



A Conversation with Ned Chaffin

The following interview took place over the course of three days at Ned and Marjorie Chaffin's home in Bakersfield California. Gary Cox was the principal interviewer. Cynthia Beyer participated in asking questions from time to time. In addition Ms. Beyer scanned into the computer 131 Chaffin family photos. As part of the interview, Ned provided a commentary on each photo.

The Chaffin family had a ranch on the San Rafael River, near where it enters the Green River, in the 1930s and 40s. They ran cows in the "Under the Ledge" country from 1920 to 1944, when Ned was in his teens to late twenties. This area is now part of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and Canyonlands National Park, more commonly known as The Maze, The Dollhouse, Ernies Country and Waterhole Flat.

Themes touched upon include: historical features in the landscape and the stories behind them, place names and their origins, the grazing history of the area, detailed descriptions of the day-to-day routines of cowboy life, the outlaw history of the area, Chaffin family history, stories about local historical figures, the early history of scientific research in the area, such as the work of the Clafflin-Emerson Expedition and the Nequoia Arch Survey, and the construction of the road across Horseshoe Canyon.

The interview occupies seven tapes. Six of the ninety-minute tapes were filled. Tape number seven was only partially filled.

Ned Chaffin Interview, November 20 – 22, 1999
At Ned & Marjorie Chaffin's home in Bakersfield, California.

NC: Ned Chaffin

GC: Gary Cox

CB: Cynthia Beyer

MC: Marjorie Chaffin

NC: [Ned is describing his effort to get his old spurs back] Well, so he went and got this cage. And here they were in this cage, welded in there with all this other stuff. And it was a very, very, very interesting object. You know what I mean. Takin' a bunch of junk and makin' really somethin'. How am I gonna get my spurs out of there? And Murray says, well, I don't know how we can get them out of there without tearin' the whole thing up. I says, we're not gonna tear it up. So I gotta go back and talk to that dude. Do you think he'd maybe sell me the thing? What kind of a guy is he? I mentioned it to Frank Tidwell and Frank acted like he was afraid of the guy. Like maybe the guy had a gun or something, I don't know. Do you know him?

GC: Dave Englemann?

NC: Yeah.

GC: He's a real nice guy,

NC: Well, I don't doubt he is. Delbert Tidwell said that they left the spurs hangin' up on the barn. You know, just hangin' up out there.

GC: Back in 1986 Dave Englemann said that I ought to go interview Faun Chaffin. He was still alive then and living in Fruita. And I never got around to it. I was always thinking about it, but it never happened.

NC: There's one guy Faun talked to. God love him, if we could just find him and find his papers, John Hoffman.

GC: I know a bit about Hoffman.

NC: You know about him?

GC: I know he had gathered a lot of material for a history of Canyonlands National Park. And Dick Negri knows what he has, too. But, I heard that there was a disagreement with the Park Service or that Hoffman has been very ill.

NC: Well, you've been listening to too many oral history talkers. What happened was, Marjorie and I went to San Diego to meet up with Hoffman. He had assembled all this material. They had the Veterans of Foreign Wars state convention there. And we went down there. And of course John Hoffman's home was in San Diego. And so of course the first thing I did was call him. The first thing we had to do (to hell with the VFW) we had to go mess around with him. Which was fine with us. You know what I mean. So anyway, he had the book all assembled and had everything there. And he had the cover for it. And him and Marjorie sat down and they figured out the cover. And he said this is ready to go to the publishers. I've got it all. I didn't read it or anything. But he says it's all ready to go. He says, all I gotta do is get this cover. So they messed around with it for an hour or so.

And anyway I understand that he fell off a ladder up on the side of the house. He was badly injured and now he's incompetent. Of course his parents were both dead. And I think he was an only child. His father was a doctor. And, they was raised there in San Diego. And he told me that his dad would never turn the Mexicans or the vaqueros down for any kind of care. And a lot of times he'd do a lot of work for some family and maybe they'd give him two cows or two horses or something. Anyway, to make a long story short, he ended up with a lot of lots down there on the beach and a lot of property right there where the old town San Diego is now, which is where the home was.

MC: He had a beautiful home.

NC: And you didn't have to be a college graduate to realize when you looked at the home from the outside, and you was reassured of it when you opened the door and went inside, that they were people of very, very, very substantial means. Because you just don't have stuff like that on your good looks. A beautiful place.

Anyway, we really had a good time, and was really lookin' forward to it. I kept worryin' about him. And it was a long time before I ever found anybody that even knew where he was at. And so finally I obtained a telephone number and I called this number, and the guy that answered the phone was very curt... well almost rude. You know what I mean. He was unavailable to talk to anybody. He couldn't talk to anybody. And he'd appreciate it if I wouldn't call back.

But I don't know what ever happened to the thing. Now Kelsey did a lot of work, runnin' down lies and tales. Negri did a lot of work running down lies and tales. And a lot of other people. But Hoffman, really got to the core and spent the time. I told him about the deal when Delbert and Leland and I put a bunch of their cattle down in the head of Horsethief Canyon. I told him about that tale. He checked everyone of

those guys, Delbert and Leland both, and got their story on this particular incident. Huh? He didn't just take my word for it. Because you know in oral history, when I give you oral history, the main thing I wanna do is make a hero out of myself. If I can't do that, I wanna make a hero out of my family and my friends. And I want to give my enemies hell. Now just think when we record this, I can get even with all those people. Get even with every one of 'em, 'cause they're all dead now and can't refute it.

GC: So is Hoffman still in San Diego?

NC: I don't know where he is. There's no doubt about it that Hoffman had the best collection of historical materials. Because Hoffman didn't fool around. He spent a lot of time down there runnin' around through them rocks. He and his little ol' jeep.

Break

NC: [Ned is speaking about putting place names on a map which Hazel Biddlecome Ekker sent to him] To make a long story short, I marked 'em and sent them back to her. And she didn't give the Park Service the map that I marked. She took her own map and marked it. And gave it to them. And she got a couple of places wrong. And, she admitted a couple of things, and one thing and another. And that's where some of this confusion over names comes from.

Now, Hazel always had a sore spot. And all the Biddlecome family had a sore spot, about our good friends, the Smith family. This is Betty Smith's husband and his family. Because their place that they now call Cow Camp, that was originally named Biddlecome Springs. And the Smiths, (I don't know whether they did it to be mean or ornery or anything), changed it to Cow Camp. And of course this Cow Camp became known and appeared on some maps. And Pearl was always madder than hell about that. Huh? You know what I mean. In fact, in her Robbers Roost Recollections book, she says some people named Smith changed the name from Biddlecome Springs to Cow Camp. Some people named Smith. I thought that was kinda funny.

That was Pearl alright though. Bless her heart. God love her. If I say anything mean about Pearl, I want you to remember one thing; Pearl to me is like one of my big sisters. I love her and I hate her. Her and Hazel both. To me, they're just like sisters. You know what I mean. If you had older sisters, you know what I'm talkin' about. But anyway, that's what kinda happened on that one. So that happens and the names get fooled around and everything.

GC: And any stories you might have on any of these names would be very interesting to us.

NC: There's one thing I notice on all your maps; there at the pond and the corral at Waterhole Flat, Dave Rust named that the Chaffin Camp. Now I've got it on a map someplace, if I knew where the map was. And Dave Rust sent me a picture and on the back of the picture; 'taken at Chaffin's Camp, Waterhole Flat.' And also I have a thing from one of the agencies that lists some places that had been named wrong, or that wasn't named, and this was one of 'em. Now who put this out or where it came from, I don't know. I don't even know where I got it.

GC: When did your father first see the steps on the Spanish Bottom Trail?

NC: I can't remember the dates, but I would estimate it took place before my father and mother were married, which was in 1897.

Anyway, my dad, Billy Hay, and a guy by the name of Lock started down through Cataract Canyon. And they was not really lookin' for gold. They was lookin' for oil seeps. They'd heard about the oil seeps. So anyway they got to Spanish Bottom and they met a couple of guys and told 'em how they could get from Spanish Bottom to the mouth of North Wash. In fact they'd just come up it. So anyway it was decided that Lock and Hay would run the canyon and meet dad at the foot of North Wash, and Dad would walk from Spanish Bottom around the rim. And of course all he had to do was follow those guys' tracks, so he didn't have to hunt around for trails or ways off rims and everything. He just followed their tracks and went down there.

Now dad said the steps of the Spanish Bottom Trail was there at that time. Now that's the steps that we're all arguing about that goes up that little rim up toward the top. That's the one everybody in the world claims credit for building. Now, whether dad was speaking of the steps that's there now or not, I don't know! Maybe the steps that dad said was there aren't the ones that were there then. Or I guess they're probably still there to this day.

Pete Monnet told somebody that he put the steps there. Then I hear a very, very, very, very strong assertion, that a guy by the name of Snow built the steps. Now, when he built those steps, I don't know.

The Snow family was well know up around Wayne County and especially up in Emery County, up in (not in our area) but up in the Castledale area and up in there. Sheepmen and cattlemen and farmers and quite a prominent family in the country.

Also, it was rumored to me that Snow built those steps over in the head of Shot Canyon. Now I'm gonna have to take a dim look at all this. And I'd hate to say that somebody didn't do something when maybe they did. But if a guy by the name of Snow built those steps he would probably be dead before any of us ever got around. So I don't know, I think this could be just a rumor.

Now, I'll say something about the steps out of Shot Canyon. We had a little bunch of cattle over in Shot Canyon. And I saw the steps from the bottom of the Canyon when I was up in there making sure we got all the cattle out, 'cause we was movin' out of there. But I didn't go up there. We only used Shot Canyon on a dry year. So it was probably a couple of years later before we went there. And anyway, Clell went around the trail the long way. And I was suppose to go there and see if I could find that way off. And I hunted and hunted and hunted and hunted, and had a hell of a time to find it. But I finally found it. And then after I saw it, I was riding ol' Smokey mule, and of course I had him sharp shod and everything. And I looked at it a time or two before I even took him down it. But anyway we went down it.

Now, Pete Masset did not know that trail was there. And neither did anybody else. Because if anybody knew that trail was there, they damn sure wouldn't have gone around that other way where you push stock off in that big crack. You know where you go around that little rim there after you go through the sentinels? In fact if you look down in that big crack there, there's probably some bones down in there.

I maintain that the origins of that trail in the head of Shot Canyon is lost in antiquity. And nobody knew that thing was there or everybody would've used it instead of goin' around. Now that's just common sense. You wouldn't leave here and go to Fresno, to go over to your motel, if you was in a hurry and wanted to do something and was riding an ol' sore tender-footed horse would ya? You'd go the easiest way! That's the way the trails are. That's where the roads are now. It's the easiest way. The easiest route. The route the cow goes. She takes the easiest way and that would have been the easiest way.

So I don't know about who laid those rocks. But dad said the Spanish Bottom steps was there; and this must have been about 1895 or 96. It was a long time ago when he made that walk. And he said, well those steps was there then.

Now, whether the steps is there now or not, I wouldn't say. It's very possible that someone could've made 'em better. Put in bigger stones and everything. But the way those steps is built is quite a job. You don't have any cranes. You don't have a bunch of big 300-pound boys that can pick one of them rocks up and shove it around. You got

a bunch of old boys eatin' baking powder biscuits and gravy. And they're working their heads off to do it.

Anyway, I'm gonna say that the origin of these trails is lost in antiquity. And if anybody tells me they built that I would have to ask 'em when. And, how did you move that rock in particular over in Shot Canyon. That one big rock. One or two ol' wore out cowboys didn't put that rock there, I'll guarantee ya that. Now I'm not very smart. But it took a pretty good little amount of strength to even move that rock from where they found it. Which we don't know, 'cause there's no sign of course. But that's a big rock. Not only that, what if you're sittin' there workin' on that and you slipped. What'd happen if that rock would start goin' off and happen to hit you and catch you? Why'd you'd go off too. I tell you, if the truth's known, I'll betcha there was at least 10 guys put that rock down there. And they no doubt had a bunch of ropes or somethin' to where they could control it to keep it from going down off the rim.

GC: What can you tell us about Pete Masset?

NC: I believe he brought his sheep over into Ernie Country in 1935. That's the last time I saw him.

You want to hear a good story about Pete Masset? One to put in your book? Okay now, when the depression started, I'm telling you, times was tough. Nobody, I mean nobody, had any money. And a guy by the name of Barbeau, was the boss up at the bank up at Price. And ol' Pete Masset had wintered his sheep down under the ledge. And he summered his sheep back up above Price; back up there on the mountain someplace. So he went into the bank because he needed some money for supplies and everything. He went in to ol' Barbeau and he was tellin' him that he needed the money and things. And old Barbeau wouldn't give him any money. Finally, they say, ol' Pete Masset threw his hands into the air like that and said, alright you son of a bitch, if you don't want to give-a the money, you take-a the sheep and you go on top-a the mount!! And he started out the door. But he didn't get out the door. 'Cause ol' Barbeau caught him and said to him; aw come on now. We'll talk this over. We'll straighten this up. I can let you have a little money, enough for you to get by. He decided he didn't want to go up the mountain with that herd of sheep.

Pete Masset was a little guy, a little jolly guy. And he never rode. He had a horse that he kept, a mare, that he kept in his string with his mules, but he never rode her. He walked every place he went. You would be goin' along, and you might kinda break into a little trot once in a while, and ol' Pete Masset would keep up with you. And he never shut up. He's worse than I am, really. And of course he knew a million stories.

The one guy we should have here, rest his soul (and he's gonna need all the help he can get - nothing derogatory now, just statin' a fact) is the little ol' guy that used to work for Biddlecomes. Boy I tell you! He was one of the kids that was in the street when The Wild Bunch robbed the bank over at Telluride. He was one of the kids that ran for the sheriff and told him that the bank was being robbed. He was a kid then. But, boy that guy knew every story. And he'd just would tell one after the other after the other. I mean, he was tellin' a story when you woke up in the morning and he was still tellin' stories at night when you went to bed.

They called him Dick the Dapper. That was his nickname. That's what old man Prommel hung on him. Dick the Dapper. Because he was kind of a dude. You know what I mean. He wanted to make sure his pants wasn't too dirty and his shirt wasn't too dirty. He worked for Joe for a long time. Joe Biddlecome. Boy but did that guy have the stories.

I'll tell you one story about him. Clell and Faun and I, we was goin' from Crow Seeps to the San Rafael River. 'Course now this was in horse and a buckboard. And we pulled in at North Springs. And, we're gonna have some lunch. So we built a fire. 'Course wood was scarce around North Springs, as you probably know better than I do. But anyway, we built a little ol' fire and made some lunch, whatever it was. And, just as we got ready to eat, here come Jimmy Johnson. Now Jimmy Johnson was a nephew of Andy Moore, from Texas. And I don't know whatever happened to Jimmy. But anyway Andy and Dick had sent him in to fix them some dinner. Well we was just ready to eat. So he sat down and ate with us.

Well we hardly wasn't through, till here come Dick and Andy. 'Course they'd been handlin' them cattle. A lot of 'em wild and everything. And I mean it was hot! God dang, boy I'm tellin' you. And ol' Dick come down and of course there wasn't no food ready. There was an old cottonwood log there, about that big around, that everybody in the world had chopped on tryin' to get some wood off from to build a fire. And ol' Dick grabbed his axe. He started swingin' that axe, and choppin' some wood and he says, I hope this axe head don't come off and kill some of you Mormon sons of bitches!

He got the fire goin' and got the coffee boilin'. And then he started tellin' stories. At the campfire he'd rake out some coals to the side of the fire. And of course, tin cups was all you had. And he'd put his tin cup on the coals there. And he'd have that coffee sizzling. And he'd sup it. Sup that black coffee, oh blacker than your thing there [recorder case]. Sup that black coffee and tell those stories. Before he left North Spring, he was telling those stories and everything.

But he was really mad at us damn Mormons because we didn't have his dinner ready. Oh, if you'd have had that tape recorder for just one day around that guy, I'm telling you, you would really have something. Because he had really heard the owls hoot. He was one of the old cow thieves. I shouldn't call him a cow thief 'cause I never saw him steal any cow. But he was associated with those people. You know what I mean. In the old days, well it really wasn't against the law to steal a cow. Now, it was against the law to steal a horse, or steal a man's wife. But stealin' a cow was a little bit different.

GC: So, if they were unbranded they were fair game?

NC: Well, sometimes even if they was branded they was fair game.

CB: So you only got in trouble if you stole somebody's horse? That was more important?

NC: Oh yeah! Oh yeah! You'd never steal a horse. Uh, uh! Nobody did! Nobody! There wasn't any horse thieves in that country. They might borrow one. In fact I got a picture here I'm gonna show you in a little bit, of me on a horse. And, this horse was traded to the Chaffin family. And the Chaffin family didn't know about the trade until they started tryin' to find this ol' mule and couldn't find the mule. Mule was gone. And the horse was there. Now what to you do, Cynthia, in a case like that? We had 3 or 4 horses like that. Harness Up Spring, you got that on your map? Harness Up Spring?

GC: We do not have it on the map but I do know where it is. It is on the north rim of the South Fork of Happy Canyon about a mile west of the Flint Cabins.

NC: Happy Canyon. Yeah. Have ya got it troughed up and everything? You ought to have a trough there so that game and everything can get a drink. 'Cause that's good water. And it always runs the same amount of water. A little ol' stream about, oh, maybe little bit bigger around than that.

GC: There is a cottonwood tree there. But, I haven't seen any troughs or pipes there at all.

NC: The trough we had in that one was an old wood trough. And no doubt the old wood trough has rotted away and gone.

GC: Maybe it washed down the canyon a little ways.

NC: I don't think so. Now it might be covered up with clay off the side. But I don't believe there'd be much of a wash right there as I remember.

Well, this old horse Johnny is the main character in the Harness Up Spring story. He was traded to us in the middle of the night, for a little bay horse. And this mule that the guy traded us ol' Sloughfoot for, had also been traded to us before.

In other words those ol' boys were goin' through and maybe their animal got lame. I know old Sloughfoot was in pretty bad shape when we got him. The kid had just rode him to where he just couldn't go any farther. So he just left him and took the mule. And away he went. Nobody followed him. They didn't want the mule that bad. You could've followed him if you wanted to. There was tracks, goin' toward Green River.

GC: But that didn't happen very often did it?

NC: No, he came there to the ranch. And he was puttin' up hay. And he stayed about 3 days. And helped us pitch hay. And he left. Said he was goin' to Green River. And of course they just turn the horses out and they go out there into the desert. So he went up there by that frog there in the valley up above the ranch there and grabbed that mule. Took the saddle off his horse and left the horse and took the mule and away he went. So that's alright. That's the way things was.

CB: Where is Meat Hook Spring?

NC: Alright, the closest landmark I'll give you is the spring in Big Water, where the cowboy rock art is. Up the wash from there, about a half a mile or three quarters of a mile, are there still some big cottonwoods there?

GC: Yes.

NC: Well the Meathook brand was painted with sheep dip, back under a rock there. Meat hook. And they tell me that Joe Biddlecome had used that brand. Because they tell me that one of his neighbors had a brand that was a 'Two J'. And he just put the diamond on top of it. Now that's only a rumor. I'm not sayin' that. I'm just tellin' you what I heard. I don't believe everything I hear.

GC: Well that's the spring that is now designated Big Water Spring on the maps.

NC: Big Water Spring is down where the cowboy art is. That's what I tried to tell everybody that would listen. But nobody wants to hear about it.

GC: Things get turned around, that's for sure.

NC: Well, they get turned around because people allow them to. People hearin' these things. And maybe never even been there. But that's the Big Water Spring there where the cowboy rock art is. Is the rock art still there?

GC: Yes.

NC: How come my brand isn't on that rock?

GC: I don't know, why isn't it?

NC: I don't know! I was a too lazy I guess to put it on there.

GC: Did you ever hear any tales of outlaws using the steps down to Spanish Bottom at all in the 1890s?

NC: Dad assumed that someone had used them. It's a cinch they was used. People wouldn't go to that much work, just for fun you know. They was built for a purpose.

We should have a big seminar in an auditorium someplace with a great big map of that country. And put the whole thing in a simple perspective. Here it is. Here's the coal country. Here's Green River. Here's the San Rafael Reef. Here's the Henry Mountains. Here's the La Sal Mountains. Here's the Abajo Mountains. Here's Navajo Mountain. And here's the Colorado River wending it's way down through it all. Let's just stop and think for a minute. How many places in all this big length, even today, can you get from here to there on a horse?

GC: Not too many.

NC: Well there was a hell of a lot less then. So, stop to think; suppose I'm at your camp there on top of that hill. Suppose I'm right there. And I hear that somebody's after me. And they know I'm there. And I know the country like the back of my hand. I don't cause I've forgotten half I knew. But I did. I knew every gully and every rock and every tree. Okay.

Hey, that old boy's gonna come after me. Now let's see, where is he? He's over at Green River. Oo! I don't want to go back towards Green River. Where am I goin'? Well I'll go to Hanksville. I'll go down. And I'll go down the ol' Outlaw Trail. And I'll cross the Dirty Devil River. And I'll go up by Hanksville.

No, I don't want to go that way; maybe I'll get caught. Okay. I'll leave here, I'll go over. And you know where the South Trail is? Have you got that marked on your map? Okay, I'll go over and go down the South Trail. I'll drop down into Hatch's Canyon. And I'll go around the Red Benches. I'll drop down into Rock Canyon. I'll drop down into the mouth of the Dirty Devil. And then I'll take it from there. I can cross the river at the Dandy Crossing, and get out. Or I can go down the river and go out. Or I can go out up the side of the Henry's. I can go out and go up around the Henry's.

Goin' the other direction. Naw, I'd better not go that way, I'll go down the North Trail. Okay, now you get down to the foot of the North Trail. Now I wonder which is the best way to go? Let's see, I can go around by Jack and his Family [Bagpipe Butte]. And go around the rim to Waterhole Flat, around that way. I can go over to Spanish Bottom. And cross the river. And go out Red Canyon. I can go that way. I can go around. I can go up to Anderson Bottom. I can cross the river and go out what is now known as the Shafer Trail. I can go that way.

You stop and think how many million places a guy can go from one point that is so protected. It's just like you've got the old man right there with you. Man you've got it made! And that's why that was a place where the guys knew when they got down there, that chances are, that nobody would pursue 'em. Because where are you gonna pursue 'em? If a guy's riding on one of them good windy days when that sand's blowing there at your camp and he takes out of there with a horse, by tomorrow, you can't tell which direction he went. Because the sand's got the tracks filled. So I'm the law, and I'm goin' out there and hunt you. Well, what am I gonna hunt? A whisp of the wind or something.

Only one guy I know ever really caught any outlaws in that country. That was Uncle Johnny Armstrong. And he went out. And he followed these outlaws' tracks. And they dropped down into Horseshoe Canyon. They went down the sand slide. 'Course now that was before the road. They went down The Sand Slide. Went down the canyon. Went out the Deadman's trail. They camped either at Clyde Springs, or Windy Point Springs, up from Tidwell Ranch. And Uncle Johnny Armstrong went up there and he got these two guys and brought them back.

Now, today I wouldn't advise a Lawman to go out there and try to take two desperados back with him. Would you? This shows you one thing. Those guys, they wasn't crooks, really. They was just victims of circumstances and so on and so forth. And was really good guys. They didn't shoot Uncle Johnny Armstrong. Hell, they could have gotten behind a rock there and shot him. And the buzzards would've had his bones picked before anybody even knew he was gone.

And all these guys that say they knew Butch Cassidy, they knew this and they knew that; most of them don't know doodlely, really. Because the facts are quite simple. It's a fact that Butch Cassidy came back to the United States. This is a fact. I mean it's a fact just like the sun came up this morning. Now of course it was foggy here and you couldn't see it but it still come up. Because people that knew him, saw him.

GC: Well there was something called the Butler Trail I've seen referred to in some of the writings about the outlaw days. The Butler Trail crossed the river and apparently went up Red Lake Canyon and Butler Wash on the east side of the river, then up onto Elk Ridge. The logical place to cross the river would have been Spanish Bottom.

NC: That's the only way you could get there from your side of the river. Is go up Red Canyon. You couldn't cross it any other place, unless you went down to the Dandy Crossing and went all the way up to the Elk Ridge and come down The Trough. Because you damn sure in those days wasn't gonna get a horse across that maze there [The Grabens]. I don't think. Those canyons sure looked awful deep from my side of the canyon. Looked like the walls were straight up and down.

GC: I thought Spanish Bottom would have been the logical river-crossing place for the old Butler Trail. And maybe those steps had been added to or put in there by the outlaws. A possibility perhaps.

NC: It could have been. Now there's one thing I can't find. And while you're searching for historical papers, if you ever do find this thing, at least let me know where you found it. Dr. Crampton interviewed my father. And wrote down one of the tales about the river and about dad. And he wrote dad and mom a letter. And he thanked 'em for helping him with the thing. And sent them a copy of the thing. And wanted dad to look over it to see if there was any errors or omissions and send it back to him. And he thanked mom and dad. And I guess he stopped by and they all had dinner in mom's house. 'Course you couldn't leave moms' house without eatin'. She'd think you was mad at her. You'd insult her.

I've even got ol' Barry Scholl searching for this interview transcript. And he can't find it. Barry Scholl tells me that Dr. Crampton's files and his papers are a mess. Like mine, I imagine, from what he says, only a lot more of 'em. Barry Scholl says that he's been searchin' for it and can't find it. And let's see, where is Dr. Crampton's papers? Dr. Prommel's stuff is up at the University of Wyoming. Dr. Brimhall's papers are at the Maryinette Library in Salt Lake. Where in the hell is Crampton's papers? I think maybe they're up at the University of Utah too. I'm not sure. I should know. I could find out if I wrote a bunch of letters.

But anyway, it would be very interesting to see Crampton's booklet about dad because you never hear about the miners on the Colorado River except for one or two of 'em that had a little bit of Hollywood in 'em. You never hear 'em ever mentioned. In fact that's where my mother and my dad went on their honeymoon. They was down on the Colorado River, placer mining for gold. That's where they went on their honeymoon. Now can you imagine that?

GC: Beautiful place to have a honeymoon.

NC: Yeah, I guess so. Down there workin' 18 hours a day, tryin' to catch some of that gold dust as it goes by. When it went through the sluice box you had to grab it real quick or it would float off it was so skinny.

GC: So they didn't get much gold?

NC: Ol' Dave Rust said Lou Chaffin took more gold out of there than all the other miners put together. But I don't know whether he knew what he was talkin' about or not. They worked awful hard though. But you know, that old river had a hold on my dad, just like whiskey. Oh I'm not gonna say it was bad. But, I mean, every so often he had to go do a little placer minin' on the river. They had a lot of interesting times.

GC: So he did quite a lot of placer mining in between cattle ranching and other things?

NC: Well, I think he did a lot of placer minin' there for many, many years. I think that's about all he did. Yeah. I've got some tales that they wrote some place. If I only knew where they was at. But anyway that's beside the point. That's got nothin' to do with Canyonlands.

GC: Well, a possibility that Rosemary Sucec was suggesting for those steps, was that perhaps the Navajos put them in. Did you ever hear any stories of Navajos running sheep in that country at all?

NC: They could have.

GC: Did you ever see them. Did you every see any Indians down there, in that country?

NC: Never. Never saw any Indians there at all. Down the river. There's some Indians down there.

GC: What, down around Hite?

NC: Well from Hite and below where they could come down from the reservations there.

There's only one Indian that I can remember, ol' Jack Davis. I think he was an old outlaw. He was about three fourths Indian. He use to come through there and help us brand our calves. And then he'd take off and go. I don't know where he went. Don't know nothin' about him.

GC: Was he a Navajo?

NC: I don't know. He had real black hair like an Indian. And he always wore it down on his shoulders.

GC: Did he have it in braids?

NC: No, no. He just let it fly. He was a pretty good ol' bronc stomper. Old Jack was quite a tall, skinny guy.

Well, when he went down there, dad wanted him to watch out for Clell and I on the account of those horses. Dad didn't want us to get hurt. Jack told dad, hell, he says, I think they have to watch out for me.

I don't know who he was. Don't know where he came from. Probably the remnants of the gang, I imagine. Toward the end, why, I mean, there no doubt was a lot of the hangers ons and everything that floated around. Went to town and got jobs and raised families. And were good citizens. Lots of 'em. Where they went, we don't know.

Use to see a guy or two go through once in a while. Dad always said if we saw somebody goin' why, let them make the contact. Now there was three or four I saw goin' through and there was one guy that just kept goin' and didn't stop to chat for a minute. But dad always said, if they don't wanna to make contact with you, you don't bother 'em. You just leave 'em go. Don't mess with 'em. So, there was only one. One time. That was right on Waterhole Flat there right where the trail goes around the point there right down below Willow Tank. This ol' boy was coming down the upper trail.

GC: Were there any Indians working for the sheepherders at all that you recall?

NC: I can't remember any Indians. I'm trying to think of a story about an Indian, but I can't come up with nothin'. Have some stories about a colored cowboy or two.

GC: Oh really? Who was the colored cowboy?

NC: The main one I know was called Nigger Bill. But he wasn't the Nigger Bill that they named the canyon after around Moab. I think this Nigger Bill worked for old bishop Meeks over out of Wayne County area. And they used to bring their cattle into Green River and ship 'em. And he came there.

Ah, you never heard of the Chaffin Hotel I know. But anyway, the Chaffin Hotel operated in Green River from 1919 until mom left there. That was the place where everybody from Wayne County and over in that whole county up there all stayed and ate when they came to Green River. It was our home. And it was also The Chaffin Hotel. Should be so named.

Anyway, they brought the cattle in to ship 'em. And they'd loaded 'em in the cars. And they all come down there to dinner. And of course mom had a big ol' feast. You know how those old guys are after weeks of cookin' on a campfire, eatin' gravy and bakin' powder biscuits. Anyway, this ol' colored boy grabbed his plate and started outside. And mom says, Bill where you goin'? Well, he says, I was going outside, I don't know whether you white folks wants me to stay here and eat with your house or not. She says, Bill you get in here and sit right down over there at that table! You're just as welcome here as anybody else. And I never want to hear anything like that out of you again! You're just as welcome here as anybody! And that's all I can remember about him. I guess he was a real good cowboy. I guess he was not only a good cowboy but a good cowman too. And there is a difference you know. There is a difference between a cowman and a cowboy. But I guess he was one of the rare people that was both.

GC: What's the difference?

NC: A cowboy is a guy that's a good roper and a good rider and so on and so forth. They call him a good cowboy. A cowman is a cowboy that knows how to cowboy a little bit, but that really knows how to handle cattle; knows how to select bulls for best production, and the whole gambit, the whole ball of wax. Lots of guys claim to be cowboys and everything that really wasn't cattlemen. And I was one of 'em. I was one of those. And if you take those old desert cowboys and take 'em over to Nevada, over where we had our ranch over at Elko, and leave 'em there for one spring, they'll all tell you the same thing. That they didn't know doodlely about the cow business. About cows, period. And that's the truth. But anyway that old colored boy was a good cowboy and a good cowman.

GC: So this Bill that came to dinner was not the one that the canyon was named after?

NC: No, no, no, no. The Nigger Bill that the canyon was named after came there another time. Came there with his boss. I guess they was looking for some stolen cows or somethin'. People was always huntin' stolen cattle. That's where I got to meet most of the people I met back there.

GC: How about Sweet Alice Canyon; how did it get its name?

NC: It happened during the Nequoia Arch survey conducted by Conley and Mr. Prommel, looking for some oil signs. And we had camped there at that tank in the canyon. And, dad went over to get water. Ya had to bail the water out of the tank to water your stock with. Because they couldn't get to it. That's why there was always water in it. In fact they called it a tank that never went dry. And I don't believe anyone in my knowledge ever saw it when there wasn't water in it.

But anyway we was camped there. And dad went over there. And dad was one of the world's worst singers. He couldn't carry a tune in a sack. He didn't know a flat from a sharp. He was the world's worst singer! He was the only guy I ever saw that couldn't even hum a melody. And anyway, he was trying to sing 'Do you remember Sweet Alice Ben Bolt?' And old man Prommel hollered down to him, god Lou, why don't you shut up you're driving us crazy. Well I was just singing about my beautiful wife. And Prommel says, yes I know you were. So that's how that canyon was named. It was named by H. W. C. Prommel. And he called it Sweet Alice Canyon. That's where we was camped. And we called it that ever since.

GC: Did you run many cows up in there? Did you use that area very much?

NC: Well, we used it in the winter quite a bit. But you know, rain in that country is a very iffy subject. And in the winter, when you had a little bit of snow, why we'd use that area. But, cattle couldn't get into this tank. But there were some tanks above it they could get into, like in the spring, when it didn't all evaporate out so soon. And, yeah we ran cattle in there, whenever we could, because it was a good feed country. Good strong feed country. But water was a problem.

GC: Okay, let's talk about the next one over; Sand Tank Canyon, or Big Sand Tank Canyon. Which is it? Big Sand Tank or Sand Tank?

NC: Well, we just always called that the Big Sand Tank. There where that fall is. You know where that is, I'm sure. You know. I know you know the place that I'm talking about.

GC: Right, right, I know where that is.

NC: And they just called it the Big Sand Tank.

GC: For obvious reasons.

NC: For a very obvious reason. It had a sandy bottom and the water wouldn't last in it too long because that sand would drink it up. Now today, if a guy was there, and if he had him some kind of a belt or somethin' that would enable him to go down in there and dig that water out and take that sand out of there, there's no doubt he would find a big reservoir underneath there that's covered up by the sand. And, so, we just called it the Big Sand Tank Canyon. Beautiful spot right there. Beautiful. In the evening you look back into the fins there. I've got a beautiful photograph of it.

GC: And you utilized that water hole fairly often?

NC: Well, whenever we could, whenever there was any water in it. The water wouldn't stay in it too long though. That old sand would really drink that water up. It no doubt just went down. I think there was a big rock tank there underneath, if you could get the sand out of it. 'Cause you could go there even when it was dry and you could dig down and find water. Try it sometime when you go there and it's dry. Grab your shovel and dig down about 3 feet and see if the water doesn't come seepin' in. And if you want good water, that's it. You know what I mean. Good clean rain or snow water. And really, really good water. Oh yeah, yeah. Nice place. Beautiful spot.

GC: Let's talk about Clell's Seep.

NC: Clell's Seep. That's the little old seep there in the chute. You couldn't call it a spring. And George Franz named that Clell's Seep. He also named Lou's spring over in the other canyon. Because he was in charge of the government project that fixed up those springs. Fixing up those springs was paid for by the government. And George Franz was in charge of the overall deal. Now, he didn't do any of the work. In fact, he wasn't even there. He hired Lou Chaffin to do all the work. And Lou took his crew, which included one of the Thompson boys, and went there and fixed up those springs to where you could water a few horses. I guess the troughs are still there?

GC: The troughs are still there.

NC: I hauled those troughs down there to 'em with my mules when they did this work.

GC: Where'd you haul them.

NC: From Flint. They brought 'em out to Flint Flat in the car. And I hauled all their supplies for 'em. I hauled supplies for all the work that was done down there. I did pretty good. I got two dollars a day and a dollar a day for each one of my mules. Hell, I was the richest man in that part of the country.

GC: So you hauled the troughs down the Flint Trail?

NC: Yes, right down the Flint Trail.

GC: What was the Flint Trail like at that time?

NC: Oh, about like it is now I imagine.

GC: Well, it's a road now. I mean what was it like back when it was just a trail. Could you take a wagon down it?

NC: No. Not unless you wanted to slide it down, like they did the old oil-drilling rig. The Flint Trail was in pretty good shape. All except there where that turn is. You know where the turn is? Where you come down like this from the top. You come down like this, and you come down and you make that turn and go down onto that little rim down below? That was always kind of a bad place right there. But, I mean, it was ok. Stock would go over it. You would have to walk. You couldn't ride your horse. And you say you had a big rain there this year?

GC: Yes.

NC: Speaking of rain; ol' Clell and I, we spent about two hours down on that rim. We spent about two hours there huddled up against that rim one hot summer day in the damndest thunderstorm you ever saw. And it washed the hell out of that trail. I imagine about like what you had this year, probably.

GC: Yes, the rains completely destroyed the Flint Trail this year.

NC: I often wondered what would happen to the road if they ever get a rain like that on it. Those rains don't come all the time. But, when they do, boy they really wash it.

GC: So you had to strap those troughs onto a mule, or a horse, and bring them down?

NC: Yes.

GC: But there was no way you could bring a wagon down that trail?

NC: Oh, heavens no. No, no, no, no, no. I never saw that trail when you could bring a wagon down it. But they did get the oil-drilling rig down it.

You see, dad went down to Red Canyon to get the little keystone rig that they used. And dad brought it out to Flint Flat. And Wolverton and Faun and Dubinky Anderson and Paul Saulgaver, and maybe others were there working on the Flint Trail so they could take the rig down it. Well, when ol' Lou Chaffin got there he had a better idea. He said, we'll slide it down. 'Cause there was snow there. It was in the winter-time. Lots of snow. You know, that snow gets pretty deep on that trail.

Anyway, they got the rig and they went up there and wrapped the cable around some cedar trees, and they let it down a little bit at a time on the snow. And that's the way they got that rig down the Flint Trail. Now I could never figure out how the hell they got it down over the Black Ledge. Because, where they went down the black ledge there, I know they did a little bit of blastin'. And they must have had it fixed up pretty good. And I guess some rain had come along and washed a lot of their work out of there. Because that was always a rough spot.

GC: So you took those troughs down? What year was that?

NC: Did you ever walk up the Devil's Slide Trail?

GC: Yes.

NC: Did you see my name up there on the rock, January 4th, 1935?

GC: No.

NC: Yeah, well, that's why I know it was 1935. Because that's what I was doin' there at that time. I was haulin' the dynamite and the food and everything for dad and his crew. They were camped there, at the top of the Devil's Slide, and they did a lot of work on the Devil's Slide.

GC: So they did the work on the Devil's Slide the same year they did the work on Clell's Seep and Lou's Spring, 1935?

NC: Yes. And George Franz was in charge of the whole thing. George Franz was a politician. He was knowledgeable, sort of, I mean, he was a semi-politician. He wasn't a real politician. But, I mean, he was a guy that always kept his finger in political things. And, anyway, they gave him the job of ram-roddin' this government deal. Put out by the government. It was really designed to give people some work. Also at the same time they was to fix trails and springs. And we fixed those springs there in Ernie Country. They fixed the spring up at cow camp, up at the Smith's camp. They fixed that all up. And some others. I don't know where all they went. But they worked on that deal for quite a while. But all the time they was in our area there, I did all the packin' for them. Have you been to the twin pipe springs down on the Big Ridge?

GC: They put that in at the same time?

NC: Yes. Are the troughs still there?

GC: No.

NC: The troughs aren't there? The heck they're not! I thought they'd be there. The way that hill-siding was there I thought that those troughs would still be there. Well anyway, that was troughed up nice. That was a nice spring. There was some good water there and quite a bit of it. A lot more water than there was range, really. But they did a good job on that. They built that trail down into the spring there. And they troughed it up nice.

GC: There is a spring on the other side of the Ridge there, on the North side of the Big Ridge, called on the map, Dripping Spring. And that spring has troughs associated with it.

NC: Dripping Spring is there by the old corral. Is it still there?

GC: Yes, the old corral is still there.

NC: You're a-kiddin'!

GC: No, that's a solid, old corral. That's a good corral!

NC: All that stuff's solid. It had to be. But nobody ever figured there was very much water there at the Dripping Springs. Not near as much as there was down at the Twin Pipe. Maybe at the Twin Pipe where the water comes out, no doubt now it is washed away. And the water is going away. It's going someplace else. Is the pipe still there?

GC: There are some pipes there.

NC: No water comes out of 'em?

GC: It drips a bit.

NC: The one pipe ran a stream of water about the size of my finger. Which is a big spring for that country. And the other one, maybe half that thick. We used to camp there at Dripping Springs a lot. That's a nice place to camp. It was a good place to camp in the summer 'cause it was cool there. And it was a good place to camp in the winter because you was out of the North wind. 'Course in the winter you'd camp mostly outside. You wouldn't sleep at a place like that. But, yeah that's a nice place. Good water too at the Dripping Springs.

GC: It was in 1935 that they developed Clell's Seep?

NC: Yes. And Lou's spring.

GC: Clell was one of your brothers?

NC: Yes.

GC: Could you tell us a little bit about Clell?

NC: Clell was the brother older than I. About two or three years. And Clell was a real good cowboy. He was just well put together, you know, for most anything. He was a super good rider. And he was good with horses. And he was one of the best ropers in the country. And not only that, he was a cowman, like I told you before.

'Course he worked for our operation for awhile. And then when George Franz brought the stuff in Big Water, he went to work for George Franz and ran that outfit for him. And he worked there. And Clell had to deal with the wildest bunch of cattle that was ever assembled in one bunch. Nothin' to compare with 'em no place. The longest-legged, narrowest-hipped cows you ever looked at. And in about eight years he had some of the best cattle in the country. And cattle you could handle. Still had a lot of wild cattle now, don't misunderstand me. But he had gotten them to where you could handle 'em.

And, as far as his breeding program, it was a little bit different than most of us. Because George Franz had a little money. And if he saw a bull that was a little bit good, he could pay an extra twenty-five or fifty dollars for him. So bought his bulls from

Charlie Reed over on the La Sal River. And Clell would go over and pick 'em out. And they didn't have nothing but top bulls. And he really put an improvement on that bunch of cattle.

Clell married George's daughter. And she went down to Big Water. And they punched cows down there together. And then there's the story about them being down at Cabin Bottom when the cabin burned down. In the wintertime they'd take a bunch of cattle down and put 'em on the bottoms down there. And, old George, he'd float some cottonseed meal down there. And they'd feed the cattle with it. Clell and Goldie was camped there in that old cabin. And when they came back from feeding the cattle that night their cabin had burned down. Burned up all their food, all their clothes, all their feed for their horses, just didn't leave nothin'. So they went up to Anderson Bottom. There was a little ol' one room cabin up there that George Franz and Dad and Billy Hay built. A little ol' one room cabin. They went up there and stayed that night. Then the next day they went on up to Tidwell's and then they went on into town to get some supplies.

Clell worked for George Franz. Ran the outfit there until 1937. And he and Goldie decided to split the blanket. And Clell quit George. And in fact, he came out here to Bakersfield. And he worked back and forth here. He worked in the oil field. He worked as a truck driver. And he worked down here with me at the beverage-distributing place. And he worked for Uncle George over at Leamington, Utah, over in the quarry.

He was drafted in the army. And he went with the 104th infantry division to Belgium and on through to meet the Russians over on the Elbe River. And he came back. And he married. Of course he and Goldie were divorced. And he married Marjorie's girlfriend. Her name was Eleanor Dixon. A beautiful girl. And they had only been married for a few years when Clell got the disease that inhibits you to where you can't walk. And he passed away in the veteran's hospital up in Salt Lake City. He was not loud mouth like me. He was a quiet sort of person. And he was a super good cowboy. Super. One of the best all around.

GC: He was a good cattleman too?

NC: Yes. I like to add that too. The reason I add that is because none of the Chaffin boys was very smart. And I'm the dumbest one of the litter. But when we bought that ranch over in Nevada, and I got over there in that different country (a lot different country than ours) I was only there about a half-hour until I knew I didn't know a damn thing about the cow business. So I started learnin' right there. And as far as Nevada cowpunchin' is concerned, and cattle raising; if you gave me the best ranch in

Elko County and told me I had to go over there and run it and live on it and stay on it and try to make a go of it, I'd tell you to take your ranch and keep it. Ah, what an experience.

GC: Quite a lot different than the Canyonlands?

NC: Ahh, we never had any sick cattle down there in the Utah desert! You never saw a sick cow down there in your life. Never! Well, once in awhile one of 'em might get a little cancer in her eye. But if she did, you took her into George Beebee. And he'd take her and fatten her up and sell her over at the meat market, you know. No, not really. But that's what you do with 'em. And that was rare. Just once in a while, maybe every three or four years, you might have a sick cow. But very seldom.

The only thing that hurt the cattle in that country, was lack of water. That's the only thing. There was always plenty of feed. And anyway it isn't a cow country to start with. Let's face it. You start thinkin' about the country here in California; the way they run their cattle here. If the State of Utah had a section of this good rangeland out here in these foothills, they'd build a fence around it and make a state park out of it.

GC: Did Clell ever use Clell's Seep? Were there any stories about him associated with that area? Did he help build that trail down the chute?

NC: Well, I don't know if anybody ever did any much work on that damn trail there in the chute. I don't know. Part of George Franz's deal with the government was, he had to put a handle on every one of those places they worked. That's how the Two Pipe Spring was named. That was originated right there on the spot. And Clell's Seep. And Lou's Spring.

GC: And Lou of course was your father.

NC: He was my father, yeah. And dad was the boss of the men. And he did all the supervising. He was the boss. George Franz was his boss. But George just did the paperwork and took care of the government end of it.

GC: And Lou was the foreman out in the field?

NC: Yes, dad was the job hand. But dad was a good hand. He knew how to get things done. And men liked to work with him and for him. And he really knew how to get things done.

GC: And he worked on the Devil's Slide trail?

NC: Yes.

GC: And some of the other projects?

NC: Well, I don't know. They did some work some other places besides right there in our area. 'Course I didn't go with 'em, 'cause I was taking care of the cattle then. And I did that packin' on the side. Made twice as much money packin' than I have made all my life in the cow business.

GC: So tell us about Ned's place or Ned's hole.

NC: It was early in the spring. Still a little snow. I wanted this cow and her calf. She just had her calf. And I wanted to get 'em 'cause I wanted to send 'em over toward Red Points. And I followed her. She came around below. Not down off the rim where you would go now there by where that road goes. You know, you can go down off that rim. But she'd come around that rim. And I followed her tracks in there.

And I observed that there was a wet spot back in there. So I dug it out, and kinda built a little pond, a bucket pan. And I got some of that old red clay that had washed down from those red hills up there. And I put that in the bottom of the pond. And the next day I came back there and that thing was full of that good water. And I thought, heck, maybe I could dig that out and maybe find a little bit of water there. And so I did. I shoveled that whole thing out. All along there where it was seepin' out. I shoveled that whole thing out. And kinda fixed it up a little bit. And I could see that it would make a little bit of water.

So, Karl Seely had about four hundred tubs up to the Cove Spring. Is any of 'em still up there? I suppose not. Probably all washed away. He had about four hundred of 'em up there that he'd hooked up to water his sheep in. He had 'em all hooked up. All the way down the damn canyon down there. And had 'em hooked up so the water would flow from one into the other. And I went up and borrowed three or four of his tubs and put 'em down there. And I got me some pipe and I went over to Cottonwood where it comes down off the drip there. And if you went back in there, there'd be a layer of that old red clay about that thick. I got a bunch of that. And brought it in there to Ned's Hole and put it in, so that what little bit of water would come wouldn't seep out, it'd run off.

And then when you'd go there to camp, those tubs would be full of water. Well, I think I had about four tubs there. That would be plenty of water for all your horses. And plenty of water for your camp. And maybe plenty of water for your horses for a day or two. And of course that was a hell of a thing for there. Because you know where

that little tank is, right there where you go around that point? There's a little tank right down under the rim there that's always got water in it? Did you ever see it dry?

GC: No, I can't recall having seen it dry.

NC: Well alright, that's another one of those tanks that never went dry. We used to camp down there. And we'd bail our water out of that thing for our horses. That thing would be full of pollywogs. Any kind of a damn varmint-wigglers. Any kind of a varmint you ever saw in the water, that tank would just be full of 'em. And the last time I went there, when my grandson and I went there, the water in it was as black as your recorder there. And there was nothing alive in it at all. The environment's done that. But that thing used to be literally full of life. And I mean just many, many, many, many, many different kinds of animals. Little animals. It was amazing. I never tell that to any of these tree lovers because I don't want 'em to use that as a bad example for the environment. And that's what causes it. But I mean that water was black. I never saw water as black as that was. I couldn't believe it. I wanted to show my grandson the life in that, to impress on him the value of water in a dry country. You know what I mean. Because now those frogs, (and those pollywogs turns into frogs), what are frogs good for? They're good for bobcats. They're good for coyotes. They're even good for a man if he's hungry enough. Anyway, I wanted to show my grandson that, so I was kind of disappointed. Then we went down the canyon. You been down the canyon to that cliff dwelling?

GC: Yes.

NC: We went down there. And of course when I got around to where I could look, the first thing I could see in there was where the pothunters had got in there and piled all the dirt out over the rim. And I thought, those old boys that dug for those pots in that place weren't very smart.

GC: When did you take your grandson there?

NC: 1985. It wasn't dug when the Peabody folks was there. I took Mr. Roberts and Dave Rust over there. Because it looked like it might be a good place. Because those rocks all on the outside and everything. We spent a whole day over in that area just reconnoitering around. And we saw that site. And Dave Rust hated that place with a passion.

GC: Really, why?

NC: He says, I've been a lot of places. And I've seen a lot of bad places. And, he says, that is the worst, the most poverty-stricken habitat I ever saw. There wasn't a potsherd. There wasn't a piece of flint. There wasn't nothin. But you know they'd been there for some time on account of the ashes, and on account of that rockwork. They wouldn't do all that if they wasn't going to stay a little while, right? And Roberts was saying something about goin' over there. And old Rust, boy, oh no, he didn't want to go over there. 'Cause he didn't want to have to drive them mules all the way, or have me drive them mules all way the up to the Cove Spring for water.

GC: Can you tell us a little more about Ned's Hole and Ned's place?

NC: It was good water. And it was a nice place to camp. There was lots of wood there. In fact I have a picture of George Whitmore and my father-in-law there. In fact, it's just right up the canyon a little ways where the picture was taken that I use for the logo for our invitation to the Cowboy Caucus. That's just right up the wash from there, right up above that jump. Is that pond still there? Across the wash?

GC: Yes. And it has been enhanced by a bulldozer since you were there.

NC: Oh gosh, if we had had a little ol' bulldozer we'd have still been down there running cows. You wouldn't have had the park down there. We'd still be down there.

GC: What's the history of the Chaffin camp?

NC: Well that was always our main place for bein' under the ledge.

GC: Did your father establish the Chaffin Camp?

NC: Well, he and Faun did, together. Though it really wasn't necessary to establish anything. It was already there.

GC: Did your father and Faun develop the spring and build the reservoir there by the cottonwood tree?

NC: No, Faun and Clell and I developed the spring. We built the pond. And, the little spring there, you know, where the pipe is. I did that.

GC: Where the camp is?

NC: Yes. The water seeps out of the rocks. And I got flat rocks and laid 'em like this. And then covered 'em up with dirt. And got this red clay from over at Cottonwood

Spring. And put the clay down for the water to run in. There was pretty good water there. You could water all your horses all the time and still be enough for all your camp use. Then, not only that, but you could turn your horses up on Little Ocean. The cattle didn't like to go up to Little Ocean. That's another thing that we oughta get into. That's where is Little Ocean.

GC: Ocean Point?

NC: Ocean Point. Where, where do you have Ocean Point on your maps?

GC: We talked about this before. And I recall that on the map, Ocean Point is where you said the Easter Block is, something that you called Easter Block, between Easter Pasture Canyon and Calf Canyon.

NC: Yes. Now that's where Hazel, when she re-marked that map I mentioned earlier, she marked Ocean Point wrong. She marked Easter Block Little Ocean instead of where Little Ocean was.

GC: So the name on the map is Ocean Point. But you called it Little Ocean?

NC: Little Ocean.

GC: Was there a big pothole or tank there?

NC: Well, there's a lot of that flat sandstone up there, that has just them little pot-holes, maybe have water in it about that deep. And when it rains, they all get full and look like an ocean to somebody, I guess. I don't know who named it. But anyway, that's what it was.

GC: You said you had a story about the Flint Cabins?

NC: I had a mule named Banjo. And I went from the Gordons [Gordon Flats] down through the trees. And after I went through the fence there at the Gordons, the snow got deeper and deeper and deeper. And a lot of times the snow would hit the bottom of the panniers, you know. It was just getting' dark when I got to the little old cabin there. And, cold. Oh boy it was cold! And I went there and I opened that door. And there, the whole side was full of wood. There was a tub out in the yard that was full of ice. You know, the snow was already melted. I didn't have ta gather up snow for my horses for water that night. I've stayed in some pretty nice places in my life. But I never saw a place look as good to me as that did.

I was miserable, and I'd had nothing but bad luck. George Franz was supposed to meet me there at the French Springs. And he had my grain and my supplies for me. He had gone over on Twin Corrals about where the pond is and he ran into some snowdrifts, and couldn't come any farther. So he just dumped my stuff out in a pile there.

So I waited around for him there at French Spring. And I thought, well I gotta do something. I gotta get goin'. So I started for Crow Seeps, or the Roost, as you guys call it. We always called it Crow Seeps. I needed to go and get me some supplies. And I went and found the supplies. And I had one mule that was hard to catch. And you think he'd let me catch him? Dang his ornery heart. I fooled around with him for an hour before I finally caught him.

Anyway, I loaded my grain up on my mules. And I headed out towards Flint. And I ran into a sheepherder on that flat just the other side of the Gordons. On the lower road. Not the road you folks use now. On that lower road. He was camped there. And he, he couldn't speak English. But he come over and went like this. I knew he had some food. So I went over there. And he had some beans. White beans full of garlic, and mutton of course. And I ate them. And then I headed for Flint. And when I got there it was just getting dark. And oh boy it was miserable. And boy, I tell you, I was cold and tired and disgusted and mad and the whole bit. And that place looked like heaven. It did.

GC: Tell us about H. W. C. Prommel.

NC: He was a mining engineer. And he ran a big gold mine down in Mexico for this company. And they were minin' the gold there. And, up to the camp, here come Pancho Villa and a group of his men. And Pancho Villa had the rifle, throwed down over his saddle like this, with his one hand on the reins and the other hand on the rifle. Had the rifle here like this. And he come up and Mr. Prommel come out. And of course Mr. Prommel spoke fluent Spanish. And Pancho Villa says to Mr. Prommel, he says, "I'm here and I want all your gold". That's what Pancho says to Prommel. So, Prommel starts b-s-ing with him. And they went into the office and got the gold and put it on the table. You know, what all they had mined. And Pancho wanted to be sure that was all they had. Pancho had his rifle cocked and he was drunk. And Prommel had a big ol' jug of tequila there. And him and ol' Pancho got to drinkin' this tequila. And they both got drunk. Pancho got drunker than he was already. And Pancho decided he was going to be generous. He was gonna split the gold with him. So, Pancho took half and left half.

And after that I guess he and Pancho got to be good friends. Pancho would come by with his troops when they was runnin' from people and get food and stuff. But never did try to rob or anything at all after that. So that shows you that even good things can come out of bad. And there wasn't nothin' wrong with Pancho stealin' his gold. We'd have just brought it up here and put it in our mint out there. Where is it? Back east someplace. They don't even store it out here in the west where it belongs. See, they store it all back east.

Prommel was a well-educated man and had really been around a lot. He had a good sensible perspective about things. You know what I mean. He was just a great guy to be around.

H. W. C. Prommel and his crew came there to Flint. And we met 'em there and we furnished 'em the horses and everything. And they wanted to go down into Big Water and see about those oil seeps. And to just look the area over in general. And this was a prelude to them doin' all that work there. This was their first trip there. And that's the first time I saw him.

I don't know, there's something about that lookout out there at Land's End that scares people off. Anyway, they went out there this evening while they was waiting for Faun to get up there with the horses. This young guy, he looked off on down toward Waterhole Flat there, and he was deep enough. And the next morning he was sick and had to go to town. And then we went. And he didn't go with us. I can't remember his name. And that's the first time I ever saw Mr. Prommel.

GC: Who was doing the oil drilling there at French's Cabin?

NC: T.C. Conley. The deal there at the French Springs was a promotional deal that this T.C. Conley, this Texan, set up. And he'd go back to Texas and promote the oil drillin' scheme and get a bunch of money. And come out there and drill for awhile.

GC: They were using that old iron boiler?

NC: Yeah. That was part of the equipment. About all that's left of it. And while we're on the question, you know that mound of dirt that's right out there, right south of the boiler? There's a mound of dirt there.

GC: Yes.

NC: Anybody ever dig in that mound of dirt?

GC: Not that I know of. What would you find?

NC: I don't know. My curiosity overwhelms me. I'll tell you a little story about that mound if you want me to.

GC: Yes.

NC: We was over helpin' Joe Biddlecome fix the spring there at the Twin Corrals, Trail Spring. We were trougihin' 'em up. And the way they fixed it, you had to cut those bolts and thread 'em to where they would fix the bolts to hold the trough together to make it solid. And he didn't have any taps and dies. So, he and I got in the buckboard. And we went from our camp there at Twin Corrals over to right where that hump is. And there was a dugout there. And there was a great, big lock on it. And ol' Joe sent me up the trail there to watch. If I heard anybody comin' I was to run and holler at him. And he got somethin' and broke that lock off of there. And he went in there and he borrowed a set of taps and dies. You know, that you cut threads with. And he went in there and borrowed this set of taps and dies that was in there so he could put threads on those rods to hold the troughs tied. And that's the story. And I just wonder if somebody did dig in there if they'd still find signs of that ol' dugout. It was covered with dirt. But it was a building on the inside of it. Like a dugout.

GC: So they were storing equipment in there?

NC: Hell, that thing was full of equipment. Heck, that thing had hundreds of dollars worth of equipment in it. Old Joe, he just knocked that old lock off of there. Them sons of bitches, he'd say. And I tell you, if you only knew ol' Joe Biddlecome. You know what he called me? He always referred to me as a goddamn-little-son-of-a-bitch. That was my name with Joe Biddlecome. Wait till I see him down in Hades! Boy I'll throw some extra coals on him. I'll get even with him.

GC: What kind of a man was he?

NC: What kind of a man was he? One of a kind. He was a breed of himself. He was a thoughtful, good-thinking man. Uneducated of course. Couldn't even read or write. He signed his name with his brand. Diamond and a half. Not with the meat hooks on it. Just a diamond and a half. That's the way he signed his checks. And if you took that check to the bank I guarantee you, you got your money. No questions asked. And he was a hard man. He was hard on horses. He was hard on cattle. If he had a dog he was hard on the dog. He was hard on his wife. He was hard on his kids. But he was a lot like ol' Faun Chaffin. The person he was the hardest on, was himself: the way he always put other people just a little bit ahead of him. If he only had one cup of water he'd make sure you'd get two-thirds of it. You follow me? That's the kind of a guy he was. But at the same time he'd be cussin' you all the time. And raising heck with you.

And trying to make a man out of us bunch of kids. I guess he was. I don't know. 'Cause he sure did always give us a hard time.

But he was a good thinking man. Pearl Biddlecome says that he was the best roper she ever saw. Well, she never saw a good roper. You couldn't get him on a buckin' horse. Nothin' wrong with that. A lot of guys don't like to ride buckin' horses. He was just a guy that really had a single purpose in life. And that was to raise his kids. Which he did. Did a good job. Raised both the girls. Saw that they both graduated from college.

But he was hard. He was just so hard on himself. Well, I shouldn't say that. Because, maybe that's what you want. Maybe you don't want a big fancy car. So why should I criticize you, just because you've got the money to pay for it but you don't have one. Huh? People might say, "what's the matter with him". And a lot of people was like that. And a lot of people was very jealous of Joe. You know what I mean. Because he was very successful in the cattle business. And he was just like everybody else. Just tryin' to get along in this cruel, cruel world. But I always considered him a good friend.

But he would really raise heck with us. And us kids, boy, he would really get after us. In fact, he laid the hickory on Hazel and I both one day. And it was Pearl's fault. But that's another story. That's a long story.

Pearl was the oldest and the smartest one of the bunch. Between Clell and Hazel and I and Pearl. And Dolphie. Dolphie Tidwell. Dolphie died a long time ago when he was just a young man. But Pearl was smarter than us and older than us. And she lorded it over us guys. And she was always workin' the angles to make us do the dirty work. You know what I mean. Like, regardless of what you was doin'. But anyway, that's the way it was. And that was great too.

We was brandin' calves there at the Twin Corrals. And there was some real wild cows out there. And I mean you had to get 'em and hold 'em up to keep 'em from runnin' away. And, if you just let them run they'd melt their calves. They'd get hot. So you'd circle 'em and just make 'em stop. Hold 'em up. And you'd stay back away from 'em so as not to spook 'em too bad. Well anyway, Hazel and I, we had these two cows and these two calves and we had them all held up and they was kind of settlin' down a little bit. And here come Pearl, hollerin' and a-screamin', "God, you guys better look out! Dad told you not to mess around with those cows till he got here". Here we had 'em already held up and everything. Anyway, with all her hollerin' and screamin' and everything, she booted 'em. And away they went. They went all four directions.

And Joe come over the hill about that time and he saw 'em. And boy he come down. And he was really mad. And he had his hard twist out with the loop. And he popped me over the back with it. Now, I didn't see him hit Hazel with it. But she started cryin'. So I'm assuming he hit her too. But he laid that hard twist over us. 'Course if you'd do that now, they'd have you arrested and throwed in jail. But, boy, he was really angry. Because he didn't want those cows runnin' around like that. But anyway, that was just one of those wrecks that happened all the time. When you were messing around with wild cattle it's pretty hard to keep away from having wrecks all the time.

GC: So Joe Biddlecome was a pretty stern man?

NC: Oh yes he was! He pretty much tended to business all the time, really. He was a pretty good storyteller himself. But the guy that worked for him, Roy Dickerson, he was the world's champion cowboy storyteller. He really had been around.

GC: Too bad nobody had a tape recorder handy to tape those stories.

NC: Oh boy. If you would've you wouldn't believe the tales he told. Boy! But it was the times. It was just the way people did things. You know. I mean it was just the way things were done. And that's all there was to it. But, you always did what you thought was the best you could do with what you had to do with. And usually you didn't have a hell of a lot to do with. Hard times. Rough go for short dough.

GC: Could you tell us about the history of the Flint Cabins?

NC: A man by the name of Paul Solgaver is the guy that engraved those roman numerals on that rock at the Flint Cabins. And he was workin' for the Nequoia Oil Company. And Mr. Ted Wolverton was the boss. Ted Wolverton the boss, my Dad the chief stone mason, and Faun Chaffin and Dubinky Anderson and Paul Solgaver built those cabins.

GC: They built all of them at the same time?

NC: Naw. The little cabin on the end. The one's that got the all cedar poles on it with the old door still hangin' on it. Dad and Faun built that one. Now there's somebody putting out the rumor that those cabins was built a long time before they went down there. But that is not true. Because they built the little rock one. I think they built the little rock one where the stone is that has the etching on it first. Because that was

separate. You know, off to itself. And it didn't have any stove in it. But it had a fireplace.

You think, well it must be awful hard, it takes a lot of doin' to burn down a rock house. But it just shows you that fire's a very, very, very strange thing. And I am very surprised that those cabins haven't been burned down a long time ago. Because the cabin there that they built, the biggest of the cabins, not the little rock one on the end, but the other cabin; there's a lot of pine logs in there that's all rotted out, see.

And on the end of one of those pine logs, old H. W. C. Prommel had his name written on there with ink. But it's gone. Because it was even gone that day we was there. Remember, remember. I think I mentioned it and we went over there and couldn't find it. Right where they'd chopped the log off he had written, "H.W.C. Prommel April 17th 1926". It was on there for years and years and years. But I guess the weather must've destroyed it.

GC: Tell us about the Nequoia Oil Company.

NC: The Nequoia Oil Company was an oil promotion like there's been millions of 'em in the United States. And still is every day all around the world. People gets an idea about drillin' an oil well and getting rich.

GC: And this was Prommel's idea?

NC: No. Mr. Prommel didn't have nothin' to do with the Nequoia Oil Company. We gotta separate Prommel from the Nequoia Oil Company. No connection at all. Because when the Nequoia Oil Company was all gonna go, Prommel was probably still in Mexico. Or maybe still in school even. I don't know where he was. But the Nequoia Oil Company; it was a company set up by Ted Wolverton.

GC: Some people call those cabins the Wolverton Cabins.

NC: Well, that's Pearl Baker that calls them the Wolverton cabins. Nobody ever called 'em that. They called 'em the Flint cabins. But that's alright too, God love her. A guy by the name of B.J. Silliman, that ran the dairy there in Green River, he and his family, back in the mid-west, were financiers of this. Or put money in it. Now I didn't know any of those folks. Well, I knew Mr. Silliman, of course. But any of his people back East, I didn't know. And Dad had traded for that ol' Keystone rig down there. So he went down and got the rig and brought it up.

GC: That's the one off the Stanton dredge?

NC: Yes. It was off the dredge. And some guys had had it. And they took it over on the other side of the river and drilled some little, shallow wells some place down there with it. I don't know just where. But anyway, they went down and got it. And brought it up and slid it down the Flint Trail in the snow. And that's what they used to drill the holes with.

In fact, Delbert Tidwell; the first time he says that he ever saw my father, is when my father was bringin' that rig out. And he and his Dad unhitched their team and hooked on to the rig to help Dad get it up out of a bad place, coming up out of the Colorado River there someplace. And he said that's the first time he ever saw Dad. And, that little ol' rig would chug right along. And of course they cut down many trees down in there. They cut 'em down and used 'em for wood in their boiler to make the steam with to run the rig with.

GC: Who found the tar seeps?

NC: Well, the tar seeps had been there for a long time. There was a seep near Meat Hook Spring right up one of them little draws there that was a pretty good one. And Dad staked the location on that, right there where this one was. And at one minute past twelve at night he got on his horse and rode all the way to Loa to record the lease. That's what happened.

Anyway, the Nequoia Oil Company was put together by these guys. They was farmers back in the mid-west. And I guess maybe they had some money or somethin'. I don't know. But anyway, they put it up. They operated there for about a year.

GC: And, and did they have a sort of tower; a rig? What kind of rig was associated with that boiler? Did you ever see pictures of it?

NC: You know Doc Marston sent me a lithograph of that rig. And if I knew where it was at I'd get it and show it to you.

GC: That would be fascinating.

NC: Anyway, the ol' Nequoia Oil Company finally decided they was gonna give it up. That they wasn't gonna get rich there. So they gave it up.

GC: Did they drill in several different locations?

NC: Oh yes. You know where the road went down over the Black Ledge and into the head of Big Water? You drop into the canyon and go down the canyon just a little

ways. And as you're goin' down, on the right hand side, there's kind of a flat there. Kind of a little flat there. They drilled one there.

Oh, I can't remember where all they drilled. They drilled several of 'em. They drilled a lot more than one. They drilled one there. They drilled one about half the way down to Meat Hook Spring. And then of course they drilled the one there. I think the deepest one they drilled is that one there where the boiler is now; where the Wolverton boiler is now.

Well, it isn't the Wolverton boiler. It's the Chaffin boiler! That boiler belongs to my Dad! And uh, he traded horses for that rig. And Wolverton was gonna buy it.

I wish I could tell you more, but all of Dad's papers and all his deeds and everything got burned up in a fire there in Green River when I was just a kid. We had a granary out there. And on the 4th of July, I guess some kids were out there smoking or somethin'. Set the place on fire. And burned up all his papers, the old family pictures and bibles and everything. He didn't have nothin' left. Really.

GC: Tell us the story about the Nequoia Oil Company, Faun and his boots?

NC: Well, the Nequoia Oil decided they was quitting. And Faun had made a deal for a little bunch of cattle to go down under the ledge. So Faun sent his specifications in to have Silket over in Grand Junction make him a pair of cowboy boots. Which he did. So when Faun got his check from the Nequoia Oil Company he deposited it in the little Commonwealth Bank there in Green River, went over to Grand Junction and got his boots. And he wrote the guy a check for the boots. Well, come to find out, his check from the Nequoia Oil Company bounced and was no good. So consequently his check that he gave to the Silket Boot Company wasn't any good. But a guy by the name of Cecil Thompson was the cashier of the bank there. And Cecil had a little money. Or maybe more than a little. We would call it a little now. But it was probably a hell of a lot those days. In fact it was. And Cecil covered the check for Faun to pay for the boots.

And, 'course I have one of the boots here. Faun wouldn't give me the other one. I tried to get 'em both. But, he gave me one of 'em the last time I was over there in fact. And that's very interesting. Especially compared with the pair that I had. 'Course these are older and these had been used so much harder and everything. But I mean, all you gotta do is look at 'em and you can tell they was made by the same people. 'Cause they don't make 'em like that anymore. A pair of boots like that now would cost you five thousand dollars. Even if you could get 'em. But anyway, that's what happened to Faun and his boots.

Now Dad's check from the Nequoia Oil Company; when he got his check, it cleared. Now, I'm assuming that people didn't do business those days like they do now. You know what I mean. And I'm assuming that the bank that check was drawn on, cleared Dad's check at the request of the people that wrote the check. Even though they didn't have the money in there. Maybe they said they'd pay 'em next year, or two years from now, or when the wheat crop come in, or whatever. And so they honored the check. Because Dad had the big family, see? Those other guys were all single. Faun, Dubinky Anderson, Paul Solgaver; they didn't have any families. Just themselves. Just young bucks. Just out ready to go.

But you know it's a funny thing; old man Wolverton headed that thing up and they worked out there almost a year. And in that year they went to town twice. They stayed down there on that damn rig tryin' to find enough wood to keep them boilers goin' and keep that thing goin'. You'd think when they got their check and it bounced they'd be mad at the guy that give 'em the check, wouldn't ya?

GC: Yes. After a year's worth of work.

NC: Yeah. I never heard of one of those guys ever speak one single bad word about old man Wolverton. And every one of 'em swore that he was an honest, and a good, and a swell guy. And that he did what he could do at doin'. That's all there was to it! And that's the way things was. Hell, he didn't have no money. So you didn't get any money. And that's all there was to it.

GC: He took a gamble on that oil and he didn't make anything.

NC: Yeah! And I mean, he didn't have the money to pay 'em. And so they didn't get paid. And, hell, that's all there is to it! What the hell! Hell, if he'd hit an oil well down there, he'd probably paid us double. We might even been bigshots now. He might have made production superintendents or somethin' out of us.

GC: So this took place in the early twenties?

NC: This was before the twenties.

GC: 1919?

NC: 1919.

GC: Did they live in the cabins part of the time?

NC: No. Well, that was their headquarters.

GC: Their Headquarters.

NC: Then, of course when they was down drillin' I guess they had some tents. They camped. Yeah. I guess they had some tents. I don't know. I never asked anybody. I should've. You see, the trouble is, everything that happens to me is uninteresting, and tedious, and work, and miserable. And nobody would ever ask a question like that of me.

GC: And then after that, what were the cabins used for?

NC: We used 'em for our headquarters. As soon as school was out in the spring we'd load up the ol' wagons with whatever we needed. And we'd go there. And we would store our stuff at Flint. Then we'd go from Flint to wherever we needed to go. Like Under the Ledge, or on the Big Ridge, or down into Big Water, or wherever. And work from there. It was more or less a headquarters. And sometimes the sheepherders would stay there. You know. Well, anybody would stay there if they wanted to. But not many people were in that country those days. Not like it is now. You have more people in one day now than I saw down there all my life. Huh? Things change, don't they? I'll say they do!

GC: So they continued to be used all the way up until the nineteen forties, when Faun got out of the business?

NC: Yes, they still used 'em. And I wouldn't doubt that probably a lot of your uranium guys used 'em. You know, if you get out there and get in a snowstorm, as I told you before, that ol' cabin looks awful good. You know what I mean. 'Course, it had that little stove in it. I don't know how long that stove stayed there after transients started coming and going. 'Cause they packed away everything that wasn't nailed down. And I was really surprised when we was back there that the cabins were still there. Because I was sure that somebody had set 'em on fire just for darn orneriness. I was hoping they didn't.

GC: Your father got the rock for the cabin?

NC: They quarried the rock there.

GC: Right there at or the near the site?

NC: Yeah, right there, close, someplace. I don't know just where. Dad had a lot of experience with that sort of thing. Because he built a lot of those rock buildings up around Torrey. Including the school. The old school. Is that a historic site up there?

GC: I'm pretty sure it is.

NC: Yeah, it must be. Dad knew how work with rock. Anything you could do with your hands, Dad knew how to do it. He was an expert almost. Yeah. I wish that old dude was here now. He'd smoke that ol' recorder for you.

GC: Was Flint Seep the water source for the cabins?

NC: We used Flint Seep. Dad even had a road built down there to where you could take the buckboard down there to fill up the barrels.

GC: The remains of the old road can still be seen. Did your dad put in any improvements there? Any pipes or reservoirs?

NC: I never saw any pipes or anything there. You go there on a hot day. Been out, and you'd run out water early in the morning. You'd go there and drop your ol' lip down there, in one of them old cow tracks. Half you-know-what and half water.

GC: So did you go down there and haul water up to the cabin?

NC: Yes. But then when we got Harness Up Spring fixed, that was better!

GC: That was a better spring?

NC: Because it was actually a spring that came out of the side of the hill. And so we trapped it up and put it in the trough. The trough was always full of nice, clean water. Or most all the time. Once in awhile the rain would hit on it and wash the clay down over it and fill it up with mud, or partially up. But all you had to do was bail it out, and next morning the trough would be full. You know what I mean. But, it seemed to me like the last two years I was there, the Flint Spring didn't want to flow too much, or run too much. Is there much water there anymore?

GC: No, not a whole lot. Which made me wonder about the water source for the Flint Cabins.

NC: You get in one of those ditches like that. And you dig back a little closer to the rock. It's surprising how much water will leak out through a bunch of clay this thick.

You know what I mean. A guy wouldn't believe it. Really. Same way over at the Cove Spring. There was this big old spring of water. And wouldn't be nothin' going out. Big ol' spring. Hell, that big around.

GC: So there used to be a lot of very large chunks of flint up there around the Flint Cabins?

NC: That's very true. The area there around the Flint Cabins, within a mile each direction, I would say, there was lots of big chunks. Some of 'em as big as your hand. And smaller. On down. All different shapes. It just laid all over. I guess maybe that's why they call that place Flint. Was because there was so much flint laying around there. Of course the rock hounds in the 50's went out and gathered all that stuff up. Or most all of it that they could find. And it isn't there. And I could never figure out how it got there.

GC: Some old timers I talked to said that they used to find a lot of points out around Flint Flat. Did you come across a lot of them out in that area?

NC: How many is a lot?

GC: Well, these fellows just said they used to go out there and collect them and now they can't find any out there anymore. Maybe they collected them all.

NC: I found a lot. I would say I found a lot of 'em, yes. Because I was there all the time. And ridin' horseback all the time. And, if there was one there, you might ride over it forty times. But maybe the forty-first time you rode over it, you'd see it. And you would never pass one of 'em up. You would always get it. But I gave most of mine away.

But I got about twenty of 'em. I wished I knew where they was at. I really don't know anyplace I found any of 'em except one. There's one little one there; I know where I found that. You know we was talking about the old corral there on the Big Ridge? That knob that the corral butts up against on the one end; there's a big pothole up on the top of that. There was lots of signs of Indians doin' their chippin' up there. And that's where I found this one little beautiful arrowhead. And Mr. Roberts said, well no doubt they used that for birds. Because it was so small and delicate. A beautiful, little thing. I wish I knew where they was at. I'd show 'em to you. I'd like to do something with my stuff. I've got a lot of good stuff. I just don't know.

GC: There's a little corral that's just down the slope from the Flint Cabins, toward Land's End. Was that one that you built?

NC: Yes, that's what we used. We used that. We had a blacksmith shop down there. Right up the road. I was tellin' Lorin Milton about it when we was there. I had a forge fixed up to where we could sharpen the bits.

There's one thing I'd like to do sometime. I wish I could come back there and we could spend a few days together. There's one thing I'd like to do. And this would have to be a fake. You know what I mean. You know where the Cottonwood Spring is on Waterhole Flat? You know where the wash drops off and the spring's right underneath it. Have you ever went out there and went out that gully on the left hand side, to go back up on top of that bench between there and the Chaffin camp? Here comes the wash and here's the drop. And here's Cottonwood Spring. Right here there's a little canyon that comes down. Right here. And we shot some holes here along the side of the hill so it wouldn't be slick for the stock. Well, I want to go there. And I want to take a drill and a bit and a hammer and my old hat and my old canteen. And I wanna sit down there like I'm drilling a hole and have somebody take a picture of me. Huh? I really do.

GC: I'll do it. That would be great.

NC: That would be. That'd be a phony. But, gosh all the junk I got, there should be something phony about it someplace. Heck, you got to have a little bit of Hollywood in your bones. Huh? I'll get my old friend Bill Racy. He'll tell me how.

GC: So what's the history of that trail? Did you and your brothers blast that out?

NC: Yes. Yeah, just to make it easier for the cattle to get down to water. It rained right on that little hill in that little valley there. Rained like hell. And the prettiest grass you ever saw. And that trail was so hard and so steep that the cattle wouldn't go up it. And so we shot that out in the hopes that they would go out there. But cattle never did like to go up that trail. I don't know why. Too far for 'em. They would go up the canyon and go around. Instead of goin' up that. But we used it a lot goin' in there. Because, a lot shorter to come right straight across the flats and go right straight down in there, see. So, it was alright. You saw where we shot the trail over in Water Canyon, I guess, going down the side there?

GC: Yes. What's the story on that?

NC: Well, we just did that. Just to have a place to go.

GC: Did the sheepherders have a trail down through there before that?

NC: Oh sure. You'd take sheep right down there. For sheep, you wouldn't need the trail.

GC: The trail was enhanced for cattle?

NC: Sheep would go right down there. But, going back to Paul Solgaver: Right up the canyon, not in that same fork, but up the canyon from where the crack is; you go around the trail and go up there. Which is the way I guess you go in. I think it's the only way you can get in there. And if instead of going to the right of that little rock pinnacle goes out there, if you'll go to the left, there's another big build-up there. You know where they built it up with rocks so the stock could go down. And Faun and Paul Solgaver built that. Kelsey called it the Chaffin trail. I don't know why. Nobody ever called it the Chaffin Trail. But that's what he's got on his map. I just told him we shot the thing there and I guess that's just what he decided to call it.

GC: Down in Clearwater Canyon, just downstream from Cottonwood Spring, there's an archeological site with pictographs. Did you take the Peabody people there?

NC: Yes sir. We're the ones that excavated it, and dug it all out. That is not an ordinary dwelling. In fact, I gotta go there and put my mark there. Even though I got my name on the wall. I don't mean that. I gotta put my mark on it. That's a holy place. The first thing we found; we found some corncobs; but the larger the size of their corncobs. I would say that they was probably seven inches long. There was a bundle. I'm gonna say, as I remember the bundle, about that big around. Each cob had a hole bored through it. And it was tied together with a piece of cedar bark with a knot in it. You know, to keep it from comin' undone. Also, at the same place, was a piece of ochre. You know, the stuff that they used to paint their pictographs. Oh, where is something the size of it? I would say it was about the size of that flower vase there, from the base up. And they'd evidently molded it. And then while it was molded they had poked holes in it to make designs.

And Mr. Roberts said, yes, that was something they used in their church services. In their worship. And he also said the corncobs with the thing around 'em was a spiritual thing that they used. So he seemed to think that that cave was maybe a gathering place to worship the dead and to pray for the livin', or something.

GC: I remember from the report that they found a split-twig figurine there at Cottonwood Cave. A little animal. Do you remember it?

NC: I know there was something else. But I can't remember what it was right now. They found a robe made of buffalo hide at Sidewalk Spring. It was in a roll about that big around. And it was about, oh, as long as from your chest to mine.

GC: Three feet long?

NC: Oh, it was longer than three feet. It was good sized. And it was really a nice find. We didn't find a heck of a lot in that site, though, outside of the buffalo hide robe. Well now, I say not a heck of a lot. When you find something like that you've found a lot more than you get out of any of 'em. 'Cause those people are like the Chaffins. If they left everything they had they wouldn't have left a hell of a lot, would they? Huh? Really. You come right down to it.

GC: Could you say something about your work with the Peabody folks in Horseshoe Canyon.

NC: Horseshoe Canyon. It was the summer of 1930, when we went there. And it was the last place we went. And we camped there by where Spring Canyon [Water Canyon] comes in. That was our main camp. And we excavated several different sites there. We were joined there by Donald Scott Senior, who was Don Scott Junior's father. I think he later became the curator of Peabody Museum. He joined us there from Massachusetts. And uh, a professor and his wife from the University of Utah, joined us too, and stayed with us for awhile 'til they had to leave to go to school. Then Don Scott Jr. was accepted by the California Institute of Technology and he left us. And then, 'course, James Dennison and Waldo Emerson Forbes had to get back to Harvard University. Because they was gonna enter their Freshman year there in college, both of them. So, they left. And I think that's when Bowers joined us. Les Bowers and I and Mr. Scott Sr., stayed.

And we stayed there up until October before we got finished. And, uh, I took Dave Rust's mules and took 'em to Hanksville for him. And I stayed in Hanksville and waited for him. I stayed there a couple of days. I was going to take 'em on up to Rabbit Valley, on up above Loa for him. But, he said he didn't have nothin' to do, so he took 'em on from there and I came back to the ranch. And then I went in and entered Green River High School, for my Senior year in high school. And that was the end of the expedition.

This was of course a once in a lifetime experience. Because it kindled a lot of things in me that I had never even thought about before, naturally. And it shows the advantage of talking and being around people that had been around a little bit. Very, very nice friendships. We all got along fine. We never had any problems. Mr. Roberts was one

of the nicest guys you ever saw. Don Scott Sr. was a small man. A well educated man. The only word I can describe him with; he was a sophisticate. He is a guy that you look at and there is just an aura of class about him. Because he looked nice. He talked nice. He listened good. And he was just a great young guy. And, of course, Dave Rust was a very good friend of mine. I admired Mr. Rust very much.

The last time I saw Mr. Rust was kind of sad. He was staying with his daughter over in Provo. And Dad and I went over. And he had one of those old horns, you know, that you stick up to your ear. He couldn't hear. That's what he was usin' to hear with. And we was only gonna stay five minutes. But we stayed about two hours. And we really had a wonderful visit. We sure packed a lot of mules, and dug up a lot of pots and everything in those two hours. That Mr. Rust was somethin' special to me and to my life.

GC: How did you get involved in this whole Peabody Expedition?

NC: Well it was by an accident I guess you would call it. We was going down to Waterhole Flats, Faun and Clell and I, to brand the calves. And it had rained a little bit that afternoon. And, we thought, well, instead of goin' down to the Chaffin camp and camp we'll camp there above the Point of Rocks. You know, up on top of the Point of Rocks, there's some potholes up there. Of course those potholes was full of water. So Faun said, well, we'll just camp there. There's better feed for our horses there than there is down at the camp. So we will camp there.

But, it was dark. And when we got there we could see a fire over at the Chaffin camp, so, we went all over there. And of course that's where the expedition was. They had camped there. Les McDougal and Alfred Kidder Jr. and Mr. Roberts and Mr. Rust. Anyway, we was gonna brand some calves so Mr. Roberts made a deal with Faun that I would go with 'em to take 'em over into the Maze and down on Spanish Bottom, or wherever they wanted to go over there.

But then, well, the next day we wanted to get those calves branded. So anyway, Faun and Clell and I, we gathered up the calves and branded 'em. And we come in to camp. And Les was gone. Les McDougal. He was livin' in Hanksville. And Faun says, where's Les? Mr. Roberts says, well, since Ned's going to guide us over in there, so we let him go. And Faun got madder than hell. He flipped his lid. And he called old man Roberts some unpolite names and one thing and another. And said he sure didn't think by me going with 'em, they was going to let Les go. 'Cause he hated to take Les' job away from him. 'Cause Les had a family. And, so, anyway, that's the way we started.

Well, we reconnoitered around there. That was the time that we went over to the one we was talkin' about over on Andy Miller Flat in there. We stayed there for several days. And then we went over to the Maze. We camped there at Heist Tank for a couple of days. That's where we found the pot. Did I tell you about finding the pot?

GC: No.

NC: Mr. Rust and I, we was going up to Flint to get some supplies. And, Kidder and Roberts stayed there. And they said, well, they'd stay there and reconnoiter around. So, Mr. Roberts wanted to teach Kidder how to tell a cave the Indians had never lived in. You know, that they didn't inhabit. He cited the fact that water ran off the front of it. The fact there was some green in the back of it that showed moisture. And gave him all the reasons why Indians had never lived there. Said, well, let's go up and see! So they walked up there. And he looked over this little thing into the cave. And sticking about that far up out of the sand was this beautiful pot. Black on white. Yea big around. Painted half-way black on white or white on black, whatever it was. I was gonna say black on white. That doesn't matter. And Mr. Roberts was so excited.

When Mr. Rust and I came back and we was coming up that long straight wash there right down below Heist Tank, there, where you have to go to come up to Heist, here he come a-runnin'. "We found a pot!! We found a pot!!!" And he was so excited. And then when he told us how he found it, you couldn't believe it, see. You do all that diggin', and never find a complete pot. Dig for a hundred years and never find one. And then find one showin' somebody where there's something that there isn't any. And so that was very interesting. And that, that's where we found this beautiful pot. That was a beautiful thing. I would really like to see it. I would like to see it. And I would like to see the corncobs. And I would like to see the little figurine that they'd molded out of the ochre.

GC: That would be interesting. I guess you would have to go all the way to Harvard to see those artifacts.

NC: Yeah, to the Peabody Museum. Well they probably got 'em buried in a room someplace where you can't see 'em. Bunch of junk on top of the stuff. Probably look like the Chaffins home. I don't know.

GC: So you took the Peabody folks into The Fins, and Ernie's Country, and the Dollhouse area?

NC: Oh yes. And we went down on Spanish Bottom. Mr. Roberts wanted to see if perhaps they'd used that as a crossing place.

GC: What did he think?

NC: Well, as I recall he didn't have too much to say about it. There didn't seem to be much sign of Indians on Spanish Bottom, as I remember. I can't remember anything down there, really. I guess there no doubt was if you'd have looked hard enough.

GC: Did you help them out with excavation work in Horseshoe Canyon?

NC: Yes sir.

GC: How long did that take?

NC: As I told you before, Horseshoe Canyon was the last place we went. That's where we ended up the season. We camped at the mouth of Water Canyon. Right there at the corner of Water Canyon. We camped right on that little flat right there. That's the only place we camped. I would take the mules and take 'em up on the Tidwell side. And hobble the old mare and turn the mules loose. And every morning I'd go up and get 'em and bring 'em down to John's Hole and water 'em. And then take 'em back up before I hobbled her. I couldn't hobble her and let her go up that hill hobbled. Mr. Rust wouldn't let me. That would be cruelty to animals. But anyway, when I had to do this, then I was relieved of all the other camp chores like washin' dishes, getting' wood, fetchin' water. That was my chore for the day. Was to go up and get the horses and the mules and bring 'em down and water 'em and take 'em back up to grass. And then I would come back and join the digging crew.

GC: So you were on the digging crew?

NC: Oh sure. Heck yes! Hell, I was just one of them shovel wielders. Oh yeah. I got to where I could take one of them little brushes and dust off a little something I thought would be something. And I wasn't around there only about two minutes 'til I found out that if you see anything that looks a little bit interesting, the first thing you do is holler Mr. Roberts, or Henry. We didn't call him Mr. Roberts. We all called him Henry. I'd like to know what happened to Henry. He sure was a brain. He was really an intelligent human being. Sure was.

GC: Do you remember anything about that particular excavation?

NC: I can't remember too much about it. What we found. I don't think we found too much, as I recall. I can't remember anything, you know, like the corncobs. I just can't remember us finding anything there in Horseshoe Canyon that was extraordinary. We might have done, I don't know. But I just don't recall.

GC: How long were you there in Horseshoe Canyon?

NC: We must have been in Horseshoe over a month, I would imagine. We was there quite a long time. We'd made several diggings there. We did a lot of digging over across the canyon. You know, over where the pictographs are up quite high. We did quite a bit of work around there.

GC: Did you find anything there?

NC: I can't remember us finding anything over there worth a darn. To tell you the truth. Then we dug one out right there where Water Canyon comes in. Right up that hill. You go up in there and you go down a little hill and there's a cave back in there. We did quite a bit of work on that one. In fact, that's the one I worked on most of the time. And I just really don't remember where all we worked. I know there was other places though. 'Cause we did quite a bit of work there. We stayed there quite awhile.

GC: Then you went up to the Great Gallery?

NC: Yes, we went up to the Great Gallery.

GC: Did they do any digging there?

NC: I don't think so. I don't think they did any digging at the Great Gallery at all. There's really nothing there to dig, is there? There where the Great Gallery is. The bottom of it is mostly rock isn't it? If I remember right.

GC: I just wondered if they did any testing.

NC: Boy, I haven't been there for a long time. There's another place there. You've probably seen it. It's a small panel. It isn't like the big gallery. On the other side of the canyon. And back up in one of those washes that goes back in there. I can't remember just where. And then of course there's a nice panel there at the sand slide in upper Horseshoe Canyon. Up the canyon. That's a nice panel too. If I remember right.

GC: It sure is. Did they go up that far?

NC: Did we go up there?

GC: It's not listed in their report.

NC: I don't know whether we went up there or not. I don't think so.

GC: I know they recorded a site up in Spur Fork up there near the big tank.

NC: That's up at Outlaw Spring. Yes we camped there at Outlaw Spring.

GC: And you went up into that one with them?

NC: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. That's one of the places down there that had really been lived in. I mean, there was lots of signs. I can't remember if we found anything or not. I don't think we found much. I can't remember finding anything. I just can't remember. I just can't remember what we found there. But there was lots of potsherds and stuff like that there.

GC: Can you tell us anything more about the expedition?

NC: Well, not only did Donald Scott take a lot of, a lot of photographs but he had one of these little eight millimeter cameras and he was always takin' movies.

GC: He took movies of the digs?

NC: Well, hell yes he did! Hell, I spent an hour up there above Cottonwood one day goin' along one of those rocks so he could get my shadow on the rock. Because his dad wrote him back (that was before Senior came out) and told him he needed something to show some moving shadows, or running water or something. He said, well, we can't get no runnin' water cause there isn't any. But anyway, I run back and forth along this rock about ten times. He'd say, well, I don't know about that! He'd try to get the shadow of me and the horse goin' along the rock. I would really like to see Don Scot. I wonder if he's still alive. Now, let's see, he had graduated from Harvard that spring of 1930. So that would probably make him probably about five years older than I am. He would be up in his nineties if he was still alive.

GC: Tell us about the big rain.

NC: It rained. It was the twenty-fifth of August, 1921. That was the big one! I was just a kid. I was only eight years old. We was over to Crow Seeps. It started in the morning. The big heavy clouds came in. You know, low, down to the ground. And pretty soon there was nothing but these low heavy clouds. 'Course you get a good view from there at Crow Seeps towards the Henrys and over there. But as far as you could see there was just those beautiful, black clouds. And it started rainin' about ten o'clock. You know how the lightning comes all the way down. The first one hit over

on the Twin Corrals someplace because you could see the flash. Then this must've been the trigger. The Old Man must've had his fireworks all lined up.

Pretty soon it was just thunderin' every direction. Just a continual roar of thunder. And it rained 'til about two o'clock. And I mean it just poured. Of course, we was in the old cedar cabin there at Crow Seeps. And Joe Biddlecome used to have his little blacksmith shop in the little shed. You come out of the house, you would turn to your right and go about, oh, not over a hundred or hundred and fifty feet to this blacksmith shop. Most of the time you couldn't even see that shed for all the rain. That's how hard it rained!

That's when all them driftwoods got put down. Especially in Happy Canyon. I remember one place in Happy Canyon where there was some driftwood way up on the side. You wouldn't believe that there could be that much water in there. Figure how much water was goin' down there. You couldn't believe it. You couldn't believe that rain. There was more moisture fell in that one rain than has fallen in the whole country since. Well, I guess not, that would be stretching it a wee bit.

But that was the rain that made the Saleratus wash. The Saleratus wash was always a little, ol' narrow wash when I was a kid. We'd jump across it. And that's a big, wide bed now. Looks like a river bed. Well, a river did go down through there. Washed the railroad tracks away. Washed the stockyards away. And that's what made that a big wide wash. It was just a little wash until that rain. You can imagine a rain like that on that ol' blue clay country.

GC: It washed the railroad tracks away?

NC: Oh, heck yes!

GC: Wow.

NC: Hell, they had crews down there throwin' trees and rocks. And they'd bring big loads of rocks in on the cars. I mean this was afterwards. The water just kept runnin'. It just kept rainin'. Washed that away. That's what made the Saleratus Wash. I'd like to know how many million tons of that country went down the river that day.

GC: So, what else did you see? Uh, what else did that rain do?

NC: Well, 'Course Joe Biddlecome was worried about his pond there. Is the pond still there? There at Crow Seeps?

GC: Yes.

NC: Okay, he was worried about his pond! And God, he'd get up and put on a slicker, him and Faun, and they'd go up there to look at that pond. So, after it quit rainin' we all went up there. And there was this river of water running out. Of course the pond was full, runnin' out the spillway. And he was afraid the spillway would wash away. I can remember how Joe was a-frettin' and everything. Because we was helpin' him vaccinate his calves. And he was so afraid of Black Leg. But, it was weird really. I never saw a steer die of Black Leg in that whole country. But they sure did worry about it.

GC: Did you ever hear how many inches of rain fell in that storm?

NC: Never did hear. I'd like to know. I'd like to know. When we moved over to the ol' Chaffin ranch there, the government set up a weather station there. We had the weather station right there in the yard, right down over toward the fence from where the well is now. It had the wind meter on it and had the precipitation gauge. It had the two-way thermometer that one of 'em would stay the high of the day and the other one would stay the low. And we took care of that every day for the government. But, 'course we wasn't there for that rain. We didn't have the ranch then. And I never did hear how much fell. I would like to know. I would like to know how much rain fell on the Twin Corrals that day.

GC: Did any bridges wash away on the San Rafael River in that storm?

NC: There was no bridge down by our place. Ah, was there a bridge up at the old McMillan Ranch? Or did they just ford that? Maybe I should say the Hatt Ranch. And then you'll know what I'm talking about. You don't know what I'm talking about when I say the McMillian Ranch, right?

GC: No. Tell us about the McMillan Ranch.

NC: Well, McMillan, he was, he was a big cattleman. Probably the biggest one in the country. And he had the ranch there that's the Hatt Ranch now. There where the highway goes through. And he also had the ranch right above the old Gillies Ranch. And the one there by the highway, that was the upper McMillan Ranch. And the one down by the Gillies ranch was the lower McMillian Ranch. Then there was the Gillies Ranch. Then there was the old French Ranch. Then, of course, there was the old Harris Bottom where old Lake Harris was gonna make a livin' off from that. He abandoned that real quick. Anyway, can you get in your jeep and go from, (I'm gonna use the new name), from the Hat Ranch, go down by the old Gillies ranch, go down to

Harris Bottom and come out Horse Bench to the old Chaffin Ranch? Or can you get through there?

GC: I've never tried. But I think that if you hit the right dirt roads you could.

NC: Well, I know you could go to Harris Bottom. And wouldn't have any problem. I mean, you know. Because I mean there's nothin' there. Nothin' to interfere with you going down that side of the River. You can go right down that old road. But from there on and from there up across Horse Bench; I just wonder if some of those uranium hunters, or something, fixed 'em a little way you could go there. That would be an interesting trip. To start at the old Hat Ranch and go down the River to all the old ranches. In fact, I've often thought of doing that for our Caucus. And I can tell you all kinds of lies about the old Gillies Ranch, and the old French Ranch. Heck, I could keep you goin' for a week on that.

GC: Was the French Ranch the one run by Henry Dusserre?

NC: No. I don't think Henry Dusserre ever had a ranch on the San Rafael.

GC: Where did he have his headquarters?

NC: His headquarters? He lived up at Price. I was never to his home. Henry Dusserre was a hell of a swell guy. And his boys was. They was good people. He and his boys was good, good people. And I'll never forget old Henry Dusserre. I camped with him and his shepherders one night out at the Gardens (Gordon Flats). Do you know where the trail goes down into Happy Canyon off the South Gardens? Go out to the Gardens and go over and go down. Well, he was camped right over there. There's probably still signs of the camp there. 'Cause they camped there a lot.

Anyway, they was gonna put their sheep down in Happy Canyon the next morning. Of course, you get up early and you're ready to go as soon as it starts to get light. You're all packed up and ready to go. And I'll never forget what old Henry said to his camp mover. The camp mover's responsibility was to take care of the mules, and the stock, and cook the meals, and move the tent and so on and so forth. There was a couple of bad places on that trail. Or there was then. Probably still is. And he says to this guy, when you go down there, you be careful. Them mules is loaded heavy. I want you to be real careful now, he says. I don't care if you kill a mule or two but if you break that wine you're fired. This was Henry Dusserre. Big, big man. Big, strong, strong man. He told the guy if he killed the mule that was ok but if he broke the wine he was gone! Oh, God, what a bunch of crazy people.

GC: How many sheepherders did Henry Dusserre have working for him?

NC: Normally, with the herds there, there would be one herder and one camp mover. There would be two men in a crew. And their herds would run; I'm going to say, probably an average would be three thousand head of sheep. And the herder; it was his responsibility to watch out for the sheep. And of course the camp mover would help. He'd go set up his camp. And then if he had time he would help the herder. But mostly, when they got down Under the Ledge, they'd just turn their sheep loose. They'd just turn 'em loose down there. Hell, maybe they wouldn't see 'em for a week. And, especially this is true of the American sheepherders. Now some of the French sheepherders, like Pete Masset, and some of them, they wanted to bunch all their sheep up around the camp at night on account of the coyotes. They'd call it bed 'em down. But, the white guys, heck, they'd turn those sheep loose on Waterhole Flat there and maybe wouldn't see some of 'em for a week. You know, nothin' to see. No use hassling 'em. They're out there, they're fine. They're eating snow for water and eatin' the blackbrush and the curly grass. And the lambs getting big. And the wool's growin' long and strong.

Great sheep country! Hell of a lot better sheep country than it was a cow country. Really. Strong feed. And those sheep from Under the Ledge would shear from a pound to two pounds more every year. Well, now, three thousand head of sheep, and you get a pound more per head, that's a ton and a half of wool. And if wool was seventy cents a pound, that's quite a lot of money for those days.

GC: So, they'd run about three thousand head of sheep down on Waterhole and into Ernie's Country?

NC: In each herd.

GC: How many herds would they bring in?

NC: Henry Dusserre and his outfits, they'd go down into Happy Canyon in the winter. We're talking about the dead of winter, now, when there was snow. Pete Masset, he'd go down into the Ernie Country.

GC: And he worked for Dusserre?

NC: Himself. Pete Masset didn't work for Dusserre. Pete Masset worked for Pete Masset. Then, you had Quince Crawford, and Hy Seely, and Karl Seely. Now, Karl and Hy were partners. But they split the partnership. Hy usually had two herds down there. Karl had one. And Quince Crawford had a herd. These guys all wintered up

above Ferron, up in the Manti country, back in there. That's where they had their summer range, all of 'em. But, their lambs would be heavier. They would shear more wool. It was just a great sheep country. Really one of the best. I guess. One of the best in the West for sheep. Really a sheep country. Really shouldn't have been no cattle. You guys wouldn't allow no cattle down there now, if you was down there runnin' it. Because, all the cattle did is ate up the feed from the sheep. Because it was a great sheep country. Good cow country, too. The only thing that was wrong with it for cow country was the lack of water. But it was strong feed, and the cattle would really do good.

GC: How many sheep on average would you say would be down there on Waterhole Flat, Ernie's Country, and The Maze?

NC: Fifteen thousand head. Five herds.

GC: Does that includes the sheep in Happy Canyon?

NC: Well, now then, let's see. Pete Masset, one herd. Hiram, two herds. Hiram had them with young Karl. Did you ever get the chance to talk to young Karl?

GC: Well, not yet. But I was hoping to.

NC: I guess he's been ill for a long time. Hiram and young Karl had two herds. I think what we call young Karl was named after his uncle, which was the other brother. I think it was Hiram, I think Hiram, if I remember. I think that Hiram and old Karl were brothers. Anyway, they had three herds between 'em. And then Quince Crawford had a herd. Then Pete Masset had a herd. And then Henry Dusserre would drop off down into Happy Canyon. Which would be six herds. But they averaged three thousand head of sheep each herd. That's eighteen thousand head. Maybe we might cut that, maybe, to sixteen or seventeen thousand. But, I would say between fifteen and twenty thousand every winter. And they couldn't wait to get there.

GC: Did they run sheep on Gordon Flats?

NC: Course, up on the Gordons, up on the Gardens, there is not a lot of country there. Really. There's not much food grows out in them trees. However, when the snow would be gone down in Ernie Country, old Pete Masset would come up there a lot of times. And he'd turn his sheep down through the trees. And go down on the Big Ridge. Because the snow would last in the shade of those trees along there, to where they'd have water. And they did good down there, too. There's quite a bit of

brush out in those trees. Or a lot of that Silverleaf. Or used to be. I imagine it's still there. And some brush there and a few little grassy spots and everything.

I really don't know how many herds would stay out on the Roost and on the desert. The shepherd that we had the most trouble with was a guy by the name of Nichols. And Nichols, he wanted to put his tent in our yard there at the ranch, turn his mules in our field, and run his sheep right down to the fence line. He was that kind of a guy. He was kind of ornery. But, but that was good sheep country there. Around Keg Springs and down those points going from Keg Springs. Lots of Blackbrush down in there. Was. Still is, no doubt. And that was real good sheep country. They had lots of sheep down in there in the wintertime. 'Course, sometimes, out on the Gordons the snow got pretty deep in the wintertime. But then, if the snow was deep, you'd just move to a lower spot.

GC: How many head of cattle did your family have out on the range?

NC: Oh, I think the most we ever ran was about four hundred head. And I don't believe we had that many Under the Ledge. I think about three hundred head is the most we ever had down there.

GC: Was your cattle operation the only one down there?

NC: Yes. You couldn't get nobody to go down there. You'd had to have your brains knocked out to go down there and try to raise cattle.

GC: Did your family get along with the shepherders?

NC: Yeah. Oh sure. Well, no, there was this one guy, but the guys down Under the Ledge, yeah. Those guys were all WASPs. That's a good name. A WASP is White Anglo-Saxon Protestant. We don't want to get into politics, or race, or religion. But, they were all pioneer Mormon people. Or from pioneer Mormon people. You had to be a good neighbor, and you had to help each other, and you had to do things for other people, whether you liked 'em or not. Or you couldn't have survived. Period! Regardless of who you was or where you was at. The whole state was that way. I mean, if your sister died and left the kids and the old man fell down and broke his leg, you took the kids. And you didn't ask no questions. And you took care of 'em. And that was it. That's the way they operated. But, yeah, those guys tried to be good neighbors.

Of course, cattle and sheep don't mix on the same range. We know this. We can read Zane Grey's books. He can tell us all about that. And, maybe, he'll lay it on a little bit. You know. They got to showboat things a wee bit. Make it more glamorous than it

was. But, if you think there is anything glamorous about getting on a horse and riding from Flint to the Tidwell Ranch on a cold, winter day; why, if that's glamour, I'd just as soon leave glamour alone.

GC: So, Joe Biddlecome didn't run cattle down Under the Ledge much?

NC: No. He didn't want any of his cattle down there to where those cow thieves had access to 'em. Well, it's right. That's the truth. He wanted his right there, right around him. He didn't even want to run any cattle down on The Spur. I never heard him say so, but you could see it was obvious why. Because he didn't want those Moab boys to come up Horsethief and borrow a few of his cattle, when he wasn't lookin'.

But Joe Biddlecome was quite a guy. He was a good neighbor. He helped us a lot. He helped Faun a lot, when Faun first started. He was down there with the cattle. He went down. Helped Faun build some trails. And in fact, did you see where the trail has been shot, there at Cottonwood Tank? You know, you go down to the right and go around where the trail's been shot? Joe came down and helped Faun do that. Really learned Faun how to handle dynamite. And, Joe would come down and help us. If we had some colts that needed surgery, he'd come down and do that. And then, why, we'd go help him with his brandin' and vaccinatin', or whatever. I mean it was sort of a give and take proposition. We had a real nice relation with Joe, as far as our family was concerned. I've had some words with his two daughters, of course. But that's probably my fault.

GC: And the Tidwell's?

NC: Oh, the Tidwells. Yeah, the Tidwells were good people. You bet they were. They were the salt of the earth, Mary and Delbert.

GC: Frank said, it was always a great day when he'd see you coming over the hill down to where the ranch is.

NC: Yeah.

GC: Some company and some entertainment.

NC: If you read Negri's book, Wiladeane's part; the part that most impressed me in the whole book, the part that explained the whole situation so well, is what Wiladeane told Negri about how lonesome she would get. You know what I mean. No kids to play with. Nobody her own age. She was too little to punch cows and pitch hay. 'Course they got her doing that as soon as she was maybe, that tall. But that was part

of the growin' up there. And with young Frank, that was the same with him, see. Frank was only six years old when I left there. But he was a cute little ol' kid. And he always was real happy when we'd come by. And, of course, we was always glad.

GC: Did you experience the same thing when you were growing up? Did you have others to play with?

NC: Why, no. When we'd go down Under the Ledge there wasn't anybody to play with. There wasn't no play goin' on down there. You wont find anybody playin' when they were around ol' Faun Chaffin. He didn't go much for playin'.

GC: So, he put you to work at an early age?

NC: Yeah. Boy, did he. If you wasn't doing a man's work by the time you was thirteen, I think he'd shoot you.

GC: You didn't get bored? Growing up down there?

NC: Well, not bored. But I'd get lonesome lots of times. You know. Naturally. Hell. Boy, you just as well been on another planet as to be down on Waterhole Flat in those days. In the summer. 'Course we'd go to town and go to school in the winter. But in the summer you might just as well have been on Mars. You wouldn't have been any farther out of the world. You couldn't hear a train whistle. You never saw a plane fly over. You never saw anyone. Well, once in awhile. But, very seldom.

And then of course there for a few years, when those oil guys come in, Mr. Prommel and his outfit come in, they'd be people there. And, then, of course, being with the Peabody deal, that was with people. But most of the time there was no one.

Let's see, I went down the winter I fed the cattle for George Franz, which was the winter of 1931. Down on the Green River. I never saw a soul except Clell and George Franz from the first of January 'till the twentieth of April. Never saw one single person, outside of them. And I was down on the River. Which was more of a traffic lane, you know. Trappers and so on and so forth. But, the winter I was down there, I never saw a single soul. And that's a long time. I was only seventeen years old then. Hey, you want to see somebody, you know. You want to talk to someone.

Clell was a quiet sort of a dude. But George was good company and fun to be around. Clell, he spent most of his time trying to put an extra pound on a steer. But, he was good company. He was a good guy to be around, too. Never had any problems with him being ornery or getting after you. Now of course, old brother Faun was a little bit

different. He'd really tan your ol' hide. I don't mean physically. I mean, he didn't ask you to do chores. He told you to do 'em. And that's just the way it was. And he never changed. He didn't change with his girls. He didn't change with his son. He never changed with the people that worked with him. He was always just the same. He treated us all alike. By God, you're gonna do it, and you're gonna do it my way, or there's the road.

GC: So before you went to school were you out on the range year round?

NC: Before school? Before six years of age? No. No, let's see, we moved from Torrey to Green River in the summer of 1919. In the summer of 1919 I would have been five goin' on six. And I entered the first grade that year.

The next summer I think I went down and stayed with 'em for one trip. Now, one trip would be from the day school let out to the twenty-fourth of July; or if you came to town for supplies and stuff on the fourth of July, from the fourth of July 'till school started in the fall. And usually, because that was a busy time, you was usually a couple of weeks late getting into school. Because, your seasons was just changing. And you probably had something to do. Maybe not have all the calves vaccinated. Or something like that. And there wasn't anything easy about any of the operation.

GC: When the Taylor Grazing Act came along in 1935 or so, did that change your operation down there? Were there as many sheep? Did they get the sheep out of there?

NC: When the Taylor Grazing Act first started, or before it really started, while they was just chattin', you know, talkin', anyway, they had this meeting in Salt Lake. And George Franz and Andy Moore and Lou Chaffin went up to this meeting. And this was with the government officials and other interested stockmen. They went there more or less to see what was goin' on.

Anyway, when Dad returned, his summary of the whole deal was, it's a good thing we have some property that we can tie to our cattle operation. Or we won't be here. Period. Nobody will be. Period. In ten years the sheep will all be gone from this country. And in twenty years the cattle will all be gone. He says, that's how long we've got to operate. Because, he says, they're not going to allow this country to be trampled and overgrazed and everything like it's been. And it's just gonna happen, he says, that's just my prediction.

Well, he was a little bit wrong. But for all practical purposes the sheep and the cattle are gone. I don't believe there's any sheep left at all in that country. The sheep's been gone for a long time. And of course the cattle's cut down. Several people got out a

long time ago. Like George Franz, for example. He didn't own any property that he tied to his operation. He knew his time was up. That's why he sold out and got out of there. And the fact that Clell quit and came to California was another reason.

The Taylor Grazing Act was something that had to happen. It's like everything else. We don't want to get into politics. And we don't want to argue. But maybe sometimes when the government gets involved in runnin' businesses they go overboard. And maybe things happen that they really don't intend to happen. It's just the way it is. Gary tells me there's still a few cattle left in that country. But for all practical purposes stock raising in that country is no longer a factor. It isn't an economic factor. The tourist spends more money in Green River in one day than all them cattlemen make in a year. So I don't know. Maybe it's the right thing to do. I can't say. I don't want to get in any arguments.

GC: How long did the shearers stay there after 1935?

NC: They started thinning them out very fast. It wasn't very many years after the Taylor Grazing Act started till they started cuttin' some of the herds out of there. And now I don't know when they completed the task. This was after now. This doesn't have nothin' to do with what Lou Chaffin said. I imagine probably 20 or 25 years afterwards was when the sheep was all cleaned out. And I'm not shedding any tears because there isn't any sheep left there.

GC: After 1935 how many sheep operations continued down on Waterhole Flat, in Ernie's Country and in The Maze?

NC: I left there in 1936. 'Course I went back and spent a month or two or some such afterwards. But I'm going to have to tell you the truth. I don't know. I couldn't tell you. Maybe if old Karl Seely was still alive and was able to talk to you he could say. But I heard he's in pretty bad shape. He lives over at Phoenix in the wintertime. He might have a good idea. Course they had a lot of property up in the Manti area and up in the Castle Dale area. And maybe they had something to back their claim to being down there up with. But I don't know. But all the transient sheep went out in just a very, very few years. Including the good friend I was telling you about, Mr. Nichols. We was all so sorry that he was leaving, that we had a big party.

GC: So Fawn continued in the cattle business until about 1945 or so?

NC: That's right.

GC: When you visited him did you see any sheep down there?

NC: Gary, after a guy lives in southern California a little while you don't think he wants to go back to Waterhole Flat in the winter when the sheep's there, do ya? You know, none of the Chaffin boys was very smart. But we was smart enough to stay out of there in the wintertime. If we could. So, I really don't know what happened to the sheep operations after I left there. I was never interested in their operations. Except I heard a time or two about guys that was leavin' that had been runnin' sheep down there. You know, you hate to see anyone lose a livelihood and all that, but that's just the way things was. And I mean, nobody could change it. So, everybody did the best they could, I guess. That's what we did.

GC: Could you tell us a little bit about your father?

NC: Dad was born over in a little town over by Beaver. And this must have been about in the early 1870s. Mother was born up on Mill Creek, up in Salt Lake City. And they got married (I remember the date because I referred to it many times) on June 17th, 1897. At which time they was all livin' in Wayne County.

Of course they was all good church people. And as soon as they got things goin good over on the good side of the mountain, why they shipped 'em to the middle of the mountain, which was in the Torrey and the Loa area. And then, finally they kicked 'em out of there too. But that's another story.

But, anyway they was married. Now, for their honeymoon, I'll tell you what they did. They got married in Loa. And they got in a buckboard and went down the Capitol Wash and crossed the San Rafael Desert and went to Green River. When they hit the San Rafael River there was a flood in it. And, of course, no bridge. And they forded the San Rafael in flood in the buckboard. Now, this is their honeymoon. This is the day after they was married. They went to Green River. They went down and crossed the Colorado River at Moab on the ferry. And went over to Monticello where they was having a trial. Some guy had sued dad for claim jumpin' on the Colorado River. Or for some claims he said they had. Anyway, to make a long story short, the old judge got 'em over there. And all he did was give 'em both hell. Because he knew they was both wrong. He knew that the guy that said dad had jumped his claims didn't have any legitimate claim. He also felt like that this was something that wasn't no court deal and anything. So he told 'em, he says, the hell with you! He says, you guys get out of here and get the hell down on that river. If there's any gold, go down there and dig it out and split it and divide it. So that's what they did. That's the way they settled their court case. Now, that's what you call justice. It's too bad we can't have some American justice like this now.

They went from there down to the Colorado River. And placer mined for gold. And, dad spent, and mom spent a lot of time on the river in the first few years they was married. And that about explains their wedding. When you're young and in love, I mean, there's nothin' looks bad. But, that's a very interesting honeymoon. Somebody ought to do that again.

GC: So what did your dad and mom do then after the placer operation?

NC: Dad and his family had the place there at Torrey. And they'd go down and placer gold for awhile. And then they'd go back at Torrey. And dad built the canal that takes the water out of the ditch there and takes it around. You know where the Crosby Ranch is? You know where the schoolhouse is? You go up that road to the schoolhouse and you go over and drop down into that valley. Well, that was where my dad's family had their place. And they built the ditch from the Fremont River there to go around that hill and go over to the Crosby. And they worked on that thing for about two years. And when they'd run out of money, they'd run down to the Colorado River and placer mine for a little bit of gold. And maybe get enough money to buy a pair of Levis and a pair of boots. And then go back there and work on that. And they finally got the water out there on the Crosby.

Of course, dad could never get that river out of his blood. It was just part of him, bein' down on that darn river. And dad and mom both spent a lot of time on the river. And then he got to foolin' around and he got tangled up with Wolverton some way on that deal down there with the Nequoia Oil Company, down there in Big Water.

And that's when he and Faun decided that they would get 'em a little bunch of cattle and put 'em down there. Which they did. They went to the bank and the bank loaned them the money to buy the seed stock with. With a healthy mortgage I might say. Ten percent. Ten percent was a standard borrowing rate in those days. Well, old man Marsing said, nobody could make it in the cow business and pay ten percent. And he was almost right. Not hardly. But pretty close. But, anyway that's the way that they got started.

Then of course there was the talk about this Taylor Gazing Act. And about how you was going to have to have some property or something or you was going to get kicked off. And that was one of the things that made dad and Faun decide to buy the property there on the San Rafael. Because this was talk even a long time before it started to be a reality. It was, you know, in the wind. Like we hear about these things now. You know what I mean. And we hear about things that was gonna happen over in that country. Takes several years for this kind of thing to happen. Grind those grains of

sand pretty fine before you get around to it. But, anyway that was one of the reasons that they thought they'd better get that property there.

GC: When did they buy that property?

NC: Nineteen twenty-nine.

GC: What was your father like?

NC: You've seen his pictures. All you gotta do is look at him and you can tell. Big, handsome, athletic man. Well, not big by today's standards. But big by then. A little over six feet. And weigh about a hundred ninety, two hundred pounds. A very athletic man. Very, very intelligent human being. Hard worker. He was just, good people. You know what I mean.

Dad knew how to do things. He knew how to get things done. He knew how to work with people and get good things out of people. And he was just quite a guy really. You never heard him complain. He wasn't a complainer. I don't care how tough it got. There was always the pot of gold just over the next ridge. And he spent a lot of time foolin' around in the oil business tryin' to get rich. And then mining. But the guy says he never found the casing rock.

The last few years, when he was workin', he ran the lime quarry up at Leamington for Uncle George. And, Uncle George was a hard, tough man himself. But he had a lot of confidence in dad. And they got along good for brothers – for older brother and next oldest brother in a large family. They got along fine. And Uncle George had lots of confidence in dad's ability and the way he'd get things done. So, they just got along fine.

I guess dad would still been alive. But he got in an accident. He was hard rockin, drillin' a hole. You know, with the sledge and the hammer. And, a piece of the steel of the hammer bounced up and hit him in the eye. And he lost one of his eyes. And when he stepped off the curb there in Payson he couldn't see very well. And this guy had stopped for him. And dad stopped too. The only thing that was wrong, they both started up at the same time. And the guy hit dad. He couldn't have been goin' over three or four miles an hour. Knocked him down. And they took him over to the LDS hospital. And he lived for about three weeks over there.

And that's where you should have had your tape recorder. Was over there while he was laying there, out of it. And of course, now this was the LDS hospital, which of course is the school for Brigham Young University, for their nurses. And dad was worse than

I am when it came to swearing. Just natural for him to swear. I don't mean obscene stuff or anything like that. So, of course, I went up there to see him. When I got there I talked to the nurse that was in charge. And dad was there. And he was talkin' about an old horse named Shock. And he must've been comin' up out of the Colorado River. 'Cause he was givin' old Shock hell. I tell ya the words he was callin' that horse, you wouldn't call to your dog. And, get in that collar you so and so... And... You know what I mean. He was goin' on something scandalous. And I says to this head nurse, I said, my golly! I says, is my father learned any of your students any new words in the English language yet? And she started laughin'. And she says, you know, she said, this is a wonderful experience for these girls. I said, does he do this all the time? She says, yes, he'll go on like this for hours. And it's always something about the old days. And something about horses and cattle. And, he'd just go on and just swear. But, nope, she says, none of the girls or anything has heard him say anything obscene, or... Just outside of swearin', she says, course we're not used to swearin'.

I was there one night and he got started on a deal with Clell and I. And he wanted us to go out in the cedars and bring in a couple of wild cows that was out there. And he was tellin' us about how he didn't want us to run 'em and get 'em too hot and melt the calves. And he wanted us to do this. Now you guys get out there and get them. Now you be careful. And he just went on tellin' us exactly how to do it. Just like he would if he'd have been home. I don't know what it was the doctor said caused him to do this. But he was goin' back to the old days. He didn't know me even. And he lived for about three or four weeks. And that's where he passed away. There in the LDS hospital.

GC: Was you father a religious man?

NC: No! Well, now wait a minute now. You asked me a question there that's very hard to describe. When you say religion, do you mean by being honest and fair and treatin' people good and helpin' others?

GC: I assume he wasn't a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day saints?

NC: Well, he was born in the Mormon Church. And dad was around the Mormons all the time. But, well there's some old family history that goes to the Chaffin family and the Mormon Church. And its best we not even to get into it. Because everything as far as I know is nothing but hearsay. And you know it's so easy to say something that may or may not be true but might reflect bad on somebody. And if a guy is an S of a B, I want to know he is personally. I don't want you to tell me he is. Or somebody

else. I'm not gonna go for that. I have to know it personally. And a lot of this stuff I don't know. For a fact.

So, no, dad wasn't a religious man. Uncle George wasn't a religious man. And uncle Arth wasn't. They was religious in their dealings. And the way they treated people and their family. But as far as goin' to the church and so on and so forth, no. If you would ask dad, he would've told you he was a Jack Mormon. And if you asked him what a Jack Mormon was, he would tell you that a Jack Mormon was a person that didn't pay any tithing and stole from all the Gentiles. Now, of course in the Mormon Church anyone that isn't a Mormon is a Gentile. We normally refer to Gentiles with the Jewish religion. But this is also very true in the Mormon religion. And here again we get into religion. This may or may not be true. But this is what I've heard. But dad was not a churchgoer, no.

GC: Your mother?

NC: Mother's father had two families. One in Idaho, and one in Utah. And she was with the Utah group. And her father would come down and stay long enough to make another baby. He worked for the Singer sewing machine company. And he would go out on the road. And I guess he'd go up to Idaho and make another one. And then he'd come back.

Mother was religious. In fact let me tell you about a little incident. You know, in the Mormon Church, as I understand it, they're not supposed to baptize ya until you reach a certain age. Here again, this is hearsay as far as I'm concerned, I'm not saying this is true. Before we left Torrey and moved to Green River, mother asked the Bishop, old Bishop Pectrell to baptize me. Bishop Pectrell ran the little rural grocery store there. And he was the Bishop. And Bishop Pectrell took me out in that cold ditch that comes right up out of them snow banks up there on top of those mountains and baptized me something before I was the legal age to be baptized. But mother wanted me to be baptized before I went to that heathen town, over at Green River. You speak to those old timers there at that time and speak to 'em about livin' in Green River, that would be like you and I sayin' right now we're gonna go live in Hades. Because that's where all the cow thieves and all the bad people lived. And no-religion, no nothin'. Why there wasn't even a church there.

But, anyway, we moved over to Green River. And after we got over there mother got together with a couple or three of the ladies, and they'd meet at our house on a Sunday for Mormon religious services. And then, of course, as soon as they started, then the other people all dropped in. And it wasn't long until they had a church.

And, so yes, mother was religious. And I'm proud to say that not only did she believe in the attending church, but she believed in and practiced what she preached. Which is, to me, what a lot of us don't do. We might talk a good job but, uh, when it comes down to it we're not that good, really. But I always thought that mother was a saint. I always thought if she was over here on the other side of the Kern River and it was runnin' full of water and washed out the bridge it wouldn't make any difference to her because she could walk right across. She was a good, she was a wonderful person. She was really a religious person. Yes, very, very religious, I would say.

GC: Were there any conflicts over religion with your mom and dad.

NC: Absolutely none. Absolutely none. My ol' father, he always said, you go to your church, I'll go to mine. Once in a while she might try to get him to church after they got the little church there started. But he wouldn't go. He'd go to a dance. We used to take out the seats and have dances in the church. He'd go to that. Or if they had some food deal down there. Or a bazaar or somethin', he'd go. Or, somebody died, he'd go down there and conduct himself like a gentleman, like you'd expect a man to conduct himself in church. But, no, dad wasn't a religious man. No, not in the concept that we're talking about religion. You know what I mean.

GC: Organized religion?

NC: That's right. That's right.

GC: What about your brothers and sisters?

NC: Faun, he finally got religion. In his later years, I might add. Now whether this was his own thinking or his beautiful wife's, I don't know. Because here was another lady that was a pretty swell gal. But my other brothers? They really weren't what you would call religious people in the concept of going to church, paying tithings and all that other stuff.

In fact I heard my father say one time about paying tithing. Well, he says, I wouldn't pay any tithing under any circumstances, he says, because if you're gonna give any money away, or anything ya got away, if you're gonna take ten percent of your grain and give it away, give it to somebody that hasn't got any. Don't give it to somebody that's got more than you have. And that was his theory. And this often sticks in my mind when I go to give. Somebody will have a fundraiser and want me to donate to it. And this sticks in my mind. Now wait a minute, that old boy that wants that fund raiser, those people that are organizing that, every one of 'em's got a heck of a lot more than I have. Why should I give anything to them. It's wonderful to give, and we all

do, but its good to give to someone that has less than you do. Instead of someone that has more. And, I get very impatient with these gentlemen gets on the TV and tells me to send 'em a hundred dollars. When I know they got four Mercedes Benzes, they got homes in Hawaii and down in the islands. And I mean, I can't convince myself that I'm really bein' a good Christian when I give to those people. I guess I got that from my father.

GC: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

NC: Oh, let's see. Let's start. The ones that survived. Faun, Blanche, Gwen, Twila, Ken, Clell, Gay, Ned. Eight. And then there was a couple of children that passed away at birth. And then, Blanche died when she was eighteen years of age. She died just before we moved from Torrey to Green River. And, of course, Gay died in 1928 when he was twelve years of age.

My one sister Twila is still alive. She lives in New Iberia, Louisiana. And she gets along fine. She lives alone. And I usually call her every Sunday or every other Sunday or somethin'. If I was a historian and I wanted some history about Wayne County, I wouldn't mind talkin' to her. Because even though she's maybe a little bit prejudiced she has a lot of good insight on the way things were. She's the only one of the family that survives, beside myself. And she's ninety-three or ninety four or something. But she's still sharp and alert. And still lives alone. And gets along fine. Really. Her family (her immediate family) is all dead. Her son and her daughter is both dead. And her husband passed away a long time ago. She has some grandchildren and great-grandkids. And they live in that area down there. And so, I guess she's getting' along alright. She seems to be fine.

[The following are Ned's commentaries on each of 131 Chaffin family photographs.]



PHOTO NC 001

NC: That picture of mom and dad was taken on their 60th wedding anniversary in Payson, Utah.



PHOTO NC 002

NC: That's Ned Chaffin on Rowdy. With The Sentinels and the Dollhouse in the background in Ernie Country in 1938.

GC: So, that's the Dollhouse. The original formation that you called the Dollhouse?

NC: That's it. That's what we called the Dollhouse. I don't say that's right. Anything I say, I'm not sayin's right. Just because I think it's right, doesn't make it right.



PHOTO NC 003

NC: Do you see the boy standing down between the horses. Can you see that? All right, that's Ned Chaffin. That picture was taken in 1926. That was the day that we first started to take Mr. Prommel and T.C. Conely Under the Ledge. We got our packs on and we're just about ready to go.



PHOTO NC 004

NC: That's Ned Chaffin on Cheyenne. That's taken down on Waterhole Flat. Out on the north end.



PHOTO NC 005

NC: That's Ned on old Slewfoot. His name was Fox but we called him Slewfoot. This is the horse that I was telling you about that the boy traded us this horse for the old mule. That's him. And he had a brand right here on his shoulder, on the right side, that had been blotted to where you couldn't tell what the brand was. But he was a good, solid, true old horse and everything.

That picture was taken by our good friend and buddy, Bill Racy. I snapped that the year we was down there, in 1938. And that's taken right up the rim towards the Bagpipe Butte from Teapot Dome. And you're lookin' right down into the head of Teapot Canyon. Those are Cedar trees down there. See those trees. Those little spots down there are trees.



PHOTO NC 006

NC: And of course this is Dick Negri's favorite. Right here. That's Ned on Captain. Taken in 1938 on the Big Flat there in Ernie Country.

GC: It's on the cover of Dick Negri's book, Tales of Canyonlands Cowboys.

NC: It's on the cover of the book. Bill Racy was ridin' old Smokey Mule. See his ear? He took the picture off the horse.



PHOTO NC 007

NC: This picture is taken on Anderson Bottom. As you go down the trail into Anderson Bottom, right where it starts to open up on the bottom on the right there, there's a little hole in the rock there and some poles across it for a corral. And that was our horses and everything. And that was one of the jackasses that used to run in there.

And everybody I sent this picture to said, well, that would have been a prize-winning picture if whoever took it would have moved you down into the picture about halfway from here. Because everybody wants to be sure that you got your hat on so they can tell which one of you is which. So that's why I say I'm the one with the hat on.



PHOTO NC 008

NC: Number eight. That's Ned Chaffin and Clell Chaffin. That's taken right down here in Bakersfield at 18th and Chester, in the Fall of 1937. They had frontier days here in Bakersfield. Everybody grew beards and dressed up like cowboys and the whole bit. And that's me walkin' down the street. And that's Clell standin' up there.



PHOTO NC 009

NC: That's a picture of Ned Chaffin. And that's my sister Gwendolyn Chaffin. That's Gwen and that's me. And I must have been how old then? Ten years old, eleven? I don't know. Hey look! I even had hair. Well, I was even partially bald then. See the middle there. How thin it is.



PHOTO NC 010

NC: This picture here. That's a picture of Spencer Craft. Spencer was a carpenter by trade. Raised back in Arkansas in the coal fields when he was a kid. Was one of the few good union men I ever saw in my life. And, he married Gwen. He was her husband. And they was husband and wife for several years and finally got a divorce.

And Spence is the guy that told me to come to California and he would meet me here and he would give me a job. And I could spend the winter out here. And he was a great guy. Everybody loved him. He was a great big guy. About six foot four, weigh about 225 pounds. And laugh; boy, you could hear him all over Bakersfield.



PHOTO NC 011

NC: That's Gunsight Butte, and Sunset Pass.



PHOTO NC 012

NC: That is Ned Chaffin reachin' for his saddle. That's taken at the Chaffin Ranch in 1938.



PHOTO NC 013

NC: This is Ned Chaffin on old Rowdy with The Sentinels in the background.

GC: And you always called them The Sentinels?

NC: That's their name! The Sentinels.

GC: Where did that name come from?

NC: I think that old HWC Prommel was a guy that really went for the name Sentinels for that. Because, he said, especially from the river that's what they look like. I should have a picture here from up on the river. He said it is a group of soldiers standing up there. They don't want nobody to go over into that country.



PHOTO NC 014

NC: That's Ned Chaffin. And he's just caught Old Slat. That's the horse that I learned what little bit I ever learned about ridin' buckin' horses. That's the horse that taught it to me right there. What little bit I knew. Old Slat, he wanted to buck a little bit every morning, just enough to make you stay awake. But he was a good solid horse and Bill Racy liked him too. He was a good, good horse.



PHOTO NC 015

NC: Those people are, Alice Chaffin, Ned Chaffin and Marjorie Chaffin. And that was taken down at San Diego. Mother was down there visitin' Gwen and Spence. He was workin' on a job down there for the Marine Corps. And she was down there and we went down one weekend and spent time with them.

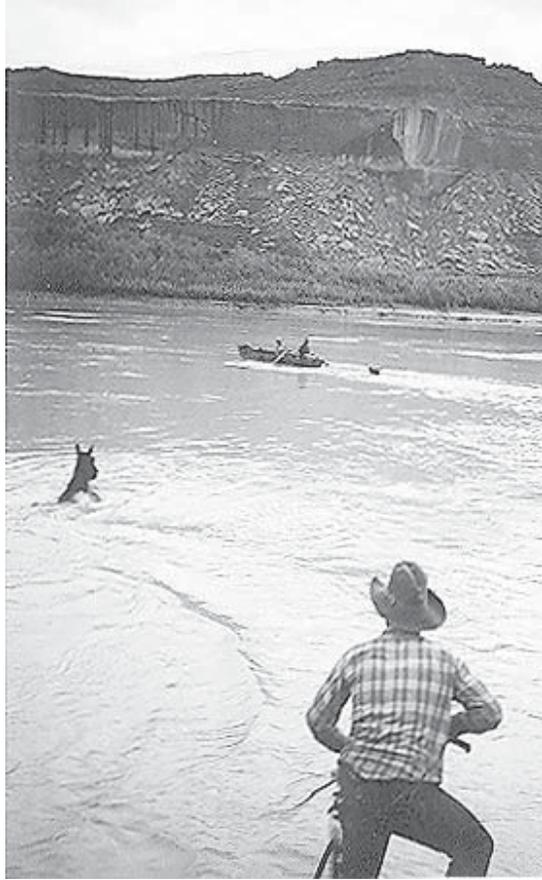


PHOTO NC 016

NC: That's Ned. And of course that's a horse. And that's the guys in some boat crossin' the Green. That's right below the cabin on Cabin Bottom. Right at the bottom. There was a place down there where there was some slickrock that gradually sloped down to the river. I'm standing on the edge of that slickrock. And we're fordin' our horses across the river there.

And it rained the night before. And that was a flood in the river. The day before you could walk across there and wouldn't have got your knees wet. Look – that horse is swimmin'. Boy, I'm tellin' you, there was a lot of water. Cause it had rained and there was a flood goin' on.

The way you do, you start across with the boat. You can see him leadin' the horse, see his head there? That's just the horse's head. Ya lead one and then you get the other ones to follow. And ya hit 'em with a hard twist. See that hard twist I got in my hand? Well, that's what I was smoking his hocks with! So he was lookin' for a place to go. So he saw the other horses goin'. And so he took off after 'em.



PHOTO NC 017

NC: This is the only photo I have out of the photos that Mr. Rust gave me from the [Claflin-Emerson] expedition. This was taken about a week after I joined them. In fact this was taken the day we left the Chaffin Camp up there to go over to the Ernie Country.

[Left to right] Here's Henry Roberts. And here's Alfred Kidder Jr. And here is Sunset Pass in the background. See, ya can just barely see it.



PHOTO NC 018

NC: Oh, well, you know where that is. I don't need to tell you nothin' about that one. That's me on the horse. And, is that Racy? Well, that's one of us. That looks more like me. And there we are. There's The Saw Log and there's the... What do you call that?

GC: We call it The Wall. What did you call it?

NC: I think that's what we called it.

GC: They call this one now The Plug. But you called it The Saw Log?

NC: Yeah, well, everybody had a few different names for them.



PHOTO NC 019

NC: That's Ned Chaffin. This handsome dude on here and that's Spence Craft. And that was taken down in San Diego. We was just goin' down to dinner. He was treatin' us on his company expense account to some fancy joint so that's why we're slicked up like that.



PHOTO NC 020

NC: I got a good picture of this someplace. And I wish we had it. That's lookin' into Horseshoe Canyon right there at the curve. See here's the road comin' up. And comes up here like this. And then up that big dirt hill. And you can also see some cattle on there. That was of course after the well was abandoned and Tidwell's had their cattle goin' up there. Before they put in the pump too. As far as the year, I would just say early thirties.



PHOTO NC 021

NC: All right. That's the Cobra Rock and The Sailor over out from Andy Miller Flats. And that's George Whitmore and Earl Daniels on horseback.

I'll give you a brief rundown of George Whitmore as I saw him. I first met him when I was sellin' uh, soda water and beer wholesale. He ran a drive-in down here in Bakersfield on the traffic circle. George Whitmore worked for the Power Company. And he worked on one of these big boards. And they didn't have all the fancy equipment those days. Anyway, he got a flash off this board. Practically blinded him. And I mean, well, he was legally blind. And, of course, I got to know him quite well. And he was very interested in the Under the Ledge country.

To make a long story short, my father-in-law and I was goin' back there to hunt deer. And Whitmore wanted to go along. First, he says, I'll give ya fifty dollars if you'll take me. Well, bein's he was a good customer of mine, I thought, well that's too much. So, I said, well, just to cover the expenses, how about thirty-five dollars. OK. So, we took Mr. Whitmore. My father-in-law furnished the car. We went to Green River. We went down Under the Ledge. We went over on Anderson Bottom. And we came back to Green River. And back to Bakersfield. For thirty-five dollars. Which was a pretty good

bargain. So he, as far as I know, was the first tourist in that country. Now of course there was gold diggers and oil seekers. But as far as just a tourist, I think we can safely say that George Whitmore was the first tourist that ever went into that country. Or he was to my knowledge.

GC: How did his name get attached to the feature called on the map Whitmore Arch?

NC: I got a picture of him standing by the arch. Well, it didn't have any name. And he was such a great guy. And I mean, even though he couldn't see, he saw lots of things we don't see. You know what I mean. But they tell me that's true of people blinded. Now he was just partially blind. But I mean to read anything; when I'd give him his bill when I'd sell him some soda water or something, he had a little spyglass and he'd take it like this to be sure I wouldn't overcharge him. Legally blind but could still see.

So, well, yeah he could see the bridge. So anyway we just said, well we'll call it Whitmore Bridge. So that's why we named that in honor of my good friend George Whitmore. Even though that's the only time he was ever in that country. Well, he was always in the country. From then until the day he died he was still there. Well, that's the trouble with them damn rocks back there. There ought to be a law against 'em.

That was about the time the war started. And when we was down there, I left them on Waterhole Flat and went into Green River and registered for the draft. Then I went back to Tidwell's and took Lorin Milton with me. And then we went down the Devil's Slides. And the other boys had came around on horseback. And we met 'em down at Anderson Bottom. And went on our deer hunt. So that's the way it all worked out.



PHOTO NC 022

NC: That's old Captain. Of course you can see the Teapot Dome there. That was taken in 1938.



PHOTO NC 023

NC: I'm going to say that's over in Shot Canyon going from Water Canyon to Shot Canyon. That's the buildup that we made there. That shows you really how rough that country is. Look how that horse's front foot's up there. And look, look at the way the saddle's standin' up on the back. And the way the tail's like this. You can tell there's a strain, a muscular strain, like you strain when you lift a heavy load.

Let's see, what have I got on the back of that one. Yeah. "Under the Ledge going up the trail". Red Man going up the trail. And Teddy is standing. They were our horses. Yeah. This is Teddy, right here, with his butt towards you. And this is Red Man, working his way up the trail.



PHOTO NC 024

NC: That's a picture of the camp right there at French Springs. See, if you'll see, that's a piece of pipe. That's a piece of casing on those two notches right there. Of course, that's fallen down now. Now, this bump I'm tellin' you about, this dugout where they had that building, was right back there. That bump is still there, because I saw it.

That was taken in 1927. That was part of the Nequoia survey. That was when Mr. Prommel and his outfit was there. This is getting wintertime and I wasn't with 'em then. I was in town, in school. They was livin' there. They was workin'. They was workin' from there. They wasn't workin' on the oil well. They was workin' on their triangulation and doin' their geological work. They was well into that.



PHOTO NC 025

NC: OK that's the crew of the Nequoia Arch Survey. From left to right: Albert Weber, who was employed by dad to help, Ned Chaffin, the little guy with the floppy disc hat. Lets go to the back and get Lou Chaffin first and then Gay Chaffin second. Standing at the door close to the food is Faun Chaffin. Standing next to him is HWC Prommel. That's old HWC Prommel. Standing right here is a guy by the name of Ed Stewart who was a big shot with the Utah Oil and Refining Company. And here is a guy by the name of Charlie Woods, who was a character. A professional man, a surveyor, a geologist and so on and so forth. And then here was Ted Crumb. And Ted worked right directly under Mr. Prommel. Mr. Prommel told him what he wanted him to do. And he was also a surveyor and a geologist. And a hell of a swell guy. All of 'em was. Every one of those guys. I'd pick every one of 'em out to cross the river with. I know if you got in a boggy spot, they'd help you out.

There was a little cabin there at French Springs and that's where that was taken. In fact, I was tryin' to find the spot where that was when I was last there. And I got to thinkin' about it, where that cabin was. I think I was too far or too close to where the well was. I think it was up closer to the road. But anyway, next time I go there I'll find it.

That was their headquarters, their office and a bunkhouse if it was rainin'. If it was rainin', you know, you took what was there. I mean, heck, you could sleep eight or ten guys in there if it was rainin' outside.

This was the Nequoia Arch survey. And the building was built by the Texas company, that they'd used for an office. And then down toward the boiler they had a cookhouse and a little bit of living quarters there for the cook. And then they had some tents and everything for the men. That old boiler was already there. The boiler was there. And they did a lot of drilling, off and on for years.

But there wasn't nobody in this group that was associated with the oil drillin'. Well, outside of dad, that maybe worked there a time or two. You know what I mean. Or Faun. They might have worked on the rig, when they was drillin' a time or two. You know what I mean. Because dollars was hard to come by.

There used to be a lot of casing and a lot of iron hanging around there. And they took all that. But they left the boiler when they started their scrap drive at the beginning of world war two. Somebody went out there and cleaned all that stuff up. But they left the boiler. Maybe they had trouble getting it loaded.



PHOTO NC 026

NC: Oh! That is my beautiful wife Marjorie. And that is her favorite horse, Stuff. His name was like, you stuff. And, she loved that little ol' palomino horse. Well, I think she thought more of him than she did of me. This is here in Bakersfield, before the war.



PHOTO NC 027

NC: There is one of my favorite spots, right there. If you go down to where ol' Ned's got them tubs right back up here. And if you look real careful, I'll bet that old Cedar tree that we used to camp under there, I'll bet it's still there. Maybe might even find an old tin can that I threw away there. But that's where that's taken.

And that's George Whitmore, with the black hat on. And this is Marjorie's father, Earl Daniels. That's George Whitmore and Earl Daniels at Ned's Place.



PHOTO NC 028

NC: That's the famous bullfighting scene out to Waterhole Flat. There at the pond. And, them damn bulls, they fought for four hours there. And we couldn't separate 'em. We'd get 'em separated. You'd hard twist 'em out of there, trying to get 'em to split up and quit fightin' and they just wouldn't give it up. I mean, they'd never quit. They just kept fightin'. And when they both get so tired they couldn't fight anymore (that's what they're doin' there) they'd sit there with their heads together getting their wind. You know, suckin' air. That's what they're doin' right there. They're not doin' no fightin' there. They're just standin' there. Say, hey let's rest for a minute or two. Boy, I'm tellin' you!

And I believe we bought these bulls when they was weaner calves from Budge Wilcox and his wife (that's Don Wilcox's dad and mother). I believe that was the first bulls they ever sold. I think.



PHOTO NC 029

NC: This is lookin' back at the Orange Cliffs; taken in 1938.



PHOTO NC 030

NC: And there's the famous picture of old Wild William [Bill Racy] over there at Horseshoe Canyon. That's Bill Racy on Tickaboo in Horseshoe Canyon. And you, I know you've saw those pictographs there on the wall.



PHOTO NC 031

NC: Now I'll tell you what Lou Chaffin said about that rock. He said that that rock should be called a Nequoia rock. The reason he thought it should be called the Nequoia rock is because the word Nequoia, according to my father Lou Chaffin now, said that the word Nequoia means, big standing rock. So he called that, Chief Standing Rock. He says, see the chief's headdress? See his nose? See his mouth? See his chin? See his arm sittin' there folded there like a big shot? See his big ceremonial skirt on him? Huh?" And so that was dad's name for it, Chief Standing Rock.

Nequoia is an Indian name. And dad said that Nequoia in Indian means, big rock. Like Sequoia means big tree. Now, I'm not sayin' this is true. This is what my daddy told me.

But anyway that's Bill Racy. And he's ridin' Tickaboo and here's Elaterite Butte in the background. And this is a picture that was published in the paper. And I got in a big argument with old Henderson over at the Desert Magazine about right there. The argument was over him goin' down there and makin' up a lot of BS. I wish I had that copy of them articles that he wrote.



PHOTO NC 032

NC: That's Bill Racy and our pack mules. And our extra horse. And of course that's The Sentinels in the background. And I'm taking that from just a little ways from The Sentinel Camp. That's The Sentinels in the background. If you remember it, right here on the flat there's a little rocky point come down there. And there's kind of a cave there. We used to camp there. And we just called it The Sentinel Camp. We camped there once in a while. Of course there wasn't no water there. Or anything there.



PHOTO NC 033

NC: And there's old Wild Bill [Racy] again. That's Bill there and The Sentinels.



PHOTO NC 034

NC: That's Bill Racy on Teddy. Lookin' down toward Ernie Country. The Flint Trail is right around this a-way. Right down here is the Red Cove. And here's the Maze. Right down here where Bill's head is. My original picture of that was a pretty good picture. But that one isn't too good.



PHOTO NC 035

NC: That's Bill Racy and the cattle. And we're down at the foot of the North Trail. And we're headin' down the Black Ledge to go down off the trail on that point down into Big Water. That's probably where your main hikin' trail is now. Right? You don't drop off in the head of that canyon and go down that way do ya, a-foot. Be too far. Much shorter to go down this point and drop off that trail. And of course we was there a long time before we ever found our way off that point. We used to drop down there at the head of the canyon where it breaks in the Black Rim and go down that way. Two or three miles further.

GC: The large butte in the picture is now called Ekker Butte on the maps. What did you call it?

NC: Some people called it Wolverton Butte and some people called it the Junction Butte. But they tell me the Junction Butte's on the other side of the river. Dad called it Wolverton Butte.



PHOTO NC 036

NC: That is the foot of the North Trail lookin' down toward Elaterite Butte. And you're right at the foot of the trail, where it comes down off the Red Ledge and starts to go out on the Black Ledge there. Isn't there some cattle there? Yeah, there's Bill and the cattle right out there in front of me.



PHOTO NC 037

NC: That's Bill Racy you can see on horseback there in through the dead tree.



PHOTO NC 038

NC: Oh, that's Bill Racy on Cheyenne. That's one of Bill's favorite pictures. That's one of everybody's favorite pictures that knows Bill. That's a good lookin' horse and a good lookin' man on him. And ya had pretty good help when ya had either one of them. When ya had 'em both together, a little bit better than good help. Yeah, that's Bill on Cheyenne.

GC: So, how many cow hands were employed in your family's operation? Was Bill the only one or were there others?

NC: Oh, good lord! We got those kids off the railroad tracks all the time to go down there and help us. That was a common practice. Get 'em to go down to the ranch and pitch hay for a few days. A kid comes there and doesn't have a dime. And somebody tells him that your gonna take him out to the ranch and feed him. Hell, he's not too

interested in how hard he's gonna have to work or how hard he's gonna paint. He's really glad to get a place to sleep and somethin' to eat.

But we had lots of guys. And some of 'em, like Bill, stayed quite awhile and stuck with it. Let's say he wanted to have something maybe a little better than he had. You know what I mean. And Bill stuck with it. And some of the other kids too. But a lot of the kids would come and maybe work for a few months or somethin' then move on. You'd never hear from 'em again. Never see 'em again.

I know another kid that came with me. Little old Eddy Pearson. Eddy come down there and he didn't know which end the calf come out of, really. Eddy went down there and he got to be down there and he got to be a pretty good hand. Except there was one thing we could never break him of. He was mean to horses. And he wanted ride like Gene Autry and all these other cowboys who wanted to ride every place on a lope. He didn't want to go along at a slow speed that your horse could sustain, you know, under those conditions. Eddy worked for us for a year or two. And finally he rode one of them horses pretty hard one day and Faun fired him and ran him off.

The kid did pretty good anyway. He went and got in the professional rodeo business. Not only as a rider but also as a procurer of stock. He'd run around to everybody, to all the ranches. And if somebody had a horse that they thought was a good buckner, he'd trade 'em out of 'em, or buy 'em from 'em and then take 'em to the rodeo. I never saw Eddy. Never heard from him. But I sure wish that we could get a-hold of him and have him come over to our Caucus. Because Eddy Pearson was a pretty good kid too. And then all the others. They was all good kids. Just stopped to help. Trying to get by. Or maybe some of 'em a little adventurous.



PHOTO NC 039

NC: And of course that's Bill on Cheyenne and Sunset Pass there in the background. And he's on Captain Kidd; he called him Captain Kidd. His name was Captain but Bill changed his name to Captain Kidd. So we'll call him Captain Kidd. That was taken in 1938.



PHOTO NC 040

NC: Oh! There's Bill Racy. You know where the boiler is in Big Water? Well, that's taken right straight up that little flat toward the North Trail from the boiler. We ran into that big ol' steer; I mean he's a steer now. But we ran into him and he wasn't earmarked or nothin'. And so we wasn't too sure what to do. So we made a steer out of him and earmarked him. And that was 1938.



PHOTO NC 041

NC: That's Ned and Bill Racy on Cheyenne and Captain.



PHOTO NC 042

NC: I observe on your maps, no one ever calls that flat, right up from the right of the Clell's Spring up there what we called it, Horse Heaven.

You turn your horses loose over there and that's the first place they'd head for. They loved it up there. Real good grass country. Too far from water and too rough for the cattle to get up there and eat the grass. And so the horses always knew there was good feed up there. And you could take your horses up there and turn 'em loose. You wouldn't have to hobble 'em, and they wouldn't go no place at night, when you camped there.



PHOTO NC 043

NC: Ok that's at the old Chaffin Ranch. And we was brandin' some calves there. And that's Bill Racy on one of the calves.



PHOTO NC 044

NC: That's the same place. In fact I think it could be the same calf.



PHOTO NC 045

NC: That's Bill Racy on Teddy out from the Chaffin Ranch. Out toward that big red flat out there, about four or five miles the other side of the bridge.



PHOTO NC 046

NC: Now, that's a picture again of that little place where I was tellin' you about there on Anderson Bottom. Where the mules were. And that's some colts we had there. That would've been around 1940.



PHOTO NC 047

NC: There is one of the jackasses that we got out of Millard Canyon, right there. You see the Pinto one right there. That was one of 'em. Faun got him out and bred him to a bunch of those Appaloosa mares to get all kinds of weird colored mules. Which he did. And this is Faun Chaffin, of course. And that's Bill Racy and that's Ned.

GC: What can you tell us about the Burros that were in that area?

NC: Hey! Didn't ya ever go wild burro huntin'? Hell, that's a better fun than deer huntin', or pheasant huntin'! I don't know how they got in there. I imagine somebody was down there and left 'em. And they just multiplied. And when Franz bought Eph Moore out, I'll betcha there was at least a hundred head of burros, with most of them runnin' in Millard Canyon. And on the rim there.

And old George Franz, he had a big old Thirty-Ought-Six rifle. And boy he was a good shot too. And so they just declared war on the burros. Every time you saw a burro, if you had gun, you were supposed to pull it out and start shootin' at 'em

whether you hit 'em or not. And, of course they'd watch a bunch of 'em and wait till they come in to water. And when they come in to water, before they could run away, they'd maybe shoot four or five of 'em in one bunch, out of one bunch. And a lot of 'em was Pintos.

And, now, a lot families that was never even down there know all about where these burros come from and who brought 'em there and the whole bit. And maybe. But I don't know where they got their information. As long as I remember, there was burros there.

When I was a young kid, Faun and I left Big Water there where the cowboy rock art is. We left Big Water. And we was huntin' some water and grass. And it looked like it had rained back there a day or two before. So we started around the rim to Anderson Bottom. And we got about at the head of Deadhorse Canyon there, when we ran into Eph Moore and Bill Tibbetts. And, they was comin' back toward Big Water, hoping there was some rain over there. And we was goin' that way hoping there was some there. And anyway we went over there then. And I don't know what year it was. But I know I was just a little kid. I know that. And there was burros there. We camped there at the mouth of Millard Canyon. Right on the river. We camped there, that night, Faun and I. And there was burros there then.

But when Franz bought the operation out, there was lots of 'em. I mean they was really devastating the country. And old George, he declared war on them things. Now I'm tellin' you, boy, he would really slaughter them. And everybody would. Hell, people would go there and go burro huntin' just for fun. Take up a gun. You see a burro comin' down to water. He's been out there in that old dry country for maybe two days, and damn near chokin' to death. And you see him. And you think, I've got him! But you always wait till they drink first. Because, you wait till they drink, and they drink so much, and they're so gluttonous when they drink the water, that they get so much water in 'em that they don't ambulate good. They don't run fast. They don't run very far, or very long, full of water. If you're ever in a position to where you have to run one down, make sure you let him get his fill of water. And then start after him right then. With any animal, that's very true.

But anyway, that's what happened to the Pinto burros. But anyway, we got those Appaloosa mares. And Faun bred that Pinto jack to them mares. And he got some weird lookin' mules I'm tellin' you.

GC: One other question about the burros. Did you ever see them in Horseshoe Canyon or Spur Fork, around about that time?

NC: No sir! Jackasses in Horseshoe Canyon! Did you ever hear of Joe Biddlecome! You didn't see no jackasses, nor no wild horses, anyplace Joe Biddlecome ran a cow! I'll guarantee ya you didn't. 'Cause he had that ol' thirty-thirty rifle. And he knew how to use it. And if a wild horse or a jackass got anyplace around, even close to one of his cows, why you just better write the obituary. Because he was a dead one.

George Franz got rid of all of 'em but one little bunch. And they was all Pintos. One Pinto jack. And I think Faun said they left five head of the Pinto mares. And I don't know what happened to 'em. The trouble is, we get goin' and everybody starts goin' down there. And we get goin' into a lot of Hollywood stuff. You know what I mean. And we have to glamorize and say things that we really don't know what we're talkin' about. And pretty soon we've got all kinds of stuff goin' around.

Old George Franz, when he first bought the outfit, he started on 'em right then. And I'd say that it wasn't very long until they was gone.

They was all gone a long time before I left there – in the early thirties.

It didn't take long. You start shootin' the mares and it isn't long till there's no colts.

There isn't nothing in the world as hard on a range as a horse or a jackass. None. Not even a human! And humans are pretty hard on land.



PHOTO NC 048

NC: That's up around where you leave Lou's Spring and start to go to Waterhole Flat. You leave Lou's Spring and go around and go up over the little ridge and get into the main canyon. And you go up the main canyon. And then you go up a rim to get up on the flat that the Red Cove is on. See, the Red Cove's right back here. And that's that trail that goes up there. And there's some cattle. And that's old Bill Racy standin' there. And, that's where that was, 1938.



PHOTO NC 049

NC: There's George Whitmore at the Whitmore Bridge. Not a arch now. That's George Whitmore at the Whitmore Bridge. And we decided the year was 1940, didn't we?



PHOTO NC 050

NC: Oh, well you know right where that is. That's lookin' down into French Spring Canyon from Hans Flat.



PHOTO NC 051

NC: Well, of course, as we all know, that's the old corral there at the Chaffin Camp. And that's old baldy Ned with his rope. I'm goin' out there. We just brought in the horses. And of course they didn't want any part of us. But we was just kind of bunchin' 'em up there and lettin' them settle down a little bit so we could catch one of 'em. Or catch the ones we wanted, whichever. So, that's just to bring it in part of the remuda that's all.

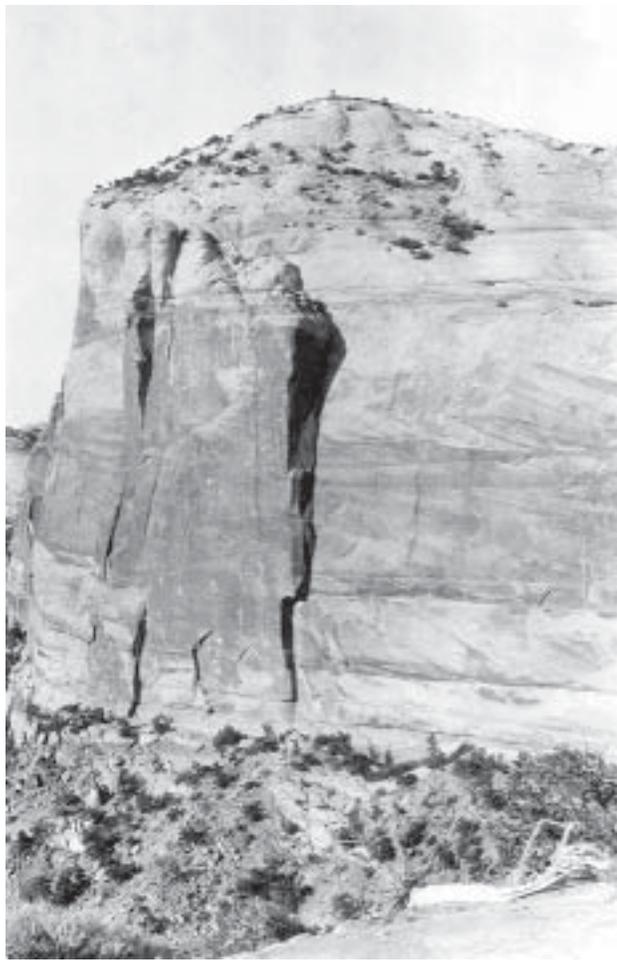


PHOTO NC 052

NC: Ah, and there's the old Observation Rock. And that was taken about oh, 1927.

PHOTO NC 053 &
PHOTO NC 054

NC: You no doubt know that that's where the trail goes up out of Shot Canyon. That's Dr. Dean Brimhall. In person. That is the Doctor himself. Bless his heart. I had such a nice relationship with he and Doc Madson. The two guys that I'm kickin' my own you-know-what real hard, that I never ran 'em down. Dr. Brimhall took those pictures. He was very interested in this place. I was going to say this was probably taken in the sixties.

Dr. Brimhall had a big advantage over most of us that went into this country. He was a very wealthy man. And if there was an Indian granary up here and he couldn't get to it, he'd call up somebody or send somebody to go get enough ropes or enough lumber to build him a ladder to where he could get in there. So Dr. Brimhall went lots of places down there that most of us won't get to. Because he'd hire two or three guys to go down there with him just to help him down off a rim. I know he was a great guy. I talked to him enough on the phone and corresponded with him enough to know that he was a great guy. You see that old paw right there? I never did shake it but I sure would've liked to. I wish I had now.





PHOTO NC 055

NC: Well, that's that bunch of rowdies from over at Green River. The Chaffin gang. They're in an old car. And that was the road goin' from Hanksville to Torrey. Up the old Capitol Reef wash. Didn't go up the river. Ya went up the wash. And that's where that picture was taken.



PHOTO NC 056

NC: That's Herb Weber. You see the water right here? The little bit of water right there in the corner? You see the cows here in the background? And you know where the pond is there on Andy Miller Flat that we was talkin' about yesterday? That's the pond. And Herb's standin' there. And that's the cattle. And here you're lookin' right back up into the Cove. That was taken in 1940.

Yeah, that's my old friend Herb Weber. Herb was a good hand. Cynthia, how would you like to pay 35 dollars a month for a guy that'd work 18 hours a day. And ride horseback all day out in that hot sun. Or out in the snow and the wind and everything. And have him take care of his job, and do it better than a good job. Well, we're talkin' about Herb Weber now.

PHOTO NC 057

NC: Ok, that is Joe Biddlecome. And the guy standing in the back of the Chair is Ted Crumb. And if ya take a real good look at the expression on Ted Crumb's face, you would think that Joe Biddlecome was after him with that thirty-thirty rifle. That's what he's holdin' there, in his hand. That's a thirty-thirty rifle. And you'd think he was after old Crumb with that rifle. Anyway, this was a picture that there was lots of conversation about.



And that's of course, a natural rock formation we called Grandpa's Chair. I'm gonna have to guess where that is. You know where Faun's Rest is? All right, you leave Twin Corrals and ya head toward Bluejohn, right? And as ya leave Twin Corrals and come up this a-way, ya come up around a little point. And over on your right, there's kind of a high hill. Well, Prommel named that Faun's Rest because Faun was supposed to go up there and put up a flag, when they flashed him with their flashers. They had a signal they'd flash. And when Prommel flashed, him, he never got no response from Faun. Because Faun took a nap. And so, Prommel called that Faun's Rest.

I think Grandpa's Chair is right down in one of those little washes toward Horseshoe someplace. I've never been there. But I think its in that general area there someplace. And it might take quite a little bit of looking to find it. But that's an interesting spot. And everybody loved that picture, especially the expression on old Ted Crumb's face. Just like he was sittin' there afraid old Joe was going to take a shot at him. Grandpa's Chair. That's what Prommel called it. But I don't know. Hell if anybody asks me about it, I'm gonna call it Joe's Chair! That picture was taken in 1927.



PHOTO NC 058

NC: There's a picture of old Joe Biddlecome in the corral. Joe Biddlecome in the corral getting ready to catch a calf. That's at Twin Corrals. See the trees back there? See that low string of trees back there?

Joe Biddlecome. Now, I want you to observe one thing about Joe Biddlecome and his ropin'. You know, we discussed this before. If that was a better picture you could see how big a loop he had. Now, suppose that Joe wanted to catch that calf right there. He'd catch him all right. He'd catch him the first throw. Course, he'd probably catch them other two too. He threw a big loop. And he always caught somethin'. Ropin' horses in the corral, he'd catch the horse all right, but if he did, he'd catch him way down on the neck, down against the withers. Or he'd catch him with a post or what not. He threw a big loop. And he had them long arms, see. And he was an athletic guy. And strong. You know what I mean. And he could really throw a rope a good distance and everything.



PHOTO NC 059

NC: And there's my ol' friend, ol' Eph Moore! That's Eph Moore. He and his family are the people that George Franz bought the outfit from there in Big Water. That Cross-E that's there on the rock in the cowboy art there at the Big Water Spring, that's his brand, Cross-E.



PHOTO NC 060

NC: There's Eph Moore again right there. And there's his old horse. That old horse. That old bay horse. Well, he swore he wouldn't ride him off a trot. Because a horse fell down with him and kind of crippled him up. And that's why his cattle was so wild. They knew that all they had to do was take off and he couldn't catch 'em. And we had a hell of a time when we first went in there. 'Course, Clell got those cattle to where you could handle 'em pretty good. But it took some doin', I'm tellin' you. That's over at Hardscrabble Hill. That's over towards Moab.



PHOTO NC 061

NC: That's Oscar Siebolt. I've got a story about Oscar Siebolt. This should be very, very interesting to you. And I know it will be. If you never heard this story before, especially.

Oscar Siebolt is another man we got off the railroad track. Bummin' through the country, no money, no nothin'. A foreigner, traveling through the country. Siebolt. German. He'd worked for the Westinghouse electric company in their engineering department. He was a well-educated man. And he came off there. And Oscar hung around with us. And stayed there on the ranch. And punched cows with us. And did the whole bit for a year, or maybe two.

But one day he got a very official letter from Berlin Germany to come home. And, he got a letter from his parents to come home. In fact there was a veiled threat in there, for him to come home – or else! So, Oscar left us and went back to Germany.

And he had a camera, and he took very, very, very few pictures. And this is the only one that he had that was any good that he sent back to us from Germany. And we got this one letter with this photo in it. And that's the only thing we ever heard from Oscar. I have the letter someplace. Of course you can tell that's the Colorado River, Cataract Canyon down there. I think that the Cove Canyon comes in right up there.

PHOTO NC 062

NC: Well, if there isn't our old friend Franky Tidwell!! That's Franky Tidwell standin' in the yard there at the Tidwell Place. This was the main house. This was the cookhouse. And the cookhouse had a room in back of it for the cook. And the granary where Delbert got hit was right straight across here. And the corral was right here.



And this is the rim that the mules bucked over that threw Alvin Drake off saddle and all that. This is what happened. We went there, and we kept the mule in the corral overnight to wrangle the horses on the next morning. And of course it just wasn't hardly daylight yet. But we went out there. And old Alvin Drake, he threw his saddle on the mule and started out. And the damn mule wouldn't go out of the corral. So, I was standin' there. And there was a hackamore and a lead rope on it layin' there on the ground. And I just grabbed that and I hit that old mule across the butt with it. And out the gate he took. And he started buckin'. And he bucked right down over here. And as he went over this rim right here the saddle went off his head. And ol' Alvin lit right out. He went right out, straight over the mule's head. And as he went out over his head, he had one of those bridles on that just had the thing that you put over the ear. Didn't have no throat latch on him. And as Alvin went out over the mule's head he grabbed that bridle and pulled the bridle off. The mule took off for the cattle. Old Alvin Drake grabbed up his bridle and away he went after the mule on foot. Because it wasn't too far down to where the horses was for him to get. So he went down there. It didn't hurt him, he said. But he was mad at me. He says... well I better not say it on tape what he said. He didn't say nothin' right then. But he said plenty later.



PHOTO NC 063

NC: That's the Tidwell family. Goin' from left to right, that's Helen, Leland, Frank and Delbert.

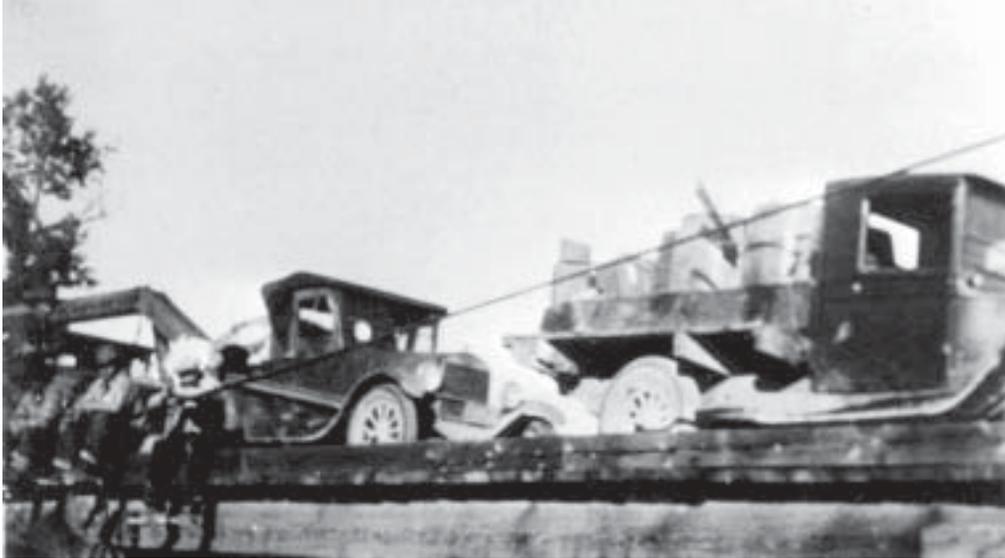


PHOTO NC 064

NC: That's the Tidwells moving across the old bridge right up above the Chaffin Ranch there.

PHOTO NC 065

NC: That's Clyde Tidwell, that you hear lots of tales about. I don't remember him very well. I was a very small boy when Clyde was around. You hear lots of tales about Clyde. I don't believe very many of 'em. My recollection was that he was a typical guy for that age. You know what I mean. No better no worse than the rest of us. But, you hear lots of stories about how he killed that guy and he went to Mexico and all that. And I think that's all a bunch of bull. I think that Clyde was killed down there.



Delbert and Mary both spoke of him with a great deal of affection. And of course now, he was Delbert's half brother. His mother and Delbert's mother was the same lady. He was Delbert's half brother.

The only thing I ever heard Delbert and Mary say about the gruesome fact was that they knew who killed Clyde. But they couldn't prove it. Now where this story comes from, that somebody told somebody that, no, he killed somebody and he'd went to Mexico, and all that. I don't believe one word of it. I think its nothin' but a bunch of Hollywood bein' thrown into a bad situation. If the Tidwells would've known he was in Mexico, they just wouldn't have been like they were, that's all. That would be unnatural. That was Clyde Tidwell's body that they dug out of the cabin down there on Tidwell Bottom. And he didn't go to Mexico. I was around Delbert an awful lot. And I don't know why, a hundred years later, we get into some controversy just because somebody wants to dramatize somethin' a little bit. I call it Hollywood. Maybe we all got a little bit of Hollywood in us.



PHOTO NC 066

There's Delbert's mother and Frank and Frank's sister there at the old cabin at the ranch.



PHOTO NC 067

NC: That's taken up at John's Spring. That's where the Tidwells got their drinkin water from. Boy that was good water. That was a nice spot.

Just a little ways from here was where my uncle, Johnny Armstrong, got the two bandits that he went chasin' down there.

Uncle Johnny Armstrong was my dad's uncle. And he was a United States Marshall and he followed those two guys. They went out and down The Sandslide and come down Horseshoe Canyon. And over at Windy Point Spring is where they was camped when he caught up with 'em. This was while they was still drilling the well.

GC: So the Tidwells were still living here at this spring?

NC: Yes. Of course when the Phillips Oil Company built the road, that was really a boon to Tidwells. Because they could come to here and have a place to camp right in the middle of their operation, instead of have to goin' way up and down and come down The Spur and everything, see? We'd have had a hell of a time if it hadn't have been for those oil companies, doin' things.



PHOTO NC 068

NC: I think this was the winter of '26. Let's see if he's dated it.

GC: There is a date on the back of that. 1927. Nequoia Arch Survey.

NC: Ok. So, that had to be early in the winter. And that's taken at French Springs. I'm pretty sure. No, wait a minute...I never really thought about where that picture was taken. I think it's taken there around French Spring someplace. But, anyway, that's Ted Crumb and that's Harold Ekker. Yeah, that could be between French Springs and the head of the North Trail. It's right in that area. That's within a mile of French Springs. The way the crow flies now, we're talkin' about.



PHOTO NC 069

NC: Oh, here now, we're way over in the other place here. We're over in the other part of the country. This is one of the reasons they had the two outfits. They was doin' two jobs at once. It says, "Winter travelers. The Black Mesa". I don't know where that's at.

One winter there for awhile, they had two crews workin'. Of course, dad furnished all the horses and the mules for 'em. And he hired Harold and Art. And he hired Albert Weber. Probably a couple other guys to help with the chores. See, when Gay and I wasn't there, they had to have somebody to pack the water and gather the wood and take care of the horses. And, of course we did that.

GC: Could you tell us a bit about Albert Weber?

NC: Albert Weber? The Webers is a well known family from over at Hanksville. Mr. Weber was a German, I think. Anyway that was Herb Weber's dad. And they were Hanksville people. And they ran a café and a little boarding house and a place where you could put your horses and things there in Hanksville, for a long time. You don't hear much about the Weber family.



PHOTO NC 070

NC: That's taken out around your country there someplace. Where you're at. The only story that I ever heard about this picture was that they got in some snowdrifts and got stuck and had a hell of a time getting out.



PHOTO NC 071

NC: All right! Left to right: Hazel Biddlecome, Harold Ekker, Millie Biddlecome holding Joe Marsing, Pearl Biddlecome-Marsing, Ted Crumb and Arthur Ekker. Arthur was just a kid then. That was taken there at Crow Seep. That was taken in 1926 or 1927.



PHOTO NC 072

NC: That's taken right up on the head of Valentine Bottom. And that's Faun. And, what the hell was this kid's name. Oh, hell, I forget his name. Maybe it's on here. Lee! Dave Lee. Yeah, that's Dave Lee. Oh, there's another bum. Bill Racy and Dave Lee didn't get along too good. If one of 'em got the easy end of a chore when they was working for Faun, why the other one would think he was pickin' on them. Well, you know how things work out. Let's call it professional jealousy.

That's on the head of Valentine Bottom. Now, what they did with those deer - so there won't be any question about that - they took those deer and Violet canned 'em. You know, put 'em in fruit jars, mason jars, and canned 'em. And that way they had some good meat during the summer when you couldn't keep fresh meat. You know what I mean. Go open up a jar of that meat and there you go. So, nothin' went to waste there. The only thing that went to waste there was the hooves. They threw the hooves away. Should've saved them. We could've made something out of 'em.



PHOTO NC 073

NC: That is a picture that was taken on my mother and father's fortieth wedding anniversary. On June seventeenth nineteen thirty-seven. It was taken in Price, Utah. Ken and Julia and their two children. They had a home there. Ken was workin' on a rig out there for the Laughlin Drilling Company. Out there in the desert someplace. And they was livin' up there. And that's where we all met for their fortieth wedding anniversary celebration.

And that's old baldy Ned as you can suspect there in the back. Here's Wiladeane. I'm gonna say that the biggest one is Donna Chaffin. Now wait a minute, let's go from here to there. I think this is Wiladeane. I think this is Claire Chaffin. This was Ken's youngest daughter and this is his oldest daughter Donna. And those other pictures [074 & 075] is the same. They was taken all there there at the same time.



PHOTO NC 074

NC: The tall one's Wiladeane. She was the oldest one. And I think the next one was Carol. And I don't know whether that's Donna, Clell's girl or Ken's girl, or whether that's Claire, Faun's daughter. I mean I can't remember. I just don't know.



PHOTO NC 075

NC: And there's a picture of Wiladeane, in the back, of course. And the one in the front; I think that must be Claire. I guess.



PHOTO NC 076

NC: That's Claire, at the Chaffin Ranch. Just sittin' there waitin' for somethin' to happen. Down at the old corral. That was 1938.



PHOTO NC 077

NC: That's Wiladeane. Taken at Green River, Utah.



PHOTO NC 078

NC: Oh! You know, there's one of my favorite all time beasts. That old Smokey Mule.

I don't believe Wiladeane's in that picture. I think that's Claire, and Carol and Donna. I think. Wiladeane knows. 'Cause I gave her one and she identified 'em for me. I should've written on the back what they were. That's taken at the ranch.

[This was later identified by Wiladeane as, from left to right: Wiladeane, Dennavor Hatt and Shirley Thompson. Taken in Green River.]



PHOTO NC 079

NC: The girl I think is Claire. The boy is Kirby Stark, who is Twila's boy, my nephew. And I forget the dog's name.



PHOTO NC 080

NC: That's my mother and my dad. And that was taken in Bakersfield over here on Brundage Lane. Marjorie and I had us a little place over there. And that was taken over there. That's when they came out to visit us. That was just before the war.



PHOTO NC 081

NC: And that's dad. That's dad on old Rowdy. Same place [as photo 080].



PHOTO NC 082

NC: That's the hairpin curve there on the east side of Horseshoe. This is Lou Chaffin. That's George Franz's truck. And that's Clell Chaffin standin' right there. He was drivin' the truck. They had just taken one of the first loads over the road and all was well. This must've been 1929. That must have been April, maybe the last few days of March. I forget which date they completed that road. Anyway, that was the initial ride that they made.



PHOTO NC 083

NC: Oh! That's my mother and this is Kirby Stark. This is mother's grandson. That's Twila's boy. That's my nephew and that's mother. And that was taken up in Mullan, Idaho. That's where Twila and her husband lived.



PHOTO NC 084

NC: Oh! Hey, that's Ned Chaffin and mom, taken at our home over there in Green River. That must have been about 1930, I guess, or along there. Might be something on the back. I don't know. Yeah, that's Ned and his mom.



PHOTO NC 085

NC: That's my mom and my sister Gwen. And I think they're holding Wiladeane. I think. I think that's when Wiladeane was a baby. My mom's on the left and my sister Gwen on the right. And I think that's Wiladeane.



PHOTO NC 086

NC: Well now there's a pair to cross the river with, right there. That's old HWC Prommel and old Louis Moses Chaffin. There is a pair to draw to, right there. If you was really up against it in a tight spot and you could pick any two people in the world to help you out of it, you wouldn't be very far off by pickin' those two. I guarantee ya. That was taken at our home there in Green River. And that also must have been in 1926 or 1927.



Grand dad Chaffin Driving

PHOTO NC 087

NC: Well, there's old Lou Chaffin. And my uncle Bill in the middle and my brother Ken on the left. That was a long time ago, friend, I got news for ya. I don't know where it was taken. Might be up the river from Hanksville. Look at that background there.

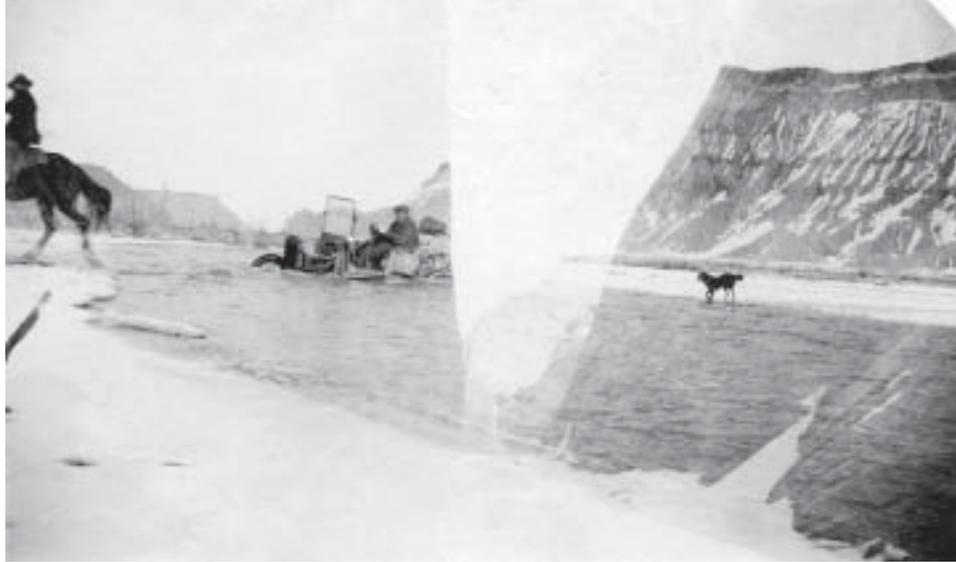


PHOTO NC 088

NC: Oh! That's my old friend George. That's my old friend George Franz, bein' pulled across the river. That's ice. He's comin up out of the deep water there. Them old cars. Look at the poor old dog there. Have to cross that old cold water. Ohhhh! Look at the frost. That's not snow. It's frost on that hill. Cold. Yeah. Old George Franz, boy, he was a pistol, that one.



PHOTO NC 089

NC: Wiladeane and I, we went to great length over this one. And that's my mom and my dad. And that's Violet in the car. And they're holdin' Wiladeane, Wiladeane in his arms. Now just a minute here. We're one person shy here. Isn't there somebody sittin' in that rumble seat? That must be Gwen. Because that's Gwen's car. And that's the old ranch at the San Rafael. That's the old ranch house. See it? See the stovepipe stickin' up? That's it. That's it.



PHOTO NC 090

NC: Oh, that's the Chaffin gang. That's mom, and Clell holding Wiladeane. There's dad and Violet and Faun and the other lady there, who I don't know. That must be one of Clell's girlfriends. Kind of looks like Daphne Smith. I don't know who it is. I can't see. I can't tell ya.



PHOTO NC 091

NC: When you show 'em this one, you can say this is the last picture of the Wild Bunch. Huh!? And look at that. If that wouldn't qualify as a wild bunch, I'd like to know what would! All right. All right, we're gonna start in the back, are we? Violet Chaffin and Alice Chaffin is the two ladies in the back. Then, we have Louis Moses Chaffin. Then we have uncle Bill Chaffin. Then we have Kenneth Chaffin. Then we have Faun Chaffin. And the little girl in front? I say its Wiladeane. Wiladeane says it's Twila's kid, Phyllis Stark. So, I don't know. That's on the front porch at the ranch.



PHOTO NC 092

NC: Ok, that's mom and dad. That's the geyser there at the ranch. And that's the piece of equipment that they drilled it with. And that's right after dad had tasted the water and found out that it was bad water. Can you imagine? Can you imagine what'd go through a man's mind? Poor boy; to hardscrabble a deal to drill that well like he had to do, and like he did. To do that, and then hit that bad water. All that water flowin' up like that. And hit ya on the skin and as cold as ice. Just the coldest water you ever saw. And then you tasted it. And it tastes really bad.

Can you imagine how much fortitude a man would have to have to keep from cuttin' his own throat right there on the spot! It is beyond my comprehension. Really! Really! I'll bet that was as big a disappointment as that old man ever had. I'll bet that was as big a disappointment as it was when he first looked at me.



PHOTO NC 093

NC: I know where that picture's taken. That picture's taken up at Teasdale. In back of the old Teasdale Hotel. That was uncle Arth's old home. He bought this old hotel and changed it. That's taken in the back yard. I really don't know any of those people except dad and mom.



PHOTO NC 094

NC: Oh! That's at mom and dad's home there in Payson. And here's dad. And here is aunt Nettie Brian, who married mom's brother. She was one of the Paces from over around there. This is one of my aunts. This is one of mom's sisters. And then, this one is mom.



9 Dec 51

PHOTO NC 095

NC: That's another picture taken there in front of their house there in Payson. And that's dad. And that's Carol Chaffin. That's Kenneth's oldest daughter, who was one of the little kids in one of the previous pictures. And then of course, that's mom. I was gonna say it could be fifty-nine. Or fifty-seven.



PHOTO NC 096

NC: Gwen Chaffin, Alice Chaffin, Twila Chaffin Stark and Phyllis Stark. That's Phyllis. That's Twila's child.



PHOTO NC 097

NC: Ok. And that one is mom and dad and Twila Chaffin.



PHOTO NC 098

NC: That is the Chaffin family. This is Bill Chaffin. This is Charlie Chaffin. This is Arthur Chaffin. This is George Chaffin. And this is Louis Chaffin. My dad and his four brothers. They tell me, that that was taken up in the Capitol Building. And that was a mural or somethin' on the wall there. That guy and his horses there by the old tree. Then it was up to the state capitol.

Now dad's the oldest one in the family. They go from age this way, going from left to right: uncle Bill was the youngest, Charlie, and then uncle Arth, and then uncle George, and then dad. Uncle Bill, he's the youngest. 'Course, now uncle Bill was gassed in the war, World War One. And he was always skinny and looked emaciated. Well, like he didn't have nothin' to eat. Like an old cow that was out that didn't have enough water and food. Uncle Charlie; I never knew uncle Charlie very well because he transported himself down here to California and I never did run him down or anything. And of course uncle Arth. Always close to him. And uncle George, god love him. And dad. Oh yeah, part of the good guys. I don't care what those other guys say about 'em.



PHOTO NC 099

NC: Oh! That's old Louie Moses. That's in Capitol Wash around nineteen twenty to nineteen twenty-two.



PHOTO NC 100

NC: There's that picture of the oil well that was taken out at Cisco. There's Lloyd Baker. And mom and my aunt. I don't know who that is. "Oil well, near Green River". Yeah, sixty miles. That wasn't very near, those days. I'm pretty sure that that was the well that burned up there.

Have ya saw pictures of the well that caught on fire in Cisco back in the old days? Heck you could see it for a million miles over there. The sparks touched off the natural gas and the natural gas blew up. See, they're still producing gas out of that field now. And that was a long time ago.

I'm pretty sure that that's Lloyd Baker. And I don't know whether that guy in back of that lady is dad or not. Dad was workin' on the well. He was helpin' drill the well. Hell, he did everything. When you saw a dollar back in those days, you started runnin'. You ran fast.



PHOTO NC 101

NC: That's dad. And that picture was taken at dad and Ken's place up at Payson, Utah. Wait a minute, let me look at that. "Dad doing his chores, 1956, in Payson".



PHOTO NC 102

NC: That's dad and his bug. It says: "From 1919 to 1926". You can take your choice. There's a seven year period. It looks like comin' up out of Fruita doesn't it? Anyway, its in the vicinity of the Capitol Reef National Monument.



PHOTO NC 103

NC: I think this is Heist Tank. Is there still a cottonwood tree in the bottom of the wash there? A couple of 'em? Is there still sign of my old rock thing there that I had built up where I had my cookin' equipment when I camped there? I took a bunch of rocks and just piled 'em up around there and put the dirt down on 'em, kinda like a table there. If you went up the wash you'd see it. I'm pretty sure that the Heist Tank itself is right back up here. The one that's on top that you can take the stock into. Then there's those little potholes down below.

And the men: there is Herb Weber and dad and I can't tell who's the man on that horse over there to your right. And that, of course, is a part of the Nequoia Arch Survey.



PHOTO NC 104

NC: Here's aunt Ephie, or Mrs. Tidwell, Delbert's mother. And Mary and Delbert, and June Marsing. Oh, I've got those all marked.

Now you're talkin' about good ropers. You see that old boy right there on that little gray horse sittin' up there like he's awake and wants to go after a wild cow or somethin'? That guy was a roper. That's June Marsing. I sure did like June Marsing. If he wasn't the best roper I ever saw, he's in the very, very, very, very top. He was the best horse roper to rope horses in a corral. And, I mean, he just wouldn't miss. And he built a little old loop about that big around. And he'd just flip it. Call it the June Marsing twist. He'd bring it up like this up over his head, like this, and he'd kind of twist his wrist like that.

He showed me how to do it. Of course I couldn't do it like he did. I did it only one time. That's when I caught Old Captain in front of Bill Racy. That's why Bill Racy's always braggin' on my ropin'. That was an accident, I assure you.

You don't spook the horses that way. Like, some guys goin' like this and scarin' the horses. And pretty soon they're all jammin' up and everything. But June would sit there and let 'em quiet down. And when they'd quiet down a little bit, he'd flip that. And he'd throw that loop high. And it seemed like it'd just settle right over the horses head and then just flip down right around his throat like and have him around the neck where he could control him. He was a real roper. He was a real horse roper.



PHOTO NC 105

NC: This is when we went down when George Whitmore and Earl Daniels went down with us. And that's down on Valentine Bottom. This is the rincon up the little canyon there toward the lower end.

And that's the big buck that my father-in-law shot. He shot him right through there. I run him right by my father-in-law. You see this white rock right there? My father-in-law was right there by that rock. And I ran the deer right by him. He had to come as close as from here to that window from my father-in-law. That old boy was comin' down through there, and I'm tellin' you he was packin' the mail. Boy, he had them old horns laid right back on his ears like that. And I'm tellin' you he was really goin'. And my father-in-law shot him. He shot him high in the back. Right through the back. But the deer just kept runnin' toward the river.

Well ol' Herb was sittin' over there. And he jumped on his horse and he roped the deer just before he went in the willows. Course we didn't have the tamarack then. And ol' Lorin Milton saw him. And he said if he'd have been one second later, why the deer would've been in the willows. And he wouldn't have caught him. But he caught him. 'Course he would've just died anyway the way he was shot. But boy he was a big one! Boy look at that spread of horns. Isn't that a beautiful thing.

And that's Faun and that's Lorin Milton and that's Herb Weber.

He's the biggest buck I ever saw. We saw his tracks when we came from Anderson Bottom. You'd see his tracks. And everyplace you could see his tracks you'd almost lose track of him from one jump to the other. He was startin' to run, see. Startin' to look for the ladies. They call it runnin'. Deer was runnin'. Now, they just run just to go someplace, hopin' they can see somethin'. His tracks looked more like big ol' buck sheep's track than a deer track. I mean, just a big ol' track. So we knew he was a big one.

Well, we come around that little place there on Valentine Bottom where that canyon comes down. And he went up there. And I cut straight across the canyon and saw that he hadn't come back out. 'Cause it had just rained the night before. And, so, we knew he was in there. So, I set my father-in-law here. All those other guys they scattered out. So, I got on his tracks. And I started followin' him up there. And I went up there just a little ways. And I picked him out of the rocks. And he come down. And boy when he hit the bottom of that wash and he started for that river, I never saw a beast strain so. Every ounce of energy he had, every bit of strength he had, he was puttin' in that run. I'm tellin' you, he was a-runnin'. And he just went by my father-in-law so fast that he missed him. But Herb caught him just before he went in the willows.



PHOTO NC 106

NC: Well, there's three of my favorite people. There's my brother, Faun Chaffin, my beautiful sister-in-law, Violet Chaffin, who's Wiladeane's mother and my good old friend, HWC Prommel.

And that was taken over to the Texas Well. Faun was workin' on the rig. Violet was a-cookin'. Cookin' for the crew. And HWC, 'course he was the geologist in charge.



PHOTO NC 107

NC: Ok, that's taken right there at the pond on Andy Miller Flats. I've used this picture for a logo for our Cowboy Caucus. But that is Earl Daniels, George Whitmore, Faun Chaffin and Herb Weber.



PHOTO NC 108

NC: That's back at Valentine Bottom with the deer. George Whitmore's the guy in the black hat, with the chaps on. Oh yea, he had plenty of Hollywood in him. He had a big ol' pair of fancy, silver mounted spurs. I sure would like to have those spurs. He can have his hat and his chaps. Boy would I like to have those spurs.



PHOTO NC 109

NC: That's Faun Chaffin. And that's taken at the San Rafael, at the ranch. Let's see what it says: "1927 - First new car Chaffin owned, Ajax. Built by Nash Burrough Company." Yeah.

That was the first new car we ever had in our family. It was all that work takin' those dudes out there during that Nequoia Arch survey what paid for that car. Five hundred and forty dollars. Hey, that was almost a month's work.

Let's see, what did dad get? He got seven hundred and fifty dollars a month and he furnished the horses. It was him and Faun and Albert Weber. And Gay and I, when we was with him, we each got a dollar a day. I had to do the camp work, get the wood, fetch the water and things like that. Help take care of the horses. And Gay actually went with them out into the field to go over and tie a flag on a tree someplace so they could shoot it with their instruments and so on.



PHOTO NC 110

NC: That's Clell with Gwen. I think that was taken over at Payson. I think that Clell was home on leave. And I think that was just before they went overseas.

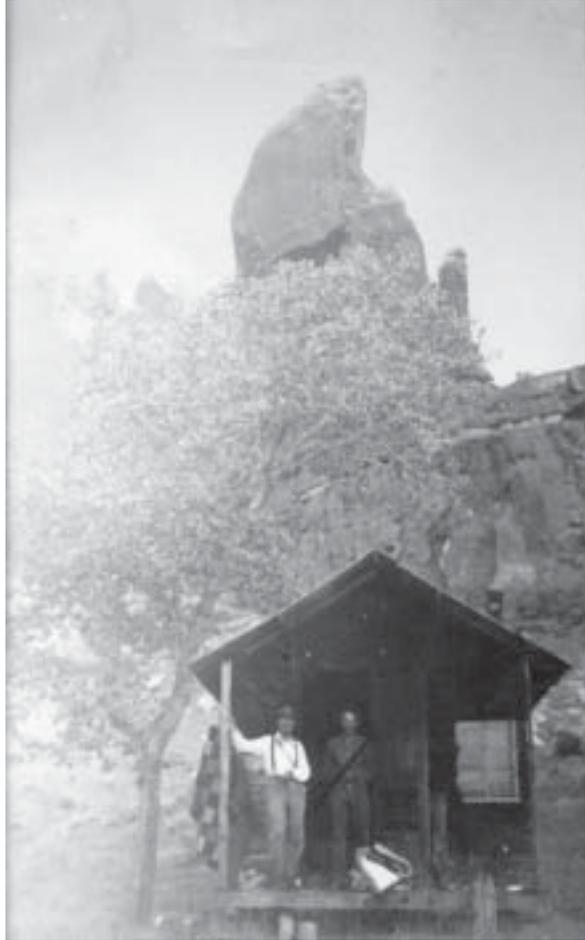


PHOTO NC 111

NC: Well!! There we are. You recognize that part don't you? You surely recognize that don't you? That's down at Anderson Bottom. That's the end of the rincon on Anderson Bottom the closest to the river. The trail comes right around here.

I wonder what ever happened to that little old cabin. Anyway, that was a little one-room cabin. And Billy Hay and dad and George Franz built it. And that was our headquarters for the George Franz operation. That's Billy Hay and that's Clell Chaffin.



PHOTO NC 112

NC: Oh, that's Clell Chaffin. And he is mounted on Bill Racy's favorite mount, Captain Kidd. That was taken up here to the Tahone Ranch.



PHOTO NC 113

NC: There's Ned and Clell. That's in Bakersfield.



PHOTO NC 114

NC: You can't see Clell's wife. That's Clell's wife. This is Clell. And that's Marjorie. And that was taken over at Bicknell, Utah. It was either the fourth or the twenty-fourth of July, I don't know which. So, we was over there. I think it was the twenty-fourth of July and they was havin' a little outdoor rodeo there.



PHOTO NC 115

NC: All right, that's Clell Chaffin all slicked up. And this is Ned Chaffin playin' cowboy. This was down here at Eighteenth and Chester, on Frontier Days. They had a Frontier Day. And everybody grew beards and put on cowboy outfits. And we had a regular ol' cowboy town here.



PHOTO NC 116

NC: Uh oh. Here's a jewel here, that one. This is a guy by the name of Mr. Calhoun. He worked for the railroad. Here is Gay Chaffin. This is my brother Gay. He was almost three years younger than me. But you see how much bigger he is than me. I'm in the middle. And then that's Jackie Calhoun, the little guy, which is this gentleman's son. Well you can guess when it was. I would say in the very early 1920s.



PHOTO NC 117

NC: They're having a parade of some kind. Gay, Jack Calhoun and Harold Halverson's sister. I'd forgotten about her. She was a schoolteacher, I think. 'Course I palled around with most of them.



PHOTO NC 118

NC: That's Ned pullin' the wagon and Gay sittin' on the wagon. Let's see what it says back here. "Ned and Gay, taken in Green River." And there again, that was a long time ago wasn't it?



PHOTO NC 119

NC: This one? This is Gay and this is Gwen. And that was taken up to Segoo. Up to the coal mining camp. You've been up there, I'm sure. Pretty much a ghost town now. Anyway, this was a company house. And you see our front door. A wall went right straight back there. And on this side was another door. And another family lived in it.

And dad and Ken worked up there one winter, minin' coal. I told you those old dudes did lots of things. In fact, I got a picture of 'em comin' out of the mine someplace. But it says here, that was taken in 1922.

This is where I had my first big run-in with Pearl Baker. This was a mining town. And in those days, the guys that followed the mines and worked in the mines was all a bunch of ruffians! And anyway, they sent Pearl over there to teach school. Over at the one room schoolhouse for about fifty kids. You know how those companies are. They don't like to put out money. They got a law against it. It's illegal to spend a dime, on anything. Even on education.

Anyway, us little old guys, boy we had the run of that school, I'm tellin' you! Boy, we didn't nobody studied. All we did was played ball and did everything we wanted to. Our teacher, somethin' happened to her. And I don't know what happened to her. And it don't matter.

But anyway, they sent ol' Pearl Biddlecome over there to teach us. Boy, she wasn't there only about three hours till she had that deal straightened out. I'm tellin' you! She

just raised hell with everybody. And when she took that ruler and pointed it at you like that, you listened. She was just a kid herself, really. But I tell you! She had them kids readin' them books and writin' and doin' that spellin' and addin' two and two and makin' four out of it. I mean quick! Which shows you it can be done. And, not only that, she made you want to learn, too. That's the most important part about teaching, if a teacher can make you want to learn somethin'.

PHOTO NC 120

NC: That is the cairn on top of Observation Rock. What they would do is, in the middle of it they'd put a pole there and put a flag on it. Then when they got, like, over to Faun's Rest, way over to head of Horseshoe Canyon, they could take their instruments and shoot it to get their proper triangulations and distances and the whole bit. Very important for 'em to have a shooting point.



I've got some pictures of Faun and Albert Weber carryin' these boards; each of 'em would be about a one by five, with different colors on it. And have it so they would collapse up into one that'd be about ten feet long. And, you'd put about three of them on your shoulder. And start out there eight or ten miles on an old horse. Do you think you didn't earn that dollar a day? And then they would take it over there and put it up. Then the guy doin' the work there could take his old machine and tell exactly how far it was and the whole bit. I don't know exactly how they did it but that's the way they did it.

Observation Rock was a beautiful spot, because you could see it from most anyplace in the whole country there. Like Lands End. Had a big one up on Lands End too. Cause you could see it from all over the place.

That's Charlie Wells. We already ran into him before. And here's Gay Chaffin. And here's Albert Weber.



PHOTO NC 121

NC: That's Gay's grave over at Elgin. He had a form of meningitis. I don't know what it was exactly. He just swelled up. And the skin turned kind of red. And pain, that poor kid, how he suffered. Oh lord have mercy on him, I'm tellin' you. Oh, the doctors came from all over the country trying to help him out. But it was just his time to go, I guess.



PHOTO NC 122

NC: There's old baldy Ned. That's old Ned Chaffin. That was taken in California. There's a pair of skis. And that's the closest I ever got to a pair of skis in my life. And I don't want to get that close to 'em again. But you see what I'm doin'. I'm gatherin' the wood and buildin' the fire and doin' the work. And somebody else is getting their skis ready to go skiin'! And that's the way it always works. Is that Marjorie holdin' them skis? I don't believe that's Marjorie. It could be. I don't think so. That was a long time ago. We hadn't been married very long. We went up to the snow up here. But that was taken here in California. And that must have been taken along about the time we was married.



PHOTO NC 123

NC: This is when they built the road across Horseshoe Canyon. And they just blasted. See where they made the crack there. But they evidently didn't have hardly enough charge in it to knock all that off. And old Ken Chaffin is standin' there lookin' for some way to get rid of all them rocks. Normally they would blast that heavy enough so that it would knock all that off. Then they wouldn't have to do it by hand, see. That's on the road into Horseshoe Canyon.



PHOTO NC 124

NC: That's Floyd Taylor and he's on the widomaker right in the same area there on that road [referring to photo NC123]. See, here's their line comin' from their air compressor that they had in that little flat down there right above the gate. Right along side of the gate there's a little flat place there. That's where they had their air compressor. And that's their air line, that pipeline comin' up there. And that's Floyd Taylor. He lived up at Fremont. He was mother's nephew.

And here's Ken down here. And Ken startin' a little spud hole. He'd drill a little hole by hand. About that deep, with the hand. Hit that hammer, make a little hole about like that, by hand. And then when Floyd come along with his widomaker he wouldn't have to mess around getting his hole started. See, cause it's already started. He'd just put that thing down there. And he's got his hole made in just a few minutes.



PHOTO NC 125

NC: Here's the camp at Horseshoe Canyon. Here's the cookhouse. That's where they did the cookin'. And there's the cars and tent. And here's where the guys stayed. Here's the corral. And then over here they had some more tents for the crew. And they stayed in tents.

'Course now lets remember, this was done in the winter, when they built that road. And pretty short days. But I'll guarantee you one thing, ol' Lou Chaffin had those boys out there just about as soon as they could see. And I don't think they moseyed back in the evening till they couldn't see very good. I think they worked about ten hours a day. Well, just as long as there was light, they was workin'. Then, of course, when the days started getting longer, why it was different. See that was done right in the dead of the winter. And, they got the road built and it worked. And it worked for a long time.

Look at the shadow of the man – whoever took the picture – look at the shadow there upon that rim there lookin' down, see. And there's his shadow. Now, this is lookin' north. Lookin' right straight north. You can see how far the sun was down. Almost down to the horizon. This is either the winter of twenty-eight, or, early in twenty-nine. Very early in twenty-nine.

Most of the guys that worked on that was members of my family! Well, hell uncle George, uncle Arth and dad had the contract. And they did all the firin' and hirin'. You don't think they're goin' out and hire a bunch of strangers. And then have to take part of their paycheck to feed their starvin'-to-death relatives. I want to tell you, when they did that work, that was just when things was just startin' to get tough in that country. And I mean, there wasn't any money. Period. And I think they paid those dudes four dollars a day, if I remember right. Floyd Taylor, that you saw the picture on the widow-maker there, he was an exceptional hand. I think he got a dollar a day more. And I think the rest of the guys got four dollars a day. Floyd Taylor was mom's cousin. He lived over at Fremont, you know, up above Loa. And they had a few guys from over in that area. But, most of all of 'em was the guys from around Green River there. Yeah, there was some nepotism goin' on there. If you was a hard worker and a member of the Chaffin Clan, one way or another, why you had a job. But they worked hard. And they got the job done ahead of schedule, under budget, and the whole bit. They did fine on that.



PHOTO NC 126

NC: I think this is Gay Chaffin right here. And I think that's Faun Chaffin on the horse right there. I

know this is Lou Chaffin standin right there. And I'm pretty sure that's Albert Weber.

Now, you see one of those boards I was tellin you about that they used [referring to photo120]. Now that's as small as you could make it. See how long that is on that mule there. And that old guy would put that on his shoulder and start across and he'd get over there and raise it up. And then the old boy would shoot it.

Look at old Louie Moses' water bag on his mule there. It looks kind of dry and empty, don't it? Huh? I wonder if he's got any water in that water bag.

That's gotta be on the Nequoia Arch survey. I've tried a million times to think where that picture was taken. I wouldn't have the foggiest idea where that is. This would have been in 1927. [In December 2001 the location of the photo point was discovered to be on the old sheep trail into Horseshoe Canyon which drops in from the east side and hits the canyon bottom near the Bluejohn Canyon confluence.]

PHOTOS NC 127, 128, 129

GC: We know what these are. I just wanted to have the dates on the headstones for our record.





PHOTO NC 130

NC: There's my old friend, George Whitmore. And the painting. A guy by the name of Rowe was the artist on that painting. And he's quite well known around here.

Old George, he really had a trip, I'm tellin' you! When he stepped out of that car right there. And could get on that horse, he looked just like a guy out of a John Ford movie. You know, that black hat and those chaps. He had a big old pair of fancy spurs that he'd probably traded hamburgers to some Mexican for. And he was a great guy. But, he really ate that stuff up.



PHOTO NC 131

NC: This diamond and a half here is Joe Biddlecome's brand. The M bar is Andy Moore's brand. This little gizmo right here is a cake-stand. That's the Tidwell brand. And the Seven D is the Gillis brand.

[End of photos and back to interview.]

GC: Are any of the shepherders you knew still around?

NC: I don't know about any of 'em still bein' around. Because as I remember, those shepherders back there, they was all older than I. Which would make 'em all pretty long in the tooth, if they was still alive. But I imagine some of 'em may be still alive. 'Course there was Dude Larson and some of the boys. And some of his family. There was Ez and Ike Huntsmann. I'm sure they're both gone. And then there was the Baleen brothers, Rex and Leland. It seems to me like Rex was about my age, if I remember right. And I was gonna say Leland Baleen would too. They worked for Karl Seely. Or did they work for Quince Crawford? I'm not sure. They might be alive. One of 'em might be. Rex might be. I think Rex was about my age. And Pete Masset is about the only name I remember, and of course the Dusserre boys, from the French side. And, there was a guy by the name of Ranier that might have worked for Henry Dusserre. I just can't remember. But most of those old shepherders that I knew down there've gone to their reward, whatever it might be. Because, those guys were all older than I, which would make them quite old now. I just can't come up with any. But, I tell ya, I believe if a guy went up around Castle Dale, and got inquiring, he might just happen to run into somebody that might know somebody.

GC: Can you tell us something about the outlaw history of the area?

NC: My dad said that he ran into Butch Cassidy or Butch Cassidy ran into him, whatever. And they stopped and chatted for a few minutes. And Cassidy said that he'd knew dad's father. And never had met dad before. And, dad said that when he saw Cassidy, as he was goin' down the side of the canyon there, dad noticed he had a pack horse and his riding horse and they was both following Cassidy. And Cassidy had the reins up over the horn. In other words, if the horse would've bolted he could've left old Cassidy a-foot. Which could happen and maybe some of us might have had that happen to us a time or two.

Cassidy, I don't believe had any enemies in our country that I ever heard of. I guess maybe the people up at the mines was mad at him. When you help yourself to the payroll, why that's maybe a cause for anger. Maybe the anger was justified. By and large, I don't think there was any hero worship and everything there. I never heard anything bad against him, like he was a liar or a cheater or a thief or anything else. Just a regular guy. And that's all. I never saw him myself. I'd like to have. I wished I had have.

But, you hear lots of stories and lots of tales about his comings and goings. I'm gonna have to believe what I have heard, and the people we might have heard it from, that he did come back from South America. That he did survive the deal down there and

came back. Because, there was several reliable people had conversations with him and knew all about him and where he went afterwards and the whole bit. So, I think it's reasonable to assume at least that Cassidy made it back from South America and led a good and lawful life after he came back here. Which is what everybody that knew him would expect him to do. And that's about all I know about Butch Cassidy. And that's what I've heard. And with no personal knowledge, you know, you have to make an opinion on what you hear. And it's real easy to hear bad things about people. And it's real easy to hear about their faults. People like to run other people down. I guess it helps their ego a little bit lots of times. But I didn't hear any of this about Cassidy. And never heard any praise for him, like he was a big hero or anything either. But just like he was just a regular, normal, good guy. That's all I ever heard and all I ever knew.

GC: How about any of the other outlaws in the Wild Bunch? Or any other outlaw stories? Did your father ever run into some of the others?

NC: Well, you know, now of course all those timers, they was intimate friends with all those old, famous outlaws, you know. They knew 'em. And they came and stayed at their house and anything.

And when we talk about the Wild Bunch, who are we talking about? Are we talkin' just about the Sundance Kid and Butch Cassidy and Logan and the other guy? Or are we talking about the whole group that these people attracted on account of business interests? Which, the business interest was, of course, helpin' rich people get rid of some of their money. We should more or less put all the group of outlaws into the Wild Bunch, because who's gonna separate 'em? Whose gonna say the cow thief or the horse thief they hung up in Wyoming isn't a member of the Wild Bunch that was down on Waterhole Flat down there below Chaffin's camp, campin' down there? Whose to say? I mean, nobody is that knows what they're talkin' about. And so, we have to assume that there was a lot of 'em that knew and assisted each other. They had to have lots of help. Or they wouldn't have been as successful as they were.

GC: Do you know any of the history of that trail into Horse Canyon? Did you ever use it? And do you know anything about the corrals by the spring in Horse Canyon? Did the outlaws build them?

NC: Sure we used the trail into Horse Canyon. That's the only way you can get in there. We put the cattle down that. And we used it all the time. And the little corral that was built down in Horse Canyon, I don't know this is a fact, but I will bet my bottom dollar that Eph Moore and Bill Tibbetts and Kenny Allred and those boys fixed that corral for themselves.

If you're chasin' me and I go down into Horse Canyon (now I'm on horseback, we don't have no helicopters and we don't have no fancy hikers like Kelsey that can scale those straight walls, we're just ordinary people) there's no place to go. And I would doubt very much that the outlaws would go down there and build anything very elaborate. I think they would really rather go someplace where they had a few more options.

Now this trail, from Chimney Rock that goes down in there. Tell me, is that passable. Could I take my sharp-shod mule down that trail? Or is that a foot trail?

GC: It's a really rough trail and it strikes me as being very old. It has deteriorated a lot. But, it was constructed. There is construction on it.

NC: All right, then it was used by stock.

GC: Do you know anything about the history of that trail?

NC: No, I don't. Faun and I spent a whole day tryin' to find that trail. Because he'd heard about it. He'd heard through the grapevine, or whatever you want to call it, that there was a way out of there. And he and I spent a day tryin' to find it, and damn near choked to death while we was trying find it to get down in there. 'Cause we didn't want to have to go all the way around to Big Water and come back down Horse Canyon and come up that canyon to get where we wanted to go. 'Cause there we was. We was just two hundred feet to where we wanted to go. And we had to ride around, thirty or forty miles over rough trails every inch of the way to get there. But Faun had heard about this trail. But we never found it. And Pete Masset never found it. So we assumed it wasn't there. It was a tale. It was an old maid's tale.

But I thought perhaps it was maybe just a foot trail.

Now there's one thing those old outlaws didn't like to do, from everything I've read, and everything I've heard people say that did know anything about 'em; they didn't like to walk! They wasn't Kelsey. They didn't like to take off here and walk farther in one day than you could go two days a-horseback, you know. They didn't go in much for that. They wanted to keep that old horse under 'em. But, I think we need to ask, how often was they there? If you was one of the outlaws and a member of the Wild Bunch, how many times would you be on the lam to go down to that country? Would you be once a year? Twice a year? Permanent? Would you want to be down there all the time hidin'? Or, I mean, what was your individual set-up?

GC: There's an inscription down around that corral in Horse Canyon by the spring. It's up high. It's not in an obvious place at all. And it reads, J. A. Y. Died April 24,

1896. Have you ever heard anything about an inscription like that? It's on the south side of the wash and just around the corner from where that little corral is.

NC: No. Never heard of it. Maybe it was one of the Youngers. The old Younger Gang, you know! Maybe that was a member of the old Younger Gang. Maybe one of them got killed on that day. What day did they get killed? They got all shot up you know, the old Younger boys.

A good friend of my uncle was a member of their gang. Old Indian Newcomb. He was a member of their gang. Got all banged up by them outlaws. Part Indian.

But see, the trouble is when we start reading this stuff on the outlaws Gary, you don't have to be a college graduate to figure out what happens. My golly! Where does it come from? It comes from maybe someone who was there. Maybe someone that witnessed it. Maybe for something you did. Maybe you talked to me and told me all the details and everything about it. And maybe I do know, or got a pretty good idea of whatever happened, whatever it was. But by the time I tell it two or three times why it just switches so much. Every time somebody re-tells one of these tales, some of 'em get a little bit wilder.

GC: Could you tell us the story about Zane Grey's visit to the area?

NC: Zane Grey and his entourage came out and they stayed down at George Beebee's place, down at the famous Shady Rest Auto Hotel. Which was a bunch of cabins built down by George Beebee's home there in Green River. And anyway, to make a long story short, they came out to the Roost. And Clell was up there helpin' Joe Biddlecome brand some calves or whatever they was doin' at that particular time of the year. And anyway Clell got a wagon, and he took Zane Grey and his people and he went over to the Roost Spring. Showed 'em the cabin there at the spring of course. And then took 'em up the canyon and showed 'em the cave where the shots had been fired into the cave by the posse that came for the bad guys. Then they left there and they went over to Outlaw Spring there on the head of The Spur. Browsed around there a little while. They went down into the Upper Pasture there at Horseshoe at the old camp where the Outlaws was supposed to have camped a lot. They came back and come over and went over to Flint. And they was gonna go down Under the Ledge, but they had a little bit of time before they'd get the necessary horses and pack mules there, so they walked out to Lands End and looked off. And when they looked off over there why the deal was off. They wasn't goin' down under there. And according to Clell's story, old Zane Grey, he kinda wanted to go down there. He especially wanted to go there at Waterhole and see those inscriptions there below the Chaffin Camp that the old outlaws had left on the rocks. But anyway, he had a guy working

for him that really was bitter about goin' down there. So anyway they decided not to go. So, Clell took 'em back to town and they paid him off. And this was just before Zane Grey wrote his book, *The Robbers Roost*. In fact that was what he was doing was there was gathering some authentic material for that book. I guess did a pretty good job of it. It was a pretty good story. Like all western stories, the good guy finally got the girl. He didn't kiss the horse at the end of it either, he kissed the girl. We admire him for that.

GC: Do you know anything about those inscriptions down there by the corral in Waterhole Flat?

NC: I don't know nothin' about 'em. I don't know whether anybody else does or not now. My good old friend Pearl, I keep to referring her, she said that Ella Butler was some big cattleman's daughter from over in Wayne County someplace. Don't know his name. Jack Butler, her husband, was this guy's son in law and she was his daughter. That's who she was. It seems like the name Jack Butler comes up every once in a while when we start readin' about the bad guys. But I don't know. I'd certainly be the last man in the world to say he was one of 'em, especially as bein' as much as I never saw him. Those are two names I remember. I really don't know nothin' about those people at all. None of 'em.

GC: Well, another question that came to mind about the camp there: I noticed on my last trip down there that there was a dike made of rocks and earth mounded up and sticks or branches added to reinforce it, to divert the water into the reservoir. Could you tell us anything about that?

NC: The only one I remember that we made was right there, right close to the pond, on the side the picture was taken off from with the Indian diggers [the Clafflin-Emerson Expedition]. There was a little wash came down there that drained some slickrock up there. We put some rocks and sticks and stuff across that. And we only built it strong enough so if a lot of water come down there it'd wash away and the water wouldn't go in. But if just a little bit of water came, it would run in the pond. We didn't have the pond up to the top now, like you guys got it. We didn't have any bulldozers. We had three head of horses and one mule. And we worked three of 'em at the time on the Fresno. And you know that dirt moves pretty slow. And we wanted to get all the water we could without the possibility in a real heavy rain of the thing filling up and washing away.

GC: Tell us a bit about The Nipple Trail. Did you have a constructed trail there over The Gap?

NC: Sure it was constructed. You just went and climbed over the rocks where you could and if one of 'em got in your way and it wasn't too big, you rolled it off. If it was too big you went around it or over it.

We didn't use it a lot. I only remember puttin' cattle over there just a time or two, that's all. Normally you go up and go up the old Golden Stairs. Is the way we'd usually go when we had to go. Which, we hoped we never have to do again.

GC: So your father had a great interest in Geology?

NC: He knew a lot about lots of things and geology was one of 'em. Because he was a student. He was always learning something every day. He only went to the fourth grade or the third grade or the sixth grade or something. But he was still an educated man. You talk him you wouldn't know that he wasn't a doctor. Excellent speaker and a guy that knew how to talk and how to present things, you know.

All those old miners back there, they had an interest in geology. But not so much maybe from a knowledge point. But from the knowledge of maybe to figure out some way to find some gold! That's why dad was very reluctant to ever go over to the Henry Mountains to hunt for gold. He said, there's no gold there. It's the wrong formation. There's no gold in that formation. There's no, like a gold vein or a mine, he said, there's none there. Wrong formation. It just isn't there! Nobody ever found any over there yet, either. Oh, ya can get those little chunks of float gold.

I know dad went over there with old Nelius Ekker and they did some placer mining one year over there and they got some gold. But that wasn't like the gold down on the Colorado River. That would be like a little nugget. A little small one. In fact Gay was with 'em over there and he would go down on the slickrock where the water'd run over the slickrock, you know, in the little pools, and he dug down there and he had a Bull Durham sack full of gold. You know, the Bull Durham tobacco sacks. And old Frank Lawler took it away from him, but he didn't keep it very long. Because old Lou Chaffin told Mr. Lawler to give it back it back to Gay. That, after all Gay got that. Well, yeah, but, he says, it's our mine. It's our claim. We ought to have it. Well, he had several ounces there. Gold was sixteen dollars an ounce. And if you had a few ounces of gold, you had a lot of money. Those days.

It's very difficult when you talk about money. I don't have the words or the know how to really talk about money in those days. By golly there wasn't any. Nobody, even rich people didn't have any money. Outside of old W. F. Asmuss and old George Franz and old John Byers, they had a little bit of money. The Wilson family and the Near family and all them, hell, they never had a dime. They was out there. They had their farms and their homes and everything. But money? No! Can't get blood out of a turnip. You

can't get money where there isn't any. That's why it was so important to the community when people like these guys comin' in there doin' that geological work and drillin' those few little wildcats around there came in. That's why it was so important to the community! Because it brought some cash.

And then, of course, there was the railroad. A long time ago the railroad had their division headquarters there at Green River. That was a division point. That's where the crew would change. The people comin' from Denver would stop in Green River and they would catch the train that the guys comin' from Ogden would bring down to there. And then they would go back. And so that's why the Midland Hotel kept goin' was on account of these guys.

I can remember those railroad men comin' there and stayin'. And they had a café there and they had Japanese cooks. Everyone but the dishwasher was Japanese. The Japanese wouldn't do dishes. And these guys, you'd never see 'em. Never. They did the cookin' and the whole bit in the hotel. But they stayed to themselves. And they made sake, I remember that. I can remember they had an old boy washin' dishes, an old bum I guess he was. And anyway, this guy, he played the banjo in the dance orchestra. And he'd get drunk. Those Japs would make sake, out of rice, you know, and this old boy'd get drunk on it. And boy I'd give a million dollars for a recording of his performance.

GC: What can you tell us about John Romjue?

NC: Lots of tales about Uncle John Romjue. Uncle John was a man of average height, maybe a little taller. A husky, strong built man. A quiet sort of a person. All wool and a yard wide. He made very little whiskey. He made only small batches. He wasn't in it to buy big fancy automobiles or buy a cattle ranch. He was in it just to have enough to eat on. And he'd make a few gallons of whiskey and he was very meticulous. He was very careful. He made the best whiskey in the country. Or that's what everybody thought. So, when he'd run off a batch, why it wouldn't last very long, because everybody would buy it. And he'd always give dad one of those old gallon jugs of it.

And I knew his favorite hiding place there at Tidwell's camp. That's why I wanted to go down there with you guys. I wanted to show you where Uncle John buried his whiskey. And I wanted to do a little diggin'. There might still be a jug hid there. The place was down from the drillin' rig, down where the road kinda turns like this to go back toward Horseshoe Canyon, down there under a tree kind of in a little sandy spot down there. And he'd always keep a jug or two hid down there to have if somebody come by and wanted a drink. 'Course he didn't want to keep it around the place there on the account of always worried about the revenuers. But the revenuers, I don't be-

lieve, to my knowledge, ever bothered John Romjue at all. Because he wasn't a professional bootlegger, really, as such.

I'll tell you a little story about John Romjue's whiskey that might be of interest to you. I was down Under the Ledge. And of course I was alone. This was in the winter. And I had made arrangements with Tidwells to be there New Year's Eve, if I could. Not, I'm gonna be there, if I'm not there, come a-huntin' me. But one of these deals; well, if I can, if I get my work done and everything, I'll be there New Years Eve and we'll go to town. In their car. So, I pulled into the Tidwell's Ranch there. It was pretty late. It was almost dark. And they was gone. In fact, the stove was still warm. They'd been gone just that long. They waited for me. And I'd made a mistake on the days.

So anyway, to go back to the whiskey deal, I was there. And I built a fire. And I started to fix me some food. In fact there was some food already there. And I started thinkin', I thought, aw hell! Now I got really lonesome. You know what I mean. And they had one of those old phonographs, that played the cylinder records. They had one of those old phonographs and a huge box of records. Well, I went down and I confiscated a jug of Uncle John's whiskey, down at his cache down there. And I brought it up there to the ranch and I started drinkin' that darn whiskey and playin' those records. And I was actually dancing with myself on the floor. I was feelin' so good. And I just kept drinkin' and boy I got drunker than heck. And I woke up the next morning; I didn't feel very good. That was a traumatic experience really. But I lost a day someplace. I really should've been there a day quicker.

So, I didn't get to town until New Years Day. And they had the big dance there in Green River. I don't know what year it is, but I know how I can find out. Because New Years Eve that year was a Sunday night. And all I have to do is go get an old calendar from the thirties to see which year the New Years Eve was a Sunday night. Why, then I could tell. Because they wouldn't let 'em dance in Green River on a Sunday. And so they started the dance at midnight. And there I am out there drinkin' booze, dancin' with myself. And all those other dudes in town drinkin' booze, dancin' with all them pretty girls, see. That's the way it went. That's the way that deal worked out.

So, the next day I got up and I headed for town and I got to the Chaffin Ranch and there was nobody at the ranch. This was New Years Day. Nobody there. So I thought, well hell, I don't want to stay here alone. Everybody had gone to town. Everybody was in town. So I grabbed the horse and away I headed for town. And I went to town and I got there along in late in the evening. Went and got my hair cut. And they had a dance that night too. But everybody wasn't there because some of 'em was soberin' up from the early morning festivities that they just had not too long ago.

But Uncle John's whiskey wasn't nothin' but good. He didn't make anything but good whiskey. I told you before, his whiskey was considered the best in the country. And if you was gonna pay two dollars a pint for a whiskey, why if you could get it from him, why you would. But I can't ever remember him bein' in town peddlin' his whiskey. I don't think he had to. And most of the old bootleggers themselves that made the whiskey, they wasn't stingy, none of 'em. Because they didn't want to make Ned Chaffin or anybody else angry with 'em. You know what I mean. Because they didn't want somebody getting mad at 'em over a bottle of whiskey and siccin' the revenuers on 'em. But, anyway, we never was bothered much with revenuers down in that country.

GC: Did you ever go see his still?

NC: Uncle John's still? Sure I saw his still many, many, many times.

GC: So, he had it set up back there in what they call sometimes John's Hole?

NC: Yeah, that's right. He had his still there for years. 'Course we'd go there. And when we was crossin' the canyon, we'd go there to water our horses, see. We wouldn't go up to Spring Canyon [Water Canyon] because John's Hole was a lot closer, see. No use goin' all the way up there, plenty of water there at John's Hole. But you'd never see him there. Because if he heard you comin' he'd go. Whatever exits he had, I can't remember just exactly what they was. But he wouldn't show himself, even if he was there. Most of the time he wasn't there. He'd just tend his stuff. Probably had a certain hour that he did it, like daylight or somethin'. But, John made good whiskey and he made all small batches. I wouldn't call him a wholesaler. I'd just call him a guy that made some whiskey and would sell it and try and get enough money to eat on and to buy enough corn and sugar or whatever the ingredients were to make another batch.

GC: Did he drink some of it himself? Did he like whiskey?

NC: John wasn't a drinkin' man, no. I never remember seein' him drunk. Never in my life. I guess he drank, I don't know, to tell ya the truth. Most of the people I can tell ya I saw 'em drink. I know I saw him if he drank. I know I saw him do it. But, no impression.

GC: So, your dad occasionally purchased a jug from him?

NC: Well, most of the time he give the old man a jug. And of course, my dad, he savored whiskey. He loved whiskey. He actually loved the taste of whiskey. He'd take a little glass of whiskey in the morning before breakfast and he was in heaven.

I only saw my dad drunk one time. This was in at our ranch. And of course dad always made home brew. And we always had home brew on ice there in the summer for medicinal purposes and so forth. And anyway, we went out and gathered the cows and brought 'em in and put 'em in the corral and we was gonna brand some calves. And when we got in and got 'em corralled, whatever the time was, I don't know, mom had our lunch ready for us. So we went up there. And dad drank a bottle of beer before we sat down to eat. And we just got ready to sit down and here come old Bub Vance from the Phillips oil well. And so we was just ready to eat. So, of course he was gonna eat with us. So mom had to set another plate. And dad went and got him another beer and got Vance a bottle of beer also. So dad drank two bottles of beer. Well, by the time he was about half through his meal, he was so drunk that he couldn't stand up. He was drunk from here to the tip of his toes. He was drunk, all over! Just dead drunk. If you would drink ten barrels of whiskey you couldn't be any drunker than he was. Because he'd been out there ridin' in that hot sun and got dehydrated. And there was enough alcohol in that home brew that it just happened to hit him, just right. And boy I'm tellin' you he was so drunk. That's the only time I ever saw my father drunk.

But my father drank. My father was a real proponent of drinking. He's the guy that said, that he who drinks and drinks with grace, is always welcome at my place. But he that drinks more than his share, that son-of-a-bitch isn't welcome anywhere. That was dad's favorite saying. And dad told me when I was a young man, he says, you never should take a drink. 'Course this was when I got to where I started drinkin' and chasin' girls and things like that. And dad said, you shouldn't drink, he says, you're not cut out for drinkin'. He said, you should leave it alone. He said, all the other boys, is all right. But, he says, you're one guy that never should take a drink. 'Cause, he says, you don't like it. It don't taste good to you. You hate it. And all you want to do is get the uplift and get drunk, he said. That's no good, he says. Don't, he said, if I was you, I'd just leave it alone. Wouldn't even touch it. So, that was his opinion. And he was right. Anyway, that's the story of drinking.

But there was always drink around the family. And I always, as I say before, associated with people that did. In fact all the guys drank. Even the bishop used to sneak over to our house and have a drink with dad once in a while, and most all the other guys. The old bishop, I used to get a kick out of him. He hid from me. "Oh, I don't want that kid to see me takin' a drink, Lou." "Oh that's all right he won't say nothin'". Nobody ever said anything. But drinking was a part of the whole equation of living in those days.

GC: What about tobacco?

NC: Dad always said he didn't want any of us guys smokin' those goddamn cigarettes. He wanted us to smoke a pipe. When we got ready to smoke, he'd buy us a pipe. Dad used to smoke a tobacco they called Old English Roughcut. And it came in a red can. It came in layers. And he'd take it like this and he'd crumble it in his hands like that and put it in his pipe. It was super strong. And I used to steal his tobacco and us kids would grind it up and roll it into cigarettes and smoke it. And we'd smoke bark off a tree, anything that'd burn. Smoked coffee even.

Any self-respectin' man had to be a smoker. And all the kids. Not the women so much. But the kids, the boys, we couldn't wait to get old enough to smoke. And the women smokin', of course, that came. But I can't remember any of the girls smokin' around home, when they was stayin' home. But, of course, soon as they got away from home they started smokin'. Both my sisters smoked, Twila and Gwen. They both was smart enough to quit though. And I smoked and Clell smoked. But Faun and Ken never did smoke. Now I don't say that they didn't sample it. But I mean – to smoke. Clell and I both smoked and we both quit.

A guy can quit if he wants to. 'Course it's very traumatic to quit smokin'. I appreciate when I see people suffering about when they quit smokin'. 'Cause I know what they're goin' through.

I know when I quit. I was getting ready to go Under the Ledge and of course I smoked Bull Durham. And I'd buy that Bull Durham and I think there was twenty sacks in a carton. And I'd buy a carton of that. And I'd have it. Nickel a sack. Spend a whole dollar for it. Anyway, I was goin' down Under the Ledge. It was early in the spring. And Dad says, you left your tobacco up there on the mantle. You better get your tobacco. Naw, I said, I'm not gonna smoke this trip down there. Well, dad started raisin' hell with me. Now, I want you to take your tobacco with you. If you don't want to smoke that's fine. Don't smoke. But I want you to take your tobacco. Because you won't get a damn bit of cowpunchin' done down there. All you'll be doin' is runnin' around to all them shepherders bummin' their tobacco. And you won't get nothin' done because you'll be wasting all your time huntin' some tobacco to smoke.

Well, I didn't take no tobacco with me. And old Ez Huntsmann and Ikie Huntsmann, they was camped right out there from the point of rocks up there on that flat. And I went there this night and stayed with 'em. Well, before that I had smoked the one sack of tobacco. And I stayed there in the Flint Cabin. And the next morning, I got up and I had enough tobacco in my sack for one cigarette. And so I rolled that cigarette and I smoked it there. And boy it tasted good. That night I went down to Waterhole. And I went down there and I stayed with Ez Huntsmann, Ez and Ike. I think Ike was movin' camp and Ez was herdin' the sheep. So, after dinner, we was sittin' around in that little old eight by ten tent. Pretty close in there. Especially when it's cold and had a fire

goin'. And old Ez and Ike, course they was both; well, what's the matter Ned? Know you cowboys all pretty poor, but if you can't afford any tobacco, we got a little bit of extra. And I says, no, I'm not smokin'. What do you mean you're not smokin'? Well, just this trip down. I didn't quit smokin'. And, 'course then they start raisin' heck about a guy quittin' smokin'. How nobody can quit smokin. And dad raised heck with me. And everybody did. You couldn't quit smokin'. Boy I tell ya that was a miserable night. You eat that good old meal. You know, a hot meal and it's cold and everything. And sittin' there inhalin' that secondhand smoke. I really wanted to smoke. Anyway, I went about my business of takin' care of the cattle. And I had a big bay mule. His name was Tobey. Tobey was kind of a frisky, kind of an ornery, wild, mean sort of a mule. But I had him trained to where, when I stopped him and I hollered whoa, he'd whoa. And I'd put my reins over the horn and I'd take off my gloves and put 'em down on the pommel of the saddle and I'd roll me a cigarette. And as soon as he'd hear that match light he was gone. He was ready to go. He'd hold absolutely still. And that next day, I'll betcha that old mule stopped for me with his ears back lookin' at me a hundred times for me to roll a cigarette. And I'll betcha I stopped him a hundred times and I'd reach in my pocket for that tobacco, unconscious, absolutely unconscious. No tobacco. So away we'd go.

I was down there about three weeks that trip, I guess. And I came back to the ranch. And boy I couldn't wait to get to that tobacco. Well, of course the old man, he met me down at the corral and I threw my packs off and everything. The only thing he said to me was, well, how did the sheepherders' tobacco hold out? Did they all run out of tobacco? And I said, well I don't know, why? What do you mean, he says, you mean you didn't smoke since you was here before? No, I didn't, not even one. Well, I smoked the one bag of Bull Durham I that had when I left here. And I haven't had a smoke since I finished that. Then, boy he really berated me and the boat I came over on and everybody that ever lit one of them g__ d__ cigarettes. Nobody could quit. And I thought, damn, I'll show that ornery old so and so. So that's when I quit smokin'. I didn't quit smokin' the three weeks before, when I went down there. That's when I quit smokin', right then. So, that's when I quit smokin'.

You're just out of it a little bit, really, when ya first quit smokin'. Used to getting all that poison and, then to cuttin' it off does something not only to your body but your mind also. And especially under those circumstances where a lot of times, you really haven't got a lot to concentrate on. You know what I mean. You're ridin' down the trail. You're goin' from Ernie Country to Waterhole Flat. You've got nothin' to do. There's, uh nobody to talk to. There's nothin' to think about. Think about them cigarettes though.

GC: What about coffee?

NC: Oh sure. Oh yeah. Coffee was a mainstay. And of course, you get around Joe Biddlecome and you get around the Chaffin outfit most of the time, and you get around old Eph Moore most of the time, they was so damn poor that they couldn't afford any sugar and cream for the coffee. So we always drank our coffee black when we was kids. And I swore, that if I ever got to a place where I could, I was going to have cream and sugar in my coffee. And that holds good to this day. I want cream and sugar in my coffee. Not, necessarily for the taste or anything. It tastes just as good without it, but because I promised myself I'd do it, if I ever got to where I had enough money to buy the milk and the sugar. So, that's why I use milk and sugar in my coffee today.

But those old boys would make some pretty wicked coffee. I helped old Eph Moore for a couple of weeks one summer over there brand some calves and one thing and another. And the way he'd make coffee; he'd take a little old handful of coffee and he'd boil that stuff for an hour to make sure he had enough out of it. Boy, pretty rough stuff with no sugar and milk. Joe Biddlecome would watch his pretty close. And just when it turned over in a boil like that, that's when he'd pull it off the coals. Roy Dickerson, he'd take the coffee and pour it in his little tin cup, and raking some coals out from the campfire, he'd put his tin cup on that and the coffee would be sizzlin' and he'd drink it, or sup it. And tell the stories. God, I'd like to have him and your tape recorder for just three hours. He could really tell the stories. Ah, coffee was great stuff. One of the mainstays.

GC: Now, didn't some folks have the condensed milk?

NC: Oh, sure, in the cans. Yes, we packed condensed milk with us. And we used it primarily to put on rice. We boiled rice. Rice was a mainstay for anybody that was cooking out, there in that country. Because it won't spoil, and it's light in weight for your mules to tote around. Your mule can tote enough rice to last you for a year. And the most important thing, it won't spoil! And, it swells up when its cooked. It's four times as big when it cooks up, as it was when it wasn't cooked. And it's very, very, very nutritious. And rice was just a natural. And we ate lots of rice. Everybody. Throw it in your old kettle.

We had an old aluminum kettle that Dave Rust nicknamed Old Bail. Because the bail had long been gone off from it. And Faun took some copper wire and put on a bail of it. And of course it was all bent up and beat up and everything. And it was about that thick, aluminum, raw around the edges where the mules had fell on it and hit trees and rocks with it. Dave Rust called that, Old Bail. I sure would like to have Old Bail. Put on my mantle in there right now. But we ate lots of rice on the range. And you'd

put a little bit of milk and a little bit of sugar in it too, which was a treat, really. But, we ate rice probably three times a week, on an average.

And even today I revert back to the scenes of my childhood and I'll boil me up a pot of rice for dinner at night. And I'll fix it shepherders' style. Because I'm going to add one ingredient to the rice and the milk and the sugar that the cowboys never did have because they never could afford it. Cut up some cheese in it. Put the hot rice in there and let the cheese melt. And I will say, even today, I'll bet I have that for dinner, three or four times a month. That'll be my dinner. That's all I'll have for dinner. Make up a big batch of it. Yeah, good stuff!

GC: What about beans?

NC: Well now, of course, beans; lets realize one thing about beans; you're down there and you've got all your camp on a pack mule, right? Now, beans is wonderful, because here again, you got something that swells, you got something that keeps, you got something that's delicious and very nutritious, just like rice. But remember one thing, how long does it take you to cook a bean back in that country? Don't have no micro-waves. You put 'em on the coals and you start cookin' 'em. You almost have to have somebody stand there and watch 'em to keep 'em from scorchin'. Especially on a campfire. White man cowboy, he build a big-o fire, stand way back, freeze on one side, burn on the other. And the Indian builds a little fire, freezes on one side and burns on the other. Same way with your beans. You put 'em on a little fire; still, burns on this side, they'll cook on this one. So it took a long time to cook beans. So, suppose we left Waterhole Flat and went over to Ernie Country and we was gonna be over there for one day. We're goin' over there this afternoon and we're gonna put in our camp and tomorrow we're gonna round up the cattle there in Range Canyon, what few is there, and put the calves in the old corral there and brand 'em. When are we gonna have time to cook these beans? To actually stay there and cook 'em. That was the worst part with beans for that country.

Now, when we was with the Nequoia Arch Survey that was different. Because, Old Baldy Ned, they paid me a dollar a day. And that was part of my job, to cook those beans. And this brings another great story to my mind. Beans was great, but in our particular situation there under the ledge, they was difficult to cook.

Now over at Biddlecome's, over at Millie's, where she had the stove and everything, where she could put 'em on the stove when she started cooking her breakfast, by the time she got breakfast over with, they was partially cooked. And she could just leave 'em on the fire in the stove and wouldn't be very long till the fire was gone. They wouldn't scorch or nothin'. Even if she was out punching cows. So, she'd cook 'em.

But the way we was, where you was packin' everything on a mule, it was just difficult to cook beans, on account of the time. We ate beans, but we didn't eat a lot of beans on the range. Now if you was gonna be someplace where you was on a job, like buildin' the pond there at the Chaffin Camp, and buildin' the corrals around the places, and you was there for several days, that was different. But most of the time you was pretty much on the go. But we ate beans. Throw a little old piece of that old salt belly in 'em. Sowbelly, we used to call it. The nice people call it salt pork. But, even today, beans aren't any good if they don't have a little salt pork with 'em. That's why I hate my doctor 'cause he told me not to use any salt pork in my beans.

GC: So, what's the story of the Nequoia Arch Survey and the beans?

NC: We was camped over at the Outlaw Spring there on the head of The Spur. We camped right there by the spring. Between the Indian cave and the spring. You know, there's a little flat place right there, and we camped there. And we had a kid by the nickname of McKlurg with us. He was a classmate of mine. Same age as I. And he and I we was the chore doers. Anyway, dad and Faun and Albert Weber and Mr. Prommel and Ted Crumb and Charlie Wells and I don't know who all was there. And Dick and I, we was the camp tenders. It was our job to take care of the camp, take care of the horses and the mules, water, make sure we had plenty of firewood, make sure there's plenty of water at the camp. Anyway, this was the first time they went down on The Spur. Well, they underestimated how far it was from there down to Sugarloaf, horseback. And by the time they got to foolin' around down there it was pretty late when they come back.

In the meantime, that morning, Faun had told us, and gave us strict orders, to take all the hand towels (which was more of a rag than a towel) and the little bitch rags, we called 'em, that ya clean out your Dutch ovens and things with and anything like that, and wash 'em all up. And we had a little old bucket about like that that we was supposed to wash these things in. And we was supposed to cook this big pot of beans. And Faun already had the beans put on and everything before they left that morning to go down on The Spur.

So, McKlurg and I, we got up, and we starts lookin' around. And of course everything's interesting, you know. Here we were twelve, thirteen, fourteen years of age. Oh, those Indian houses! And that tank down there, where there was the old post that the outlaws used to wrap their rope around when they'd catch wild horses there. And then that knob up there. You know, right up from the spring, there's a knob up there. Well, now to Kelsey that wouldn't even be a foothill, right? But to me, that's the biggest mountain in the world.

So, old Dick and I, we start cookin' the beans. And everything's goin' fine. And we left 'em on the fire. And we start down and we start up on that Knob. We walked up on top of Outlaw Knob. We climbed up on the top of that. And then we started back down. And that's where I learned that it's more difficult to come down than it is to go up. Where you really learned it, you know, learned the lesson. Anyway, we got down there and we kind of got shelved in a little bit to where we got part of the way down. We couldn't go up. And goin' down was treacherous. So we thought, well, we'll take off our shoes. So we took off our shoes. And instead of totin' them or anything, we gave 'em a heave! Well, what did they do, they went down there and stuck on a little place partway down that we couldn't get to. So finally we got down. We found some rocks. And we threw the rocks up there and hit the shoes and knocked 'em over enough to where they fell off. And we got our shoes and got down and we got back to camp just at sundown or maybe a little after.

But the crew had come back to camp. And we'd washed these towels and etceteras. But instead of us takin' the water out and doin' the washing in the bucket, we did it in the trough. There was two or three troughs there. And we took one of the troughs and put our soap and our dirty clothes in it and washed 'em in it. Here those old boys come from down there, damn near choked to death. They come up there and of course that's the first thing they hit was those troughs and there they was full of soap. Because this soapy water had went from the one trough back up into the other two. Went over to the beans. The beans was scorched. Nothin' but a great big cinder in there. I know there was five guys and I think there was six, and boy did they give two kids hell! I tell ya. It's just a wonder they didn't kill us, right there. It's a wonder they didn't kill us right on the spot, they was so angry. I never saw a group of men so angry. They was almost berserk. No food. No water. And there they was practically choking, them and their horses both.

So they had to take their horses down, and instead of waterin' 'em in the trough there, they had to take 'em down to the tank. Had to take 'em down to the tank to water 'em. And, boy I tell ya, I heard about that mess-up many and many and many a time. Because that shows ya, that sometimes we get after kids pretty hard, but it shows ya, that kids sometimes just aren't reliable. Even though we was raised in a country where you was supposed to be reliable, you know. But anyway, one boy, fine, you got a good hand. Two Boys, you got half a hand. Three boys, you got nothin'. And that's the truth.

Anyway, that was a wonderful experience, now to tell about it. Those guys are all gone. Every one of 'em. Nobody. I'm the only one left. God love 'em all. Oh god, I'll never forget old red headed Faun Chaffin! Boy he had red hair and a temper to match. And I don't know whether he would be what you would call mad or angry or just

disgusted. Boy he'd carry on, I'm tellin' ya. Anyway he really laid it on us. Anyway we didn't have any beans that night. Well, yes, we had beans for supper that night. They opened some cans. That was one good thing, workin' for the Nequoia Arch Survey. You always had lots of good groceries. All kinds of good canned food. Canned pineapple, canned meat, canned milk.

GC: Probably a big treat.

NC: Well, it was just a lot different than what we was used to. I mean after all, old W. F. Asmuss didn't get rich very easy. But he sure didn't do very bad off of those people I'll guarantee you. Because they'd just go there and they'd buy, well, canned fruit. I remember especially the canned pineapple and how we'd almost used to cherish those pieces of pineapple. Hell, they'd bring out a case of pineapple, a case of cherries, all kinds of canned jam, you know, little cans of jam about like a Campbell's soup can. All kinds of jam. 'Course no fresh meat. There's no way to keep fresh meat, you know, at summertime.

GC: So, you didn't slaughter a cow very often for meat?

NC: No! Oh, well in the winter we would. Always had lots of meat in the winter. Sure.

GC: Jerky?

NC: Yeah, we made jerky. We made jerky. Everybody liked to make jerky out of venison. But, where was the venison? Ya had to go way over on the Green River, way over at Anderson to find any venison to make jerky out of. We made beef jerky. Yeah, spent many an hour making beef jerky.

GC: What about mutton?

NC: Oh sure. Well, the shepherders; of course mutton was one of the mainstays of their diet. And that's why they always welcomed us old, roughneck cowhands. Because they figured if it was in the winter, when you can pack the fresh meat, we'd have some beef with us. And, boy they would be anxious to trade ya that mutton for some beef. Which, you eat mutton for a few days straight, you can understand why. But anyway they always had mutton. Always. That's cheap camp stuff, good. Course they had a man, that was his job, was to cook. And they had the set-up to cook it in. The always had the tent. They had the little camp stove and had the chimney and had a good ax to chop the wood with for the stove. They just set a little better table than the cowhands. They're set up for it. They had a nice camp. They always had their tents. They'd

set that little stove up, and fix the food basket here, and their bed was in one end that you could sit on. And, sit there and stir up that food. Really ate some good meals with those shepherders.

GC: Did the shepherders carry canned food with them?

NC: Yeah. Everybody packed canned food. Everybody had some canned food. It was a mainstay. And we had some.

And we ate lots of gravy. You know, take a little piece of salt pork, and you wouldn't want to take a very big piece, because you have so big a piece of salt pork, say the size of that and it had to last. You cut you off a little slice of that. Cut it up. Throw it in the frying pan and fry the grease out of it. Then you would make the gravy with the grease. Best gravy in the world. And that's why that you never get any good gravy anymore, 'cause people don't put salt pork grease in it.

GC: You carried salt pork in the summer?

NC: Oh sure! Oh sure, oh hell it'd keep all summer. Oh sure.

GC: It was kind of the mainstay for meat in the summertime?

NC: You didn't use it for meat. You used it for grease, for seasoning. You didn't take a big enough hunk off from it to use it for meat because you couldn't afford it. Ok, we'll leave Green River on the tenth of May. We're not comin' back to Green River till the Fourth of July. We gotta piece of salt pork this big, we can only take off this much every day. That's the way it was. So that's what you did.

GC: So you didn't have much meat in the summertime?

NC: No. We had no meat really, for all practical purposes.

GC: Rice and beans, jerky once in a while. Gravy?

NC: Rice mostly, gravy, beans, canned foods. Lots of gravy. Ate lots of gravy. Yeah, take that little old piece of salt pork, take ya some gravy, pour it on that old baking powder biscuit. Or, if ya never had nothin' to pour it on, you'd take your biscuit, and have one of these old cast iron fryin' pans, and take that thing full of gravy; we're sittin' around here, there's four of us; we each get us one of them baking powder biscuits, dip it down in the gravy, dip it down in the pan and eat it. You didn't have your

own pan. Who the hell wanted to wash dishes? And where was you gonna get the water to wash 'em with? Dip your biscuit in the gravy and eat it and away you'd go.

GC: And you made the biscuits in a Dutch oven?

NC: In the Dutch oven, yeah. Good old bakin' powder biscuits. Baking powder and flour and a little bit of salt. And, sometimes you might have an egg to put in it.

You know, we'd take the fresh eggs that have never been refrigerated and wrap 'em in newspaper and they'd last for five or six weeks. They didn't spoil. And we had us an egg box. About, well, like a fruit box about ah, so. We'd put the eggs in that, wrap newspaper around 'em so they wouldn't break, load 'em on the old mule and away you'd go and have you an egg or two along. Well, how many days we gonna be here. Well, these eggs will keep thirty days. Ok, we got forty eggs, we'll have one and a half eggs a day. In the bread it goes. You don't eat the fried eggs. You don't have that luxury. A fried egg, ha ha ha ha... yeah. And then all those guys wondered why we was always thin. There wasn't any fat guys down there. I'll guarantee ya! The only fat guy I ever saw down there was an old hoot owler that used to ride through the country every once in a while. He worked for old Joe Biddlecome.

GC: Were there many bighorn sheep in the area?

NC: The only place there was any bighorn sheep in that whole country when I was there was in those badlands right towards the Henry Mountains from Crow Seeps. Right down in those badlands down in there. That's the only place. And I only saw four head there. There was one big ram and two ewes and one lamb. Was the only ones I ever saw. And that's when Faun and I had some cattle down on the Dirty Devil. And we walked up, and got up there and went up and come up to Crow Seeps. And we saw 'em. That's the only time I ever saw a mountain sheep in the wild. And they are beautiful, gorgeous, athletic animals. The way they went and jumped over those rocks and everything. I mean it was almost like they had wings. Really. It really impressed me.

That was the year all the cowboys went broke over on the Henrys and the bank closed all of 'em out. In fact that's why we was there. We was down there with the steers that came off from the Henry's that Cecil Thompson bought. We took 'em down Under the Ledge and choked out and had to head for the Dirty Devil. That's what was doin' down there. Goddamn that was a nightmare, gettin' 'em in and gettin' 'em out and then keepin' 'em out of that quicksand while we was there.

That river was just one quicksand bog from the head of it to the foot of it in those days. The last time I was there it wasn't near as bad as it was when Faun and I was there. I don't know why. It just wasn't. But that's all we did. We just spent all our time diggin' them cattle out of the mud. They'd go get stuck in the quicksand. We'd have to go dig 'em out. Sometimes you couldn't get 'em out. Sometimes they'd drown before you even found 'em stuck in the water, especially when it'd rain a little bit. And the river would be muddy. And then the holes, where the water was still, and the water was clear, that's where they'd want to go to drink. And of course, that's where the worst quicksand was. You know, around some of them holes. A snipe wouldn't even walk out there.

Them old cows and steers would walk in out there and hell, they'd just go in like that and be down in sand. And then they'd start wiggling. And they'd just make about three wiggles and that takes all the water out of the sand that's right around their feet. Hell, it's just like they're cemented in there. You grab a-hold of one of 'em; hell you'll pull 'em in two before you'll pull 'em out. So, you have to get down there and dig and get that out and get their foot out. And we developed a system. We'd get a pole. Find a pole. Of course, lots of poles along there. That was one thing. Get a pole. Dig down around their foot until you got down almost to the end of the foot and put a rope on it and put it around the pole and then go up on the end of the pole like that and that. And of course then you had some leverage to pull that foot out of there. But you dig a cow out of the mud all but just her hoof in the mud and hell it's just like she was nailed there. But you could pull 'em straight up.

Boy, that's the only time I ever was in a nightmare. That was just one nightmare. Let's see, we stayed there... I can't remember the days, of course. But I know school had started and we was still there. And then one of those fall storms come in. And so Faun says, well, we better be getting out of here! So we started down, cleaning all the cattle out in front of us. Took 'em down and started 'em up Happy Canyon. And the last day, from about the Twin Corral Box, down to where we went out to go up into Happy Canyon, it was rainin' and cold and windy. No slickers or no nothin'. So Faun had an old piece of a tarp and he fixed this tarp for me, up over my shoulders, you know. But on horseback, in the rain there is no way you can keep dry; I don't care how many slickers you've got on. Water will find a hole. And boy I tell ya, that's one time in my life I wouldn't have cared if the old man had said, hey Ned... Ned, we want you up here, I'd have said, praise you, thank you, thank you, thank you. I'd had it. Because we didn't accomplish nothin'. We just, work, work, work, work, work, work, work, work. And when we got through, we didn't have as much as we had when we started. And I don't know how old Cecil Thompson put up the money to buy the steers with. And I don't know how he come out on it. I know he didn't make any money on it. If he got his money back he was lucky.

But see, he bought all the steers from all those guys that come in there. We must have had about a hundred and twenty five, a hundred and fifty head of 'em. And we took 'em from Big Water up to Flint and down the Happy Canyon trail. And there in those thick trees; some of those old Henry Mountain steers, soon as they saw those cedar trees, they thought they was back on the Henry's, you know, and they was supposed to run. If we didn't have a time! That thing was a nightmare!

Only one good thing about that trip. And I can't get anybody to call this place by its correct name, which is; the Devil's Hole, or the Devil's Camp. Right up above the Twin Corral Box. And right there, there is a little flat place, with a couple of great big cottonwoods on it. And right here is a spring and a little tank of a thing. However, the old man in his wisdom, he decided he wanted to make a little piece of paradise in really a hellhole. 'Cause if there was ever a hellhole, the Dirty Devil River Box is it! So, right here there's a spring, that gushes out of the wall. Well, we would call it a creek. It wasn't a spring. Too much water. But a lot of water, right down off this cliff, fell right down on to here. And this was a nice smooth bottom place right here. Nice big cottonwood trees. All kinds of wood. Because the wood in the flood time would come up into here and come up, and then right around here. And then right here was a bench. And you could get your horses up this bench, so there was plenty of grass up there for your horses. And there was that beautiful spring. A good, clear delicious water, comin' down there. Jump under that and take a shower. I mean that was a heavenly place in the hellhole of the whole world.

If there's a worse place in the world than the Dirty Devil Box, I'd like to know. That thing was just quicksand from one end to the other. And I mean it was terrible. Inhospitable, unlivable, the damnedest place. But that spot right there is a beautiful spot. It's a wonder to me some dude hasn't bought it and built his summer home there.

Ok, tell ya another little story. When Faun and I was camped there and got up in the morning and we could hear this roar. Ah, it's the wind blowin'. Course you're right under this big, high mesa. And, blowin' up on the cedar mesa there, up there, the wind's blowin'. Ok, I started up here to go up and get the horses. The river was kinda runnin' on this side of the riverbed. And I started up here. And I looked up the river and here come the flood. So, I ran down and come out the wash here and got up to the camp. But by the time I got there it was already runnin' high. And here come the damnedest flood you ever saw down that thing. Here come about four of our horses swimmin' down it with their hobbles on that'd got caught. But right here where this wash came in, it eddied. It hit this rock here and the river kinda eddied back like this. And it eddied back here and every doggone one of our horses come back into this eddy, and we got 'em out, where this canyon come down. And that was just a rollin' wall of blue mud! There was more dirt in it than there was water. You never saw

nothin' like it! And the debris and the sticks and everything, I'm tellin' ya! Oh my god! Any cow that was stuck in the bottom, dead! Drowned! They're gone. Not only that, this flood comin' along raised up and filled up a lot of these little holes along the sides that had kinda dried out a little bit and wasn't so quicksandy. And it just made 'em worse. Not only that, it didn't rain where we was, to help make any grass. It rained way upstream.

I can always remember Faun's birthday, which was the nineteenth of August. We was there ridin' bog. And I can always remember him cussin', and how disgusted and angry he was to spend his birthday in a hell-hole like that!

Then, many years later, Eddie Pearson and I, we put a bunch of cattle up in there. And the quicksand wasn't near as bad. I mean it wasn't. The Tamaracks were startin' to come. They hadn't come to where they was changin' the channels like they are now. But they were startin' be around here and there. The quicksand wasn't as bad, I don't know why. But we had plenty of problems, too. So, we finally went up, and went up on the Sam's Mesa Box trail, and went out The Spur, and took the cattle down the Horseshoe and took 'em in and brought 'em and turned 'em loose there around the ranch. So, we got out of there that time.

GC: So, you had a trail up Sam's Mesa Box Canyon?

NC: Yeah, that was one of the old outlaw trails. And the guy told me where it was at. And, in fact, when we went there, I'd never even been up it before. But he said there was one little place you might have to do some work on to get cattle up it. But when we went there somebody had already fixed it. So we just moseyed right up. It was a good trail out of there, really. That is, let's consider the trails. We're not comparin' this to the Golden Staircase. I mean, no we don't want to even speak of them in the same breath. Cause the Golden Staircase, that was a son-of-a-gun for cattle.

GC: I bet it was.

NC: Oh, yeah, with wild cattle especially! You better believe it was! Holy mackerel that was a son-of-a-gun.

GC: Was the Golden Staircase trail put in by cattlemen?

NC: I don't know who laid those steps. I really don't know. I imagine the sheepherders or whoever. The steps was there the first time I was there. And I never even thought about it, really, you know, the steps that goes up them little rims. But that was a bad one to get cattle up, that son-of-a-gun. Boy, I sure wish we'd knowed that other

way that I told you about. But it sure saved old Baldy Ned and old Faun Chaffin a lot of work.

GC: You didn't use The Golden Stairs very often then?

NC: Not unless you had to, you didn't, that's for darn sure.

GC: Did the sheepherders use it much?

NC: Yeah. Yeah. In fact that's the way Pete Masset would get down there. Come down and go right down the old Golden Staircase and come down. He'd come down from the top. Drop down the North Trail. Come around the Black Ledge and there he was. Or, maybe he might even drop over into Big Water and then come over.

GC: Did the sheepherders typically have horses? Or did they use mules?

NC: Most sheepherders would have their string and it would consist of a horse for the herder. A saddle horse. And would consist of a bell-mare, a mare, a female. Because the mules loves mares. And the mules will follow the mare and stick with her a lot better than they will a horse. Even if it is a gelding. If mules is around 'em all the time they get to where that they look to them for their leadership. It's something that's I guess bred into 'em. So then most of 'em would have the bell-mare, and then the camp mover would have a horse. Well, I think it depends. I'm tryin' to remember. I think it depends. And then they had the bell-mare. And then they'd have about five head of mules. And the sheepherder's, their mules, would follow. The sheepherders never drove. When you see these dudes with their mules and their packs in front of 'em you know they're cowboys. Sheepherders, they're behind 'em and the mules will follow, which is a lot better. Because the mule can pick his own way, his own route, the whole bit. It's just a better mode of transportation. We never had any mules that'd follow ours and we never trained 'em to follow ours.

GC: Did the sheepherders have dogs usually?

NC: Oh yeah, they always had a couple or three dogs.

GC: Did you have dogs?

NC: We didn't use dogs much. We always had a couple of dogs around the ranch. But, down Under the Ledge you wouldn't use the dogs because the terrain is just too rough for 'em. And especially in the summer, they just couldn't survive, you know what I mean. I know we found a sheepherder's dog that we had there when we shot

out the trail down to Crowbar Tank to get the stock down in. When we did that job, we had that sheepherder's dog that we found that just came to camp. Sheepherder lost him and anything and he came. He got a share of our baking powder biscuits. That's about all we had. Oh, no, I think we had some jerky too. He'd get a little bit of jerky and a little bit of baking powder biscuit and that's about all he got. And he was damn lucky to get that! Really, to tell you the truth. If your name wasn't in the pot, why you was a burden, man or beast.

GC: What would you do if you needed to put a new horseshoe on a horse?

NC: You grabbed a horseshoe and outfit and put a new shoe on him.

GC: So everybody was able to do that then?

NC: Well, if you wasn't able you learned young. Because you didn't ride horses in that country without shoes on. Yeah, because you get over in Hatches Canyon or Happy Canyon or over in Big Water around those rims and everything and a horse throw a shoe in the morning, why you're lucky to complete your day's work on him before he's so sore-footed that he's practically lame. Oh, yeah, we always had to keep our horses and mules shod. Yeah.

Carried the shoes right along with us and the nails and a little hammer and a foot rasp and a pair of pinchers. Yeah, you just carried those. Have 'em in a gunnysack laid all together. And when you got ready for a shoe you'd grab 'em, take your pinchers and, if the old shoe was still on and you had to re-shoe 'em, you'd take off the shoe, carefully, cause you didn't want to bend it and get it all out of shape 'cause you didn't have any anvil or anything to get it back. And you just improvised and did the best you knew how. Mules had better feet than horses.

Now those old wild horses of old Sam Adams, the guy I showed you the brand out there, the arrow-A, yesterday, his horses had really good feet. They lived in Happy Canyon. They had good feet because they ate that bunchgrass that's right under that Shinarump formation. Lots of big ol', we called it bunchgrass. And, uh, and those horses up in those rocks all the time, they really had good feed. Old Broomtail Sam, if he's in heaven now, he's on that big, old, tall, long legged bay horses of his chasin' some wild horses and trying to get someone to head 'em for him. If he went to heaven. I put that word, if. Oh, he was quite a guy. Old Broomtail Sam. Yeah, gosh yes!

GC: There weren't too many people running wild horses in that country, were there?

NC: He was about the only wild horse man in the country; that would just take a bunch of horses and turn 'em loose and let 'em go, wouldn't brand 'em and then go get 'em and try to run 'em down, catch 'em.

GC: Was there much money in that?

NC: Money? In what?

GC: Wild horses.

NC: Hell, there wasn't much money in anything. Wasn't much money. No, I would say that old Sam Adams was probably about as poverty stricken as the rest of us, maybe more so.

GC: I wonder why someone would run wild horses as opposed to cows or sheep or something else.

NC: Oh, I don't know. But he had quite a bunch of horses there in Happy Canyon. Then he had quite a bunch up on the San Rafael, up around the Gillis ranch, in the old French ranch there in later years before he died. He had quite a few horses up there.

And here again, guys would get them old rifles out and work on those wild horses, you know. Andy Moore got rid of a lot of wild horses. Him and Joe Biddlecome both. They'd really lower the boom on 'em. Because horses, as you've heard me mention before, there isn't anything in the world as hard on a range as horses. Nothin'! They're worse than sheep or goats. And that's sayin' a mouthful. Not only do they eat everything in sight, they travel so much farther than cattle or sheep. Cover so much more territory. And they'll come up to one of them big old beautiful boxbrush that the cow and the sheep will eat all the leaves off from and leave standin', and there's a clump of grass in the middle of it that nobody can get to, they'll paw the whole bush down to get to that clump of grass. I mean, they're hard on a range. Period! I know lots of people think maybe I'm a little prejudiced against the wild horses and everything, and the wild burros, and I'm not. It's just a fact that that's the way it is.

GC: Were there any wild horses running around Under the Ledge?

NC: No. Except in Happy Canyon. That's the only place they ever had any wild horses, was in Happy Canyon. And, old Sam, he kinda let 'em go for a few years and didn't do nothin' with 'em, so Faun and Clell went down there one fall and moved 'em all over to the Dirty Devil River. Well then, when Faun and Clell moved 'em there

they was close enough to Hanksville to where them Hanksville dudes (you know, if you could get 'em out of their beds) would come down and get 'em and take 'em and sell 'em for dog food and stuff, see. Or use 'em for horses. Old Sam had a lot of good horses there in Happy Canyon. He had a couple of horses there that was really good horses. Really good brood stock. But anyway, the wild horse was not welcome in that country, period! No.

GC: Did you see many antelope?

NC: Very few. There was a few antelope.

GC: In Waterhole Flat?

NC: Oh, no, no!

GC: Not on Waterhole or Andy Miller Flat?

NC: Never saw an antelope Under the Ledge period. Or a mountain sheep. Saw a coyote or two. And a rabbit or two. And there used to be a big old cottontail there at the Chaffin Camp.

GC: Did you eat many rabbits?

NC: There was an old rabbit and she lived in that wing to the corral there at the Chaffin Camp. That was her home. Now maybe she had her a place back under the rocks. But no, my father forbid us to ever eat her. Or any of her offspring. Or, he forbid us to ever shoot or disturb a dove. His theory was, and I mean he was positive on this, that if you was down there and got lost, and you was up at the point of rocks practically choked to death, and you was sittin' there along about sundown, you could hear them doves cooin' down at the Chaffin Camp, down there where the water was. And you'd go down there and get you a drink. Not only that, if you did that already, you might accidentally pick ya up a rock and throw at one of them doves and hit it so you'd have some food. Or a rabbit. If there's some rabbits there, chances are, if you really went after that rabbit you could get her. And so his idea was that that was a lifeline thing. And he would never, never allow us to kill a dove or a rabbit. Someday they'll maybe save somebody's life. That's what the old man taught us.

GC: So you didn't eat many rabbits then?

NC: No. Very few rabbits. Very seldom would we eat a rabbit.

GC: How did you deal with the biting insects, the gnats, when they were really bad down there? Did you just endure them?

NC: Just cuss! What else could you do? You was there and so was they.

GC: So you didn't have anything you used to keep them off or anything you put on your skin?

NC: Just dirt. You know, the dirt that was already there, that you didn't wash off.

GC: So you didn't bathe very often?

NC: Why sure we took a bath every Saturday night. Bathed?!!!

GC: I know, that's kind of a silly question.

NC: You gotta be a-kiddin! Anybody that'd waste water by taking a bath down in that country ought to be shot!

GC: So you would go a long time between baths?

NC: Yes. Sure, like, well when we was at the ranch, you'd leave the ranch and your average trip down there would be three or four weeks. You'd go down there, you'd never take a bath. Unless maybe it was in the summer and it'd get a good fresh rain and you had some nice fresh water and you'd jump in the tank. Maybe. More for relaxation than anything. And, maybe to get clean, yeah. Yeah.

GC: There's a type of bug that lives out in that desert country that's called by most people the Conenose Bug or the Conenose Kissing Bug. Did you ever have problems with those? They come up and get you at night, and, some people get real allergic to them.

NC: I guess you tourists must have brought them in.

GC: You were never were bothered by them? Never noticed them?

NC: No. There was a yellow gnat. They're bigger than your ordinary gnat.

GC: Bigger than the no-see-ems?

NC: Yeah. Oh boy, them old horses, underneath their jaws there, they'd just eat it to where there wouldn't be any hair. That's a good way to make friends with your horse. Itch him there under the jaw, or here around the ears where his hair is short and the bugs would gather. Yeah, that's a good way to make friends with him, like pettin' your dog. And of course the gnats in the spring was pretty bad, you know. Miserable in fact, sometimes. And those little black ones, they sting hard. They sting harder than the yellow ones, even if the yellow ones are bigger. It seemed to me like that anyway.

GC: I wanted to ask you about The Block. Now, there's a trail up to the top of The Block and, some real interesting bridges made of logs and slabs of rock going over these joint cracks in the neck that connects the North Block with the South Block. And I've often wondered who built those bridges and who used The Block. Don't imagine the cattlemen used it much. Did they?

NC: No. Now the North Block, the one towards Sunset Pass; I was up there one time. And there wasn't enough cow feed on that whole Block to feed one cow for a week. I was up on the other Block twice. And a little interesting story about the South Block. Of course there is a good trail to get up to it. Of course it wasn't constructed when I was there. But anyway, I went up there lookin' for some grass and water. And I camped at The Cove Spring, up towards the north there. We used to camp up there quite a bit. Of course in the summertime, a lot of times, it was dry. But anyway, I was camped up there. And this was in the spring.

And I went up on The Block and looked around to see if there was any grass or water up there. And I come back down and I didn't think there was. And I camped there that night. And the next morning I went to get my horses and I couldn't find 'em. I had a horse and two mules. I had Cheyenne and two mules. That was my remuda at that time. Where the hell had they gone? I looked around into the trees and I thought, well hell they took off for Andy Miller Flats. So I cut down toward the trail that went down to Andy Miller, and no tracks. I thought, where in the hell is them horses! I couldn't believe it. Somebody stole 'em! So I come back and I finally started trackin' 'em. And of course I had 'em hobbled you know. All of 'em. All three of 'em was hobbled. Here goes these hobble tracks over and up that trail. And there ol' Cheyenne had led those two mules up on the top of the South Block. And I had to walk all the way up there to get 'em. Horses like a place where they can get up and look around. That's why they call that little spot over in Ernie Country, Horse Heaven. They like it up there.

GC: But you never saw any sheepherders up there?

NC: No.

GC: Could you tell us something about the valleys we call Surprise Valley now and the Baby Graben? Of course the Baby Graben isn't a name on the map.

NC: We always called those two phenomenons the sunken valleys. I would say they were very aptly named because the bottom fell out of 'em and they fell down and the water drains into holes. Doesn't run off. They are truly sunken valleys. Now nobody can quarrel that that isn't a good name for 'em. It's easy enough for someone to look at that and call it Surprise Valley. Because you would be surprised, be walkin' along and see a great big hole in front of you and see that there was no outlet to the valley. These things are phenomenons that don't happen every day. A lot of us never saw one, so the name Surprise Valley to be applied to something like that is very logical.

We always called Surprise Valley, the north drainage of The Big Flat [Main Flat] in Ernie Country. And the story's been told many times how I almost got killed by lightning when Clell and I crawled under a rock to get in out of the rain and the lightning struck the tree and knocked me back in the cave. And, we called that Surprise Valley because Clell laughed his head off and said I sure did look surprised.

We was takin' some cattle toward Spanish Bottom. And it started to rain a little bit so we went over and got under this little overhang over there, on the side. And there's a huge cedar tree there. And we tied our horses up to the tree. Well, it'd kinda quit rainin' a little bit. And I stepped out from under the rock. And just as I reached for my bridle reins, why lightning struck the tree! And I was so close to it that it knocked me back into the cave. Knocked me down. Knocked me back I don't know how many feet. Anyway it was a very, very, very close call. And I was lucky, really, to be alive. And, anyway, after Clell saw I wasn't dead and got through laughin', he said, I never saw anybody looked as surprised as you looked. And I guess I was surprised.

GC: Did it hurt the horse?

NC: No. It didn't hurt anything.

GC: Could you tell us how Sunset Pass got its name?

NC: Anyone with any brains at all that was gonna name that'd name it The Sunset Pass. Wouldn't they? Dave Rust was the first guy I ever heard call it The Sunset Pass. But it's a wonder to me somebody hasn't charged that to Louie's Leap or something. Dave Rust is right. He said if Zane Grey would've saw that he would've saw a real Sunset Pass instead of that phony one he saw; whatever one he was talkin' about. That's what he said. I heard him say it with my own ears.

GC: So Lizard Rock got its name because you saw some lizards fighting there?

NC: We was comin' from the north end of the flat and we was goin' around. And we was gonna to take some cattle up the Nipple Trail and put 'em down into Big Water. And we stopped under a tree there for some lunch. And we kept our little lunch deal on one mule, so you catch the one mule and get whatever you had to have to make ya some lunch out.

And these two lizards was fightin' there. And one of 'em, the yellow one, had the other one's tail in his mouth and wouldn't let go. And I mean, boy they was fightin' and squirmin' around there and kickin' up the dust. And I don't know whatever happened to 'em. The last I saw of 'em they was still fightin'. And, I don't know why, after that we just called it Lizard Rock. That's where the name Lizard Rock came from. As far as I know. Now, maybe one of those old river men might have called that Lizard Rock. Maybe he saw some lizards fightin' there a hundred and twenty years ago. I don't know.

You know, you gotta be careful, bein' a smart aleck when you start a-puttin things onto things down there. Like I did with The Maze. Now, I was sure that Dave Rust was the first man that ever called that The Maze. And I told somebody that Dave Rust named that and anything and anything and I got thinkin' about it and I got thinkin' about it, and I thought, now, wait a minute, I've read someplace, somebody else called that The Maze. I read it. You know, one good thing about readin', you remember things you read. The things you're told and things you see on television, you don't remember. But if you read it, you remember it. I remember somethin' about The Maze. And I kept thinkin' about that Maze. Oh goddamn! I told someone Dave Rust named that The Maze. Ah...I don't know. That's not right. So I started diggin' through these old river books. And I think old Dellenbaugh's the guy that called that The Maze first!

GC: Oh really?

NC: I think so. Him and one of the dudes climbed up on the hill, and, that was part of their conversation. But anyway, I found it. There it was, written. There, it'd been named fifty or sixty years before Dave Rust ever even saw the country, see. But now why did Dave Rust call it The Maze? Do ya think that he might have read that article from that guy and that might've been in his mind? Or did he just say, goddamn that's a maze of rocks down there?

GC: Could you share that story about Bill Tibbetts that you alluded to earlier.

NC: Well, they was driving a little bunch of cattle and I know that some of those cows was pretty wild. Eph Moore had a lot of old gentle cows too, that wouldn't move out of your way unless you booted 'em. But I would say as a group they was the wildest bunch of cattle in the state of Utah. And they was comin' around and right there at the head of Deadhorse Canyon where the trail went around the head of the canyon, and a couple of these old cows took off up the wash. And Bill Tibbetts and I went up there and he went up around 'em one way and I saw 'em comin' down the other. So I dropped off in front of 'em. And he dropped down behind them and they followed me right down to the little group just like a couple of dogs.

They'll do that. That's the thing with cattle, they aren't afraid of ya as long as you're in front of 'em and you're movin'. So you get in front of 'em and move and they'll have a tendency to wanna follow you. If the guy behind will mind his own business and stay back out of the way, and not spook 'em, they won't break out by you either. They'll do that. They don't want to pass ya. They don't want you behind 'em, they like you to be there where they can see you every second. One can understand why.

Well anyway, and then we came back, and it was hot and dry. Oh god! And Faun and I, we'd ran out of water and didn't have any water. And old Tibbetts had a little ol' canteen on his saddle. And he took that off and handed it to me. And I could see there was just a little bit in it. And I said, well there's just a very, very little water in this. And he says, well, you drink it all. And I said, well, you want part of it? No, I'm not thirsty, he said. He said, you drink it. And I did and I know he was thirsty too, just like I was. And I don't know, that always kind of impressed me. Did then and still does to this day.

But he was a little bit leery about runnin' into people those days. He would just as soon he didn't see anybody. That's what I've heard. I really never ran into him, afterwards. Or if I did, I didn't know him. And the same way with Kenny Allred. I met him a time or two down there but if he'd walk in the door I don't know whether I'd know him or not. It was kind of a strange situation that existed there at that time. And, there was some of us that just wasn't aware of what was goin' on at all. Didn't have any idea and didn't care either as far as that's concerned.

But that was one thing about the whole shebang back there. Why, you was supposed to take a guy for what he was. Not who he was, or where he'd been, or where he was goin'. It's, what was he? You pretty much applied that to everybody.

And, old Eph Moore, god love him, he was a character. I punched cows for him for about two weeks one summer. We branded calves. Boy, Eph was quite a guy. But that old bay horse of his; he wouldn't ride that horse off a trot. If an old wild cow started

up the draw on a run, she was gone. Because Eph wouldn't chase her and bring her back because he wouldn't make his horse go fast enough to head her off and bring her back. And that's because a horse fell down with him and banged him all up and booted him. He had a fear of riding a horse fast. Because he was riding this horse fast and the horse fell and of course it threw him, came off too, when the horse fell, he fell too. And, banged him pretty good here and there. And it just put the fear in him.

But he was a character. He sure knew how to get by on slim groceries. You know the little Dutch oven I got in there? Well, he had one just like it. Maybe that's it, I don't know. But anyway, we'd make that full of biscuits. Most of the time he'd make a pone. A pone is one biscuit in the Dutch oven. A loaf. You might call it a loaf. If you was short on flour and everything, you made biscuits 'cause it looked like more. And if you had plenty of flour and everything you'd make the pone, because there'd be more food there and more substance to it because there wouldn't be any vacant spots. Be but one chunk in the Dutch oven. And then he'd fry a little old piece of salt pork and I mean a little one that would make us some gravy and we'd eat that gravy with the biscuit out of that fryin' pan. That's what we ate. That was two biscuits apiece and the gravy. I think about three times while I was there, we had a little pot of rice. And that's it. It was some slim pickins. We both survived a long time afterwards though. So, I guess it didn't hurt us any.

Afterwards I was supposed to meet Faun up at the Flint cabins. And I met him up there. And the next day we went over to Biddlecome's. Boy I was never so glad to see Millie Biddlecome in my life as I was then. Because she'd really lay the groceries on us young guys. God love her. Her and old Joe both. Real good friends. Real good.

God it's amazing, really. It's amazing that people even existed like that. I mean, old Joe, he'd come down Under the Ledge and help Faun in particular; like cuttin' colts, you know what I mean, making geldings out of the stallions. And Joe would come down anytime Faun did any dynamitin' for the first few years he was down there. Why old Joe'd come down and help him to make sure he didn't kill himself. And there's one thing Joe learned him that's kinda hard for me swallow yet to this day. You know the caps, the percussion caps that they put on the end of the fuse? You know what they are. Well, you stick the little fuse in, then you have to crimp 'em. You have to crimp. The end of the cap is made out of brass and it's vacant where you crimp it down on the fuse to where it won't come off. And you know the way those guys crimped that? Put it in their teeth and crunch it together. That's the way they did it. You could take your horseshoe pliers and crimp 'em. But old Joe Biddlecome wouldn't stand for that. Because he was afraid you might create a spark with the steel off the pliers. So that's why they used their teeth. Because no chance for a spark.

And another reason; the theory was, if you're workin' down at Cottonwood Springs drillin' some holes down there and blowin' the rock out to make a trail and you're workin' with them caps. You'd just as well have your head blowed off better than to have both hands blowed off. Right? Which would be your choice? You've got a choice. There ya are. And you're down on Cottonwood Tank now. You're not here where you can wrest a doctor. Which would you rather do, would you rather have holes all over ya here and both hands blowed off, or would you rather just have your head blowed off? Cause you'd be dead before anybody got to ya anyway. You're dead either way. Right? Now I always thought that's why they did it. But, you come to think, it's safe and it's sensible. Because there's no chance for any spark. And the spark, that's what explodes this detonating cap that makes the dynamite explode.

And they did a pretty good job. Don't you think that's a pretty good job for a couple of old cowboys, that trail that they shot off down in there? Those old dudes were smarter than they looked. You know that. That's what's amazing to me. How they did those things. Ranchers start to do something like that now, like dad and uncle Arth buildin' a road across Horseshoe Canyon, hell, you'd have five engineers and the whole bit. Can you imagine the president of the Phillips Petroleum Company givin' a couple old boys that never went through the fourth or fifth grade a job like that? Can you imagine that?

Don't do business like that today, do they? It's things like this that amazes me. To see where we're goin' and what are we doin'. Now it's just hucksters. Some guy wants to make a hundred dollars an hour to tell me what he knows, when it's just common sense anyway. Huh? Really, you come down to it, that's about all it is, is common sense. You look at that slickrock where that kid's up there usin' that jackhammer there, makin' that road. Heck, anybody knows all ya gotta do is make a straight line from here to there and go the easiest way to go, the way that'll give ya the least resistance, and the way that'll get ya where you're goin'. It's really that simple, isn't it?

GC: Did you help out much with building the road across Horseshoe Canyon?

NC: I was in school.

GC: Oh, so you weren't out there on the job site?

NC: I was, yeah. Well, let's see, when did I go out there? Did I go out for Christmas or New Years? I was out there for a few days. I guess it was probably at Christmastime. I mean they was just getting started good. They was workin' right there where those pictures were taken when I was out there. And that was early in the

construction period. That's the only time I was there, when they was workin'. Because the road was completed and the wells was being drilled the next time that I went over.

That sure did help us, you know, when they built that road across there because we didn't have to go all the way around. If I remember right, they was workin' right about where those pictures of my brother Kenneth and Floyd Taylor were taken. I think they was working in the area right up toward the top there. They started on the west end and worked down. And, I know they was talkin' about goin' around the point and what to do there, at the point. And that was the sticker of the whole road, right there. That's what worried 'em. Because as they came out to the edge of the canyon there and turned back this way to come around and come back like so and then go down that sandy hogback there; holdin' this sandy bank was really what the big problem was. So they drilled some deadmen in the rock there and put cable there and got logs and put up there to help so when the weight would hit on the dirt it wouldn't shove the grade out. Because they was in the dirt then, they wasn't in the rock down there. That was dirt. And I understand that's all fallen in now. That it's gone. That those logs no doubt's rotted out. It probably was lucky to stay as long as it did. It was good place as long as any of us was there. And that includes the Tidwells. Never had any problems. So, I guess it worked. Whatever they did, worked.

GC: When you were out there, how many men did you see working on the project?

NC: I think there was about twenty guys, if I remember right. They didn't have any bulldozers, you know. Didn't see no pictures of bulldozers did you? You're lucky to see a jackhammer. Course the jackhammer was invented a long, long, long time before that. The air hammer to drill with, is an old invention. Goes way back to the old gold rush days. Way back to the eighteen fifties. That isn't no new invention, that jackhammer. And that's sure a lot better than doin' it by hand. And of course everything we did down there we did by hand. You saw the drills, haven't you, that they used, and the spoon? I got a spoon out there that my dad made to dig the sand out. You know, you're drillin' this hole by hand and it fills up with sand and mud. I'll show you what dad got the mud out of the hole with, if I can find it.

Boy that Horseshoe Canyon road meant a lot to that country in those days. Because, boy you couldn't buy a job. You couldn't work for your board and clothes. Unless you was lucky.

GC: Who else worked on the Horseshoe Canyon road?

NC: I'm trying to think who all worked there. Well, of course, all the Chaffin family worked there. Except Clell when he had to go down Under the Ledge to take care of the cattle. Albert Weber worked on it and several guys from over up in Wayne Coun-

try, relatives, like this Floyd Taylor that I gave you the picture of. He was my cousin. And there was some more people from Wayne County. I really can't remember, exactly, to tell you the truth. I'm tryin' to think who was there from Green River. Seemed to me like Delbert Tidwell worked there. Everybody that worked on that was from Green River and Hanksville and Cainville and Loa. They was just all local people right there. Everybody. They didn't have anybody there from out of the area at all.

My father headed it up. He and uncle Arth. Mr. Phillips gave them the contract to do the work. Mr. Phillips furnished the money. He gave them a small advance. And he went into the little bank there in Green River before he even did that. And the banker told Mr. Phillips that he would guarantee that they had the money to finish the job. Can you imagine people doin' that now? Anyway, they finished the road ahead of schedule.

Everybody was so worried about the road fallin' apart. You know what I mean. The only thing was, when those rains come, it'd wash the dirt and rocks and stuff out of there. But, then they'd hire three or four or five guys to come and repair it.

And then they hired young Art Ekker to drive the jitney. Drivin' the jitney; that was the little truck they had that they would run back and forth to town with to gather supplies, and, you know, get food and clothing, blankets, oil tools, whatever. Back and forth. And when he wasn't drivin' the jitney, they'd have him workin' on the road or doin' whatever. You know what I mean. Because ya wasn't supposed to loaf on the job those days.

Half of the crew would go to town one Saturday afternoon and other half would go the next week. And they stayed there. Lived right there in those tents. Yeah. Plenty of good food. Lots of good food. Cold. Short, short days. No light.

GC: What did you and your family do on those long nights when you were down on Waterhole Flat or you when were out punching cows? What did you do to entertain yourselves?

NC: Gary, in those days, we didn't need to be entertained every minute like young people have to be today. You know these young kids, they've gotta be entertained every minute. They gotta do something. And what did you do? You sat there and looked in the fire and daydreamed. What else could you do?

GC: Did you tell stories, play cards, sing, play the harmonica?

NC: You'd play cards if you was with the shepherders. But you never had no cards. How are ya gonna play cards? You go play cards with the shepherders. If ya had someone with you, you'd just BS.

And, let's remember one thing, old Lou Chaffin had one bad trait that I never did like. I been tellin' ya all these good things about him. He had one bad trait that I hated. He thought it was mortal sin, to be in bed, when the first light of the day started comin' over the hill. That old man figured you ought to be up and after 'em. And I don't know, you do that for awhile, and it's a habit. Like smokin' cigarettes or drinkin' whiskey. You get to where you just naturally wake up get goin'. Like those short days, you'd wake up, and it was still dark. And you usually camped where you could see the Big Dipper. And you'd look up at the Big Dipper and see what time it was. You didn't have no watch of course, but the Big Dipper is the best watch in the world. And, and, uh, well, time to get up. Get up! Maybe ya hear the bell ringin' on your horse out there. Go out and get your horses. Bring 'em in. Hang the nosebags on 'em. Cook your breakfast. If you was gonna move camp, you'd have everything all ready, have your mules all packed. And the very first light of day hit you there, you was ready to go. You wasn't sleepin' in till ten o'clock and then havin' to try to go to bed at five o'clock that night.

Dad always said that workin' with horses or cattle, you accomplish more before ten o'clock in the morning than you do the rest of the day. Now that was his theory, which I believe he wasn't too far off on.

GC: So what did breakfast usually consist of?

NC: Gravy and biscuits.

GC: Coffee?

NC: Yes. Oh ya had to have that coffee. I mean coffee was really the mainstay. And we all used a lot of Brigham Tea. To make tea out of. Maybe not for breakfast, but that would save on the coffee, see. Less expensive. All you had to do was go up to the bush and pull off a batch of it, put in the pot, let it come to a boil. I like Brigham Tea with canned milk and sugar in it. That is a good tasting drink. And the old guy at the Se-go mining camp that took care of the mules that pulled all the coal cars and everything said something interesting. 'Course those mules were always getting crippled and getting hurt. And he said that Brigham Tea was good even for putting on the wounds on animals. Super good. And dad thinks that maybe that was one of the main concoctions that the old Indian used on him down on the river when he had blood poisoning in his hand.

GC: So what was it that made you get out of the cattle business and leave cowboying behind and come out here to Bakersfield?

NC: I come out here and worked for my brother in law, Spence Kraft, that guy I showed you the photographs of. He was a construction foreman here. And of course I went right to work. Now ya know, I met a damn little ol' black haired Choctaw. And I don't know, I just couldn't get her out of my mind. You've maybe had this feeling too sometime in your life. And when somebody suggested to me that I go back Under the Ledge and punch cows, I said, uh uh. No, no. I'll come back and I'll help you with the roundup, which I did. Well, when I went back then, I stayed about six weeks and helped 'em gather and sell a bunch of cattle. You see, that's when the government called our loan. And said that they'd helped us enough. Maybe we didn't need any help anymore. We could pay off. So we went down and gathered enough cattle to pay off our loan. Took us about six weeks. And, then, I just couldn't wait to get back to California. Yeah. I don't know. I guess somethin' wrong with me. I don't know.

GC: Did you see much of a change in the range over the years that you were out there?

NC: Yes. Now I don't want to be classified as a tree hugger, because I'm not. I'm not a tree hugger. No! And I hate to say this, but it's true; if the Taylor Grazing Act hadn't of taken the stock off that desert like they did and off Under the Ledge like they did, there wouldn't be nothin' down there but two cedar trees and rocks today. Nothin'! That country would've been blown away. Because, you take three thousand head of sheep on Waterhole Flat and go down there in November and not leave until April, they make a lot of tracks don't they?

And the country was startin' to blow! In other words, it's one thing for the wind to come up strong, and for that old dry desert sand to shift. That's natural. Sand shiftin' in the wind has been goin' on forever. But I mean dirt in the air. Dirt was startin' to come when I left there. Or a year even before I left there. And you could tell that it wasn't gonna be too long until that stuff was gonna be completely denuded.

Now, I didn't observe too much curly grass when I was down there recently. And curly grass was the mainstay for our feed. Which of course is a perennial. Grows in clumps. Very tough. Stands lots of drought. Stands grubbin' it right down. The sheep and cattle can eat it right down to the roots and it'll still come up when the sun starts shinin' in the spring. And I saw that a lot of that was gone. And I see a lot of what we call cheatgrass takin' over. And of course, if there was something there disturbing that, that wouldn't grow either. Except back in the bushes and one thing and another.

Yeah, just about had that country ruined! Really. Because there was too many sheep. Don't want to blame everything on the sheep, now, don't misunderstand me. And I'm not bein' prejudiced. I'm just tellin' it like it is. But havin' the cattle on it in the summer, to keep the grass from growin' up and goin' to seed; and then to have sheep there in the winter that come along to eat the seed and eat the grass, roots and all; I don't care how hardy a plant you got, it can only stand so much of that. And I think there was people concerned, even then.

GC: Did you ever hear any stories of what the range was like when your father first got into that country?

NC: Oh, sure. Heck you've heard these stories all the time. Hey Ned, the first time I come through here, this was a wavin' field of grass all the way up to your stirrups. That's all I heard. I heard that all my life.

But, I think any of your arid areas in the west, was way overstocked. Way overstocked. You go out in the Nevada desert, where they don't run much stock anymore, well like our area. They got a few wild horses out there, but hell they don't amount to a hell of a lot. And it's not what it used to be.

You get up in some of the good areas, like up around Elko where you've got the ingredients that makes for a good cow country, like grass and water. That's all ya need for a cow, is grass and water. And you get it up there, and they ran so many cattle in there, and they've been congregated in such bunches, that they've got every damn disease ya ever heard of and a lot of 'em that ya didn't. And they raise lots of cattle up in that country. Lots of 'em. And lots of big cow outfits. And boy it looks pretty to see them cattle out in them meadows standin' in that green, green grass about that high. But you go look at the cow and she's aborted her calf and half her guts is hanging out. Or her eyes are droopy.

If you gave me the best cow outfit in the Elko County, right today. If you said, Ned I'll give you this ranch. All you gotta do is go run it and it's yours. You do anything you want to. You can have all the money you make off from it. I'll even pay you a salary to go run that thing. I'd say, you go to hell. I wouldn't go up there and try to punch cows for all the tea in China. Just on account of all the diseases.

GC: So you did have some experience there?

NC: Oh sure. Marjorie's father in law and I. Hell we had us a big ranch over at Deeth Nevada. You know where Deeth is? You know where Elko is? Well, Deeth is about thirty miles east of Elko, just before Wells. Boy that was a beautiful place. Right at the

foot of the Ruby Mountains. Three big creeks came down through it that had water in 'em. And we bought us about twenty sections of ground, that the railroad had got when they built the railroad; railroad ground when we got the thing, you know to run our cattle on in the summer. We had a hell of a place over there. But god almighty, I mean, it took four veterinarians and three doctors and ten nurses to keep the cows goin'. If you didn't have a new sick cow every morning, why somethin' was wrong, you better start checkin'. Disease, disease, disease, disease, disease. Cows'd be fat. Big cattle. Big cattle. Big! Good feed. Strong feed. Big. Pretty. Oh pretty. But I hate that country worse than I do the Dirty Devil! I guess because I was so disappointed, really.

In the first place, when you're raised over in Green River, you really don't know a hell of a lot about the cow business. I went over to Nevada after we got that ranch, and I'd been there about thirty minutes, and I said, Ned you old bald headed son of a bitch, you know very little about the cow business. And you better start learnin' quick! Because this is a new ball game.

It was nothin' like over where we was before. Entirely different situation altogether. And it was just nothin' but a big pain in the neck. I'm tellin' you. We stayed in business one year and one day after we bought it. And that would put us in the long-term capitol gain for our profit. But, boy I was never so happy to sign any papers in my life as I was for that.

Everybody says what a cow country that is. And it is a cow country. 'Cause boy there's more cattle in Elko County than any county in the United States, except one, which is Cherry County, Nebraska. And, now I don't know what Cherry County, Nebraska looks like. But I know it's a lot different than Elko.

But, cold, miserable. Wind blow!!! You think the wind blows out at Hans Flat? Hell, that's just a breeze! After we bought the ranch, we got there on Marjorie's birthday, the twenty first of March. Twenty-first of March. Marjorie's birthday. Nineteen forty-nine. Twenty-first of March. Beautiful day! Beautiful. You know what I mean. Cold. Chilly. But beautiful. You know. Next morning got up. Oh boy, beautiful morning. Sun come up nice and bright. Clear. Cold, but nice. Long about two o'clock, that little ol' north breeze started blowin' down that big, long valley there around the side of that mountain. It started blowin'. A few of those little ol' wind clouds started showin' up, you know. And by three o'clock, it was snowin' a little bit. And it wasn't snowin' like it does at Hans Flat. Goin' from up to down. It was snowin' one side to the other there. And that ol' wind blowin'. And cold. And it was that way every day for about six weeks. Wake up in the morning, it'd be lookin' nice. Well, gonna have a nice day today for a change. And have to go out to that damn haystack and pitch that damn hay. Wait for spring. Then when spring finally did come and the cows started

havin' their calves ya had to spend all day and all night out there pullin' the calves out of their mothers. And the cows abortin' their calves. And runnin' around with their guts hangin' out and everything. And people call that a cow country? Hell, it was a post office too. I don't know. I just hate that country!

GC: So that was your last experience with the cattle business?

NC: That was my last experience with the cattle business. I never even thought about goin' back in the cattle business again. I don't know. That was really an experience.

So, a guy offered us a hell of a good price for it. He had the money to pay us. So, we said, let's cash it out. I said, I know where I can go to work for the National Supply Company in Bakersfield. So that's what we did.

I guess I got out 'cause I was so disappointed. That's why. Because I didn't know. See, you're getting into something you don't know. See, you think because you rode down Waterhole Flat on an old sore footed horse, you think you're a cowboy and a cowman. See, you think you are! You think you are! But what a man thinks he is, and what he is, as you well know, is two different things. But boy I found out real quick. But praise the lord that he gave me an insight to realize that I didn't know. Had to start a whole new learning process. Had to start all over again. Like Lou Chaffin used to say, now when you go after those cows, you go way out around 'em and get on the other side of 'em, 'cause you don't want any of the wild ones breakin' off an runnin' up in the rocks and the trees. See, that's something you learned. Same way over there.

But all the sickness those cattle had and everything, I don't know, It sure didn't seem like a cow country to me. But it is a cow country. It's a great cow country. They raise lots of cattle over there. My gosh they got lots of cattle. Hell, you could see more cattle... Get up on this bench right up above our ranch house, look down that valley, you see more cattle off of that one bench than there is in the state of Utah. You know. All meadows, and them big ol' creeks comin' out of the Ruby Mountains. Hell, that was heaven! Till you go there and start tryin' to make a livin', it's a heaven.

GC: So, quite a difference between being a cowboy in the desert and in the canyon country and out there in Nevada?

NC: Is there a difference between night and day? Is there a difference between heaven and hell? That's the difference!

There was one place there, right up above the ranch house, an old hundred and sixty acre homestead. And they called it, The Alice Place. And this was included in the

ranch that we bought. And this was, of course, an old homestead. And was deeded probably right to the foot of the mountains. And the mountains came down and here was this big bench. Right in the middle of this place was a great big spring of water about that big around comin' out of the ground. And big beaver ponds. And a nice beautiful meadow right here. And that was part of our ranch. And that was really a beautiful spot.

Well, this one hundred and sixty acres, sold here about two years ago. You know what that thing sold for? Just that hundred and sixty acres? Now I'm not countin' the thousands of acres we had up on the mountain. Just the main ranch there in the valley. Just this one hundred and sixty acres sold for nearly three and a half million dollars! But that was one beautiful spot. Now, if you had three and half million dollars, that'd be a wonderful place to own and to have. You could build you a nice home there. As soon as it started getting cold in the winter you could head for California. And talk about deer. I saw over seventy head of deer there in one bunch and every one of 'em was bucks. Everything from a little ol' forked horn buck to some of 'em that had horns that looked like a cedar tree runnin' across there. They just ran right across this Alice Place. Right across this flat and headed right up into the timber. And sage hens, or sage grouse, maybe you call 'em, just full of 'em. Wonderful place to retire if you was rich. But to raise cattle? If you gave me the Alice Place and told me I had to go up there and raise cattle on it, I'd laugh at you! I'll say, no I'll stay here with Marjorie. When things gets too hard we'll go get us a welfare check. I'm not goin' up there.

But boy that was one beautiful spot. And that's why most of these guys wishes they had their ranch back. And that's the only reason. If they're up in Elko County, there's only one reason they'd like to have their ranch back. And that's so they could sell it damn quick and get them big bucks. That's the only reason. It isn't cause they want to go up there and punch cows. I don't think! Unless they're crazy! Oh boy. If I had a choice between the Dirty Devil River and Elko County, I don't know. I'd have to think about it. If Pearl Baker was still alive so I'd have somebody to fight with I'd take the Dirty Devil.

GC: Could you tell us the story of picking up the vaccine in Green River for black leg?

NC: Normally they'd worry about black leg in the summer, like in August when you get these monsoon rains. And they always tell me, that when your livestock's goin' through a change, like they're eatin' dry food, and doin' a lot of walkin' and it rains real hard and makes lots of good, green grass, and they start eatin' that, that's when they'll get the black leg. Anyway, that was the theory then.

Anyway, they'd ordered the vaccine for us and for Biddlecomes both. So we was gonna start up at Biddlecomes and do theirs first. And then do ours. So they sent me to Green River to get the vaccine that they'd ordered. So I took a buggy and I went from Crow Seeps to the Gillies Ranch, one day. The next day I went to Green River, picked up the vaccine and came back to the Gillies Ranch. That's two days. The next day, before the sun went down, I was supposed to be at Crow Seeps, with the vaccine. Now, here I am, I'm just a kid. I can't remember the year. I was just a young kid and here I'm out there alone, with this team.

And, anyway, I come back to the Gillies Ranch the night after I picked up the vaccine. And old Charlie Gillies, he met me out at the gate. And he said, Ned, he said, they had the damnedest rain back up there in that blue country yesterday you ever saw. He's talkin' about up in the Sinbad, up in the reef. He said, boy, he said, if we don't have a flood down this river that'll scare you, he says, I'll sure be surprised. He says, don't unhitch your team, I've got some food cooked in here. Come on in, we're gonna have some food and we're gonna think this over and talk it over.

So, he and Eb Gillies decided that I would go down to Harris Bottom and cross the river and camp. Course I had my camping equipment. Already had the food. And, Charlie Gillies fixed me up some food so I could have some breakfast. And Eb took me down and put me across the river and made sure I got there and got my camp made up. They gave me some hay to put in my buckboard so I wouldn't have to turn the horses out.

So, we crossed there at Harris Bottom. And I went out and I fixed me a little camp there. And it was about dark then and Eb went on home. And the next morning, well it must have been just right at daylight, I heard the damnedest roar you ever heard. And boy, here was the flood, really comin'. Well, I camped way back on the bar and I threw my bed on a clump of Bullgrass. And the stock would walk in between the Bullgrass and the ground would be just like a web in there. Anyway, that's where I was at. I had my horses tied up to the buggy, because I had hay to feed 'em. I jumped up, put on my clothes, and harnessed up my horses and it was just barely startin' to get daylight. And when I pulled out of there I was wadin' in water in that Bullgrass about up above my shoe-top. And just as I pulled up off the bottom, I looked back across the river. And what did I see across this old floody, muddy water. That river was full. One of the biggest floods they ever had down that damn river. Well, old Eb Gillies was sittin' over there on his horse, makin' sure I was all right.

And, of course, when I left Charles the night before, he gave me all the instructions that an old man would give a young guy out alone like that. Now, in the morning, you want to get up early and get a-goin'. 'Cause you got a long ways to go. Most of it's

uphill. From the San Rafael to Crow Seeps it's not much downhill. And it's a long ways. And you're gonna have to get up and get goin'. Cause, he says, if you're not there about the time old Joe Biddlecome thinks you ought to be, he's gonna be huntin' ya. And if you were out foolin' around, that's one thing. And if you're not it's somethin' now. He says, when you get to North Springs, he says, you unhitch your horses and take 'em into Hooch Spring there and water 'em good. And you sit there and eat some lunch and wait and let them horses rest a little while and give 'em some hay. You'll have some left. Let 'em eat for a little while before you go on to The Roost. But don't stay too long, 'cause I want you to get over to The Roost. If not early in the afternoon, in the middle of the afternoon.

He gave me all these instructions. So I followed his instructions. I kind of jogged along. Course that's really uphill and sandy goin' from Harris Bottom up to Dugout Spring and up in there. It's pretty uphill and pretty sandy and I went pretty slow there. But after you get goin' with just the buckboard and the team, you kind of jog along. So I got along and I got over there fine.

And, you know where you come out of the cedars to drop down onto the Roost Flats? You can go to Bluejohn one way or go to Crow Seeps the other. Here was Clell on his horse, waitin' for me. "Where's the vaccine?" he says. I said, "It's right here". He says, "Give it to me". Ok. Hand it to him. Ok, see ya later. Your horse is a little bit sweaty, don't drive him too hard now. I'm takin' the vaccine.

Well, they'd already had the cattle gathered and was all ready. Had 'em in the corral there at Crow Seeps to start vaccinatin' the calves. And they was runnin' lots of cattle, those days. Not like now. They'd already had 'em all vaccinated by the time I got there. But, see, if I'd-a stayed on that north side of the river, on the Gillies side of the river, there isn't a man in the world that would let a kid try to ford that flood. Nobody. I mean that would've been suicide. And old Charlie Gillies knew, that if I wasn't out there about the time old Joe Biddlecome thought I should be, old Joe Biddlecome would be on his horse and be wonderin', you know, thinkin' something might have happened to me, some accident or something, you know. Because that's the way people were that day. If I was supposed to be at Crow Seeps at high noon when the sun was right up here, if I wasn't there, somebody was lookin' for me. That's the way it was.

But, big deal, vaccinatin' them calves. Was always a big deal every summer. But, I don't know what for. I really don't. They said it was to go against the black legs. But, black leg, where is it? Where is it? You take a flu shot, in the Fall, because you know that when you go in the market, some gal is gonna cough in your face and she's carryin' some germs. And you take this flu shot and it might hinder you from getting

'em. I guess that's why they used black leg vaccine. I guess, I don't know. But I never heard of havin' the black leg, I guess.

GC: So cows stayed fairly healthy?

NC: Yeah, always healthy. The cattle in our country, you never saw a sick cow.

GC: What kind of cows did you run?

NC: Hereford and Durham cross. The original herd that dad and Faun first started with, had a lot of Durham in 'em. But we always used Hereford bulls. You saw the pictures of the two Wilcox bulls fighting. Those are the kind of bulls we had.

GC: And Joe Biddlecome ran the same kind of cows?

NC: Oh yeah. Now they've got all these crosses in there that I guess are doin' better. I guess they are better. They're better cattle for the country, I guess. They grow faster. Calves are bigger. They live longer. They take less water. They can walk farther from the water out to some grass. Just better, better. Improved. That's one thing they've improved. Is the cattle for those dry, arid ranges.

But those arid ranges, I can't see much of a future for 'em. Because, more and more and more and more, they're going to get tighter and tighter and tighter on the restrictions. Right or wrong. More and more and more, these groups are gonna buy up those permits. And that ground, if they ever once get their fingers on 'em, they're gone forever. And if I would even suggest to those people that I put a cow on there, they'd kill me. Now, if I want to turn a jackass out there, or a wild horse or somethin', well that's different. But a cow... People love cowboys and hate cows. That's what Bill Cunningham says. And he says, that's difficult for me to understand. How you can love a cowboy and hate a cow. Cause without the cow we wouldn't have the cowboy. But we can't change what's goin' on. And I guess it's all right. I hate to think about if I went down Under the Ledge I couldn't go no place. Because I can't walk twenty miles out across that desert. But it's here. And that's all there is to it. So you have to live with these things. There isn't anybody says I have to go there. Huh? Who said? Nobody. You can't go, stay home. Elementary.

End of interview.

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