AN INTERVEIW WITH BUCK HOLLINGER

An Oral History conducted and edited by Robert D. McCracken

LINCOLN COUNTY TOWN HISTORY PROJECT
LINCOLN COUNTY, 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 <u>not</u> 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 <u>uhs</u>, <u>ahs</u> 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 1868. 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 Buck Hollinger at his home in Pioche, Nevada, March 24, 1992.

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Buck, why don't we start by you telling me your name as it appears on your birth certificate.
BH: Samuel Alexander Hollinger.
RM: When and where were you born?
BH: I was born in what they call Spring Valley out here.
RM: What was your birth date?
BH: May 16th, 1905.
RM: What was your father's name?
BH: William Alexander Hollinger.
RM: And where was he born?
BH: Ireland. He was about 10 years old when his folks came here.
RM: Did they come directly to Nevada?
BH: No, they had some relatives in New York and they stayed there a year or two. Then they had another relative in business here, so they came to see him. And then they bought a little ranch out in Eagle Valley and there they located.
RM: What was your mother's name?
BH: Lydia, and her maiden name was Blair. She was from St. George, Utah.
RM: How many brothers and sisters did you have?
BH: I had 2 brothers and 3 sisters.
RM: Were you the oldest?
BH: Yes.
RM: Could you tell me their names, going down in birth order?
BH: Well, 3 of them have passed away now. The oldest girl, just a year younger than I was, was named Lydia. Then there was Kermit, then Grace, then Leo, who was the youngest one.
RM: How much younger was Leo than you?
BH: Oh, 10, 12 years. That's a guess.
RM: Did you all grow up on the ranch out there?
BH: Yes.
RM: Could you describe the ranch?
BH: It was just a little cattle ranch. At that time there was no BLM or restricted grazing. You could run cattle outside if you could find any feed. They raised a few cattle and farmed a little.
RM: And where did you say the ranch was located?
BH: Out here in Eagle Valley.
RM: Who has the ranch now?
BH: Well, they divided the thing up for the kids Ä 4 of them. I didn't get any of it.
RM: How big a ranch was it?
BH: It wasn't but 100 acres Ä a small place.
RM: How many head of cattle were they running?
BH: I don't know. They had them sold off before my time.
RM: He wasn't running cattle when you were growing up?
BH: No, he was dead by then.
RM: When you were a kid?

BH: Yes.
RM: What did he die of?
BH: I don't know. There were 3 Hollinger boys out there and they all batched and lived in the old home after their parents died. Then they eventually scattered.
RM: Oh, I see. Your dad grew up on that ranch out there.
BH: Well, more or less, yes. They came to town here. There was quite a lot of money going and they got jobs here in town Ä managed to kind of stay together.
RM: Your father and his brothers?
BH: Yes.
RM: What were his brothers' names?
BH: Joe and Sam Hollinger.
RM: Do you recall any stories that your father told about growing up on the ranch out there?
BH: I don't know of anything special. Just routine, I guess, like any other family. As soon as they got big enough, they'd hustle a little job there.
RM: And then they came into town and worked?
BH: One of them did. He was a miner and he worked in the mines all the time. My dad didn't work in the mine. He helped the blacksmith or something. He never did mention working underground.
RM: When your grandparents died, did they divide the ranch up between the 3 boys?
BH: Yes, they fell heir to it. What land they inherited, they had when they died Ä left it to their own kids.
RM: I see, so they divided the ranch up 3 ways. Do you know what your grandfather paid for the ranch?
BH: No, I don't.
RM: Did he buy it or homestead it?
BH: He bought it. They had a cousin who was in business here Ä he had a saloon Ä and he owned the ranch. He was renting it out and wasn't doing very well, so he was glad to sell it to them when they came. He gave them plenty of time to pay for it.
RM: Which end of Eagle Valley was it in Ä the north end or south end?
BH: Right in the middle. The old house is still there. It's just in shambles, but it's still there.
RM: What's the ranch called now? Is it still called the Hollinger place?
BH: Yes.
RM: Are there any Hollingers out there now?
BH: No. They're all gone.
RM: So your dad got basically a third of the ranch?
BH: Yes.
RM: And then he married your mother. Do you recall how he met your mother?
BH: No, I don't.
RM: Was she LDS?
BH: Yes, I think so.
RM: Was your dad LDS?
BH: No. He never paid a hell of a lot of attention to religion. I think his father and the rest of the family was Catholic. I heard them mention the Orangemen and something else in Ireland.
RM: How many acres did your father wind up with there?
BH: Oh, I don't know. It wasn't very much. Hardly enough to make a living on. They had to expand.
RM: Did he expand it?

BH: No, not that ranch. There was no more land available right around that. They had to get out.
RM: Where did they go?
BH: Well, I don't know, to tell you the truth. They scattered around. As I say, they got jobs here in Pioche.
RM: Did you grow up on the ranch he inherited?
BH: Partly, yes. When I got about 20 years old, I started going alone. I remember when I started, it was in '33, right when times were good.
RM: [Laughs] Yes. Where did you start your ranch?
BH: Spring Valley, up in the next valley from Eagle Valley.
RM: Tell me about how you started your ranch.
BH: Well, an old man had this place and he had a few head of cattle. And finally the place was running him Ä he got so he couldn't do the work for anything. I used to help him brand his calves and things like that, and drive the cows up in the mountains, so I had $1200. I earned that for $1 a day pitching hay.
RM: Boy.
BH: You couldn't get a dollar at that time. I gave him $1000 and then I had a contract with him for $500 a year and 5 percent interest. And he wanted to stay there, so I told him he could stay as long as he wanted. He didn't go anywhere Ä he was there 3 or 4 years before he died. He got pneumonia on me there. There was a couple of feet of snow, and it was colder than hell. The road docs had come out there, plowing the road. I stopped to talk to them and I asked if they would take him back because he was pretty sick Ä had pneumonia. And he would drink a little occasionally. And I wasn't here, but the story they told me after he passed away was that he got drunk that night after he'd come into town. He went to the bathroom and he just came out of the bathroom and keeled over dead.
RM: What was his name?
BH: Jake Sturtzenegger.
RM: Had he homesteaded the place?
BH: No, he bought it.
RM: I wonder if he bought it from its original owner?
BH: Yes. The original owner's name was Artemis Millett.
RM: How big was the ranch?
BH: Eighty acres, meadow and pasture.
RM: It was all meadow and pasture?
BH: It's too cold up there to raise anything else.
RM: You can't grow a garden up there, can you?
BH: Well, not regular. You can raise radishes and onions and stuff like that if you plant them a little late in the season.
RM: Why is it so cold there?
BH: I don't know. There's plenty of water. Whether that has anything to do with it, I don't know. But it was colder than hell. Just as cold as Ely.
RM: It's a lot colder than Eagle Valley, isn't it?
BH: Oh, yes.
RM: But it's not very far away.
BH: About 6 miles.
RM: Is it a lot higher?

BH: It is uphill from Eagle Valley, but not too much. There's a lot of water there, and the valley's right out in the open. It's the floor of the valley Ä you could call it a big canyon there. And that damn wind blows dust till you seem to be . . .
RM: Was there a house on the place for you when you bought it?
BH: Yes. He had an old house. He had one room made out of logs, and one out of boards. I lived in it for 4 or 5 years till I could get enough to get a shack of my own.
RM: How many head were you running?
BH: I had about 20 when I went there. I had to work for him. And as I said, there was no Bureau of Land Management or anything. You could turn them on the range any time you wanted to. If they got something to eat and lived, you were a winner; if they died, you were a loser.
RM: What if you turned them onto a range where some other fellow had his cows. What would happen?
BH: Oh, they all mixed. There were a dozen other families down there that all had a few head of cattle. They all went together.
RM: Did people ever quarrel about the range?
BH: Very seldom. They were opposed to sheep, naturally. They would all get together and chase a sheepherder away.
RM: Did you ever have problems with sheepherders?
BH: No. I just had a few cattle and slowly . . . I'd get a little job whenever I could. I kept what I had inside. I had pasture and then I'd cut some hay. In fact, I sold a little hay every year until I got cattle enough to eat what I had.
RM: Oh, so you were feeding your cows and they weren't on the range that much?
BH: Right. I kept mine inside until I got on my feet a little and got enough of them Ä then I turned them out.
RM: When you left the ranch, how many cows did you have?
BH: I had about 400. I bought another ranch, and after a while I had plenty to take care of.
RM: Where did you buy the other ranch?
BH: It joined me on the north. It belonged to my uncle, and I had a small share in it. There were 13 kids, and I bought their shares out. I got time on some of them, [which] enabled me to buy it.
RM: How many acres did you buy altogether?
BH: There were, I think, 320 in the other place. Patented land. It was meadow and pasture, too Ä good meadow. It joined my land with just a barbed wire fence between them.
RM: Was it natural grass or alfalfa?
BH: Oh, you couldn't raise alfalfa. It was too cold. It was all grass, but it was good quality grass. The stock did well on it.
RM: You just got a cutting a year, didn't you?
BH: Absolutely.
RM: How many ton would you get an acre?
BH: Oh, 3, 4, something like that. It was good quality grass. I'd irrigate it and it'd get up about 3 feet high.
RM: Wild grass is a lot of different grasses, isn't it?
BH: It's 3 or 4 different kinds. Where's it's right wet, we called it broadleaf, and where it's a little drier, it's a different grass.
RM: What did you call it where it was drier?
BH: Just grass.
RM: Did you start buying the second ranch after the war, or before?
BH: It was before.

RM: How did the war affect you out there?
BH: It helped me Ä prices raised a little. In '33 a grown cow was worth $20.
RM: What could you get for a cow during the war?
BH: Oh, about $100.
RM: That much?
BH: Yes.
RM: So you were doing well, weren't you?
BH: Better than I was. Of course, your expenses increased too.
RM: Did you add any other land on after you bought the second ranch?
BH: Yes. After that, whenever I'd get a little a bit . . . You had to wait out there till somebody died, or some damn thing; what was for sale wasn't very plentiful. The whole community bought a sheep outfit out. We got some land and range, and water improvements and things like that. That outfit used to run 3 bands of sheep in the high country, and we bought them out to get rid of them.
RM: Did you ever have any fights with them before you bought them?
BH: Oh, naturally you had some arguments.
RM: Are the sheep pretty hard on the range?
BH: They're no worse than cows if they take care of them. You raise sheep right, they don't hurt the range like people say. If you herd them here and there and then move them every 2 or 3 days . . . What does the damage is when they make a camp, and then hold them right there until everything's eaten up and tromped down. That ruins the range. If they graze it 2 or 3 days and move on again that doesn't hurt the damn range. They can even come back again once or twice in the same place after the foliage is greened up and grown a little.
RM: When they really overgraze it, how long does it take it to come back?
BH: Oh it takes quite a while. Some of it never does. If they tromp it, you know . . .
RM: When you were grazing cattle on the range, water was the key thing, wasn't it?
BH: Well, we needed it in some places, yes. But we had plenty of water. There's a little stream in damn near every canyon, up on the mountain. Cows didn't have to go very far to water.
RM: What mountain was that that you're talking about?
BH: White Rock. You can see it. It's on the north end of that range. Do you see the one with the most snow on it?
RM: Yes.
BH: That's the highest part of the mountain.
RM: There's a lot of water coming off of there?
BH: Well, not enough to irrigate a farm or anything, but plenty of water for livestock.
RM: What are some of the plants that the cows eat out on the range?
BH: I don't know. They're natural, mostly. And the BLM planted some fields with crested wheat. That's damn good feed. It comes early in the spring. And early in the spring's when you need a little boost because everything's eaten up through the winter. They do fine on that crested wheat.
RM: Does it come back every year?
BH: Oh, yes. It's a good, tough grass.
RM: How about the white sage? Is that a good food?
BH: Well, that's all winter range. It's good feed if you've got enough of it.
RM: What about just sagebrush? Is that good food?

BH: They'll live on sagebrush. You can winter sheep on strictly black brush, but for cows, there's not enough nutriment. They get pretty good protein on that black brush, so they say, but you need something else besides just brush.
RM: Black brush is just the plain sagebrush?
BH: Yes.
RM: Are there any other foods they do well on out there?
BH: Well, they eat lots of browse, Brigham tea, buck brush. They can eat anything that's green.
RM: They won't eat pine needles or juniper, will they?
BH: Nothing will eat that damn stuff.
RM: What kind of cattle were you running?
BH: Herefords mostly. In later years I had the first Angus bulls to mix them with. And that made a hell of a good cross, Angus and Hereford. You'd get a heavier calf Ä 25 pounds better or something than straight Hereford.
RM: Did the straight Hereford do better than the straight Angus on the range?
BH: You can't beat that Hereford. It's as good a range cow as you can get. They're good rustlers, hardy cows. They give milk enough Ä most of them Ä to raise a good calf.
RM: Did any of the other ranchers ever experiment with some of the other breeds like Shorthorns and Charolais?
BH: Yes. My uncle out there had a herd of purebred Shorthorns. He got nice, big cows.
RM: Did they do well on the range?
BH: They didn't go on the range. He kept them home on the ranch that joined me. I bought it eventually Ä the one I told you about.
RM: When did you retire out there?
BH: Oh, about 20 years ago.
RM: About 1970?
BH: Yes.
RM: How big was your ranch when you finally called it quits?
BH: Oh, 500 acres, mountain, ground and everything.
RM: Did you have a pretty big range allotment?
BH: I had what we bought from that sheepherder. The rest we claimed under a vested right.
RM: Is that right transferable?
BH: Yes. Sometimes they don't pay any attention to it, but it's a good argument.
RM: And you say you had about 400 or 500 head when you quit?
BH: I had around 400, I guess. It didn't pay to have more than you could take care of.
RM: Did you ever get married?
BH: Yes. I married Ellen Johnson. She was from North Dakota originally. She came here to teach school in Pioche. That's where I got acquainted with her.
RM: When did you marry her?
BH: It was about '38. She taught school here and in Panaca, too.
RM: Did you live in town with her, or did you live out on the ranch?
BH: We lived on the ranch. I batched on that first ground for about 4 or 5 years before we got married.
RM: Did you have a family with her?
BH: We raised those 2 girls there. [Mr. Hollinger points to some pictures.]
RM: What are their names?
BH: Lorna and Mary Ellen.
RM: And are they living in the area now?

BH: One of them lives in Vegas and one in California.
RM: I see. Do you recall when they were born?
BH: Not exactly. We had an old Bible that was written in, but I think one of my girls has got it. The oldest one's about 50; they were 10 years apart. The one on the right there is the older one. They've each got a family. In fact, the 2 granddaughters just left here this morning. They came up and stayed with me for 2 or 3 days.
RM: That's nice. What are some of the highlights about ranching out there that stick in your mind?
BH: Well, nothing special. It's just ranching, a lot of damned hard work if you take care of it.
RM: When did you put up the hay out there?
BH: We started about the first of July.
RM: And when would you be done with it?
BH: It takes about a month. Of course we didn't have a lot of power equipment Ä we pitched most of the damned hay. You know how it is Ä a lot of damned hard work.
[Door opens: interruption] Hi! Made it.
Other Voice. Hi, ya! You bet.
RM: Is that your lunch, Buck?
BH: My senior citizen's lunch. If you're homebound, they'll bring you lunch if you're eligible for it. I'm sure as hell homebound. I can't walk; only with that [walker].
[Tape is turned off for a while]
RM: Who were some of the people that you remember out in Eagle Valley?
BH: I remember all of them Ä Sandburgs, Delmues, Lytles and Foglianis. Francis had a ranch in Spring Valley. Fogliani had an old polygamous ranch there.
RM: Oh, did he? Mary Scott is a Fogliani, isn't she?
BH: Yes, her dad had the place there.
RM: You were kind of raised out there together?
BH: Oh, yes. Right along the same creek.
RM: What do you recall about growing up there, Buck?
BH: Nothing special, just a lot of damned hard work.
RM: What did the kids do for fun?
BH: They didn't have any.
RM: [Laughs] Is that right?
BH: Well, that's the way it seems to me now. I know all the kids worked. You had to work.

CHAPTER TWO

RM: What were some of the first chores that a kid would do?
BH: The majority of them were taught to work as soon as they were big enough. They'd milk the cows, feed the pigs and do light work. All the boys learned to ride horses; some of the girls. That Mary Scott could stick to a horse like a wood tick.
RM: I'll be darned. Did they have dances and things like that?
BH: Oh, yes. Down in Eagle Valley they had a town hall. They'd celebrate a little occasionally.
RM: How many ranchers were there in Spring Valley?
BH: There were 6 or 8 on the creek all the way down. Then there's another valley on south of Eagle Valley they call Rose Valley, and where Delmues lived is called Dry Valley. It'd narrow up and then it'd widen out, and they'd call that a valley. Then it'd narrow up again and here's another one.
RM: So there were about half a dozen families in Spring Valley. Were there more people in Eagle Valley?
BH: Oh yes. It was settled first. There were 7 or 8.
RM: And then how many in Rose Valley?
BH: There were only about 3 there Ä Les Lytle and Friel Lytle and Pat Devlin.
RM: Then down on Dry Valley? How many were there?
BH: Well, not so many. One was all there was that amounted to anything; that was Delmues'.
RM: Where did you ship your cattle?
BH: Buyers would come in. When we shipped them, we'd have to drive them to Modena.
RM: Oh, how long did that take?
BH: Two or 3 days.
RM: And then put them on the railroad in Modena?
BH: Yes. They finally put a track into here, and then we could ship from here for a while. Then the trucks got so popular that the railroad quit Ä they hauled the rails all away and everything.
RM: Did they take your cows to feedlots, or straight to the slaughterhouse?
BH: Oh, they weren't fat enough to slaughter. To the feed yards, mostly.
RM: Where were the feed yards?
BH: All over Ä wherever they had an extra field. They'd go to Los Angeles, mostly.
RM: Where did you get your supplies when you were on the ranch?
BH: Here in Pioche, and Modena. There was a pretty good store there. If you bought a quantity of something, they'd charge you a pretty good price. Like, you'd buy your year's flour Ä what wasn't perishable Ä pull it out of the wagon and get it, and bring it home.
RM: How did ranching change over the years from the time you had your ranch in the '30s to when you finally quit in 1970?
BH: Well, it was mechanized. And I got so I baled the hay. First we buck-raked it, and then we went to a baler. That all created more expense, naturally, but it was a lot faster and better.
RM: Did it pay you to do it in the end?
BH: Oh, I think so.
RM: We were talking about the life of a kid out there, and you were saying it was a lot of hard work. At what age did they start a kid working?

BH: Soon as he was big enough Ä 10 years old, somewhere along in there. Prior to that they weren't much good.
RM: Would the boys help their fathers and the girls work in the house?
BH: Right. And they all worked. There was no difference, they all worked.
RM: Did your mother make all your clothes and things like that?
BH: She did some Ä patchwork, mostly. But they bought them. The women had to work like hell. They didn't have time to sew.
RM: Did she do any canning out there?
BH: Oh, yes. They all canned. They had some little orchards and everybody had a few fruit trees.
RM: Even in Spring Valley?
BH: Not in Spring Valley, it was too cold. But they had them in Eagle Valley. They raised good fruit there.
RM: And your mom would get some of that and can it?
BH: Oh yes. You could buy it cheap. They even had peddlers come with a wagon clear from St. George. It'd take them 2 or 3 days. They'd come into Pioche and sell vegetables and things. The name of the place in St. George was Clary.
RM: Now, you left the ranch in 1970? Who did you sell it to?
BH: The Linkletters.
RM: Was it the famous Art Linkletter?
BH: His boy.
BH: [Knock on door] Come in!
[Tape is turned off for a while.]
RM: Let's see. We were talking about the kids' life out there on the ranch and the hard work. What kind of games did kids play, Buck?
BH: They played a little baseball and volleyball. The majority of them got a pretty good education. You could get to eighth grade out there. At Eagle Valley at one time they had 2 years of high school. They couldn't afford to pay the kids' board to go to school [outside the valley], so they sent a teacher up there. And believe it or not, those kids who had single teachers did fine.
RM: Yes, I believe it. How did you get to school down in Eagle Valley?
BHBH: On horseback. Then we'd go to Panaca to high school. We got 2 years of high school in Eagle Valley, and we went to Panaca and finished up.
RM: Eagle Valley had a little one-room school, didn't it?
BH: Yes.
RM: You grew up with Vera Flinspach, didn't you?
BH: I was raised with her. How did you get acquainted with her?
RM: Oh, I interviewed her last year.
BH: She's getting pretty old.
RM: She's older than you, isn't she?
BH: Yes. I'm only 86 and she's about 90, or damn close to it.
RM: You said you were born in May 1905, didn't you?
BH: That's right.
RM: My dad's birthday is the 28th of May, 1905. He looks a lot like you, too.
BH: Well, I hope he's good and healthy.
RM: He's pretty healthy.
BH: Well, I'm not too . . . I've got no balance. If I leaned over like that, I would fall on my head, or backwards or sideways. I've got to be awful careful with that damn thing [the walker]. Otherwise, hell, I eat and sleep good. But I can't do a damn thing. Things I

used to do here in no time Ä mow the lawn and all Ä I can't do now. I can't even vacuum the house. I tried to push the damn vacuum and hold onto that walker with one hand. I can't do it. I can get myself something to eat and get into bed and out.

RM: Do you live here alone?

BH: Yes.

RM: Did your wife pass away . . . ?

BH: Yes, about 6 years ago.

RM: After you moved to town?

BH: Yes. She had a brain tumor. We took her down to Loma Linda in California. Two doctors said it would kill her to operate on her, and one said it wouldn't. The daughters and I talked it over and they didn't want to kill her, so they brought her back to Vegas and put her in a rest home. They were doctoring her, and she got worse every day. That damn tumor was right in back of the left eye. In fact, she lost the sight out of that eye entirely. She was blind.

RM: What a shame. Did you buy this house when you moved to town?

BH: Yes.

RM: Who did you get it from?

BH: It was the Orr family.

RM: Which one of the Orrs?

BH: Well, all of them. I bought it from the estate. Their dad lived here.

RM: Of course you remember Judge Orr, don't you?

BH: Oh yes.

RM: Did he live in this house?

BH: No, it was his brother Roy. He had a Ford car dealership here Ä Roy Orr.

RM: So you bought this house and then moved into town. And you said you sold the ranch to Art Linkletter's. Does he still own it?

BH: No. I think they knew where they were going when they bought it. They sold it to the state parks [department] for a damn sight more money than I got.

RM: How long did he hold it?

BH: A couple of years Ä long enough to sell the cattle off.

RM: So they knew that that's what was going to happen?

BH: I'd imagine. They don't take many chances, those people. They know what they're doing.

RM: Yes. I wonder how he knew.

BH: Oh, I don't know.

RM: So your ranch out there is a state park now?

BH: That's right. They're letting it go to hell slowly, growing up the brush. There wasn't a bush when they got it. They put the grazing up for bids once every 5 years, and the highest bidder gets it and grazes it for 5 years. Those cattle make a damn good gain. They gain 200 or 200-and-a-quarter pounds in the grazing season.

RM: They eat that much?

BH: Yes. They have all they need. They don't overgraze it. They watch it and change them Ä I had 2 or 3 pastures fenced off, separate; you put them from one to the other.

RM: It's the BLM that puts it up for bid, isn't it?

BH: No, it's the Park Service.

RM: Is that grazing just in the park?

BH: Inside the park.

RM: On those old meadows?

BH: Sure. Meadows and pasture.

RM: Are your houses still out there?
BH: Well, I pitched that house in '41. I'll never forget that. Christ, it'll be there for 100 years yet. Made out of railroad ties and stuccoed outside. It's a good, sturdy house.
RM: How big was it?
BH: Three bedrooms, kitchen, front room, a full basement. I dug a well by hand in the basement and put a pump in it. The pump came up right by the sink. Then finally we got a power plant. I was there for a hell of a while without any power Ä it never did go that far up the valley.
RM: How deep was the well you dug?
BH: Oh, about 20 feet.
RM: How big around was the hole?
BH: Big enough for a man to work in. You'd hoist the dirt up with a bucket till the water ran you out. Then you'd put a piece of casing in and fill it up again.
RM: Oh! That's how you do it.
BH: That's how I did it. Then I put a pump in it. I had a little Kohler light plant. I couldn't afford it for 2 or 3 years after we built the house, even.
RM: When did they get electric power from the outside?
BH: I don't know. The Park Service put in a line after we left.
RM: Oh, you never had public service there?
BH: Never. Nor telephone either.
RM: And you grew up with coal oil lamps and everything, didn't you?
BH: More or less, yes Ä till I got that little Kohler plant.
RM: Did you use the Kohler plant all the time?
BH: Yes, after I got it.
RM: And you probably always had a gas refrigerator?
BH: Oh yes, and a cook stove.
RM: How did you keep things cool when you were a kid?
BH: Well, some of them had refrigerators; you could get butane. You watched what you had and didn't accumulate stuff that would spoil. You'd salt your meat down and things like that. Then they had a burlap over a box, and they'd throw water on that in the mornings and kind of cool things down. It was a hell of a mess.
RM: Did you ever do any mining, Buck?
BH: No.
RM: You never had any claims or anything?
BH: I probably rode over some good things, but I don't know the difference. It's all rocks to me.
RM: You probably rode all over these hills?
BH: I've been behind every bush.
RM: How far east did you get in your riding?
BH: To the Utah line.
RM: How far north did you go?
BH: To White Pine County. We had some grazing in Utah, too. The line comes right along the edge of the mountains and we lopped over some; our cattle would run in Utah. But when they put the Taylor Grazing [Act] in, they ran us out of Utah.
RM: How else did the Taylor Grazing affect you?
BH: To tell you the damn truth, it was a good idea. Before, the grazing was free. And you know how when something's free, everybody's after it.
RM: Yes.

BH: And they had more cattle than there was range, and more sheep. There were 7 or 8 herds of sheep from Cedar City over in our range here every winter. We couldn't do anything about it. And then of course we had cows on it, too.
RM: So it was hard on the range?
BH: Sure it was.
RM: The Taylor Grazing was in the '30s, wasn't it?
BH: I don't remember when it was, but it was a good idea. It preserved the range, anyway. And they didn't come in droves and just gobble everything up and go. They finally had some private allotments here. Now, that was a good thing.
RM: How far west did your range go?
BH: Just over the mountain; we're still in Lincoln County.
RM: Oh, you mean you went clear on the other side of Pioche?
BH: Yes, that next valley. They call it Dry Lake.
RM: So you had a huge area?
BH: It was plenty large.
RM: How do you locate your cows in a huge area like that?
BH: You ride and watch them.
RM: But if they've been out on the range a while, how do you know where they are?
BH: They'd stick pretty well. I had cows that'd be there all winter, and they'd leave early in spring and go to the mountain themselves before I got to them. They've got a little brain.
RM: How do they know where the water is?
BH: They can smell it.
RM: I'll be darned. So you can take a cow out in the range and just drop him off and he'll find the water.
BH: Yes, if there's any close.
RM: How far will a cow go to water?
BH: Ten miles, I guess.
RM: Is that right?
BH: Some of them. That's in the worst cases.
RM: Did you own the water on the range that you had?
BH: Pretty much, yes. We had to appropriate it with the state engineer.
RM: So other people couldn't use that water without your permission, right?
BH: Oh they did, yes.
RM: But did they need your permission in theory?
BH: Well, if they didn't get it . . . if you're dry, you'll drink. That's the way it happens.
RM: Sure. Are you getting tired, Buck?
BH: Oh, I'm always tired. Don't think anything about it. I had this hip operated on a few years ago and it bothers me a little yet.
RM: Did you get a new hipbone there?
BH: Well, I needed one, but he didn't put it in. He said, "I'll patch it up with a little baling wire and glue."
RM: [Laughs]
BH: He said the damned hipbone was all honeycombed. It bothered me for a long time before I had it operated on.
RM: Did you ever have any bad accidents on horses?
BH: Not too bad. I've been bucked off, and kicked and bit and every other damned thing.
RM: I'll bet you really know a lot about horses. You probably know a lot about cows, too, don't you?

BH: You have to know a little.
RM: How do you know a good range horse?
BH: Ride him and you can damn soon tell.
RM: What do you look for?
BH: The way he performs. You tell a good horse from a bad one. You can't tell a damn thing from the looks of them. Just like a milk cow Ä the way to check a milk cow is milk her. And the way to select the horse is to ride him. You know whether it can handle cattle or not. And [you want] a horse that will watch a cow. If he's got his ears back when you start after a cow and if she moves wrong, he's there; that's a good horse.
RM: Where did you get your cattle horses?
BH: We raised some, and we'd catch a good mustang once in a while. They made a damn good horse.
RM: Does the offspring of a good cow horse tend to make a good cow horse? Is it inherited?
BH: To a certain extent, yes.
RM: How big did you like your horses to be?
BH: Oh, 1000 pounds. A winter horse is about 1100.
RM: Oh, you wanted a heavier horse in the winter?
BH: Yes. They had more work in the winter. And with a good, big, gentle horse, you were all right. If you had to make a long day ride, you could. We fed them grain all the time, every day.
RM: How far did you used to ride on horseback in a day, on a long day?
BH: I never measured it. You go just as far if you're working a bunch of cattle or trailing them as if you just . . . we never did head out to go anyplace. You were working toward the place or away from it or something.
RM: When you were a kid, Buck, did you come into Pioche very often?
BH: Not very often. We had to come with a wagon until we got big enough to harness the horses. We'd come in with a few vegetables once in a while.
RM: How long did it take you to make the trip?
BH: It's 16 miles to Eagle Valley Ä it'd take 2 or 3 hours or more.
RM: What do you recall about Pioche from when you were a kid?
BH: It was just a mining town.
RM: What do you recall about the miners?
BH: I wasn't too well acquainted. They were just ordinary people, all hard workers. There were a lot of hobo miners, too. They'd come and work and get a little stake and go on. This was a pretty good town in the early days Ä even in my time. They'd taken out quite a lot of ore. But the old-timers got it all. They dug holes and drilled and every other damn thing, and they didn't find anything more, only water.
RM: There's a lot of water under here, isn't there?
BH: Oh, yes. They had big pumps over here in Caselton to pump the water out so they could work in the mine. Hell, there was a river running down toward Caliente when they were pumping.
RM: They pumped out of the Prince, too, I think.
BH: They had to pump in all of them, I guess, down to the water level below.
RM: When you were a youngster and came into town, what were some of the things that you would do?
BH: We would unload and go down to the old Chinaman's and have lunch and go home.
RM: You'd have lunch at the Chinaman's?

BH: Well, he arranged that himself. If you had vegetables, you ate dinner with him or he wouldn't buy anything. We'd try not to eat with him and save a few dollars so we could buy a little tobacco.
RM: [Laughs] But he wouldn't buy your vegetables if you didn't eat with him?
BH: No, he wouldn't even let you in the damn restaurant.
RM: I'll be damned. What was his name?
BH: Wing.
RM: Was there a pretty good-sized Chinese community here in town? Chinatown?
BH: They had 3 or 4 houses right up here in the draw. And they had what they called the joss house Ä some religious thing. They were good citizens, near as I know.
RM: What kind of food did the Chinaman serve?
BH: Good food.
RM: Was it Chinese food or American food?
BH: Oh, American.
RM: He didn't serve Chinese food?
BH: Well, I guess he did. I don't remember it. I never tasted the Chinese food. It looks like it was eaten once . . .
RM: [Laughs]
BH: Meat and potatoes was all I knew and that's about what I eat.
RM: Was that what you had out at the ranch?
BH: Yes.
RM: What did you have for breakfast out there?
BH: Eggs and a little mush. We had homemade mush every morning.
RM: Cornmeal or oatmeal or what?
BH: Cornmeal and oatmeal both. You never had your cereal in a package like you get now. We never heard of that.
RM: And of course you always had milk, didn't you?
BH: Oh, I'll say. They made their own butter. Some of them made a little cheese, but we never did.
RM: There were no bars or anything like that out there, were there? There were no stores in Eagle Valley either, were there?
BH: No. That's the closest store right here.
RM: Did most of the people do their shopping here in Pioche or did they go to Modena?
BH: A lot of them who could afford it went to Modena. They'd buy a ton of flour at a time and 3 or 4 sacks of sugar and bring it home and store it, and they cut the price a little on it that way. And you couldn't run to town every day. You had to buy a little extra when you did so you could have it on hand.

CHAPTER THREE

RM: Did you steal tobacco when you were kids, Buck?

BH: Yes. If a stranger came to the house and stayed overnight, his tobacco was gone if he didn't watch it.

RM: [Laughs] He'd lose it? And then what else did you smoke when you didn't have tobacco?

BH: Oh, potato leaves.

RM: Will they work as tobacco?

BH: Oh yes. And then they had a weed that grew out there and ripened in the fall. Some called it Indian tobacco and the Indians called it toklat. It's kind of a narrow leaf about 6 inches long, and you'd dry that. It tasted more like tobacco than anything else.

RM: Did you get any kind of a feeling of tobacco when you smoked it?

BH: Certainly.

RM: You did? So it might have had some nicotine in it?

BH: Well, as far as we were concerned it was the best there was. And if we got any tobacco we'd mix it with that sometimes.

RM: When did you get it, in the summer? Did you prepare it or anything?

BH: We got it in the fall when it ripens, just like any other plant. It used to grow wild all over the roads and everywhere else Ä it still does. You'd get a little pile of leaves like that and dry them and rub them up and take the stems out, and you had your tobacco.

RM: Would you then save it and use it all year?

BH: Yes.

RM: Did you smoke cigarettes or a pipe, Buck?

BH: A pipe.

RM: What kind of a pipe did you have Ä corncob or . . . ?

BH: Oh, corncob once in a while, but mostly regular pipes. You could buy a pipe then for 4 bits.

RM: How old were you when you started smoking?

BH: God, I don't know. It seems to me I smoked when I was big enough to scratch a match.

RM: Is that right. You used kitchen matches, didn't you?

BH: Yes, and I had another kind Ä I don't know if you've ever seen them or not. It was a block with little matches on; there'd probably be 100 matches in that block. You'd pull one off and light it and then they all stuck together. But that was a tedious damn thing.

RM: Were they stuck together at the head?

BH: At the bottom. It was loose and you'd break them off.

RM: They were wooden?

BH: Yes. But mostly we used kitchen matches.

RM: Did you ever strike them on your pants like that?

BH: Oh god yes. And I had a piece of sandpaper with a tack in it on the cantle on my saddle. I used to reach around when I lit a match on it.

RM: So you were smoking as you were riding?

BH: Yes.

RM: What kind of tobacco did you smoke?

BH: Royal Velvet mostly, Bull Durham, anything. They've got now so you . . . I used to buy those cans Ä it used to be a pound, now it says 14 ounces on the can. That's the way they screw you. That went up $3.00 just lately. What they're doing now Ä most of the tobacco companies Ä is making a package. They charge you a dollar and a half, a dollar

six bits an ounce in that little old package. And they've raised it to $13 for one of those 14-ounce cans now. And you can't hardly buy them. They're scarcer than hell.

RM: Is that right? What's your favorite tobacco now?

BH: That Velvet. I mix it. I couldn't get Velvet when I got the last one. That's Sir Walter Raleigh, that other one. It tastes different, but if you're out of it, you'll smoke anything.

RM: Did all the men smoke in those days?

BH: Not all of them; most of them. A lot of them never smoked; they chewed tobacco.

RM: What did they chew?

BH: Old Horseshoe, mostly. You used to buy it off a plug about a foot long. You'd come in the store and they had a cutter, and it was marked. You'd get a 10-cent cut for a piece about an inch and a half wide. Or you could buy the whole plug.

RM: The men out there would probably buy a big plug, wouldn't they, to last them?

BH: Oh yes, 2 or 3 of them.

RM: How in the world did you keep warm out on the range?

BH: You put all the rags you had on.

RM: Did you wear long underwear?

BH: You're damn right.

RM: Wool or cotton?

BH: Wool when we got big enough and could afford it.

RM: How about the scratching of wool?

BH: That half-wool crap would scratch you; pure wool doesn't scratch you. I had woolen blankets and woolen quilts in my camp bed. I kept warm somehow.

RM: Did you use sheets in your bed?

BH: No Ä wool blankets.

RM: Did you sleep in your long underwear?

BH: Oh sure.

RM: Was the long underwear you used the kind with the trap door or was it a two-piece?

BH: Mostly drawers and shirts; they were the best. They were warmer. You could pull them up on your shirt and . . .

RM: What did you wear on top of the long underwear?

BH: A shirt and pants. A wool shirt if you could get it. If you couldn't, you'd get these flannel things.

RM: Would you ever wear Pendleton shirts or anything like that?

BH: When we could afford them. They were good shirts.

RM: What kind of pants did you wear?

BH: Oh, Levi's mostly.

RM: And then what kind of footgear would you wear?

BH: Well, of course for riding you wore cowboy boots mostly. But they were pretty damn cold sometimes. When the winter was right bad, we'd wear a shoe with it, what they'd call a "pack in." They were made out of felt and they were pretty warm. This pack was just like a rubber boot, and you'd put it inside of your shoe. But you only wore them when you had to Ä they were a damn nuisance, and they wouldn't fit in the stirrup. If you'd get caught with that foot in the stirrup you'd get killed.

RM: You wore the boot so you could get your foot out of the stirrup if you had to, didn't you?

BH: You bet.

RM: You always wore the boot when you rode?

BH: Well, when the weather permitted. If it was cold you couldn't. I don't know if you ever knew of the '48 and '49 winter, when they had that hay lift. That was a hell of a winter.

RM: Tell me about it.

BH: A hell of a lot of cattle died. There was a regular blizzard; about 3 feet of snow. And the damn snow was loose, just like ashes. Cold weather set in; it never got above zero for 3 weeks or a month. It stormed more on the west side of our range, and that range of mountains only had a little old brush about 6 inches high. It snowed those cattle in in the canyons. We had to get them with a Cat Ä that was the only way to get to them. Every damn bunch . . . half of them were dead and we killed half of the rest to try to get them to feed. And that snow was so damn dry they were choking to death. I saw cows get a mouthful of hay that big, just like that, and walk around with it. They didn't have saliva enough to masticate it.

RM: Is that right?

BH: Oh god that was a bad winter.

RM: The snow was so dry it would fill up their nose . . . ?

BH: Well, no, it was dry. They could lick it, they couldn't get any moisture out. Just like ice. If a cow has got snow, hell, she can live on it. But that son of a bitch . . . and then it would blow. You opened a road over to one of those places and you'd come back in 2 hours and it had blown full.

RM: Wow.

BH: The wind blew constantly. And cold. My god it was cold.

RM: How did you survive it?

BH: We had a hell of a time, to tell you the truth. It was damn miserable. We had plenty of clothes, but when you're riding a horse, you're up in the air and you're exposed to more wind than if you're down on the ground. And it was damn cold, I tell you.

RM: What kind of a coat did you wear in the winter?

BH: I had a wool coat. Toward the last of my ranching I bought a down coat, and I'd wear a wool sweater under that.

RM: Was that better?

BH: Oh yes, warmer.

RM: Did you wear chaps or anything?

BH: Damn right you wore chaps.

RM: To keep warm?

BH: Yes. They'd turn the wind, anyway.

RM: And what kind of headgear did you wear?

BH: A cap, and a muffler around your neck. When the weather was warm you wore a cowboy hat. I wore those hats all my life.

RM: Was '48-'49 the worst winter?

BH: That's the worst winter I've ever seen. The worst we've had before or since.

RM: Do you recall the winter of '37?

BH: Sure.

RM: Was that a bad one?

BH: Not as bad as in '48 and '49. It was a pretty hard winter, but it didn't stay cold. That cold weather is what killed those cattle. You take 3 feet of snow and that crust Ä they can't walk in it. The cows would shave their legs just like you'd shave them with a razor. A lot of them, their legs would bleed.

RM: How did the hair come off?

BH: The crusted snow wore it off if they did any travelling.

RM: Oh!

BH: And then their legs froze. For instance, I had a bull . . . Now, if the cows weren't pretty bad off we didn't take them in to [feed them on] the hay. Cattle were worth $20 apiece

in '25 and hay was worth $40 a ton. So you had to watch what you bought, too. Anyway, this bull, when I left him up on the hill, was doing fine Ä looking good. I just cut him out and left him. Well, to make a long story short, he followed the tracks in and the next morning he was standing by the corral. So I let him in. He stayed up for a couple of days; finally he lay down. I went out one morning to feed, and this bull couldn't get up. I happened to have a Cat there, so we chained him to the rig and rigged him up. We had a hell of a time getting the chain off of him then when he got up. The Cat left and in a couple of days, here he was down again. We couldn't get him up. I threw him some hay and kept him a couple of days and he couldn't get up. So I shot him and skinned him. When I got to skinning his hind legs, what's the matter he couldn't get up? Those damn hocks and legs were all frozen.

RM: Oh my god!

BH: That's what was the matter with that bull. He was all right otherwise.

RM: His legs were frozen?

BH: It was all frozen. The blood vessels were all kind of dried up.

RM: So there's no way he could have been saved, was there?

BH: No. And a lot of cows had half of their hoof come off, and there were some with ears off.

RM: Oh. It must have been a devastating financial loss for you.

BH: It was a hell of a loss. If a little calf was born (we didn't season the breed then, they calved whenever they could), he was dead as soon as he hit the ground. If a cow had a calf sucking, her tits froze. She'd wean the calf anyway and he'd starve to death if she didn't get him to feed. That was a miserable time.

RM: What percentage of your cows did you lose?

BH: I don't know what percentage.

RM: Did you lose half?

BH: Oh yes. We had the brands off over 500. We'd look at the dead cows and write them down Ä we had a pasteboard on the back of the cabin door and every night we'd record the brands the different fellows had seen. If the Lazy A had 10, you'd write that down. The last time we counted them it was over 500 Ä then they quit even looking for the corpses. So I don't know how many died. Some people there had a lot more than I did. I was pretty lucky. My cattle went through the ranch in the fall from off the mountain from over there. And anything that looked to me like I didn't have to feed her, that was thin, I kept home. I had my calves all weaned and had my best cows over there. They were cows you'd figure would make a living by their own. Someone said, "Why the hell was it the best cows?" Well, that's the reason. It was your best cows. It was the cows you figured could stand a little hard weather. Quite a few cattle died.

RM: How did you survive economically?

BH: You just had to dig up, that's all there was to it. Everybody had a few dollars extra. It took it.

RM: What else do you recall about ranching out there, Buck?

BH: I don't know anything special. It was just like an ordinary ranch. You'd get up and work like hell.

RM: In the evenings out there with no power, what did you do after sundown?

BH: Oh, you'd read a little bit. We had an Aladdin lamp. It had a mantle on it and it was pretty good light. But we didn't waste too much time reading. You were tired enough you wanted to go to bed, anyway.

RM: Did people get up early on the ranch?

BH: Yes, we were all up early.

RM: What time would you get up?
BH: About 6:00 in the wintertime. By the time you got your breakfast and went out and grained the horses . . . if you had help you'd grain them before breakfast and milk the cows. If you didn't, you'd do it later. You'd get up early and go to bed early.
RM: What time would you turn in at night?
BH: Oh, 9:00, somewhere around then. You got all the sleep you wanted, anyway.
RM: And you said it could get really cold out there in Spring Valley in the summer.
BH: It was cold enough you couldn't raise fruit trees or strawberries or anything.
RM: As you go down the valleys from Spring Valley to Eagle Valley and Rose Valley and Dry Valley, does each valley get warmer?
BH: Yes, but they're all cold, to tell you the truth.
RM: Is Dry Valley as warm as Caliente?
BH: Caliente'd be warmer, I imagine. I know it's warmer in the summertime.
RM: When you sold out your ranch, you moved in here. Was it a big change for you, moving from the ranch to the city? You'd never lived in a town before, had you?
BH: Not since I was a kid and I lived in Eagle Valley.
RM: Oh, OK. That was kind of a town, wasn't it?
BH: Yes, we called it a town. There were 10 or 15 families.
RM: So basically you came into Pioche to retire, didn't you?
BH: Mostly.
RM: Do you miss the ranch at all?
BH: Sure I miss it. One thing I miss is, I had about a dozen ewes out there. We had our own meat. By god, I miss that worse than anything. I'd rather have a good lambchop than a beefsteak. We always had meat.
RM: What did you do out there when people got sick, Buck?
BH: You tried to get them to town. We had a doctor here most of the time. You had to bundle the sick person and bring them into Pioche. They had a little hospital here they'd keep them in when they were sick. I don't know, they didn't seem to get sick as much as they do now.
RM: Why do you think that is?
BH: I don't know. Now, that just seems that way. I don't know if it's true or not. They always seemed to be healthy and working. And they lived pretty old, most of them. They didn't live quite as long as they do now Ä some of them Ä but some of them did, too.
RM: It seems like a lot of the people who lived to be older in those days didn't have the ailments that people who are older now do. Does it seem like that way to you?
BH: That's right. Nothing got wrong with them. They'd smoke and chew tobacco and abuse themselves quite a bit and they'd still be hardy.
RM: Do you think people have gotten softer?
BH: I don't know. War, disease and things Ä maybe they're exposed more where there's much different stuff. Maybe that's the cause of it. It might be when you were isolated like that, you didn't pick up germs like you would in town or something.
RM: Did you folks get hit out there with that 1918 flu?
BH: There were a lot of young fellows right here in Pioche that died with that goddamn flu. There wasn't a one out along that creek that died with it.
RM: Is that right? Did people out there get it?
BH: I couldn't tell you, but none of them died. A lot of people died right here in this town. Big, husky young fellows died deader than hell.
RM: When you moved to Spring Valley, who were the other ranchers there?

BH: It was Dave Francis and Louie Fogliani. A couple of other people had ranches; however, they didn't live there, they lived in Eagle Valley.
RM: Did Francis have a pretty big operation?
BH: Yes, he had a pretty big place.
RM: And who were the people who lived in Eagle Valley, but had land up in Spring Valley?
BH: Well, Joe Hammond was one. They raised hay and stuff, but they lived in Ursine.
RM: And who was the other one?
BH: That's all, I guess.
RM: Who was living in Eagle Valley at the time?
BH: Oh, there were Hammond and some more Hollingers Ä Joe and Sam Hollinger. They stayed right in Eagle Valley.
RM: And who else?
BH: Henry Hammond, Vera Flinspach's father, had a place there. And there was Billy Dwyer.
RM: And who was living down in Rose Valley?
BH: There were a couple of Lytles Ä Les and Friel Lytle Ä and Pat Devlin. Their ancestors traded a mining claim for that ranch. They divided it 3 ways and these 3 guys lived there and took care of it, or so the story goes.
RM: Who was living down in Dry Valley?
BH: Joe Delmue was the principle one. They had a good ranch. Then there was a ranch down at the canyon they called Flatnose. Sasetties lived there. They had a few cattle and horses. Everybody had a few cows.
RM: Why did they call it Dry Valley? Was it drier than the other valleys?
BH: Yes. A creek went right straight through the middle of it, but there was no farming going on because they couldn't water it. Afterward it developed and they dug wells and it's all under cultivation now.
RM: Did Rose Valley have wild roses growing there, or what?
BH: Oh I guess they were somewhere in there. They irrigated out of the creek in Rose Valley. Each one had a third, the 3 of them. They turned the water and irrigated it. They raised hay.
RM: Eagle Valley was also called Ursine, wasn't it?
BH: Yes.
RM: And there was a post office there, wasn't there?
BH: Ursine was the post office name.
RM: Were there a lot of springs up in Spring Valley?
BH: A lot of them, yes. There were some that big around.
RM: Two and a half feet in diameter?
BH: Yes, just enough to catch an animal Ä and he'd die if you didn't get him out.
RM: Is that right? You mean a cow.
BH: Yes. They'd slip in. And there were some springs there Ä I had a couple in my field Ä 50 yards across, one of them. Big springs.
RM: Wow. Producing a lot of water?
BH: They didn't have so damn much water, but they were big. Some of those smaller ones don't run out at all Ä they just set a puddle of water like that. If a cow gets in it, she can't get a foothold, and she'll swim around till she gives out and drowns. That's what happened to them if you didn't catch them right away. And you couldn't catch them all right away a lot of the time.
RM: Was there a lot of game out there?
BH: Yes.

RM: Deer and sheep?

BH: No sheep or elk, but there were plenty of deer. And there were plenty of geese and ducks in the wintertime. In fact, a lot of ducks nested right there. I cut a lot of nests with the mowing machine. They were lying in the grass; there was nothing you could do about it.

RM: Did you know the Hacketts over there?

BH: Yes. They ran some cattle and mined a little. But I never was around them.

RM: You didn't go over there much?

BH: Oh, occasionally when we shipped cattle we'd meet with them, and like that. But we didn't have much business to go around them.