remember peeling potatoes — helping Lo Buck or one of the cooks — because I loved to chat with them and hear about China (I probably pestered them to death). My dad [would inspect] the peel I was taking off the potato. When you pared a potato it had to be thin.
- RM: Did you peel it with a peeler or a knife?
- AS: With a knife. And I remember wonderful old coffee grinders — how delicious fresh ground coffee is. They bought beans and had great big coffee grinders. The smell is fantastic.
- RM: It was a big job, wasn't it — it lasted all day?
- AS: Oh, such incredible labor. And those dishes! Once when my sister and I were young (Teresa wasn't in on this as I remember because she was younger) we got to have a choice of a job. They had whitewashed picket fences all around Dunphy all down the lane and around the house. There were miles of them. We could whitewash the fence or, when we were older, we got to wrangle the horses, or we could do the dishes. When you see stacks of plates this high 3 times a day plus all the pans and roasters and cutting boards . . . We soon decided that we'd rather spend eternity whitewashing that fence!
- RM: Is that right? Who did the dishes?
- AS: The cook. When they were feeding big crews they had helpers — what they called swamper — a chore boy. The chore boy milked and chopped wood outside and occasionally they had someone to help with dishes.

RM: Was the chore boy usually Oriental or Chinese?
AS: The cook was the only Chinese.
RM: Was a chore boy an older man or a young kid?
AS: I think he was probably anyone who wasn't a buckaroo.
RM: Was he always a male?
AS: Yes.
RM: Where did the cook stay?
AS: They had a little cabin. There were lots of little buildings at Dunphy. There were big barns, blacksmith shops, a tack room, a saddle shop, a granary — it was a big outfit.
RM: The cooks were never married, were they? They didn't have women with them?
AS: No. If they were married the wives were in the old country and they would send money home. It was always their dream that their bones or their bodies be returned to China for burial.
RM: And it was a 7-day, 365-days-a-year job, wasn't it? Did they ever take time off to go into town?
AS: I'm sure they did but I can't remember.
RM: And you think some of them smoked a little opium on the side?
AS: Just this one man who was so funny; I can't remember his name.
RM: Opium wasn't against the law back in the old days.
AS: No, and that was the custom — it belonged to their nationality. I'm not saying anything bad about it. I remember my family laughed later during the Korean War at that and said, "She'd get along great in a Chinese prison camp. [Laughter] You'd so obviously love every one of the [captors] — "I bet I knew your cousin," you know.
RM: You really liked the Chinese?
AS: Yes.
RM: How would a Chinese cook fix up his cabin?
AS: I don't know; I never went in.
RM: You never saw the interior of one?
AS: Very little — just going to call him for something or other.
RM: What did they wear when they were working?
AS: Just regular shirts and pants. But they never wore Levi's.
RM: And these slippers?
AS: The one who kicked them around wore the regular Chinese sandals. I remember them wearing soft shoes like those black Chinese slippers you see in Chinatown. I can't remember Lo Buck's. I was outside a lot with Lo Buck because he was certainly probably the youngest, maybe the most physically active. The other men I remember as being older and being very slight in build. They also wore their hair in a queue, or braid, that was very long.
RM: Was Lo Buck full-blooded, do you think?
AS: Oh, yes. And extremely nice looking.
RM: Did they speak broken English or pretty good English?

- AS: As I remember, Lo Buck spoke pretty good English. Some of them had broken English. That's another thing I remember — Mommy's family had always read so much and my dad always loved newspapers. People make fun of us, saying that we read too many newspapers. I grew up with an Irish newspaper — some kind of Hibernian; the Chinese got their Chinese newspaper; we got the *Eureka Sentinel* and the *Elko Free Press* and the *Battle Mountain Scout* and the *Austin Reveille* and the *Reno Journal* or *Gazette* and always the *San Francisco Examiner*. That place was flooded with papers.
- RM: So people in those days were in touch?
- AS: Right.
- RM: What about magazines coming in and things like that?
- AS: I remember a very few early *Saturday Evening Posts* and I know we always got *Ladies Home Journal* and *Good Housekeeping*. There were no sports magazines, but there would have been a lot of brochures on bulls and horses and so on. I remember some really early copies — from the end of the '20s — of *Nevada Magazine*. I don't remember when that started to be published. But after I was teaching I was picking them up for bulletin boards and for articles for my class and thinking, "Oh lord, if I only had those old ones."
- RM: How about books?
- AS: We always had lots of personal books. We always got books for presents.
- RM: What books do you recall getting?
- AS: All the children's series and all classics. One of my very favorite books was the story of a Wyoming cow pony, *Patches*, that I've got saved for my daughter to give her daughter. Mr. Fleischaker from San Francisco, who bought the TS when Dunphy was split apart from it, gave it to me.
- RM: Let me make sure I've got this straight. We start with a huge ranch called the Dunphy estate. Then the Dunphy Ranch is split off from it when Dunphy passes on. And then the rest becomes the TS?
- AS: I think by then William Dunphy, Sr. — the one who started it — is dead, and the children are in this corporation. I'm vague on this.
- RM: Where does the TS come in?
- AS: TS was the brand for the whole Dunphy estate.
- RM: It's a "T" sitting on top of an "S" on its side. And the Dunphy ranch was always the "TS" brand?
- AS: Yes.
- RM: Where did that come from?
- AS: I don't know. The only brand that I knew the story behind was later, when they were dividing up the holdings — Carmen Jenny Dunphy Meyer and her husband, Rodwell Xavier Meyer, had Xavier and Carmen on the "X/C." That was one of the brands after the "TS" was separated. The "TS" brand went with the main holdings of the Dunphy estate in the early '30s. As I told you, Captain Meyer kept the Dunphy Ranch and the range up north.
- RM: And the Dunphy Ranch consisted of the White House?

- AS: And the Blue House was the TS, and part of the north range up on Maggie Creek. When I was growing up he kept part of the Red House.
- RM: And the part up where the Newmont mine is now went with the TS, didn't it?
- AS: Yes. A ranch's value really depends on its range, so he had the north range up on Maggie Creek also. Part of it went to the TS and he kept part of it with the Dunphy Ranch.
- RM: When they split up the ranch, in effect, did your father stay on then with Meyer?
- AS: Yes.
- RM: Who took over the TS?
- AS: George Banks.
- RM: And who owned the TS?
- AS: The corporation headed by Fleischaker and made up of a lot of promoters and businessmen.
- RM: Who was George Banks?
- AS: He was from Elko. He was a ranch manager.
- RM: Were there other big ranches in that region besides the Dunphy Ranch?
- AS: Oh, yes. There was Marvel's ranch.
- RM: Where was the Marvel Ranch?
- AS: Out of Battle Mountain in Lander County. The other great big one was the Twenty Five that George Russell had below Battle Mountain.
- RM: Going down towards Austin?
- AS: No, west of Battle Mountain towards Winnemucca. And they had other ranches all around that were broken into pieces like Dunphy. I don't know how true this is, but they said Russell had come into the Austin territory with my grandfather, Dan Callahan. Dan had stayed and taken up the homestead at Callaghan Creek and Russell had gone on down by Battle Mountain and started what was to become this incredibly large ranch — the Twenty Five. The Russell family were very wealthy and successful. The Twenty Five is since all broken up. Everything's broken up anymore.
- RM: Russell wasn't an Irishman, was he? That doesn't sound like an Irish name.
- AS: I'm not sure. If you get Irish enough you can turn even Levi into Irish! [Laughter]
- RM: Tell me about your mother's life on the ranch. She didn't have to cook all the time, did she?
- AS: Just when they had 40 men and the cook quit. [Laughter] They did a lot of entertaining.
- RM: Who would they entertain?
- AS: Visiting business people, ranchers, cattle buyers, friends, politicians, miners, relatives, people from Austin, people from San Francisco . . . They touched a whole gamut of people.
- RM: So if she wasn't out in the kitchen preparing, she had to entertain all these people.

-
- AS: But she would, I'm sure, always help make sure the tables looked good and so forth.
- RM: Did she plan the meals?
- AS: I think she would have specified menus for special people; otherwise that was the cook's domain. And it depended on what was available.
- RM: Did any famous politicians like Tasker Oddie or Pat McCarran ever come through?
- AS: Yes, all of those were friends that my dad knew and dealt with —Oddie and Pittman . . . I remember especially a judge who was a very good friend of his — Judge Eather from Eureka. And all the local politicians were always there — Pete Merialdo and Ed Delaney and so forth. People from Austin were always coming and going, and people from Elko. And of course the clergy going from Salt Lake to Reno would stop over.
- RM: Because you were right on the railroad; it wasn't inconvenient, was it?
- AS: Right, and there weren't any motels yet; they don't start up for another good 40 years.
- RM: Did you have guest rooms in your home?
- AS: I'm sure we moved around, but I don't remember. But you gave up your room to somebody. [Laughter] And we had big porches.

CHAPTER FIVE

RM: We were talking about your mother's life on the ranch. How did she occupy her time and what was she involved in?

AS: I think she was always busy, with 4 little children born pretty close together, and then trying to fulfill the obligations of housekeeping. We had help from the Indian ladies who lived on the ranch, but not steadily. There was always laundry, and 4 little kids in and out of scrapes and one kind of flu or something and the other. And she was close to her mother up at Austin, Eliza Farrell Callahan.

RM: Did she go over to visit her mother often?

AS: Yes, and my grandmother would come to visit when I was very young. And my aunts always came to visit, especially my younger aunt, Mercedes McAfee, my grandmother's youngest child by her second husband. She lived and worked in San Francisco and she didn't like dust or cows or horse manure on your boots. She used to come up for all holidays and on vacations. She spent a great deal of time at our home, because, as I say, it was a fun place.

RM: Let's talk about holidays. How was Thanksgiving celebrated on the ranch?

AS: Everybody you could name and invite. And think of the work this was! We raised turkeys — they were my mother's special project, so they were her turkeys. And they butchered the turkeys and sold them. And we always had big flocks of geese. Now the ranches are down to strictly cows and horses; there aren't turkeys and chickens and geese and ducks; they're too much trouble. They're lots of work. But we always had turkeys on Christmas, and my mother always liked to include fried oysters for part of the Christmas dinner. And we always had big birthday parties.

RM: Did Thanksgiving include pumpkin pie?

AS: Yes, the traditional dinner. And we always did picnics. When I was quite young we used to always go to Fourth of Julys in Austin. They were just wonderful. It's too bad we don't have more pictures or better recollections. I remember having these long curls — my sister Mary and myself. We hated having them done because it's very time-consuming getting it rolled around your fingers and all. And we would be all dressed up. (Of course, people show off their children.) There were wonderful Fourth of July festivities with fireworks, and we'd get to ride on the old fire engine and be in the parade.

Austin was always a very lively and a very social town in contrast to other little towns. I'm sure I'm prejudiced but the others are poor imitations. Austin was more exciting, maybe more social and worldly-wise. I'd get a bouquet from Austin, and the flowers were fancier — they were classier, a different kind of people.

RM: Did they have a parade on the Fourth of July at Austin?

AS: Yes, wonderful fireworks and parades. And as I say, Austin was a party town

from its very early days. Where others might be more serious or [full of people who] worked in the mines and went home to their [families], Austin was out on the street celebrating.

RM: The mines were not particularly going at this time, were they?

AS: No. My mother always said you could trace the rise and fall of the mines with the tombstones in the Austin cemetery. We also went to Austin for Memorial Day.

RM: That used to be big, a more special holiday than it is now, didn't it?

AS: Yes. They called it Decoration Day and we took lilacs from the ranch and ordered fresh flowers to come in on the Hiskey stages and took them down to the graves of my grandfather, Dan Callahan, and my great-grandmother, Eliza Farrell and my grandmother, Eliza Callahan McAfee. All the ranchers came in and people who lived far away from Austin came back. There were picnics and much getting together, comparing children and who had passed on and how well so-and-so son's was doing and so forth.

RM: Where did people stay when they came for a day like that?

AS: With friends or on the ranches or in the hotel.

RM: Did you stay at the ranch?

AS: Yes. It's about 20 miles northwest and by then we were using cars.

RM: What was Christmas like on the ranch?

AS: My mother always made such a production about Christmas. After Dan Callahan was killed, they were very poor. My grandmother's brother, Uncle John Farrell, and his wife and daughters would send trunks of the clothes that they were no longer wearing out to help. (He was the engineer whose wife and daughter were presented at court in London.) I'm sure they were most difficult for someone on the ranch. What good are all these velvets and silks and everything? My mother said that my grandmother made darling dolls and doll clothes out of some of the things in these trunks. But I remember my mother saying that when she was married, her children were going to have bang-up blow-out Christmases. And we did; it was just like toyland. I can remember huge Christmas trees . . . there are no pine trees around Dunphy, they had to go up to the Cortez Mountains by Oneman's mine to cut the tree.

RM: How tall would the trees be in the house?

AS: Oh, almost to the ceiling.

RM: And it was a high ceiling?

AS: Yes. And I remember the clip-on candles. You're too young to have ever seen candles on a tree; they are absolutely enchanting. Of course, they could only be lit for a few minutes and then extinguished because they were a fire hazard. We had fantastic Christmases. But the only relatives we really had were my mother's parents; my dad's family was in Ireland and Pat Walsh by then was dead. The other Walsh children and my father were friends but not to the extent that they'd come for Christmas. And the Walsh children that he loved the best were killed in ranch accidents.

RM: What did you decorate your tree with besides candles?

AS: Beautiful old glass ornaments; my daughter has some of them. They make replicas of them now. And there were lots of Czechoslovakian and German ornaments. I remember little birds with some kind of a fiberglass feathers coming out the tails.

RM: And did you string popcorn or anything like that for your tree?

AS: We must have.

RM: Did you wrap your presents?

AS: Yes. And toys were put out as toys until we no longer believed in Santa Claus.

RM: So Santa Claus came?

AS: Oh, Santa Claus came. I remember how darling my mother was. It always snowed, it seemed, for Christmas when I was young and we'd look out and see little hoof marks in the lawn from the reindeer. She had somebody drive sheep through. I had a little band of sheep. You know that in cow country sheep were regarded as the most fatal disease you could possible acquire when I was growing up. But people gave my dad sheep when they were passing through the land or they'd pick up a lost sheep. They had thousands of sheep in a band and there were a few strays; that's expected losses. I gradually acquired quite a nice little band of sheep that they were glad to have after they acknowledged that the person who was less than perfect had the sheep. [Laughter] They're great for lamb chops and roasts. But she'd have somebody drive the sheep through the yard so that it would look like reindeer hooves.

RM: And you kids would get up and say the reindeer had been there.

AS: She did so many things. I remember how when I was really young they mowed the lawn with horses. There were big, big bands of horses moving from field to field and from ranch to ranch and there was always somebody breaking horses down in the corrals.

RM: So they would just have the horses graze the lawn to mow it?

AS: Yes, they'd just run the horses through. This was pretty wild when I was growing up — that's the time you wish you could go back to. There wasn't even a highway. You had to go through Dunphy and around up over Walshes Canyon and then down Maggie Creek. Then you'd get onto the road by Carlin to follow the river up to Elko.

RM: You had to go that far north to get to Elko?

AS: Yes. You didn't go over Immigrant Pass until the highway came in.

RM: When did the highway come in?

AS: I was pretty little — maybe 8. I remember the scrapers with the mules.

RM: Was Valentine's Day a big day for you kids?

AS: Valentine's was always very big. The Elko paper just had [a feature on] old valentines from the Elko museum. They have a wonderful museum in Elko that Ruth Roseberry, a former teacher and a real Nevadan, donated to. She had a collection of old valentines and they were exquisite — they were so tender and pretty. I saved a couple from when I was a little girl and Teresa

had them in the trunk at the ranch. I gave my daughter these pretty things with fold-outs and lace and cut-outs; they were exquisite valentines.

RM: What about Halloween?

AS: Halloween was always celebrated, but just among ourselves or the children around there.

RM: You didn't go trick or treating because there was no place to go.

AS: No, we never went trick or treating. But we had costumes. Holidays weren't so commercial then. Any small exchange was much appreciated; presents were very special. It wasn't the enormous glut of stuff that we seem to have now. Maybe the big holidays were even more important because they weren't connected with a 3-day holiday, like they are now. It's all changed.

RM: Where did you get your mail?

AS: We had a wonderful arrangement there, because the railroad had a telegrapher and crew over at the station at Dunphy, so we got our mail every day from the train.

RM: So there was actually a Dunphy and the Dunphy Ranch?

AS: Yes.

RM: How far apart were they?

AS: About a mile.

RM: What was over at Dunphy?

AS: There were section houses. When you go down I-80 now there are mine buildings and ore dumps and all that, but there used to be section houses for the people who worked on the railroad and some kind of railroad storage houses and a depot and cattle pens and chutes for loading cattle. And they had telegraphers and agents. There was a lot of business. There also was a post office.

RM: Were there any stores or anything in Dunphy?

AS: No, just the railroad facilities.

RM: How many people were living there, do you think?

AS: I don't know — 5 to 7. The section workers could have families so it might go to 10 people. I'm estimating now.

RM: So they had a little post office?

AS: That post office was right with the depot. In later years the post office moved. My mother had it at Dunphy Ranch; she was the postmistress and it moved to Dunphy later.

RM: Who all was she giving mail to besides people at the railroad?

AS: People on other ranches — other people down on the TS — and miners who were out around. There was quite a little group of people. There were many more people out around in those days on little places — little mines and little prospects and trappers — that are all gone now.

RM: Yes, I've noticed that.

AS: You only went a few miles and there was somebody. Now, [the population] is in big places and all the little places in between have been absorbed. If there was a building there of any kind, it's been torn down for its wood to

decorate something in town. Unless you know where to look for the foundation in the sagebrush, you would never know there'd ever been anything there.

RM: How many people were actually living on the Dunphy Ranch? You had a lot of buckaroos, didn't you?

AS: They came and went; they were seasonal. They were branding or calving or taking them north or bringing them down to feed at the Blue House and Dunphy. They also fed some of them at the Carlin field, and some up at the Red House . . .

RM: In that area they fed in the winter, didn't they? They couldn't leave them out on the range.

AS: That's right.

RM: When did you have a lot of buckaroos at the ranch? What part of the season?

AS: It must have been in the fall. In the winter there weren't many —the buckaroos fed at the Blue House, the Red House, Simon's, Carlin field and Maggie Creek ranches. They're all up north in Elko County.

RM: What would be going on down at other ranches? For instance, what was going on at the Blue House? Was there a Chinese cook down there?

AS: The buckaroo wagon cook would be there, and the buckaroos.

RM: Was a family living in the Blue House?

AS: It was mostly men. There could have been a man with his wife, but I don't remember. If there was, she would have been the cook.

RM: What other permanent camps were there on the Dunphy Ranch besides the Blue, White and Red houses?

AS: There was Carlin field; they lived and fed there. That's right out of Carlin Ranch. There was a little tie house at Simon's and they fed there. There was the house at Red House where they fed and the men from Red House fed up at Taylor field. That was a ranch right up the road all belonging to the same thing. There was work for a lot of people there.

RM: How did your father hire buckaroos?

AS: He found them in town or they rode into the ranch. They might have worked for another ranch and decided they wanted change jobs. These men were very rarely married to anything; they were a changeable group.

RM: They were mostly single men, weren't they?

AS: Yes, single men; mostly young. They came from North Dakota, Oklahoma, out here, California, Oregon, Washington. Some of our young buckaroos went over to big ranches in Oregon and some went down out of Winnemucca or up to Elko County. And everybody kind of knew each other —it worked by word of mouth. "You know anybody? I'm looking for a rider." "Yes."

RM: Did the buckaroos who were on full time tend to be older fellows and less drifters, would you say?

AS: A couple of them stayed for a long, long time.

RM: And they were older?

AS: Well, you'd get older if you stayed. But it's a young man's job. Those guys

had to be in their teens and early 20s.

RM: So you don't find many buckaroos in their 30s?

AS: As you would really get accomplished and be capable of taking care of a group of cows, you'd be getting up in your 30s.

RM: At what age would a guy become too old to be a buckaroo?

AS: You'd have to ask Teresa; I don't know. Who was this great buckaroo that just died here? I can't think of his name right now, but he's memorialized in cowboy poetry and song. He died at 87 years [and they said he] saw the world through the ears of a horse. There are a lot of songs written about him that are out on tape now. He died a couple of years ago down in Arizona or New Mexico on a young horse he was just breaking in. They said what a nice way to die. So there is no age. A lot of the ranchers and real good cowmen are old. You live a hard life.

RM: What was a buckaroo's pay?

AS: Maybe \$30 a month and found.

RM: What does that mean?

AS: That's board and room and say \$30 a month (or whatever).

RM: Did a buckaroo own his own horse?

AS: Rarely, but he had a saddle and bedroll.

RM: Your school at the ranch went to the eighth grade, right? Where did you go to school then?

AS: I guess we had a high school certification — my sister and I went to the first year of high school at the ranch. Then my sister Mary and I went away to convent school in San Rafael, California, for high school. All my mother's family had gone to some kind of convent or school like that. I'm sure that we were better off there; it was an excellent school.

My mother went to St. Mary's of the Wasatch in Salt Lake City. She had some great stories about those times. Was life more exciting then, or does it just seem so? They were such vibrant, energetic people. Wherever my mother was was a lovely place to be. No matter what she was doing she put magic in it; my father too. None of us [girls] had this quality; my brother did. That type of people come into the room and the lights and music go on.

RM: What did you do for music on the ranch, speaking of music?

AS: We had a piano and Victrolas, and the men had guitars and harmonicas.

RM: Did you girls learn to play the piano?

AS: My mother did and my sister Mary played for a while. My dad was always singing — he sang all these great Irish songs. He must have had a very good voice. And the Irishmen were always singing and whistling. Now, there had to always be hard times; ranching is a very dangerous thing. People are hurt, easily. Of course I see it through rose-colored glasses.

RM: Tell me about getting sick. When did you get rheumatic fever?

AS: I must have been in about the third grade. I felt badly about it. I got such wonderful care being sick that I wasn't exactly suffering; I was having a fine time. But think of the burden it was to my dear mother — her children were

just grown up enough that they were more capable of being on their own and she could go out and join my father. Because Daddy was always doing fun things.

RM: Like what?

AS: Oh, he had to go to town for this luncheon or that meeting or he'd be going to buy bulls or something; he always had something going. Or was going to ride down to the other ranch and check out something. Well, my mother would love to go with him. There is no way I could ever pay her back for the years I took from her life.

RM: So you were sickly for years?

AS: It must have been 2 or 3 years. I remember I went back to school when I was about 12 years old and I went into the fifth grade. If you could read they popped you into the sixth. And that was the year in San Francisco. Then we came back to the ranch.

Incidentally, Daddy was always involved in Eureka County politics. He was a big Democrat, where all the ranches are now Republicans.

RM: Why was he a Democrat?

AS: I guess all Irishmen are Democrats — Irish Catholic Democrats. I remember when my husband got out of the Marine Corps. (He went in right out of college; he didn't even graduate. He was graduating, but he didn't stay for the ceremony. They had to report to Quantico for OC training. He picked up his diploma 4 years later when he got back from the South Pacific.) When he registered to vote, I said, "I don't care how you vote, but if you're coming into this family, you've got to register Democrat." [Laughter] I mean, this was serious! I remember when I first voted in Eureka for some reason and Ed Delany was looking over my shoulder making sure that I marked the right box. [Laughter] Early Nevada politics was just hilarious. I remember the fun they had campaigning for Al Smith.

RM: Oh, really? Al Smith was a Catholic, wasn't he?

AS: Yes, and a Democrat. So he had all the right qualifications. Now I go home to anybody and people say, "That's their lousy Irish Democrat sister." [Laughter] We're going to shut down the mining industry, we're going to break the cattle industry. [Laughter] But then it was more social and fun. There wasn't the bitterness; it wasn't divided on lines of what they're going to do "for me." It was a great chance to get together and celebrate with bunting and parties and "who are you for."

RM: The political parties and the voting and everything?

AS: Yes. And they had great songs at the rallies. Because we didn't have so much commercial entertainment, people created more of their own. As a little girl I remember it being so much fun, where now it isn't any fun at all.

RM: It's all created for you, now, isn't it?

AS: Unless you go as a delegate from your party, and then I imagine it's boring meetings other than lunches and after-hour drinks. It's not flags and Fourth of July and fireworks and great speeches. My dad was a wonderful speaker

and very vocal.

I started a while ago to tell you of some of the Irish priests. Father Lamb from Las Vegas was a very well-known, prominent early Nevada priest. When my family knew him he was based in Elko, and he stayed over quite a bit. It would be past our bedtime and we would have been sent to bed, but we'd creep down the halls so we could hear what they were talking about. There would be other priests or other Irishmen with him talking to my dad and mother and whoever else was invited in. They told great Irish ghost stories; I remember being scared to death.

CHAPTER SIX

AS: We also knew all the bishops when they were just coming from Salt Lake. We knew Archbishop Mitty when he was a bishop out of Salt Lake. This might have been before Nevada had its own bishop and we were part of the diocese of Salt Lake. I think Bishop Gorman was the first Catholic bishop for Nevada. We were always part of either California or Utah. But we knew Gorman because he stayed over at the ranch as a young man.

When my sister Mary and I went to the convent in San Rafael for our last 3 years of high school we were getting extra religious training and everything from these very professional sisters. There was a girl from El Salvador and one from Montana and Mary and I, and there might have been a couple more. There was a very small group of us that they considered had been sadly neglected in the religious area. And I was always [the kind of person who] thought my horse had a better soul than most people I knew, because he'd wait for you when he dumped you in the desert. I graduated in 1936 [and in those days] we had to curtsy to the Mother Superior when we received our report card, holding our skirt in a proper bow. This was very hard for somebody who was used to wearing Levi's on the ranch. These skirts were big pleated monsters and it would go between my knees because the skirt was so binding.

Well, Bishop Mitty had been promoted to the exalted rank of archbishop and he was in charge of all California. He was going to pay a call on our convent and we had been drilled and warned not to disgrace them. And we never said that we knew this man. They were so busy berating us — did we curtsy properly; were we still awkward with the afternoon grace or did we know it; if he asked us a question, did we know any of the proper answers. (Kind of arguing over who had the better soul.) And he wanted to meet the girls from Nevada or maybe [students] from areas other than just the Bay Area. So we would be in this small group to line up to meet him, and in those days we were expected to genuflect and kiss his ring and everything. And we had to practice. We were feeling very sorry for ourselves — we imagined we were really picked on and treated badly. The other girls were all better educated and knew more about their faith than we; we would surely disgrace these nuns. And when he saw us, he remembered our honest Irish faces and he scooped us up from genuflecting and he hugged us and how were we! And he asked if the sisters were treating us well, and if we had any problems to please contact him and he'd take immediate steps to rectify our situation. (We never dreamed of trading on the fact that we knew him. We thought certainly he'd forgotten us by now. We'd been pretty little and now we're in high school.)

RM: Where did you go to church?

AS: We went to Mass in Battle Mountain, and also in Carlin.

-
- RM: Every Sunday?
- AS: No, not every Sunday. And we had so many visiting Irish priests that we had Mass at the ranch a great deal — they'd just set up an altar stone and they could say Mass in a field or anywhere in the house.
- RM: How would you get to Battle Mountain?
- AS: In cars — those neat old cars like kids would covet now with the isinglass windows — those touring things.
- RM: Wasn't it cold in the winter?
- AS: Bitter cold.
- RM: But you would get up Sunday morning and go in to Mass?
- AS: We went. And we used to go up to Maggie Creek with the hay crew in the summer with my mother and my aunts. It was fun to see all the horses and everybody around campfires with guitars after supper. We'd spend part of the summer up there and we had cars then. We would go into Carlin to Mass and I remember the dear ladies in Carlin telling us that we were all sun-burned and freckled and peeling and we should surely wear more hats and cream. Women had to wear some covering in church in those days.
- RM: Oh, a woman couldn't go bare-headed to church?
- AS: No. That was a long time ago. If you wear a hat now, everybody turns and looks — "Who is that well-dressed stranger?" For a while they wore those little Spanish mantilla veils. It was just a little short shoulder veil or a little veil cap.
- RM: What did you do about eating fish on Friday?
- AS: We had codfish and tuna fish or an omelet. And my dad would come in and say if that's the only thing wrong he ever did, he was going to have a steak.
- RM: So the Chinese cook prepared codfish or tuna?
- AS: We had lots of dry salted codfish. It came in wooden boxes from Norway. They made wonderful stuff out of that — codfish cakes and cream dishes with boiled potatoes. If you were a good cook, you could do wonderful things with that codfish.
- RM: Yes, I remember those boxes.
- AS: Yes, those pretty wooden boxes. There's another collector's item we didn't bother with.
- RM: How about the tuna? Was that canned?
- AS: Yes. I remember lots of cod; I don't remember tuna until later.
- RM: What did you do after you graduated from high school?
- AS: We stayed down on the ranch. My sister Mary and I were in the same class.
- RM: So you got pushed back a grade because of your rheumatic fever.
- AS: My dad thought we were too young [for college]. I had taken my entrance test for Cal and from going to school in San Francisco I desperately wanted to go UC Berkeley. My dad said we'd had enough running around and besides we were too young to go to college anyway. And if we wanted to go school it was Nevada or nothing. You know, you didn't argue with your folks in those days. I wanted my daughter to go to college in Arizona. I said,

“Oh, I think that would be so much fun. That would be lovely.”

After we argued at some length she said, “Mother, if you want to go Arizona so badly, you go.”

I would have dropped dead before I’d say that to my parents. I never got spanked in my life but I spent a lot of time in the corner. My parents had this air about them. You would no more talk back to my father than you would drop dead. As I remember him, his eyes were twinkling but there was a distance that you would not presume on any more than someone in the military would presume to their general. Suicide is preferable. And my mother was a disciplinarian.

RM: But she never spanked?

AS: No. They just had to look at you. If my father didn’t like a friend or group of friends we had as we were older, he’d say we must have a taste for knick-knacks. And that was putting you down in your place. Then he’d turn and walk off.

RM: And that was enough?

AS: That’s all it took. And my mother had a presence . . . But she was kind. I think she was my best friend, the most incredible lovely woman. They have a lovely inscription on her tombstone where she’s buried in Elko that says she was great in prosperity, but greater in adversity. It’s in Latin — something like, *Manos in prosperitate, major in adversitate*.

RM: Did you study Latin?

AS: No, I thought I was too stupid so I chose French. [Laughter] But we had missals all through my growing-up years.

RM: What’s a missal?

AS: A Catholic prayer book where one half is Latin and it’s translated into English on the other side. So we knew a lot of Latin. Even if you haven’t studied it, you know the basic meanings of words.

RM: So your dad said it was Nevada or nothing for college? Did you go to UNR?

AS: Yes, and I just loved it. Of course, we had an excellent education out of the Dominican convent in San Rafael. We studied from like 4:00 till 6:00 and from 7:00 till 9:00 in a supervised study hall where you saluted and said “by your leave.” And they patrolled. You didn’t have a magazine buried in your book like kids do now. [Laughter] Of course, we were a picked group. I think there were 30 in my graduating class. But the nuns wore gold wedding rings and for discipline all they had to do was tap with their ring on the desk. That’s all they needed. It’s a whole different world now. And you could take students so far in those days, where you had so much control and the students were so encouraged to learn.

RM: Yes. What did you study in college?

AS: I had an education major and a minor in history and zoology.

RM: When did you graduate?

AS: In 1941.

RM: Right before the war?

- AS: Right. I remember sitting in the movie theater downtown in Reno, holding my husband's hand. He was a year behind me in school. And [on the screen] you saw all the tanks running through Belgium and Poland, and you knew it was our turn next. And I worried: "Are you going to come back?" We've been married 48 years now and when we first married, he had been overseas for 27 or 28 months with the Marine Corps all through the South Pacific. His was the backup division going on to Iwo Jima. I remember teaching in Carlin and it came over the radio that the 3rd Division was going over the side — they were the reinforcements for Iwo Jima. And I thought, "Oh, my god. That's Wes. He's going to get shot." When he did get home, he called up the school and they called me to the office. And we didn't use telephones [as freely as we do] now. He called from San Francisco and I burst out crying.
- RM: Were you married then?
- AS: No, but I wanted to get married before he went.
- RM: Why don't you mention Wes by name for the tape?
- AS: My husband is Charles Wesley Schlager. We've been married 48 years in May and he grew up in Las Vegas. He was born in Los Angeles, and when did you come to Las Vegas, Wes — 1927?
- WS: Yes.
- AS: He lived on a homestead out of Las Vegas and then in Las Vegas. His father was a tile setter and worked on some of the real early buildings in Las Vegas. I met him at the university.
- RM: And he served in the South Pacific in the marine corps? What are some of the other islands that he was on besides Iwo Jima?
- AS: They had a base camp on Guadalcanal, but the 1st Division was the division on Guadalcanal. They were base camped there. Then he went to Bougainville and Guam and Iwo Jima.
- RM: Did he get wounded?
- AS: No, he was never wounded. He got a bronze star for gallantry in action on Guam. I remember when we got married, he had a 30-day leave. That was when they expected to go and attack Japan; they'd taken all the islands. And we thought 30 days was a lifetime. I mean, who could be so lucky as to be together for 30 whole days. And now we've been married for almost 48 years.
- RM: Did you get married on those 30 days?
- AS: Yes, when he came back from San Francisco. We got married on the 5th of May 1945 in Elko.
- RM: So he didn't have to go back after the 30 days because by then they'd dropped the A-bomb.
- AS: No, when his leave was up, he reported to Quantico and he was based there in Virginia until after the A-bomb, and they started cutting the Marine Corps. He was discharged in about November and we came back to Nevada.
- RM: What did you do then?

- AS: He worked up at Ruby Hill in Eureka and we stayed there for a couple of years. Our son Patrick was born over in Kimberly. It was a mining hospital over there then.
- RM: Kimberly at Ruth?
- AS: Kimberly isn't even there anymore. That was a great hospital with a good doctor, Dr. Quinn, who later came to Reno.
- RM: I went to high school in Ely. When did you graduate from UNR?
- AS: In 1941. Then in 1941 and '42 I taught in McGill, Nevada. And that was so much fun. I taught with Annie Johnson, Russell Elliot's wife. Annie and I had been sorority sisters — and Betty Nelson and Melva Lawrenson. And the people in McGill and Ely were wonderful to us. Annie Johnson Elliot was an Ely girl and I'd go and spend the weekends with her sometimes. And the people, after church, would invite us to breakfast and to their homes. And in McGill, people baked us the wonderful breads. They'd even put gas in their cars and gave us the keys. Who would do that to some 22-year-old now?
- RM: What grades did you teach?
- AS: Second grade. I taught there one year and then I came to Carlin. A job came open in Carlin, but everything was contingent on the service. If this one woman's husband got a job instructing in Texas, she would join him; if he was sent overseas, she'd keep her job in Carlin. He got the Texas instructorship, so I got her job in Carlin. Then I was only 30 or 40 miles from the ranch at Beowawe that my family had then. I could ride home on the train after school on Friday from Carlin and get dropped off in Beowawe. It was perfect. I was lonesome for home and for everybody there. My father died right after I was married.
- RM: When did your parents move off the Dunphy Ranch? And why did they move?
- AS: They moved because it was sold and there was no longer a job for my father.
- RM: Your father lost his job after all those years?
- AS: Yes.
- RM: What year was it sold?
- AS: When was it sold, Wes? Right before the war?
- WS: It was in '38, something like that?
- AS: Maybe '39 or '40?
- WS: It might have been '40.
- RM: Who bought it?
- WS: It was all split up.
- AS: It was divided up some more.
- RM: What ranches was it divided up into? What would we know it as now?
- AS: They have the same names — the White House, the Red House, the Blue House and so on. Newmont owns the Blue House and much of Maggie Creek now.
- RM: So that became part of the TS, in effect?

AS: Yes, later. They bought that prior to the TS.
WS: TS bought a lot of it, Aileen.
RM: TS bought a lot of the Dunphy?
AS: Yes.
RM: Why did they sell it?
AS: Everybody was getting old and running out of money.
RM: I wonder what it sold for.
AS: I have no idea. And you can't even compare prices with what money's worth now, you know. Something you'd get \$10 million for now, you got \$250,000 for then.
RM: How old was your dad by this time?
AS: In his 70s.
RM: So he was still superintendent when he was getting up in years?
AS: Yes. Then we got that ranch in Beowawe.
RM: When did he buy that?
AS: Right around that same time. That's the one my sister has today and she's built it up till she's got a lovely place.
RM: And what is that ranch called now?
AS: It's called the Sansinena Ranch now; it was the Mahoney Ranch. She married the rancher from across the road, Paul Sansinena. The Sansinenas sold their ranch and moved away and Paul married Teresa and they stayed there on her ranch. And now, because her boys are Sansinenas, they call it the Sansinena Ranch.
RM: What did it consist of at the time your father bought it?
AS: It was a small ranch. Teresa has added and improved and everything is really ship-shape. It's a beautiful ranch.
RM: So your mother had to move out of the White House.
AS: My mother liked the ranch that was hers much better. My dad didn't, but Mommy always wanted her own place, no matter how small: This is mine and it's not subject to the ups and downs of being employed by somebody. It's like any job. Would you be here or not? Tomorrow it could change. She loved the place at Beowawe. She was very happy with it.
RM: Did your father spend the rest of his life there?
AS: Yes. He died right after I was married in June in 1945.
RM: So he wasn't on the ranch that many years before he died?
AS: No.
RM: What did he die of?
AS: A combination of heart and old age; we were never sure.
RM: How old was he when he died?
AS: Seventy-eight, as much as they could figure out. But we never really knew how old he was. He never saw his birth certificate. [You'd have to go to Ireland and see the] baptismal certificate. When I was in my late 20s, my mother was always having to be a witness for some Indian woman so she could get her social security or old age benefits.

- RM: To say when the woman had started working for her?
- AS: That she had known her, and she could put her in a place and time and swear to it. Word of mouth stuff and pieces in the newspaper were all there was available. I know there were a lot of people for whom she had to do something to establish that they were of some age and possibly much, much older.
- RM: Did your mother stay on the ranch?
- AS: Mother stayed on the ranch with my brother Dan Mahoney and my sister Teresa Mahoney. And my sister Mary Mahoney taught at the school at Beowawe and lived there until she married her husband, Bob Guisti, in 1946 or 1947.
- RM: When did Teresa marry Sansinena?
- AS: About 32 years ago.
- RM: How much younger is she than you?
- AS: Five or 6 years younger.
- RM: And your brother, you said, was killed?
- AS: My brother was killed in an automobile coming home from Elko with some haying supplies — buck rake teeth — in August of 1952. My brother was the pride and joy of our family. When I was born, I'm sure my father was disappointed. He wanted a boy. I grew up with him always wanting to trade 2 of us girls for a boy . . . [Laughter] This Oregon rancher that my dad knew through the cattle business happened to have 3 fine sons where my dad had 3 fine daughters, and he would like to trade 2 of us for one more son. [Laughs] My brother was an enchanting person, just a sweetheart. He had a nice new pickup and he was bringing buck rake teeth and it went off the road and turned over right about at Beowawe on I-80 coming west. My mother lived 4 years after that. She died of cancer. So she suffered losing her husband and her son and her health. As I said, her tombstone said she was great in prosperity, but greater in adversity. I never heard her complain once.
- RM: Whose idea was her tombstone inscription?
- AS: My sister Teresa's, probably. Mother was very very gallant. All those women were. That's what I tell my daughter and my little granddaughter. "You have this blood [of a woman who] stood out there all of 4'8" or something with a shotgun saying to these men, 'I will pay you off. Get off my ranch.'" And Mother came though everything . . . When she was very ill, I used to go down in the summers and on vacations to help and be with her, and I'd fix her hair. And she just looked wonderful. She used to laugh about it. She said, "I'll make a lovely corpse. My hair looks lovely, Aileen." She was feminine and she was very bright. I remember her pouring coffee around the table and the men were talking cow prices and all — tonnage for hay. She already had it done in her head while the boys were [figuring in out]. And she wore earrings and a ruffled apron. You never knew there was a whole battle fleet right inside her.
- RM: How far from Beowawe is the ranch?

-
- AS: About a mile and a half southwest. The Horseshoe is a big ranch up there. I remember reading in a Nevada history that the trees were planted in the shape of a horseshoe.
- RM: Where was the Horseshoe during the Dunphy Ranch era?
- AS: It was the other big ranch there.
- RM: It wasn't as big as Dunphy though, was it?
- AS: No. But a lovely family lived there. Their ancestors had started in the early days — the Hinkleys.

CHAPTER SEVEN

- RM: Wes said off the tape that your tongue is hinged in the middle and flapping at both ends. [Laughs]
- AS: Right. My long-devoted husband. [Laughter]
- RM: Well, it's the Irish in you. [Laughter]
- AS: The only people I knew on the Horseshoe were the Hinkleys. Reading some early-day Nevada histories, they drove this herd of cattle up from Texas. I always guessed that some of the Hinkleys were the original owners of it. They were an incredibly attractive family.
- RM: You mean they were good looking?
- AS: Good looking and with great personalities — and they were great party people. [At the spot where they] are camped out there now for that power station it would freeze over in the winter, and we'd go out there sledding and for eggnog parties. The Hinkleys are a story in themselves.
- RM: Are they all gone now?
- AS: There would be a son, Bobby, in San Francisco who is 71 years old. They were wealthy people — upper class. There was lots of intrigue in and out with brothers and sisters and money and ranchers and neat stories of one taking advantage of another, of great schemes to make money and pull this fabulous ranch out. Many years in ranching things are at rock bottom — the bank owns more than you do. And Hinkleys finally lost it.
- RM: When, approximately?
- AS: In the '40s. They were dear friends of ours. The wife's name was Stoney.
- RM: What did the Hinkley Ranch consist of?
- AS: It's a big ranch. It's out of Beowawe on both sides of the river. They have part of their ranch right up near Teresa's ranch, the Sansinena Ranch. It's on the south side of the Humboldt River. They would be on the north side or the east side of the Humboldt.
- RM: Does it go clear down to Carlin?
- AS: They had range up in all those mountains on the way to Carlin. Grayson was apparently a family name — Grayson Hinkley, Sr., and Grayson Hinkley, Jr. And the wife was named Stoney. I always thought that was the most wonderful name, Stoney Hinkley. They had all been to Vassar and [schools like that].
- RM: When did the Hinkleys come in there?
- AS: Apparently in the real early days, but I don't know. I just remember reading once about the herd being driven in from Texas and that they stopped at a point right by Dunphy called Shoshone Point, where little hills come down to a little point near the railroad.
- RM: Apparently they might have come in from California.
- AS: Yes. And driving herds from Texas, because cows were cheap in those days.
- RM: What were the Hinkleys' children's names?
- AS: Bobby was my brother's age, so he would be 70 or 71. And there was a Gray,

Jr. that I don't remember so well, because Bobby was more our age. Dean Witter from Dean Witter Investment Brokers bought it. I think they had borrowed so much money from him that he took it over.

RM: And this was before 1940?

AS: Yes, because we were still at Dunphy and up at the Red House. Bobby was a friend of my brother's and he was so lonesome for the ranch; the rest of the family had gone back to California. As you say, they were California-based people. He was so lonely that he stayed up here and worked for my dad for a while up at the Red House. I remember Bobby up there haying. It broke his heart to lose this ranch that had been in the family for generations. And when Dean Witter took it over it became impersonal — all the fun and romance was gone; it was strictly business. George Banks was Dean Witter's manager.

RM: How long did Witter have it?

AS: I don't know. It's been sold to many other owners since then — all very wealthy people.

RM: Was it broken up like the Dunphy Ranch?

AS: I don't know. Maybe as it sold other people bought some of the range rights.

RM: What about the main house at the Dunphy Ranch? Was it a nice place?

AS: Yes, it was a pretty house. It was white and it always had big trees all around it. We had huge locusts, the kind that have fragrant white bunches of flowers. I remember how heavily the air was perfumed in June. Whenever I get near a tree like that, I'm home. Old-timers planted those locusts all over. Those fragrant white blossoms are like bunches of grapes, only they're white waxy flowers. I don't know what species of locust it is, but you'll find them all over at abandoned ranch sites and cabin sites, by old ruins. We grew up climbing in these wonderful big trees with great big limbs where we could spend days in the summer. There were flocks of birds all over from the water and alfalfa fields and the hayfield and the big trees — orioles and robins and lots of woodpeckers. And of courses the swallows at the river built their nests under all the branches.

RM: Speaking of flowers, you mentioned lilac bushes. Probably all the ranches had lilac bushes.

AS: Yes. At my grandmother's ranch at Callaghan Mountain they had pretty lilac bushes and wild pink roses. Bert Acree was a famous Austin man and his mother brought the cuttings for yellow roses from Texas.

RM: That's what I hear.

AS: We've got some in our backyard [here in Sparks] that we brought from Austin. There are yellow roses all over and there are pink wild roses all along the Humboldt. The yellow roses are up around Austin. And everywhere you see these yellow roses (you see some through here in Sparks in June) the cuttings are from Austin. A lot of people in Sparks are from Austin way back, so somebody would bring a little bit down in a pot.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

AS: [My dad] and some other young buckaroos from Walsh's ranch up in the Reese River drove steers down to Tonopah. [They included] some of the Walsh boys that he loved so much. It was a long, dusty ride from the Reese River down to Tonopah. They got there and this was in part of the heyday of Tonopah and there was an elegant hotel with white tablecloths way down.

RM: Probably the Mizpah.

AS: Probably. They had a lovely silver service and everything. They went in and they'd probably washed in a horse trough or something to get a little of the dust off [laughter] and wiped off with their kerchiefs. They went in and were seated and — I remember my dad telling this with great glee — the restaurant wasn't too anxious to serve them. They were not fit patrons for the restaurant. But they had decided this was where they were going to eat. He said he reached in his pocket and pulled out a handful of double eagles and threw them on the table. And he said service improved immediately. [Laughter]

RM: Those are great stories.

AS: And my mother taught school down at Waltis' ranch below Grass Valley.

RM: Where else did she teach?

AS: Several places. One was down below Grass Valley. Mrs. John Spencer was a rancher's wife in Grass Valley. One of these Spencer brothers was a father of Dewy Dann, a half-breed Indian who was the father of the present Dan sisters who are terrifying the BLM. He had pretty blue eyes — a dark Indian face and blue-green eyes. His father was a Spencer and his mother was a little Indian woman.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: Where is Grass Valley?

AS: This was Callahan's Grass Valley. Callaghan Creek is in Grass Valley about 20 miles northwest of . . .

One place she taught was down at Emil Walti's. There is a story Philip Earl [has written up] about how Mrs. John Spencer had a baby reptile. She gave it to the Waltis and there are hot pools at the Waltis — artesian wells. (I think Walti is a German-Swiss name; they're an old-time family.) This alligator lived for many, many years in their pool. My mother remembered it as a young woman.

RM: That's interesting. Philip Earl does good work.

AS: Oh, he's an enchanting man. I just know him to see and to ask a question. But when my mother worked for the Waltis Mr. and Mrs. Walti decided they would take the children and their schoolteacher and they went to San Diego or Long Beach and spent the winter there. What a lovely job.

RM: How long did your mother teach school before she married your father?

AS: I don't know. As I remember, my mother was 33 when I was born, so she must have been about 30 when she got married.

RM: Then she was not an extremely young woman when she got married.

AS: No.

-
- RM: How old was your father when they got married?
- AS: He was much older than my mother. We always thought Daddy was about 20 years older than Mommy. He was pretty close to 50 when I was born. (And Dan Callahan was 20 to 25 years older than Eliza. Guy Rocha at the state archive in Carson helped me look up some early-day census things and he said, "Here is this young woman married to a much older husband," referring to my grandmother, Eliza Callahan.)
- RM: Then you and Wes got married and you lived in Eureka for a while.
- AS: Yes. He worked at Ruby Hill and then up at the Diamond Mine. We moved down to Elko about 2 or 3 years later and he worked in a hardware store and for a liquor company. We lived in Elko for about 19 years. Our son Joe and our daughter Thea were born in Elko. Then Wes came back to school. He was always helping the boys' friends with their math and he didn't have a teaching certificate, but he decided he might like to teach. I said, "If you're doing such a rushing business helping everybody with their homework and they can understand you . . ." and he liked to do this. So he came back to the university and got his teaching certificate and taught down here. We stayed in Elko long enough for Joe to graduate. Joe and Thea and I stayed in Elko and I taught school. Thea was in kindergarten and first grade and Joe was the captain of the football team and student body president, so we couldn't take that away from him. We stayed in Elko 3 years. And our son Patrick went into the marine corps and was overseas in Vietnam. We moved down here to Sparks in 1968.
- RM: And Wes taught school?
- AS: Wes taught middle school at Sparks Middle School for 16 years.
- RM: Is that right?
- AS: I changed to first grade when I came down here and I taught at Glen Duncan for 5 years and at Florence Drake for 10 years.
- RM: So you both taught school here in Sparks? And you taught in Elko?
- AS: Yes, I taught in Elko. I taught in McGill and Carlin and in Reno — Glen Duncan is in Reno — and then back here in Sparks, because Florence Drake is at Sparks.
- RM: Do you have any more recollections of your parents and the whole ranch life scene?
- AS: Oh, I remember always going out when we were very little. As I said, my mother was an outdoor type who was tired of the house. I guess 4 little kids close together must have been an awful burden, and her husband was always in the truck and on the horse and on the train and off. She had maybe her sisters to visit or an Indian lady to help, but primarily children are your responsibility; no matter how much help you have, they're always yours. I remember her hitching up the spring wagon and taking us for drives in the wagon.
- We walked a lot. We walked all over the hills around Dunphy. We walked down through all the little washes and picked the first little spring flowers.

There's a little fern-like flower my mother always called "Papa's flower." It grows very close to the ground with a little pale pink blossom in the early spring in the arid part of the desert. She said my grandmother told her that was one that Dan Callahan really enjoyed.

RM: Speaking of flowers, what other kinds of flowers did you have on the ranch? Did you have irises and flowers like that?

AS: Iris and wild roses. One year we got this brilliant idea that we should have a cactus garden, so we went to the hills with a wagon and brought in cactus and made a cactus bed.

RM: Did they live?

AS: Yes, they lived. They were native; you can't kill them. And we always had geraniums in the windows, and coleus. And from the Chinese we had white paper narcissus — the little tiny ones. They are very sweet-smelling. The Chinese always got bulbs. That's my best memory of Dunphy. There was always a deep window sill with bowls of these flowers. You plant them in December and they bloom for Chinese New Years in January. They grow about 12 to 15 inches tall. We always had those as gifts from the Chinese. Always, growing up, there were these in the window sill in the winter.

RM: In pots?

AS: You put the bulbs in pebbles in water in a bowl. You put the pebbles about halfway up or almost to the top and pour water in. The bulbs are about 3 inches across, and the better quality the bulb, the better blooms you get. They are from a [special] time and a place in my life. I have them every year.

RM: What would happen if you put them in dirt? Do they form another bulb?

AS: They don't; they are bloomed out. I've tried planting my bulbs but you just get a green shoot; you don't get the flowers. They're just good for that one growing season.

RM: What do you remember about the winters at Dunphy? Were they tough?

AS: They were very cold. And to a child who was sick part of the time . . . after I had cost them so much money I was very carefully supervised. I couldn't go with the horses when they went over the mountains; I'd have to go on the truck or wagon with somebody: "You can't do this. You might get sick again. You're going to hurt yourself."

RM: What did you wear for clothing to keep warm there?

AS: Just regular winter clothing.

RM: What did the girls wear?

AS: Dresses as we were younger and that awful long underwear. You had to fold it over your hand to make it fit around your ankle while you pulled up those long black cotton stockings. And the galoshes were so heavy with the buckles. When you kicked them off in the spring, you felt like you were lighter than air. I remember lots of deep snow growing up. My dad had a great big sled that I think they put 4 horses on to pull it. They would go through Walshes Canyon up over the road of the first highway to the Red House on a sled in the winter.

RM: There was that much snow?

AS: Yes, there was no way the cars were going to go through. I remember being worried about him leaving. He had a huge fur coat like the college boy raccoon kind of coat with the big collar that came way down to here. They would go up there with sacks of stuff and blankets. There were always 2 or 3 men on a sled and that's the way they went north.

RM: When did you get power at the ranch?

AS: In the '30s, I think.

RM: You didn't have power when you were growing up, did you?

AS: No, just coal oil lamps and Coleman lantern types with the mantles like you use for camping now. I don't think anybody stayed up late like we do now. You went to bed earlier and got up earlier and you have different schedule. Breakfast was at 6:00.

RM: And you heated with wood, probably?

AS: Yes, with ties. We didn't we have trees around or anything so we used ties from the railroad.

RM: Would you buy them from the railroad?

AS: I think they just picked them up. I don't think they sold those until maybe the last 40 years.

RM: They weren't creosoting them in those days either, were they?

AS: No.

RM: So they would burn well.

AS: Yes. There were a lot of good tie houses through northern Nevada. They made lots of nice sturdy houses. They plastered over the cracks. They were good, warm houses. And they used the ties for kindling with coal, because there was no source of wood around there.

RM: You did use coal, though?

AS: Yes.

RM: Because the railroad was convenient.

AS: Yes, and there weren't any trees to cut like there are down here, to heat with wood.

RM: Was it tough keeping warm at night?

AS: I guess we had lots of quilts and clothes. Maybe we weren't used to being as constantly warm as we are now.

RM: I think you're right.

AS: And people were outdoors all the time got more used to it.

RM: Yes, we're used to warmer temperatures, especially Americans. I think Europeans keep their houses colder than we do. Did you have phones?

AS: Yes. I remember when Bell Tel was putting through their lines and how excited we were with the men bringing in the first radios.

RM: When did you get a radio there?

AS: I was pretty young — middle 20s, maybe.

RM: How did the radio change your life?

AS: Not appreciably.

RM: Did you listen at night? You couldn't pick up anything in the day, could you?

AS: Not much. I remember being so excited with the telephone men. As long as I can remember there were phones in the dining room and the cookhouse, and they went to the other ranches. They had an early-day phone line some way. And we were warned to stay away from it in electrical storms. They had bad electrical storms. I remember some of the band of sheep I had standing by a barbed wire fence when the lightning hit; the sheep were decimated.

RM: You saw that?

AS: Yes. And the lightning coming out of the phone. We used to have big lightning storms. My mother didn't like lightning. I guess I was too stupid to know the difference — I thought lightning was very exciting and a wonderful thing. They always got off horseback when it was lightning and they'd get away from the cows with the horns because it travels along the cows' horns.

RM: The lightning will travel down their horns and jump from one horn to another? Is that right?

AS: And we had to get away from water during lightning storms. I know we used to go swimming in the Humboldt. I mean, we'd call that swimming; it was dog paddling for sure. And we went fishing; my mother loved to fish. Around Austin there are all these wonderful creeks with great fishing. Callaghan Creek went right through Dan Callahan's ranch. And we always said "crik"; we thought a creek was a chair with a strange noise or someone's back out of whack. A "crik" had water in it.

RM: That's the way I pronounce it too. They say creek in the East, I think.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RM: Tell me about the sheepmen/cattlemen situation in your childhood.

AS: That was very tender ground. Growing up there was a fight over the range. The Horseshoe Ranch never had sheep and Dunphy never had sheep. Marvels ran sheep and cattle, I think, and I don't know what Russell had down at the Twenty Five, that large ranch west of Battle Mountain. There was a feud all through the West, but I'm not qualified to talk about it.

RM: Do you remember any incidents, though?

AS: Only one thing. We didn't have any trouble at Dunphy because Dunphy was too big; they were too powerful. They had lots of money behind them, and a bank of lawyers in San Francisco. But up on the Callahan Ranch out of Austin, my grandfather's ranch, my uncle John Callahan was riding and sheepmen were coming down into the canyon to take his range. John Callahan was a tall man — over 6 feet. He was built a lot like my dad was, but not as heavy. He was riding and he beat the sheepherder with his rifle butt and scattered [the man's] camp. I guess he shot into the sheep. He rode carrying a rifle and my grandmother was so glad that he hadn't killed him. There were lots of fights to the death and lots of poisoning of livestock. There were big feuds. Then the Taylor Grazing Act came along and divided up [the range]. Before that, if you read Nevada history, the tramp sheepmen came in and bought a little ranch. They moved their sheep according to the season. Some of the biggest ranches out of Austin now are Basque-owned.

RM: In fact, the whole west side of Pine Valley, the Cortez Mountains, was owned by the Eureka Land and Livestock Company, wasn't it? That was mostly Basque-owned.

AS: You see a lot of Basque people out of Eureka. Your big ranchers now up there . . . the Dameles are mostly gone. A lot of them sold out. Bernard [Damele] was over at Three-Bar out of Austin. They were the big ranchers in Eureka.

RM: Where was the Damele Ranch located?

AS: At Tonkin and Three-Bar. They had a lot of places. A good lady to talk to would be Bobbie Damele — Mrs. John Damele — of Eureka. Her husband's dead; he was a young son of early-day ranching. They owned the biggest ranches in Eureka County. But age takes its toll. People died and sold out. Three brothers were left on the ranch and they would have been a little bit older than me. They had split up.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: You're going to tell me about your dad being active in politics.

AS: Yes, he was a Eureka County Commissioner in the '40s. He died in '45 and this would have been 5 or 6 years preceding that. He loved to go to Eureka. And it was always his good Basque friends who helped him get elected.

RM: And he was representing the northern part of the county?

AS: Yes. And one of his dear friends up there was Judge Edgar Eather, who was

very prominent in Eureka history. After my dad was buried in Austin and Judge Eather would be driving from Eureka down to Reno, he said he always tipped his hat to Bill's grave when he came by the cemetery. And I remember especially Ed Delany and Pete Merialdo and this wonderful sheriff Mike Donnelly. He was Irish. You talk about good-looking men — he could have been in "Lonesome Dove." After my dad died, my mother became commissioner.

RM: Oh, he died in office?

AS: Yes, and she replaced him. Then she was elected to another term. And in little counties, people who had been your friends but were running against you never spoke to you again when you won the election.

RM: Did he die during his first term?

AS: No, because he would talk about being re-elected and the good Basque friends who helped him up there. (He always enjoyed being part of Eureka. He was also on grand juries — he'd be a grand jury foreman.)

RM: Then your mother survived her own election. Did she like being commissioner?

AS: Yes. As I say, this was the woman who was always running things from behind the scenes. Where they say women stayed home . . . they knew all the business — the price of the cows, the tonnage of the hay, what needed doing where. Now we talk as though if you don't have a career — unless you're paid and work certain hours for a corporation . . . These people had careers with the best of all worlds. Also, a lot of them would get out and ride with the men. They did work as it needed to be done.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: You were saying the cattle buyers would be at the table at the ranch . . . ?

AS: Around a table full of men who were discussing cow prices and weights and the hay tonnage. My mother would be pouring coffee wearing pearl earrings and a ruffle on her apron. And she had the figures all done in her head while the men were working them out at the table on paper. My dad was wonderful with math, too, and very proud of his ability in math. And they both wrote beautifully — they had a lovely strong flowing hand with great character; big across the page. My dad wrote wonderfully descriptive letters when we were away in school.

RM: On ranch life?

AS: Yes, and the weather.

RM: Do you have any of those letters?

AS: A couple are put away in the safe deposit box. We should have saved every one, but you think you're invincible. That's why I can relate to teenagers. You know it's never going to end. The people are there like statues. And you blink an eye and everybody's gone.

ADDENDUM

But life continues on its crooked path, and a change of lifestyle came for my parents and for the four of us children when we left the Dunphy Ranch in 1939. My father and mother purchased a ranch just west of Beowawe. Now they had their own cattle and their own brand, "WJ," taken from my father's given name, William Joseph.

My sister Mary and I were attending the University of Nevada. After graduation we began our teaching careers. My brother, Dan, and sister Teresa were associated with our parents in the operation of the ranch.

Bill and Jessie Mahoney had always taken an active part in local and state politics. They kept close, personal ties with the county officials in Eureka. My father was a frequent member of the Eureka County grand juries throughout the years. He served 2 terms as Eureka County Commissioner. He died during his third term in June of 1945. Governor Carville appointed my mother to fill out his unexpired term. Subsequently she was elected for 2 more terms.

My mother took over running the ranch at Beowawe with Dan and Teresa after my father's death. She had always wanted a ranch of her own, instead of managing someone else's property. She especially loved the ranch at Beowawe, with its wide-open views. She took a knowledgeable interest in every aspect of the ranch and cattle operation and was a very shrewd rancher.

We used to ride together and walk through the fields close to the house looking for the turkey's nests. Mama loved picnics and was always coming up with an excuse to have one. Some of my best memories are of the times we cooked steaks over an open campfire and had watermelon under the willows by the Humboldt River.

My mother used to enjoy sitting on the well casing in the middle of the big barnyard, watching the planes fly overhead and looking out over her alfalfa fields. She always said she was never lonely, but happy and content on the Mahoney Ranch at Beowawe. She especially enjoyed the pretty tree-lined lane with its wild roses blooming between the trees that led down to the ranch house. I remember how she would cut wild roses to decorate the dining table. She had a gift for creating beauty, fun and excitement wherever she happened to be.

My mother used to say that God had been good to her because she had never lost a child. Then my brother Dan was killed in an auto accident while coming home from Elko with buck rake teeth in August of 1952. Her heartbreak knew no bounds. Dan had also been slated to inherit the Callahan Ranch in Grass Valley, Nevada.

Mother and my sister Teresa carried on with the ranching operation, no matter what the difficulties were, and continued to improve the place. Following my mother's death in 1956, Teresa took over running the ranch. She married Paul Sansinena, a neighboring rancher, in April of 1960. He joined her in operating the Mahoney Ranch. They drilled a very productive well, expanded the alfalfa fields and made many improvements on the range. They also built a new ranch house and

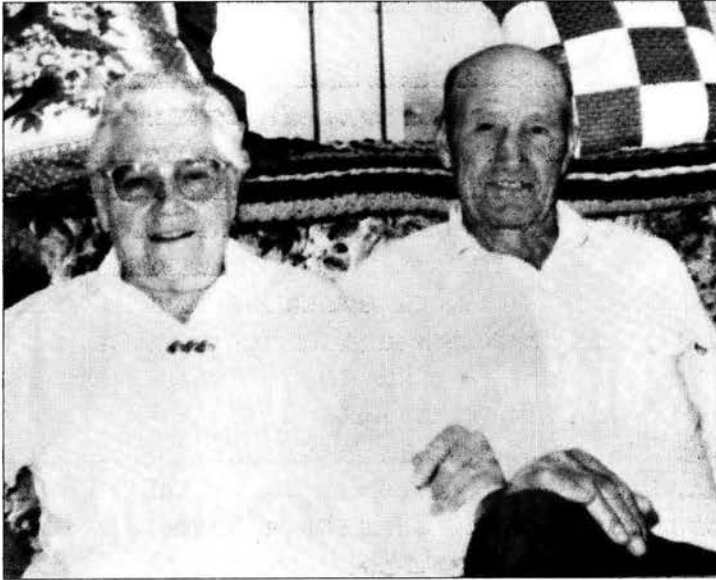
new outbuildings, fences and corrals.

Paul died in April of 1992. Teresa is now in partnership with their 2 sons, John and Mike Sansinena, in operation of the ranch.

Mama would be so proud to see how wonderful the ranch looks now. Teresa and her family have made all of Mama's dreams about how good the ranch could look come true.

After this was written, on April 4, 1993, John P. Sansinena, Teresa's oldest son, was killed in a tragic automobile accident near the same place our brother, Dan, had died in 1952.

**An Interview with
FLOYD & CHARLENE SLAGOWSKI**



Charlene and Floyd Slagowski
Pine Valley, Eureka County, 1992

*An Oral History conducted and edited by
Robert D. McCracken
1993*

CONTENTS
An Interview with Floyd and Charlene Slagowski

- CHAPTER ONE** 4
Background information on Charlene's parents and the early loss of her father; Charlene is brought up in Pine Valley by her grandparents, Charles and Molly Rand; Charles works with bull teams hauling wood, and his later career in carpentry in Mineral Hill and Palisade; hardships the Rands survived through the years, including deaths, an earthquake and a grasshopper infestation; describing an infestation of Mormon crickets; recollections of the rabies epidemic in Pine Valley coyotes from 1915 to 1935.
- CHAPTER TWO** 12
Further recollections concerning the rabies epidemic; remembering a scabies infestation, and discussing tularemia in the local rabbit population; Charlene's travels to attend school; background information on Floyd's parents and Floyd's youth on a Wyoming farm; Floyd moves to Nevada and finds work on various ranches, then lands a job on the Sadler Ranch in Diamond Valley; remembering the Sadler Ranch; moving cattle using horses; a night spent at Joe Flynn's ranch — typical Nevada hospitality.
- CHAPTER THREE** .20
The hard work of feeding cattle in the winter on the Sadler Ranch; more discussion of the Sadler family; on cleaning ditches and haying using horses; remarks on breaking horses; how to choose a good horse; driving cattle from the Sadler Ranch to the railroad at Palisade — animals that had never seen more than a mud hole were suddenly presented with railroad tracks, traffic and a river.
- CHAPTER FOUR** 28
Rounding up cattle in Pine Valley in the fall; the geography of Pine Valley and the quality of the feed there; availability of stock water in Pine Valley; remarks on the presence of the BLM in Eureka County, and some background on the tramp sheepmen in the county who helped overgraze the range prior to the 1930s.
- CHAPTER FIVE** 35
Further remarks on the BLM, and observations on the future of the ranching industry and ranching as a way of life; breeds of cattle in Pine Valley; the winter of 1889-1890; the importance of the freight teams of the 1870s to the region between Eureka and Palisade; the merits of oxen, horses and mules as freight animals; remembering Charlene's cousin Joe Flynn, a freighter and rancher; the size of William Pritchard's freight company in Palisade; an extensive description of the intricate work of driving a large freight team.

CHAPTER SIX

43

A continuation of how freight teams are connected and managed; some differences between horses and mules as dray animals; feeding and watering teams of freight animals; how to tell when an animal is faking pulling its load; Floyd enters the U.S. Army in 1942 and, in Hawaii, becomes a mule handler and then a farrier; spending his last army days in Colorado.

CHAPTER SEVEN

50

How Charlene's grandfather Charles Rand came to Nevada while transporting some mules; Charles meets his wife, Mary Booth, at Mineral Hill and, after some years in Mineral Hill and Palisade, they buy a ranch in Pine Valley; the settlement of Pine Valley and the building of Eureka and Palisade; a description of the mountains bordering Pine Valley and the creeks that flow into and through it; winters in Pine Valley.

CHAPTER EIGHT

56

The seasons in Pine Valley; more history of the early settlement of Pine Valley; The Emigrant Trail and the mail route from Salt Lake City to Sacramento in 1851; remarks on Joe Flynn, his talents with horses, and how he freighted from 1910 to 1912, when the Eureka and Palisade Railroad was washed out; memories of other Mineral Hill pioneers; Charlene's memories of school days in Palisade in the late 1920s.

CHAPTER NINE

63

A description of the railroads in Palisade; the confluence of Pine Creek and the Humboldt River; early phone line in Palisade; recollections of the school in Palisade, and of riding the narrow gauge between Palisade and the Rand Ranch each week; further memories of epidemics in the 1930s; some of the men who served in the armed forces from Pine Valley; Floyd and Charlene are married.

CHAPTER TEN

71

Economic improvements in ranching in the 1940s compared with the early 1930s, especially the winter of 1931-1932; how people lost ranches in the 1930s; a discussion of the various ages at which cattle have been sold through the years, and the types of cattle preferred at different times; the era of sheepherding in Eureka County.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

79

The 1950s — a new highway and a new phone system enter Pine Valley; living on the Slagowskis' ranch; running water and power come late to the valley; Floyd and Charlene's children attend high school in Elko, and some of the challenges of boarding youngsters away from home; how Floyd began to hay with machinery in the 1950s; on working hard and creating a fine ranch; the school on the Slagowskis' ranch; the iron mine in the Cortez Range; mail delivery in Pine Valley through the years.

CHAPTER TWELVE

87

Remarks on the cattle business in the 1960s; moving a house and a vault door from the Mount Hope Mine to the Slagowskis' ranch; starting the school at the ranch in the 1950s; the Slagowskis move to the Pony Creek Ranch in the 1970s, and their children move onto various local ranches; Floyd builds their new home in the late 1970s; remarks on the oil wells in Pine Valley and on the Carlin and other area gold mines; a true story of driving a bull 90 miles in one day — on horseback.

ADDENDUM

95

A detailed account of the art and science of hitching, driving and managing freight teams.

This is Robert McCracken talking to Floyd and Charlene Slagowski at their home in Pine Valley, Nevada, August 7 and September 15, 1992.

CHAPTER ONE

- RM: Charlene, let's start with you. Why don't you tell me your name as it reads on your birth certificate?
- CS: Just Charlene Walker.
- RM: And when and where were you born?
- CS: I was born in Sparks, Nevada, April 22, 1919.
- RM: And what was your father's name?
- CS: Charles Safford Walker, and he was born in Safford.
- RM: Safford is where?
- FS: Southwest of Palisade 7 miles. It was a mining camp.
- RM: Is it in Eureka County?
- CS: Yes.
- RM: Do you remember his birth date?
- CS: October 22, 1882. I was born after he died. He died in 1918 in October and my mother was 3 months pregnant with me. I was number 5.
- RM: Oh, so you never knew your father?
- CS: No, and he never knew me.
- RM: What did he die of?
- CS: He died in the flu epidemic on October 22, 1918.
- RM: And where were you were you living then?
- CS: They had just started to purchase that place in the very north end of the valley that is now down by Mary Lund's — the Palisade Ranch.
- RM: Palisade Ranch in Pine Valley?
- CS: Yes.
- RM: What did your mother do then?
- CS: She tried to keep the place for a while and then a year after he died, she married my stepfather.
- RM: And what was his name?
- CS: Ed Thomas. He was much older than she was. They had one child and then they moved to a fruit ranch in Shasta County, California. They stayed there till my oldest brother was ready to go to high school, and then they moved back to Sparks. So they weren't in Shasta County very long.
- RM: And were you with them?
- CS: No, I wasn't. I was number 5 in the family and then she had the little boy, so my grandparents kept me. I stayed right here in Pine Valley. [Laughs]
- RM: Was that your father's family or your mother's family?
- CS: My mother's family.
- RM: And what were their names?
- CS: Rand — Charles Henry and Molly Rand.
- RM: When did they come into the country?

FS: Charlie Rand came into the country in 1881 from Ontario, Canada —from the same place as these people [some guests of the Slagowskis] did. Molly came in 1885.

RM: I see. Was he an Englishman by birth or was he a Canadian?

CS: Canadian, I guess. Am I right about that?

FS: I think he was Canadian.

RM: What brought him down here?

Other Female Voice: That's what we don't know.

FS: From what history I can find, he left that country and came down into the States. He was part of a large family, and he left the family at the age of 19 and came down into the States. From where he was working he brought a load of mules from Missouri out here to Eureka, and then he stayed. Of course, a lot of mules were used in this country at that time by the freight teams.

RM: What was Molly Rand's background?

CS: My grandma came from Binghamton, New York. She had a sister out here, Kate Flynn, and Kate and Joe Flynn lived in Mineral Hill; he was involved in mining. She came out, as I understood, to help Aunt Kate when one of the children was born, and then she just stayed. In fact, Grandpa always told this story: He and another fellow were standing out on the porch of some building in Mineral Hill, and as the stage went by he looked up at her, and he said to this other guy, "See that lady in there? She's going to be my wife!" And sure enough, they married.

RM: How long did it take?

CS: It didn't take very long — a bit over a year. They were married November 16, 1886, and they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on the 16th of November in 1936.

RM: How nice. How long did they live after that?

CS: Grandpa died in August of '39 and Mom died in August of '47.

RM: And you called her "Mom"?

CS: Yes, I did.

RM: She was your mother, in effect.

CS: Yes, definitely. In those days there wasn't much travel, so you didn't go back and forth. I don't remember seeing my own mother till I was about 7, I think.

RM: Is that right? What did you think when you saw her?

CS: I had different feelings then than I did later. You have resentment when you're more or less given away, but I've fathomed that out since. And I was grateful to be left with my grandparents.

RM: For one thing, you were, in effect, an only child.

CS: That's what all the aunts and uncles thought — they thought I was a spoiled brat. But I don't know. When I think back at it, I wasn't as spoiled as some of theirs. That's *my* opinion. [Laughter] Now, I'll probably want to wipe that out. [Laughter]

-
- RM: When did your grandfather come out to this part of the county?
- FS: He came to Eureka in the spring of 1881, and to Mineral Hill in the late fall of the same year.
- RM: Did he take up a new piece of ground, or what happened?
- FS: When he came here, his first work was as the swamper for a bull team.
- RM: What is a swamper?
- FS: He's the fellow who helps the driver, the bullwhacker. He had to care for the oxen, catch them, hook them up, see that they had their feed and help with upkeep on the wagons. They were hauling wood at that time out of the timber.
- RM: To Eureka?
- FS: More to the railroad. The railroad used wood in their engines at that time. And everyone used wood, so there were wood cutters available to deliver it wherever it was needed.
- CS: And they used it for charcoal.
- FS: That was his first job when he came here, but then he went into carpentry, and I don't know whether he learned his carpentry before he came here or whether he picked it up later, but he became a good carpenter, and that was his main work throughout the early years — first in Mineral Hill and then in Palisade.
- RM: Oh, so he went from Mineral Hill to Palisade?
- FS: Yes, and then he worked for the narrow gauge railroad, in the shops. He was building cars and various things — they built their own cars. So he was in carpentry there throughout the years.
- FS: Then he bought a ranch in December 1907.
- RM: What ranch did he buy?
- FS: He bought the old Perry Ranch down here. It's known well in this country as the Rand Ranch, but the Tomeras own it now — Tommy and Patsy Tomera.
- RM: Charlene, tell me a little bit about your mother. What was her background?
- CS: Her maiden name was Elizabeth Rand, and she was a teacher. She taught at the various places around here. As we understand, she taught at Ramano, and she taught in Cortez. Then later, after she was married to my stepdad and he became ill, she taught out at that air force base — that was old Jim Stead's place. She just taught the Gasperi kids and some from . . . she lived in Sparks, then.
- RM: And she would have been raised in Palisade?
- FS: She was raised right here in Palisade. After her teaching, she married Charlene's father and they had a store in Palisade. They sold the store at the time they bought the Palisade Ranch. They bought the store in 1912, I think.
- CS: No, she hadn't been there very long. I think they were still in Palisade. Paul was born in 1913, so they were still in Palisade. Then they bought the ranch, I think, in 1917. Then he died shortly after — in the spring. She and her sister, Sue, went away to college, and Sue was a teacher also. Her father got the Rand Ranch in 1907, and she was away at college, and then teaching.

-
- Then she got married to my dad.
- RM: Your grandfather Rand came into the area close to the beginning of Eureka, didn't he?
- FS: Pretty close to it, yes. It was about 10 years behind the very beginning.
- RM: Tell me a little bit about him. How would you describe him physically?
- CS: He was an ordinary-built person. I'd say Grandpa was about 5 foot 8, wouldn't you say?
- FS: Possibly — or 5 foot 9.
- CS: He was Canadian built. He wasn't heavy, though. He was a slender-built man. He was a very honest person. When Floyd and I think about it, my grandparents were the rocks of Gibraltar, to stand up under all they did. And in those days you didn't cry out to the government for a handout whenever you had a little tough luck. And they had a world of it.
- RM: What was some of their tough luck?
- CS: They lost a daughter in death in 1917 and then my dad and Aunt Sue's husband died within about 3 weeks of one another in 1918 with that flu. They lost a nephew that same year with the flu — Will Flynn. Then Uncle Bill went into the war. He was in Germany and France in World War I.
- FS: And before that, in January 1915, a fire burned their home. CS: Yes, and they had to borrow money to build a house.
- FS: In 1914 they had a big earthquake; it stopped one of the springs that they depended on for irrigation at the ranch.
- RM: That was here in this valley?
- CS: Yes. It stopped Trout Creek running. (It later came back.)
- RM: Where was that earthquake centered?
- FS: I don't know, but I read a history of it recently — they told about it in Elko. And they said the hot springs in the Elko were a murky, milky color right after it. It was quite a shaker. There's quite a history written on that time.
- CS: Then when I was a small kid of 7 or 8, they had a grasshopper infestation that just wiped out the fields.
- RM: Oh!
- CS: I remember Nora Yates calling my grandma on the phone. She said, "Molly, they're moving from here. They're coming down the valley." Mom and I went out and we climbed up on this old root cellar and looked to the south and the sky looked . . . I can remember it yet. It had a tan look, and you could just hear the flutter. And those things were just hitting us and falling. You never saw so many insects in your life.
- RM: And what year was that?
- CS: I would guess, offhand, that it was probably about 1926.
- RM: And did they destroy everything in the valley?
- CS: They even had to put the pitchforks in the barn at night, because those grasshoppers would eat on the handles and make them slivery.
- RM: Is that right?
- CS: I remember the folks telling about that. Oh, they were horrible. And I re-

member Grandpa and my older cousins mixing the poison for the grasshoppers. You know, they didn't have too much to combat them with. So at night they'd go to what we called the "poison house," where they mixed it. They had an old canvas on the floor and then they'd put down bran, and I remember it had banana oil and . . . could it have strychnine, Floyd?

FS: Most likely. They'd mix that with shovels, just like you would mix cement. This was after they'd put in a day in the hayfield. (I imagine they had hay up before these things hit.) Then they would each take a little bucket of it and go out and broadcast that on the fields or where the grasshoppers were the worst. I remember that in a very detailed way.

RM: Did you ever have another infestation like that?

CS: Oh, the Mormon crickets.

RM: And that year was what?

FS: In '38, '39 and '40. There were billions of them.

RM: Do they chirp?

FS: Yes. You could hear their scraping.

CS: But not like these little night crickets — they're a joy.

FS: Yes, it's a different thing. But you could hear the scrape of their legs.

CS: You could hear them when they descended upon you. [Laughs]

RM: Were there just clouds of them?

FS: No, they can't fly. But they were so thick that there were just hordes of them in the patches. They'd come down and descend on our ranch and they were so thick that you'd open the gate and they'd just jump all over. You'd go to walk in the door and the crickets would jump in the house.

CS: They were big, ugly things.

FS: They ate crops.

RM: Did they do a lot of damage?

FS: When they would stop to eat, they would do a lot of damage. Then they'd move for a day or two, and then they'd stop to eat.

CS: Floyd, I don't remember that. Wouldn't they just descend on you and stay there till they mopped you out? Weren't they there about a month and then they moved on?

FS: Well, sure. They would move on day after day, in hordes. But there was one horde after the other that would come. I'm talking about this whole country between these mountain ranges.

CS: Yes — it was black with them.

FS: They went clear into Elko and on beyond — all of this country. And they're cannibalistic. On the road, a car would come along and run over the crickets and the others would gang up to eat those dead crickets. And then another car would come over and mash them. They'd get so thick and they were so slick that they caused a few car wrecks.

CS: There was a cricket infestation when they lived in Palisade and Aunt Mary and Aunt Sue and Uncle Dan and all were just little kids. They said that they were so thick then that they stopped the railroad trains because they were

- slick on the rails.
- FS: They said that it got so slick on the rails that they'd get to an up grade and they couldn't start.
- RM: Isn't that incredible!
- FS: So her grandparents had the infestation of those things too, you know.
- CS: In this infestation in '38 and '39, it was amazing. [Laughs] You'd take an old kerosene can and a stick and you'd get out there and just pound on it, and the racket would drive them. You could drive these crickets.
- RM: And where would you drive them?
- CS: You'd get them out of your yard if you could.
- FS: They dug pits about 2 feet deep and they set up a big tin corral around the pits, half as big as this room. The tin was about 18 inches high and they couldn't get over it. They would put a wing out like this [a wedge-shaped figure] and they'd drive them into it, and then they'd burn them.
- RM: Was that effective? Could you make a dent in them?
- FS: Oh, a little.
- CS: You thought you did. You had to do something. It's like any problem — you think that you're accomplishing something. And the stench was terrific. They smell like old rotten, rotten fish [after they've been burned]. And even in those days, whoever was at the head of [getting rid of the crickets] wanted to show that there was some [justification] for all the money spent. So they would make these corrals along the highway — these big piles of them, burning. And the stench was awful. We always figured they did it along the highway so that everybody could see what they were getting paid to do.
- FS: Actually, they put them where the crickets were the worst.
- RM: So in one year you had a terrible infestation of grasshoppers, and you had 2 or 3 years of these crickets?
- FS: Yes. And another thing that was terrible was the rabies in the coyotes.
- CS: Oh, the rabies!
- RM: Oh, really! Tell me about that.
- FS: That was back in the early '30s and for 15 years before that — from 1915 to 1935 in spells; not continually.
- CS: I remember when I was a little kid sitting out in the yard, a rabid coyote came in the yard and my brothers and sisters grabbed me and took me in.
- FS: I remember Joe Flynn and some of the old ranchers telling how these rabid coyotes would come in and bite a cow and then the cow would get it. Or they'd bite a horse, and the horse would get it. There were a few incidents of people being bitten. They'd get the disease and die from it. It was a bad situation.
- CS: Yes. My cousin and I took the Pasteur treatment. It was about in '31. And that was a foolish thing. My uncle had a dog and [a rabid] coyote bit it and they fought and my uncle knew it. But he was taking care of the dog for somebody and . . .
- RM: Tell me about the Pasteur treatment. That was needles into the abdomen,

-
- wasn't it?
- CS: Yes, a needle in the abdomen every day for 10 days or 2 weeks. To tell you the truth, it seemed forever. I know that it happened through the Christmas vacation. My cousins and I spent the Christmas vacation with Uncle Bill and Aunt Ella, in Elko. Dr. Secord administered the vaccine and it was shot in the tummy each day — one side and then the other side. And as I say, it seemed like forever.
- RM: I think it was 10 days or something.
- FS: In that neighborhood.
- CS: Yes. And it was uncalled for. Had he shot the dog, then that wouldn't have happened. We all watched that dog go right from the first stage clear through his rabies and he died. And Dr. Secord was afraid [that we'd been exposed]. They were overrun with cats and they had about 7 dogs, beside all of us kids. He figured that the dog's froth . . . they had kept this dog in a shed where there was grain and other supplies. So they had to take that all out and burn it. That was a total loss, just a foolish thing. And then we had to undergo that treatment because he figured if the cats walked in the froth and then possibly scratched us . . . Actually, I don't suppose we ever had to take it because there was no contact.
- RM: The dog didn't bite you or anything?
- CS: No, it never bit anybody.
- RM: What happens to a cow or horse when they get the disease?
- FS: Well, they get it and when they're in one of these fits, they might bite something else and give it to them. But they'll eventually die from it.
- RM: How do they behave as they're getting worse?
- CS: I've heard my aunt Mary and Grandpa say that if ever you heard a rabbie cow bawl, you'd never forget it. But I never heard it.
- FS: It's a pitiful sound.
- OFV: They go round and round in circles.
- Other Male Voice: They just bellow and bawl . . .
- CS: They have it up there in Ontario with skunks and foxes.
- RM: How did they get rid of it in the coyotes here?
- FS: Everyone who saw a rabid coyote killed it, and eventually they got the upper hand on it, I guess. But it was a long time. It was a serious, serious thing.
- CS: In '32 or '33 my cousins were feeding and they saw a rabbie coyote in the field. They turned right around with their bobsled and went back to the house and told my grandpa. He got on his horse with his .30-.30 and he tracked that coyote till he found and killed it. That's how they got rid of it — it was just a case of killing the culprit.
- FS: Tell him about the fellow who died from it in Palisade.
- CS: Oh, I remember Grandpa's story about Miles McKennen. He died from the rabies. Grandpa said that it took 4 or 8 men to hold him down. When they're dying of rabies, they're just like that dog. I remember old Prince. He would have moments where he'd just beg you to kill him. And I suppose

Miles did too. Then this would hit, and it just racks their whole brain up. And he'd just go wild.

FS: They'd have to hold him down until this passed over. Then they'd take care of him until he'd have another attack. And then they'd have to hold him down, because he was furious.

CS: And I can't tell you whether he died then; I imagine he did. But I remember Grandpa telling me that.

RM: And that would have been before your time?

CS: Yes. I suppose I wasn't even born, because they lived in Palisade. They were horror stories, and you were so fearful. I go walking every evening, but you didn't do it then.

RM: You stayed inside?

CS: Right. When I was a kid, you didn't go very far from the house. And you watched for coyotes. They said that one would come along and maybe bump a fencepost or a brush something, and it would just stand there and keep biting it and biting it. And of course, when you saw it, you went and got your gun and blew him to bits.

CHAPTER TWO

- FS: I recall Reinhold Sadler telling me one time he went to catch his wrangle horse to wrangle the horses in. He said when he put the bridle up to him, he just dropped everything and left, because the horse had been bitten with a rabid coyote in the night sometime.
- RM: Wow. So he probably went and got his gun and shot him?
- FS: I suppose he had to destroy him.
- CS: Now, another plague was the rabbits. They ate you out of house and home. We've had several infestations of rabbits; I remember the folks did.
- FS: They weren't that bad. They'd get bad, but they'd die off. A more important one would be to tell about the scabies that they had when they had to dip all the cattle.
- CS: Yes, that was bad too. That was when I was about 15. So you see, it was one thing after another.
- RM: Tell us about the scabies. What is scabies, to begin with?
- FS: It's an infestation of tiny mites the cows get, a skin mite disease. They lose their hair. It's a pretty risky thing, and they have to dip the cattle in a solution to kill it in order to stop it. They had to build a dipping bath to put the cattle through the solution, and that's all an added expense and added time and trouble.
- CS: I think a bunch of them went together and they built a cement floor in the corral and then it went down into a big cement chute and then underneath this they had a furnace-like thing where they chucked in wood and stuff to keep [the dipping solution] warm through the night. I remember walking over there with Grandpa to fire it up at night. And it was always the awfulest-smelling stuff — it must have had a lot of sulfur in it. It smelled like rotten eggs plus other things. I remember I used to take sagebrush in my hand, rub it in my palm, and put it over my face, and smell the sagebrush. Of course, I just had to go over with Grandpa to see this. [Laughs] I was just a young teenager. But that was all an expense. All the different ranchers brought their cattle there. They would come out of this chute, and you had poles with these "S"-shaped things to poke their heads down in the solution.
- RM: Oh, they had to get their head down in it, didn't they?
- CS: They had really to be baptized in that stuff. [Laughter] They'd come back up and then they had a drain pen where they'd stand and drip and they had little ditches in this cement so it would run back down in the vat. It was quite an operation. I can't remember who brought their cattle there to do it, but the different ranchers in the valley came and put them through that. Did they only have to be put through that once?
- FS: I believe so.
- RM: Was there just one serious outbreak of scabies, or have there been others?
- FS: There have been other light outbreaks throughout the years, but if they handle

it immediately, they get it stopped. But this one kind of got a hold and all the people in the valley had to dip to get rid of it.

The reason we talk about these things is to more or less give an idea of the troubles and setbacks and the problems and expenses they had trying to establish a ranch.

RM: Yes — it's part of the life here.

FS: That's right.

RM: What about the rabbits? They rise and fall, don't they?

CS: Every so many years. They're starting to become quite prevalent now.

RM: What causes the cycle?

FS: It's a natural thing. It'll take them a few years to build up to a real problem. And at that time, they'll eat alfalfa fields and alfalfa stacks. They're a nuisance; they do a lot of damage. After they get to a certain point, they'll get tularemia — rabbit fever disease — and they'll all die off. It's just a natural cycle and they're gone and you don't see any more for many years.

CS: Nature takes care of it.

RM: Is the tularemia in the population all the time or does it just come in now and then?

FS: It must be there all the time. But when they get so thick, that will take them.

CS: Tularemia is a disease in humans too, you know.

RM: Yes. We used to call it rabbit fever.

FS: That's what kills them off — they get too numerous and the disease takes over and they die off.

CS: It's a swelling of the glands and . . .

RM: We were told never to touch their blood, especially in a month without an "r."

FS: I don't know about that. We always leave them alone — won't touch them.

CS: We still don't. If there's a dead rabbit around, we're careful of how we dispose of it. Floyd's brother had tularemia.

RM: So you grew up on your grandparents' ranch?

CS: I sure did. But every time I had to go to school, I had to be sent away. I went to Elko and stayed with my aunt — she taught school over there. I stayed with her to go to first and second grade. Then her son died; that was another blow. He was only 13 or so when he died. Then I was sent back down to Palisade to school. And that's when we used to ride on the old train. You'd go in on a Sunday afternoon on the old train or in the little motor car and then come back out Saturday morning. That was a short weekend, as far I was concerned.

RM: Right — very short.

CS: I hated it. [Laughs] Then my uncle started a school out on the ranch. He had the place the Bispos have now.

RM: What would the ranch be called?

CS: I guess they call it the Raines' place; Bob Raines had it years ago. And so I went to school in Diamond Valley too. In those days it took 5 to start a

school and 3 to hold it out here in these boonies. So I was a pretty good candidate for holding a school. [Laughter] And that's about all I was. I wasn't much of a student, I can tell you. Then I went to Reno to high school and graduated from there.

RM: I see. So you went to a lot of different schools?

CS: Oh, yes. They couldn't stand me very long. [Laughs]

RM: Floyd, why don't we back up a bit and get your name and everything like we did with Charlene. Why don't you tell me your name as it reads on your birth certificate?

FS: It's Floyd Carl Slagowski.

RM: And when and where were you born?

FS: I was born in Burnt Fork, Wyoming, April 24, 1916.

RM: And what was your father's name?

FS: Eli Slagowski.

RM: And do you know when and where he was born?

FS: He was born in St. George, Utah.

RM: Was he a Mormon?

FS: Yes, they were Mormon people. He moved from there up into the Bridger Valley, where he and my mother homesteaded in 1900. And that's where the family was raised. They added some to the homestead, but that's where we were raised.

RM: Whereabouts in Wyoming is the Bridger Valley?

FS: It's in the southwestern corner of the state.

RM: What nationality is Slagowski?

FS: Polish.

RM: Was his family converted to LDS in Poland?

FS: Supposedly the old grandfather was to be a priest in the Catholic Church. I don't know what happened, but he left that to come to this country. He came over here and then he got converted somehow, I guess.

RM: I see. And then ended up in St. George? And was your father a rancher by occupation?

FS: That's right.

RM: And what was your mother's name?

FS: My mother's name was Susan Merchant, and her folks came from Australia.

RM: Is that right? What was her place and date of birth?

FS: I can't tell you exactly, but it was about 1878.

RM: And was she born in Australia?

FS: No, she was born down in St. George, Utah, too.

RM: Were her parents converted to LDS in Australia and moved here?

FS: I don't think they ever were converted; they weren't Mormon. But that's where they met.

RM: And then where did you grow up?

FS: I grew up there on Henry's Fork, where Dad homesteaded.

RM: How did you get out to this country?

- FS: They had a large family — I was one of 9 children. And naturally, on a small ranch, the older children moved out and found work in different areas, because there wasn't enough for everyone.
- CS: And his mother died when he was young.
- FS: My mother died young and after Mother died, Dad leased the place to my brother-in-law and my sister, who had just been married. Three of us younger kids stayed with them to finish the eighth grade in the school there. I finished the eighth grade right at the beginning of the hard Depression. There was plenty of hardship right then and I wasn't able to go out to high school. That was the end of my schooling right there. So we moved out to find work throughout those hard times. My brothers and I did various things — worked around various ranches and whatnot before I ever came here.
- RM: When did you first come here?
- FS: In the spring of 1937. A friend of mine wanted to come down here because he said wages were better. The work was more plentiful and he had a brother in Ely, so we took my old Model A '28 Ford and headed for Ely.
- RM: What kind of wages were you getting before you got here as opposed to when you got here?
- FS: I had been fortunate enough to have a job on a ranch up there at \$30 a month and found.
- RM: "And found?" What does that mean?
- FS: That means board and room. That's the way they spoke of it at that time. If you had a job with board and room, it was a job for a certain wage and found.
- CS: And the board and room wasn't any Conrad Hilton. [Laughter] Sometimes it was just the sky.
- RM: Is that right?
- FS: Oh, yes. [Laughter] When I come to Nevada, my first job was \$45 a month.
- RM: So you had a 50 percent increase in pay.
- FS: Right. That's a lot.
- RM: Where was your first job?
- FS: I went to work for Frank Callaway in Currant, at his ranch there.
- RM: Tell me about Frank Callaway at Currant.
- FS: He had the ranch and he hired a lot of Indian help from the Duckwater Reservation there. Most of his help were Indians. But he also had the post office and the little store there.
- RM: That would be where the restaurant is now?
- FS: That's the present Currant restaurant. He also had race horses. And it amused me at the time — he had a parimutuel betting system setup; he could get [the races] over radio and his help would come in and bet on these parimutuel bettings on the race horses, and I don't think it cost him too much for wages because he was getting it back through the betting on those horses. I wasn't used to this type of thing, so he didn't get any of mine back. I was only there a short time. [Laughter]

I got sick and had to leave. It was a kind of a different operation. He had a pretty good ranch and ran a lot of cattle there.

RM: How big was his ranch?

RM: I don't recall. That's been a long time ago and I only helped him for about a week. We branded up some calves and got some cattle out while I was there, and I got sick. He wanted me to start irrigating and I didn't savvy that too good, and I got the flu and I left there and went back to Ely. So I was there a short time. He had a good ranch there.

RM: Was there quite a bit of traffic on the road from Tonopah to Ely?

FS: As I recall, when I went from Ely to Callaway's ranch at Currant, it was all gravel road. With that Model A '28, I fixed about 3 tires, I think, on the way there. [Laughter] It took about all day to get there. So there wasn't much traffic on that road.

CS: There wasn't much traffic period, then.

RM: Did you ever get on down Railroad Valley or up to Duckwater or anything?

FS: No. That's as far down in there as I got. When I got sick, I went back to Ely. When I got over my sickness, I came on west and tried to find work at old Pop Moorman's place, and he didn't need help. Then I wound up in Eureka.

RM: Where was Pop Moorman's place?

FS: He was about 30 miles west of Ely on Highway 50.

RM: OK. And was that a big ranch?

CS: I didn't think it was big.

FS: It was nice outfit.

RM: And what happened in Eureka then? What was Eureka like?

FS: There was not much going on, really. It was pretty quiet. And when I came into Eureka, I was 500 miles from home or anyone that I knew too well and I had about \$5 in my pocket and I was out of a job and things were looking a little bleak. I went into Pete Laborde's saloon; he had the old Eureka Hotel. Old Pete had been a sheepman and a rancher, and he knew all of the ranchers in the area. I asked him about finding work because I told him I was about out of money — I told him my circumstances. Pete said, "Yes, I think I know where you can get work." He said, "Pat O'Shea just left the Sadlers. It's been a hard winter. They're out of hay. They're trying to get their cattle out and I think you could find work if you went there." So that was a good lead from a fellow who knew. I immediately got in my old car and drove down to Sadlers.

RM: Where was Sadler's place?

FS: At the Big Spring, 35 miles north of Eureka in Diamond Valley.

RM: And what happened there?

FS: I went to work for them and I worked there about 4 years.

RM: Till the Depression was basically over?

FS: It was beginning to come out of it a little bit, but they were still in trouble. But it was improving, and I liked the people so well. It was a wonderful family. I had had enough hard knocks that I was glad to have a good job and

stay there, and they were so good to me.

RM: What was your pay there?

FS: Forty-five and found.

RM: So you were still way ahead of what you had in Wyoming.

FS: It was an improvement.

RM: What was life like on the Sadler Ranch?

FS: It was very good for me. They had just come through some hard times with the Depression, naturally. They were buying the place from an estate. Edgar and Ethel were the old folks there on the ranch. Edgar was the son of old Governor Reinhold Sadler. They lived in the big house there. Young Reinhold Sadler had just got married to Verna — Chris, we called her. She was a schoolteacher. And they were in the big house too. Tiny Sadler — Floyd — was down in the western part of the state somewhere, working with a survey outfit, and the youngest girl, Violet, was in Reno in high school at that time. They had this good ranch operation there and needed help and they liked my work and I liked the family and Riney as a boss, so we got along well.

RM: How many hands did they have there?

FS: They only had one other man hired.

RM: What was going on in Diamond Valley at that time? There was no irrigation then, was there?

FS: No. The jackrabbits up there were carrying their lunch across the flat where those hayfields are now.

RM: Is that right? [Laughs] Were they running cattle in Diamond Valley?

FS: They ran cattle north. There were other ranchers in there. At that time, of course, they didn't have a stock truck, so you didn't truck the horses out to do your work. Everything was done with horses — the haying operation was all horses, your work with the cattle was all horses. Wherever you went, it was with horses at that time. There was a lot of work for me. That's the kind of work I liked and they didn't especially care for the riding part of it, so I did 90 percent of that.

RM: How many miles can you make on a reasonable day?

FS: It depends on various things, of course. I might tell you about one incident that would be typical. They had cattle at the Young Ranch in Jiggs and they sent me to get them. It was in late November or early December — it was late and there was snow on the ground. I left the Sadlers' ranch and rode to Jiggs in one day; that's 55 miles. I got there just a little after dark. Mrs. Young fixed me a nice supper while I took care of my horse in the barn and she gave me a good bed.

The next morning the 2 boys helped get the cattle rounded up out of the field. It was about 10 below that morning. We saddled up just before daylight and went down into the field and gathered the Sadler cattle out of their bunch and I got started. I got into the lower end of Diamond Valley that night with those cattle and I dropped them at dark and rode on in to Joe Flynn's ranch and stayed with him all night. I went back the next day, got

my cattle and went on. So it was 3-day trip.

RM: Wow — 110 miles. That's faster than I thought you could go on a horse.

FS: Three days was crowding things, but it was typical of the work that had to be done.

CS: But remember, it was cold. He was trying to get to the fire. [Laughs]

FS: When I left them in the lower end of Diamond Valley that night, I think it was about 10 below when I got into Flynn's. It was a cold winter.

RM: How do you stay out in that kind of cold?

FS: You just saddle up and get right with it.

CS: You do a job.

FS: You hump up and take it.

RM: Do you get used to it?

FS: Oh, yes.

CS: You might tell about how you got to Joe Flynn's — how it was different in those days. You could go into somebody's house and feel at home.

FS: I had met Joe Flynn several times and he was a fine outstanding man. And I had stayed at his place a couple of times, taking cattle or bringing them back if it was a distance where you couldn't get home. If you'd come to a ranch you'd stay overnight and you were welcome. Joe Flynn was very good. And he had told me, "Anytime you come here, I want you to stay over; you're welcome anytime."

Well, when I came in that night after dark, there was no one home. And Joe Flynn had had trouble with people stealing groceries out of his cellar and things at various times, so he locked everything up when he left. He was riding for cattle over the mountain and I didn't know that. That time of year, he generally came down here to Pine Valley, because he bought hay and fed his cattle. So I thought he was gone, and I didn't know he'd be back. And it was so cold and I was so tired from the ride, driving those cattle from Jiggs that day.

I thought, "Well, I'm going to go see if I can get in past his lock." He had just a nail driven in his window to hold it from swinging out and he'd open it to get air in the house. Well, I picked that nail out and crawled through the window, unlocked his door and went back out and put the window back like I found it and had the door open. [Laughter] I went in, built a fire, got warm and cooked myself some supper.

And about the time I was finishing my supper, I heard a noise outside and went out on the porch and it was Joe Flynn. Joe said, "Hello, who's there?" [Laughs]

I told him who it was and I said, "If you'd hurried up a little bit, you'd have been on time for supper." [Laughter]

Joe said, "You wait till I put my horse away." He put the horses away — his and his hired man's — and he came back and fixed a meal. We went to bed and next morning he fixed a good breakfast about daylight. I had to go back and get my cattle but before I left, Joe said, "I want you to tell me how you

got into the house, 'cause I had it locked up.”

So I said, “Well, come out and I’ll show you.” And I picked that nail out in the window and, I said “I crawled in and opened it.” [Laughter] I said, “I wouldn’t normally do that but you told me I welcome.”

He said, “I’m glad you done it. I think a lot more of you that instead of fighting the cold for another 10-mile hard ride . . . I think more of you for doing what you did.” He said, “I’m not locking my house against people like you. It’s [locked] against people who want to steal.”

RM: That’s a great story.

FS: It’s typical of the hospitality out here.

RM: Is the hospitality like that now?

FS: In places, but very few.

CHAPTER THREE

- RM: What other recollections do you have of the Sadler place?
- FS: Mr. Sadler was in the legislature at the time. Edgar and Ethel were more or less retired, and Edgar was in the legislature. They were down there in the winter months some and we were there on the ranch. Reinhold, their son, had taken over the operation of the ranch.
- CS: And Tiny.
- FS: Well, Tiny wasn't there yet. My first winter there [I did] some of the hardest work I ever did. Reinhold was building his new house, and they had the foundation all made and they were just putting a floor on it.
- CS: He had been married to Chris for not very long.
- FS: Yes. That was the fall of '37. That winter, Floyd Sadler came home and the 2 of them, Floyd and Reinhold, were building on that house to finish it up for Riney. They fed the weaner calves and then worked on the house each day throughout the winter. The other hired man had left and I was the only hired man, so I had to feed the rest of the cattle. And as I recall there were about 800 head of grown cattle to be fed — mostly dry stock and one bunch of cows and calves. I had to harness up my horses in the morning before breakfast, and in the wintertime, during the short days, breakfast was just about daylight. I'd have my horses harnessed and fed by then and I would have to work 4 head of horses on my feed rig. So immediately after breakfast I'd take a lunch and I would go up by the spring and out to what they called the John's field — I think that's 4 miles. There I fed 3 big loads of hay.
- CS: He pitched it off the wagon.
- FS: Yes, I would pitch loose hay. And a load was a ton of hay; a ton would feed 100 cows.
- RM: So you'd have to make 3 trips?
- FS: Yes. I'd pitch it on the wagon, haul it out in the field and pitch it off for the cows to eat, then come back and get another load, until they were fed. Then I would load a load and haul it back into the next field, where I fed that load and 2 more that I pitched there, which would make the 6 loads I fed there. Then I would load a load of hay there and haul it back up above the spring, where there was a bunch of cows and calves, and feed a load there. Then I would have to go back by the house and down in the field 2 more miles to get a load of hay and bring it back to finish feeding the cows and calves. When I unhooked my team at night in those short days, it was just about dark. So I had spent the whole day working as hard as I could pitching hay.
- RM: How did you do it?
- CS: He was young. [Laughter]
- FS: My lunch, when I took it, would be frozen ice at noon. Those mornings were very cold. Many mornings when I went out, it was 10, 20 to 25 degrees below zero when I'd leave there. Driving 4 head of horses is a little bit cold on the fingers.

RM: You got gloves, I assume?

FS: Yes, but holding to those lines in that penetrating cold was hard. I'd tie my lines up to the Jacob's staff and beat my fingers to keep them warm and let the team go by themselves. Those horses were pretty well trained and when I would have a load of hay to pitch off to the cows, they were trained to go in a huge circle while I'd pitch it off. They knew how to follow the feed ground. I worked some with a bobsled when the snow was good. When the snow melted it would get down into that alkali and mud and get wet, so I'd still use the sled; a wagon would bog in too deep. All we had then was a big wooden wheeled wagon, so it was better to pull the sled with 4 head of horses in the mud. That's what I used most of the winter. In the spring, of course, on the higher ground, I had to use the wagon. But I fed those cows for them that winter and I was a little bit weary by spring.

RM: You were earning your money, weren't you?

FS: I think so.

CS: But they were good to him. He always felt they were just like home.

FS: Mrs. Sadler was just like a mother to me. As I was telling you [off the tape], I lacked education. She would give me material to read. Being a teacher, she could see my shortcomings, and she liked me. So she would give me material to read and then she'd question me to see if I read it. After supper at night while she was washing the dishes, she'd have me read to her to see how I was improving, and she helped me with my words and my understanding. I thought that was pretty wonderful. The main thing I regret is that I never told her how much I appreciated it.

CS: Oh, you did too, Pa.

RM: Tell me some more about the daily work on the ranch.

FS: Well, on that ranch there's a big spring — lots of water — and you have to irrigate to raise a hay crop. Reinhold did all the irrigating and he worked hard at it. He was a hard worker. He knew how to get the best use of the water. We had to clean those ditches in the spring to clean the moss out so the water would run free to the patches he irrigated. And we were limited on machinery to work with. These huge ditches with the water coming out would be mossed up and have silt and mud in them, and we'd have to clean that out. Riney would take 6 head of horses and he would ride one horse and drive these horses, and I would ride a Martin ditcher and keep it in the ditch to throw that muck out.

RM: What is a ditcher?

FS: The Martin ditcher is a iron V-shaped thing that's straight on one side and has a blade on the other. This blade throws the dirt out to make a ditch.

RM: Oh, it actually makes a ditch. How deep does it go?

FS: Well, it's pretty limited. It'd make the ditch about a foot deep; I think the blade was about 6 feet long. And on an angle it would make it 3 or 4 feet wide. But these ditches were way bigger than that. They'd been made with a team and slip scraper. All we could do with that was go down to the

bottom to knock the silt and the moss out, to clean them with this ditcher. As the moss and silt were loosened, they would be flushed down the ditch and out by the water.

CS: That was warm water too. That probably created more moss.

FS: Yes. They have big ditches out from this huge spring. It's a big spring — about 12 second feet of water. That's a lot of water.

CS: That was Floyd's big bathtub. He'd go up there and take a bath in the winter just the same as in the summer.

RM: Does the spring still flow?

FS: Oh, yes.

RM: The pumping hasn't stopped its flow?

FS: I don't think so — not that they know of yet. They keep a check on it.

RM: What are some more details of the work that went on there?

FS: Well, I had to work in the hayfield too, and when we put up the hay he had a small crew, but they ran a long time.

CS: What do you call a small crew?

FS: A small crew was 2 mowing machines, 2 buck rakes, one 14-foot hay rake and a stacker team — 6 men and the stacker. It takes 7 men for the crew.

RM: And quite a number of horses.

FS: Oh, yes. Each teamster changed horses at noon.

RM: Oh, you only worked a horse a half a day?

FS: That's right. It's hard work. The first 2 years I was there in the haying season, Floyd Sadler and I drove the mowing machines. One year I recall we mowed 70 days without a break. I mowed hay without a stop 7 days a week.

RM: That's a lot of hay.

FS: That's a lot of hay and a lot of time. The next year, I ran a buckrake in the hayfield, and the next year I stacked for him. I did all the stacking. I was trying to gain a little more experience in the various phases of ranching.

CS: And then you rode in the fall and you broke horses.

FS: Oh, I didn't break any horses for Sadlers.

CS: I thought you broke horses.

FS: One work horse is all I broke for Sadlers. I didn't break any horses there.

RM: You've broke horses though?

FS: Oh, I've broke horses.

CS: Oh, land!

RM: Tell me about breaking horses.

FS: It was a whole lot different than today because all the horses that we broke in those days were raised out on the range, and we didn't break them until they were 4 or 5 years old. So they were wild. It involved quite a little hassle to get them gentled enough that you could get on or off them or put your saddle on or whatever you needed to do. It was hard work and dangerous work. It was a different process. Now most of the horses are gentled from a baby colt so they're not afraid. Half of your problem in the early days was getting a

horse gentle enough to not be afraid of you.

RM: What are the steps you went through to take a horse off a range and break it?

FS: When we'd bring them in off the range, we'd have to cut them out away from the others and get them in a small corral. We'd catch them by the front feet and throw them down and hogtie them so they couldn't get up. Then we'd put a hackamore on them. We'd let them up and tie them up high to a solid post with quite a long rope so they couldn't hurt themselves as they hung back. We'd just leave them alone there and let them sit for a while. They'd fight that rope until they would learn to give to it. They'd hang back and fight it, but they'd eventually give to it. Then we'd untie them and work with them to get them to come to the pull of the rope.

But you couldn't get up to them; you couldn't touch them, because they were scared to death. They would kick or strike at everything that came near. Some of them would even fight you. So you had to work with them a lot. And we would throw them down quite a lot that way and hobble their feet so they'd stand, and then you'd work them gentle with a gunny sack. When they'd get so they weren't afraid you'd tie up a hind leg and work with them so they couldn't get away from you but yet you could touch them. Once they got so they knew you wouldn't harm them, then you could saddle them up to get them used to the saddle. Sometimes you'd turn them loose then and tie their head around to one side so that the horse would learn to give to that rope a little, and then to the other side. You'd work with them that way until you got them gentle enough. With the hind leg tied up, you could get on and off. They would scare and caper around a bit, but they couldn't get away. Then they'd get used to the sight of you on their back. And from there on, when you've got them so you can get on them, it was just get on and ride.

RM: Did they buck?

FS: You bet. About 90 percent of them did. And when you first rode outside, they would stampede and run because they were scared to death.

RM: You couldn't hold them?

FS: Oh, no. You didn't have that much control.

RM: You just had a hackamore on them?

FS: Well, I always used the snaffle bit to break one. But whether you used the snaffle bit or a hackamore, you didn't have much control to begin with. That would come with a little use day by day as you used them.

RM: What do you do when a horse just runs with you?

FS: The best thing to do is just let him run — although there are so many fences now. And then there were washouts. When we were starting colts, we generally liked to have someone come along with us to haze and turn them away from ditches and fences and things, if they ran.

RM: How far will a horse run?

FS: Generally a quarter of a mile to half a mile. They run out of air a little and they start to slow down. They'll go further than that, but not at full steam. It

-
- took a lot of time and a lot of hard work to break those wild horses.
- RM: How long would it take from the time you would start until the time you had them so that they were a decent horse?
- FS: I always figured it takes about 3 years to get a horse into the bridle and working well.
- RM: So it was a lot of work.
- CS: It depends on the horse, too.
- FS: But you'd be riding a horse within a day or two — you'd be on his back for short times. Then you worked along in the snaffle bit — you'd ride him in the snaffle bit for, say, a year.
- RM: Now, the snaffle bit has got a hinge on it in the middle?
- FS: Right. You'd ride him in that for a year before you'd have him handling well enough that you felt you could put him in the hackamore. Then you'd put him in the hackamore and you'd ride him for almost a year and get him to handle real well with the hackamore. By that time, he's getting more experience and working better all the time and you can control him with that. Once he handles well, then you put him into a 2-rein with a hackamore nosepiece with your bridle and a curb bit. He won't like it at first, but you can still handle him with the hackamore. So you've got him in 2 reins. Then he gradually learns to handle with the bridle and pretty soon you've got him straight in the bridle. You have to ride him in that for almost a year before you feel he's really broke.
- RM: So you have a 3-year process in breaking a horse.
- FS: That's what I think.
- CS: Well, that's the Floyd Slagowski way. He puts his heart right in it.
- FS: A lot of people do it differently. They go into it a little faster and sometimes it doesn't work. You can spoil a horse awfully easily; you can give him bad habits by trying to go too fast.
- RM: What makes a good cow horse out here?
- FS: Work.
- CS: Work and TLC. [Laughs]
- FS: A horse is an animal that has a lot of energy, a lot of stamina, and enough work to give him exercise is a lot of work. If you give him enough work to keep him in good shape he learns by habit, and the more work you give him of the right kind, showing him the right thing day after day after day, the better he gets at it.
- RM: Can you look at a colt and tell whether he's going to be better than average or anything like that?
- FS: Not necessarily. Definitely you want a horse with good conformation.
- RM: Why?
- FS: Because they are more active and they can handle themselves better. Their legs are straight.
- RM: What exactly is good conformation?
- FS: I don't know how to describe good conformation. You want straight legs

and you want them to be deep through the girth. The first thing you look at in a horse is his feet. If a horse has got good feet, you can look on from there. If he hasn't got good feet, you might as well just discard him.

RM: What do good feet look like?

FS: They're good solid hooves. They're not split, not broke, they're straight. And he can carry himself. You want good feet, good straight legs. You want a fairly short back but you want a long sloping hip—muscular. You look for the muscle.

CS: A quarter horse, in other words.

FS: You like a long neck—trim, slender, not too coarse, and you want a nice, fine head that's wide between the eyes and short between the eyes and the muzzle—a smooth head and neck that blend into his body smoothly. You take horses of that kind, and a bigger percentage of them are good. But you can get a perfect conformation and have a horse that doesn't amount to a great lot.

RM: What about personality and heart and that kind of thing?

FS: They're all different—as different as humans are. A person who breaks lots of horses, rides lots of horses, handles lots of horses, will find that all horses are different. You have to overlook a lot of their little faults and pick out the good quality and build on that.

RM: What do you look for in personality to make a good one?

FS: You like a horse that's alert and sensitive and responds to your rein—a horse with a light mouth.

RM: What does a light mouth mean?

FS: That you don't have to pull hard. When you touch the rein or if you touch him with a foot, you want him to respond immediately. A lot of that is developed and a lot of it is in the horse. Some horses are just logy and you don't want that response.

CS: You want their trust too. [That has to do with] the way you behave with them. He has one now that he's having a little problem with. Boy, that horse has got a beautiful personality. I love it. He loves me too. I walk down there and he always comes and nuzzles me around. And next thing I know, he pulls my hair net off. [Laughs]

FS: But your horses are as different as people.

RM: Does a cowman develop a relationship with his horse, so to speak?

CS: Oh, yes, you trust them.

FS: Yes. I think you find that more in people who do all their work on only one horse. They become a little closer to that horse and depend on him a little more. Years ago when I was riding with outfits, we had from 8 to 10 or 12 head of horses in our string. You rode those different horses—maybe you changed at noon. And you had a lot of different horses that you rode. If you went from one outfit to another, you got a whole new bunch of horses.

RM: Would there be one horse you would prefer? "Oh, boy, I'm going to be riding him this afternoon," rather than, "Oh, god, I got old so-and-so."

-
- FS: [Laughter] You're right. You have certain horses that you use for certain jobs because some are better. You have some horses that you can trust that do your work a lot better than others. You have some horses that you have a pretty hard time getting your work done on. You learn the particular work that you have for that day and you choose the horse that you can do that on.
- CS: Yes, or you choose the one that has the most miles in him and will stand up under it. I've heard Floyd say that.
- FS: Yes. And some horses have more endurance than others. Now, like that trip that I told you I made to Jiggs . . . You have a 3-day ride, one day right after the other of long rides like that, it tires him out. He's got to be tough.
- RM: You couldn't do that on just any horse, then.
- FS: No. That 55-mile ride had snow, and mud under the snow. That's hard.
- CS: The reason he knows so much about hoofs is that he learned to be a farrier in the army.
- RM: Oh, so you went into the army after you were down here.
- FS: [Laughs] When I worked for Sadlers there we came through Pine Valley every fall taking the cattle to Palisade to put them on the railroad. When they sold cattle in the fall then, they didn't come with trucks to get them. You got what you had for sale and drove them to the railroad and put them on the railroad cars and the buyer took them wherever he wanted them to go — to his feedlot. So it was kind of a hard deal.
- Those cattle down there were more or less wild and when you brought them into the railroad, they had never seen more water than that little spring over there or a mudhole to drink out of. They didn't know about crossing water. They wouldn't cross a bridge — they'd never been driven across a bridge. When you peeked over that hill to Palisade and heard the train whistle down that canyon and it echoed up and down that canyon, they just milled and were scared to death. And your horses were scared of that too. We would drive the cattle into a ranch where all the ranchers had got together and put a set of scales. They all weighed at the old Blair Ranch. Then it was a mile from there into the stockyards at Palisade.
- We'd take those wild cattle, and after we got them weighed, we had to go down and cross the river. Well, the cows wouldn't cross the bridge nor would they ford the river — we had a hard time getting them to ford it. Of course at that time of the year, the river was low and that was our best bet. So we'd have to force them to cross the river (it was only about belly deep). And then when we crossed the river, we crossed the narrow gauge E&N [Eureka Nevada Railroad] tracks, and we'd gone over both tunnels. We crossed in and were on the north side of the tracks then. We had to cross back over the Southern Pacific tracks, go down between the E&N tracks and the Southern Pacific tracks about a quarter of mile to the stockyards. And at that time there were probably 30 or 40 people in Palisade. And the dogs were barking and the trains were whistling up and down the canyon and I tell you, it was a nightmare getting those cattle into those stockyards before

a train came along and scared them back up over the hills. It was one of the worst places I ever found to put cattle into the stockyards to ship them off the ranch. So that was one of the problems we had. If we had 150 or 200 head of cattle, 4 men could handle them. Five hundred head would have to be taken in 3 drives to avoid greater problems.

CHAPTER FOUR

- CS: You say, Floyd, that it was very hard to corral those wild horses.
- FS: Oh, yes. It was a lot harder than cattle.
- RM: I've been told that in the early days here they kept the cattle on the range all year. Down south of Austin, down toward Tonopah, they keep them on the range all year, but here you feed them in the winter now. Could you discuss that?
- FS: In this country the winters are severe enough that they have to feed hay through about 3 to 4 months of the winter. The Taylor Grazing Act was formed in 1934 and, after that time, all the ranchers in this country had to have a permit to run cattle out on the range. They turned the cattle out in the spring and used the outside range; then they had to be gathered in. In Pine Valley, in the fall of the year, we would start at the southern end down at the old Plumber place.
- RM: How far would that be south of here?
- FS: That's 8 miles. (If you go beyond that there are other ranches down there, but they never were involved with the roundup on this end.) Right after haying time, they would all get their saddle horses in, get the shoes on them, and start to gather the cattle that were sold for beef — the steers and heifers and the dry cows. And each rancher from Palisade up to here would send a representative — one man — to ride with the group. When they rode out of Plumbers' ranch, Plumber would be the boss. He would spread the men out on the rides and he would be the boss of the riders in that area for about 4 days' ride out of there. And they would gather all the cattle they could. We'd ride out and hold roundups high in the mountains and gather the steers and anything for beef. When we brought the beef that had been sold in, we'd leave the others out there. The rancher [whose ranch we were working out of] kept his cattle there and we'd move the rest of the cattle and the horses to the next ranch — say here. We'd ride about 3 days out of here. Then we'd move the cattle and the horses and strays onto the next ranch and ride out of there, and so on all the way down the valley. Each rancher would take over as boss at his ranch. It would take about 30 days to ride the valley, and by then everyone would have their beef in on good pasture, all but a few. Then each rancher would ride to gather in any little stragglers that we had missed and get their beef prepared and ready to take to the railroad. Everyone had to drive to the railroad then and ship their beef.
- CS: Remember, the cooks were cooking for 15 to 20 cowboys.
- FS: Yes, the women at each ranch there would cook for the crews. And of course when you had that many and each man had 5 to 8 head of saddle horses, you had quite a cavvy to wrangle each morning. And each of the cowboys would take a turn wrangling these horses in to use in the morning for each to catch his horse. After the beef was gathered and shipped in about the first of November, we would start the ride to gather everything. They'd gather all

the cattle off of the range and bring them into the fields and hold them on their meadow pasture until they had to start feeding. Then in the winter months they would feed until spring and when spring came and the grass started, they'd go back to range again.

RM: How far would you go?

FS: In this valley we would ride as far as the crest of the range. There were also cattle coming into this valley from Cortez Valley.

CS: Yes, that's west. They call it Crescent Valley now.

FS: They would drift over into this valley so they would send a couple of representatives from the ranches over there to gather those cattle. There would also be cattle coming from Jiggs, that area in Mound Valley, over into this valley, and they would send 2 or 3 or 4 representatives. So they would ride with us here and, when we finished, they would take their cattle and go back home.

RM: Now, Mound Valley is the next valley to the east?

FS: Yes.

RM: And where is the town of Cortez?

FS: The old mine was right on the west side of Mount Tenabo, just on the west slope of it. The old town was very near to the Eureka and Lander county line.

RM: What is this range to the west called?

FS: That's the Cortez Range.

RM: Describe Pine Valley. Where does it begin and where does it end and what does it consist of?

FS: I would have to call Pine Valley all the drainage of Pine Creek. Now they call this up here on Henderson Creek Garden Valley. They used to call that other one over there Denay [sounds like Daney] Valley; it's part of the drainage. They are just mini-valleys, you might say, within Pine Valley.

RM: I see. And Pine Creek runs north and drains into the Humboldt?

FS: Right. Pine Creek starts up here at the little pass to the south of Horse Creek off of Mount Tenabo. Horse Creek is the main tributary off the head of it. Garden Creek and Denay Creek run into it, but they come in from the south. Pine Creek runs a little bit north of east until it comes to Blackburn. There's a big bend in the creek there that goes north. Then it goes north to the Green Springs down there. And at Green Springs it turns almost due west into that little narrow canyon and it makes a circle to the north and then another circle back to the west. That's almost a little "S" shape through Pine Creek Canyon. And that's just a mile from where it empties into the Humboldt.

RM: Does Pine Creek run all year?

FS: Oh, yes.

RM: And how about the tributaries?

FS: Most of the tributaries dry up, but not our creek. Hot Creek here runs constantly. All of the tributaries from the south eventually dry before they get here. This is the first live water that runs all the time. Then Trout Creek runs

the year round, and Padelford Creek runs quite well.

CS: But not all the year round.

FS: No, not all year. Hot Creek and Trout Creek make most of the hay meadows down through here. And there's Big Springs in the bottom down here — Big Springs at the Stone house.

RM: Where are those big springs? What's feeding them, I wonder?

FS: In the old Rand place down there and the Stone house . . . years ago they used to call that Stone house the tule lands. And there are a lot of tules there, but there are sump holes — springs that come up — and they're deep. I don't think anyone knows the source, really.

RM: Could you talk a little bit about what the cattle feed on when they're out on the range?

FS: Well, so many people who travel through on the highway think that this is a very desolate area — that there is nothing. But when you get away from the highways, away from main travel route, and go back through these hills, you find a lot of good grass and a lot of springs, especially in this northeastern part of the state. And there are a variety of grasses. I'm not well enough informed to tell you just all of the types of grasses, but there are many different native grasses that are good and a good strong feed. This is typical and good livestock country — livestock do very well here.

The old cow buyers years ago used to come in here to buy these dry cows because of the hard fat they had on them — they slaughtered out better. It was far better than the cattle they could get in California that were on lush-appearing grass. They liked them much better because this feed is strong. It's a better fat.

RM: I wonder why that is.

FS: It's the higher altitude; it's stressed a little more. And the more stress it has to [undergo] to get its growth, the better quality it seems to be.

RM: Is that right?

FS: That's what I find. On a good rainy year, when we have more rainfall than normal, the grass will be taller.

RM: How tall will it get?

FS: Oh, up to 1 or 2 feet. But it's not as good a quality sometimes as it is when it's down at about 8 inches. The cattle will be fatter and stronger. And the ranchers have known that all through the years. This is good stock country. It is not what I call farming country, because you're limited on what crops you can grow. You grow hay for the cattle and that's about the limit.

RM: Why are you limited on the others?

FS: The seasons are too short; too much frost.

RM: What is your growing season here?

FS: From about the middle of June to the 1st of September.

RM: So you can't really have a garden here?

CS: Oh, yes. We have a garden. This year, remember, spring was so early. We never plant spuds, squash, beans or corn before the 10th of June because

- you're going to get that frost in June, usually. But this year we went ahead; we got with the program. We got stung, too.
- FS: Yes. [Laughs]
- CS: We had to replant the corn and the squash and the beans. The spuds survived somewhat, but they're pretty sorry — kind of anemic looking. But we garden. We have a big garden all over up here.
- FS: In some of the more protected areas back in these canyons they don't get that much frost, and some of them grow some fruit and a few other things. But overall, it is livestock country.
- RM: How many cuttings of hay do you get?
- FS: We get 2 cuttings of alfalfa and one of native hay.
- RM: And about how many tons of alfalfa do you get to the acre here, would you say?
- FS: I don't really know.
- RM: Would you get less than Diamond Valley or would it be about the same?
- FS: I think a little less, because they let the hay mature a little more here and they figure on 2 crops. Over there they cut it a little early but they figure on 3 crops. They might get a little better production per crop; I don't know.
- RM: I'm fascinated by the stressed plant being more nutritious than the one that isn't. Would stressed alfalfa be better?
- FS: I think that's why the quality of alfalfa in Diamond Valley is as good as it is — the high elevation and the cooler temperatures add a little stress.
- RM: So Diamond Valley has good quality hay?
- FS: They have top quality hay there.
- RM: And yours would be as good here?
- FS: Oh, yes.
- RM: Are most of the people here in alfalfa or grass?
- FS: Well, the ranchers here mainly have grass. Although I shouldn't say native, because it's been planted in timothy and redtop and various grasses.
- RM: But you only get one cutting of it?
- FS: That's right.
- RM: When they originally started planting hay, did they have to do a lot of working of the land to get it level and everything, or was it in pretty good shape to begin with?
- FS: Years ago I'm sure that it was rough and had to be worked some. The old-timers talk about all of the wonderful rye grass that was in the bottom lands here along these creeks. And it's been written in some history how wonderful it was then and the good grass and everything. But I think they didn't take enough into consideration. I fully believe that the rye grass was that good through the bottom lands and up through here. But now they say in their writings that it has deteriorated throughout the years, and I don't believe that is true, because they've irrigated it. If you over-irrigate rye grass, it will die out. They'd give it too much water and it would die out, but they've gone in and plowed this land up and leveled it and planted timothy

and redtop and a better quality of hay. So I think the overall bottom land through here which they said is deteriorated is actually better, because of the better quality feed.

RM: You mean, it's producing more feed than it was originally?

FS: Right, it produces better and more.

RM: Are there any grasses that the cows do better on?

FS: Oh, sure. There are some that are more palatable and that they eat better because they like it better. And there are some that are better quality that they do better on.

RM: Are different areas known for one type of grass versus another?

FS: Oh, yes. In different areas, different types grow better than other ones. But it's all good. And this country is well watered, if the water is taken care of right.

RM: There's enough water for everybody?

FS: Well, for stock water. I'm talking about stock water. All along in these hills there are lots of little springs.

CS: Well, it's having its problems with the drought right now. But the other day when Floyd was up in the hills, he said actually that old dried feed is there and it's good; it's water that's a little problem.

FS: People in the BLM come out here and look out through and see this short, dry feed, and they think the cattle will starve to death. But they just look at that little old dry feed that they can see from the road and they don't look at the cows. And the cattle are fat on this dry feed. As long as they can get water, they're in good shape. They have good flesh and they're contented and doing real well healthwise. That's a better way to measure feed and its quality.

CS: But the water's getting to be a little problem on the range.

FS: Yes, but not too bad in this area right here.

RM: You mean for the water for the cows?

FS: Yes, stock water.

RM: Could you talk about how things were in the days of open range when the Taylor Grazing Act came in '34? The BLM just is gradually tightening its grip, isn't it?

FS: Yes. They've built up throughout the years and they've gradually got a bigger staff in there. And they come out through here and look the country over a little more and check it. One of the big changes that I see in this particular area is that years ago, when I first came here in the late '30s and early '40s, there were lots of sheep in this country. And there were more cattle than there should have been. It was overstocked.

RM: It was overgrazed?

FS: I'm sure it was overgrazed. When the BLM came with the old Taylor Grazing Act, there were a lot of tramp sheepmen in the country. What I mean by tramp sheepmen — the sheepmen here would bring in a fellow from the old country and have him herd sheep and he'd take his wages in sheep. Pretty

soon he'd have a band, but he wouldn't have any base property, and he would just go from place to place. He'd winter in the south and come north in the summer, and just trail where he wanted to. And there was quite a number of them. One of the [Taylor Grazing Act] regulations was that people should have base property in order to have a range permit, so they stopped all of the tramp sheepmen.

Then they limited each ranch's range according to the amount of hay it could produce. If he had 1000 head of cows in the winter months, then he could develop range for 1000 head out on the range. That's the way they determined their [allotments].

So that brought things more into order. You have to give the BLM credit for that. I don't give them a lot of credit [laughter], but for that I will. You can't take away what's right. So that helped the range quite a bit.

Then in the early days here, the sheep used to come in in the spring; they'd shear them just before they'd come in. And in the spring months, in early April, you get a lot of blizzards and cold winds and they'd be sheared. Well, those sheep would get cold. And in those blizzards, they would just run — and they'd turn them back. They'd go one way and then turn them back; they'd have to herd them. So they were in bunches running back and forth. And in lambing time, they'd have a terrible time controlling them in these storms. They tromped more feed than they ate — they tromped the early feed so badly that they hurt it.

They tried to keep the coyote population down, but one spring up here the Sallaberrys had sheep running up on this range. They had a government trapper with them in the spring to trap coyotes and hunt dens and try to keep the coyotes out of their lambs, but the coyotes took so many of their lambs that they told me they lost nearly 50 percent of their lambs one year. Well, with the coyotes being that bad and various things, they sold their sheep and changed to cattle, and there were a number of other people who also sold their sheep and changed to cattle.

RM: What time frame are we talking about here?

FS: We're talking about the mid and late '50s. As we got away from that early tromping by the sheep in the spring, and as the cattle numbers went down a little bit, that helped the range; and the range has increased by leaps and bounds. We also had better control on the waters and things — we did that ourselves, more or less. The range is far better now than I've ever seen it. They try to tell you, some of them, that the range is decreasing, but that's not right. I've watched it over a 50-year period of time and I've seen a big increase in the feed — everything is just in better shape.

RM: How do you see the BLM's role in maintenance of the range now?

FS: The BLM's role in it is not favorable. They have a big staff over here at Elko and also at Battle Mountain, but they have young people who have gone through range classes in college. Well, those young people are all taught one principle, one thing, one way. And they try to base their knowledge on what

they've been taught; their knowledge is not based on common sense. And they won't accept the knowledge of the ranchers who have been here for many, many years and seen these changes.

RM: What is the base of the knowledge that these young college guys are trying to put out?

FS: They talk about range improvement and what they've done, but the only range improvement they did was to plant some crested wheat fields around the various countries. That has increased the feed no end, and it was a good project. One of the things that I have wanted them to do for years and years was improve water. And of course, I'm just as glad they didn't now, but they wouldn't do that. Now, that's one thing we do individually here that has improved the range a lot — we have developed springs for stock water and we have that water taken care of so it's in troughs and it's good clean water for them to drink.

CS: But they want to intervene in that.

FS: The BLM is trying very hard to get the water away from the state, which shouldn't be done. I don't like that.

RM: Oh. The state controls the water now, don't they?

FS: Yes. And they should. I hope it stays that way. Now the BLM works with the Wildlife Service and they're allowing them to ship in antelope, elk and everything. They're putting on more of this for the sportsman and they're trying to cut us back on AUMs [animal unit months] to accommodate the game animals. Well, that's a wrong principle. And they've let the environmentalists, to a certain point, influence them in the notion that the cattle are harming the range. And we don't believe that; we can prove otherwise.

CS: Tell him about the riparian situation.

FS: They're trying to fence off the creeks for one thing or another because they think the stock are doing so much damage to it. Well, that's a costly program that's not worth the effort. I feel that we people who are using this range have bought this range with our money. It's a part of the ranch, but they're trying to take us off of this. And their principles are all wrong. Every rancher in this country, I would say, is trying to better the range, because we've got sons and grandsons coming up. We're not trying to ruin it. We try to take care of it. Of course, you're going to have a percentage — probably 10 percent of those ranchers could care less and they're greedy and they'll take off everything they can get, and they abuse their privileges. But I'm talking about the majority, probably 90 percent, who take better care of the range and the water and the grass and everything else than they can out of that BLM office.

CHAPTER FIVE

- FS: For instance, these young people that they bring into the BLM to administer will come out here to check the riparian areas and whatnot. They don't want the cows grazing along these creeks because they're afraid all the bugs and things along the creek will die. Anyhow, they send these people out into the field here. They've had a little schooling and they maybe spend an hour to a half a day out here on one of these areas, and they'll say that it's deteriorating, it's going to pot, they're overusing it. They have nothing to compare it with — no time limit to compare it to. We, out here, who have lived here for 50 years, have a better comparison for it. We know what we're talking about, but they won't accept this. Instead of being public servants, they try, and sometimes do, dictate their erroneous ways.
- RM: How do you see the outcome of this?
- FS: Oh, I wish I knew.
- RM: Some people I've talked to say that this is going to be the end of ranching, and that that's the real intent of the BLM.
- CS: Well, they'd better not get to thinking that way or it will be.
- FS: That is the real intent, and I do believe that they're going to ruin the ranching industry, almost, before they come to their senses and have to change. I do believe that they will in time come back. Livestock raising has been in effect since the beginning of man, and it has always been a good industry. If you work at it right, livestock will take care of you as well as you take care of it. It always has throughout the years. I think we're going to have some bad times, some ups and downs and hard knocks here, but I think we'll weather the storm.
- RM: One of the things I think the people in the BLM don't consider is the fact that they're also dealing with a way of life out here which is worth preserving too. It's as much a part of the environment out here as some of the plants and so on.
- CS: Yes, and a lot of these good ranches are changing hands, getting into the hands of some fellow who's loaded with money but doesn't have that much experience or doesn't care about the area. They're taking them over and those ranches are just going right downhill. You ought to see that ranch where Floyd started up — Sadler Ranch.
- RM: Is that right?
- FS: Oh, yes. It's terrible. This one fellow has bought ranches all over the country, and he just put a caretaker there. The caretaker takes care of his cattle and the things around there, but he's limited and he doesn't care. And the ranch property itself has gone down.
- CS: The people who are on there right now are some good conscientious people, but they're still just working.
- FS: They don't care.
- RM: You're saying that the family rancher here has a long-term investment in the

area, whereas the big guy doesn't have an attachment to the land.

FS: Oh, definitely.

CS: I don't mean to snuff out somebody's lights so ours will burn brighter. But we had a holding down here, my grandfather's old ranch. When we were disposing of it, we had a chance to sell it to some Arabian. We could have, but Floyd said, "No way." We're preserving our friendships in this valley and their interest in livestock, and you'd better sell to somebody like that. So we did. We had a chance to sell to Dameles, who in turn sold to Tomeras. This is rancher to rancher to rancher, so therefore the ranch is upgraded.

RM: Are the ranches hard to sell when a person wants to?

FS: Not really.

CS: We could have sold for more.

FS: You talk about the family ranches, and I want to say a thing or two about that. It's been proven throughout all of the years that your good strong family unit, and your family operation, is the backbone of any country.

RM: That's right.

FS: When it fails, everything falls apart. And it's the same way with the ranches. The family takes care of the family ranch for a future purpose as well.

RM: Yes. He also takes care of it because he loves it.

FS: That's right.

CS: It's part of your life. You're part of it and it's part of you.

FS: I know nothing about city life. I've never lived in a city. [Laughter] I have no idea . . .

CS: You know enough about it to know that you don't want to be there. [Laughs]

FS: I'd be completely lost. If I didn't have this, I wouldn't know where to go and what to do. And there are other people like me — it's just what you like.

CS: It's the same way with our boys; they've stayed right with it. They could have gone and gotten the big money in the mines, but money wasn't the main purpose. They like their family life. And thankfully they're living good family lives, raising their kids here. They have a different outlook on things.

RM: That's great. Tell me about the different breeds of cows. Are there any differences in terms of how well they thrive or in their qualities or anything else?

FS: That's an individual preference, of course. But years ago, when I first came into this country, I would say 90 percent of the cattle were the Hereford breed. And there were at that time a lot of Shorthorn cross in them.

RM: Why were they crossing into Shorthorn then?

FS: That, again, was an individual preference. I think they thought they got a little bigger cattle and that they felt they got cows that milked better and raised a little bigger calf. That was the purpose of that cross. And some people liked them real well. I never liked the Shorthorn cross with the Hereford, because those old cows always look like they're ready to die. They're poor and scrawny. They raise a beautiful calf, but the cow herself is always

poor, so I never cared for them. I think we started in this valley probably first of all to crossbreed, and I started to crossbreed with Angus in my first calf heifers, because you get a better survival of your calves.

RM: You breed the Angus bull to the first calf heifer?

FS: Right. And that cross has proven to be one of the best feeders in the feedlots, and all of the buyers like them. They've done real well for us. And we've stopped with just the one cross. Many of the other people started to crossbreed, and they've picked up with these new exotic breeds. And they never stopped with one breeding. A fellow at [Reno], Bill Barrens, was the cattle specialist at the university. He had a meeting up here one time, and I asked him, "Now, I've crossed with the Angus, but I've got some heifer calves that I'm keeping out of that cross." And I said, "What do I do now?" He said, "Go to a third breed." Well, I didn't believe that was right and I didn't do it. Many of the other people did — they went to a third breed and a fourth breed and a fifth breed. I didn't like that idea and I never did do it. And I'm glad I didn't, because I've seen so many of the others go through a third and a fourth and a fifth breed, and they're mixed up to where they're just more or less mongrelized. And they're not a good-type cattle. Now they're trying to get back to a better cross. But it's all individual feeling on that.

The original cattle in here were Longhorn cattle. This ranch we've got down here was the first ranch developed in this valley.

RM: Which ranch is that?

FS: Right down across the road. That was the old original Cross Ranch. And that was their brand — a cross. It was established by Lewis Bradley, the governor of the state. He established that ranch and brought Longhorn cattle in there in 1864. He was the first cattle rancher in this country. He developed ranches in Jiggs and the Mary River country over there; he had cattle all over. He had a huge outfit. And they tell me he brought in some of the first Shorthorn cattle from the East to upbreed them.

RM: When would that be — the 1870s or '80s?

FS: That would have probably been in the mid-'70s. At about that time some of the other ranchers began to ship in a few Herefords, and they knew that a better quality cattle was needed. So it was along about the 1870s when they brought in the first Herefords.

RM: Why did they know that a better quality of cow was needed?

FS: They were furnishing beef to these mines around this country and those old Longhorn cattle were tough. They could stand this country all right, but those steers didn't mature till they were 8 or 9 years old.

RM: Is that right?

FS: Yes. A yearling Longhorn wouldn't be as big as a weaner calf. It took those critters forever to mature. And that's what they were selling for beef here. And they knew that these others would mature faster. And the Longhorn was tough meat.

-
- RM: Were they tough because they were older when they were butchered, or just because they were naturally tougher?
- FS: I think it was a variety of things. They were a thin, skinny cow with stringy meat, and they were older and whatnot. I think people wanted a little better beef.
- RM: That's really interesting. So the bottom line was that they could make more money with another breed here besides the Longhorns.
- FS: They felt they could, but when they brought those others in and then those hard winters hit, they lost more of them too. They weren't as hardy — they couldn't stand the hard winters and rustle as well. So you had other problems.
- RM: So it was a tradeoff. Somebody told me that the winter of 1890 was really bad.
- FS: Eighteen eighty-nine and '90 killed a lot of cattle.
- RM: Did it kill the Longhorns too?
- FS: Yes, it killed a lot of them too. But these other cattle are not as hardy and it killed more of them. And they weren't putting up hay yet.
- RM: And is it true that 1890 was when they decided they should be putting up the hay?
- FS: That's when they started in this country, although they put up a little hay before that throughout the year. But it was just enough for their saddle horses; they were using a lot of saddle horses. They had to ride them in this winter-time to watch these cattle.
- RM: So 1890 was kind of a watershed year here in terms of switching from a little bit of hay to a lot of emphasis on hay.
- FS: After that winter, they brought in machinery and started to irrigate and put up hay.
- RM: And that became a really major focus of the whole work, didn't it? Because obviously there's a lot of work in putting up all that hay.
- FS: Yes. However, in this valley they were putting up hay down here as early as 1870 on the Cross Ranch and on the old Hay Ranch and down through the valley. All of these ranches were putting up hay in the early '70s because of the freight teams that were going through here. They'd feed those freight teams, and they were putting up hay for them, not for the cattle; the cattle ran on the range.
- RM: The freight teams were going to Eureka.
- FS: Right; and Palisade. It's a little hard to believe, and hard to fathom in the mind, that they used the freight hauled out of Palisade to Mineral Hill to build a town of 500 people and they built [Eureka] from 1870 to '75 to 6000 or 7000 people. And that was before the railroad. All the material to build those towns and develop those mines and all came out of Palisade.
- RM: It came down this valley?
- FS: By freight team. Can you imagine how many freight wagons and teams that took?

-
- RM: Incredible. What kind of animals were they using?
- FS: They used a lot of bull teams to start with. Then after Pritchard started his freight out of there, he shipped in a lot of mules from Missouri and he used mostly mules.
- RM: Why were they initially using oxen?
- FS: The oxen's a good freight animal. They were tougher, they were slower, but they would pull a heavier load. They maintained better than horses did on a long hard pull, and especially through mud; they could handle the mud and the slow going better with the heavier load than horses could. Now, I don't know how they rested bull teams, but a cow has to have time to eat and chew her cud and rest. How they managed that I don't know, but those old things maintained better, they said, than horses did.
- RM: Would they be able to chew their cud while they were pulling?
- FS: Not too easily. They generally have to lie and rest to do that. So it was always a mystery to me just how they maintained.
- RM: What were the advantages of mules in hauling freight?
- FS: Mules could live on scantier rations than the horse, and they're tough. They do a lot of hard work. There's quite a difference between your mule team and your horse team. Joe Flynn freighted a lot with teams, and he told me that a mule team can lug any load they'll start. If they've got a heavy load and they can start it, they can just keep right on walking. They can maintain and keep going where a horse can't. The horse will start a lot heavier load than he can lug. And you have to stop and rest a horse team more often.
- RM: Oh. But if a mule can start it off, you don't have to stop and rest him?
- FS: That's what he claimed. Once they're broke in right and know how to take care of themselves, they will lug along with a load that they can start — that is, in normal conditions.
- RM: So a horse has got more torque, I guess, on the initial pull?
- FS: Yes. They can start a heavier load, but they can't maintain it.
- RM: Where do the ox fit into that?
- FS: An old ox team is just plain tough. When they lean into a load, it's going to move. [Laughs] Especially in mud. They can be in mud clear to their knee joints and still just keep a-plugging along, where a horse will flounder and quit. A mule won't hardly go into it, but an old ox team just keeps going on.
- CS: Maybe that's what they mean when they say dumber than an ox team. [Laughs]
- FS: I don't know about that — he didn't know about that.
- RM: You've mentioned the name Joe Flynn. Who was that?
- FS: Old Joe Flynn was Charlene's mother's cousin. He was born and raised here in Mineral Hill. He was a great guy. He finally had a ranch up here in his later years, but in his younger days he freighted out of Mineral Hill to the railroad, and he freighted over from Buckhorn to Blackburn and over out of Bullion down to the Padelford Ranch. So he savvied freight teams.
- RM: Was he using mules?

FS: No, he used horses. The old freight company that came into Palisade owned by William Pritchard had the biggest number of freight teams of any in the state — or in the whole country, as far as that's concerned. They figured that when he got started out of Palisade he had over 500 wagons and over 2000 head of work animals.

RM: Really? That was a big operation.

FS: That's right. And he was the one who built the railroad grade from Palisade to Alpha.

RM: Oh. And there must have been other freighters as well?

FS: Yes, there were many individual teamsters. But he was one big company — he freighted from Eureka to Hamilton and Pioche and from Eureka to Belmont, and he carried on from there. But think of hauling all the food and the clothing and the material to build those stores and mills and mines and everything; everything was hauled by freight team from Palisade to Eureka. They said there was a constant string of dust down this valley both ways, hauling the ore back and so on.

[After reviewing this manuscript, I realized the highly technical material on freight teams needed further elaboration. I have provided an addendum for the reader who is interested in this topic; it begins on page 95.]

RM: How large were the teams?

FS: They used from 12 to 20. Back in the Midwest, in the farming country, they worked bigger teams than that on some of the combines and things — you maybe had 40 head. But they had them as many as 10 animals wide and only 4 long. Out here in this brush country, in the rough terrain, all they had was just a little 2-track wagon road, so they had to string them out. It required a good skinner to handle them.

RM: And they were pulling 2 wagons, weren't they?

FS: Oh, they pulled 2 and 3 wagons, with the commissary wagon behind that. If they came to a right steep grade, they had to drop their wagons and take one wagon up and take the team back and bring another wagon up; it was slow. Or if it was muddy and bad and they got stuck in the mud, they had to drop all but one wagon.

RM: Do you know anything about the skinner's skills? I don't know how a person could handle a 20-head team! [Laughter]

FS: I know how they hooked them up and how they drove them. Say on the wagon of a 20-mule team, they used a big stout team for the wheel team. That was their best team — one that could hold the load a little without using the brake.

RM: What do you mean by hold the load a little?

FS: Well, if he happened to go down a little downgrade, they could hold back some on it. Of course they used a brake, but if it was just a little, the team could handle that. So they used the big team there.

And the skinner rode the left or near wheeler. (They called them the wheelers.) He had a saddle on it and he rode him. Then immediately ahead of

them were what they called the pointers. They were hooked right to the tongue of the wagon. Their stretchers were hooked right to the end of the tongue. The wheelers didn't guide the wagon, but the pointers did. When these pointers turned, they pulled the tongue of the wagon. The tongue of the wagon was rigid. The wheelers didn't have to hold that up — it was built rigid. It had to be rigid and held itself up because there was too much weight — it would make sores on their neck and bother them.

So the pointers guided the wagon, and immediately ahead of them were the swing teams. Right in the lead were what they called the leaders — the first ones, way out on lead. All in between them and the point team were swing teams, as they called them. And they all worked with just a cross-check to hold them from spreading apart.

The wheelers had lines on them — cross-checks where the skinner could drive them — hold them or turn them or whatever he needed to do. He had a long jerk line that went right up along those horses, right through the high ring in the hame on the left side of every left-hand animal to the left bit ring of the left leader. And they had cross-checks on the leaders. He had a check from his bridle bit back to the lower hame ring on the off horse. And from his hame ring to the off leader, it went by and unhooked to the outside, the right ring on his bit that didn't hook to the right. He also had one on the left one, but he had a jockey stick that worked on the hame ring to that off ring. When the skinner wanted to turn to the left, he gave a command of "Ha." That meant left. And he would pull on this jerk line, and that would pull on the left bit of this horse, and as he turned the check rein over here would pull the left horse with him and they would turn. And if he wanted to go to the right, he'd give a jerk on that jerk line and that horse would throw his head up and that would pull on this check and turn him to the right. And he'd call "Gee," and as he threw his head and hit that check rein, it would turn him to the right. As he turned to the right, that jockey stick would push the other horse to the right and they'd turn to the right. Now, these horses, as they worked, would follow the roads. They learned to follow that road all the time, so they didn't have to turn them that much.

But the road was crooked and if they had a sharp turn to make, those leaders would come around that turn and when they did that, they'd pull a long chain that would pull across. When it would hit the leg on that next swing team horse or mule, he would jump over the chain and pull to the outside. And then when they came around, he'd be pulling to the outside, pulling that chain. The chain would swing back and hit the next one, and he would jump that chain. All these swing teams would jump that chain and they would pull out to keep the chain in a half circle so that they wouldn't pull the wagon off the road. So all of them, clear back to the pointers, would jump over that on a sharp turn and they'd be pulling out. And they were just tied with cross-checks to hold them together; nobody was doing anything with them. They just jumped that chain. Then as the leaders would come

-
- out straight and that chain would crowd him, he'd jump back over it.
- RM: How high off the ground was the chain?
- FS: About a foot off the ground.
- RM: That's very impressive.
- FS: It was a quite an art for a skinner to do that. And he had a swamper to help him with all those horses. It was nothing but hard work.
- RM: Did they unharness them at night?
- FS: Oh, yes. They unharnessed them and turned them loose to graze. Now, all of these pointers and swing teams and the leaders had light harnesses. All they had was a collar and the tugs and they had a back band that came back to a crouper, and they had lazy straps that come off the side and carried their tugs so they didn't step over the tugs. It was just a light harness; they had no breast straps or holdback straps or anything. All they were doing was pulling. Now, your back team had pull straps that they hooked to the neck yolk so they could hold back on them, britching on their harness and the whole works.
- CS: You say he had a saddle on that horse.
- FS: Yes. They had a light saddle that they put on.
- CS: Even though they had the harness on?
- FS: Yes, they had their harness rigged . . . well, they wouldn't ride bareback, as many miles as those guys rode. [Laughs]
- RM: How many miles were they making a day?
- FS: That varied, depending on the terrain and the weather and the load and country and everything.
- RM: What would be a good day?
- FS: Generally I think a team with a heavy load would make around 20 to 25 miles.
- RM: And how long of a day was that?
- FS: That'd be pretty long day — about 10 hours. They had to stop at noon and let the horses rest a little and water them. They had to have their rest.

CHAPTER SIX

RM: How did you learn so much about this? Did you ever drive teams, or was it through talking to old-timers?

FS: I drove a lot of teams but I've talked to a lot of old-timers and I've read a lot. With a long team, they would be pulling 3 heavy wagons, with the commissary wagon behind with their horse feed and their own feed and their beds and all of that. They had to have a light wagon for that, you see.

The wagons had to be coupled right, too. You had that long chain between all of the horses clear back to the wagon. But between the wagons, you had a coupling — they had a chain that came back past the tongue to the horses, and then from the back of that axle it hooked to a link in there. The front of the axle was hooked there and the back of it hooked here. All this pulled from the chain and the axles of your wagons, so there'd be a pull all through there. Then from there back they had a rod back to the back of the wagon — what they called a fingerlink hook. That hooked into a chain under the tongue of the trail wagon and the trail wagon had a sharp tongue, but it had a clevis on the end of that tongue and it hooked onto a horn on the reach of the lead wagon — just a loop that hooked over it. And this horn was about 18 inches long. So this thing that hooked over it hooked into your chain down under here and pulled the load of that wagon by the chain underneath. But it would slide up on the horn when they stopped.

They'd bring their team to a stop on a slight downgrade if they could, or if they were going upgrade, they'd lock the hind brake and then your lead wagons would roll back. But this clevis on the hookup would slide up on this horn on each wagon and then when your team started, they only had one wagon to start. They'd start that wagon and it would get to rolling before this one came tight. Then they'd start the second wagon. That slack would give them a chance to just start one wagon at a time. Once they got rolling, they could keep going.

RM: Yes. They couldn't start the whole thing as a dead weight, could they?

FS: No, the whole thing would be too hard to get started rolling. And then when it was on a steep hill going up, they rough-locked the last wagon and then the others would come back on that hook. So they had to start just one, come again, and start the next one. And with the rough-lock system they had brakes on and the driver who rode his horse had a rope back to a brake right behind him. He could pull that rope to brake that wagon, but his swamper had to brake the others. He'd climb up on the side and lock his brake in a lock system they had there.

And if it was so steep that the brakes were just dragging along and wouldn't hold it back, they had to rough-lock. They all had a rough-lock system. It was a chain fastened to the bed of the wagon that went down to a long shoe with angle irons up on the sides of it. They'd drop that down on this chain and let the wagon roll into that. When the wagon got into that, the chain

came tight and they'd stop on this shoe. That would stop the wheel from rolling and would be sliding on that shoe. If they were coming down a hill and on a grade, they would rough-lock the last hind wagon wheel on the upper side. They'd lock that one first. Then if they needed more, they'd rough-lock the other hind, and if they needed more, they'd rough-lock the next wagon. They'd use however many rough locks they needed. When they were going up a hill, in order to keep the wagons from rolling back when they stopped to rest their team, they had what they called a chuck block. That was just a rough lock fastened on the back behind the hind wheels on the back wagon. They'd drop that in there and the wagon would roll back on that and it would stop them right there.

RM: It must have taken a man a long time to become a skinner on an outfit like that.

FS: Well, he had to be a good horseman. I've heard Charlene's uncle and Joe Flynn and Ross Plumber and some of the other old-timers tell me that some of these skimmers were good enough that when they would go into Eureka . . . Now, in front of the courthouse, or in the main street, maybe before they even built the courthouse, they had a flagpole right in the middle of the street. They said those old-timers would come in there with their 20-mule teams and make a circle around that flagpole in the street and come back. They were clever enough to turn 20-mule team with their wagons in that short a space. Now, the street at that time might have been wider . . .

RM: But still, that's amazing.

FS: Some of them prided themselves in doing that just to show what they could do. That takes a good skinner.

RM: Yes! Now, the skinning was the same for the mules and the horses, wasn't it?

FS: Yes.

RM: If it was a mule team, did they use one horse on the jerk line or anything like that?

FS: Most generally if they used a mule team, they were all mules. They didn't mix them because they worked better in groups.

RM: How did they handle the bull teams?

FS: All [I know about] bull teams is just what I've read.

RM: Did they use 20 bulls?

FS: They used a long string of animals, but I don't know how many. I doubt if they used 20 — probably 12 to 14 of those old bulls. But they'd pull just as big a load with them.

RM: Those oxen were huge, weren't they?

FS: Oh, they were big. Probably most of them in this country were under a ton.

RM: What would a draft horse that they were using weigh back then?

FS: They worked just about every horse that was available — little, big or otherwise. I think most of the draft horses out in this country were around 1400, 1500, 1600 pounds. They didn't have too many huge horses, because the

- smaller horses handled the rough Western life better. They were able to rustle for their feed and travel this rough country better than the huge horses.
- RM: You mean the big Belgians and Percherons and breeds like that couldn't make it as well out here?
- FS: Right. The smaller horses seemed to handle this country better. And when I worked horses in the hayfields, the smaller horses were more nimble. They got around better and they worked better than the big, big horses.
- RM: Oh. And what would a mule weigh?
- FS: They had mules that weighed 1400 pounds. They were big mules.
- RM: Is there a lot of difference between a mule and a horse in terms of the way they handle and everything?
- FS: Oh, yes.
- RM: How would you summarize their differences?
- FS: It's hard for me to explain. The horse responds quicker to your pull than a mule does. A mule is more stubborn — you have to work around that stubbornness. But they're also a careful animal; a mule won't hurt himself. If he gets into your grain bin, he won't overeat and hurt himself. A horse will founder on it; he'll kill himself. A horse will overwork himself and give out. A mule, when he gets tired, will just quit and that's it. He knows how to take care of himself. He won't get in wire and he won't get into a mud hole or a bind. A mule's more careful that way than a horse is. They're just different to work with. You have to learn their habits and ways in order to get the best out of them.
- RM: Charlene, you say your father was one of the freighters we've been talking about here.
- FS: I never did get to talk to him, of course. He was a young man when he died.
- RM: But he would have been involved in just what you're talking about.
- CS: Oh yes. He did that and he helped put this telephone line in that we have.
- FS: And according to Harry Webb, he drove the mail up in the early days too.
- RM: Would it have been about a 4-day trip to Eureka from Palisade with a team?
- FS: Yes. Old Bill Curto in Ely freighted from Palisade to Eureka during the time the railroad was flooded out, and he said it was a 10-day round trip. Of course, that was loading, unloading and various things. And he said that was in good conditions. On one trip he made, he said it took him 20 days and he was cold the whole time, and wet. He was camping out at night in miserable rain and snow and sleet; he said it was bad. So you had a variety of conditions.
- RM: Were any of the camps to Eureka dry camps?
- FS: They had to be dry camps. There wasn't water everywhere. They'd have to haul a barrel of water to make a dry camp.
- RM: Would they drop feed off at camps as they went down and then use it on the way back?
- FS: I doubt that they could do that. I know they had to feed their horses sometimes, but in the summertime, most of the time they turned the horses loose

at night to graze.

RM: Oh, because there was feed here.

FS: Yes. There was grass and so on.

RM: I was told that between Las Vegas and Beatty/Rhyolite in the early days they would put feed and water at these dry camps along the route, and god help you if you messed with somebody's water and feed. It was almost a capital offense.

FS: Oh, yes. It was just about liable to cause a killing. In that country down there that's very understandable. They tell me that they used to haul a big tank wagon along.

RM: Yes, I've seen them in pictures. Here they wouldn't, would they?

FS: There might have been a time of the year here when they had to have a tank wagon along with them, because in the fall it's pretty dry. There's a lot of water along the way, but there were places where there was no water.

RM: If you were taking all of your feed along and all of your water, how much feed would you have to give a horse a day and how much water?

FS: Oh, boy. It'd take a lot. I think a horse would require water, mainly. That's more important than the feed, really. In hot weather, and pulling a load, I wouldn't be surprised if a horse would drink 30 gallons of water.

RM: Wow. Would they grain their animals?

FS: They would grain them, yes. You give a horse 10 pounds of grain twice or 3 times a day and that takes a lot of grain with a big team. But if they grain them that much they could use a lot less hay. They relied a lot on grain because of that.

CS: I'll bet they did.

RM: You can get more work out of a horse with grain too, can't you?

FS: Yes. He's tougher. He gets to where he can stand the work better on a lot of grain.

RM: How much hay would you have to give them if you weren't graining them?

FS: It depends. If you give them free choice, a horse will eat 30 pounds of hay or more. But you don't generally give him free choice. You give him a certain amount and then supplement it with grain. If you fed them a heavy feed of grain 3 times a day — 10 pounds each time — you could probably get by with 10 or 15 pounds of hay at night.

RM: I see. Is there a rule of thumb about what a horse or mule could pull?

FS: Most of the skimmers figured about a ton to the animal on horse or mule. I don't know what they figured with the bull teams.

RM: What would be a really good animal?

FS: Oh, some teams. If you had a small team, say 4 head of horses on a wagon, sometimes they could pull twice that much on good traveling. But on these long journeys where they're going day after day after day and pulling a heavy load, they figured about a ton to the animal.

RM: What do you do about horses that are slacking off? It's pretty easy for a horse to fake it in there, isn't it? I mean, they're just like people, aren't they?

- [Laughter]
- CS: Pop thinks so.
- FS: You bet they are.
- RM: What do you do?
- FS: Well, they had the swamper along and if one of the mules got to laying back and soldiering too much, he'd just walk up alongside him and about the time he spoke to him, he'd cut him a good hard one with the whip. A few licks like that, and when you spoke to him, he'd keep a-going. He know what was coming if he didn't. [Laughter]
- CS: They learn quickly.
- RM: And you could tell whether they were pulling by whether or not they're in the collar?
- FS: Oh, yes. But they can fake that too. I'll tell you about an old work horse I had here. Charlene was helping me, working in the hayfield — we were buck-raking hay. I gave her my old pet feed team to work on the buck rake. Well, we pushed the hay up on the stacker teeth, then you backed up and raised those teeth and kind of pressed that hay so it goes up on the teeth good so it won't fall off [laughter] from the stacker. When she'd pull a load up on there and push it up, then she'd back and she'd speak to her team to push it up there. This old horse would brace his feet and stretch his neck and groan. And he wouldn't even have the collar against his [laughter] shoulder. I'd say, "Push it up a little tighter."
She'd say, "Well, he's pushing as hard as he can." [Laughter]
I'd say, "King." Man, he'd just push that thing plumb through there.
- RM: But he knew how to make it look like he was doing something?
- FS: He sure did. He was the smartest . . .
- CS: He had the boo in on me. They're like people.
- FS: But he was a good horse.
- CS: Oh, he was wonderful.
- FS: That was probably the best horse I ever owned in my life in a work horse.
- RM: Well, you came to the Sadler Ranch in '37, and then you were there 4 years? So that would take you to about World War II.
- FS: I quit there in January of '40. Then I went across the valley and worked at another ranch till spring, and then went back to Wyoming in June to see my folks. I came back to Pine Valley and went to work for Ross Plumber in the summertime. I helped him put up his hay and then I rode for him in the fall to gather his beef and his cattle, and rode all fall for him in the fall of '41. Then that fall of '41, in December, I went down to the JD to break some colts for Charlie Damele. I worked there that winter and started a bunch of colts and worked for him for a year, till the fall of '42. Then the army called.
- RM: Was your draft board in Wyoming?
- FS: No, it was here in Eureka. I have been a constant resident of Eureka County since '37, so that's where I registered and where I went to the army from. They had called me in '41, right after the war broke out, but they rejected

me. I had a growth in my nose and I couldn't breath well and they rejected me and put me on 4F. Then they called me back for a reevaluation in '42 and took me in.

I went into the army at Fort Douglas in the fall of '42 and went down to Camp Callan in California just out of San Diego and took my training in an anti-aircraft battalion. They were giving 8 weeks basic training then. We had 7 weeks of basic training and they passed a new ordinance that we had to have 13. Naturally, the army doesn't do things like I think they should. Instead of adding on to our 7 weeks, they backed up and gave us 13 more on top of it. So I was down there all winter, training. [Laughter]

Then they took us up to Camp Stoneman on the bay below Sacramento. I think we were only there about 2 weeks and then we caught a barge down to Oakland, where we caught a ship to go overseas. And we boarded the *SS Lauralean*. It was a luxury liner that they had transferred into a troop transport. We got on that at Oakland and sailed out under the Bay Bridge. That was a gant old feeling.

RM: I'll bet it was — not knowing whether you'd come back.

FS: That's right. None of us knew whether we'd see that old bridge again in our lives. Anyway, we shipped to Hawaii and got off in Pearl Harbor. When we went into Pearl Harbor there were so many ships still sunk in the harbor that the captain had a hard time working his way through to get into the harbor to unload us. It was a mess. We unloaded there and went by truck up to Fort McDowell, right up in the center of the Island of Oahu. We were there in quarantine for 21 days. And while we were in quarantine we didn't have a full battalion, so we had to transfer into other units. The 27th division had come back from down under and they'd been hit so hard they had to regroup and rest and get new troops and equipment to go back. So most of my outfit transferred into that 27th division and went down under.

RM: Down under to where?

FS: The other islands — retaking Guam, New Guinea and all the others down there. One evening I saw this pack mule outfit go by the window of the barracks and went over to their camp. They were from Wheeler Field, right close to our camp. I said to the captain, "Would there be any chance that I could transfer into that mule outfit?"

"Well," he said, "I'll ask and find out," which he did. And they needed men, so I transferred into that mule outfit. And that's where I spent the rest of the time, right there in that mule outfit.

RM: Is that right? As a farrier?

FS: Well, not right then. I was a packer. When they took troops from here, they found that they had to have a little bit of jungle training. The young boys had trained here in the U.S., and going down there into that jungle, it would get so dark and there were so many strange noises in the jungle that it would just drive them bananas. They couldn't take it. They were afraid of Japanese snipers and all these noises, and being in the dark. So they'd give them

jungle training in the jungles in Hawaii. We were carrying supplies back into those mountains for them while training.

I packed there for a while and then I went into the horseshoeing school for 6 months to learn to be a farrier. I shod mules for about a year and half before I came home.

RM: And that was the end of the war?

FS: Well, by the first part of June in '45 I had enough overseas time that I was eligible for a furlough home. And things were easing up a little by then. The army had developed a point system so you had so many points for overseas time, army time, battle time and whatnot. And I was only 2 points short of having points enough to get out. I still lacked those 2 points, but I was eligible for furlough. So we came back to the States and I got my 30-day furlough. At the end of the 30-day furlough, I was supposed to go back, but I called and asked for a 10-day extension. I was dragging my feet, trying to keep from going back. [Laughter]

RM: You knew that it was going to end over there pretty quick.

FS: Well, yes.

RM: It had already ended in Europe, hadn't it?

FS: Yes. And things were looking up. So I was dragging my feet, trying to keep from going back, and I got an extension for 10 days. Then they put me back there in Camp Carson, Colorado.

RM: Oh, really?

FS: I was to stay there waiting for my orders to go back over. Well, while I was there waiting for my orders to go back over, they bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Japanese quit. And when they did, our government dropped the point system 2 points, and I was eligible to get out. Then they sent me down to Camp Carson in Colorado Springs — they had a bunch of horses there and they had brought in a lot of German prisoners and were keeping them there in Camp Carson. They were bringing back a lot of troops from Europe and letting them rest up there and wait for their discharge. And while they were there they had about 65 or 70 head of horses, and they were letting those fellows ride them just to kind of break the monotony while they were waiting to get out. So they put me down there to shoe those horses. Well, I only shod about 3 and I said to the captain, "How about those prisoners of war?" They had them doing KP and all the details. I said, "Is there any of them that can shoe a horse?"

And he said, "Well, we'll find out." So he went out and brought me back one of the German prisoners — a horseshoer. So I put him to work and I saddled up a big black horse and went to the hills. I had a lot of fun. [Laughs] That's where I got my discharge.

RM: And then you came back to Eureka?

FS: Yes.

CHAPTER SEVEN

- RM: Charlene, let's repeat some background on your family and their history in the valley. Who was the first family member of yours to come into the valley?
- CS: My grandpa Rand — Charles Henry Rand.
- RM: And when did he come in?
- CS: Now, when did he come in? You have the date, Pop, better than I do.
- FS: We think it was about 1881 or just before.
- CS: Didn't we find out that Grandpa was here about 9 years before he got married to Mom in '86?
- FS: No, he'd been gone from Canada that long. He spent time in the Midwest before he came here.
- RM: Where had he been in the Midwest?
- CS: Was it Missouri? And then they had relatives in Michigan — I think he was there too.
- FS: He might have come through there, but he worked down into the States.
- RM: Why did he come here?
- CS: That's a good question. That's what our Canadian relatives who were here last month wanted to know. I think he got in with that fellow who moved those mules out here, or something.
- FS: He brought a carload of mules out here for a employer he was working for in Kansas. From all I've been able to learn, he was working for a fellow in Missouri. Do you know his name?
- CS: Mr. Gallagher.
- FS: And he apparently had a good working relationship with this man and he trusted him to bring a carload of mules to Eureka.
- RM: That would be on a railroad car?
- FS: Yes. He had to transfer them from the Central Pacific Railroad in Palisade to the narrow gauge and take them to Eureka from there. So that would have had to been in early 1881. As we said before, he was the oldest son of that family in Canada, and it was a large family and a small farm, so we assume he left home to make room for the others. And he wanted to travel.
- RM: What happened after he got here and delivered the mules?
- FS: His first job after he got here was the swamper on an ox team hauling wood for the railroad, to fire their trains. But he was a carpenter, and after that job he left Eureka and came to Mineral Hill, where he worked as a carpenter.
- CS: He was originally from Brantford, Ontario. The family stayed there, and the relatives you met in August are from there.
- RM: So he's the only one who went to Missouri?
- CS: He just went there for a short while as a young man. Then he left Missouri and came out here and never did go back. He was a Westerner. He was young when he left Canada; I think they said he left when he was 19.
- FS: He was in carpentry most all of his life here until he got the ranch.
- CS: Yes, he was building railroad cars for the E&N Railroad in Palisade.

- FS: He also helped with the building of the various buildings in Mineral Hill. And they lived in Mineral Hill until 1894. He married Charlene's grandmother in 1886.
- RM: What was her name?
- FS: Her name was Mary Booth.
- RM: And what was her story? What was she doing out here?
- CS: She was raised in Binghamton, New York, as far as I know, and her sister, Kate Flynn, lived in Mineral Hill because old Joe Flynn was a miner. So she came out to help Aunt Kate when she was having a baby; I think her oldest baby. After she got out here, she met Grandpa and they got married.
- RM: When did they move up to Pine Valley?
- FS: He worked in Mineral Hill all of those years, even after they were married. All of their children were born in Mineral Hill except the youngest.
- CS: Well, Aunt Mary and Aunt Rachel.
- FS: Just Rachel. And then Mineral Hill was beginning to fade away. The mines were going down and he moved from Mineral Hill to Palisade and worked in the shops in Palisade. He was the foreman of the shops where they built the railroad cars and the turntable for the roundhouse and the whole works. He was head carpenter there through all those years. Then in 1907 he bought the ranch in Pine Valley, the Parry Ranch, and that's where they lived from then on. Everyone here calls it the old Rand Ranch now. He bought it from a fellow by the name of Francis A. Parry.
- RM: And how big a ranch was it?
- FS: It was a pretty good-sized ranch. I'd say he was able to handle 500 head of mother cows at the time. He developed and got more land afterwards, but at that time it was about that size.
- RM: Could you describe where that ranch is in the valley?
- FS: It's 12 miles, isn't it, Mom, south from Palisade?
- CS: Yes, 12 miles south of Palisade.
- RM: Would you discuss the initial settlement of the valley?
- FS: In 1868 the Central Pacific Railroad went through Palisade as far as Carlin. The fall of 1868 Padelford moved into Palisade and built a toll bridge and had toll roads out of Palisade. He apparently knew, or could foresee, that there would be a depot established, even though Elko wanted the depot and was fighting to keep Palisade from it. Now, that was lower Pine Valley. The beginning settler in Pine Valley was Governor Bradley. He came in from Austin down here and settled right here on Hot Creek — our place — in 1864. And he brought cattle in and was running them here in the valley at that time. He was here at the time Mineral Hill was discovered in '69. Eureka started to produce ore in '69 and in the spring of 1869, Palisade was developed. A depot was built there and the freight teams started hauling supplies to Mineral Hill and Eureka from Palisade. So the ranches started to develop hay land to feed the teams, and it gradually developed from there.
- CS: And you said that they furnished meat for these places too.

-
- FS: Yes.
- RM: Was Bradley governor afterwards or before?
- FS: Later. His first term began in 1870.
- RM: Oh, so he hadn't been here too long before he became governor.
- FS: He was here in '64. He only stayed here in the valley until '66. Then he moved over into Mound Valley and established ranches over there and his son John stayed on the ranch here. They had this ranch then up until 1885, and then they sold it.
- RM: Were other ranches developed about the same time that Governor Bradley came in?
- FS: No. He was the first livestock man here for many, many years. Now, Joe Dean did run cattle over around Buckhorn and Mount Tenabo and in that area by about 1867. And then in 1870 Joel Willard moved in down there. And part of the old Rand Ranch had cattle for a few years until he left and went to Arizona. But there were no cattle ranches other than Bradley in here until quite a few years later.
- Most of the early developments raised hay and grain and feed for the livestock — the freight teams and all. From 1869 — the early beginning of Eureka and Mineral Hill — until 1875, every bit of the material needed to build those towns (Eureka to over 6000 people, Mineral Hill to 500 people) was hauled by ox and horse and mule freight teams to Eureka. You see, that was before the railroad was built.
- RM: So there was a better market for grain and hay than there was for beef.
- FS: Can you imagine the amount of freight that moved from the depot in Palisade?
- CS: To build those towns.
- FS: To build those towns and then haul the ore back to Palisade to ship out.
- CS: It was quite a growing concern.
- FS: Yes — tremendous. I can hardly imagine it.
- RM: Yes. How many farms do you think there were in the valley in those early years?
- FS: There were quite a lot of people who came in and took up land right at the start. And there were small tracts of land at that time. After a few years, as they were developed, there were some people who stayed here and other people who wanted to move on to other places and other things. They sold their land to someone who stayed here and gradually they built into bigger portions of land, and that's when they established the bigger ranches. And after the E&P Railroad went through and there weren't so many freight teams to feed, the ranchers started building up herds of cattle and running cattle. I would say it was after 1875 when most of the other places began to run cattle in any amount. The Bradleys practically had this valley stocked with cattle.
- RM: So Governor Bradley was in here before Eureka was discovered.
- FS: Oh, yes. He came in here from Austin.
- RM: He came in for the Austin boom?
- FS: Well, he had come in from California to Austin with his cattle; he was fur-

-
- nishing beef for the mines there.
- RM: Did he have a ranch at Austin too?
- FS: Yes, he was in partners [with a man].
- RM: Where was his ranch in Austin?
- FS: I think they were a little to the north of Austin proper — on the Reese River.
- RM: And then he came over here in '64?
- FS: That's right. Then in '66 he moved over into Mound Valley, established ranches there, and spread from there clear on into the Marys River country and established ranches all up there. Marys River is a tributary to the Humboldt. So he had a huge ranching operation.
- RM: Where is Mound Valley?
- FS: It's the place they call Jiggs now.
- RM: Then he was followed by small farmers?
- FS: To start with, yes. Of course they all had a few cattle, but they never started into cattle as a big operation until after the teaming was practically over.
- RM: Yes. Because it was a better use of the land to grow grain and hay. You don't have any information off the top of your head on the prices of grain and hay then, do you?
- FS: No, I don't, and I'm sure they couldn't furnish nearly enough in Pine Valley here. A lot of their grain was shipped in from around the Genoa area and from Utah, and maybe even from the Midwest after the railroad come through. Before that I don't know where they got it.
- RM: How many acres are we talking about being cultivated in the valley?
- CS: Each ranch has a lot of acreage, but it isn't all under cultivation.
- FS: I'd say there are probably 35,000 to 40,000 acres in the deeded lands of the ranches up the valley now. But at that time they were small parcels as they were starting out.
- CS: Is that under cultivation?
- FS: Well, pasture land.
- RM: Did they have to level the land?
- FS: Oh, yes. It was covered with scrub brush, sagebrush, rabbitbrush and various things. There were places where the creeks flow into Pine Creek where the water spread out and there were big patches of rye grass. All the land had to be plowed and leveled or smoothed and replanted, and all the brush killed and burned off.
- RM: Were there any native grass meadows?
- FS: There are some small ones — the ones here on Hot Creek and the ones at the Hay Ranch would have been natural meadow, yes; they were pretty good size.
- RM: But there weren't that many?
- FS: No.
- RM: Were there any beaver ponds?
- FS: Maybe down at the Stone house. The old Rand place and the Stone house now would have been other places where there would have been natural meadows because there was a lot of water from the springs which were de-

-
- veloped there. I suppose, in the early, early days when Joseph Walker and those early beaver trappers were in here there might have been beaver ponds.
- RM: Let's take a little side trip here and talk about the geography of the valley. Tell me what mountains border Pine Valley.
- FS: On the east would be the Piñon Range south as far as Dry Creek. From Dry Creek on south to Garden Pass it is called the Sulphur Springs Range, although it appears to me to be the same range. Then there's a small pass, Garden Pass, that connects the Sulphur Springs Range to the Roberts Creek Mountain. The Roberts Creek Mountain protrudes out to the north into Pine Valley and is about 12 miles east to west. And there's a low pass that connects it to the Simpson Park Range. Then the Simpson Park Range runs from the west side of Roberts Creek Mountain northward for about 12 miles to a low pass, where it is divided from Mount Tenabo. Mount Tenabo then runs northward to its highest peak. From that peak eastward and then northeast back to the Humboldt River is the Cortez Range.
- RM: Could you tell me again about the creeks that run in, starting in the south on the east side?
- FS: Henderson Creek comes off of the Roberts Creek Mountain and runs through Garden Valley and flows northward into Pine Creek. Then there's a small creek that is fed by a large spring that they call Chimney Creek. It's on the Sulphur Springs Range. Then 5 miles north of Mineral Hill you come to Edwards Creek, which flows through the old Plumber property and then to Pine Creek. Then as you come northward, the next creek you find of any significance is Dry Creek. Dry Creek seems to be the separation between Sulphur Springs Range and the Piñon Range on the east. Then as we come northward from Dry Creek, we have Pony Creek.
- RM: And that's the creek your place is on?
- FS: Yes. And then north of us, the next creek is Willow Creek.
- CS: You missed Hot Creek.
- FS: I sure did.
- CS: Hot Creek comes before Willow Creek.
- FS: Yes. Pony Creek, then Hot Creek, then Willow Creek to the north. The next creek north of Willow Creek is Smith Creek. The next one north of Smith Creek is Trout Creek, and then Mill Creek. Those are south of Pine Mountain. And north of Pine Mountain is Padelford Creek and Cold Creek.
- RM: Now, you told me that some of them are intermittent streams. Which ones run all year round?
- FS: Hot Creek is about the only creek on this side that runs all year other than Trout Creek.
- CS: But you say that Tommy says it's dry.
- FS: Tommy says it's dry this year, but [this year is unusual]. All of the others dry up. They run with floodwater in the spring and then dry up.
- RM: Hot Creek is fed by a spring out in the valley?
- CS: No, it's fed by a spring up here in the hills right north of us about 2 miles.
- RM: How wide a creek is it?

- FS: It's a creek that the water commissioner years ago told me he had measured all the way from 5 to 8 second feet.
- RM: What is a second foot?
- FS: A second feet is a cubic foot of water per second.
- RM: And then on the Cortez side, are there . . .
- FS: Well, as you come north from the southern end, on that side there is a creek and it's fed by a big spring — they call it the Tonkin Spring. They call it Denay Wash. It flows from south of Tonkin down to the northeast into Pine Creek. Pine Creek heads on the north end of the Simpson Park Range and then Horse Creek comes off of Mount Tenabo and runs into Pine Creek there. Then as you go northward, the only creeks of major importance would be Sheep Creek and then Big Pole Creek, Little Pole Creek — and from there on they're just mainly snow runoff gulches — there are really no creeks.
- RM: Why are there so many creeks? Is it because you get a lot of snow here?
- FS: The mountains have a lot of snow in the winter.
- CS: As a general rule.
- FS: And they flow a lot of snow runoff in the spring.
- RM: You mentioned earlier that you get your first frost about the first of September and your last frost in the spring about middle of June?
- FS: That's right.
- RM: And then are the winters hard here?
- CS: It depends. We've had so many easy ones that it's funny.
- FS: It's hard to say what an average winter is here anymore. They're so changeable. Some winters will be practically open with very little snow on the ground all winter long. In other winters, we'll have snow all winter covering the ground a foot deep or so.
- RM: How were they 30 years ago?
- CS: Oh! You had winters.
- RM: Describe what a winter was like here, Charlene, when you were a kid.
- CS: Of course, one of the heaviest winters would be in '32. The top wires of the hay corrals were sticking out and that was about it. And it went to 40 below and stayed 40 below for weeks.
- RM: Oh!
- CS: I remember that. I know when it got to 20 below, we kids thought that was warm. [Laughter] When I was a kid I suppose there were some dry years, but I wasn't aware of it. But there were surely heavier snows.
- RM: When does winter set in here?
- FS: Generally around Christmas time.
- CS: Yes, or just before.
- RM: It's pretty nice up till then?
- FS: Yes.
- CS: Last year, though, the most snow we had was in October.

CHAPTER EIGHT

- CS: There's no set rule about the winters anymore, that's for sure. Maybe it's because of the equipment that keeps the highway open and this sort of thing. The winters don't seem as long and as hard.
- FS: That's part of it. But in the last 20 years, I would say, the average winter hasn't been as severe as they were before. It seems that way to us.
- CS: Not severe enough. [Laughs] It's too dry.
- RM: Has the range suffered a lot because of the smaller amounts of snow?
- FS: Just this year. Other years the range has been good.
- CS: It's starting to show now, although it's been dry for several years. Floyd says feed is good, but the water is a problem.
- RM: Do you have spring here, or does it just kind of go from winter to summer?
- CS: No, we have 4 seasons. I love it.
- RM: When does spring begin?
- CS: Probably March or the last of February.
- FS: It starts in March, but we have a long, drawn-out springtime here. In the northern states generally they'll have a Chinook wind and it'll take off the snow and it turns from winter right into spring, but we don't have those here. It just slowly changes.
- CS: You know spring from winter. Right now it's early fall, but I've still got flowers out here. That's up here, though.
- RM: They don't have flowers now in the valley?
- CS: No. They've frozen down there.
- RM: When do the trees bud here?
- CS: About in April.
- RM: When do the lilacs bloom?
- CS: In late May — sometime around Memorial Day. And we have lots of wildflowers. In fact, the wildflowers this year were practically gone by Decoration Day.
- FS: This was a strange year.
- CS: Yes, it threw us off.
- FS: Everything was 3 weeks earlier, at least, than normal.
- RM: Yes, it was a really mild winter.
- CS: Yes. As we told you, we got with the program and planted too early, although we knew that frost would probably come in June.
- FS: Those trees don't leaf out as a rule till May.
- CS: Or June, yes.
- RM: To back up a bit: Cattle came into the valley after the railroad came in, really. And by then these places had consolidated into bigger operations?
- FS: Well, they were beginning to consolidate. They've continued to add on and make larger holdings all through the years.
- RM: So that's still going on?
- FS: Yes. Every operator has added a little more land to the place.

- CS: Or developed the land — developed and planted it, or cultivated, which we didn't before.
- RM: Has the population of the valley fallen as a result of this long-term consolidation? Are there fewer people here than there used to be?
- FS: Oh, definitely.
- CS: Do you think so? But every ranch has their family.
- FS: Yes, but years ago there were more little ranches with families on them.
- CS: Oh, you're right — like the Webb place and Thatchers and Fritz . . . and then they had the mines and families throughout the valley.
- FS: And Palisade was a little town. There were quite a few more people here then.
- RM: Has the history of the upper valley been different from the history of the lower valley? Because you mentioned that the first settler in the Palisade area came in at a different time than the governor did.
- FS: Oh, yes. And I forgot to tell you about the first settler. Governor Bradley was the first cowman to come into the valley, but the first settler to come was old Bill Denay down there. He took up a homestead on Denay Creek in 1862 — that was the spring they passed the Homestead Act. So he was the first permanent settler in the valley.
- CS: I've always heard it called "Dainty Wash." And it wasn't Dainty Wash at all.
- FS: It wasn't Dainty. It was Denay. [Sounds like Daney.]
- RM: What was his background?
- FS: A lot of it is only supposition. An early historian said that most of the early settlers in this part of the state were either laborers or keepers of the Pony Express stations and the old telegraph line. The Pony Express came through in '60. When they folded up a year and a half later, a lot of those people liked the country and stayed and settled. When the telegraph line came through that replaced the Pony Express, a lot of those workers stayed in the area. All we can assume is that he came out with the Pony Express stations or the telegraph and liked it and settled.
- RM: Yes. And that would have affected more the southern part of the valley, wouldn't it?
- FS: Yes.
- RM: In the northern part of the valley, the railroad is coming through a little bit later. But meanwhile you got the Emigrant Trail, with the emigrants coming down the Humboldt.
- FS: Oh, yes, but they didn't stay and settle.
- RM: Did the trail go right down the Humboldt or was it off the Humboldt a bit?
- FS: From Carlin west, they went over Emigrant Pass and then turned back to the river at Gravelly Ford because of that deep canyon down through there. Part of the time they did come over this side across the lower end to Pine Valley and down through on the south side of the river. It was a harder trail. But they did, in order to get water and feed for their stock.
- RM: What was the name of the canyon they were avoiding on the Humboldt?

-
- FS: They call it the Palisade Canyon. There are huge bluffs and cliffs there.
- RM: Was there a general store or a trader or anybody along there?
- FS: No, not before the railroad.
- RM: Was there anything at Carlin?
- FS: There was nothing at Carlin. All there was at Carlin were those good springs where they stopped to feed and rest up. They went from there to miss the big canyon.
- RM: But nobody settled there?
- FS: No, there were no settlers through there for many years.
- RM: So it took the railroad to bring settlement there.
- FS: That's what brought the settlers into Pine Valley — the railroad and the mines.
- RM: And before the mines was the Pony Express.
- FS: Before the Pony Express, they had a mail route from Salt Lake to Sacramento. A fellow by the name of Chorpenning ran it through here. He came through from Ruby station to the Gravelly Ford with his mail. He carried mail through with pack mules.
- RM: When did he start that?
- FS: He started that in 1851, I believe. He started that, and for one year he and another fellow were partners — they ran that stage and carried it with pack mules. But they were going around the north side of Salt Lake and following the Emigrant Trail down through. And it was hard, especially in winter; they were losing money.
- RM: So they weren't coming down this way?
- FS: No, they came over the Emigrant Trail for years. Then they stopped that route and he carried the mail from Salt Lake down through by Las Vegas and over into California a winter or two because of the hard winters. And then he took another contract in '58 and he was carrying it from the south side of the Great Salt Lake. He came through Ruby Valley, through here and over this hill across the valley.
- RM: Was he coming over Chokup?
- FS: No, they came on down Huntington Creek and across through Railroad Pass. Then they cut across over Piñon Range here and they had a station.
- RM: Did they cross over the Piñon Range?
- FS: They came right over the pass between the 2 ranges.
- RM: Oh, Dry Creek.
- FS: Yes. Then they came across over through here and over Pony Trail. There was a short period of time when they did carry the mail through in a 4-mule and 6-mule stage with light spring wagons, but that was in 1859, just before the Pony Express took over. The Pony Express took his job away.
- RM: So that would have been before Austin.
- FS: Right.
- RM: Where were they taking the mail? Was it to Genoa?
- FS: No. They were going through Genoa, but they were going to Sacramento.
- RM: There really wasn't much here in '59, was there?

-
- FS: No. But they started in '51 or '52, in the real early days.
- RM: Why was he coming down this way rather than following . . . ?
- FS: He was looking for a shorter route to save money.
- RM: Simpson came through in '59, I think.
- FS: Right. Simpson followed Chorpenning's trail through here — a good part of it. He followed his trail from Camp Floyd around the south side of the Great Salt Lake and followed the stage trail clear to Ruby Valley over here. He left it at Ruby Valley and came over here to the head of Huntington Creek. And then he turned up over Chokup Pass and went down through that way. But Chorpenning was still running the stage through here.
- RM: He was a real pioneer, wasn't he?
- FS: You bet your life he was a pioneer. His partner, Absalom Woodward, was killed right here at Gravelly Ford, or right here on the canyon on this side, coming into Pine Valley with his pack mules the first year they took the contract.
- RM: How was he killed?
- FS: Indians. And that left the contract to Chorpenning.
- RM: Let's go back and pick up on the ranchers. The railroad came in and then you got a lot of cattle ranching in Pine Valley.
- FS: Oh, yes. It's not a farming area. Grains and hay — alfalfa — can be raised, but as far as vegetables or fruits or anything, it's too short a growing season. So it is a good livestock area. And most everyone went into livestock because, other than mining, that was the major industry here.
- RM: About how many ranches were there in the valley by the time the railroad was completed?
- FS: That would be hard to say, because there were a lot of settlers. (I have a good many names of those settlers, but it would be hard [to make an accurate count].)
- RM: I was just trying to get a ballpark figure.
- FS: There'd probably be 10 or 15 now, and there were probably twice that many.
- RM: Oh, maybe 30 ranchers?
- FS: Oh, yes. I have the names of at least that many, and maybe more.
- RM: Your grandfather bought a functioning ranch when he came down here, didn't he?
- CS: Yes.
- RM: But your mother was raised in town?
- CS: Yes. All of them were raised more or less in Mineral Hill and Palisade. By the time that Grandpa came on the ranch, the older ones were going to college and teaching and getting married. My mother's the oldest of the family, and then Aunt Sue. But they were raised in the valley.
- FS: Her mother grew up to school age in Mineral Hill. I think after her first year of school in Mineral Hill they moved to Palisade, so the whole family grew up the rest of the time in Palisade. After they finished the schooling that was available in Palisade, they went to Reno and took further schooling at the

university.

RM: Do you recall stories that your mother might have told about life in Mineral Hill?

CS: [Laughs] I don't remember Ma's stories. She was too young when they moved down here. Joe Flynn probably told you some good ones, Pop.

FS: He told me lots of stories. [Laughs]

RM: Tell me about Joe Flynn.

FS: Now, you're talking about Joe Flynn, Jr., the one I knew. Joe Flynn, Sr., was a mining man. He had mining claims in Mineral Hill and worked those mines. As a kid, young Joe worked with him; he learned mining pretty well from his dad by working with him as a kid. Joe told me it took an expert blacksmith to sharpen the drill steel for the miners at Mineral Hill because the rocks were so hard that they dulled steel continually.

At a pretty early age, Joe started as a swamper for some of the teamsters. Even though there was a railroad there was still a lot of freight, and teamsters were used around the country. Young Joe took an interest in horses, liked them, and liked that life, so he went as a swamper. And that's where he learned to drive a team. So that was the way he grew up in Mineral Hill. And it was the same thing for Ross Plumber, our other good friend. He grew up there and worked as a miner as a young kid and then worked with teamsters and learned to team.

RM: So you knew both of these men when they were older and they would tell you stories and everything?

FS: Oh, yes. But they were fairly young.

CS: And then, what did we learn about the charcoal burners up there? Didn't Joe tell you about those too?

FS: Old Steve Maples was a charcoaler. He had a crew of men up here at what he called his wood camp.

Years later, floods washed out the railroad — that was in 1910. It didn't start again for 2 years, until late in 1912. During those years, Joe Flynn freighted whatever was needed from Palisade to Mineral Hill and vice versa. And the Buckhorn Mine was working at that time and he freighted ore out of Buckhorn. So did Charlene's uncle, Bill Rand; he and her dad and Ross Plumber all had teams running out of Buckhorn.

RM: Now, Buckhorn is this side of Mount Tenabo. Was it a community?

FS: Yes. It was just over the hill from Cortez, on the Pine Valley side.

CS: You know, Joe Flynn had some claims in Union that he worked too.

FS: Joe took up claims and sold claims throughout the years, so he was a mining man too.

CS: He was my mother's cousin.

FS: Kate Flynn, Joe's mother, was a sister to Charlene's grandmother. So that made the Flynn's and the Rands cousins. We were very close to them. The Plumbers ranched in the valley too in later years. I've known them ever since I've been in the country and Charlene's known them all her life. And

then there were the Bruffeys, who came in in the early days. Old Theodore Bruffey came into Mineral Hill with the very first miners and set up a saloon. And he raised his family there. His oldest daughter, Bell, was the first baby born in Mineral Hill. A few years later he bought the old Bruffey Ranch, and all of his family were raised between Mineral Hill and the ranch. Roger and Bert and Alan, his sons, lived on the ranch for many many years and were neighbors to us all those years.

CS: And old Mrs. Bruffey took in those teamsters. They boarded there, I think.

FS: That's right.

CS: It was a big old adobe place and it was made into rooms so that you could . . . And they had that top floor, too, where they danced and played.

FS: When old man Bruffey bought the place, he had a bunch of laborers make brick from the mud right there in the yard and he built a huge brick house.

CS: The remains are still there.

FS: And the Mrs. ran a boardinghouse. They had the hot spring there and they had hot baths, and people from the mines came and soaked in that hot water.

CS: Yes, they could pay 50 cents for a bath. [Laughs]

FS: Old man Bruffey, himself, was a wheelwright by trade and he taught his oldest son the wheelwright and farrier businesses, so they shod teams and fixed wagons going through.

RM: Where is the Bruffey Ranch?

FS: Eight miles south of here. It was 5 miles north of Mineral Hill.

RM: Was Mineral Hill a big mining area?

FS: It was a rich mining town, yes. It was mainly silver.

RM: When was it discovered?

FS: In 1869. That was the same time that Eureka started shipping ore.

CS: And then Union.

RM: How big a town was Mineral Hill?

FS: It only had 500 at its peak, but it was a rich mine.

RM: Did it last long?

FS: It ran till about 1885 before it started to go down, and then it had another spurt after that.

CS: Yes, because Mom and Grandpa were married in '86 and they lived there and had 5 children up there.

FS: But it still had dwindled and was just shipping light [amounts of ore].

RM: Is there much left there now? Can you see anything? How close to the highway is it?

FS: It's about 4 miles east of the highway. There's good road right there.

CS: You can see it from the highway.

FS: The old Joe Flynn orchard and house are still there.

CS: What's left of the house. Kitty and Flynn bailed water out of the well with a bucket when they were kids and carried water to that orchard, and they had a nice big orchard. That's how they kept the kids out of trouble in those days. And that orchard is still there.

-
- FS: Now, there were many other people in that area, but these are people that we were associated with all through our lives that we know better, people who have told us about the area.
- RM: Were there any other towns in Pine Valley?
- FS: Palisade.
- RM: What was Palisade like?
- CS: I can tell you what Palisade was like. [Laughs] I went to school there. When I went to school there they had 2 schools. They had the grade school through the fourth grade in the new building and then the other building was a courthouse, a jailhouse and a school. It made Ripley [Ripley's Believe It or Not] because of that. [Laughs]
- RM: A courthouse, a jailhouse and a school?
- FS: It was only place in the United States with all 3 in one building. [Laughter]
- CS: And they went from the fifth through the eighth grade in there. I think they had the first year of high school in there too.
- FS: I think Palisade's top population was about 350. It was a small place.

CHAPTER NINE

- RM: Tell me about the railroad depot at Palisade.
- CS: There were 3 of them. They had the Western Pacific, the Southern Pacific and the E & N.
- RM: The Western Pacific was coming from the west and the Southern Pacific was coming from the east?
- FS: No. The Western Pacific Railroad didn't come through until 1912. The first railroad through there was the Central Pacific. It was taken over later by the Southern Pacific. And then the little narrow gauge railroad came out there while the Central Pacific was still running. So there was the Central Pacific depot and the narrow gauge E&P Railroad depot that were in there at that time.
- After the flood washed it out, or maybe just before, it was taken over by another company and it changed to the E & N — the Eureka Nevada Railroad.
- RM: It was still the same track?
- FS: Yes, it was taken over by another company.
- RM: So Palisade was a railroad center, and probably the most people that ever were there was 350?
- CS: Yes.
- RM: When did you go to school there?
- CS: I started in '25, '26.
- RM: What was in Palisade when you moved there?
- CS: It had 2 grocery stores. There was Frank Martinelli's grocery store, and he had a bar adjoining. And then there was N. A. Whitmore's store.
- RM: Do you know anything about Martinelli?
- CS: Not really. He lived in Reno until he died a few years ago.
- RM: Where did he come from, do you know?
- CS: I suppose Italy. [Laughs] But he was a citizen here in the U.S.
- FS: He was probably naturalized, though.
- RM: How about Whitmore?
- CS: Boy, I couldn't tell you. He just owned that store.
- RM: What else was there in town?
- CS: Oh, my land, they had several bars, you might know. I know they had the Tea Pot Dome and Frank Martinelli's and Joe Bartel's, and Sam Geneno had one. In that lousy little town, they had all those bars. Isn't that a reputation for you?
- RM: Were there a lot of railroad workers there? I mean, was that mainly what it was?
- CS: Well, there was a family there. The Hawkins family really ran the E & N. And then there were the workmen on the SP.
- FS: That's what it was, railroad workers. Of course, there were laborers there to help transport the freight and so on.

CS: They always had that house down there where the SP people who took care of the depot and so forth lived.

RM: What's there now?

CS: Not much.

RM: Does anybody live there at all?

CS: There's kind of a trailer village started there now. I think it's just one family.

FS: Charlene's mother and father had a store.

CS: They had the store and then Whitmore bought it after my dad died, I think.

RM: When did your parents get the store?

CS: I don't know exactly; of course, it was before I was born.

FS: Your father and mother sold the store and bought the ranch. They bought that Palisade Ranch in 1915, I believe.

CS: Yes, I didn't realize that they'd had it that long.

RM: Oh, there was a ranch there?

FS: It was just out of Palisade. It's still there.

CS: But they couldn't have been there very long.

FS: From 1915 till he died in '18.

RM: Does Pine Creek empty into the Humboldt at Palisade?

FS: Just below Palisade, yes.

RM: Does it form a big delta?

CS: Kind of, yes.

RM: Did that delta make an agricultural area?

FS: Well, more or less. Not right down on the delta — it was too sandy. But just up there's a sort of a bench above and it's all real fine [soil].

RM: On a typical year, how wide is Pine Creek when it goes into the Humboldt?

FS: It's 6 feet wide and a foot deep.

RM: So it's a good Nevada river. [Laughter]

CS: Do you think that's all? It'd be deeper than that.

FS: Well, in flood water. [Laughs] It's not much of a creek.

CS: I guess you're right.

FS: So you're talking about quite an important valley here with very little water running through it. [Laughter]

RM: Right. A well-watered valley by Nevada standards. [Laughter] What was Beowawe then?

FS: That's a whole other town in another valley.

CS: It's kind of the end of Cortez Valley.

RM: Why was Beowawe there?

FS: Beowawe was a station on the railroad.

RM: Was it bigger than Palisade?

CS: No.

RM: Is there anything to it now?

CS: Yes, there are people there.

RM: More there than in Palisade?

CS: Oh, yes. There's nothing in Palisade to speak of — just one family, I think,

and some workers.

FS: There are ranchers in there that uphold Beowawe more or less, I guess.

RM: Oh. You mean the ranchers in Pine Valley don't uphold Palisade?

FS: They all go to Carlin. There are no stores in Palisade. Beowawe still had a store the last I knew.

CS: I don't think they do now.

FS: Maybe, but it did have one until recent years.

RM: Is Cortez Valley more occupied and productive than Pine Valley, or less?

FS: I would say there are more people but it's less productive.

CS: They think they are. They're going to build a brand new school there in Crescent Valley.

FS: They've started a development at Crescent Valley, but it's all based on hope. There's not too much in reality.

CS: The cost of the school will be a reality. [Laughter]

RM: And where is Crescent Valley?

FS: They came in there and changed the name of Cortez Valley. Everyone here called it Cortez Valley, and years later they changed it to Crescent Valley.

RM: Is it crescent shaped or something?

FS: It's sort of a crescent shape.

RM: Do you recall any stories your mother told about growing up in Palisade?

CS: They had a lot of fun things there — a lot of dances at the schoolhouse. But it was more work than anything then. You know, things didn't come so easily then.

RM: Did they have electricity there when she was growing up?

CS: Oh, no.

RM: But they would have had a telegraph, wouldn't they, because it followed the rail?

CS: Yes, they had the telegraph.

FS: They had a telegraph.

CS: Whenever you'd send any word, you'd have to send a telegram to Palisade, and they in turn would go over a phone. The phone line in the valley belongs to the people in the valley, and it was built by valley people. In fact, my father helped build it too.

RM: When was that?

CS: In '15, I guess. As I told you last month, my dad died in October of 1918, and I wasn't born until the following April. But I know that when a telegram came in, it would come over to the SP office, and then they'd go across to Frank Martinelli's store or Whitmore's and call that message out the valley.

FS: The valley line only ran through the valley by the old crank phones.

RM: So that the phone line just went down here to the end of the valley? It didn't go on into Eureka?

FS: It went north from the JD Ranch.

CS: Eventually the line that the E&P owned went from Palisade to Eureka. Sexton had that.

-
- RM: You people in this valley didn't really associate that much down in Eureka, did you? Your focus was north, wasn't it?
- FS: Well, it's so much closer.
- CS: Yes. And there's more there when you get there.
- RM: So you didn't get to Eureka that much, did you?
- FS: Just for legal business.
- CS: And it's still about that way.
- RM: Tell me about the school you went to in Palisade.
- CS: It was built in 1923, as I recall. It was a real nice building — a kind of a grey stucco.
- RM: How many classrooms were there?
- CS: There was just one big classroom for the first 4 grades. But in the first grade there were only 2 or 3 students, and in the second grade there were about 4 of us. Third grade was about the same. One teacher would have all those grades.
- RM: Yes, I went to a school like that.
- FS: Later on the Tomera girls graduated from the eighth grade there, so all the grades up to the eighth must have been in one classroom.
- CS: Yes, they didn't have that many kids there then.
- RM: Did they have a division curtain or anything?
- CS: No. Everybody could take all those grades many times if they wanted — if they didn't mind their own business. [Laughs]
- RM: Are there any historic buildings left there like the old railroad depots?
- FS: Oh, no.
- CS: There's the cemetery; that's it for anything on the historical side. There's a historical marker where Brad's house used to be — the boardinghouse where I stayed when I was kid. Her name was Mrs. Bradley. The Masons' marker is there, where Brad's house burned down later.
- RM: Who is Brad?
- CS: Her name was Ella Bradley, and she had a roominghouse there. I stayed with here when I went to school in Palisade. As I was saying last time, my grandparents raised me and they were on the ranch. So I used to ride the little motor car or train into Palisade on Sunday afternoon and come back out Saturday morning — a short weekend, especially by the time you got on that trolley and poked along.
- RM: Tell me about riding the narrow gauge. Was it a steam engine?
- CS: Yes, they burned coal. I thought it was a big pain to have to ride on it. I was scared to death — it looked so big to me. Now it looks like a toy. [Laughs]
- RM: How many cars was it pulling?
- CS: It depended. This time of year, for instance, they hauled the sheep, and sometimes they hauled cattle down to the main railroad. I'd say offhand they'd only have about 7 cars altogether on it.
- RM: And you would go down to the ranch on the weekend and then come back for school?

-
- CS: Yes, I had to go back to school. I hated to see the [train coming].
- RM: Did you like living in the boardinghouse with Mrs. Bradley?
- CS: Oh, yes. She was a friend of my mother's. They didn't have any luxuries. She used to have an Indian woman, old Susie Forward, who came to help. Brad would go out and build the fire and put the water on out [to heat] in the wash house and the Indian lady would come. She washed clothes on the washboard. She was a nice old Indian lady. I loved her, and she had a little dog and I loved it.
- RM: And she lived in Palisade? Were there other Indians living there?
- CS: Yes. They had kind of a little Indian colony to the west of Palisade. They'd come to Palisade in the winter and then they'd go back to the hills in the spring.
- RM: How many wickiups were there, would you say?
- CS: Oh, boy, I don't know. There was old Boohoo and Boony and Minnie and some of the Hollys and the Doc family. There weren't too awfully many. The kids went to school there. I know Molly Doc did, and I guess Henry Holly did too.
- RM: Do the tracks still go through town?
- FS: Oh, yes — right through the old abandoned town.
- CS: The trains still go by, but there's not anybody there to get on or to wave at them. [Laughs]
- FS: And of course, the old narrow gauge track is all gone.
- RM: When was the narrow gauge shut down?
- FS: September 1938, I think.
- CS: Whenever there was a passenger to be picked up, they must have notified them or something, because when I went to high school I used to go in there and catch the train early in the morning.
- FS: They still had a depot in there then.
- CS: Yes, but I never waited in the depot. You just sat in the car until the train stopped and you got out and grabbed your suitcase and got on.
- RM: So you went to high school in Reno?
- CS: Yes.
- RM: Did you board with a family there?
- CS: No, my mother lived there. By then she had migrated back from Shasta County, California, because they lost the ranch there, as I understand it. So I went and stayed with her in Sparks.
- RM: Did you come into possession of your grandfather's ranch when he passed away?
- CS: No. Grandpa died in '39 and Mom (my grandmother) didn't die till '47. So it was hers until then, and when she died, they settled the estate and it went to my mother and my uncles and aunts.
- RM: So you didn't have property in the valley yourself?
- CS: No, not until my grandmother staked me to this place.
- RM: She staked you to the place we're on right now?

-
- CS: No, down where we raised our family.
- RM: Is it the place you come through to get up here?
- FS: No, it's across the road on the other side. She financed the buying of that and we paid it back.
- CS: She loaned us the down payment.
- RM: When did you acquire that piece of property?
- CS: It would have been in '44. It was when Claire was born. In October of '44 we moved on the Goodfellow Place.
- RM: What stands out in your mind about the valley in the '30s?
- CS: The first thing that would come to my mind about the '30s was that hard winter. It was such a long, cold winter. They finally had to buy hay in the valley, and the hay that they got was horrible. I don't know where they got it but it was like straw and it was very, very dear. I know that the railroad tried to haul it out and there was so much snow that it would stop the railroad. They just fought and shoveled. They had teams and wagons and they'd load the hay off of the railroads and haul it back to their places as well as they could. That was a hard go.
- FS: It wasn't only a hard winter in that respect, but I think they had an outbreak of the rabies at that time.
- CS: Well, before that, Pop.
- FS: But it was still going on that winter and they lost stock from that.
- CS: Not in '32. I don't remember stock dying in '32. It was tapering off then. They did have the little rabies scare then.
- FS: That's what I was talking about. As we told you last time, there had been a bad outbreak of the rabies here in the coyotes through the '20s, as we said the other day. And it had been a quite a thing to them. I think that in '32, too, if I remember right (and I wasn't here), they had to dip their stock for scabies. Everyone was required to dip their stock with a sulphur dip that would kill this scabies.
- CS: That would have been about in '33 and '34. They all went together and they built that dipping vat at Grandpa's. That was very costly for everybody, you know.
- FS: I think we mentioned before that the ranchers got together and financed and built this dipping vat. Then they all went there to dip their cattle. They had to heat it, so they had to have a furnace underneath their tank and chuck wood in under it and keep it warm all night, so it wouldn't freeze. They had to have a drain pan to drain the solution back. It was quite a costly thing for them.
- CS: Yes, they made a big cement trough that the cattle went off in. And they had to swim them across kind of in it. As I remember it, the vat itself was as long as this room.
- FS: Oh, yes.
- CS: And they had those handles with an "S"-shaped metal where they could push their head to force them clear under. They really baptized them. [Laugh-

ter] Then they had to get up onto a pen with a cement floor and they'd let them stand there and drain back into the vat. Yes, that was a very costly thing. And it was a bothersome thing. I don't know whether it was all that necessary. I guess it was.

FS: Oh, yes. It was.

RM: What stands out in your mind about the late '30s?

CS: Things were changing then. We were getting better roads and better communication.

FS: Where were the better communication — because we still had the old telephone line.

CS: Yes, but they put the old telephone line in over there in Diamond Valley.

FS: Oh, I was thinking of this valley. I wasn't in this valley in the '30s.

RM: Right — you were in Diamond Valley.

FS: One thing that stands out in my mind that happened here that was kind of unusual to me was the cricket infestation. And we talked about that before.

RM: Is Pine Valley the best agricultural area of Eureka County? Or how would you rate it?

FS: I think it is. [Laughs]

CS: We think it is. There's more cattle raising here.

RM: Diamond Valley's only been recently developed as an agricultural area.

CS: Well, in the last 35 years or so. Diamond Valley is more farms and more of this is a ranching area.

FS: The main thing that's unique or different, I would say, about Pine Valley is all this freight that had to be handed through from Palisade to Eureka in the developing of those towns. Then it came to be an agricultural or a stock-raising valley and has been a very good stock-raising valley. Outstanding, I think. And it's stable.

RM: Are the prime agricultural and stock areas of Eureka County Crescent Valley, Pine Valley and Diamond Valley?

FS: No, all of the county is agriculture and mining. I suppose you'd go on south down through Antelope Valley. That's south and west from Eureka. The county still runs on beyond Eureka down there. I don't know just how far south it goes — 30 miles or so. I think that Hot Creek down there is still almost in Eureka County. Also, Eureka County extends north of the Humboldt River.

RM: What stands out in your mind about valley history in the '40s, Charlene?

CS: I was married in '41 and left, so I wasn't around here so much.

FS: But we were back in '44, so it wasn't a very long period of time.

CS: Yes, I wasn't gone too long, was I? I was like a homing pigeon.

FS: I couldn't say how many men from Pine Valley went away to the army — Johnnie Damele and myself and Buster Carletti and many others from Eureka. The list would be long. Joe Rand went, but that was in the '50s.

CS: And a lot of men went during World War I. Joe Flynn's oldest brother, Will, Pete Hawkins in Palisade, and Jim Buckskin and Bill Rand.

-
- RM: Did those people die in the war?
- CS: No, most of them came back. Will died. The year that my father died, Will Flynn died — my father and my uncle. Both my mother and her sister lost their husbands within 3 weeks of one another in the flu epidemic. And that's what Will Flynn died from, really.
- FS: Yes. One of the Plumbers died from that flu. I think there were 5 in this valley who died from flu.
- CS: Yes, that was a devastating thing.
- RM: What stands out in your mind about the '40s, Floyd?
- CS: Well, we got married in '46. [Laughs]
- FS: I came into this valley and worked here in the early '40s. In '41 I worked for Ross Plumber and I also worked for the JD up here in '42 until I went to the army.

CHAPTER TEN

- FS: I guess that's the main thing I can remember about the '40s.
- CS: The '40s were a real struggle as far as I was concerned all the way along.
- RM: In what way was it hard?
- CS: Well, that was when I had all my trouble, and my divorce. That was my growing up.
- RM: But economically it wasn't as bad, was it?
- FS: Economically things were coming up pretty well by then. After the Depression I don't think things changed too much until about 1937 or '38. There were really tough times through the '30s.
- CS: Yes, they were still using horse machines.
- FS: After the war, things started to pick up.
- RM: So you began to see the Depression easing a little bit in the very late '30s.
- FS: Oh, yes.
- RM: And then it just continued to improve after the war?
- FS: Yes. There was quite an inflation.
- RM: So you were getting good prices after the war?
- FS: Sort of.
- CS: What you called good then.
- FS: Yes, they were good for the time. Along in '32, '33, '34 beef wouldn't bring 3 cents a pound, if you could sell it. Then when I came down here in '37, the price had come up to where a good yearling steer — a 2-year old steer — was selling for about 7 cents a pound.
- CS: I remember Joe Flynn wanted to borrow \$75 with his herd of cattle as collateral and the banker would not give it to him.
- RM: Is that right? How big a herd?
- FS: I think he had a couple hundred by then.
- RM: So you couldn't get \$75 loan in the Depression on a herd of cattle?
- CS: No, he sure could not.
- FS: That's right. He told me he was offered 2-1/2 cents a pound for his steers delivered in Austin. Joe said, "I won't deliver them to Austin for that price. I'll keep them and feed them another year." He wanted to get money from the bank so he could keep them and the bank wouldn't loan him money. He kept the steers and came through and came out with them. But he couldn't have done it if he hadn't had a wonderful friend who helped him through the winter by giving him feed for his cattle.
- RM: Who was the friend?
- FS: Billy Moore. He had a lifetime friend from then on. Old Joe Flynn could never say enough for him. He said he was a great guy.
- CS: Moore's son just died just a year ago last April.
- RM: What year did that happen?
- FS: That was in '33 or '34.
- CS: It was right about the time I was going to school down at Uncle Bill's.

-
- FS: It was '32, because it was that hard winter. They were tough times on these ranchers.
- CS: That winter was so tough I remember Pa and Charlie skinning a cow every day. The cattle were dying every day.
- RM: They were just skinning them for the hide?
- CS: They'd die and they'd just skin them out. They'd use the little feed team and come in the afternoon and hook onto her and pull the hide off of them. I tell you, they had hides hanging all over the fences by spring.
- RM: And this was because of the cold?
- CS: Yes. The cold and the long, long winter. I remember those cattle coming in the yard. They'd climb up on Mom's sagebrush pile of wood and eat that sagebrush. Oh, things were tough.
- RM: What is sagebrush wood?
- CS: It's just sagebrush wood. We used to always have a big pile of sagebrush wood and a big pile of mahogany and pine wood. I remember those cows climbing up to try to eat that. It was tough because they couldn't get the feed in. As we said, the railroad couldn't buck the snow. Things were pretty well paralyzed.
- FS: The snow was so deep that they couldn't come in any of the natural routes.
- CS: And they didn't have any equipment or anything to clear roads then.
- RM: So you had a terrible winter right in the middle of the Depression.
- CS: Yes. We often look back and admire my grandparents, and how they struggled through and held above all that. Because they had one hardship after another. And in those days you didn't put your hand out to the government; you stood on your own two feet. It was the survival of the fittest.
- RM: Did many people lose their places?
- FS: Oh, yes. A lot of people.
- CS: The people that were here lost theirs.
- RM: You mean on the place you're on right now?
- FS: Well, not this one. The one down across the road down there.
- CS: Well, the Carlettis.
- FS: Yes, Carletti lost this one too.
- CS: Yes, this place right here.
- RM: What happened when a person lost their place in the Depression?
- FS: They had borrowed money from the bank and the bank just foreclosed.
- RM: What would happen then?
- CS: They went down to Reno and got jobs.
- RM: So most of them moved to the city?
- FS: They went wherever they could find work.
- CS: The old lady who went through that is still alive in Reno. We go to see her every once and a while. She's 96 or 97 — old Hattie Carletti. They were all tough people.
- RM: What happened to the place after the bank foreclosed?
- FS: The bank kept the place and they generally would put a man on as a care-

- taker to see that everything was kept intact.
- CS: Till they could sell it.
- FS: They didn't improve it. They didn't do anything in that line. In later years they might lease it if they could find someone who would give them a little lease money on it until they could find a sale for it.
- RM: Was the herd usually included in the deal?
- FS: Yes. But the bank generally sold those. So the ranch was just left sitting. That's the way we bought that ranch down there. It had been lost to the bank and then some people bought it back. And Goodfellow had it at that time. But when he moved on and sold, he sold all his cattle. So we bought it as just a ranch. That happened to a good many ranches.
- RM: Was the caretaker getting paid?
- CS: Oh, yes.
- FS: He was getting just a minimum wage to stay there and take care of it.
- CS: And they were glad to get it.
- FS: Oh, yes.
- RM: And they wanted somebody there because otherwise the property would be vandalized and things would be carried off?
- CS: They didn't need to worry about vandalism so much then.
- FS: But they would have if someone hadn't have been there; it would have happened. But caretakers would work for a minimum salary because they could stay there on the place. They had a house furnished and they had outbuildings. They could have a milk cow and raise a garden — they had quite a few things that would help them along.
- RM: What was a fellow getting for something like that?
- FS: I don't know.
- RM: Would it be a family?
- FS: Oh, many times. I don't know what rates the bank would give them. That was probably negotiated.
- CS: That time that Terso Garro was here and was holding things together, I'm guessing that he probably got about \$70 a month, or maybe \$60.
- RM: My dad wasn't making too much more than that working as a miner. [Laughter]
- FS: That's right.
- CS: Well, these people were working. If you got a good family and they were a working family they made the best of it.
- FS: It depended on the caretaker. Many times he would keep up the fences, the corrals and buildings and things like that. He did work; he earned his money.
- RM: Yes. Then eventually somebody would buy it from the bank? And who would typically buy it? Were they local people or would they come from the outside?
- FS: Many times they were people who had a business and were making money. They could buy it at a real cheap price.
- CS: That's how Peretti got in out here.

-
- FS: Joe Peretti bought the Hay Ranch down here from the bank on a case of that kind, and Henry Merrick bought this place from the bank. Dan Filipini bought the Dean Ranch over in Crescent Valley from the bank.
- RM: So local people then would turn around and buy it up?
- CS: Sometimes. But the Merricks got this, and they weren't local.
- FS: They had had some kind of financing.
- RM: Basically they got it at fire sale prices?
- FS: Oh, yes.
- RM: Was there a lot of hostility towards the banks?
- FS: The only one I heard of who had any hostility towards the bank was Joe Flynn, when he couldn't borrow the money from them. He was pretty put out over that. There were other cases where the banks went broke and people couldn't get their money.
- CS: Yes, that was tough.
- RM: Did a lot of people in the area get hurt that way?
- CS: Yes, that's why some of them lost their places here.
- FS: The banks never went broke in Elko but the Eureka Bank went broke. Now, how many people were affected by that, I can't tell you. But I don't think it was a thing of hostility as much as disbelief and disappointment and hurt. They knew that the bank couldn't help it.
- CS: And it was just hard times; just spinning your wheels.
- RM: Is there anything else about the '40s that might stand out in your mind? We're getting economic improvement in the valley then?
- CS: Yes, in the '40s things started coming out.
- RM: What were you getting for cattle in the '40s?
- FS: It seems to me the cattle had got up to about 15 and 16 cents for steers. What dry cows sold for, I can't quote right now. I wasn't selling any at that time; the people I worked for sold them and I didn't pay that much attention.
- RM: I was talking to Carl Haas and he said that when he took over the R.O. Ranch down in Smoky Valley in '51, they kept steers a long time and sold them when they were 4 or 5 years old or something. He said some of those steers were something else. [Laughter] He said you didn't crowd them; they could tear up a corral and they could jump over a 6-foot fence.
- FS: I think they had more of that down south where they wintered their cattle outside. In this country where they had to feed through the winter, it wasn't profitable to hold them to that age. The only ones that went to that age were a few that wintered out here on occasion. I have seen 4- and 5-year old steers sold, but very few. But in that southern country where the cattle run out in the winter, they could do that.
- CS: [Laughs] They'd be practically like mustangs to get them in down there, as I recall.
- FS: Yes, they'd be wild, and a lot of those people crossed with the Brahma a little bit. And if you got a little Brahma stock in them, they can outrun a racehorse and they can jump a higher fence than a horse can.

-
- RM: Is that right? [Laughter]
- FS: So I know he would have had trouble if he got them to that age. [Laughs]
- CS: But in this area they didn't.
- RM: At what age would you sell a steer?
- FS: They sell them at about 1-1/2 to 2 years.
- CS: But I can remember that that varied in demand. I remember Frank Yates saying to Grandpa, "Oh, well, they don't want the big ones this year. They want small ones. And of course, I have big ones." I remember them discussing that. They were dropping down and they wanted more, like Floyd said, of the 1-1/2 and 2-year-olds. And here old Yates had his 3-year-olds, coming on 4. [Laughter]
- RM: Why would people want a big steer?
- FS: After the war for a short period of time the only people who would buy big steers were the army. They would buy the big cuts and they didn't care. But the normal housewife wanted smaller cuts. So that's why we were selling long yearlings. By the time they were fed out they'd be about 1200 pounds and they were a smaller cut. And that's what the public wanted.
- RM: What is a long yearling?
- FS: A year and a half. But during the war, there was a different phase of stock raising. During the war, they were using tallow and fat from the beef, all they could get, to put in explosives, because they were using lots of explosives. So they wanted these small, blocky cattle that put on excess fat. When they butchered them, they'd get that tallow, and the packing plants and buyers wanted these little blocky cattle. A lot of people bred their cattle to the little short blocky type for that purpose during the war, and after the war that dwindled down and they didn't want this fat. And the housewife was demanding leaner beef. So then people started to change their breeding system to get a leaner animal.
- RM: What breed was giving the stocky fat carcass?
- FS: These little English breeds were the best for that — the Angus and the Hereford.
- RM: And what were the more lanky ones?
- FS: Your Shorthorn and Brahma were long, tall cattle.
- RM: The beef market is subject to its fashions, just like everything else, isn't it?
- FS: Sure.
- RM: What fashions followed after that?
- FS: Here in late years they want very lean meat. They don't want a fat carcass.
- RM: How do you get a lean carcass?
- FS: They do it mainly through a breeding program; I don't understand that. But you get a taller, longer, slimmer animal that doesn't put on excess fat. They'll still grade good meat, but they will not carry a lot of fat.
- RM: It has been in the '80s they have wanted the lean, isn't it?
- FS: Yes, but I think that started gradually. I myself started growing bigger-framed animals and got away from the little short punchy fat ones right after the

war. I think that gradually came into being up until now.

RM: I see. And you got that with the Shorthorn and the Brahma?

FS: Yes. You get it in the English breeds too — in the Angus and the Hereford. They've lengthened them and they're a different carcass animal.

RM: Does Pine Valley have a history of sheep in it at all?

FS: It had a quite a history of sheep, but I'm a poor one to talk about sheep because next to fish, I dislike them the most. [Laughter]

CS: Oh, you liked eating them. I can remember the sheep situation. You know, they worry about the range fires now. I can remember as a kid looking out and seeing this great big smoke in the hills. They'd say, "Well, there's a blanky-blanky sheepman going through. He's set a fire." [Laughter] Nobody did anything about it. I guess it just burned itself out.

RM: Were the ranchers hostile to sheepman?

CS: Oh, yes. Sometimes you'd see a big cloud of dust and they were coming through your meadow. They did down by Grandpa's once.

FS: They tried to do it here too. [Laughs] The '30s were dry years, hard years, drought years. And the feed was poor anyway. The range was overstocked with cattle and by all means with sheep.

And at that time, in the early '30s, most of them in this country were Basque sheepmen. They would hire a fellow from the old country to come in and herd sheep and they would give them sheep for wages. And they'd stay out in camp. Well, before long, in a year's time, they'd have their own band and they'd go off with their own. Some of them had no base property, so they called them tramp sheepmen. They just ranged wherever they wanted to. So they were a problem to the established ranches that had a range right for their cattle. They were just tramping through. That was the main thing that brought the Bureau of Land Management into being. The range was overstocked and they knew they had to do something — so they passed the Taylor Grazing Act in 1934, as we discussed last time.

When the BLM took over, their ruling was that you had to have base property in order to acquire a range right. And on this base property, if you could show enough feed to feed your animals for 6 months of the year, you could get 6 months of use on the federal range for the summer. So that took care of all the tramp sheepmen.

There were a lot of sheepmen that had base property, and they could get range rights. The railroad ran through here, and the sheepmen had leased most of that railroad land and they came all through this country. But as I said, in those dry years, even through the '40s, they'd come in in the spring of the year early and shear those sheep. You'd get those cold blizzards in the spring and the sheep were cold, and they would just run and blat and then they'd turn them around and they'd run the other way. Well, they absolutely ruined the new feed starting; just tromped it completely out, to where it never got a regrowth after they went through. They were hurting the range badly. There was always controversy over that. The sheepmen won't claim

that they did the range any damage. But I could see it through the years; they were a problem here.

I can't tell you just when, but the people who owned the Eureka Land and Livestock Company down here had this range all leased through this country that they bought from the railroad. After they bought that land, they wanted to change from sheep to cattle and they sold a lot of the railroad land to the ranchers here in the valley. Then they changed their sheep operation to about half cattle and half sheep.

And we had such a run of coyotes in the country that they were taking a big percentage of the lamb crop every spring from some of the smaller sheep outfits. About in the early '50s up here, the Sallaberrys were running sheep on the Cortez Range and they had a government trapper living right with them in camp in the spring at lambing time to hunt coyote dens and keep the coyotes down. They still took such a percentage of his lamb crop that he was discouraged and he sold all his sheep and bought cattle.

Several of the sheepmen did the same — they changed from sheep to cattle. After most all of these sheep left the country but a few, we had better years. The grass came in better and the range wasn't overstocked. Things just improved by leaps and bounds. Since that time, I would say that this range is greatly improved from what it was at that time. My idea of the best improvement of the range is some good years with more rainfall and whatnot along with the lack of the sheep in particular, and probably fewer cattle. So the range has improved, even contrary to the BLM and those people's claim that it's running down.

RM: I see. The railroad owned the mountain range along here?

FS: When the Central Pacific went through, in order to finance that, the government gave them every other section for 20 miles on each side of the railroad. That's a 40-mile strip of land that followed this railroad clear through. So that's what I call railroad land.

RM: Does that come all the way down to here?

FS: That comes right to here. Right over here about a mile was their last section up on the west side.

RM: Is that right? Who owns all that land now?

FS: Dan Filipini, who had the Dean Ranch over there, bought a little better than a township of railroad land. And Joe Peretti down here at this next ranch bought a huge amount. Charlene's uncle Bill bought a lot of it and he got it blocked and fenced it in. The Tomeras on the other end bought a lot of it. All of the ranchers from here down around that area bought that land.

RM: Then the ranchers from here to the railroad don't have to worry that much about grazing, do they, because they're got a lot of their own grazing land?

FS: They do have it, and yet it's intermingled with the federal land. The BLM does control the federal land but they can't control the other.

RM: But the cows are getting over onto the BLM land?

FS: It's kind of a hassle.

-
- RM: Yes. But their problems are fewer than a rancher, say, down in the Smoky Valley, who is totally dependent on federal land.
- FS: Right. It's made a big difference to this valley.
- RM: What finally happened to the Eureka Land and Livestock Company?
- FS: Phil Etcheverry bought it. I don't know whether you know Phil or not. He has holdings in Bakersfield, California. He takes his sheep there in the winter and brings them back here to Roberts Creek in the summer. He runs cattle here too.
- RM: So he still has land and grazing rights?
- FS: Oh, yes.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

- RM: Does anything stand out in your mind about the valleys in the '50s?
- CS: Oh, yes. The new highway came through and we were also connected to the outer world by phone — the dial system.
- RM: Before, you had your old crank system into Palisade?
- CS: Yes, but it was just ranch to ranch and then into the store in Palisade.
- RM: And when you wanted to call Joe Blow down here, you just gave his ring?
- CS: Yes. One long was the Stone house, 2 shorts was the Rand place, a long and a short was the Yates and so on.
- RM: And that had been put in during the teens?
- CS: Before I was born.
- FS: I think it must have been put in about 1915, somewhere along in there.
- RM: And the ranchers got together and put it in themselves?
- CS: Yes.
- RM: So in the 1950s you got a real phone system connected to the outside world?
- CS: Yes. We still had our phone, but it was connected to the outer world.
- FS: When did we put that in?
- CS: I know that when Danell went to high school it was towards the end, Pop. They had the highway clear through when she went in for high school. She graduated in '59.
- FS: And that's when we made this phone line into Carlin?
- CS: Yes. We had both the phone and the highway when she went to high school.
- RM: What was the road like before they put the highway in?
- CS: Just a gravel road, like the one you were on coming up here — a little better than that in spots, but not much.
- FS: In the '40s the road from Garden Pass down through here was just a dirt trail, but they got that graveled eventually in the late '40s or the early '50s. It was the late '40s when they finally got the gravel on down through there. But from here on down the valley, a lot of it wasn't even graveled yet, and we had to turn and go over the hill into Carlin and that was dirt road and some of it was graveled.
- CS: Some was natural gravel.
- FS: Yes, but that Pace Hill wasn't . . .
- CS: No. [Laughs]
- FS: It was natural gravel and mud that deep, so it was a bear cat getting out of this valley over there. You couldn't go over along the river like we do; you went over that summit.
- CS: Well, you didn't go in the winter much.
- FS: If it was rainy or the snow was too deep or anything like that, you just stayed home.
- RM: So you stayed home a lot?
- CS: Yes, you stayed home a lot. And when you went shopping, you had a list that long and you filled it. Floyd used to go up to Twin Falls and load up on

potatoes and squash and other winter things in the fall. And apples; we always had apples in the cellar.

RM: So you were living very much like they did 70 years ago.

FS: Oh, very much.

CS: You canned a lot and . . .

FS: We had a well under the house and a pump on the sink, and Charlene pumped all our water with a hand pump for many, many years. We didn't have running water.

CS: We never had running water until Joyce was born, and she's 24. That's when you put that in.

RM: So in '68?

CS: Something like that.

RM: And did you get that because you had power?

FS: Well, because I had an old Witte generator. [Laughter]

CS: We never had power until 1986; it came in while we were here. Floyd and I built this house.

RM: Is that right? Did the entire valley lack outside power until '86?

CS: No. We were the last. There were 3 different power companies that came within 30 miles of this valley, but they didn't come in the valley.

RM: Is that right? Which ones were they?

FS: Sierra Pacific was in the Beowawe area and out at Crescent Valley, and Mount Wheeler was in Diamond Valley — it came down as far as the old Flynn place. And Wells Rural or whatever it is was right over here at Jiggs. It was this side of Jiggs, over the mountain here.

RM: Jiggs is right over the mountain here?

FS: Yes, about 30 miles or so.

CS: They wanted to come in here, but they gave us such an unrealistic figure that we couldn't cut it.

RM: How did you finally get power in here?

CS: In '86 we finally were given an offer.

FS: Wells Rural Electric was a rural electric company and they were trying to expand a little bit. They wanted to service Carlin and when they were finally able to service Carlin with power, we were able to get them to run this branch line out here.

CS: But they wouldn't put it in Carlin unless they took us in.

FS: They had to have a rural line in order to get the REA [Rural Electrification Administration] money.

RM: So Carlin didn't have outside power either?

CS: Right. They had their own generators.

FS: They had 2 huge generators there. But in 1948, Charlene's uncle, when he took over the old home ranch down here, was the first man to buy a diesel generator. That started the ball rolling and [laughter] each one, as they could afford it, got their own generator.

CS: Putt-putt. Yes, we got our own Witte generator.

FS: And did we get ours in '62?

CS: You got it when Dave was 12 years old and he was born in '50, so it would be '62.

FS: I bought the first generator in 1962 and we generated our own power until we got this power in February of 1986.

RM: Was a Witte an old one-lunger?

FS: Yes.

CS: You'd wake in the night, it'd be cold out, and if it was silent, boy, you piled out of that bed — or he did — and went out and got life back into it. [Laughter]

FS: That was a terrible feeling, to wake up and not hear that miserable old thing.

RM: Is that right? But they were reliable, weren't they?

FS: Oh, yes.

CS: They were. Really, they should run a full 24 hours to do the best job.

RM: How much fuel did they use in a day?

FS: They were the most economical of any of those generators I've used. We only had a 5-KW plant. I think it probably put out a total of 2, but it was considered 5. [Laughter] But it would burn 5 gallons of diesel in a 24-hour day.

CS: And diesel was less expensive then.

RM: Yes, 20 cents or so.

FS: Now, the 10-KW, a bigger plant, ran about twice that.

RM: How big was your flywheel on that little one?

FS: About 3 feet across. It was a good-sized wheel. There were 2, one on each side.

RM: Did you have to put new rings in them or anything very often?

FS: No. They would last and last and last. If you kept oil in them and kept them cared for, they would just run and run and run.

RM: You never really had to repair it?

CS: Oh, you had to go down and keep water in the thing because it would get so it leaked.

FS: You could buy units and rebuild that just like new for very little.

RM: I like the way they sound. We had a one-lunger on the hoist of our mine in Reveille Valley. And when you put a load on it, it would go sh-sh . . .

CS: Oh, yes.

FS: If you'd turn on too many appliances — the iron and a few other things — you'd hear it do that, too. [Laughter]

CS: I never had an electric washer until John F. Kennedy was buried in 1963.

RM: Is that right? You must have been one of the last valleys in Nevada to get outside power.

FS: I'm sure we were.

CS: We were the last rural electric loan of 2 percent in the nation. We made the news with that. Of course, they thought we were dumb-dumbs in the boonies who didn't know what electricity was. They didn't know we had our gen-

-
- erators. And they didn't think we knew how to handle electricity because they'd come in and see an old hand iron and say, "Oh, do you know how to use those?"
- I said, "I sure do." [Laughter]
- I used to heat them on that gas stove there till we got the electricity at this place in '86. We moved up here to stay in '83. We had the house built to be livable by 1980, but things came up that kept us from being here steady until '83. And I ironed with them right until '86.
- RM: So that was just natural to you.
- CS: Yes. I'd used them when I was a kid when my grandma had them. I grew up with them. I'll admit I was too spoiled — I didn't iron with them much. I was too busy riding horses and enjoying my childhood. [Laughter]
- RM: What difference did the road make?
- CS: That helped a lot. We didn't have to struggle with going over the summit, and you could get in and shop a little more often. We were not used to it, though.
- FS: About that time our kids were old enough to go to high school in Elko and we had to board them there and take them back and forth. So we were going every week, and that road made a big difference to us.
- RM: Was it hard on you to board your kids out like that?
- CS: It wasn't easy, but somehow we managed. I couldn't go in with them because we still had the ranch school and I had some kids out here going to school. The others knew what they were supposed to do. I'm not saying that they did it perfectly, but . . .
- RM: Who did they board with?
- CS: One of them stayed with my aunt one year, and then Danell stayed with Doc Moore and worked for her to help a little on her board and room there, but we paid for her too.
- RM: That was an extra expense for people out here, wasn't it?
- CS: Oh, yes, definitely.
- FS: And then Claire started 2 years after Danell. She stayed with the Dr. Reed family, and she helped Mrs. Reed quite a bit around the house.
- CS: We still had to pay, but it was less money.
- FS: And then when John got ready to go to high school, we bought a house over there and we gave a home to a little lady who needed a home there to take care of the kids. That worked well for us; it cut down our expenses.
- CS: We had different women.
- FS: We had 4 of them. We had the house and the kids stayed there and they had a lady there to oversee them. When Dave was in his last 2 years of school, we hadn't sold it but we had rented it out. He stayed with the Bear family, owners of Capriolas.
- CS: Out on a ranch there where he could be kept a little busier.
- FS: Yes. He stayed a couple of years with them.
- RM: So it wasn't easy.

- CS: Yes, but it didn't seem a struggle then. Of course, when I'd go in to try to find somebody to take the kids, I was like a politician. I went from . . . not door to door, but to the reliable places.
- RM: What else stands out in your mind about the '50s?
- CS: Well, Floyd went more to machinery in the hayfield. He got rid of the horse machines.
- FS: That's what stands out in my mind I guess as much as anything. Up until the early '50s we were putting up all our hay with teams in stacks — loose hay. So we were doing it the old way. Then in the early '50s, '51, I bought a little tractor. I started to mow quite a lot of the hay with it, but it took years before I could convert over from teams. I think it was up in the '60s before we got converted clear over to machinery. We still used teams all through that period.
- CS: I think I quit working in the hayfield when Dave was about 10. That'd be in '60.
- FS: So it was probably about that time or shortly after that when we got all machinery in the field and didn't have any teams.
- CS: It happened a little at a time, yes.
- RM: Was it a big financial burden to acquire the machinery?
- FS: Yes, it was more costly, but at the time it was hard to find teamsters that could drive the team.
- CS: And parts for the old machinery too. The rest of the world was mechanized and we weren't. And when we bought something, we wanted to pay cash for it and we didn't want to go in debt to speak of. So we would wait until we were more financially secure. We got by on a shoestring; everybody thought we were tightwads. Well, that's fine. We were figuring it out ourselves. We were tightwads. We still are. We don't need to be, but I'm used to it. [Laughter]
- FS: We got married in '46 and we had total financing of a run-down ranch as a debt with no cattle. So we had to build that up from scratch. In 25 years I had that debt completely paid off and the ranch stocked with cattle. Maybe we were tightwads, but we kept things together and made it, along with having to educate the kids as well as we could. It was a burden. It was trial and test and times that were hard, but . . .
- CS: It was a good burden. It's what you should do.
- FS: I don't have any ill feelings about it at all. I'm glad I lived in the time period that I did.
- RM: Yes. What about the '60s?
- CS: Carl went to Vietnam from '66 through '68.
- FS: Our daughter Danell got married in '60, and Claire got married too in the '60s and had all her hard luck.
- RM: The family was getting grown by then?
- CS: They were, yes.
- FS: They were moving out then. In the '60s we were just normally struggling on

through.

CS: We still had the school down there even though our kids weren't in it.

RM: You had a school on your ranch?

CS: The school was on the ranch and the neighbors had younger children.

RM: How big a school was it?

CS: Oh, goodness. I think there were about 10 kids at its peak.

RM: You established it with your own children?

FS: Yes, we established the school in the fall of '51.

RM: And then when did it fold?

CS: In '68. We didn't just have our own kids. We took in a niece and a nephew who lived with us and a little girl from the iron mine. The iron mine was operating then.

RM: Where is the iron mine?

FS: You can see it up there [in the Cortez Range]. Right about at that first low pass, right on the left you can see a brown spot on the hill. That's the workings of the old iron mine. And it worked in the '50s, didn't it?

CS: Yes.

RM: Were they shipping the ore out on the railroad?

FS: Yes, they trucked it to Palisade and shipped it to San Francisco and put it on a ship, I understand, and it went to Japan.

RM: Who owned it?

FS: The Modarellis owned the mine and they leased it to Simplot from Idaho.

RM: Did they work a lot of men there?

CS: There were quite a few.

FS: I don't know just how many. There was quite a fleet of trucks.

CS: In fact, they started that Union 76 station right there that's between here and Perettis'.

FS: And they started a Shell station down on Cold Creek.

RM: So you had a couple of gas stations in the valley?

CS: Yes, just for a short time. They had quite a flock of trucks hauling into Palisade.

RM: Did the people live in Carlin?

FS: No, they lived right up at the mine. They built some little shacks and lived right up there.

CS: Or they had trailers.

RM: So there must have been a pretty good-sized community there?

FS: There was only the one little girl there who went to our school.

CS: I think there were only a couple or 3 families up at the iron mine.

FS: Plus the singles.

RM: Did they have an open pit?

FS: Yes.

RM: Did they exhaust the ore?

FS: No.

RM: Let's see, where were we before we started discussing the mine?

- CS: We were going back and forth. The kids were going to Elko.
- FS: One more thing that happened in the '60s was that the post office moved from Palisade to Carlin.
- CS: I thought it was in the late '50s that the mail started coming out of Carlin.
- RM: Did losing your post office make a big difference to you?
- FS: It didn't make any difference at all. They ran it out of Carlin the same way.
- CS: The postmistress in Palisade was irate because they were trying to hang on in Palisade and she had the post office. When they moved the post office into Carlin she lost her job, so she wasn't real happy about it. They moved down to Sparks and live down there, so they did all right. It was time for Palisade. It was slow death anyway. When you went into Palisade to get the mail, there was nothing else in there. When was the last year they had school in Palisade? I don't really recall that.
- FS: Jim Buckskin drove the mail. We had daily mail delivery, didn't we?
- CS: No, we never have had. The only time we had daily mail was when I was a kid and they had the old choo-choo train. [Laughs]
- FS: That's right, when the old narrow gauge carried it they had daily mail through here. Then Jim Buckskin carried the mail and it was twice a week at first — Monday and Friday. It finally came back to Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
- CS: And that's the way it is now. It's Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
- RM: Oh, do you get mail delivered to your box down here?
- CS: Yes. He goes in to Lunds' — to their house — and delivers, and he delivers up to Stenoviches, but we have to go out to the box.
- RM: How did they work it with the train? It didn't stop at every ranch, did it?
- CS: Oh, no. As he went by, he just threw it.
- RM: In a sack?
- CS: No, he just threw it out.
- RM: He could just throw the letters out there?
- CS: Well, he had it tied up. It never was in a sack. And in the winter I remember that, boy, you'd better be down there when they threw that off, because snow or not, plung [throwing noise]. [Laughs]
- RM: If it was raining or anything?
- CS: Right. Actually, I think Mr. Saxton did that more or less as a favor to the ranchers.
- FS: I don't think so. He fought with the federal government over his money for his contract for mail. That's how he kept the train running, really.
- CS: Oh, I thought it was a friendly deed. And when you mailed mail, you had a hoop. You took an old willow and bent it around, and then you put a clothespin on that. When you had any letters to mail, you clipped them in there and then you stood by that wobbling old machine as it came down the railroad track. [Laughs] I was scared to death of it. I was a big kid before I ever held that hoop out. The conductor would reach out the back of the train and hook his arm in it, take your letter off and fling your hoop back to you.

RM: Is that right? Did a letter ever miss and go flying?
CS: No.
FS: He didn't go by fast enough for that. [Laughs]
CS: No, they didn't go that fast. But I was a pretty good-sized kid before I got the nerve enough to hold that hoop up there.
RM: Rain or shine or sleet or snow, out it went?
CS: You got there and caught it, yes. There were no plastic sacks in those days.
RM: And if you weren't there . . .
CS: It would just lie there.
FS: They wanted mail badly enough that somebody was there, you can bet on that. [Laughter]
CS: Every day but Sunday.
RM: What about packages?
CS: Well, sometimes if you had packages they'd stop.
RM: What if you had a package to mail?
CS: You could flag them down, and they'd reluctantly stop.
RM: How fast were they going? [Laughter]
FS: It's hard to tell. They might have slowed down, but I think their average was about 15.
CS: Don't you think they go 25 miles an hour?
FS: When I figured the timetable from Palisade to Eureka, they couldn't have averaged more than 15.
RM: So he just reached out and grabbed that hoop with his arm?
CS: Yes. He'd just lean out there. They were just used to doing that, you know. They'd hang onto the railing. He'd reach out there and hook his arm in it and take the letter out.
RM: And this was until '38?
CS: No, we didn't get mail on the train in '38, because the mail contract was let to Jim Buckskin. He was doing that in '30 or '32. Remember, he had to carry it by horse.
FS: That's right. They had taken it away from the train and given it to Jim before the trains quit. I know he carried it the hard winter in '32.
CS: Yes, he did. He carried it when I was going to school down at Uncle Bill's.
FS: Then Jim Buckskin's house burned down in Palisade and he moved to Elko. And he came out of Elko and picked it up in Carlin and brought it.

CHAPTER TWELVE

CS: This is quite the pioneer area.

RM: I can see that. And interestingly, you're not that far from a mainline trans-continental railroad; but yet, a few miles off of it and it's pioneer territory.

FS: It sure was.

CS: Now you're saying that this was still a pioneering area in the '60s. I was thinking of other things in the '60s too. That's when the school closed down here and they started busing the kids into Carlin, and that was a bitter pill for a lot of them to take. They didn't like having to consolidate and lose our little schools. But they did and now they just think it's wonderful.

FS: Another thing — after the highway was finished through here, they started a highway maintenance camp down here about 3 miles. We had 2 families there and their kids came to our school too.

CS: Yes, that was in the '50s.

RM: Is that camp still there?

CS: No.

FS: They don't use it anymore. It still sits there, but it's unused.

RM: They've reduced the number of stations all over the state, haven't they?

CS: Yes, they have. This station was short-lived. They were only there about 12 years.

RM: What was the cattle business like in the '60s?

FS: The cattle business was good through the '60s. We had some drought years in the late '50s and then in the '60s we had some good years — good spring rains, good feed, good hay crops. We had good years for quite a number of years. The prices of cattle fluctuated — some years good, some years not so good. But they were all pretty fair years. We couldn't complain about that.

CS: A big thing for us in the '50s was our move from down out of the swampy field at Goodfellows up to where Carl lives now, where we raised our family. They literally took the old house down over my head. We had an old fellow who could do carpenter work and they literally tore the house down over our head in the summer.

We bought a building from the Mount Hope Mine in '50. We couldn't work on it in '50, but in '51 we decided to fix the house and fix the schoolhouse, and we got a teacher. All this happened in the fall of '51. We were supposed to have it all ready.

RM: Where is the Mount Hope Mine?

FS: That's over Garden Pass, just on the other side and back up to the west.

RM: Was it a pretty big operation?

FS: Well, it was during the war. It was some rare minerals that they used a lot of during the war. They mined it and it flourished through the war. Then after the war, it shut down. They sold that in '50, didn't that?

CS: It was closed in about in '47 or '48.

FS: And in '50 they sold their businesses. I went up there because we had to

move. Our old house that was down there had just juniper posts and rocks for a foundation and it was on swampy ground. It was a big 2-story house and it was twisting and warping and cold. Wanted to move out of that wetter ground, out of the hay meadow. When we irrigated, it was wet all around the house and our corrals were bad too — barn and all.

I went up to Mount Hope and bought their office and warehouse building. There was a fellow there the day they had the auction who moved houses from Fallon and I made arrangements for him to move it for me. It had a cement vault with a big steel double door in the vault, and in order for him to move it, I had to take that vault out — break the cement down to ground level. (He said he could move it in 2 weeks.) I also had to come home and dig my foundation and pour a cement foundation to set it on in that time.

CS: We did that with the wheelbarrow. [Laughter]

FS: But I broke that cement down. I had a 16-pound sledge[hammer] and I couldn't even knock the corners off of it, so I bought a 40-ton jack from the caretaker there for \$20. And I got inside that thing and popped the walls out. And it was reinforced with mine rails for steel. [Laughs]

RM: Wow.

FS: It was tough, I'll tell you.

CS: We got that building for about \$1000 — a pretty cheap house. It was nice — a good, well-built building.

FS: Anyway, I finally got that cement out of there and I took that big steel double door and pried it up with a bar and got it on a tilt and tied it with a chain to the rafters with a pulley rig. I let it down to the floor with this pulley rig up; it weighed about a ton.

RM: And the rafters held it?

FS: The rafters held it. Of course, I hooked to several of them. I let that door down on 2 pipes and this warehouse had a big double door in the front of it with a ramp out front. I rolled it out on the pipes and into my pickup. When I rolled it into the pickup the tires held it and I brought it home. When I got home I found a big stout corner post on my fence about a half mile from the house, backed up to it and hooked a chain to it, and drove out from under it. Charlene thought I'd made one of the worst mistakes in the world, to haul that piece of junk home.

CS: [Laughs] I launched around and I said, "What did you bring that thing home for? And wearing yourself out!" You know what? He ended up selling that thing for \$100. And that was a lot of money to us then.

FS: It had only stood there about a month when Chris Sharon from the *Elko Free Press* office come out and said, "You bought that warehouse up there and you got that vault door. Do you want to sell it?"

I said, "Yes. What'll you give me for it?"

He said, "\$100."

And I said, "You got a vault door." [Laughs] So we sold him the vault door and he took it and as far as I know they still have it in that old building over

there.

CS: Then I thought he was the smartest man there was. [Laughter]

FS: But after I got that done, I had to come home and haul my gravel with the team by hand and dig my footing and pour my concrete and mix it by hand.

CS: We did it, though.

FS: I had that foundation ready for him to set the building on in 2 weeks.

CS: He was younger then. We both were.

RM: That's still hard work. [Laughter]

CS: That was very hard work.

FS: That was the beginning of it. And then when we moved that fall, our neighbors came with 2 of their tractors and they moved our old wash house off from our old house; a bunch of them came to give us a day's work.

CS: No, they did that in the spring, because that's when we used to celebrate birthdays, and it was our birthday, yours and mine.

FS: But anyhow, they came and give us a day's work. I had it jacked up and we put it on logs — skids. They hooked their tractors on it and dragged the thing up there and we set it on a timber foundation.

RM: I'll be darned.

CS: That was the wood shed.

FS: We worked it over for our schoolhouse.

FS: That became the schoolhouse and the teacher's quarters.

RM: I was going to ask you where the teacher lived.

FS: She lived in one room of that and held school in the other room.

CS: It was sort of small, but she didn't mind.

FS: We had to find a teacher and furnish the teacher board and room and furnish 5 kids to start the school.

CS: You had to have 5 to start a school and 3 to hold it in those days. We ended up with 6 kids. And you realize what a teacher gets paid now —well, that poor lady was getting \$2400 for a school year and we were boarding her free.

RM: She took her meals with you?

CS: Oh, yes.

RM: Who did you get?

CS: Mildred Campbell is who we got, and she stayed with us 3 years. That lady was still alive about a year or so ago in a rest home down Sacramento way.

RM: Was it hard to find other teachers?

CS: Teachers didn't like to come out in the boonies like that. But she was an older lady.

FS: We had quite a variety and quite a lot of teachers through that period of time.

CS: Yes, we were tough on them or they didn't like the boonies.

FS: Probably both. [Laughter] I had been on the school board in Palisade when our kids went to school in there.

CS: We only had 2 kids who went in there.

FS: When we started this school, I quit and Charlene took over the school board

business.

CS: Roger Bruffey and I held it together.

RM: What do you recall about the '70s?

CS: Lots of things. We bought this place in '73.

RM: Why don't you describe where you are for people reading this?

FS: We say this is on the Pony Creek Ranch.

CS: We're on the east edge of our son Dave's meadow. Dave has the Pony Creek Ranch. Is that what you call it? I thought it was the Carletti . . .

FS: Well, it's been called a dozen things. I call it the Pony Creek Ranch; it's the only ranch on Pony Creek.

RM: Why did you move up here?

CS: You ask Floyd. That was his idea too. [Laughs]

FS: In 1972 we had a few dry years and I was having to buy hay for my cattle. I had enough cattle that I didn't want to sell the cattle to buy hay, and it was a kind of a problem — I was buying hay every year. I was in Diamond Valley one fall to buy some hay for the winter and a fellow I bought a couple of hundred ton of hay from said, "You wouldn't want to buy the farm too, would you?"

And I got to thinking. Our middle son, Carl, had had a stint in Vietnam and had just come back. I thought, "Well, he wants to come to the ranch, so that would be a good deal. I'll buy that farm and stick him there." I thought that we'd send our yearlings or weaner calves or whatnot over there and feed them. It would fill in and we wouldn't have to buy hay anymore. So I bought the farm. Carl didn't move there that fall, but the next spring he moved there in a little old camp trailer and irrigated the farm and put up the hay.

CS: And we were bailing it then.

FS: And that fall he got married, didn't he?

CS: No, Dave got married in '71.

FS: But when Carl got married we went down to Smoky Valley, down at Carvers, to the highway maintenance camp there. They were selling 2 houses from the maintenance camp and I bought one of them and moved it up there. Carl and I poured the foundation and Bud Eldridge in Elko moved the building up there for us.

RM: Where did he move it?

FS: To this farm in Diamond Valley that I bought — just this side of Eureka. Anyway, Carl got married that fall and moved into that. We moved our cattle over there — the calves and other young stock — and fed them that winter on that hay.

The next spring, in early spring, Joe Rand was living on this place and he wanted to know if we wanted to buy it — he wanted to sell. That put me on the spot because I'd borrowed a little money to buy that farm and then the next spring he wanted to sell this. And this was a valuable piece of property and fit with our other property. We made plans and I borrowed money and I bought this place from Joe in the spring of '73.

Then Dave and Billy Sue come up and moved onto this place. And they were with us the winter before, as I said. He and Billy Sue lived in the trailer on the other place down there and in the spring, when I bought this, he and Billy Sue moved up to this place.

CS: They moved here in June of '73.

FS: We kept the farm and Carl stayed over there for several years. Then we went over there in the spring of '78.

CS: No, we didn't move up here until the fall of '78. Carl and Sharon and the twins and Joe came back to our place in November of '78 and we moved out and went up to the cabin in '78.

FS: In '78 we put the farm in Diamond Valley up for sale and moved Carl into our home down there, and Dave was on this place — we had bought it. And Charlene and I decided to come up and build our home here.

CS: Papa decided. [Laughs]

FS: We moved into that little cabin by Dave's house and lived there while we built this house.

RM: So you bought this whole Pony Creek Ranch?

FS: Yes.

RM: And your son lives down below?

FS: Yes.

RM: And then your other son lives on the other one?

FS: Right.

RM: That's really nice.

CS: We have another son who's in Elko; he's in the construction business.

FS: But Charlene and I got to where the work on that ranch was just a little more than I could handle and keep up to, and we had a few little health setbacks.

CS: So he got some more work to do. [Laughs]

FS: I decided to build our home up here and we moved into that cabin and put our farm up for sale. We worked on this house all winter and got it framed up and everything by spring, but the farm didn't sell. So Charlene and I had to go over and irrigate the farm in May and put up the hay that summer, then we came back here at the end of September. The boys hauled the hay here from the farm to feed it and we came back here and worked again on our house that winter. Then the next spring it still hadn't sold, so we had to move back over there again and irrigate it and put up the hay the second time.

CS: And stay from May until September again.

FS: Then in the fall of '80 Jerry Sestanovich and his brother Leroy bought the farm from us, so that cleared us of that problem.

CS: We worked on this and we were about to have Thanksgiving dinner here in November of 1980. It wasn't completed. Then we were moved in here and we did finish it.

FS: But with these interruptions . . . and then I didn't have power tools. I built this all by hand. So it was slow.

CS: He didn't want power tools anyway. He wanted to do it the pioneer way.

[Laughs]

FS: It took time but most of my time was in backing up and correcting mistakes.

[Laughs]

RM: I know that feeling in building. [Laughs]

FS: Anyhow, we've had a lot of setbacks through those years, but those were the main events with our business here.

RM: Is there anything else that happened that would have affected the valley as a whole in the last 20 years?

CS: Oh, land — a lot of things. With the mines and the oil wells in here, with those big old tankers rumbling down through the valley, it's not as peaceful as it used to be.

RM: Are they pretty good wells?

CS: Evidently. A big old tanker goes out of there every single day.

RM: When did they hit those?

CS: Let's see, how long ago?

FS: It's been at least 15 years.

RM: And they've been producing all that time? Are there a number of wells?

FS: There are 3 right there at Blackburn, 1 across over here and 2 down here by Tommy Tomera's place.

RM: So here and Railroad Valley are Nevada's oil areas.

FS: That's the only oil in the state.

CS: But it doesn't do anybody any good. I mean, it isn't on any private property.

RM: How has the big Carlin gold mine affected you?

CS: It changed Elko; it's not the nice little town it used to be.

RM: That's one of the big gold-producing centers of the world.

FS: Oh, it sure is.

CS: With progress comes problems, let's say it that way. I guess the area has benefitted economically.

FS: As far as Pine Valley's concerned, neither the gold mines nor the oil wells have done us a bit of good.

CS: Well, now wait a minute. You get the tax money.

FS: Well, that's all right too. But it hasn't lowered our taxes.

CS: No, it sure hasn't lowered our taxes.

RM: But has it made more things available — more county services and so forth?

CS: They're having a hey-day.

FS: I guess you'd say so. I don't think it's improved our situation here that much, but it has in Eureka and in the towns.

RM: So it hasn't really affected the valley people that much?

FS: Not really. As far as ranching's concerned, I don't think those things have changed the price of cattle at all.

CS: Let's put it this way, Pop. Maybe if they weren't there, our taxes would have gone higher.

FS: Well, it's a possibility. As far as we can see on the surface, you don't see any benefits from it.

RM: Did you ever know anybody who used to work those mines before they became big producers?

CS: We didn't know those Hansens — they had the Newmont mine, didn't they?

FS: We've heard about them and we know people in Carlin who knew those old people.

RM: Are the Hansens still around?

CS: No, they've died.

FS: Lee Taylor in there knew them real well and he's still around.

RM: Were they a couple old prospectors out there with their mine?

CS: That's what I understand.

FS: And that's right where this big rich mine is — right on top of their claims.

RM: Did they live out there, or did they live in Carlin?

FS: I think they were out there most of the time in the summer, working their mines. Maybe all winter too. They tell me most of these big mines around the country are on little claims that were worked before. They're not new finds.

CS: Right. Just look at Buckhorn. It was an old mine.

RM: Is the Buckhorn a big operation now?

CS: It was.

FS: It's closed down now.

RM: Why did it close?

CS: We don't know, but it's been closed down for a year and a half or two.

RM: Are there any other big mines in your vicinity?

FS: No, not really.

RM: You've probably been on top of every one of the mountains around here, haven't you?

FS: I've pretty much covered this whole country horseback.

CS: That's how he found this area right here. I sure didn't. He just came and said, "You know, Mom, let's turn our place over to Carl and Sharon and the kids and let's us just move up there and we'll just build our house. I've got a good place in mind."

I said, "Oh, Floyd. Have you lost your marbles? I don't want to leave my house." Well, we're here. [Laughs]

RM: How far can a cowboy go on horseback on a typical day?

FS: Oh, 30 to 40 miles.

CS: How far did Wallace Bailey cover?

FS: Well, he said typically, average. [Laughter]

CS: He was an unusual old man.

RM: How far did Wallace Bailey go?

FS: I've told several people about it; I told one of the grandsons the other day. It's hard for people to believe it. He was Hale Bailey's dad and he lived in Diamond Valley. When I worked at Sadlers — that was only 3 miles from his place — he rode by one morning. (I had just come in from wrangling horses.) I talked to him a little bit as he went by and he told me he was

-
- coming down here to the Rand place to get a bull. He was riding a little sorrel mare and I naturally supposed he'd go down one day and back the next. Well, he came by just between daylight and sunup, and that evening, just at dusk, he came back in, driving a yearling bull. And it's 45 miles from there to the Rand place. He drove that bull back.
- RM: So he went 90 miles?
- FS: Ninety miles, and half of it driving a yearling bull. There are not many people who can drive a yearling bull that far in one day.
- RM: How did he do it?
- FS: He just knew cows and knew horses and was a going little man. [Laughter]
- RM: He must have had a heck of a horse.
- FS: He had to have.
- RM: That horse went 90 miles?
- FS: That's right. But that's rare.
- RM: When you drive a bull, how does he know where you want to go?
- FS: He doesn't know. You make him know.
- FS: You just turn him the way you want to go.
- CS: Well, if he's going up the road he'll pretty well know to stay in the road.
- FS: But he'll fight to go back home, so you have to get after him.
- RM: The horse does that kind of automatically, doesn't she?
- FS: Right. You head him the right direction and keep him going. He actually drove the bull 42 miles, because he stopped at Sadlers with it. I opened the corral and he put the bull in there. But say he drove the bull 42 miles. Now, you're out here driving one. How many miles did he go?
- RM: Yes, zig-zagging . . .
- FS: Chasing that bull — that man rode a lot of miles that day. It's hard for anybody to believe that a man could do that. [Laughter] I saw it with my own eyes or I wouldn't have believed it, and a lot of fellows I tell it to think I'm dreaming.

The following is Mr. Slagowski's expanded explanation of the freight wagons of the West, inspired by the discussion in chapters 5 and 6.

ADDENDUM

The freight teams and loads of the West differed greatly from those used on the large farms of the Midwest. It was possible for the farmers on their large, level and cleared fields to work large numbers of animals on heavy loads. As many as 40 animals, usually mules, were used on heavy combines, etc. They could be 8 animals wide and 5 long, and with the level cleared fields all animals could walk equally free of obstacles to pull the load.

This was not possible out here in the West with our steep hills and heavy growth of sage and other brush. The roads here were only made the width of a wagon's wheels. Animals were hitched 2 wide to pull the load, walking in the 2 trails made by the wagon tracks. Most of the early loads were made merely by pulling a wagon by team, mashing down the vegetation. By continual use, 2 well-defined trails could soon become a road where a team could follow to pull a wagon.

When larger and heavier loads were required it was necessary to add more animals to pull the load. This was done by adding more teams, each in front of the other, and as many as 10 teams long, allowing each team to follow the 2-track road so that smooth and good footing was possible for each animal. This also required a unique hookup of animals and required a professional skinner to drive them.

On hauls of 50 miles or more, and hauling heavy loads, it was common for 10 to 20 head of mules or horses to be used. The tonnage or bulk of the load would dictate the number of wagons needed. Teams of 16, 18, or 20 animals would usually pull 3 wagons with a commissary wagon. Of course, the commissary wagon was not considered payload; it was used to haul all camping gear, horse feed and repair equipment needed. A 10-, 12-, or 14-animal team would usually use 2 wagons and a commissary wagon. One or sometimes 2 wagons would be pulled with smaller teams, depending on load weight or the size of the wagons.

Teams numbering under 8 head were driven from the wagon seat with lines to each team. Longer teams were driven by the jerk line method of control. The skinner of these long teams saddled and rode his near (left) wheel horse.

Each wagon was fitted with a large steel plate that bolted solid to the bottom center of each front axle. This steel plate extended both front and aft of the axle with suitable rings or eyes where chains or rods could be fastened. A heavy steel rod was fastened to the rear of this plate, extending back under the wagon to approximately the end of the wagon reach. A heavy ring was welded in the rear of this rod. Each wagon was equipped with this pull device. To the front of the steel plate a chain was fastened, extending forward to an equal length of the wagon tongue. It had a finger link hook. Both chain and rod were carried by a short chain to the tongue and reach of the wagon. When the finger link hook was fastened to the ring of the rod of the forward wagon, this was the device that coupled and pulled each wagon.

The lead wagon had a full-length tongue extending approximately 2 feet in

front of the wheel team. The end of the tongue was equipped with a specially shaped iron where the holdback strap or chain of the wheel team fastened. It also had special hooks or eyes where the stretcher chains of the point team fastened. The tongue of the lead wagon was held up about 2-1/2 feet above ground level in a rigid position by the front hound assembly. This relieved the wheel team of the burden of carrying the tongue with chain and stretchers attached. All trail wagons had only a short or half-length tongue as a means of guiding that wagon to follow correctly. Each wagon was also equipped with a horn device bolted solid to the back end of each wagon reach. This device was approximately 2 feet long and curved slightly upward to its extended end. Each trail wagon tongue had a heavy ring or device bolted to the end of the tongue. When this ring was placed over the horn of the forward wagon, and the chain fastened to the rod, the coupling was complete. Thus, the horn carried the tongue of the trail wagon and guided its direction, while the chain rod assembly pulled the load. The hook of the end of the tongue of the trail wagon rested in pulling position to about 6 inches from the end of the horn of its forward wagon. This allowed the trail wagon to roll forward at each stop about a foot to 18 inches as the hook slid forward on the horn assembly. This had its unique purpose also, which will be explained later.

The wheel team pulled their load by a set of doubletrees attached to the top of the tongue and front hound assembly by a pivot pin. Usually the wagon wrench was used for that pin. The pointers (the first team in front of the wheelers) pulled their share of the load from a pair of stretchers hooked to the end of the wagon tongue. As previously stated, a chain was fastened to the steel plate at the center of the front axle, extending forward to the end of the tongue. A ring in a long chain was then fastened to it by the finger link fastener. This chain extended forward to hitch as many teams as were required. If a 20-mule team was needed this chain would extend between 8 teams if we don't count the chain under the wagon tongue, 9 if we do. This would require nearly 100 feet of chain.

All teams forward of the wheelers only had need of a light harness, and pulled their load by a lightweight set of stretchers. Only crosschecks held these swing and point teams together; otherwise, they worked loose and were guided only by the chain. The lead team carried the chain tight at all times. They were chosen for their willingness to keep a tight chain and to respond well to rein and command.

As the leaders followed a turn of the road the pull chain would press against the legs of the inside animals of all swing teams, starting with the team immediately behind the leaders and continuing back to the pointers. Using the touch of the chain on his legs as a cue, the animal would cross over or jump the chain, and both animals would pull to the outside turn. Each team following would follow suit, thus holding a bend in the chain. The pointers were the team that guided the wagon, and would also cross over the chain, pulling on the outside of the turn to hold and guide the wagon on the road as it made the turn. Once the curve of the road was negotiated, the opposite of this maneuver was made by all teams when the road straightened.

The jerk line was a long lightweight cord or rope, passing forward from the

driver on the near wheeler through a ring on the left hame of each animal to the left bit ring of the near lead animal. The leaders had crosscheck reins from each inside bit ring to his partner's lower inside hame ring. From the near leader's right or inside hame ring was also fastened a jockey stick, which extended to the off leader's outside or right bit ring. Whenever a left turn was to be made, a steady pull on the jerk line and a "Ha!" command was given. As the leader turned left the cross-check from his hame ring pulled the off leader also to the left. When turning to the right a light jerk of the jerk line and a "Gee!" command was given. The light jerk of the line caused the near leader to raise his head. This reaction brought tight the inside cheek rein to his partner's hame ring, thus pulling him to the right. As the near leader moved to the right the jockey stick from his right hame ring caused a pull on the right hame ring of the right, or off, leader. When either turn began, this would pull the chain to one side or the other, causing the swing teams and pointers to react as described above.

Around the Nevada mining camps many kinds and sizes of wagons were used. The Studebaker was probably the best known and most commonly used. However, several other wagonmakers had good wagons on the market. For heavy weights such as reduced ore a small wagonbed was all that was required. If household furniture or other bulky items were to be hauled, a high bed was used to protect these items. Most heavyweight wagons had solid steel axles with heavy and high wheels. The taller wheels rolled more easily under a heavy load. The larger wagons had wheels in back that were 6 feet high, with 4-1/2-foot wheels in front. A full inch-thick steel rim or tire 3 or 4 inches wide was used. These wagons hauled heavy loads over roads that were rough, rocky and sometimes had sharp ditches to cross, so they were made sturdy for rugged use.

All teams around the mining camps in Nevada, where dust or flying twigs of brush were a problem, were fitted with a large protective leather cover over the hames and collar of each animal. This kept dust or any foreign object from collecting under the collar, where it could cause a sore to form on the animal.

Each wagon was equipped with a braking system. Through a purchase system pulled by a brake lever, wooden blocks were pressed against each hind wheel of each wagon. These were separate units on each wagon. This system was adequate on most gradual downhill slopes. The back wagon brakes were always applied first. If more was needed the brake was applied in forward order beginning with the hind wagon.

On extremely steep hills another braking system was used, that of the rough-lock system. The rough lock was made from a heavy 1-inch-thick iron plate slightly wider (by 1 inch) than the wagon wheel tire and 18 inches or 2 feet long. The front end of this iron was drawn out to form a loop and a chain was attached to this loop. To the top part of this heavy iron was welded 2 or 3 cross irons turned up about 3 inches on either side to form a cradle to hold the wagonwheel in place on top of the skid iron. These rough locks were hung by a hook on the wagon bed just forward of each hind wheel. When this rough-lock device was placed forward of the wheel and the wagon pulled onto the rough lock, the chain from rough lock to the wagon bed

was of sufficient length to pull tight, holding the wagon wheel on the skid. By the weight of the wagonwheel riding on this skid device, a braking system of major effectiveness was realized. Whenever the rough-lock system was used, the uphill wheel of the rear wagon was applied first, next both wheels. As more brake was needed the same was used on each wagon, working forward.

Another braking system like the rough-lock system was used and also had its unique purpose. This system consisted of 2 rough locks, this time called check blocks. They were hung from the wagon bed behind the hind wheels of the back, or last, wagon. Their purpose was to hold that wagon from rolling back whenever a stop was required on an uphill pull to rest the team. As these stops were made the swamper would place the chuck blocks under each wheel of the back wagon. When that wagon was allowed to roll back onto these blocks, that wagon was held in place. Each wagon forward then would roll back until the last hookup of each wagon slid forward to the front of the horn, being forced to stop there. This hookup device compares somewhat to the arrangement of freight trains. When the team was rested and ready for another pull, they were only required to start one heavy wagon at a time. As each wagon pulled forward the next wagon never came tight until the load on the tongue slid backward on the horn until the pull chain came tight. This allowed each wagon to be started separately.

An Interview with MARIANNE SMITHWICK



Marianne Smithwick, 1993

*An Oral History conducted and edited by
Robert D. McCracken
1993*

CONTENTS
An Interview with Marianne Smithwick

CHAPTER ONE

2

Background information on Marianne's parents, who married in Italy and came to Cortez, Nevada, at the turn of the century, living in various Nevada locations, then settling in Beowawe; Marianne's father returns to Italy and dies there; his widow and Marianne move to Cortez, where Marianne's brother was working; the silver mines at Cortez; Marianne loses a brother to pneumonia and a sister to a drowning accident; Marianne marries Ira Smithwick and they move to Denver, then Battle Mountain, then return to Beowawe; memories of Cortez in the 1920s; Ira wins the mail contract at Beowawe; remarks on the mail route, area ranches and the town of Beowawe; Ira begins a trucking business; the wear and tear of roads in the area on trucks and equipment in the 1940s; hauling ore from area mines; remarks on the 1993 mines at Carlin and Cortez.

CHAPTER TWO

12

Further discussion of hauling ore and livestock from local mines and ranches to Beowawe; a long-term contract hauling barium; on Marianne's daughter, Opal; remembering the Beowawe Sagebrush Ladies Club; remarks on life and people in Beowawe from 1930 to 1960; the Indian settlement at Beowawe; Ira leaves the trucking business and moves to the Petan Ranch, then gets into maintenance work for the highway department in Pine Valley; the Goldfield Mining Company; remarks on the climate at Beowawe, and on hunting, fishing, mosquitoes, ticks and rattlesnakes; Marianne's work at the Dupont Pharmacy in Elko.

This is Robert McCracken talking to Marianne Smithwick at her home in Elko, Nevada, February 17, 1993.

CHAPTER ONE

- RM: Marianne, why don't you tell me your name as it reads on your birth certificate.
- MS: Marianne Bianchi.
- RM: And when and where were you born?
- MS: Cortez, Nevada, May 13, 1911.
- RM: And what was your father's name?
- MS: Raffaello Bianchi.
- RM: And where was he born?
- MS: Italy.
- RM: And what was your mother's full maiden name?
- MS: Jilda Mancini.
- RM: And do you know where she was born?
- MS: She was born in Tofrey, Italy.
- RM: Did they marry in the old country?
- MS: Yes.
- RM: When did they come over here?
- MS: Well, my dad had been going back and forth to Italy after he lost his first wife.
- RM: He'd come over here and lost his first wife?
- MS: Well, he was living here. But I think my folks were married in 1905 in Italy and then they came over here in 1907 or 1908.
- RM: Did they come right to Nevada?
- MS: Yes. He was mining.
- RM: He was a miner by trade?
- MS: Messing around with mines, yes.
- RM: Had he been a miner in Italy?
- MS: No. He just went back to see his family.
- RM: What was the first town he lived in here, do you know?
- MS: I think it was Cortez, because it was a booming camp at that time. He went there and worked in the mines for a while.
- RM: And he was an underground miner?
- MS: Well, anything. Anything that had to do with mining, he liked to do. He went to railroading in later years.
- RM: But first he was a miner? What were some of the other camps he worked in in Nevada?
- MS: He worked in Mill Canyon and Tonopah and Battle Mountain.
- RM: Did you live in Tonopah with him then?
- MS: Yes.
- RM: How old were you then?

MS: Probably 3 or 4 years old.

RM: Do you remember anything about it at all?

MS: Not very much; can't even remember where we lived. I could go to it, but I can't remember the street name anymore.

RM: So you were there about around 1915?

MS: Yes. And then we moved to Beowawe.

RM: What mines did he work out of Tonopah?

MS: What was that big mine?

RM: The Mizpah.

MS: Yes.

RM: Did he get any silicosis?

MS: No, not that I know of.

RM: How long did he work in Tonopah?

MS: A couple of years.

RM: Do you remember hearing any stories or anything from your Tonopah days?

MS: No, not really. Only that we moved. [Laughs] We moved back to Cortez.

RM: What mine was he working in at Cortez?

MS: Cortez Silver.

RM: Do you recall anything about that mine?

MS: Oh, it was a good mine, a silver mine. And then we left and went to Beowawe. From Beowawe we went to Yerington; he went ranching then.

RM: What was he doing in Beowawe?

MS: Just lying around.

RM: He wasn't working at a mine or anything there?

MS: No, not then. We went to Yerington and lived there during World War I. He was ranching with my uncle out of Mason Valley. I started school there. And then we went back to Beowawe. I went to school in Yerington in my first year; I think it was my second or third year that I started in Beowawe. I went there through sixth grade, I guess it was.

RM: Tell me about going to school in Beowawe and your life there.

MS: It was a one-room school with one teacher, and she had about 35 or 40 kids. She taught all 8 subjects plus penmanship and art and music. And we had a great time; we got along fine. Then we moved in 1922. My father went back to Italy to try to settle a family estate back there with his sister-in-law and he never did come back.

RM: Did he take the family with him?

MS: No. He was only supposed to be gone 6 months. And Mother didn't want to take us kids out of school for that length of time and spend all that money to go and come. So we stayed in Beowawe and my brother helped take care of us. He worked on the railroad then when this happened.

RM: That was your brother by your father's first marriage?

MS: No, by my mother's first marriage. My father had 2 boys, but they were young men by the time that he married my mother, because he was much older than my mother.

RM: And then he went to Italy and didn't come back?
MS: No. Well, he went blind.
RM: How did he go blind?
MS: Old age, I guess.
RM: How much older was he than your mother?
MS: About 25 years.
RM: What did the family do when he didn't come back?
MS: We went back to Cortez. My brother was a bus driver in Cortez and they switched men back and forth, you know.
RM: From the town to the mine?
MS: Yes. So we went to school there in Cortez. Then I went away to school for 3 years, I guess. But my mother had terrible heart attacks all the time, so I had to leave school when I was a junior and come home and help take care of her.
RM: What was it like living in Cortez?
MS: It was nice. We had the good school and we had lots of fun there. And it was home.
RM: Were there a lot of people living in Cortez then?
MS: Yes. It was a very prominent silver mining camp.
RM: Was there just the one mine or were there a lot of mines?
MS: No, just the one big mine — Cortez Silver.
RM: How far from town was it?
MS: It was up on the hill about a mile and a half.
RM: And your brother drove the bus up there? That's how he made a living?
MS: Yes.
RM: Did your mom work or anything?
MS: Well, she took in boarders and she did a lot of baking and sewing and things like that to make a living for us.
RM: How many children did she and your father have?
MS: Three.
RM: Were you the oldest?
MS: Yes. I had a brother who died as a child — Rudolph.
RM: What did he die of?
MS: Pneumonia, they said. He was about 3 years old. And then I lost my sister, Adele, in later years, swimming in the Humboldt River. She drowned there. She was 21 years old.
RM: And you were living in Beowawe then?
MS: Yes. Of course, I was married by that time. But my folks lived there — my mother and my sister.
RM: Did your mother remarry?
MS: She did in later years, yes. My sister drowned in 1935. She didn't marry until much later.
RM: Is that right! So your mother lived to be old even though she had heart attacks.

MS: Yes, she was 89 when she died.

RM: How old were you when you were living in Cortez?

MS: We went back in 1922, so I was about 11.

RM: And how old were you when you left?

MS: Eighteen.

RM: So you basically spent a lot of your school years there.

MS: Well, I took a [correspondence] course after I left high school. I went to high school in Battle Mountain.

RM: Did you live in Battle Mountain?

MS: No, but I had family that was living there — my 2 half-brothers.

RM: And you had to live with them, didn't you? You couldn't commute?

MS: That's right.

RM: Tell me more about what Cortez was like then.

MS: It was a very thriving mining camp; there were lots of people there.

RM: Were there stores and everything?

MS: Oh, yes. There was a store and saloon and boardinghouses. The mine had their own boardinghouses. And people lived in their own houses. I mean, it isn't like now when they have trailers; they had regular houses to live in. And then I got married in '28.

RM: So you would have been 17 years old?

MS: Yes.

RM: Who did you marry?

MS: I married a fellow by the name of Ira Smithwick.

RM: And where did you meet him?

MS: In Cortez. [Laughs]

RM: Was he working there?

MS: Yes, in the mine.

RM: He was a miner?

MS: Well, he was then. Afterwards he wasn't. After we were married, we moved to Denver and he worked for Denver Rock Drill for quite a while. Then we had to come back to Cortez because we had our little home in Cortez and all of our furniture was there. They sold the house out from under us.

RM: How long did you live in Denver?

MS: About 6 months. We lived in an apartment house on Gardener Street.

RM: I'm from Denver, but I don't know where that is.

MS: It was way out of town. I had to take a bus if I wanted to go to town because he drove his own car. Then we came back to Nevada and we lived in Battle Mountain until 1930, and then we moved back to Beowawe.

RM: What did you do with your little home in Cortez?

MS: They sold it. It's still sitting there. It's a mud house.

RM: It was adobe?

MS: Yes.

RM: When was it built?

MS: Oh, glory. It was there ever since I can remember.

RM: Was it comfortable?
MS: Oh, yes. We had fixed it up — bought all new furniture. And he even piped water in the place.
RM: What people do you remember from Cortez?
MS: Oh, gosh. The Guistis, the Boitanos . . .
RM: Who were the Guistis?
MS: They were an old family here. There were Atilio Guisti and Chris Guisti . . . and the mother lived there for years. And then the Boitanos lived there; he was a half-brother to the Guistis. He and his family lived there and he ran the post office. I worked in the post office when I was 12 years old.
RM: What do you remember about that?
MS: I remember it was a headache. [Laughs] No, I liked it. It was fun.
RM: Were you helping out a relative or something?
MS: No, just a good friend.
RM: Just making a little money?
MS: Yes, 50 cents a day.
RM: Where was the post office located?
MS: Right in the middle of town on the little hillside. They had a store there and the dance hall was down below us, the saloon was on the other side and the big boardinghouse, the company boardinghouse and offices, were just east of us in the same vicinity.
RM: About how many men were working at the mine then, do you know?
MS: I imagine 75.
RM: That many?
MS: Yes — 3 shifts. Sometimes more, because they had the power plant and the mill going and all that.
RM: I wonder where they were shipping their ore. Do you know? Or did they mill it there?
MS: Yes.
RM: They had a mill there, didn't they?
MS: Yes, they did. They sent the bricks out.
RM: I see. They produced bullion.
MS: All I can remember about Tonopah is all those darn holes in that hillside.
RM: [Laughs] Yes, right.
MS: The Old Mizpah Hotel. Is it still standing?
RM: Oh, yes.
MS: I haven't been back there for . . . oh, my god. My daughter was flying at the time. She was an airline stewardess and she happened to come into Tonopah from Phoenix and we met her in Tonopah. That was the last time I was there. We went through the old hotel and some of the old places like the church and the school.
RM: They remodelled the hotel some years back.
MS: That's what everybody tells me. I worked in the drugstore here [in Elko] for 22 years and I used to see a lot of the salesmen who came through from over

there. And they'd say to us, "You wouldn't even know the place."
I'd say, "I'm never going to find out." We had some bad memories and some good memories.

RM: You had some bad memories of Tonopah?

MS: Oh, yes.

RM: Like what?

MS: Oh, I don't know. You know how kids are — they don't like this place and they don't like that place.

RM: What else do you recall about Cortez?

MS: It was a good, lively mining camp until '34, and then they gave up mining.

RM: Then they shut her down? It was silver, wasn't it?

MS: Yes.

RM: Was it rich ore?

MS: I think it was just basic ore, myself.

RM: Yes. And what happened when they gave up the mine there?

MS: They closed it down.

RM: The town folded?

MS: Yes. It's just been kind of hit-and-miss since. But now they're doing good. But there's no camp there. (There's a camp down below, I guess.)

RM: So then you got married. Where did you say you lived when you got married?

MS: We went to Battle Mountain from Cortez after we came back from Denver.

RM: So you left when the mine shut down, is that it?

MS: Yes.

RM: In '34?

MS: No, it was before that. It was '31.

RM: So '31 was when it shut down?

MS: Well, they shut down a lot of their men.

RM: Oh, I see; they cut back. And then you moved to Battle Mountain. What did you do in Battle Mountain?

MS: He was out there with the mine — at the Buckingham. Then we bid a job in Beowawe — a mail carrier's job.

RM: How long did you live in Battle Mountain?

MS: Just 2 years.

RM: Oh, and then you went to Beowawe. What took you to Beowawe?

MS: The mail contract.

RM: So he became the mail carrier?

MS: Yes, we carried mail clear out to Waltis' and Baumanns', out in that area, from Cortez, for 16 years.

RM: What did your route consist of?

MS: Just would-be miners and ranchers from Beowawe.

RM: You went from Beowawe out to Cortez?

MS: Past Cortez.

RM: And then clear out into Lander County?

MS: Some.

RM: How far south from Cortez did you go?

MS: Thirty-five miles.

RM: Was this in about '34?

MS: We took the route in '30.

RM: What was Beowawe like?

MS: It was a little railroad town, and there was some mining going on around there. I mean, spot mining — individuals mining out of there, and ranchers. There were some big ranches around there.

RM: What were some of the ranches?

MS: Horseshoe Ranch.

RM: Who was on that then, do you remember?

MS: Grayson Hinkley.

RM: Were they running a lot of cattle?

MS: Quite a few. And there were sheep ranchers out of there too. Sansinenas had sheep for quite a number of years. And the Mahoneys had cattle. It was a thriving little town. We had 2 saloons, 2 stores, a post office and I don't know what all. There were quite a lot of people around there; they had a school.

RM: Did you know Martin Milano?

MS: Yes, but they came in there afterwards — in the '40s, I think. Have you talked to Martin?

RM: Yes.

MS: Have you? Good. I don't think they came there until the late '40s. During World War II, anyway.

RM: About '51 they bought the bar. But he'd been in and around there, working for the railroad, I think. So you carried mail from '30 to '46? All through the war? Did you do the mail carrying, or was that your husband?

MS: I did during the summer.

RM: What was it like delivering mail when you had snow and everything?

MS: I didn't do it when there was snow; he wouldn't let me. I did it just in the summertime until about the middle of October.

RM: But your husband did it the rest of the time?

MS: And then he went in the trucking business after.

RM: In '46, he went into the trucking business? Why did he quit the mail?

MS: Well, he was tired of carrying mail. [Laughs] It was a big headache.

RM: Why was it a headache?

MS: You couldn't get parts or anything. We had 12 trucks at one time.

RM: Were they big trucks?

MS: They were ton-and-a-half Fords. We made a good living, but we spent a lot of the money too. Over dirt roads, you know — all country roads up in those hills.

RM: They tear a truck up, don't they?

MS: We own a tire factory some place, I don't know where. [Laughter] A couple

of parts factories too. [Laughter]

RM: Those old roads would tear those tires up, wouldn't they?

MS: Oh, god . . . and you couldn't keep help, you know.

RM: It was hard to find help?

MS: Oh, yes, good help.

RM: Even after the war?

MS: Well, part of it was during the war.

RM: You were hauling during the war too? So he was in the trucking business while he was carrying mail?

MS: Yes.

RM: How did you get your mail route? You said you bid on it?

MS: Yes, we bid to the government.

RM: Did people bid against you?

MS: Oh, sure. The lowest bidder got it.

RM: How did you know how to bid?

MS: He just did, I guess.

RM: How long was your contract for?

MS: Four years at a time.

RM: How many people were on your mail route typically?

MS: Quite a lot.

RM: Like 100 or 200?

MS: About 100, I imagine.

RM: And did you deliver every day?

MS: There for a while we delivered every other day. It became a daily route after the war.

RM: What kind of vehicle did you use?

MS: Ford! Ford pickup.

RM: Did they hold up pretty well?

MS: Yes, better than anything else. And we had a few other vehicles that we used if we needed to. A lot of times I used a car instead of the pickup.

RM: How many miles would you get on a vehicle before it was destroyed?

MS: [Laughs] Hard to tell.

RM: How long would one last?

MS: Oh, maybe 4 or 5 years.

RM: That long?

MS: Of course, he took care of them himself.

RM: What were the mines that he was hauling for?

MS: We we hauled for everybody, not only in Beowawe and Cortez. We hauled out of Battle Mountain, out of here [in Elko] . . . we had franchises from the government.

RM: Were you hauling for the government?

MS: No, you have to have rights under the government. And they have to issue the rights — like different territories that they give you and so forth. That became a headache.

RM: I'll bet it did. What were some of the mines that you were hauling out of in the Beowawe area?

MS: All of the Tenabo area.

RM: What was going on down there?

MS: Just simple individual mining. We'd haul the ore into Salt Lake to the smelters.

RM: Was that usually where you hauled to, Salt Lake? At Tooele?

MS: Yes, and Midvale.

RM: What kind of mines were they at Tenabo? What were they digging there?

MS: Barium, turquoise and silver.

RM: There are turquoise mines at Tenabo?

MS: Some good ones; they're still going.

RM: Is that right? Where else were there mines in that area besides Tenabo?

MS: Cortez and Mill Canyon.

RM: Now, where's Mill Canyon?

MS: Just down below the Cortez Canyon about 30 miles out. That was silver also.

RM: Was there one mine or a lot of little folks?

MS: It was one mine that we hauled for. Well, we hauled for some of the private owners, too, but that was a different area. I think it was in the Mill Canyon area, not from the large mine there.

RM: Where else did you haul from?

MS: All around Battle Mountain — every hole that there is in Battle Mountain, we hauled from it. Individuals. And out of Winnemucca also.

RM: What about other mines in the Palisade area?

MS: Yes, we hauled ore out of there too; into Palisade.

RM: Into Palisade to the railhead?

MS: Yes, and wool and things like that.

RM: Why would you truck ore to Salt Lake when they could have put it on the railroad?

MS: Because it was just in small lots.

RM: Oh, and they couldn't get a car.

MS: No, a carload would take them months. Have you been up here at this new mine?

RM: The Newmont Mine?

MS: The Newmont and the Barrack mine.

RM: No, I haven't.

MS: We hauled that off of there with a dozer and things on trucks to get a truckload of ore for those individuals. Now look at it!

RM: Do you remember some of the individuals who were working out at what is now the Carlin mine area?

MS: Jones I think was one of them; I can't remember the other. There were 2 old-timers up there. They worked all their lives out there to get a truckload of ore.

RM: They worked their lives there?
MS: Oh, it took a whole year to get a truckload of ore.
RM: And his name was Jones?
MS: One of them. But I can't remember what the other brother's name was.
RM: Two old brothers?
MS: Yes.
RM: Was his name also Jones?
MS: I think they were half-brothers, but I'm not sure.
RM: Had they been working there a long time?
MS: Oh, yes.
RM: It would be something if they could see what's there now.
MS: Oh, my glory. If my husband could see what's going on out there now, he'd turn over in his grave.
RM: Would he be pleased?
MS: Yes, because he always said there'd be lots of ore up there. Always. And also where they're mining now at Cortez. They're mining at the foothills of Cortez, just before you go up the canyon where we used to always go. And every time we went by there, he'd say, "There's gold in them hills."
RM: Is that right? So there was gold there besides the silver that they were digging?
MS: Yes. And all that valley out there has mines going now and they haul it all to the Cortez mill. (I guess that's where they haul it. That's what I've heard, anyway.)
RM: Tell me more about what was going on up where the Newmont Mine is back in your days.
MS: Nothing. [Laughs]
RM: There were just a few diggers up there?
MS: That's right, just a few individuals.
RM: Were they hard rock mines or placer?
MS: Hard rock and placer.
RM: Were they digging on little streaks or what?
MS: Anything that looked like ore. [Laughs]
RM: Did they have their cabins there and everything?
MS: A couple of little old cabins.
RM: So he was hauling from there to Salt Lake. They didn't have their mill or anything there?
MS: Oh, no. They had nothing. Not even a cow trail. [Laughs]
RM: And they worked there year round?
MS: All year round. They holed up there like gophers in the wintertime. [Laughs]
Poor things.
RM: What years would this have been?
MS: It was in the '50s. Of course, I don't know how long they'd been there — for years before that.

CHAPTER TWO

- RM: What other areas was he hauling from in that whole region around Beowawe?
- MS: It was just the whole region.
- RM: Do you remember any other mines? What did they call the area where the Newmont mine is now?
- MS: Carlin. I can't remember the name of the mountain where they were, though. There were individual mining operations out there too, you know.
- RM: Were there other people there besides these two half-brothers?
- MS: Not that I know of, not in that district. There were some down in the Dunphy area.
- RM: How far is Dunphy from where they were?
- MS: Probably 20 or 25 miles out there in the desert.
- RM: So you and your husband were providing a service to these people who didn't have enough ore to put on the railroad.
- MS: That's right. And lot of times we did haul for guys who did have rail cars full.
- RM: And then you'd take it down to Palisade?
- MS: No, Beowawe.
- RM: And it would go out on the rail?
- MS: Yes. We shipped a lot out of Beowawe.
- RM: But then you were also hauling wool for the sheepherders?
- MS: Yes.
- RM: Anything else you were hauling?
- MS: Anything. [Laughs]
- RM: Cattle?
- MS: Yes, we hauled cattle too.
- RM: Did you have dump trucks?
- MS: And flat beds too. We had to have the cattle stock racks — stock trucks. Oh, we had them. [Laughs]
- RM: But you weren't getting rich at it?
- MS: No. We were making a good living, but we were putting it back into the equipment on those roads, I'll tell you.
- RM: How did you keep them in tires with all those rocks on the roads?
- MS: That is the \$64,000 question. You had to keep them going when you had them on contracts. We had a contract out there out of Battle Mountain — we hauled barium out of there for 10 years. And boy, that was an expensive job. We worked for the London Extension Mining Company out in the Tenabo area, and later for Gold Acres.
- RM: How long was the haul?
- MS: Let's see — to the railhead was 8 to 10 miles. It was 36 miles to Beowawe.
- RM: And it was really tearing up your tires?
- MS: Yes. Now they have it oiled.
- RM: Is the barium mine still working?
- MS: Oh, yes.

RM: So there are some big barium mines out there?
MS: Yes, out of Argenta. We hauled out of there during the war and after the war too.
RM: How long did a truck last?
MS: [Laughs] Sometimes not very long. You can't expect them to last very long on rough roads and rough treatment.
RM: What would you do, beat them up and trade them in on a new one?
MS: Yes. Well, when you're on contract, you have to have them get out.
RM: Did you work a lot on contract?
MS: Yes, especially the barium hauling.
RM: What kind of price did you get for a ton? Did you do it by the ton?
MS: Yes, they did it by the ton.
RM: What would a truck hold — 5 tons?
MS: Some. Some only 3. Some only 1-1/2. It depended on what area you were going into.
RM: How rough it was?
MS: Yes. It was hard to get them up there.
RM: Where did you get your drivers?
MS: Anywhere we could get good drivers.
RM: Did they stay long?
MS: Some of them, yes. Of course, the war took a lot of our good men.
RM: When did you quit the trucking business?
MS: Let's see, our partner went to war . . . I think the partnership quit in '42.
RM: Who was your partner?
MS: Dinty Welch.
RM: And so you folded it?
MS: And sold all the trucks.
RM: In '42?
MS: In '42 or '44, we sold the trucks.
RM: So you didn't work after the war? You didn't haul after the war?
MS: My husband did.
RM: Oh, so you had a lot of trucks during the war?
MS: We had 11 or 12.
RM: And after '44, how many did you have?
MS: Just one.
RM: So he was his own man, just his own driver?
MS: Yes.
RM: What kind of a truck did he have then?
MS: Ford.
RM: He was a Ford man.
MS: Oh, yes.
RM: And where was he hauling then?
MS: Anywhere he could.
RM: Why did the partnership dissolve?
MS: The partner went to war, so that was the end of the partnership. [Laughs]

RM: Where were you living during the trucking business?
MS: Beowawe.
RM: And did you have children?
MS: One daughter — Opal.
RM: Where was she born?
MS: She was born in Battle Mountain in 1929.
RM: And she went to school in Beowawe?
MS: Yes. And then she went to high school here in Elko and she went to college in Reno. Then she went to be an airline stewardess and she had to go to nurses' school in Denver.
RM: Is that right? Where does she live now?
MS: She lives in Reno, she and her husband. Her husband was a pilot for Pan American for 35 years.
RM: She met him while being a stewardess?
MS: Yes, she did.
RM: She was a stewardess for Pan American?
MS: No, for American Airlines. She flew overseas, too, for the 2-1/2 years before she was married. She had 2 children after they married and they have 5 little grandkids. I have 5 great-grandkids — 4 boys and a girl.
RM: Tell me more about Beowawe from the woman's point of view. Tell me about the Beowawe Sagebrush Club.
MS: Oh, it was very active for a long time.
RM: Were you there when it formed?
MS: Yes.
RM: Who were some of the people that were in it?
MS: Babe Milano, Ann Bogus, Jeannette Baumann, myself . . . What was the teacher's name? Why do you ask me these questions? I can't remember! [Laughs] When you get to be 81, you won't remember either.
RM: Why did you form the group? What was its purpose?
MS: Just to have a get-together; there wasn't much doing at that time.
RM: Did all the women in the community join, or just some of them?
MS: No, most of them.
RM: All of them did? Mostly wives?
MS: We had a couple of Mexican girls who belonged, and 2 Indian women.
RM: What were some of the things you did?
MS: We used to have a Christmas deal for the kids. We bought lots of nice toys and things for the kids. And we had a fund-raising project and we gave it to them. Or if there was some needy family, why, we helped them — things like that.
RM: When did you form it, do you think?
MS: [Laughs] I can't remember. Babe should remember — Mrs. Milano. We sent a lot of stuff overseas to the boys.
RM: So it was active during the war?
MS: I don't think it was during the critical part of the war; I think it was afterwards, but the boys were still overseas.

RM: What year did you move to Beowawe with your husband?
MS: In 1930.
RM: And then when did you leave Beowawe?
MS: In 1960.
RM: So you lived there 30 years?
MS: Right.
RM: Did Beowawe change over the 30 years?
MS: Very much so. They took all of the railroad people out of there and mines were down about that time too.
RM: So the town kind of folded?
MS: Yes, it did.
RM: Did you always live in the same house there?
MS: Yes. We bought a little 2-room shack when we moved there — a tie shack. And then we remodelled it and had a 6-room modern house.
RM: Is it still there?
MS: Yes, it's still there.
RM: Do you still own it?
MS: No, I sold it 4 years ago. I couldn't take care of it. I was working and driving back and forth to Beowawe, and my family said, "No more of that malarkey, Mom." So we sold it.
RM: Did you have a big garage there to work on the trucks?
MS: And it's still sitting. Well, our big one burned down in 1948. Then we built another one, but at that time we didn't have all of the trucks. But there's a big garage there yet.
RM: Tell me some more about social life in Beowawe.
MS: It was very good.
RM: What kind of things did you do?
MS: We had dances and card parties and home parties — just good get-togethers, you know. Until after the war, and then people disbanded, naturally.
RM: And the trains were going through all the time?
MS: Oh, yes. Both outfits — the WP [Western Pacific] and the SP [Southern Pacific]. I lived just across — maybe across from here to that trailer down there — from the SP.
RM: Thirty yards away?
MS: Just about.
RM: Did they wake you up at night?
MS: Oh, yes. But you get used to it.
RM: And those were the old steamer engines, weren't they?
MS: Most of them, yes.
RM: By the time you moved they had switched to diesel, hadn't they?
MS: Oh, yes. And the town had died down as far as railroading was concerned — all of the railroad people out of Carlin and out of Beowawe too. I think there's still a section boss there, but I'm not sure whether they work him out of Carlin or Battle Mountain.
RM: And you didn't have electricity until pretty late, did you?

MS: No. We had our own plant for years.
RM: What kind of a plant was it?
MS: It was 10-KW.
RM: For the town or for you?
MS: No. For ourselves.
RM: That's a lot, isn't it? What was it?
MS: A diesel.
RM: Did you run 24 hours a day?
MS: Yes.
RM: Did it use a lot of diesel?
MS: Not very much.
RM: How many gallons would it use a day?
MS: I can't remember. It was very economical, though.
RM: So you had all the conveniences?
MS: In later years, yes. But before we had gas lamps and things like that.
RM: Of course, you had grown up with that.
MS: Yes, right. I studied many a lesson by candlelight and coal oil lamps.
RM: You mentioned you took a correspondence course. What was that in?
MS: That was in my last 2 years of high school.
RM: Oh, you went to high school by correspondence?
MS: Yes, the last 2 years.
RM: From where?
MS: From Boston, Massachusetts.
RM: What company was it, or what school?
MS: English something. [Laughs]
RM: How did that work out?
MS: Oh, fairly well. Not as good as . . .
RM: You would have rather been in school?
MS: Oh, yes, much more.
RM: But you did that to be able to stay home?
MS: Right. It's the only chance I had.
RM: When you went to Beowawe in 1930, who were the some of the people that lived there?
MS: Well, the Sansinenas were there — the seniors. All the seniors were there; the kids grew up with mine. And the Webers.
RM: They were all there in '30?
MS: Yes. And Andreozzis. I can't remember any others.
RM: Who were some of the other people in Beowawe in later years when you were there?
MS: There were the Tylers, the Stones, and the Allens. The Baumanns were ranchers out past Cortez but she had to come into town for school for the kids.
RM: So she lived there?
MS: Yes, she lived next door to me.
RM: What were the mother and father's first names?

MS: The mother's first name was Jeannette and the father's name was Walter. They live here now.

RM: And who were the Sansinenas? They had a ranch, didn't they?

MS: They were sheepmen. The father's name was Pete and the mother's name was Mary. And then they had 4 children — Paul, Emily, Leon and Yvonne.

RM: Who was Teresa Sansinena married to?

MS: She was married to Paul. But he's dead and gone. She still lives down there on the ranch — she and her son. (Her other son was recently killed in an auto accident.)

RM: Where was she from?

MS: She was from the Dunphy area out of Beowawe. Their folks had a ranch down there.

RM: Oh, she was a ranching family.

MS: She was a Mahoney.

RM: Who else was in Beowawe at this time?

MS: There were some Indians.

RM: What do you remember about the Indians when you were a kid?

MS: We went to school with them all, practically.

RM: Do you remember any of their names?

MS: I went to school with Rosie Pete and Bert Pete.

RM: There are a lot of Petes, aren't there?

MS: Yes.

RM: There are Petes down around Tonopah.

MS: Well, they're some relation. Jerry and the ones who live around Tonopah are related to these kids — an aunt or uncle or something. And Nancy. I can't think of those other kids' names.

RM: Where did they live?

MS: In Beowawe.

RM: Did they have their own section of town?

MS: Yes.

RM: Where was it located?

MS: Just up against the hill going out to Cortez way.

RM: Was it up by Red Mountain?

MS: Yes. My home was right down at the bottom of Red Mountain. My mother lived about a mile from where I lived.

RM: Did your mother settle down in Beowawe?

MS: Yes.

RM: And she spent the rest of her life there?

MS: Yes, she did.

RM: And you're the only child who survived?

MS: I'm the only one left.

RM: What kind of houses did the Indians live in?

MS: Nice little homes.

RM: And they earned a living by working on the ranches?

MS: Yes, most of them worked as ranchers and cowboys. They all survived.

[Laughs]

RM: When you left, were there Indians living there?

MS: Some.

RM: Do you remember any of their names?

MS: There were some Buffalos — Harry and Jimmy Buffalo, Essie Buffalo, Josie Buffalo and their mother Maddie Buffalo lived there. And the Snooks lived there and the Danns lived there out of Beowawe; the Danns lived out on the ranch — the ones who are fighting for their rights, you know. But they all went to school in Beowawe at that time. They still do, I guess.

RM: Did they have their own way of life or their own ceremonies and everything? What do you know about that?

MS: Not much. They're very secretive people. I always wished I could have learned to speak Indian because I went to school with a couple of nice Indian girls. But they were secretive about their language. They wouldn't interpret it to you at all — only in English.

RM: They did speak their language to each other?

MS: Oh, yes. A lot of it. The Andreozzis were Indian too — partly.

RM: Why did you leave Beowawe in 1960?

MS: We moved to the Petan Ranch.

RM: Where's that?

MS: That's 90 miles north from Elko. You go out towards Mountain City and that way.

RM: Did you get a job there?

MS: Yes, my husband was maintenance man there.

RM: He just gave up trucking?

MS: By that time he was through with trucking. [Laughs]

RM: It was just too hard?

MS: Oh, yes. Couldn't make any living with one truck; competition was too strong.

RM: So he was a good mechanic and he went to work on the Petan Ranch. Who owned the Petan Ranch?

MS: The Jacksons from California. It was a big outfit. Well, it still is. We lived there for 3 years and then we moved to Pine Valley. He was maintenance man at Pine Valley for the State Highway Department when he died.

RM: When did he pass on?

MS: In 1967.

RM: And you were living in Pine Valley then?

MS: Yes.

RM: What did you do then after he died?

MS: I moved back to Beowawe and then I moved in here and got a job.

RM: And lived in your old home in Beowawe? Did you stay there long?

MS: No. He died in February and I lived there until the next September.

RM: So there wasn't much happening in Beowawe then?

MS: No, nothing.

MS: Why don't you think the geysers work anymore in Beowawe?

MS: They have a big geothermal plant there.

RM: But do the geysers still shoot in the air?

MS: Not much. No, they're all corralled. You see, they've got them all piped in into this deal. Now there's a big mine going up there right near that geothermal power company — up that canyon. They're hiring a lot of men; they found gold up there. They call it the Goldfield Mining Company.

RM: Oh, that's where that is!

MS: They have about 100 men now working and they expect full capacity at 350.

RM: How far is that from Beowawe?

MS: Nine miles.

RM: So Beowawe might boom?

MS: Well, I guess it is right now. They're thinking about putting a road from the mine to Battle Mountain to meet the main highway there at Argenta. Now, I don't know how true that is.

RM: Is the Goldfield Mine in Eureka or Lander County?

MS: Both.

RM: It's on the border.

MS: So a lot of people are living in Battle Mountain now.

RM: And commuting back.

MS: Yes. And some are living here and some are living in Carlin, I understand. I'd like to see it go. Many miles I've walked that place, hunting. [Laughs] We used to go hunting up there where that mine is now.

RM: What were you hunting?

MS: Birds, chukkers and deer.

RM: Was there a lot of good game up there?

MS: Yes.

RM: Does Beowawe get a lot of bad weather?

MS: Not like here, no.

RM: It's warmer than Elko?

MS: Yes, much so.

RM: Why, I wonder.

MS: I don't know. When I lived down there, I used to drive back and forth from here to work. And I said, "God it's cold here."
"Well, you come from a cold country."
I said, "It's about 10 degrees warmer down there."
And they used to make fun of me because they said, "Oh, you're just splashing on for good time."
I said, "No, it's true." And it is true. Summertime it's the same way — it's cooler there than it is here.

RM: So it's a better climate? Is it lower in elevation?

MS: Yes, it is some.

RM: The Humboldt River comes through Elko, doesn't it?

MS: Yes. It goes through Beowawe too, down into Battle Mountain, and down to Winnemucca and through that way. Not much of a river, but it's the best we've got.

RM: Did you used to do any fishing?
MS: I didn't. My father used to fish in Beowawe when he was alive —river fishing with those little old poles. [Laughs]
RM: Yes, right. Cane poles.
MS: Yes, or willow poles.
RM: I've heard there was a mosquito problem in Beowawe.
MS: Oh, yes. Talk about mosquitoes! Battle Mountain too.
RM: Battle Mountain has mosquitoes?
MS: Oh, yes.
RM: How did you deal with the mosquitoes?
MS: We wore nets.
RM: Over your face?
MS: Yes; you couldn't stay outside if you didn't. I can remember when I was a kid, my mother used to make us wear long stockings and long sleeved shirts, and she'd wrap our arms with newspapers and our legs so that the mosquitos wouldn't bite us.
RM: Wouldn't bite through?
MS: Yes.
RM: They'd put the newspaper under the clothes?
MS: Yes. My sister was allergic to them. She was always sick with them.
RM: What did she do with so many of them there if she was allergic?
MS: Well, she stayed inside most of the time. But sometimes you had to go outside.
RM: Was there a time of year that they were worse?
MS: Oh, yes. In the summer — late June and July were terrible. They're not as bad now.
RM: I wonder why.
MS: They've had all these pesticides and things that they spray, which help. Well, they spray here too.
RM: But they were really terrible, weren't they?
MS: Oh, my god. Battle Mountain was terrible, absolutely terrible.
RM: What other pests did you have?
MS: Wood ticks. But we managed to live through it.
RM: Were there rattlesnakes there?
MS: Oh, yes. Not right in Beowawe; once in a while you'd see one but not too often. Up in the hills there are lots.
RM: Did anybody ever get bit there?
MS: Yes.
RM: Did they get pretty sick?
MS: Yes.
RM: They didn't die?
MS: No.
RM: Did you worry about it with your child?
MS: Yes, we did because we lived right under a hill.
RM: Did you ever find them in your house?

MS: Oh, god, no. [Laughs] Saw one out here one day.
RM: Right out in your front yard?
MS: Not mine, but out there in the street. I was standing here having breakfast, and I thought, "God, that looks like a rattlesnake. That looks like a rattler." So I called my neighbor who was living there at that time. I said, "Get your gun."
"What the hell you got?" he said.
I said, "There's a rattlesnake trying to get into your trailer." [Laughs] So he got his gun and shot it.
RM: He did?
MS: Yes. It had 9 buttons on it.
RM: Big one.
MS: I'll tell you, that scared the heck out of me. I said, "Well, if they get any closer, they can have the trailer." [Laughter]
RM: So you came to town and got a job in the drugstore. How did that work out?
MS: Fine.
RM: You met a lot of people, didn't you?
MS: Oh, yes.
RM: What did you do there?
MS: Clerked.
RM: How long did you work there?
MS: For 22 years for the same boss. [Laughs]
RM: What drugstore was it?
MS: Dupont Pharmacy.
RM: And when did you quit that?
MS: Well, he had to have heart surgery — he had 6 bypasses. So he had to sell the drugstore. But he's assistant pharmacy manager out at the Payless Drug here in Elko now. We sold to Payless in '88.
RM: So you've retired since then?
MS: Not by choice. He said he had to sell the store in order to get rid of me. [Laughs] Oh, he was a good boss. He was a good guy, and still is.
RM: Is there anything else that you think we should talk about? Any stories or recollections?
MS: We had lots of fun. [Laughs]
RM: It sounds like you had a good life.
MS: I sure did. Lot of hard knocks along with it, but then that goes with it, I guess.
RM: What were some of the hard knocks? Keeping those trucks running?
MS: Yes. That was the biggest headache, I can tell you. And meeting the pay-rolls.
RM: Were you the bookkeeper?
MS: Yes.