AN INTERVEIW WITH JOE AND EVELYN HIGBEE

An Oral History conducted and edited by
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LINCOLN COUNTY TOWN HISTORY PROJECT
LICOLN COUTNY, NEVADA

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PREFACE

The Lincoln County Town History Project (LCTHP) 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 interview 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 LCTHP'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 LCTHP 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 incoherency. 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 LCTHP 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 correctly spell 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.

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.

Although Nevada was granted statehood in 1864, examination of any map of the state from the late 1800s shows that most of it south of the 38th parallel remained largely unsettled, even unmapped. In 1890 most of southern Nevada - including Lincoln County - remained very much a frontier, and it continued to be so for at least another 20 years.

Even in the 1990s, the frontier can still be found in Lincoln County in the attitudes, values, lifestyles, and memories of area residents. The frontier-like character of the area is also visible in the relatively undisturbed quality of the natural environment, much of it essentially untouched by humans.

A survey of written sources on Lincoln County's history reveals variability from town to town: A fair amount of literature, for instance, can be found covering Pioche from its first newspaper, beginning in the fall of 1870, to the present. Newspapers from Delamar are available from 1892 to 1906 and Caliente from 1904 to 1968. In contrast, Panaca and Alamo never had newspapers of record. Throughout their histories, all Lincoln County communities received only spotty coverage in the newspapers of other communities. Most of the history of Lincoln County after 1920 is stored in the memories of individuals who are still living.

Aware of Lincoln County's close ties to our nation's frontier past and the scarcity of written sources on local history (especially after 1920), the Lincoln County Commissioners initiated the Lincoln County Town History Project (LCTHP). The LCTHP is an effort to systematically collect and preserve the history of Lincoln County, Nevada. The centerpiece of the LCTHP 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 Lincoln 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 each community's life and development. The collection of interviews for each community 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 community and county history that reveals the flow of life and events for a part of Nevada that has heretofore been largely neglected by historians.

Collection of the oral histories has been accompanied by the assembling of a set of photographs depicting each community's history. These pictures have been obtained from participants in the oral history interviews and other present and past Lincoln County residents. Complete sets of the photographs have been archived along with the oral histories. The oral interviews and written sources served as the basis for histories of the major communities in Lincoln County. These histories have also been archived.

The LCTHP is one component of the Lincoln 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 Lincoln County Board of County Commissioners initiated the LCTHP in 1990 in order to collect information on the origin, history, traditions and quality of life of Lincoln 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 area. In the event that government policy changes and a high-level nuclear waste repository is not constructed in Nevada, material compiled by the LCTHP will remain for the use and enjoyment of all.

--RDM

This is Robert McCracken talking to Joe and Evelyn Higbee at their home in Richardville, Nevada, one mile north of Alamo, Nevada, in the Pahranagat Valley, March 16, 1991.

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Joe, let's start with your name as it reads on your birth certificate.

JH: It's Joe Vaughn Higbee. (I am named after my grandfather Joseph Sharp.) I was born in Alamo, Nevada, in 1925 in the home I am now living in.

RM: What was your father's name and when and where was he born?

JH: My father was Ernest P. Higbee and he was born in a little town called Toquerville, between St. George and Cedar City [Utah]. He was part of the Mormon Higbees over in southern Utah. They moved here when he was about 10 years old. He and his father came into this beautiful valley and saw the water and all that, so they decided they'd like to move here. They moved here about the same time the Mormons did, about 1900 or 1901.

RM: And when was he born?

JH: He was born in about 1890.

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

JH: Mamie Sharp.

RM: When and where was she born?

JH: She was born in Pioche. There was no doctor here, of course, so she was actually born in Pioche, Nevada, and lived her whole life here in the Pahranagat Valley.

RM: Let's move back to your father's family. Can you discuss them a little bit?

JH: My grandfather Isaac Higbee was a cow man and a cowboy and a pretty tough character really. I don't know if I should repeat some of the stories of his life. He was a Mormon, but he was one of those who believed in living life. He was a big, old, tough man, and he lived a tough life.

RM: In what sense was he tough?

JH: Well, he drank quite a lot of whiskey and celebrated and he loved to run horses. I'll tell you one story. They got a little Dixie wine and he decided that . . .

RM: Now, what's Dixie wine? Is it from the Dixie [Utah] area?

JH: Yes. That's what they made form the grape over there. They had a bunch of mustang horses in a corral, and he bet some fellows he could ride every horse in that corral without touching the ground. He got them running, and as they ran around this corral he would jump from one to another and get the mane . . . He was a stout man - I remember him. In fact, he stayed with us.

He lived in the time when they worked in Arizona and he tells a story about living there. He had a wife and family down in southern Utah, but went into Arizona and worked for a big cow outfit and made a little money. As they were coming home, some outlaws had trailed them, and he said they found that they were scared. So they kind of camped out on a little island out in the middle of the river.

RM: The Colorado River?

JH: Yes. And as they were coming along back toward Utah, they were nervous - they had a bad feeling - so they camped out there. Two white men tried to kill them for their money, and these white men were later found down river. The story goes that Indians had killed [the outlaws] and they were found down the river, but I always wondered if maybe [my grandfather and the other cowboys with him] did it, not the Indians. He never would admit it. But they were raised in a bad time and they worked out at mines and there were lots of stories that I could tell you if you wanted to listen.

RM: I'd like to listen to some of them. Was he a native of Toquerville?

JH: No, he came west with the Mormons.

RM: Oh, with Brigham Young?

JH: Well, if you read the LDS church history, they're listed many times. People came over in groups of tens and hundreds. A Higbee was in one of these groups and was a hunter of game for his section. Also in the church history it says that they took part in the Meadow Massacre and things like that. They were there, for good or bad.

RM: When did they go down to Toquerville?

JH: They had a beautiful home in Provo, Utah, and [Brigham Young] decided that they should settle down there, so they left that beautiful home to go to a rock pile. If you've ever been to Toquerville . . . it's a rock pile. The only thing they could raise was wine, I think. But he sent them down there and they were supposed to raise cotton and all these kinds of things that they needed, so that's how come they wound up there.

RM: How old was he when he went there?

JH: He went to Toquerville as a young man.

RM: Did he have a family then?

JH: No. He married my Grandma Davis, who already lived in St. George or someplace like that. Do you remember where the old Silver Reef Mine was? As a young man he worked at the Silver Reef Mine there. It was black silver, it was not silver as we know it. It came in the sandstone.

RM: Is that right?

JH: There's a story behind that. They made grind stones out of it and they tested it and found out it actually had silver in it.
RM: I'll be darned.
JH: If you haven't been there, it's worth your time to go. It's just north of St. George about 10 miles and straight west 2 or 3 miles.
RM: What are some other stories about him that would tell us something about his character and who he was?
JH: Well, he loved to run horse races. Now, my dad was a smaller man. It was funny, but [my grandfather's] wife, Grandma Davis, was a little woman, and my father was a small man. So he always jockeyed for him - both my father and another cousin of his, Ed Higbee, who came over from St. George. They always jockeyed and he loved to run horses. He trained horses pretty near all his life.
RM: Did he come from a big family?
JH: No. There was only he and Dick, and I think one or two sisters, he wasn't from a big family.
RM: What about your mother's side of the family - the Sharps?
JH: They came from England after they had joined the church. I'm looking at a picture of Jake Johnson and my mother, as a young girl. She was a great friend of the Franks and she stayed in their home when they used to go to dances in Delamar - and there was a skating rink and other things that a young girl loved to do. But she always stayed with this Jake Johnson, who was quite a famous lawman [and a member of the Frank family]. He used a gun earlier in life, but he killed a person and he felt like maybe he'd made a mistake, so from then on he never even packed a gun. He would walk in and he was a big, gruff person, and a little hard to get acquainted with, my mother said. But she remained a lifelong friend of the Franks.
RM: That's interesting. And you have another picture here?
JH: There is Louis Stearns - he was the first Hiko postmaster. He was also the judge of Hiko, and in these stories they tell about hangings . . . [A man named] Vail was on trial and he spoke quite broken German. They said he wasn't too pleased that they were making the coffin - they should have at least waited until after the trial. Then Henry Sharp became the second postmaster.
RM: OK, let's go back to the Sharps. When did they come over from England?
JH: [Reading] "Henry Sharp, one of Pahranagat's leading citizens, was born in Floore, North Hampshire, England, on October 10, 1833. His parents were Henry Sharp and Sarah Kidaley. He had 7 brothers and sisters. Henry was a blacksmith, as was his father. At ate 17, he came to

Birmingham. Whilst living there he became interested in the LDS church, the Mormons, and joined the church December 12, 1854, at Birmingham. He said, 'I had to go to the United States, sailing November 30, 1855 on the ship, The Emerald Isle. Not long after arriving in the United States, he met and married Charlotte Ann Morris, who had also come from England, from Suffolkshire. She was 20 years old and he was 21. They moved to Monroe, Nebraska, and a year later their first child, William Henry, was born - the 24th of December, 1856." I knew all of these people, but William Henry. "They lived in Monroe, Nebraska, until the second child, Ella Terria, was born. Then they moved west 100 miles, preparing to join the Mormons' move westward. In Wood River, Nebraska, their third child, George Henry, was born. A wagon train left Wood River, Nebraska, June 26, 1861, and the Sharp family was with it, arriving in Salt Lake City September 13, 1861. Not wishing to live in the city of Salt Lake, they moved south to Goshen, Utah County. From there they moved south again to Fillmore, Millard County, and it was here that their fourth child, Mary Eliza, was born, May 30, 1863. In 1865, twin sons were born, Hiram Herbert and Joseph Lewis." And that's where I came in. The same year, they moved to Hiko and Irish Mountain.

RM: OK, now let me just get this straight in my mind. Henry Sharp was your great-grandfather?

JH: Yes. He was my mother's grandfather. Joseph was my grandfather.

RM: OK, his son Joseph, one of the twins, was your grandfather. And your grandfather, Joseph Lewis Sharp, lived . . .

JH: He lived right here. They moved to Irish Mountain [when the twins] were little babies.

RM: So your great-grandfather came to the Pahranagat Valley.

JH: Yes.

RM: What brought him here?

JH: They were headed for California. They stopped at this beautiful place with lots of water (and there were lots of Indians, too) and it was a nice place to rest the stock before they crossed the desert. It was a son-of-a-gun from here until you hit California. While they were here, the Indians stole their horses, took their cattle and stole everything. At this time there was a mine at Irish Mountain called the Silver Canyon, and so they moved up there and went to work. Mahalia was born there - she was younger than the twins - and then they moved, when she was little, down to Hiko.

They moved to Hiko and made their home there and took up land all around Hiko. In fact, I've got a copy of the

document he actually filed on the land, and it told how many years he had been here in Hiko. I was just looking at it this morning. It came from the old Pioche paper.

RM: Why were they heading for California?

JH: Gold.

RM: Why were they going this way? I mean, the way they usually went to southern California was down the Mormon Trail. They were taking almost the same route the 49'ers went across, and I suppose it was still pretty barren.

JH: There were a lot of people that did that though. A lot of people got in trouble doing that, too. That was serious business, from here on. They would go from here towards Tonopah and that area, and they would wind up south of Sacramento and in that area -by [way of] Bishop, really.

RM: Oh, they'd go over toward Bishop.

JH: Yes, in that area.

RM: Oh, that was their shortcut to California. I'll be darned. Now, what year was it that they were coming through here?

JH: I think it was 1865.

RM: Henry Sharp came here in 1865?

JH: He was just a boy.

RM: Did you know Henry Sharp?

JH: No. My mother did.

RM: What kind of a man was he?

JH: He was a kind man, a good person, and yet those were hard times, and he helped kill Indians and a lot of other things. He had 6 or 7 girls and 3 boys, and not one of them married until after he died. He'd tell them, "Hey, I want grandchildren," and all that, and there were plenty of young men around and they were beautiful young ladies. I've got pictures of them - here's one of him and all the daughters. Anyway, there wasn't one of them who got married until after he died. Then they were all married within a couple of years. He was a good man and a kind man.

I could tell you another story:

There were 3 boys who came from the East. They were headed for California and they were going to go right up over Logan Springs and across that way.

They got to the foot of Logan and they were going to camp the night there. Some Indians were there and they had some pine nuts and they asked them to come over and have some pine nuts. The older boy didn't know about that, but the younger two decided, "Well yeah, let's get some pine nuts from these Indians." They went over there and the Indians came up behind them and bashed the 2 kids in the head and killed them. The other one broke and ran. They had taken off their heavy boots and he was in just a kind of pair of

moccasins or something - maybe that helped to save his life - but he ran and the Indians behind him tried to stop him and kill him, but he was quite a foot racer and he ran down to Hiko. It was after night, and he got down to Sharps and they took him in. My mother's aunts and uncles tell this story - it took 2 weeks to pull all the stickers out of his feet and his body.

Henry Sharp and Geer, Butler, Ferguson, McGuffy and many other men in the valley (quite a few bachelors at that time) got a posse. There was one big camp of Indians right out from Alamo and they killed a whole bunch of them. There was another bunch up at Crystal and they killed a bunch more of them. They made the Indians turn over 10 others from their tribe, but somebody turned them loose, so they only hung 2. But they killed quite a bunch . . .actually, that was the last time they had trouble with the Indians.

RM: What year would that have been, roughly?

JH: Well, that would have been not too awfully long after Sharp got down to Hiko - 1867 or '70. There were only the McGuffys and the Butlers . . .

RM: Was Hiko going when he got here?

JH: When he first got here, I doubt it very much. They later made a mill at Hiko. You see, Hiko wasn't anything, but they later made a mill there.

RM: But there was some activity at Irish Mountain?

JH: Absolutely. In fact, this old Geer had patented mining claims on their private property.

RM: To back up, Henry Sharp and his family were coming through here on their way to California and the Indians ran off their horses or killed them or something. What did the valley look like then in terms of white occupation?

JH: Well, there were lots of Indians and some outlaws. In fact, this one chief said there were about 300 bucks, plus squaws and kids.

RM: Where were the Indian camps?

JH: One of them was right here on the west side of Alamo. I've heard my folks talk about it.

RM: Is there a spring there?

JH: No, but there was a little grove of trees. That's one thing that people don't realize. When the settlers first came in, there were only a few black willow trees. There was one bunch down below Alamo at that place that Grandpa Sharp bought later. And then there was one at Alamo, and there were some ash trees, and that's all the trees there were. So a tree was quite an item, believe it or not.

Evelyn Higbee: Wild grapes grew in there.

JH: Yes. There was a bunch of Indians at Ash Springs and then there was a camp at Crystal. But they didn't live here year around. They would stay here in the winter and then they would go north, like to Cherry Creek and Pine Creek and Timpahute.

While I'm thinking of it, there are 2 stories I'd like to tell you. One is about when Grandpa Joe Sharp was a young man. He owned all the range and cattle out west here.

RM: How far west did it go?

JH: Well, probably 60 or 70 miles from here, then north . . . he owned these 2 or 3 valleys and all the springs. The way he got to know this country, his oldest brother was named Henry, and he never married until he was a real old person. So he kind of lived with the Indians quite a lot of the time. And they actually showed him 2 real valuable gold mines. (Remind me about this gold mine story.) But anyway, Henry lived with the Indians. The Indians told Henry where the water was and he told Joe Sharp. Henry didn't care about the springs, but he did the mining. Joe Sharp was out here riding and he came upon a place where he could hear some old squaws crying and hollering. Out at Timpahute Mountain the Indians had abandoned 3 old, blind squaws. They had become blind and couldn't go with the tribe, so they just put brush around them so they couldn't get out, and then they left. He rode up on these old squaws and he took them and back to the [Indian] camp and told them, "You so and so, you don't take care of these . . ."

Another story they tell about Joe was when he was just a young boy. He was riding around Hiko on a horse and he came upon an old Indian camp which the Indians had left. He thought he heard a cat so he started looking around there and it was a little Indian boy. (Sometimes I get emotional when I tell one or two of these stories.) He got him up on the back of his horse and took him home and said, "Can we keep him? He's hungry, he's starving to death."

Henry looked up, and he had a big family and everything, but he said, "Yeah, we'll keep him." So they raised this Indian boy right with their family. They called him "Chiney." I saw him once.

EH: He grew up right here and had a family of his own.

RM: Is that right?

EH: He went down here on the reservation, didn't he Joe?

JH: Yes.

RM: Was he a Shoshone?

JH: No, I think he was Paiute.

RM: Were the Indians here Paiute or Shoshone?

JH: I think they were Paiute. Another little story tells about one time when they rode out in Irish Mountain. They always killed a beef, and the old Indians knew that, and they would eat anything - the entrails and everything. This one old Indian knew when Grandpa and the others were going to ride, so he went out early. They found his lunch on the trail that they took - it was a dead mouse in between two old leaves - it had fallen out of his pack.

Another time (it kind of makes you choke up) in that day and age, they didn't have welfare and all those things, young mothers died and people died, and they didn't have any folks. Joe Sharp was out riding again, down in a cornfield they had, and he found a little boy. Once again, he put him on his horse and took him home and said, could he keep him. His folks died and other people took him in, but mistreated him - he was starving and had been beaten.

RM: Were they Indians?

JH: No, this was a white boy, Johnny Murphy. They took him home and said, "Can we keep him , Dad?"

Well, Henry Sharp was a kind man and he looked up at this little sad boy that had been beaten, and said, "Dammit yes, you can keep him." So they raised him, too.

RM: Is that right - with all that big family?

JH: The oldest girl stayed and helped to raise all the family until they all married, then she, in turn, married Johnny Murphy (the boy the Sharps raised).

RM: Did they stay in the valley?

JH: Yes, until she died. That's another story. Some of the Sharps moved from here to Elko County, and after she died, he went up and married Ella Sharp (a daughter of the Louis Sharp who had left and gone to Elko County). That's kind of a strange coincidence.

CHAPTER TWO

RM: I hope you've got more stories like that. Those kind of stories make history come alive.

JH: Yes, they make people live.

EH: Otherwise they're just names.

JH: So they would bring home strays for the family to raise - an Indian boy and a white boy.

EH: You know, Henry Sharp had the first mail contract to Pioche, Nevada. He and his boys would go halfway one day, and at the halfway point they had a little old shack and one girl and one boy would stay there. They would go from there one day and they would have fresh horses at this stop over at what they called Bennett Springs. Then from Bennett Springs they would go to Pioche and then back to here bringing mail. And they would take a horse and go way north over into Quinn Canyon and Cherry Creek.

There's a story they tell. One of the older girls, Ella, had one of the little girls and the Indian boy over there [at the cabin]. She had just gotten through scrubbing the floors and they got to sliding on these old floors. They were just board floors, and they had soap on them, and they got to slipping, and I guess she paddled their behinds real good. And my mother always told about this little Indian kid - "Now Ella," he said, "don't you wish we no slide?"

RM: Now, where is Bennett Springs?

JH: Well, Bennett Springs is over in Delamar Valley.

RM: And there was a cabin there where they stayed? Did they stay there full time or did they go up there?

JH: Somebody did. I've heard my mother's aunts talk about it. They hated to be assigned there - they lived at Hiko and took turns for a couple of weeks at a time, so they wouldn't have to be out there for so long.

RM: And that was so that the mail deliverers would have fresh horses?

JH: Yes. There were 3 boys, Henry and the twins Hiram and Joseph, and they would take turns. The boys would take turns staying out as well as the girls.

RM: And how often did you say they made that run from Pioche for the mail?

JH: It took them about 3 days to make the run and then they would start all over again. It would take one day to Bennett Springs and then one to Pioche and back to Bennett Springs and then back to Hiko, so about 3 days for the round trip, with a wagon.

RM: And one of the boys and one of the girls would stay there and keep fresh horses?

EH: My mother told me a story that tells what they did to this grouchy mail driver one day. [chuckles]
It goes: Even with such heavy responsibilities they managed a bit of mischief. There was one old grouchy mail carrier they hired. He growled at everything. He told them repeatedly that he had to get up early to be on his way and they better have his breakfast ready for him and not to dare let him oversleep. So the old grouch bedded down for a long winter's snooze, but the children only let him sleep 4 hours, never telling him that at the time they awoke him for breakfast and sent him on his way.
They really got him up early. He never knew the difference.

JH: I started to tell you about Henry Sharp.

EH: He never married, did he Joe?

JH: Well, he married Mary Dawson up here late in life. But he lived mostly with the Indians. And the Indians showed him where these springs were and he'd never show my grandfather Joe where the springs were, but he'd tell him. Anyway, the Indians showed him 2 or 3 valuable, rich deposits. Later on his sister in Hiko was postmistress for many years, and twice a year he would take a small sack of ore - about 20 pounds - and send it to the smelter in Salt Lake City and then he'd have enough money for his taxes and living, but he never would tell anyone where his gold mine was. My grandfather Joseph even tried to follow him a time or two, but he'd just come back. There was only one other person the Indians ever showed, and that was Mrs. Geer. They blindfolded her and she said they actually had to let her down on a rope to get to it. That's the only thing she does remember - that they had to let her down a rope. Of course, Henry would never say anything. In fact, my mother was with him when he died, and she asked him about it and he said it was just as well that nobody knew.

RM: So in effect, it's a lost gold mine. What a story.

JH: You take the people in Pahranagat Valley, the old-timers spent half a lifetime looking for it.

RM: Is that right?

JH: I think it was probably in Sheep Mountain. You know this other country has been explored and gone over with a fine-toothed comb.

RM: But Sheep Mountain hasn't?

JH: No, it's a tough mountain. Joe Sharp also owned [all of] Sheep Mountain. It was south and west of Pahranagat Valley, and at one time was along what used to be the route to Las Vegas. My mother was out there and she didn't like to hear the branding of calves. Mother was kind of a soft-hearted person and she didn't like the bellowing of the

calves when they were branded, so she took a walk and she fell off a cliff and could have killed herself. If you've ever been there, it's just steep, with many cliffs.

RM: I've never been up on Sheep Mountain. I always look at it -it's a fascinating mountain.

JH: It's a mean mountain, it really is. It's just cliffs and straight up and down, and boulders. There are 3 springs on the west side that Grandpa Sharp owned - Shale Cut, Cabin and Sheep Springs.

RM: He owned the grazing rights on the west side of Sheep Mountain?

JH: Yes, on the west side. We still had that, even when I was a boy - that's one part that he kept. He sold all the others - LaQuinta, Tikaboo and Saveo - to William T. Stewart after he got to be an old man. He got sick and sold it to Will Stewart.

RM: Is that Will Stewart in Vegas?

JH: Yes, that's the Will Stewart in Vegas, the father of Dan, Dell and Cornell.

RM: When did he sell his rights to Stewart?

JH: Grandpa Sharp didn't sell to the Stewarts till after 1900.

RM: Oh, I bet it was the Stewart boys then.

JH: All the Stewarts moved from here. But they didn't leave here until I was a pretty good-sized kid in high school. Some of them left when I was in grade school.

RM: Tell me some more about your great-grandfather and your grandfather Sharp. Do you have any more stories about Henry Sharp?

JH: Well, he ran the first cafe. It was in Hiko and was also a store where everyone got groceries, kerosene and clothing.

RM: OK, let's go back to the valley. When he got here, who occupied the Pahranagat Valley?

JH: I've got that written down. They took up the ground all around Hiko.

RM: Were they homesteading?

JH: Yes. He patented all that Hiko ground on homestead - probably in the names of his children and family. There's an old block building up there that they call the "Johnny Murphy House", this oldest daughter had that piece of ground. There's a real fine block building up there.

RM: So there was nothing at Hiko when he got here?

JH: Right. To go back to this McGuffy story - it's kind of an odd coincidence. These 2 McGuffy boys, who were born and raised here, years later came back to visit and got up to Ash Springs. They both got hellacious drunk and one of them drowned. The water is very warm and one of them drowned and the other almost did.

RM: Now, when would that have been?

JH: Oh, this happened about 15 or 20 years ago, in the '70s. They were old men then.

You asked me about who lived there - Geers, Fergusons and Butlers were here when the Sharps came. There was an old bachelor named Cadwell who lived below the Fergusons, and they got into an argument over water. They even went to court about it (this was in the newspaper in Pioche if you want to look it up). Ferguson lost, so he stabbed Cadwell in the belly, but Cadwell lived.

Now, Ferguson had some corn up behind the house, and quite a while later somebody rang a bell and it sounded like a cow was in the corn. Ferguson went out to get this cow out of the corn and somebody shot him and killed him. Everybody knew who it was, but it went a while longer till Mr. Geer and Mr. Butler and other Fergusons shot Cadwell. It was at night. He was scared so he only went out at night after the shooting - he knew he was in trouble. They shot him and it was in the old Pioche Record. The newspaper clipping named the men that shot Cadwell and ended the article with, "Enough said." That's the way it ended. [laughter] No one was brought to trial.

There's a little side story to this - it's kind of gruesome. These same gentlemen decided they would take him up to Hiko and bury him the next day - that was the least they could do for him. So they went to Sharp's bar and got slightly inebriated - Butler and Ferguson and Sharp and Frenchie (the Frenchie family were the next ones down). The grave wasn't very deep. Mr. Geer, who was a tough old man, gave the obituary. They had Cadwell down in the grave and they covered him with a sheet and took a big boulder and set it down on his head and said, "The way of the wicked is hard."

RM: [laughter]

JH: That isn't quite all the story. About a week later the dogs and coyotes started digging Cadwell up. So they had to get the town drunk there in Hiko (every town has one, you know) all liquored up and they gave him $10 or something to go dig a grave and they rolled him out of this one and put him in the other. [laughter]

RM: What a story! When would that have been, approximately?

JH: Oh boy. Probably 1875. Grandpa Sharp probably was just a teenage boy, because I know he wasn't part of the killing.

RM: Tell me what you know about the Geers, Joe.

JH: The Geers were here before the Sharps - they and the Fergusons. They were cousins and they came from the East someplace.

RM: Were they Mormon?

JH: Absolutely not. In fact, the Henry Sharp family, who were Mormons, had no contact with the Mormon church for so many years that none of them grew up as Mormons. None of my mother's people, the Sharps, were Mormons, they joined the church later. But anyway, Ferguson was a tough man and so was old Pappy Geer. The Geers owned all the range east, north and northwest of Pahranagat Valley and had literally thousands of head of cattle. He got to be a really wealthy person. To give you an example, Mrs. Wright, his niece who inherited the place, had a picture of him with the governor of Nevada in World War I showing him as the biggest bond-buyer in World War I. He owned all of Delamar Valley and way north and east. As he grew old, other people either bought his range or took it over when he could no longer defend his hold.

RM: Did he basically own the Pahranagat Valley?

JH: No. If you want to go back to that, there were the Sharps and then the Fergusons, the Frenchies, then the Thompsons, then the Butlers, then the McGuffys, then the Richards. That's where my people came in - Richard owned the Ash Springs down to Kent Whipple's place (what is now called Kent Whipple's place).

Then Joe and Henry Sharp took up all the ground that we live on now, from there to almost Alamo. That's where the Pearsons' place took over. And that's the place the Mormons bought, settled and made the town of Alamo.

RM: Were those people here when Henry Pearson first got here?

JH: No, they all came at about the same period of time.

RM: Who was here when the Sharps got here?

JH: As far as I know, just the Geers and the Fergusons and probably the Butlers.

RM: Do you know when Geer came in, roughly?

JH: Probably around 1860.

RM: How many were in the Geer family when the Sharps got here?

JH: There was a Mama and Papa and Dyer and Maude.

RM: Dyer and Maude were the children?

JH: Dyer never married until way late in life, his dad bought him some more property. In fact, he bought the old Butler place and gave it to Dyer. But Dyer finally got sick and went to California and some nurse married him. I don't think she ever lived with him, but she married him for the property. But then the Depression came and she never lived here and she almost lost it because she couldn't pay the taxes.

One time Grandpa Joseph Sharp and 2 Ferguson boys were prospecting around the country and they found some rich ore [at Delamar]. They spent quite a little time [developing it] and they called it the Monkey Wrench. It was one of

the old original filings, and it was called the Monkey Wrench because they had taken an old monkey wrench and beat the [claim stakes into the ground].

RM: That was their prospecting tool?

JH: Yes, this old monkey wrench. Joe Sharp later sold his interest to the 2 Ferguson boys for an old team of white horses and a wagon. His cousin George, one of the other Sharp boys, used to laugh - he would say Joe was the worst trader in the world. One of the Ferguson boys got a little money out of it. He had a beautiful home at Hiko - a 3-story. The other one didn't realize much out of it.

RM: Why were they prospecting over there? Was there any particular reason?

JH: No, they just prospected a lot. The Fergusons had claims all over the country and so did Grandpa Sharp. He had claims on Irish Mountain and claims all over- Baldy Mountain . . .

RM: And then what happened? Was there a boom right away?

JH: No, it took a while, but finally the word got out. Then they got people out of Salt Lake interested in it. The Ferguson boys got quite a lot of money out of it. Grandpa Sharp never got anything but the team and wagon.

RM: That's interesting. What year would that have been? Was it before 1890?

JH: Delamar closed down in 1911, so I think it was around 1890 or something like that. You've heard the stories of how many people were killed at Delamar and how the Delamar dust (as it was called) affected even the people living in town [who didn't work in the mines].

RM: Well, I've heard about the dust - that it was a bad place for silica.

JH: My dad was a young man working for Joe Sharp on the ranch and he was going to go over there and get a job. His father and Joe Sharp told him, "Don't you go into that mine, not one day." So he never did. But a lot of his friends from southern Utah - cousins actually - went over there and they didn't last 6 months.

RM: That's remarkable. Let's go back to the Geers. You were talking about their son . . .

JH: Dyer lived his whole life here but he never married. He was kind of like Uncle Henry. He actually had children with the Indians and old Papa Geer used to call them his sons. The boys left and went down to the reservation when the rest of the Indians left. But he grew up and spent most of his life around the Indian camps. As he got older he became sick - probably cancer - and went to Los Angeles to the doctor. He married a nurse he met there.

EH: Maude Geer was the sister.

JH: Oh, that's right. I remember a story they'd tell about old man Geer:
"I raised Dyer, I raised him well. Mother raised Maude and she raised Hell." She was a pretty girl and all the young boys from around here tried to court her. But, no - her ran them off. He was a pretty tough old boy. Finally, this [man named] Moore came along and he was tougher than the old man. And he said, "hey, we're going." So they got up and took off
RM: So he got the daughter?
JH: You bet - he took the daughter. The old man took after them and when he caught up with them Moore said, "I'll just kill you, that's all there is to it." He convinced him and the old man went home. Maude did come back to have her first child.
The Fergusons lived up in a little old rock cellar just south of the lake. They were cousins and she had her baby there. Mrs. Wright, who actually wound up with the ranch, was the Moore [daughter]. She was a Wright, but that was her married name.
RM: Where was Moore from?
JH: He was an outlaw. He came through this country and he was just tougher than old Pappy and he just took her and married her. And as I said, Pappy never did forgive her. But Mammy helped deliver the first child. Somebody came down and said, "Your daughter is having a baby." So she got in an old buggy and got somebody to take her up there and she stayed several days.
RM: But they wouldn't accept her back into the family?
JH: No, they never did.
RM: She was living with the Fergusons.
JH: She and her husband.
RM: How did Moore earn a living?
JH: He was a cowboy around here.
RM: A hand, basically?
JH: Yes, he was just a cowboy.
RM: But he was a tough guy?
JH: Yes, tougher than the old man. He was tougher than these local boys. There are some terrible stories told about old Pappy.
RM: Like what, for instance?
JH: Feeding people to the pigs.
RM: Do you think they are true?
JH: I don't know. I shouldn't even say that. I try to keep to the truth, but that I don't know.
RM: There are no Geers left in the valley, are there?
JH: No, The daughter who was born here was the only one who ever lived here, and when she died that was the last. Her

parents left right after she was born and she lived her life in old Mexico, but she came back when the folks got old. She had an old Model-T and she took them for a ride or two and wound up with all the property and all their money.

EH: She was a banker down here.

RM: So Moore's daughter wound up with the property.

JH: Dyer didn't have any children other than the Indians, but Josie Moore Wright had a brother. He was not included in the will and I don't believe he or his family realized any part of the estate.

CHAPTER THREE

JH: I just found out Pappy Geer's name: Adrian W. Geer. Everybody in this country always called them Mammy and Pappy.
EH: This is a picture of the daughter.
JH: This is Clara Maude Geer - she's the one who ran off with Moore.
RM: And how many children did she and Moore have?
JH: Two. She had the girl Josie and a boy, but I don't know whatever became of him. He was living in southern California. I don't think he ever came to the valley, that I know of. I've been here all my life and I think I would have known about it.
RM: But the granddaughter inherited?
JH: Yes. Here's a picture of the girl - Josie Moore Wright.
RM: How big of a place did Geer have when your folks first got here?
JH: He had probably the biggest ranch in the Pahranagat Valley at that time. The big ranchers had a lot of cowboys working for them.
RM: Did he have most of the Pahranagat Valley?
JH: Gosh, no. He only owned that part and then, as I said, there were the Sharps and then the Frenchies, who owned Frenchie Lake, and the Fergusons and then I think there was a man by the name of Thompson and then Geer and then Butler and McGuffey.
RM: Were they all here when the Sharps got here?
JH: No. The only two that were here when they got here were Ferguson and Geer.
RM: How much did Geer have? I mean, the whole valley was open then, wasn't it?
JH: Yes, but he didn't have it.
EH: He probably had all he could handle. [chuckles]
JH: They wouldn't let them take but so much, you know. A lot of these ranch owners would get their cowboys to take it up for them and they would later buy it back from the cowboys and make it part of the ranch.
RM: Did Geer have mining interests?
JH: Yes, he had a lot. In fact, some of the claims on Irish Mountain, which is on the west side of the valley, are still listed in the Lincoln County Courthouse - where he filed for the patent on the mining claims.
RM: Where were they selling their cattle in those days?
JH: Oh, that's another story. Way back when, they would have a big old drive, usually to the end of the railroad. In the earliest days they had to drive them many miles, one time they took them to Elko County. When the railroad finally

came through southern Nevada they just took them to Caliente or to Moapa.

RM: But that wouldn't have been until the turn of the century.

JH: That's right.

RM: What kinds of crops were they producing?

JH: They had some alfalfa. I've heard some of them tell about alfalfa - there's one field up there that's wonderful ground and they claim it was the same alfalfa for 50 years. They raised mostly this wild grass. And then they raised beautiful corn. This is a good place to raise corn.

RM: What did they do with the corn - feed it to the stock?

JH: Yes, to the chickens and pigs. While Delamar was operating it was a valuable asset to the people here. They all had great big orchards - Mr. Geer, Mr. Butler, Grandpa Sharp - everybody had orchards. Grandpa Sharp must have had 4 or 5 acres of them. And anything they could raise, they sold in Delamar, so they raised about everything they could. They had a good market. The people here in the valley really prospered when Delamar was going.

RM: What kinds of fruit trees did they grow?

JH: About anything - apples, peaches, pears, apricots - you name it.

RM: They sold to Tonopah too, didn't they?

JH: Yes. And they raised pigs and turkeys and all kinds of things. I know my folks raised a lot of turkeys.

RM: Do you usually get a fruit crop, or does it often get frozen?

JH: We always get apples. About the only thing they don't ever get much of is apricots because they bloom too early. But the rest of the fruit usually does well. It used to, anyway.

RM: So how long did Pappy and Mammy Geer have their place?

JH: Oh, they lived to be real ancient.

RM: Do you remember them?

JH: Absolutely. I remember all these people - all but Henry and Joe Sharp.

RM: But the Geers were definitely in here before the Sharps?

JH: Yes, the Geers and the Fergusons were here before the Sharps.

RM: What do you recall about the Fergusons?

JH: They were cousins to the Geers.

RM: Was there a family of them?

JH: Yes, there were several sisters and brothers.

RM: Was there a mother and father that started the family?

JH: I don't know their genealogy that well. I've heard them talk about several brothers and several sisters. One of them was a Manning and married a Manning and it was all mixed up, so I know there were some girls, but I can't tell

you how many. There are 2 or 3 Fergusons living here. For a lot of the old families - like the Pearsons, the Butlers and all of those people - none of them are left. But there are Sharps and Fergusons, and they are intermarried. As far as that's concerned, the Butlers and the Geers and the Fergusons and the Sharps all intermarried.

RM: There weren't that many places to go for spouses, were there?

JH: This Pahranagat Valley was very isolated in all respects.

RM: Tell me about the Sharps. Didn't you tell me that they mined first?

JH: Just for a short period of time. Then they put a mill in at Hiko so they moved down and they put up an eating house and a bar. And they took up all the farming ground around Hiko.

RM: Tell me about the restaurant that they opened up.

JH: Those girls and the mother put up some good meals and clean beds. I've read stories, as I was going through material (and I had heard before), that they put up a nice bed. People came through there, and they fed the miners and people at the mill. There were a lot of old bachelors there - in fact, there were still a few of them around when I was young. I don't know how they survived. I guess the county gave them $10 and they used to carve out a little dugout someplace. Most of them were half blind, and they would get their beans and bacon and crawl back in their hole for another month in the side of the mountain. Many of those hovels were around Hiko, but they were all up and down the valley. It was sad.

RM: Yes. So the Sharps must have built the building at Hiko.

RM: Yes, they did. Now, Ferguson is the one who made the big, beautiful building in north Hiko. It was a lot nicer building than the Sharps built.

RM: Where did they get their lumber?

JH: They must have shipped it in by the railroad, and from there on teams.

RM: But the railroad didn't get to Caliente until after 1900. Maybe they brought it by wagon from Salt Lake.

JH: It was farther south than Salt Lake.

RM: Oh - Fillmore?

JH: Actually, Richard was a freighter from the end of the railroad to Pioche. The Richards were quite a musical family. They had their own orchestra and they actually would play in Pioche. They'd stay overnight there and then they'd go back, that's how they learned about this valley.

RM: How big was the building that the Sharps built in Hiko?

JH: I really don't know, although there are pictures of it.

RM: I wonder where he got the money. That's quite an undertaking.
JH: I don't know.
RM: Maybe he made some money in mining.
JH: He just went to work. I don't think he owned a mine or anything like Geer and some of them did.
RM: And you say he had a boardinghouse?
JH: Yes. Because this one story I read told about 3 boys who came from Idaho and stayed there and then they wrote back and thanked him later. Some of these folks have made copies of those letters over all these years. The story tells about those boys staying there and the clean sheets and the food. Then they left for California, except the Indians got after them. I think they killed one of them, but the other 2 got away or something and came back to Hiko and then went to [Idaho].
RM: And you say he had a store or bar?
JH: A bar and a store.
RM: Was he running cattle on his land?
JH: Yes, they always had a few cattle. And his boys . . . when Joe Sharp was just a young man he started running cattle, and then that's how he wound up with all this range. Hiram, the other twin, was never very healthy. He never married and he died when he was about 35.
RM: What was wrong with him?
JH: You know how it was in those days - there wasn't a doctor anyplace. There wasn't anything in Las Vegas, and Caliente was a ranch. If you got sick, you died. That's what it amounted to. All those years there was something wrong with him - he was just never healthy and he died a fairly young man. But he used to live with my grandfather or one of his sisters.
RM: Could you, again, name the children that Henry Sharp had and say a sentence or so about what happened to each one of them?
JH: OK. There were 3 brothers who started out from England.
EH: Henry, Hubert and Louis came to America. Then Hubert went to Canada and married and settled down there and Louis and Henry came to Nevada.
JH: Yes. Louis came with Henry.
RM: Did he come to the Pahranagat Valley?
JH: He came here for a while, then he moved to what's called the Sharp Ranch, up north and west about 100 miles. Now it's called Adaven. Then that group of Sharps moved from Adaven to Elko County.
There's a little story I could tell you about that. They went there and a man named Wines owned a bar and a cafe up at Elko County. They took a herd of cattle up to the end

of the railroad and he saw all those cowboys and he just closed and boarded up his establishment. They saw this beautiful country and came back and sold out down here and went back to Elko County. What's funny is that years later, Louis Sharp married Wine's daughter. That was the second Louis Sharp.

RM: The first Louis was Henry's brother and then he had a son named Louis?

JH: Right. In fact, when you go up to Elko County there's Louis, Louis, Louis, Louis. In fact, there was another Louis Sharp down here.

RM: I'll be darned. Those 2 brothers had a huge impact on Nevada.

JH: They had a bunch of kids . . . Here's an interesting story they tell about this family and some of the troubles that befell them. They had a [warning system] that, if they got in trouble with Indians or whites, they'd run a flag of a certain color up the chimney. One day the men were not too far away, working in the fields, and 2 women and the 2 children were at home. (This was a 2-room cabin but 2 families lived in it.) Some Indians came around, and first they said, "Well, maybe we can hand them something out the window and maybe that will satisfy them." They tried but [the Indians] took their spears and tried to cut their hands off, so they decided that wouldn't work. So Henry's wife Charlotte took her kids . . .

RM: Was this in Hiko?

JH: No, this is before they came to Hiko.

EH: This was somewhere up in Utah.

JH: At any rate, this one woman was pregnant. She said to Charlotte, "You take the children and go in the back room and lock it and I'll stay out here and see if I can't give them clothes and food and satisfy them until the men come." So she tried, but this woman was raped and murdered and decimated. By the time the men got there they opened the door and saw all this horrible thing and, of course, they killed the Indians. But that's a little side story.

RM: Was it Charlotte who was killed?

JH: No, no. It was a friend of Charlotte's. They lived together in the same cabin.

EH: Charlotte and the kids hid in the other room.

RM: Oh my god. Now, Henry and Charlotte had these children. The oldest child was named . . .

JH: . . . William Henry. And William Henry loved to mine and he owned a lot of property just north of Alamo about 3 or 4 miles.

EH: Didn't he have a lot of horses, Joe?

JH: Yes, he had lots of horses.

RM: Was he a grown man when Henry came to the area?
JH: He was the oldest one, but he was still a youth.
RM: Like a teenager?
JH: Yes. He's the one who lived with the Indians part-time and the Indians showed him where the gold and silver and the springs were.
RM: And he lived out his life in the valley?
JH: Yes. He's buried right up here. Then Ella was the oldest girl. She was the one who took care of all the children and kept the family together after their mother left them.
RM: Did Charlotte take off?
EH: She ran off.
RM: When did she run off?
EH: The youngest one was only 5 or 6 years old.
RM: What happened? I mean, did she run off with another guy, or did she just leave?
JH: She literally ran off with another guy.
RM: Who was it?
JH: Bill Johnson - I guess he was someone who boarded there or something, I really don't know.
RM: Did they ever hear from her?
EH: They went to Utah, yes.
JH: Oh, yes. The boys never did go see her but as time went by, why, some of the girls went and visited her.
RM: But she went back to Utah?
JH: Yes, and lived out her life in central Utah someplace. I think they ran a boardinghouse there.
RM: So the number one daughter, Ella, kind of took the place of the mother in raising the children?
JH: Right. And I told you they raised this Murphy - and later on she married him and they made a big place up in Hiko, and it's still there. She was buried here in Pahranagat Valley in the Hiko cemetery.
Then Alice is the one who married Johnny Richard in a double wedding. Alice Sharp and Johnny Richard married and my grandmother Katherine Richard and grandfather Joe Sharp married.
RM: Oh - so that brothers and sisters married brothers and sisters? That's nice.
JH: As I said, none of them married until after Henry Sharp died, and then they all married pretty fast.
The next boy was George. He is the one who left here as a young man and went to Railroad Valley. That's where there's oil and where the Sharp boys up there live. They own lots of property there.
RM: Why did he go over there?

JH: He and Will Ferguson went there originally, and they had cattle together. And Ferguson sold out to him. Ferguson married their sister Mahalia.
RM: Ferguson married a Sharp sister?
JH: Right, Mahalia. We'll get to her in a minute. But anyway, they went over there, and then Mahalia and Will Ferguson sold out to George Sharp.
RM: And then they came back here?
JH: Yes.
RM: I was talking to the Sharps the other day - I ran into them in Tonopah.
JH: Did you? Norman and Gerald?
RM: Yes.
JH: They're my cousins.
RM: Yes. And they said that they thought their family didn't come in there till 1900. I thought that seemed late.
JH: Boy, that is late. But they ought to know.
RM: And then George lived out his life over in Railroad Valley?
JH: Yes, and died over there. He gained lots of property, I'll tell you. And then Mary Sharp married John Peter Wright. He was a miner from Delamar and he only lived several years after they were married. The mining dust got him. Now, the old Henry Sharp had the post office after Louie Stearns. When he got old, Mary, to support her family, ran the post office in Hiko for many years. That's how she raised her family. And then her son John got started in the cattle business, and he's been a cattle man all his life.
RM: That'd be John Wright.
JH: John Wright. And his sons, Jay and Kay, still run cattle here in the valley. Hiram, Joseph's brother, died fairly young. He was the twin. He never married.
RM: And Joe, the other twin, was your grandfather.
JH: Right. And then Annie - she was the younger one - first married Joseph Little. And he died of who knows what, in that day and age.
RM: Was it shortly after they were married?
JH: Yes. They never had children.
RM: He didn't have the dust?
JH: No, he didn't have the dust. He just died. And then she married Will Thorne.
RM: Was he a local fellow?
JH: No.
EH: He was a surveyor.
JH: He was a surveyor - quite an intelligent man. He came in here surveying this country and she was a pretty girl, and Annie married Will Thorne, and they had 2 children - a boy and a girl, Audrey and Francis.

RM: And did they take up land here?
JH: No, they just had a home here in Alamo. Now, Joe Sharp owned most of the ground north of Alamo and south of Henry Sharp. As some of his sisters got married he let them have some [land]. And then as some of his other sisters married, he'd just give them property. I guess he wanted to keep the family around. He was a kind-hearted, good person.
RM: Let's talk a bit about Louie Stearns. When did he come in?
JH: I wouldn't have any idea. He must've been there pretty much in the beginning. He was the first postmaster, he was the judge, he was kind of everything.
RM: Were there little communities up at Irish Mountain?
JH: You bet.
EH: There was a little place called Logan.
JH: In fact, there are still old rock places up at Silver Canyon, where they moved to.
RM: And that's where the miners were staying that were working there?
JH: Right.
RM: And Stearns became the postmaster of Hiko?
JH: Postmaster, and the judge . . . and the jury. [chuckles]
RM: And then what happened? Did he die there?
JH: Yes, I think he's buried at Hiko. And then Henry Sharp became the postmaster and later Mary Sharp Wright was. I think Henry Sharp was the first sheriff, too.
RM: He was the sheriff of Hiko?
JH: Right, and Lincoln County.
RM: So he would've been a sheriff when Pioche was going?
JH: Yes. The county seat, to start with, was here. Then they moved it to Pioche.
RM: OK, sure, he would've been the county sheriff there.
JH: They moved the county seat over there when Delamar went down and Pioche really was booming.

JH: Who are we missing? Mahalia - did I mention Mahalia?
RM: You mentioned her, but not in the [list of] names.
JH: OK. We started talking, and I said we'd get back to her next. She was another sister and she married Will Ferguson. As I said, they lived here in the valley, then they moved up to Railroad Valley with George Sharp, and I guess they had about 800 head of cattle from the story I remember. Then he sold out to George Sharp. First they moved over to Hot Creek, up by Sunnyside, and stayed there for a while. Then they moved back to Pahranagat Valley. He had cattle all his life. He and Mahalia both lived and died here in the valley, and raised a family. Not too many of their folks are left here, but one girl married Vern Shumway, and they're here. So some of their posterity is here.
RM: Now, we talked about the Fergusons, the Geers and Sharps, they were the first ones in. Who came in next?
JH: The Mormons came in and bought the Pearson ranch.
RM: Now, the Sharps were ahead of the Mormons?
JH: Oh, yes, by 40 years.
RM: They were Mormons, though.
JH: Yes, but like I said, none of the kids were even baptized.
EH: [They were converted] in England, and that's about all the contact they ever really had with the church.
RM: That's about it, they really weren't practicing Mormons.
EH: They didn't have an opportunity to.
RM: So basically 3 groups came in early - the Sharps, the Fergusons and the Geers.
JH: There were others - for instance, the Butlers. One of the Butler girls married a Ferguson, so that kind of entwined . . . The Butlers owned the ranch just south of the Geers. They was next to the Geers. Then there was the McGuffy family.
RM: Now, when did the Butlers come in?
JH: The were among the very first.
RM: They cam about the same time as the Sharps?
JH: Probably a little later.
RM: OK, yeah. What was his name?
JH: Oh, I know one of the boys was . . .
EH: Nye?
JH: No, Nye Butler's one of the sons. The old man and family are buried up on the hill.
RM: Did the Butlers have a lot of children?
JH: Yes, they had several. And then the next ranch down below them was the McGuffys.

I think they had the 2 boys I was telling you about. But here's the story: The McGuffys owned a nice, big beautiful meadow straight west of Ash Springs. [Mrs. McGuffy] had a desire to own the property right around Ash Springs, that some old bachelors had homesteaded - each man had a few acres. She desired this land, so she would invite each one of them to supper and when they got home, they would die in their bed. Nothing was ever done about it or anything like that.

RM: It would be hard to prove in those days, wouldn't it? They didn't have toxicologists testing for poison and so on. [chuckles]

JH: That's right. But they all died after eating supper with her.

RM: Was she alone?

JH: No, she had a husband and a family. There were the 2 boys, and there were some girls. I told you the story about the 2 boys who later came back when they were fairly old men and one of them drowned.

The next family down there was the Richards. They owned lots of property from there down to where the Sharps took over.

RM: When did the Richards come into the picture?

JH: I figure it was about 15 or 16 years after the Sharps, so about 1883.

RM: Were they Mormons?

JH: Yes, but they grew up just like the rest of them.

EH: The church wasn't available.

JH: The church wasn't available, and they all drifted away from it. None of them were baptized.

RM: Were the Butlers Mormons?

JH: No, the Butlers had nothing to do with the church.

RM: So, really, the Sharps were the first Mormons in, but then there were other people who came in that weren't Mormon?

JH: Good lordy, yes. And I'm not sure, maybe they didn't even admit they were, I don't know. You know, there was a lot of anti-Mormon sentiment. In fact, even when my dad rode in Arizona as a young man (he went down there to ride for 2 or 3 years), and he told me that he didn't dare admit he was Mormon.

RM: There was that much prejudice?

JH: Oh, yes. There's lots of prejudice in certain areas.

RM: What would have happen if he had admitted it, do you think?

JH: Oh, he probably would have got the hell beat out of him. In fact, he said he rode for quite a while with this one guy, and finally that guy said to him, "Ern, you're a Mormon, aren't you"?

He said, "Well, so am I." [laughter] So maybe the Sharps thought, "I didn't practice . . . maybe I'm not even one."

But history says that they were - I mean, their baptismal records - of course, people have done all that [genealogical] work.

RM: Let's talk some more about your dad's folks.

JH: It was a big family. They came over her about the same time the Mormons did. The stories about all this water got out in southern Utah, and so the Higbees came when the Mormons came - about 1900. I think the first ones came in 1900, and the second bunch in 1901. My dad came with the second bunch.

RM: Did they come from Utah, or did they come from Delamar?

JH: They come from southern Utah. There was quite a bunch of Mormons that came from Utah and wound up here. The Paces, for instance, came from southern Utah. They owned a grocery store. When Delamar closed down, they actually moved to Pahranagat Valley.

RM: So your father came over here in 1901?

JH: Right. He was about 10 years old. My dad told a story about [their trip]. When they left southern Utah they had chickens, 2 or 3 wagons . . . My dad was just a boy, and Will was his younger brother, and he was only about 4 or 5. For some reason Grandma Higbee would not run a wagon, so they had the 2 wagons, and they had Will, the little guy, sitting up there. My dad and one of the oldest girls, Sabra, drove the cattle and the horses.

And Grandpa had the second wagon. He said they would go a little ways every day, and then at night they'd let the chickens out and they would milk the cow and everything, and so on. And that's the way they come into this country - it took about 10 days. When they got on the Panaca Summit (at that time it was just an old dirt road) they told Will to stop there and they would help him down the hill. But he didn't, he headed off down there. So my dad was on the only horse. He was just a 10-year-old boy, but he took to him and finally caught him down there a ways, and darn if he didn't run along and get those old horses stopped. His mother was just horrified. I mean, she just thought he was dead.

EH: She was terrified. Ern was the third child, and by the time he was born, both older children were dead. In those days they got childhood diseases.

JH: Then they lost one other brother, Carlton, after they came here.

RM: Oh. So the family had 5 children and only 2 lived, huh?

JH: They had more than 10 children. Living at this time were Ernest, Sabra, Ethel, William, Zelda, Lila and Lawrence - 3 died at a young age.

RM: When your dad's family came over here what were they leaving in [Dixie] Utah?

JH: A rock pile. And wine. To be right honest [chuckles] with you, my grandfather, Ike Higbee, got to drinking quite a little of that Dixie wine, which a lot of the folks did. My grandmother said to him, "You know, I've got my family, now you've got to quit your drinking or I'm going to leave." [laughter] I never knew him to drink when I knew him.

RM: So it was a tough go over there?

JH: It was really tough. It was much easier here because Delamar was going. Anything anybody could raise, [they could sell]. So they prospered, they could make a living, you see. In fact, this valley probably was never more prosperous than when Delamar was going. They could raise an egg, or a chicken, or a wagon load of hay . . . I've heard my grandpa Ike talk about taking the hay up there, and they had a Chinese man there who did the laundry. He had a little old cart, so he had to have a horse to feed. And he told my grandpa, "I want some of your hay but no fox [sounds like "fock"] tail." So Grandpa took up a load of that and he said it was just loaded with foxtail, you know, and [laughter] the Chinese man didn't know foxtail when he saw it, so that was fine with him. And he was just fine.

Another time my dad went up there and he had a loco horse - horse that got into locoweed - which is dope. And they're crazy. My dad didn't realize this horse was loco when he was got him, but they just quit on you - they just won't go. So my dad got behind him and beat him, and finally got him up to Delamar, and he knew he couldn't come home. And the old horse was docile and he told the Chinese man, "You know, I'd like to trade this for that gentle horse you've got on that team there. He said, You know, I've wanted a mare . . ." (this was a horse). And he b.s.'d the old Chinese man, so he traded him. They hooked him up, and the old horse was gentle, you know. But the next morning, he was raring to go, and I guess he just tore that thing all to pieces, all through Delamar. [laughter] Those old boys were a little tough on the horse trading, sometimes. [laughter]

Oh, they used to cheat each other on that horse trading. That was legal, I think, to cheat each other on horses. Another time my dad traded horses with somebody form over in Panaca. Dad was out on Sheep Mountain, riding - (they'd be gone for 6 weeks at time) he was out riding for Grandpa Sharp at the time. This guy delivered the horse, and it was the sorriest looking old thing, an old mare. They knew about the time Dad would be home, so my mother and Grandpa

Sharp and all of them took an old hat and cut out holes for ears, and put a bonnet and an apron on this old horse. [laughs] My dad was so mad, he went all the way to Panaca, and I guess the guy knew he was coming, because nobody in Panaca knew where he was. [laughter] That was part of horse trading. [chuckles]

Well, to get back to Higbees . . .

RM: The Mormon church didn't tell them to come over, did they?

JH: Oh, no. They came as different groups. The one year there was Thomas Stewart, Urban Riggs and Botts and Jim Allen. Those 4 bought the whole Pearson ranch and they made Alamo - they blocked out the streets. That was a good thing, I've always thought that if the Mormons had not come here and laid out the town of Alamo it might have wound up like Sunnyside, or like the Sharps over in Railroad Valley. It seems like it took somebody or something to come in and make a town and make a [farming community]. Over at Railroad Valley, there's a lot more ground, but look what's there.

So I've always felt that maybe if the Mormons hadn't moved in, you never know what it might [have been like].

RM: The Mormons always set up good communities, yes.

JH: Yes, they actually made the town - made streets wide and straight as Brigham Young had done in Salt Lake City, Utah. Then 2 years later, a lot more came from another town - Kanab, Utah. That's when the Coxes, Foremasters, Shumways, Lambs, Higbees and all the rest of them came.

RM: That would've been in 1901.

JH: Yes.

RM: What did your grandfather think, coming here with his wagons and everything?

JH: Dad was the oldest child, and he and his dad came down the Virgin River and they went over to Bunkerville and then up across this way, and into the valley. They looked it over and [thought] "Hey, this is much better than the rock pile we got over here." So they went back and sold what they could, and took all their stock. But [when they moved] they came the other way - by Panaca, through Hiko, and then right down. They bought a little place just below the Sharp ranch, just north of Alamo. It was part of the old Pearson property, but they bought it from the Mormons who had recently come in.

RM: How much did he buy?

JH: Oh, he must've had 40 acres.

RM: Could you make a living with 40 acres?

JH: Well, it didn't take much in them days.

EH: All they had to do was survive.

JH: All they had to have was some kerosene, a little bread. They had a few cattle, they had their chickens, and they about made their own clothes. So they didn't need a lot, a little bit of tax money, which didn't amount to much, and the kerosene and some flour and a little sugar. They could raise the [rest of the things they needed.] And anything - corn, hay, you name it - they could sell in Delamar.

RM: What happened when they got here? Did your grandfather build a house?

JH: Yes, he built a little house.

RM: What did he build it out of?

JH: A lot of them made them out of adobes. When Delamar closed down, the people didn't have nice homes. A lot of the houses in the valley were just adobes, which were fairly comfortable, in a way - probably they were warmer than those old Delamar houses. But when Delamar closed down, they practically gave the houses to those people here and they moved them down here and made the homes in Alamo and the surrounding ranches.

RM: Were the Delamar houses wood houses?

JH: Yes, little old wood houses with wood floors . . .

RM: How did they get them down here? That's quite a little trip, to get them from there over to here.

JH: Yes. They would move them just like you do now. They would take big long poplar trees and tie them to the back wheels of a wagon in a Y, and set the house right on the logs, and they'd have 2 more wagon wheels up in the front. Then they would hitch up 8 or 10 horses - maybe 15 to 20 horses - and they'd pull them through the sands and set them down. They didn't have very good foundations, none of them did. In fact, they moved our present home from across the valley. This wasn't a Delamar home - there are only one or two of them left - they've either all been torn down or burned.

EH: Clark Hardy's is one.

JH: There's one of them right up here, if you want to take a picture of it.

RM: When did they start moving the Delamar homes in?

JH: In 1911.

RM: What caused Delamar to fold?

JH: The ore just ran out. Talking about Delamar, they have run the tailings 3 or 4 different times and they're thinking now, if they can get Clark County to give us a little water, of running it through again.

EH: And of opening the mine up again.

JH: Yes, but they got all the high grade out of it.

RM: Are there opportunities for heap leaching, like they've done in some of the other old camps?

JH: Yes, actually, they've developed these new processes . . .
RM: Would they heap leach the whole mountain?
JH: Well, I don't know about that.
EH: When they develop a new process they go through this mine.
JH: They've already gone through them 2 or 3 times in my lifetime.
RM: So your grandfather built an adobe house and your father would've been 10 years old . . .
JH: Right. He went to school here about 3 months out of the year - that's all they had.
RM: Do you recall him talking about what schooling was like?
JH: Yes. Henry Sharp would board the schoolteachers - he'd hire them and pay them. To start with, all there was was just the little old school at Hiko.
RM: Was it a little frame building?
JH: Well, the teacher and the kids just used one of his rooms, I guess.
RM: I see. And Henry Sharp did that for his kids?
JH: Yes, for his kids and any others that lived at Hiko. The next school that opened up was when the Richards moved into this end of the valley. He did the same thing that Henry did. He would hire a teacher and help with the pay. And [they held school] about 3 months out of the year.
When the Mormons moved in, they did the same thing down here. There was actually 4 schools at one time - at Hiko, Crystal, Richardville, and Alamo. They were still around when I [started school]. In fact, they were still using them. My brother Edwin, who is 2 years older, went to Richardville school. We lived on the other side of the valley. We moved the house because this was kind of a lake in the winter and you couldn't cross over here. (The road came down here.) But always before, the Richardville school was on that side. So Edwin went over there 2 years. Kay Wright and all of them went to Hiko.
But when I went to school . . . I was born in 1925 and I was about 6 years old when I started so that would be about 1931, and they consolidated that year.
EH: Everybody was bused into Alamo.
RM: And before that, there were 4 little schools. Were they little frame buildings?
JH: Yes.
EH: There's one left. That one is up on the Stewart ranch. All the windows and everything are gone, but . . .
JH: Yes - the one at Crystal. It's in the canyon - from the Stewart ranch you go straight across through their lane and the building's still sitting there.
RM: So a person could go and take a picture of it?

JH: Right. And then the foundation for the Hiko one is where the fish and game place is. They moved the building down here (it was a pretty good building) and it sat down here for a long time. They moved the Richardville school down there, too, but I think it's all gone.

RM: Mr. Stewart, when he came in, was the one who took part of the Pearson ranch and platted it out for the Alamo - is that right?

JH: Yes. He and Riggs and a man by the name of Botts and Jim Allen.

RM: What was Riggs's first name?

JH: They called him Irv, but [his real name] was Urban.

RM: And then people bought lots in Alamo?

JH: Yes, the second bunch bought lots. They would live in town, and they had their little ground outside. With their 40 acres, they could make hay or whatever.

RM: Do you know what your grandfather paid for his 40 acres?

EH: Joe's mother told me one time that land was 25 cents an acre. And on a back of a picture it said $2 per acre for one with water. Here it is.

JH: That's the Frenchie family, they had land up there. There's a story that goes with that:of the boys here, a Ferguson boy and a Richard boy, married 2 Frenchie girls. And it's kind of a sad thing - they moved from here over to Bishop, California, and one had a boy and one had a girl and those big, strong healthy [Frenchie] girls both died within a week after their children was born. Andy Richard took the baby and brought it back to his mother here, and she raised this baby - they called him Merle Andy Richard. The little girl was raised by the Frenchies. And a sidelight to that is that the daughter got burned up in a big fire back east - the Coconut Grove fire. Her father, Charles "Duke" Ferguson, lived with us for quite a long while. He never did remarry, but the other man did.

RM: I want to go back and pick up 2 other people who we might want to say a little bit more about. The Indian boy that the Sharps adopted . . .

JH: Chiney?

RM: Yes. Tell me whatever happened to him, and what kind of a person he was, and so on.

JH: All right, I'll tell you a little about him. When I was a boy, there were still Indians here. Chiney stayed and worked around with the ranchers and worked for Grandpa Sharp and anybody he could. He married a squaw and left the whites and went with the Indians. After he grew up he left the Sharps, but they still remained great friends all their lives. If we went to Vegas . . . the road used to go down by the Moapa Indian Reservation. So when my mother,

Uncle Lawrence or Aunt Jewel or any of the folks [went down there], they'd look up Chiney and his family. In fact, I was a little boy when we swung around there once and saw them.

RM: Did he have children then?

EH: Yes - we have a picture with his family.

RM: What finally happened to Johnny Murphy?

JH: He went to Elko and married the Ella Sharp from up there and they had some children. He's buried in Elko.

CHAPTER FIVE

RM: What happened to your mother's sister Jewel?
JH: She stayed here most all her life. She and Mother divided what was left of Joe Sharp's ranch.
RM: Lawrence didn't get it?
JH: No, he got that piece down [at Alamo]. He had a big ranch down there and the 2 girls divided this place. She didn't live too awfully long right on the ranch. She married, was divorced and her second husband owned Ash Springs, so she was at Ash Springs for a long time, until they went to Las Vegas. She died in Las Vegas and is buried in Richardville cemetery.
RM: What was her married name?
JH: Dimmick. Her daughter was the girl we told you had cancer, and who put all this book together for 10 years. She was my first cousin.
RM: I see, what was her name?
JH: Geraldine Anhder Wadsworth.
EH: She had to look up all this information.
JH: Here's something we haven't mentioned. I'd like to bring out the fact of the cancer in this valley. I know darn well it's from the fallout that used to come over. They didn't even tell us to stay out of the weather. They would actually wash cars as they went through here, time after time, and yet they wouldn't even tell us to stay out of the damn thing.
EH: Yes, they never told us anything about [the danger]. We'd go stand out there and watch that it.
RM: You mean, they would wash your cars?
JH: No, no one would wash ours - this was for anybody going through. They would stop the cars down there and wash them.
RM: The AEC [Atomic Energy Commission] would do that?
JH: Yes.
EH: If they were leaving the valley, they'd wash them.
RM: But they wouldn't tell you to stay out of it?
JH: Right.
EH: If they would have told us to even stay in while one was going over.
RM: Good lord.
JH: And the clouds would come right over us, we could see them, you know. All the kids would get out and watch them.
EH: We went out and watched them, too, we filmed them. [chuckles]
JH: There's one street down in Alamo where every house has had from 1 to 3 people who lived on that street at one time die from cancer. There's [my cousin] Geraldine, Kent Whipple,

Kate Evelyn Wright - all young people. It's all up and down the valley, but that one street is exceptionally bad.

RM: Were they young people?

EH: Yes, they died young.

RM: Does it tend to be any kind of cancer?

JH: Just about any kind.

RM: Tell me about seeing the clouds.

JH: Well, they came right over through here from the west. It was a dirty red-looking cloud. You'd see the bomb. They wait - even right now, when they shoot them off out here - they wait for 2 weeks if they have to, so the wind doesn't blow to Las Vegas and California.

But one time one went straight north. Fay Stewart was at Irish Mountain at that time, working at Timpahute. One of those clouds went right over there. He had one of the most beautiful daughters you ever saw in all your life. At age 21, she got married and had, I think, 1 or 2 kids, then she died of leukemia, He died a few years later, but he had lung cancer.

That [cloud of fallout] went on up over Minnie Sharp - the mother of the boys you talked to in Tonopah. She lost all her hair - she never had a drop of hair after that went over. And the Bordoli family - it killed the little boy and his dog. The lady was in the house, and so she survived. But it killed everything else around there. It even dropped on the cattle - they had big old blotches on them.

RM: Yes. Dan [Stewart] told me that his cows had big burns on them, and that about 10 percent got cancer of the eye.

JH: Yes, right. And of course both my parents died of cancer when they were old. But I'm talking about young people. Kay Wright's wife died of cancer. You can go up and down the whole valley . . RM: Has anybody ever done a study of the cancer deaths here?

JH: I don't think so, not in this valley. They have in St. George, because they have money and a lot of talking power.

EH: There are more people there.

JH: But this is the closest place there was, you know.

EH: We're about only 35 miles straight through from Ground Zero. The cloud just came right over this way.

RM: You could see the cloud come up and then come this way?

JH: Oh, yes, we could see it. It would gradually drift . . .

EH: It would be a big old mushroom thing - then it would finally dissipate and come right over us. We never thought anything of it, you know.

JH: It was a big, old, dark-looking, reddish-black cloud. You could tell it, you know.

RM: Did you see dust falling on your car?

EH: Not really.
RM: But you could see the cloud, huh?
JH: Oh, yes. It was a funny looking cloud, a funny color. It was between a gray and a black.
RM: How big was it?
JH: Usually, by the time it came over us, it had spread out a little. Mother Nature had kind of spread it out in maybe just a trail, then maybe it would get bigger as it came along. It depended on the upper winds, you couldn't say it was any one thing.
RM: Did you ever notice any burns or any unusual effects on your body or your family's?
JH: Gosh, yes. One day I was running a Caterpillar, and at night when I came up, my neck was burnt black.
EH: It was fiery red.
JH: And all the skin came off on my neck.
RM: Where were you running the dozer?
JH: Just right here in the valley.
JH: It killed Cornell Stewart, Dan's brother.
RM: What did he die of?
JH: Leukemia. He really got burned bad, too.
EH: Well, [the government] sent him out there where the Stewarts' cattle were and told him they had to get them out of there. [The government] wouldn't go out and mess around, they had him go out there and move his cattle.
JH: They never even gave him protective cover or anything else.
RM: Did they ever come in here and tell you . . . ?
JH: Oh, they tested.
EH: We wore badges all the time. They won't tell us anything.
JH: I'll tell you a little story:
We were putting up hay. Well, they tested your badge once a week, or something like that. They saw Mother's badge and holy Toledo, it went right out of sight. And they said, "Well, you've been out on the Test Site, haven't you"?
And Mother said, "Well, no, I haven't been on the Test Site."
EH: She'd been right there, cooking in the kitchen.
JH: So they took that badge away and give her another.
EH: And that's all they did.
RM: That's all they did?
JH: Yes, that's all they did.
RM: Good lord.
EH: They'd never admit to anything. You can take them and show them the cattle right here . . .
JH: Some of our cattle's eyes are . . .
EH: . . . they say, "Well, they're just off of the Test Site," out in that other area. But they hadn't come up from that area, they'd been right here in the valley.

JH: The cows themselves were all right, but their bags - you know how the teats hang down . . . ?
RM: The udder? Yes?
JH: They would hit the brush, and then their bags would get brown, and hard. The calves couldn't suck and they would die.
RM: No kidding. From the radiation on the brush.
JH: Sure. It's just big burns on the cow's teats.
RM: Oh!
EH: It's terrible . . .
JH: You show them that kind of stuff now . . .
RM: No response from them at all ?
EH: No, they won't admit to anything.
JH: I showed them our horses - we had some horses here that had never left the ranch - they were brood mares. I showed them white spots that were all over their backs and they said, "Oh, no way. You had to have had these horses out on the Test Site."
RM: Is that right.
JH: Well, you lying so-and-so. So we didn't even mess with them.
RM: They just stonewalled you.
JH: Yes.
RM: Did this happen over a period of years?
JH: Yes, a lot of years. Well, we aren't talking about the valley [history] now. [laughter]
RM: Well, I think this is an important part of the valley's history. I've heard stories like this from other people, too. We were exposed to it up in Reveille Valley.
JH: Oh, hey - you know you were.
RM: We'd get up and watch the tests.
JH: I was talking about the Sharps, who are just over there, and what happened to them.
RM: I don't think we got the cloud that the Sharps got.
JH: That was probably the worst one.
RM: One time we saw a cloud come up the Kawich Range. At that time there were uranium hunters all over, and their geiger counters were showing - "Hey, man, this whole area's uranium." [laughter] Their scintillators were going crazy up there, [laughter] and it was fallout on the brush.
JH: [laughs] Absolutely. Yes, they were all pretty near rich. And all it was, was fallout.
RM: They thought they had it made out there.
JH: They hunted here north of Hiko - I can show you where they put up a whole bunch of claims - and it was just fallout.
RM: And we wore those badges, we thought they were a joke - they didn't explain anything to us. We kept them hanging on our beds.

JH: They still check some of our kids for thyroid. They don't check us, but they do some of our kids.
EH: Yes. They tested them, and they spot test them every so often. They want to know how they're doing.
RM: How would you describe your relations with the AEC then and now?
JH: We've had so many dealings with so many government agencies, that the people in this valley are very - I don't quite know how to say this - but they don't trust them, let's just put it mildly - they don't trust them.
EH: Well, they don't tell you anything.
JH: They've lied and cheated us so much. Let's go way back to the Test Site. They told the Stewart boys and [others], "Hey, we're going to only have this just 10, 15 years, and then we're going to give it back to you." Now they just keep talking more, you know. Sheep Mountain was the same way.
EH: Yes, they just keep fencing off more and more.
JH: And even the Bureau of Land Management has been a terrible disappointment to us.
RM: How has the BLM disappointed you?
JH: To start with, the BLM was a good thing. They helped us make reservoirs and they helped divide the range up - [they'd tell you] how many years you ran here and here, and all that, which was a good deal. They actually helped us fence - we did the work, but they would furnish the material. And they actually planted things in spots. But in the last 20 years or so, they've just forgotten what the whole program was about.
EH: And they won't let <u>you</u> do anything.
JH: Yes. Say we had a spring on that mountain and we decided it would be better if we were to stretch a pipe down here. Well, it would just be impossible.
EH: You couldn't do it. They'd just absolutely refuse.
JH: We've dealt with a lot of different agencies throughout the years. It's been a pretty sad deal from beginning to end.
EH: We got so disgusted once, we bought a ranch in Idaho. [chuckles]
EH: Yes, were going to just get off BLM [land]. And now this last thing with Clark County and the water - that's going to be the living end.
RM: Oh, lord - isn't that something.
JH: But as I say, my folks are lying right up here, so we're going to give it our best shot.
RM: I don't think they're going to pull that one off.
JH: Oh, yes they are.
EH: I think they will.
JH: Did you hear the news last night?

RM: No.
JH: They passed another law that said that . . .
EH: They could take the ranch and farming water for culinary water.
RM: I think what you're going to see is a large environmentalist uprising against it.
JH: That's the only chance we've got, because all the power is in Clark County. The beginning of the end was when that Warren Court came out and said it had to be one vote, one man. Our founding fathers knew [better]. They set up the Senate and our House, so that the big couldn't completely eat up the little. But when they came out and said that . . . there used to be 17 senators in Nevada, and now it's . . .
RM: That's right, Clark County just totally dominates the whole state. And it's getting worse.
EH: Oh, it will get worse.
JH: And the thing of it is, people like us don't have any rights anymore. And that's sad, you know. If fought a damn war - spent about 3 of the best years of my life fighting a war for that - and then I come home and as I get to be an old man, they come in and tell me I've got to move off. After they passed this law, they can tell me I've got to move off now - tomorrow- whenever they want. It's pretty sad.
EH: It's not fair.
RM: Especially for Vegas. We live in Vegas now and it's unfit to live in.
JH: Yes. Really, all they're doing is causing more problems. I talk to so many people out of Las Vegas, and they tell me just what you said: Leave it as it was, it's bad enough as it is.
EH: Yes, they should slow down the growth till they can catch up.
JH: To bring another 2 or 3 million . . . . lordy, it just creates more problems.
[Tape is turned off for a while.]
RM: Is there anything else that you recall your mother talking about - as a young woman growing up in the valley at that time?
JH: Well, mainly the all-night dances. And when they were at Delamar, I remember she said they had a roller-skating rink there. And they had a nice dance floor. In fact, they

moved it down here to Alamo, and it had a real good hardware floor. It's still in the LDS chapel, they redid it 2 or 3 times, but that floor's still the original floor from Delamar.

RM: That's amazing.

JH: She said she went to school - what little bit they had - and some of the teachers stayed right in their house.

EH: What was their evening entertainment?

JH: They read lots of books. One of the things they always gave each other for Christmas would be a book. Then during the year they would exchange their books. The Richards sang and played music at night, so when Mother lived with them, there was lots of music. But not everybody did that. And then there were the picnics - they all did lots of picnics in this country. Ash Springs has always been a wonderful place for young people, and in that day and age, the people who lived in Alamo would go up early in the morning and take a lunch and whatnot, they would spend all day there, then come late in the evening. That was a common thing to do in the summer.

Of course they helped to ride in the fall and the spring, when the cowboying was needed. And they'd help farm - they would run the buck rakes and the derrick horse and pitch the hay and all that kind of stuff.

EH: And they made sorghum from sugar cane.

RM: Oh - they raised sugar cane?

JH: Yes. The only time I ever saw them make it, they put it in a barrel with a fire under it, and they had an old horse to turn it (if you don't turn it, it burns). They had a thing fixed up in the barrel like a churn, and this old horse went around and around, day after day (at night they'd change and put another horse on), till it turned into sorghum.

RM: Is that right. And that's molasses?

JH: That's molasses, yes. They were still doing that a little when I was a kid.

And they'd put their pork and things, which they mostly had in the winter, on the north side of the house. They didn't have refrigerators, you know. The only way you could cool things was by digging a well. Anything you want, you'd put down in the water - like to try to keep your milk from souring before night. You'd let it down with a windlass.

RM: How deep is it to water here?

JH: Well, we have a heck of a good well here, and it's only about 38.5 - 40 feet.

EH: It's good water.

JH: If Vegas took the water, that would be the first to go - water like ours.

RM: Does your water here come from that deep carboniferous aquifer?

JH: Well, yes. This good water does. They think something forces it up. But there's other water that's horrible.

EH: It's bad.

JH: Oh, it's bad. It's got everything in it.

RM: Is it well water?

EH: Yes. You can't use it to wash with or drink or anything.

RM: It's so harsh?

EH: Well, it's yellow - full of iron.

JH: This whole valley used to be a river, way back when. I bet it's been [chuckles] a while. The old Indians told some stories about getting on a canoe and going to see their brothers way up White River. You can go up and see Indian writings all along where they lived, where there's no water now. So I think this was a low spot, because of the narrows down here, and there was probably a lake. As time went by, it was filled up. And now when they did way down, all they get is this old swamp. Actually, that's what you're getting, because it looks bad - it's black.

EH: The lady living right up here (she's moved to Vegas now) had water that stunk.

JH: Oh, some of it actually stinks.

EH: It has a terrible swampy smell. You couldn't drink it for anything. She couldn't even use it to shower with. She got dirtier showering with it . . . she'd have to go someplace to shower.

RM: How did your mother and father meet?

JH: He moved here as about a 10-year-old boy, and when he was still just a boy he went to work for Grandpa Sharp. So they were well-acquainted. Now, this is another story you haven't heard [chuckles], if you're looking for family history. I could go into a lot of stuff.

RM: Great - that's what we're here for. [laughter]

JH: This goes back to polygamy. My father knew a girl that he quite had a case on, one of the Pace girls who had lived in Delamar. They kind of grew up together - they had dances, and all that kind of thing, with the 2 villages mixing, and they kind of knew each other from southern Utah. She went back to St. George and he stayed here and worked for Grandpa Sharp and they wee going to be married. So he got his wedding stake (I didn't know this till he was an old man - he didn't mention it) and he went over to get married, and a while before, they had married her off to a bishop or something.

So he came back and married a girl here - she was a lot older than he, and she was a strange one. She was a hypochondriac. So they didn't stay together too long.

EH: Well, long enough to have children.
JH: Yes, they had 4 children. They moved into Arizona, and then he left her. He got a job at a big cattle ranch down there and just kept on going. He got divorced and moved back to Nevada. He farmed down at Overton for a year or two - raised cantaloupes - then he moved back and went to work for Grandpa Sharp for the second or third time. (He was even working for him a while when he was married to his first wife.) And my mother was married to another man for a short period of time. But when my father went to work for Grandpa Sharp again, after all those years, they got married.
RM: So he was not a real young man when they married?
JH: No. I think he must've been darn near 40 when I was born.
RM: Are you the oldest?
JH: No, Edwin's older.
RM: And they got married here in the valley?
JH: Yes. And then went to Caliente and had a dairy for a short time.
RM: And he moved into this home.
JH: Yes, when it was [on the other side of the valley].
RM: Where was your grandfather, Joe Sharp?
JH: He died when I was a baby - Mother and Dad had been married about 4 or 5 years.
EH: They had a dairy over in Caliente.
JH: Yes, Dad and Lawrence (the son) and Grandpa Sharp had started a dairy. Grandpa was raising the hay over here on this ranch, and they'd bring it to Caliente, where they had a dairy. Caliente was a pretty good-sized railroad town. And Grandpa Sharp got sick - finally he got so bad that Lawrence and Dad had to come back, and they brought the cows with them. Grandpa Sharp died, and then the Depression hit and we wound up with all these milk cows, and that's how we survived - we shipped cream up to Nelson Ricks Creamery in Ogden. (I did milking, even as a little boy.)
RM: So your father moved into the household with your mother and her father?
JH: For a short time, yes. But actually we were mostly in Caliente.
RM: And your mother and father had 3 children? Why don't you give their names and the years they were born?
JH: OK. My oldest [sibling is my] half-sister, Barbara Stowell. She's a lot older than I am.
RM: Is she still in the area?
JH: She's still alive, she's in Reno. She didn't ever like it here.
RM: Did she grow up with your father?

JH: Oh, yes. My father raised her.
EH: She went to Lincoln County High School [in Panaca].
JH: When she grew up there still wasn't a high school here - they had to go to Lincoln. Anyway, my dad married my mother and they had 3 kids. Edwin is the oldest - he was born in 1923. He lives on the big Burns ranch just straight west of Ash Springs. It's the old ranch that the Richards took up. It's all still much like it was, they haven't done much with it.
RM: And then, you're the second child.
JH: I'm the second child - I was born in '25. And I have a sister who did live here for a long time. She married a Wadsworth, and they live in Reno. They have a nice home there. He runs one of the big construction outfits up there.
[Tape is turned off for a while.]
RM: You mentioned that Timpahute opened during World War II?
JH: Yes, they were getting tungsten. I went to high school with some kids [of families] that worked out in Timpahute. I also went to school with the Sheehan boys from the Groom Mine.
RM: Were they the owners of the Groom Mine?
JH: Yes. And the air force bombed them out of there. (They swear up and down the air force did it on purpose.) They had a nice little mill there and all, and they swear up and down that the air force bombed them out on purpose while they were in eating dinner.
RM: Is that right - so in effect that made it useless for them.
JH: Right. You see, their mine sat right up where they could see everything. They had to go, that was all.

RM: Where was Timpahute shipping their ore before World War II?
JH: They always shipped it on trucks to the train at Caliente. From there they shipped it to Orem. It's used to make tensile steel.
RM: Oh, so it went up to the Salt Lake area.
JH: Yes, and they just dumped it into the steel to strengthen it.
RM: And they were doing that back then.
JH: Yes - before World War II.
RM: Was it a big operation before World War II?
JH: Pretty good-sized, you bet. It's opened 3 times in our lifetime, that they've actually had mills and things like that.
RM: What was the first time?
JH: That was the first time.
RM: About what year was that?
JH: Oh, there were guys working . . . Ev, do you remember old Dick Wetzel and those guys?
EH: Yes.
JH: They all worked out there when I wa in high school. Some of the guys who worked out there used to come into the high school dances.
RM: And they lived there, didn't they?
JH: Yes, they made a camp out there. The first camp was out in the flat, not up by the mine. I went in the service in 1943, and I graduated '43, so it had to be 1940 or '39.
RM: Is there water at the mine or in the vicinity?
JH: As they went back in the mine they found water. [At first] they got a big well down in the flat and pumped it up there. The second and third time it opened up they had the water pumped up that they [found in the mine and they built their town up there].
RM: How long did the mine operate the first time?
JH: Oh, it closed out right after the war - probably 5 or 6 years, something like that. And the next time, it only opened for a year or two.
RM: Was that in the '50s?
JH: Probably.
RM: My dad worked there in the '50s.
JH: For heck's sake.
EH: It had to be in the '50s, then.
RM: I think it was probably around '54 or -5.
JH: You didn't go to school here, then.
RM: No, we were mining out at Reveille Valley.
JH: In Reveille Valley? Then you know the Sharps in that country.

RM: I don't know the Sharps well.
JH: Fallinis?
RM: Yes, I know the Fallinis pretty well - Helen and Joe, and all of them, yes. In fact, I interviewed Helen for the Nye County Town History Project. But my dad got snowed out or something one winter at Reveille Valley, and he had to get a job, so he went to work at Timpahute.
JH: I'll be darned. I've thought of a story about Groom Lake - this is kind of interesting. There were some miners and their families working at Groom Lake and they called these people the Purdyman party. They had a mine on the other side of the valley. In that day and age, there weren't Caterpillars and all these things like we have now, and the snow got so deep, they ran out of food and everything. They could see a light across the valley so they decided they would cross Groom Lake and go over there.

Well, they got right out in the middle, in one of those big old Dodges or some blasted thing about this high, and they ran out of gas or it quit or something. One of the guys said, "Well, I'll go on and I'll get some help." Well, they found him dead, by a tree. He didn't make it. But the other guys made a light and the guys from Groom Mine came down and got them.

They stayed there. In fact, the story is that one of the women who was working there cooking or something married one of the old boys from on the hill there, and they lived happily ever after.

But the county sent 3 local boys out to pick up the one guy who didn't make it. They had an old Model-A truck, and you know how they didn't have much window - the window was out of the back. In order to keep warm, they managed to take a lot of whiskey with them. [chuckles] So they were slightly inebriated. As I said, the guy died by a tree, sitting up like this. They got him and roped him on the back of the old Model-A truck - it didn't have any racks or anything, they just put a rope around him and he was all laid out. Those guys got to coming home, and one of them happened to glance back - and here he was, looking right through the window.
EH: Sitting right up.
RM: Oh! [laughter]
JH: Of course, they were going slow, and they just - whoosh!
RM: Jumped out of the truck? [laughs]
EH: It just scared them to death. [laughs]
RM: That is funny! [laughs] Then Timpahute operated for a couple of years in the '50s?
JH: Yes, it didn't operate too long.
RM: And I think Wah Chang had it at that time.

JH: You're right.
RM: Then the third time was Union Carbide?
JH: Yes - they're a big outfit, you know.
RM: When did they operate it?
JH: Oh, boy. What - it operated 8 or 10 years ago, Ev? It's still out there.
EH: They still have guys out there watching it.
JH: It's been dead for 4 or 5 years.
EH: They put, what, $7 million into that mill.
RM: Now, tell me some more about your father growing up in the Pahranagat Valley.
JH: Well, he didn't get too awfully much schooling. I think he finally went, a little bit, to the eighth grade, and then he went to punching cows. He told a story about the Geer ranch. They kept about 100 head of saddle horses - they had that many cattle. And they had about 50 head of work horses, so they had about 150 head of horses. Now, that's a big outfit. My dad and Billy Lamb went to work for them when they were boys. They went up and they said, "We want to ride your rough string."
RM: Now, the rough string is . . . ?
JH: It's the string of unbroken horses. Nowadays we break them younger, but then they let them get to be 3 or 4 or 5 years old and they would have to actually break them. They would ride them 8 or 10 times, then turn them over to the cowboys. So the rough string is getting them so that some of the cowboys could ride them.

Dad was only 13 or 14 years old - he hadn't been in this valley too long. He and Billy Lamb were about the same age. They grew up together, they were the best old friends in the world. (Billy Lamb is Floyd Lamb's father.) They told this old man they wanted to ride the rough string, and, "Yeah," he said, "Well, I'll give you a try. If you want to, try it."

So they went out to get the horses - he was going to show them which ones to break. Billy Lamb got right in the middle of a creek, and this old mare put her head down to drink, and for some reason she got spooked, and she bucked Billy off, right square in the creek.

So the old man said, "Well, boys, there's no use of . . ."
RM: [laughs]
JH: My dad said, "Oh, no, we can do better than this." And they did, they broke a whole mess of horses just as boys. Then they headed north with the cowboys. They went with them, and they told about riding the old Coal Valley, on into Garden Valley. He owned Coal Valley and Garden Valley and all the north. They were gone for 2-1/2 months or

something - just 2 buckboards and bed rolls, and that was it.

EH: Joe's dad loved horse racing.

RM: Did they have a lot of horse racing?

JH: Oh, always. When they had a celebration here, they always raced horses. When the Indians were here, they used to even race them. Then they raced against each other. Will Stewart loved it. Dell Stewart and those guys always had horses.

EH: They still do.

JH: They still have them. Old Dell and all of them raised the best quarter-horses and race horses in the country, they spend a lot of money on them.

RM: Did they bet on horse races, or how did they . . . ?

JH: Well, no, the Mormons didn't bet on them, they wagered. [laughter]

EH: Your dad rode relays, or something, didn't he? That's interesting.

JH: Well, yes, that's something you might know about my dad - he was quite an athlete. You've seen in the western movies how they jump on a horse - they grab hold of the mane and get one foot on up?

RM: Oh, yes.

JH: He was an expert at that. OK, they used to have what they called a relay race. There were several different kinds - in one you started, and then you ran down and threw the saddle on and came back. My mother said that nobody ever beat my dad.

Another kind was where you had, say, 4 or 5 horses, and you went out around a great big track - maybe 4 or 5 miles in all - and you would have different guys with different horses. One of the guys [who held a horse for my dad] was a big old Indian, a big old guy, and my grandpa Higbee was always one of them - he was a big man. They'd just grab that old horse, and my dad would just hit, and he'd just hit again on the other horse and he was gone, and nobody could ever beat him. He was a good athlete - he really was.

RM: How long were the horse races?

JH: Oh, it wasn't like the modern-day tracks they have now. They would just kind of level off a little spot and say, "from here to here." They were probably half a mile, and some of them maybe even a mile.

RM: Did they ride with saddles and everything?

JH: They had regular jockey saddles. Or with those relays, that was a regular saddle. And if they were just racing saddle horses, they would use the regular saddle. But when they got serious, which they did sometimes, they got

awfully serious - that's where the fights and so on started.

RM: They would have fights?

JH: [chuckles] Oh, yes. You know how horse racing is - nobody ever loses. There's always an excuse for every race - somebody cheated . . . And they used to cheat.

EH: [chuckles]

RM: How would you cheat in a horse race?

JH: There are many ways. I've heard my dad tell of it. [chuckles] To start with, say your horse was better than mine, but he was nervous. My dad or one of them would come up to the line. (Remember, they didn't have starting gates.) They would come up in the line too quick, or way too far back. So the nervous horse would go down the track and they couldn't stop him. So they called it a false start. You had to wait until both of you got to the line at the same time. So [chuckles] they would jockey around for about 30 minutes or so, and by that time the nervous one had probably lost half its gas, and then he would just ride, and away they'd go. [laughs]

RM: What's another way?

JH: Well [chuckles], my dad and Dick Higbee were the 2 jockeys. There were a lot of different ways they would do it. A lot of things were on the start, or there were several things they used to do if they got an even start. They still do it, I guess - ride along with the whip and hit the other horse over the eyes, or do things like that.

RM: So it was serious business for them, wasn't it?

JH: Oh, yes.

EH: Like a basketball game. [chuckles]

JH: They'd get in a big fight half the time.

RM: Were there always a lot of races?

JH: Yes, there were a lot of races. Heck, they'd run all the little old cow ponies and they'd have kids' ponies . . .

EH: They'd run all day long.

JH: In fact [chuckles] I remember my brother had a real good horse. He used to rope on him, and nobody would outrun him. One time when we were all young guys, the Stewarts brought some of their best horses from Las Vegas to the locals. But old Paul Stewart had stayed here, he never did move to Vegas. He said, "Edwin, can I run that old horse you've been roping on?"

And Edwin said, "Well, I don't care." (They'd had a rodeo before the races, you know.) "Well, sure, go ahead, Paul." Paul was an avid racer and he never did lose. So they started, and I'll be damned if this old rope horse of Edwin's didn't beat this high-powered horse of Stewart's.

[laughs] Old Paul got on and beat his own nephews. (Paul was a brother to Will.)

RM: Did the little guys always ride?

JH: Oh, yes. Grandpa Higbee couldn't ride, that's why he always made my dad and Dick Higbee ride - they were small. I'll have to tell you one about Grandpa Higbee. His brother Dick was a little guy. Dick was a wrestler - like Dad, he was an athlete, and real quick. They were at the mining town of Silver Reef and there was a bunch of miners around there in the evening, and one guy kept a-bragging. He said, "I can whip anybody in town. I can whip anybody in the mine."

He just kept it up, and finally this little guy, old Dick, walked up and said, "I don't think you can." So the miners all got a big purse, because they knew Dick, they knew he could fight. There was a heck of a bet going on, and they started off, and Dick just pretty near killed the guy.

So the guy got mad. They had tents, and he ran in the tent, and he said he was going to kill him. "I'm going to get my rifle and kill you so-and-so." Dick said he didn't know what in the hell he was going to do. He just hated to run, but he didn't have a gun or anything. So [chuckles] Ike, his brother, the big one, (I've got a son who's built just like him) stood right in the tent. And as that guy came out, Ike hit him right square in his jaw.

RM: [laughs]

JH: [laughs] Of course, down he went. Then Ike beat him up pretty good and he ran him out of the camp.

RM That's a good story. Where is Silver Reef?

JH: It's just north of St. George about 10, 12, 15 miles - it's only about a mile off the road - just west of Toquerville about 10, 12, 15 miles.

RM: Do you remember any other things about your father growing up in the valley that he would talk about?

JH: Well, he grew up just about like we did. We hunted - there was lots and lots of game here. Before, there was no deer - the Indians had all the deer killed off. There were 1 or 2 or 3 on Irish Mountain and that was all. The deer all came back when they started killing off the cougars. Now the environmentalists are protecting the cougars again, so there's a lot less deer. But when I was little, and when my folks came to this country, there were mountain sheep, but there weren't any deer.

RM: Are there mountain sheep now?

JH: Yes.

RM: Were there a lot of mountain sheep?

JH: Yes, there were a lot of them.

RM: I've read that the Indians in southern Nevada did a lot of hunting of mountain sheep but it's hard for me to imagine there would be a lot of mountain sheep, I've never seen one in the wild.

EH: They planted a bunch up here in the valley.

JH: Yes. I saw some just a while back right out here. We owned that range down here on Sheep Mountain. Ev and I have movies of them.

EH: Yes, that we took over at Sheep Mountain.

RM: Now, Sheep Mountain was acquired by the Sharp side of the family, wasn't it?

JH: Yes. Well, all the range - the Higbees didn't acquire [rangeland].

RM: Your mother grew up here in the valley, too, didn't she?

JH: Yes.

RM: What do you recall . . . ?

JH: Mother was a real hand with a horse. Her dad was in cattle, and he always kept them in the best horses, and Lawrence, his son, had the first old Model-T, and . . . as I say, he had a little money. My mother had long reddish hair - she was a beautiful woman. Her first husband died when he got hit by lightning.

RM: What was his name?

JH: George Stowell. They'd only been married a year and a half - they had the one child, Barbara. And then after 6 or 8 years she married my dad.

RM: Where was he when he got hit by lightning?

JH: Out on the north end of Irish Mountain, in the cedar trees. But anyway, she helped them with the cattle. She wouldn't help them brand, but she'd help them ride. She was a good horseman, my mother was a good rider. You see, although they tried to put the schools where the kids were (they moved them a lot) the kids had to go on horseback. Those girls and boys got to be horsemen, they could ride. They'd tie their horses up and go to school.

Mother actually went to school up here at Richardville, where the Richards had a school. They didn't have one right here, so she went up and lived with her grandmother Richard and went to school up there, in the schoolhouse that they moved over from Delamar. So she actually stayed with them in the winter.

When she got to the eighth grade they sent her, I think for 2 years, to school in Los Angeles. After the eighth grade, there wasn't any school here.

RM: Whereabouts in L.A. did she go to school?

JH: I don't know. Some girls' school.

RM: That must've been expensive

EH: You bet it was.

JH: Yes, I imagine it probably was. So she had more schooling than practically all the girls and boys in this country.
RM: How tall was your mother?
JH: Oh - she was about your height, wasn't she, Ev?
EH: Five foot five.
JH: She was a wonderful person.
RM: What did she do after her first husband was killed?
JH: She stayed with her mother and father. She lived across the valley, in this home. This was Joe Sharp's second home. The first one, before he got married, wasn't much, but as he got a little money, he made this home.
RM: I see. So your mother was raised in this house. That must be kind of nice, to live in the house where . . .
JH: I was born in this house. All of her children were born here.
RM: Was she born here?
JH: No, Mother was born in Pioche.
RM: How many acres was Joe Sharp farming?
JH: Oh - boy. He owned from that lane in front of the Pearson place, all but just little spots. What - 600 acres - 800 acres?
EH: Yes, 800, 1000 . . .
RM: That was a lot. Was most of it pasture?
JH: Yes. Although he had some alfalfa. I remember my mother said she used to run the old buck rake and help put up hay just like the boys did where she grew up.
RM: How much alfalfa do you think he was farming?
JH: Oh, probably a couple of hundred acres.
RM: And how many cuttings do they get here?
JH: Three.
RM: And they just get one cutting of the wild hay, don't they?
JH: Yes, usually. You can get one and a fair one, but mostly it's just one cutting of the grass hay. That's mainly what they put up, grass hay.
RM: Is the grass hay better hay?
JH: Oh, no. It isn't nearly as good as the alfalfa hay. I think good alfalfa is 12 or 14 percent protein, and this grass hay is crowding it to get 5 and 6.
EH: It fills their tummies, is all. [chuckles]
JH: They still use it a lot, though. You winter cattle on it, but they don't get fat.
RM: Why didn't they put in more alfalfa?
JH: Water. Now we have cement ditches and all that, so you can take care of [the water situation]. But in those days they had those old ditches and the water came down through the dirt and sand, and the water just disappears in the sand, and with the heat, so by August or September . . .

RM: Your grandfather Sharp must've had the biggest place in the valley.
JH: Oh, no. The Geer place was bigger and the Richard place up here by Ash Springs - the one that Fish and Game owns down at the lower end of the valley - was bigger.
RM: How many acres would you say the Geer place was?
JH: Oh, 800 or 900 acres.
EH: We said Joe Sharp's was between 800 and 1000.
JH: Well, maybe it was about that size, then. It's cut up now where it's hard for me to envision it. Because as I said, as his sisters got married . . . sometimes he'd almost give them land, to keep them around. And as the grandkids came along, and his kids, we divided it [further]. Now it's split up to where we've only got about 120 acres. Originally, he had a lot of land.
EH: I'll say he had a lot of land.
RM: So he was growing mainly alfalfa, and running cattle, and he had vast ranges out there, and then they probably always had a garden, didn't they?
JH: Oh, a big garden. And he had a great huge orchard. Everybody who was here a long time (of the white folks) had a great big orchard.
EH: Did they have a cellar?
JH: You bet, they had cellars in these hills. I may have told you about where the Indians died - they would just go right back to the hills . . . it would stay at the same temperature the year round - it wouldn't get any colder and freeze. It was cool enough to put their apples, their potatoes, their carrots, their cabbage, anything they'd store.
RM: Basically, did they grow the whole range of vegetables?
JH: Absolutely, yes.
RM: Is there anything that won't grow here - that they tried?
JH: No.
RM: Did they grow grapes?
EH: They didn't grow for us. [chuckles] We're not garden people.
JH: No, but this is great country for grapes. It's not like Toquerville was, where the Mormons came from, but you can raise good grapes here - good fruit.
RM: Did your grandfather Sharp take up raw ground, or did he buy it from somebody?
JH: I'm not real positive. I think he took up a lot of it. He may have bought little pieces from somebody else, but he and Henry, his brother, took up the piece above. Henry (the guy who lived with Indians) owned a big piece. Henry was the oldest, and then Joseph. Henry took the place that

was right next to the Richards' - right there down to this lane - and Joe had it from that lane to this lane.

RM: Did any other Sharps of their generation take up land in the Pahranagat Valley?

JH: No. George, their brother, went over into Railroad Valley, but they were the only 2 in this valley. The Richards took up land. They even took up little pieces of ground here and there besides the big place. That was later, though.

RM: How many brothers and sisters did your mother have?

JH: She only had one sister and one brother - Jewel and Lawrence.

RM: And what happened to them?

JH: Well, Lawrence wound up with a pretty good-sized ranch below Alamo, just below the Stewarts. It's a nice, big ranch.

RM: What happened to Jewel?

JH: She got half of this ranch. She didn't live on it very long. Her children still own it.

CHAPTER SEVEN

JH: I've got a story I'd like to tell you about Sprague. You know that outlaws lived at Ash Springs when the Sharps and all of them were here as young married people. Jack Sprague was the outlaws' leader, but there was a whole bunch with him, and for some reason they each had Jack for a name - Jack this or Jack that or Jack . . . Anyway, [Henry's wife, Charlotte Ann] was up there and Sprague came up to Hiko with his gun and his men and he shot up the town, shot through all their windows and things like that.

EH: They were scared of him, and they'd just give him anything he wanted. He lived off the people in valley.

JH: Charlotte Ann grabbed the kids and ran out the back door. But one of the little girls got wound up in some yarn - she was making a quilt or something - so she couldn't get out the back. She ran back in and there was an old guy, probably an old miner, and darned if he didn't grab his knife and cut this little girl loose, so [once freed], Charlotte Ann grabbed her and took her. Sprague killed the old boy who had helped the little girl just a little while later. From the stories I've heard of him, he was a horrible person.

EH: Geraldine's history of the Sharp family says, "The only time he didn't snarl was when he was talking to himself." [chuckles]

RM: There were a lot of outlaws in here, weren't there?

JH: Yes.

RM: It was because it was so isolated, wasn't it?

JH: Absolutely. I mean, this was isolation.

EH: Even the guys who were with Sprague hated him. Tell Bob what they did.

JH: Well, the other outlaws actually got scared of him - he killed some of them. They decided they'd have to do away with him, so they got some poison some way and put it in his beans. And they got worried that that wasn't going to do it, or he was going to kill them - maybe he'd feel it and kill them all - so damned if they all didn't draw their guns and kill him. They buried him up at Hiko.

EH: Yes - he sat by a tree, or something, and he was sick, but they had to hurry, so they just shot him.

RM: Is that right. And this would have been in the '70s or '80s?

JH: Yes. There was no law in here.

RM: Do you ever recall stories of a family coming through here in the 1870s by the name of Yount? A family that helped form Pahrump came through here - Joseph Yount and his

family and his son-in-law, Harsha White. And Harsha White stayed on for the winter and taught school in Hiko.

JH: Is that right - well, it's a cinch he stayed with the Sharps, then. I've been told 100 times that the teachers lived with them. I've got a list, someplace, of all those old teachers, but I haven't got that name.

RM: That's really interesting. Then they went on and established the Manse Ranch in Pahrump. They were coming from Oregon, headed for Tombstone.

JH: [laughs] Kind of like the Indians did with the Sharps?

RM: Well, exactly the same thing happened to Yount when he left here. He decided he was going to go to California instead and he got over to the Amargosa Valley, and he was resting his horses there, letting them graze, and he had a herd of cattle with him. The Indians killed his draft horses, because they knew he couldn't leave without them and then they could poach his cows.

JH: [laughs] The same thing that happened to the Sharps. I'll be darned.

RM: Now, you were born right in this house?

JH: Yes - all 3 of us children were born here with Aunt Luna Brown as attending midwife.

RM: Aunt Luna Brown delivered you?

JH: Right, as she did everybody else.

RM: And how was your father earning a living in those days?

JH: Boy, that was tough. During the Depression he helped make the railroad that they built before they started work on Boulder Dam. Ed Higbee, Dick's son, and he were old buddies - friends throughout their whole lives. Ed Higbee got the contract to make the grade from the railroad at Vegas out to Boulder Dam before they made the dam. My dad spent a whole year down there, but Ed, in the meantime, went broke, and Dad didn't get anything for a year. He worked here and he worked there and tried to keep everything. We pretty near lost this whole ranch for the lack of $500 during the Depression.

RM: Is that right. For taxes?

JH: For taxes, yes.

EH: A lot of people down here did.

JH: Well, that's when the Stewarts lost . . . they owned all that ground and they lost all of that during the Depression.

RM: Is that right - for want of taxes?

JH: Right - want of taxes and some mortgages to banks.

EH: They lost the whole thing.

JH: The old man kept a little bit. They came in and bought it originally, but then they divided it all up between the boys and other people, and the only one who wound up with

[anything was] Will Stewart, the one who moved to Vegas. He's the one who also bought Grandpa Sharp out. They had the big ranch west of Las Vegas. I think the LDS church bought it . . .

RM: Oh, they went down there and they took over the old Stewart Ranch in Vegas, and then later moved out around Sunrise Mountain.

JH: Right. But Will kept his [land here], and Tommy, the old grandpa - his dad - kept his. The rest - Ray and Sumner and all the others - lost theirs.

RM: What are your first recollections about growing up here on the farm?

JH: I'll tell you, it was a paradise for young boys, to grow up in this valley. Just paradise. I hunted ducks, I fished, I ran these old creeks naked as a jaybird. And when I was a little older, I'd chase mustangs.

RM: Did you chase them on horseback?

JH: Yes. You didn't catch many, but you had a lot of fun trying. Pretty much, you'd do as you darned well please. And things were might slow and laid back.

As we grew older, we had our own parties and made our own fun. As we went into high school . . . by then they'd gotten the oil road through here. I was about 10 years old when the oiled road finally came in here (in 1935 or '36). So we were a little closer [to things]. There weren't too many people that went by here [chuckles] in a day's time - maybe 4 or 5 cars. But at least we could get in and out. We didn't have shows much down here, so we'd go to Caliente. All of us would get in the back of a pickup, pay the mailman for the gas and he would take us over there.

EH: He'd already been over there and back with the mail, but if we'd ask him, he'd never say no.

JH: He was kind-hearted. His name was Mel Foremaster. He would take the mail and buy shoes for everybody when they graduated, and he would buy the thread for the woman's sewing.

EH: Everybody up and down the valley gave him an order and they would pick it up with the mail.

JH: He would take a piece of thread, and he would try to get the same material. He was the greatest, most kind-hearted person.

RM: So he would fill all your orders in Caliente, and then bring them back. How many years did he do this?

JH: Oh, 20 years or so.

RM: When do you suppose he started?

JH: He started when I was a young man. Karl, his older brother, had the contract during the Depression. (Karl Foremaster's kids were a little better off than the rest of

us.) But when he got older, Mel took it over and he had it for 20 years or so.

EH: Oh, yes, easily.

JH: And as we got a little older, we had basketball and we started going to tournaments. And we had a good band, and we got to Ogden to a band [meeting]. We were very fortunate, we had one of the finest band leaders in the state of Nevada as a teacher - Horace Mead. He was an artist and a musician and a very talented person. He went from here to Las Vegas and taught at Vegas High for a long time after he left here. He was killed in a car accident. I'll tell you, we didn't go anywhere much when I was little. I must've been 5 or 6 years old when I finally got to go to Vegas, and maybe to Caliente once in a blue moon. People just didn't go, you know. You didn't have any money during the Depression, for one thing.

EH: If they did go, they went a-horseback to the neighbors to play, or something like that.

JH: Yes, we rode horses a lot. We all had horses - but no saddles.

RM: And how was your dad earning his living?

JH: Dad was here and there and everyplace, and we had all these milk cows. There was a guy who come and stayed with us. During the Depression, when your parents died, somebody else took you in. Well, we took this boy in and he helped my mother milk those darn cows.

RM: How many were you milking?

JH: About 20 head.

RM: And raising the hay for them.

JH: And raising the hay for them. They'd turn on the old separator and [milk them] and then they would put [the cream] in the ditch so it wouldn't spoil, and then they'd put it on the mail and it would go up to Ogden.

RM: The mailman would take the cream?

EH: Yes, he'd haul it to Caliente.

JH: That was about the only money we had for a long time. But we still raised turkeys, and once in a while, by Christmas time, maybe you could take a bunch of turkeys over to Tonopah or someplace. Vegas wasn't much and Caliente wasn't too big either. So they'd go to Tonopah or someplace and try to get rid of turkeys, and they made some money in that way. It didn't take much to live. We had our own chickens, we didn't go hungry like a lot of people did.

EH: You didn't have the power bill to pay or the water bill to pay or the pump to fix or . . .

JH: We had our own eggs, we had chickens, we always had meat, and my mother raised a big beautiful garden. She was a hard worker, and my dad was, too.
EH: They canned all that stuff . . .
JH: In fact, you look at our . . . I guess it rubbed off on Ev and me, because we've got a damn cellar down here that's plumb full of everything.
RM: Is that right? From canned things?
EH: Yes, and bottled.
JH: We still bottle 300 or 400 quarts of tomatoes a year.
RM: Is that right.
JH: Yes. I eat that many myself. [laughter] Some of the things I had to eat during the Depression, like milk and all that, I won't eat anymore. But tomatoes, and the fruit, I still love. The things that I had to eat . . .
RM: Where did you go to school as a boy?
JH: I went to Alamo. As I said, my brother went here to Richardville, but I went to Alamo. They had a bus that came around this old dirt road. You'd sink along there. It tipped over once on a sharp turn up here. [The road was] real crooked. My brother and sister rode horses to school, but by my time I rode the bus.
RM: How many kids were in the school?
JH: I was in one of the biggest classes that ever was for 30 years, and it was about 10 kids. Most of them had 4 or 5 to a grade. And they had 2 grades in one room.
RM: And it went through how many grades?
JH: Eight.
RM: So there were 4 teachers?
JH: Yes. When I was older they got kind of a high school here and then they went to Lincoln [High School in Panaca for] 2 years .
EH: Now they have an assistant for every teacher [chuckles], almost.
JH: I played lots of basketball, and we had a good basketball team. In fact, we won a state championship or two. We did a lot of things, there was lots of softball.
EH: Our kids just won the state championship in A basketball. We beat our rivals over here at Lincoln - [chuckles] Panaca.
RM: That's great.
JH: We went in for athletics a lot in my family - we had 2 family members working at coaching.
RM: Did you tend to have the same teachers year after year, or did they come a year and then go?
JH: The good ones stayed if they wanted to, and the poor ones didn't last, I'll guarantee you.

Now, that's something I wish we had in this day and age: some of those old sisters who, when the teachers didn't come through, would just let them go. [chuckles] They'd get rid of them and that was all there was to it.

EH: Now we can hardly fire a teacher.

JH: I felt that I had a good education. When I went in the service, I took the test right along with a million other boys, and I got to be a flying cadet.

RM: Oh, you were? Were you a pilot?

JH: I trained to be a pilot, but they did away with the program before I got finished, I didn't get to be a full-fledged pilot. But I, and other kids who went [into the service] from here, did really well. I felt we had as good an education as anybody. I felt that we had damn good teachers. People like the Richards and the others seemed to be interested in education, it was kind of born and bred in them. And the Mormons, too. They wanted the best teachers for their children, and if they didn't come through, boy, they didn't mess with them.

RM: What were some of the activities you were in as a boy?

JH: One of the big ones was marbles. The girls played jacks. But [often] there weren't enough of us to play, so the boys and the girls would play softball together and all those things.

EH: And in high school, and even before that, they'd have a potluck party about every Friday night.

JH: You'd go from one home to another.

EH: They'd take turns.

JH: You'd bring some sugar and a little stuff and make candy one night, or popcorn, or . . .

RM: And when you finished the eighth grade, what did you do?

JH: They had a 4-year high school down here by the time I finished eighth grade. That was only finished 2 or 3 years before I got there.

EH: I don't know when that building was put there - '36?

JH: Something like that. I was in fourth or fifth grade when they built it.

RM: And after you got out of high school you had to go right into the military?

JH: Yes - a little sooner.

RM: Did you get drafted?

JH: Yes, I got drafted. You had to sign up when you were 18, but they would let you finish your senior year of high school. Then immediately you got "Greetings from the President of the United States." So I went into the army air force and took these tests and I did really well. I studied in the air force for about a year, and when they did away with this program (they decided they had enough

pilots in training) they sent me to Italy. I was in Italy 2 years.

RM: What were you doing in Italy?

JH: A little of everything. I don't know whether you've heard of the partisans in Yugoslavia - they were the people who were fighting the Germans. Old Tito actually had an army in Yugoslavia even though the Germans were there, and we furnished him with food, ammunition, all kinds of supplies. Then they had the partisans in north Italy behind the German lines. I've got a lot of pictures of us dropping supplies behind the German lines.

We also had some big old slow-moving planes that actually took the wounded from the front back to the hospital. These planes could land right out on a field. (Nowadays they use helicopters.)

RM: Whereabouts in Italy were you stationed?

JH: Well, everyplace. I landed at Naples, and then went up the coast to Rome, and then on to Civitaveccia, Tarquinia, Sienna . .

EH: We got to go back there in 1986.

JH: Yes, we went back and I showed Ev all of our the places we'd been, visited some of the towns and just . . . I still had a really good Italian friend over there and we stayed with him and took the tour. We went and looked at Naples, Capri, Blue Grotto . . .

RM: Were you in for 3 years?

JH: Yes, I came out in February 1946.

RM: And then what did you do?

JH: I went to work for the county for about 6 months. Then they changed politics and I dairied for 2 years. We still had those old cows. My brother Edwin lived right here and we made a barn and had about a 50- or 60-cow dairy. Then he got hurt in a damn rodeo - he broke his leg and his ankle.

EH: His horse fell down and crushed his ankle.

JH: His horse fell on him. And we had range cattle, besides. I was doing about 3 things here, and I finally about went over the blue wall, so we had to get rid of the dairy.

RM: What kind of cows were you milking?

JH: It was all Holstein. But in the meantime, we were trying to build up range, I bought quite a lot of range. I own quite a lot of range now.

RM: Did your family still have Sheep Mountain?

JH: Yes. We sold it, finally, to Floyd Lamb.

RM: When did you sell that?

JH: Oh - it's been a long time, probably in the '70s.

RM: Tell me about that mountain.

JH: That damn valley is different from most valleys. You know where the houses used to be?

RM: The only thing I know of Sheep Mountain is coming down from Indian Springs. You look off to the left there, and I'm always fascinated by it.

JH: Well, there's a little ranch right at the lower end there - Corn Creek. You go straight north up that little valley 10 or 20 miles and then you hit a big round valley. When it rains a lot, the water will get all over it, it's just a big dry lake. In fact, during World War II the airplanes would actually land on it.

Then on the east side of that lake is Sheep Mountain. And I'm telling you, that's the roughest, meanest mountain in the whole world.

RM: Is that right. Is there pasture on it?

JH: Absolutely not. We ran cattle at Cabin Springs. Shale Cut was another spring. There was Camel, Cabin, Shale Cut and Sheep. There's one more spring - maybe it'll come to me in time. There were 4 springs on that west side, but they have just run down. There's nothing but mountain sheep - it's mountain sheep country. We used to see them all the time - they'd come in to water at the springs. As I said, we've got some movies of them.

RM: Are there a lot of mountain sheep up there now?

JH: Yes. Of course, this is a gripe of mine, but there are not as many as there would be if they'd kill the cougars. I think there'd be sheep going out of our ears in a few years. But they have to preserve the cougars along with everything else. You know these environmentalists think that you've got to have cougars and you've got to have all these things. They swear up and down they only kill the old and the weak. Well, that's the damndest lie there ever was. I can show you big deer with horns that wide... They do the same thing with deer, not just with mountain sheep. So they're sucking wind on that.

RM: Did you run a lot of cattle up in there?

JH: Oh, no. During the Depression Grandpa Sharp sold out his cows, but kept the range. And all we had was the dairy and a few range cattle that my dad ran right around here. So Edwin and I decided after World War II that we wanted to spread out and we started running down there, again. My dad ran a few down there but we decided to get a few more. We didn't run many - just about 75.

Then we sold that out and started moving north. We bought some range up there and then I bought him out.

RM: Where did you start buying range?

JH: When you go up White River above Hiko, our cattle are on both sides of the road now. We own the grazing rights from

the front of that mountain and we own all of that White River area up to the end of the second narrows - from one narrows to the end of the second narrows. Then all that country straight west from there, into Coal Valley, and we own a lot of Coal Valley.

RM: Wow. How many head are you running now?

JH: Oh [chuckles] that's another story. My one son and I were at Hiko and we finally got disgusted with the BLM. They gave us so much trouble it was running us about . . . That was before President Reagan, back when the Democrats were in. They just about ruined us - they were taking it all away from us. But when President Reagan got in, he and Paul Laxalt were buddies, and Laxalt was a sheepherder, so he turned him around, and Reagan put some people in there who could see both sides of the story, anyway. At least they weren't going to take us off [the land].

But in the meantime my boys and I went to Challis, Idaho, and bought a big ranch. We were running 700 or 800 head of cattle between the 2 outfits. Well, all of a sudden they decided we had to pay 21 percent interest, the price of cattle dropped from about $1 to about 48 cents and gasoline went from about 80 cents to $1.50.

We didn't lose the Idaho ranch, we sold it. We were up there about 8 or 10 years. But we still kept this ranch, so we moved back and my son and I started all over, we're building back up. We never sold all of our range up here, and since then, I've bought a little more. It's kind of in our blood, I guess. That's why we hate to see it go down the tubes.

RM: You were showing me that Henry Sharp was here in 1865, according to census data. That is early.

JH: And as I said, Louie Stearns was the first postmaster at Hiko, then Mary Sharp. If you wanted some of the others at Hiko, there was Esther Nesbitt, Helen Schofield, Bonnie Schofield . . . and at Alamo, later, Lois Stewart was the first one, and then Will Thorne, then Madge Pace, Elva Sharp and Edwin Sharp. I told you about the early mail service of Henry Sharp . . .

The first garage in Lincoln County was Andy Richard's (son of G. W. Richard). He was not only a musician, he was a natural mechanic. His garage was right down here in Richardville, just right on the old dirt road. He fixed the old Model-Ts. In fact, there's a story that one time a man who was running for governor had started from Reno and come down through Goldfield and that way, and he and his group got way out on that desert someplace - I guess he tried to come through here - and he damned near choked to death. They finally got in here and old Andy Richard was the one who went out [and helped them]. The old boy who was running for governor made Andy stay with them, and old Andy was with him during his whole campaign as he swung throughout the whole state, to keep his car running. [chuckles] Old Andy told that story as long as he lived.

RM: Is that right. Did the candidate win?

JH: Yes, I think he got to be governor.

RM: That's a good story.

JH: But old Andy would tell that story a hundred times.

EH: I've heard it, but I can't remember who the candidate was.

JH: We've covered most everything, I guess. There weren't many doctors, I'll tell you. People just died, when they [got sick].

RM: What about the closing of the clinic? I read in the paper that they're closing the clinic here and in Caliente because of lack of funds.

JH: Yes, right.

RM: Which means you won't have any health care here now?

EH: None at all. That does away with our ambulance, too, because you have to have a doctor within 50 miles or so.

RM: Isn't that awful?

EH: Yes, it's terrible.

RM: When they say the clinic in Caliente, do they mean the hospital?

JH: No.

EH: They're thinking about closing the hospital, too. They don't have money to fund it.

RM: Good lord.
EH: I heard that yesterday. Of course, there's nothing to confirm that.
JH: Do you want to know the names of people as they came down the valley?
RM: Yes, I do.
JH: OK. You start right at Hiko with the Sharps, then the Fergusons and then the Roeders. Then the Frenchies there at Frenchie Lake, then the Thompsons - that was the big ranch just below Crystal. Then the Geer ranch, then the Butlers, then the McGuffys, then G. W. Richard - old George Richard - Henry Sharp, Henry Sharp (the son), Joe Sharp, then some younger, other Fergusons - the Will Fergusons. And then Pearson.
RM: About what year would this be, then?
JH: Way back in the 1860s - from 1865 or so.
EH: Yes, they moved in and took up those places.
JH: You see, Henry Sharp was in there at the 1865 census.
RM: And all these people were here then?
JH: Yes, most of them.
RM: Let's talk about you and Evelyn meeting.
JH: She was born and raised in . . . well, you tell it.
EH: Murray, Utah. I was 12 when I came down here. In Utah we lived mostly in West Jordan - the same area [as Murray]. My father had a mining venture down here with a nephew at Irish Mountain.
RM: And what was his name?
EH: Henry Nels Youngdell.
JH: It was the same place - Silver Canyon - where the Sharps ... the old Illinois Mine.
EH: My father and his brother and a couple of nephews and a man named Street lost everything in the mining venture.
JH: They lost a dry farm, they lost a Caterpillar and a harvester.
EH: Homes . . . Uncle Don Youngdell lost his farm.
JH: Mr. Street lost a big grocery store.
EH: That must've been in about '35 or '36. They were down here a while before we ever came. We didn't come down till about 1938 or '39.
JH: So this blond gal showed up down here, and I fell for her. She was just a kid.
EH: [chuckles]
RM: Where did you live when you came here?
EH: We moved into a little house in Alamo, a rental, and went to school. I loved it. We'd always lived out in the country anyway, but here there were all these beautiful big weeping willow trees on both sides of the street. They were dirt streets, but still, I thought it was something

really neat. And the kids were friendly and we got along really well.

RM: Were you two in the same grade?

JH: Oh, no. I'm 2 years older than she is.

EH: I was in the eighth grade when we came.

JH: We got married while I was in the service.

EH: December the 24th, 1943.

JH: But we went together for 4 years. We didn't have any children [during the war]. In fact [chuckles], you know how cadet training is. We got married in Reno, Nevada (they sent me to college for a while).

EH: I went up there and went to work at a grocery store.

JH: We got married at 10:00 and I had to be at the base at 12:00. That was Christmas Eve, 1943.

EH: [chuckles]

RM: Is that right - what a honeymoon!

JH: Yes, these service marriages . . .

RM: So your father came here in a mining venture. Can you tell us a little bit about the venture?

EH: It was in Irish Mountain, at the old Illinois.

RM: Does it date way back?

JH: Oh, man. You bet. It's one of those patented claims.

RM: Is it a big mine? I mean, is it a big workings?

JH: You bet - there's lots of big workings. There's one hole down there that looks like [it goes] straight down. There are holes all over.

EH: In fact, this same nephew of mine, Harold Spencer (he just lived right over here), moved down here 10 years ago. He leased it again and was going to go back in and get the silver out of the dump, but silver went way up to about $12, and then it started down. It went down continually, so he gave it up.

JH: He was going to ship the dump, he figured he could make some money. But silver went down to $6 and stayed there forever, so he never did do anything about it. I helped him fixed the roads and things.

RM: I've never been over to Irish Mountain. Are the mines in one spot there, or are they all over the mountain?

JH: They're kind of all over the mountain. There are some on the north side, and the west and east sides . . .

EH: I wonder if that old tree that forms a cross is still there. Right on the horizon there's . . . I don't know what kind of tree it is. It's been there for years.

JH: It's made by 2 great big old ponderosa pines. I've hunted deer up there, Ev, and it's 2 trees that make it look like a cross.

RM: Is that right? That's nice.

EH: It's right on the horizon, when you get in a certain area you can see it.
RM: When and where was your father born?
EH: He was born in Fairview, Utah - San Pete County, Utah.
JH: His older sister was born in Sweden, but I think he was born in this country. Olga was born in Sweden.
EH: No. I think she was born in San Pete County.
JH: Boy, she could speak Swedish like a good one.
EH: Yes. Olga's and Henry's folks came straight from Sweden.
RM: Was your father a miner by occupation?
EH: No. He was a mechanic, actually, and a dry farmer. He leased lots of dry farming ground and worked it. When he came out of the service in World War I, after a few years they gave them a big pension of some sort, and he bought a Caterpillar and a lot of dry farm equipment. And that's how he made a living. It was tough during the Depression for us, too, I'll tell you.
RM: And what was your mother's name?
EH: Harriet Zina Poole. And they're English.
JH: They talked like real, honest-to-god Englishmen, too.
EH: She was born in England and came over here as a baby.
RM: Did she come over here with the church?
EH: Yes. Her parents did, she was just tiny.
RM: How many brothers and sister did you have?
EH: I have 1 sister and 2 brothers.
RM: Do any of them live in the valley?
EH: No. They went to school here for a bit but they didn't stay.
RM: And how many children do you have?
EH: We have 4. Vaughn is the oldest. He was born in '46. Vance was born in '49 and Valerie in '52 , and Varlan in '60.
RM: Do they live in the area?
EH: Yes, they all live here in the valley.
JH: Vaughn started out to be an athletic director and coach. He coached here, then he coached when we were in Idaho. Now he works at the University of Nevada.
EH: He's the extension agent here in Pahranagat Valley.
JH: Do you know that old, big tall guy in Vegas - Lynn Mills?
RM: I've met him, yes.
JH: He works with Lynn Mills. And Vance is a fireman in Las Vegas. Now, Vaughn has 5 children. Vance has 3 boys, and he lives right here by us.
RM: Does he farm?
EH: Yes.
JH: He has the sprinklers and all that. And then Valerie and her husband live up at Hiko.

EH: She married Stewart Twitchell, from Enterprise, and they have 6 kids, including a pair of twins.

JH: Varlan lives straight up across on the other side of the ranch with some other Higbees - Edwin's boys. So we've still got them all around.

RM: That's great.

EH: Varlan has a boy and a girl, the girl was born first. The boy is just a little over a year old.

JH: Varlan works for the Nevada State Highway Department and Vance is a fireman in Las Vegas. They have to do that to keep our cows.

EH: Yes, you have to have a job on the side to run cattle. [laughter]

RM: Right. We haven't really said much about the role of the church in the area. Basically, Alamo became a Mormon community, didn't it?

JH: It sure did. The church had quite a lot to do with life in the community. Although when I was growing up, it was a long ways from here to Alamo to go to church. We were baptized and all that, but we probably didn't go as much as we should have, because we didn't have a car and it was a long way. They actually had an LDS church and Sunday school at Hiko at one time.

RM: At the same time as they had one in Alamo?

JH: Yes, at one time.

EH: Then they used the bus, didn't they?

JH: Yes, they actually [chuckles] broke the law. When they finally combined the school district, they used the school bus.

EH: They used the school bus for everything.

RM: What are your personal recollections of Mormon life?

JH: Well, as we got a little older, we always tried to go to Sunday school when we could. And especially when I got older and I was in the bishopric (which manages the LDS church affairs in this area) we took the kids on some darn nice trips. These kids still didn't get out of the valley much. We took them to Washington, D.C., we took them to Disneyland many times, we took some vast trips with our young people. We'd raise money and so on.

As I was growing up, the church didn't have that [kind of] money. But the school had basketball trips - we went to Reno and things like that.

RM: Did you have a mutual when you were growing up here?

JH: Yes, we always went to mutual. That was a good place to meet the girls. [laughter]

RM: I went to high school in Ely - I wasn't Mormon, but I went to mutual.

JH: That's the way it used to be here. Everybody went to mutual and primary. [chuckles]

EH: We used to get a lot of kids that weren't Mormons but would come. Well, they still do - they still have weekly activities. They do lots of things, they keep the youth really busy in this community.

JH: They used to have big dances - they called one The Gold and Green. They don't do that anymore, but they used to. They'd teach you how to dance and all that kind of thing.

EH: Yes, they've gotten away from dancing, for some reason.

RM: How do you see the future of the valley?

JH: It looks pretty bleak right now because of this water thing. It's got us all scared. If it weren't for the water thing, I see a great future for us, really. This Pahranagat Valley is really growing.

EH: We have the largest elementary school in the county - about 200 students.

JH: Which is nothing to brag about, but it shows we are growing. (And we were the smallest.) And we've either won the [basketball] championship, or been in the championships, almost every year here. This place has been athletic-minded.

EH: Three years we were runners-up and this year we made it. [chuckles]

JH: Our daughter Valerie is also a coach.

RM: So it's an athletic family.

JH: Oh, yes. In fact, we've got one grandson who played college ball.

RM: So the Higbee athleticness is coming through, isn't it?

JH: [chuckles] You bet it is.

EH: [chuckles] We're athletic supporters. [laughter] Kenny plays for a college in eastern Oregon.

EH: We have another grandson - our oldest - Vaughn's boy- who is in Japan on a mission.

JH: Two of our kids went on missions - Valerie went to Australia and Vance, our son here, went to Japan. And they all went through college. Varlan, actually, went to a trade school, but the others all went to college.

RM: Well, is there anything I haven't focused on?

RM: How about the phones?

JH: That's another story.

EH: The power came in the year he went into the service.

JH: When I went in the service, we still had kerosene lights, and still had the little path outside. We had outdoor plumbing until after World War II.

EH: They had telephones in Alamo - just a couple of the crank-them-up kind.

JH: You had to get a hold of old Mrs. Mitchell over there in Central and . . .
RM: Where was she?
JH: In Caliente, that's where the switchboard was.
EH: The county commissioner had a phone, and Alamo Service - those were the only 2 I know of. The phone lines came in '56, I think.
JH: You know, everything we've got here, we've had to struggle for. Just take the power.
EH: Alamo had power - M. K. Stewart had a plant that furnished it.
JH: But it was pretty sorry.
EH: Yes, it was always going out . . .
JH: . . . a while in the evening, or something. But most of us up here never had anything. We had to fight like hell to get the power up here from Boulder Dam. (From the main line, they went up to Pioche.)
RM: Oh, the main line went to Pioche, and you didn't get on it?
JH: Right, we had to hook on.
RM: And it was a big fight to hook on?
JH: Oh, we had an awful struggle. Nothing ever came easy. And the telephone - everything we ever got . . .
EH: Tell him what we did to get the television.
JH: [chuckles] We dragged TVs up on top of all these mountains...
EH: . . . full of boulders.
JH: You can't get television in this valley. We dragged televisions . . . we'd pack stuff, finally. Well, and it was fuzzy in here. Finally we got [good reception] way down on that mountain - we bounce it once off there.
EH: About 6 or 8 couples of us went.
JH: We took a generator on New Year's Eve, and it was cold, we had a fire.
EH: We had a fire, but it wasn't that cold. Anyway, we packed that TV up on that mountain . . .
JH: . . . with a generator.
EH: . . . and we took our supper.
RM: Is that right - to watch TV.
EH: [chuckles] Yes. They turned on that crazy thing, and you could see this snowy picture. You'd have thought we found a million dollars. [laughter]
JH: So then we thought we'd pick it up there and bounce it over here and use it here at night.
EH: It was exciting.
JH: That's where we get it - straight over from here. But you have the mountain to cross. We get 3 stations - 2 out of Vegas and now we bounce one out of St. George, and it's on the same mountain over here.

EH: And then they put cable in a year ago. It's just in Alamo, they'll get it up this way eventually.
RM: Do many people have satellite dishes?
JH: We do, and there are quite a few people who do, going up here.
RM: You get all the channels with that, don't you?
JH: When it's working we do.
RM: It doesn't work?
JH: There are so many of them that they've got scrambled. We get a few, but it costs you so darn much money.
RM: With Clark County being so dominant in the state government now, you've got a squashed feeling, don't you?
JH: Oh, we do. And it's getting worse.
EH: We think they need to look farther ahead than just the water in this little valley.
JH: To me, water has got to come out of the mouth of the Columbia. You could drown California and Nevada both, with just a third of it, or just a little bit. [They should do that] instead of letting it run out into the ocean. They could solve our problems, if they would just look at it from the point of down the line 50 to 100 years, like they did the freeway system. And it's the whole United States - because it's not just Nevada, it's southern California, southern Nevada, northern Nevada, Arizona - it's all of these places.
RM: Yes. It's the whole Southwest, really.
JH: I don't know why they don't look at it from a broad point of view and try to solve the thing, instead of just robbing from Peter to pay Paul till Peter's is all gone, and then Paul's still going to be out of water. That's what it amounts to.
RM: I remember when I was a kid, hearing about bringing down a big river from Canada or something like that. The idea has kind of died.
JH: The environmentalists have really made it tough to even think about something like that. Now, maybe I'm a Bolshevik, but I think we've got to even take a second look at atomic power. With coal . . . they talk about pollution and all that kind of thing, but if they could figure out a way to get rid of the nuclear waste . . .
RM: Sure. I agree with you.
JH: Anyway, I believe they've got to look at these problems down the tubes just a little ways, instead of short- and narrow-mindedly looking at southern Nevada and Lincoln County. We've got quite a little water here, and it looks mighty good to them. [The state of Nevada] passed a law, last time, where they don't have to prove usage. We spent

a lot of money drilling wells. It took us 5 and 6 and 7 years to prove usage.

EH: It took a long time to prove up on a well.

JH: They went up there and passed a law last time that they don't have to prove usage. So they can take up this country and have this water and they can keep us dead - even though they don't use it for 20 or 30 to 50 years, they can keep us from doing anything.

They were going to open Delamar up, but they had to have water - they had to get permission from Clark County. And they said, "Oh, yeah, we'll look at it. We'll be kind enough, we'll look at." In other words, if somebody wanted to take up another piece of ground, or if Alamo got a few more people and wanted a well or something, forget it. So you can see what a stranglehold they have.

The rest of Nevada is dead as far as further growth is concerned. And now they passed legislation and they can actually tell us farmers, "This water's ours," and they can take it. They just did that 2 or 3 days ago. It's the beginning of the end, and we're just sick about it. But what can you do? You feel so helpless. As I say, I've got 6 generations right here that put a lot of sweat and a lot of blood . . . people don't realize that. But I'm glad to have you as somebody to listen to me.

RM: Well, it's going on the permanent record, too. [laughter]

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: You were telling a story . . .

JH: [chuckles] It was about George Richard and Mary Ann Foy. As has been mentioned before, he was a musician, and he played for dances, even as a young man. They were playing in Minersville, Utah, at a dance, and he saw a pretty little gal sitting on the bench and he decided to lay down his fiddle and go dance with her. They danced 2 or 3 dances and he said, "I'd like to marry you."

And she said, "Well, you've got to marry me tonight. I'm going to get married tomorrow. I'm supposed to marry some polygamist." So after the dance, they took off and got married and lived happily ever after.

RM: Isn't that something. They were married a long time, weren't they?

JH: Until they both died.

RM: They lived to be really old, didn't they?

JH: Oh, you bet. He must've been 89 or 90. And she was even older than that. She outlived him. But they both lived to be ancient. It must've been love at first sight, I guess. [chuckles]

EH: And it saved her from a polygamy marriage or something. [chuckles]

JH: So we're related to a lot of the Foys over in Utah, on the other side.
RM: About what year would it have been when they met?
JH: About 1867.
EH: They had 7 children.