

An Interview with
MARTHA HAWKINS

An Oral History conducted and edited by
Robert D. McCracken

Nye County Town History Project
Nye County, Nevada
Tonopah
1990

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Martha Hawkins
1990



From left: Uncle "Van" Vanover, Amelia Hawkins Sallaberry, Imogene Vanover, and Frances Emerson Carter in front of the Irwin Ranch in Duckwater Valley, Nevada c. 1941



Josephine and Frank Roberts, Halstead Ranch, Duckwater, Nevada, 1911. Josephine is holding her son Frank, brother of Marther Roberts Hawkins. 1911

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PREFACE

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

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

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

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

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As project director, I would like to express my deep appreciation to those who participated in the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP). It was an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to obtain oral histories from so many wonderful individuals. I was welcomed into many homes--in many cases as a stranger--and was allowed to share in the recollection of local history. In a number of cases I had the opportunity to interview Nye County residents whom I have known and admired since I was a teenager; these experiences were especially gratifying. I thank the residents throughout Nye County and Nevada--too numerous to mention by name--who provided assistance, information, and photographs. They helped make the successful completion of this project possible.

Appreciation goes to Chairman Joe S. Garcia, Jr., Robert N. "Bobby" Revert, and Patricia S. Mankins, the Nye County commissioners who initiated this project. Mr. Garcia and Mr. Revert, in particular, showed deep interest and unyielding support for the project from its inception. Thanks also go to current commissioners Richard L. Carver and Barbara J. Raper, who have since joined Mr. Revert on the board and who have continued the project with enthusiastic support. Stephen T. Bradhurst, Jr., planning consultant for Nye County, gave unwavering support and advocacy of the project within Nye County and before the State of Nevada Nuclear Waste Project Office and the United States Department of Energy; both entities provided funds for this project. Thanks are also extended to Mr. Bradhurst for his advice and input regarding the conduct of the research and for constantly serving as a sounding board when methodological problems were worked out. This project would never have become a reality without the enthusiastic support of the Nye County commissioners and Mr. Bradhurst.

Jean Charney served as administrative assistant, editor, indexer, and typist throughout the project; her services have been indispensable. Louise Terrell provided considerable assistance in transcribing many of the oral histories; Barbara Douglass also transcribed a number of interviews. Transcribing, typing, editing, and indexing were provided at various times by Jodie Hanson, Alice Levine, Mike Green, Cynthia Tremblay, and Jean Stoss. Jared Charney contributed essential word processing skills. Maire Hayes, Michelle Starika, Anita Coryell, Jodie Hanson, Michelle Welsh, Lindsay Schumacher, and Shena Salzmann shouldered the herculean task of proofreading the oral histories. Gretchen Loeffler and Bambi McCracken assisted in numerous secretarial and clerical duties. Phillip Earl of the Nevada Historical Society contributed valuable support and criticism throughout the project, and Tam King at the Oral History Program of the University of Nevada at Reno served as a consulting oral historian. Much deserved thanks are extended to all these persons.

All material for the NCTHP was prepared with the support of the U.S. Department of Energy, Grant No. DE-FG08-89NV10820. However, any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of DOE.

--Robert D. McCracken
Tonopah, Nevada
1990

INTRODUCTION

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

Although Nevada was granted statehood in 1864, examination of any map of the state from the late 1800s shows that while much of the state was mapped and its geographical features named, a vast region--stretching from Belmont south to the Las Vegas meadows, comprising most of Nye County-- remained largely unsettled and unmapped. In 1890 most of southcentral Nevada remained very much a frontier, and it continued to be for at least another twenty years.

The great mining booms at Tonopah (1900), Goldfield (1902), and Rhyolite (1904) represent the last major flowering of what might be called the Old West in the United States. Consequently, southcentral Nevada, notably Nye County, remains close to the American frontier; closer, perhaps, than any other region of the American West. In a real sense, a significant part of the frontier can still be found in southcentral Nevada. It exists in the attitudes, values, lifestyles, and memories of area residents. The frontier-like character of the area also is visible in the relatively undisturbed quality of the natural environment, most of it essentially untouched by human hands.

A survey of written sources on southcentral Nevada's history reveals some material from the boomtown period from 1900 to about 1915, but very little on the area after around 1920. The volume of available sources varies from town to town: A fair amount of literature, for instance, can be found covering Tonopah's first two decades of existence, and the town has had a newspaper continuously since its first year. In contrast, relatively little is known about the early days of Gabbs, Round Mountain, Manhattan, Beatty, Amargosa Valley, and Pahrump. Gabbs's only newspaper was published intermittently between 1974 and 1976. Round Mountain's only newspaper, the Round Mountain Nugget, was published between 1906 and 1910. Manhattan had newspaper coverage for most of the years between 1906 and 1922. Amargosa Valley has never had a newspaper; Beatty's independent paper folded in 1912. Pahrump's first newspaper did not appear until 1971. All six communities received only spotty coverage in the newspapers of other communities after their own papers folded, although Beatty was served by the Beatty Bulletin, which was published as a supplement to the Goldfield News between 1947 and 1956. Consequently, most information on the history of southcentral Nevada after 1920 is stored in the memories of individuals who are still living.

Aware of Nye County's close ties to our nation's frontier past, and recognizing that few written sources on local history are available, especially after about 1920, the Nye County Commissioners initiated the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP). The NCTHP represents an effort to systematically collect and preserve information on the history of Nye County. The centerpiece of the NCTHP is a large set of interviews conducted with individuals who had knowledge of local history. Farah interview was recorded, transcribed, and then edited lightly to preserve the language and speech patterns of those interviewed. All oral history interviews have been printed on acid-free paper and bound and archived in Nye County libraries, Special

Collections in the James R. Dickinson Library at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and at other archival sites located throughout Nevada. The interviews vary in length and detail, but together they form a never-before-available composite picture of each community's life and development. The collection of interviews for each community can be compared to a bouquet: Each flower in the bouquet is unique--some are large, others are small--yet each adds to the total image. In sum, the interviews provide a composite view of community and county history, revealing the flow of life and events for a part of Nevada that has heretofore been largely neglected by historians.

Collection of the oral histories has been accompanied by the assembling of a set of photographs depicting each community's history. These pictures have been obtained from participants in the oral history interviews and other present and past Nye County residents. In all, more than 1,000 photos have been collected and carefully identified. Complete sets of the photographs have been archived along with the oral histories.

On the basis of the oral interviews as well as existing written sources, histories have been prepared for the major communities in Nye County. These histories also have been archived.

The town history project is one component of a Nye County program to determine the socioeconomic impacts of a federal proposal to build and operate a nuclear waste repository in southcentral Nye County. The repository, which would be located inside a mountain (Yucca Mountain), would be the nation's first, and possibly only, permanent disposal site for high-level radioactive waste. The Nye County Board of County Commissioners initiated the NCTHP in 1987 in order to collect information on the origin, history, traditions, and quality of life of Nye County communities that maybe impacted by a repository. If the repository is constructed, it will remain a source of interest for hundreds, possibly thousands, of years to come, and future generations will likely want to know more about the people who once resided near the site. In the event that government policy changes and a high-level nuclear waste repository is not constructed in Nye County, material compiled by the NCTHP will remain for the use and enjoyment of all.

--R.D.M.

This is Robert McCracken, talking to Martha Hawkins at her home in Duckwater, Nevada, January 12 and March 27, 1990.

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Martha, could you tell me your full name as it would read on your birth certificate?

MH: It'd be Martha Elizabeth Roberts, and my married name was Hawkins.

RM: And what was your birthdate?

MH: August the 6th, 1914.

RM: And where were you born?

MH: In Duckwater, Nevada, on the Halstead ranch.

RM: Could you tell me your father's full name?

MH: Benjamin Franklin Roberts. He was from Pennsylvania.

RM: Whereabouts in Pennsylvania - do you know?

MH: I haven't the least idea.

RM: And do you know his birthdate?

MH: August the 18th - 1888, I believe.

RM: And what was your mother's full name, including her maiden name?

MH: My mother's maiden name was Josephine Ida Rogenteni. She was born March the 8th, 1890.

RM: Almost exactly 100 years ago?

MH: Yes. It'll be 100 years the 8th of March.

RM: Was she from Pennsylvania?

MH: No. She was born in Duckwater, and her mother was born in Duckwater an the Irwin ranch.

RM: Tell me about the Irwin ranch.

MH: OK. My great-grandfather, Ike Irwin, was a sheriff in Eberhardt, Nevada

RM: Where is that?

NH: That's north of here about 23 miles. It's just about 8 miles below the old town of Hamilton. He was a deputy sheriff there, and he had walked in from Michigan. I don't know how many years he was a deputy sheriff. And then for some reason that I don't know, he went to the area that we called Irwin Canyon (which was named after him). He must have had a couple of men with him because they cut shakes there and freighted those shakes to Goldfield. Then they ran out of food, so Ike Irwin got on his horse and rode up through this area going to Austin. Now I don't know why he was going to Austin when Eureka was booming at the time, but he was going for food. And when he came to the lower part of Duckwater he saw all this beautiful ground going to waste and hundreds of seconds/feet of water going down the valley. So he stopped and put a rote on the ground that he was the first water user and he'd be back to take up a ranch.

Well, unbeknownst to him, on the Deflon place, which now is the Duckwater Indian Reservation, some old man had put a willow with a note on it that he was going to come back and be the first [to use the] water rights. Ike Irwin did come back and he built a little rock cabin about 4 feet wide and 8 feet long, which he slept in, and he had a bonfire to cook with. And then he took up all the acreage that he could - I think 640 acres. He didn't have any money, so he took a scythe and cut these meadows, which were wild meadows at that time, and put those in 500-pound bales and traded them to Hamilton and that was the first money he got.

Then he had people come in - I can't name them all - and homestead more ground for him, because at that time he could only take up a homestead which, I think, is 640 acres. There were the Crosses and the Jim Beaches and . . . there were about 4 or 5 homesteaders. As he went along he bought each one out so he'd have a portion of the wild, meadows. And then he met Louisa Kensy, who was a schoolteacher in Hamilton. He met her and married her and brought her down to the ranch and built a home for them. And in that family there were 2 boys and 2 girls; the girls were the oldest.

RM: Do you remember their names?

MH: Oh, yes. My grandmother's (mother's mother's) name was Hermion Rogenteni, but she later . . . her husband was killed in the Eureka Diamond Mine and in later years she married Charlie Irvin. And Ike Irwin took up homestead for each child. Hermi and Imogene, the 2 girls, lived on their own homestead, but the boys stayed with the father. And while they were young girls, they helped with the work and everything.

Ike Irwin put in 80 acres of orchard and he had around 500 head of cattle which he'd run down below the ranches. And there are 2 springs that he named after himself - Ike Springs and Little Ike Springs, which are on the map. He ran his cattle in there until wintertime when it got too bad, and then he brought them back on the ranch to feed.

He put in a big garden so that he'd have something to eat and he put in hardwood trees so that he'd have wagon tongues and soft wood to work with.

He built his own house and he had a big sawmill up in what we call Sawmill Canyon across the valley here. He freighted that all over the country - to Hamilton and to Tonopah and to Goldfield.

He just seemed to be a wonderful person. He was always good to everybody. He said the Indians would come in and work for 5 days and at that time they only got 25 cents a day. And the old squaws would do the washing and ironing and whatever. And all of a sudden they'd say, "Me no work tomorrow. Me go. Me no hungry no more." They wouldn't come back until they got hungry.

But everybody-who came went to Ike Irwin to stay and get a meal and freshen up, and he'd give them some money to go on their way. They say he was the orneriest man in the world to live with, but maybe he had to be. When he first came here and lived in that rock cabin I told you about, he had an old cap-and-ball pistol and he slept with it in his hand. And they asked him, "Why do you do that?"

He said, "Well, it was either be shot or shoot first," as the Indians were still wild then.

RM: What year did he come in, do you know?

MH: I haven't the least idea.

RM: Now, when was Louisa Kensy Irwin born?

MH: February 24, 1842.

RM: And where is the stone house that Ike Irwin built? Is it still standing?

MH: No, but I might be able to find it if you want to go looking for it.

RM: Well, I don't have my camera with me now, but maybe when I come back . . . Is this the area where your home is?

MH: Oh, no. It's 4 miles down in the valley here to the south. It's right on the lower part of Duckwater.

RM: What brought Ike Irwin to Hamilton - did he hear of the boom, or what?

NH: No. I think there were 11 or 12 in that family. They were settled in Michigan and I think they just all scattered. His wife's family came from Pennsylvania and the history I have is that they walked from Pennsylvania clear to Walla Walla, Washington.

RM: Wow.

MH: They said one girl had a pair of new shoes and the only time she put them on was at camp, in order to save them so that she'd have something to wear when she got to where they

settled. But in those days, people wanted to see what the country was like.

RM: Now, did your mother grow up in the valley here?

MH: Oh, yes. She grew up down on the Irwin ranch. My father came in on the Tonopah Tidewater Railroad as a surveyor. Mother was 17, I guess, at the time and he was about 18. The survey crews got to Tonopah and they ran out of money and my father walked from Tonopah to Duckwater.

RM: Why did he come to Duckwater?

MH: Well, he was on his way to Ely, figuring that he'd get another job. The first night I think he came to Stone Cabin and then he went to the Fallini ranch [at Twin Springs]. Then he went to the Nyala ranch and then he came right up the valley and hit Duckwater.

When my mom was a young lady she always went after the cows down on the lower part of the ranch. She net him down there just about where they lived all the rest of their lives. He got on the back of her horse (she never rode with a saddle) and she took him home to the Irwin ranch and they just went from there to getting married and raising 7 children. And we stayed on the Irwin ranch until we all got married.

RM: What were the children's names from oldest to youngest?

MH: There was Frances, Isabelle, Martha (which is myself) and Monroe (my brother - he's still on the ranch, or part of it), Helen, Mabel and Frank. My sister Frances died last April.

RM: Did they all stay in the area?

MH: No. Frances went to Fallon when she got married, and then in later years she went to Sierra City, California. Helen went to Eureka and was around there for years and then she went to Fallon and she's still there. Isabelle, when she married, went to Eureka and she's still in Eureka.

My brother Monroe (we call him Bub) was married in Eureka and he stayed there for years until Mother and Dad retired and then he came down and was running the ranch. My mother inherited one-third of her mother's ranch, which is part of the Irwin ranch. And he's still there on the ranch on 5 acres which my mother was given as a gift to live on for the rest of her life, which she did. My sister Mabel worked in Ely and moved to Salt Lake City and then she came back and worked in Vegas and I don't know how many years she's been in Vegas, but recently, just a year ago, she retired and has moved to Lund.

Frank was married in Tonopah and he's worked in the mines and every place all through the country and in later years he went to Lander, Wyoming. And just recently he's retired - he thinks he's retired. [chuckles] He has 2 sons and a daughter and the second boy-went to Alaska and convinced his dad to go gold mining and he's up in Alaska gold mining now.

RM: Can you discuss the ranches that were in this area when you were a small child? Your ranch at the south end of Duckwater, and then what else was there?

MH: There was what we called the Beach place, which is now part of the Halstead place. The Halstead place was my great-aunt Imogene Vanover's place. Frank Vanover, Imogene's husband, drank the ranch away and they sold it to people by the name of Straights. Now this maybe wrong, but the Straights sold it to the Halstead family, as I understand it. And it's still the Halstead place. And the place I'm living on was the Joe Tognoni place.

RM: And then what's north of you?

MH: North of the lane was the Bill Mendez place. He was Portuguese and I don't know where he originated from, but he couldn't read nor write and between his wife and himself he learned to read and write, but not very well. But he had a brother who started up a grocery store - the store still stands - and the brother, Jesse Mendez, ran it.

RM: On the ranch?

MH: Well, it's just off the ranch a little ways. Then there was the Deflon place, which is the main part of the reservation now. And then . . . now I don't know if Mrs. Rich was at the Bank ranch (we call it the Bank ranch because in later years the Eureka Bank bought it), but a lady by the name of Mrs. Rich . . . I don't know what her first name was or anything about her, but Ed Halstead always talked about Mrs. Rich and her cooking; they said she was the world's best cook. But whether she was one of the ranchers or whether she was just on that property or what, I don't know.

RM: How big was the Irwin ranch when you were growing up? How many acres was it, do you think?

MH: Well, he could take up 640 acres, which is a section. So if he had 5 or 6 people each take up a section, there would be about 3000 acres, wouldn't there?

RM: So he had as much as 3000 acres?

MH: Well, I'd say there was.

RM: Were the other ranches large like that too?

MH: Oh yes. Except the Beach place, and it's smaller, and the Tognoni place wasn't too big. I don't know how many acres there were on the Tognoni place.

The cellar out there was the first post office in Duckwater. RM: Right outside your house here?

MH: Well, yes. I use it for a cellar now, but these 2 rooms were rock and my house ran clear on out to the end of the cellar.

RM: Your house here. Your kitchen was . . .

MH: Yes. But then it was all torn off to the rock part. In later years the Halsteads built this kitchen and . . . and I've lived here 33 years. Although I haven't always lived here. I'm the gypsy. [chuckles] RM: You didn't always stay in Duckwater, then?

MH: Oh, 90 percent of the time I did. My husband mined cyanide tailings in Eberhardt for 11 years and we worked in the mine out of Eureka when scheelite was good. I spent one winter there in Eureka and then I went to Tonopah a couple of winters to put the girls in high school. Outside of that you can say 90 percent of my life was spent here in Duckwater. RM: When you were a small child, how many people would you say lived in Duckwater?

MH: There were lots of people but I couldn't say how many. There were lots more than there are now. Almost every little nook and corner had somebody in it. All on the west side here there are old buildings. Ed Halstead said that when the early settlers came in they all settled on the west side, and you can see the foundations of some of the houses along there.

RM: How about the Indians when you were a small child?

MH: Well, there were lots of Indians, but not as many as there are now because a lot of them have been transported to the reservation here now.

RM: Where did the Indians live when you were a kid?

MH: They lived up where they live now. And Bill Mendez (the old man Bill Mendez, there's a younger-generation Bill Mendez in Gardenerville) to up 40 acres up there and donated that to the Blackeye family, an Indian family which is one of the oldest families here. And there are several Blackeye people living on the reservation. Willie Blackeye, right now, is the oldest known Indian up there, and he's lived here in Duckwater 90 percent of his life. He was born back up here in the hills a little ways, on what we call the Brown Summit.

RM: When you were a small child, what did the ranchers produce here? were they cattle ranches or sheep ranches or what?

MH: All of them had cattle and they cut these big meadows and had thousands of tons of hay. And then the sheep men from the north around Elko would come down and sometimes there'd be around 10 or 15 bands of sheep through here in the wintertime and they'd sell that extra hay to them.

RM: But they were also feeding hay to the cattle? I wonder how many cattle you had on your ranch.

MH: Well, we didn't own anything there except the 5 acres that were given to Mother. My dad just worked for the ranches. (My great-uncles ran the Irwin ranch.)

RM: How many cattle were there on that ranch?

MH: Well, when I was growing up they never had any cattle. Just the old, old man, Ike Irwin - Mother always said he ran about 500 head of cattle. But when I was growing up, outside of a milk cow or two, I never saw a cow.

RM: Well, how did they earn their living then? With sheep?

NH: No, just off of the hay and off of the ranch. My great-aunt had about 150 head of cattle.

RM: Where did they sell their cattle?

MH: Eureka. And then they'd trail them to Ely. I don't think they ever trailed any to Tonopah.

RM: It was just too far, wasn't it.

MH: I imagine.

RM: What was life like when you were a small child here? What did you do as children for amusement?

NH: Well, we had games, and . .

CHAPTER TWO

MH: We just seemed to entertain ourselves some way or another. We had several games that we played, but I can't remember the games.

RM: Did your mother take care of the house?

MH: Oh, yes. She worked outside too and always had a big garden and did a lot of canning and everything. The orchard on the Irwin ranch sort of went haywire after Ike Irwin died and the boys took over. My great-aunt, Auntie Vanover, had a beautiful orchard. And when the fruit come on Mother and we kids would go down there and help Auntie, and my grandmother Hermi would come up. We'd spend a week at a time putting up fruit for us and for them and for my grandmother.

RM: What fruit did you grow in the orchard?

MH: Oh, the apricots came on first and then cherries and then apples and then the peaches and there were always winter apples that'd stay all through the winter till March and April.

RM: Did you usually get a crop of fruit or did they ever get frozen out? MH: We didn't get frozen out often - most of the time we had some kind of fruit to put up.

RM: And then you had your own milk cows?

MH: Well, my great-aunt did and my mother had one cow but it wasn't always fresh, you know.

RM: Did you raise chickens?

MH: Yes, we had chickens.

RM: Did you ever buy groceries?

MH Oh yes. My dad would go twice a year with the wagon . . . in fact, the first time I went to Ely I went with my oldest sister Frances and my dad to Ely. He'd go twice a year and bring back a load of groceries in the wagon. When I tell some of the younger generation that I went to Ely in a wagon the first time in my life they think I'm crazy. All they know is cars.

RM: What was it, a 2-day trip to Ely or longer?

MH: Two days in and probably a day there and 2 days here.

RM: Do you remember anything about that first trip to Ely?

MH: Oh, I can just see it right in my mind. We went from Duckwater to White River to the Pastorino place the first day. And this is what makes me laugh: When we got to the Pastorino place the wife was off delivering a baby and he was a great big Italian guy with the darkest and blackest and biggest black eyes you ever saw. I was 9 or 10 years old, and I just got scared to death of him. But he'd never hurt a flea. He gave us per and made a bed for Frances and me and I don't know where my dad slept

The next morning we went on into Ely and we were there one day. I can't remember eating in the restaurants, though. The only thing I can remember is Joe Candy Kitchen's Ice Cream Parlor. The ice cream was super. The only time you ever got ice cream at home was in the wintertime when you'd have to make it yourself.

When we came back my dad said, "Well, if you girls wouldn't mind we can sleep under the steel bridge in White River and it'd give us a few more miles to get home earlier." Well I was just scared spitless of that old man so I agreed right away. And that steel bridge still stands today.

RM: Is that right? Now where is that?

MH Just up above White River a little ways - above the Wheeler place. But the highway's completely around it, so unless you know where to go you won't find it. Then we came on home the next day.

RM: Where did you get your mail? Did you get it here at the Duckwater post office?

MH: The mail was up on the Bank Ranch, I believe. It went from Currant Creek to the Bank Ranch, I believe. And then it went to my grandmother's, which was maybe three-fourths of a mile from my. mom's place. And then it came back up the creek to the old Jesse Mendez store, which Thomas McGary had for years and years. And it went from there to Currant Creek again.

RM: What business establishments were there in Duckwater when you were a child?

MH: There were 2 grocery stores. One was the Mendez's and one was my great-uncle's Sephine Rogenteni's. Rogenteni's is just right across from my place and all that's left is a rock cellar.

RM: And then where was the Mendez store?

MH: The Mendez store is just above where you turned in to come in here.

RM: How big were the stores?

MH: Oh, they had everything you wanted to get - clothes, food, kerosene (there were no gas vehicles those days).

RM How big was the interior of the stores?

MH: Oh, about twice as big as my kitchen.

RM: So then the store would be about 30 feet by 30 feet?

M: Yes.

RM And they carried food and dry goods and ...

MH: Just everything imaginable.

RM Where did they get their supplies?

MH: Out of Eureka and Hamilton.

RM: Were there churches in the valley when you were growing up? What was the center of social life then?

MH: Oh, no. If you had any church you were taught at home. But every now and then somebody'd want to party, and my dad was one of the musicians. He'd play the violin and they'd get somebody to play the piano and if you had a player piano, they played the player piano. Somebody always could play the violin or play the piano or some kind of instrument. I don't ever remember too many guitars - mostly pianos and violins.

RM And you would have gatherings at people's homes?

MH: Yes. A rider would go by and say, "We're having a party tonight. Tell everybody up the way as far as you go and tell somebody else to take it on up and . . . "

RM Did quite a few people show up?

MH: They all showed up and they all had a wonderful time.

RM: Would they last all night?

MH Oh, sometimes. It was according to how much fun they were having.

RM How did you celebrate holidays here?

MH: At home. Christmas and Thanksgiving were special days for us at home, and Easter was just a big day for us kids My mom painted the Easter eggs. She was a beautiful artist and she'd take water colors and paint the eggs. We never had any dye.

RM And then she would hide them?

MH: Oh yes. My dad would get up early in the morning. He had more fun than any of us 7 kids, hiding those eggs.

RM And then what was Christmas like?

MH: It was about the sane. It was just gorgeous. You'd never forget a Christmas that Dad and Mother gave you. And there'd be a big dinner about 2:00 or 3:00 in the afternoon.

RM: Did you have a tree?

MH: Always - we always had a tree clear to the top of the ceiling.

RM: What did you decorate it with?

MH: My dad and mother would never tell us; they always said that Santa Claus decorated that tree. And we didn't know for years and years - I think we were just plain dumb that we didn't catch on. They'd decorate it just gorgeously, and . . .

RM What would they use for decorations?

MH: Oh, they had all kinds of decorations; seldom did they ever put popcorn on it.

RM: Would they use things they made?

MH: Sometimes they had to make them, but they'd just keep them from year to year. And my grandmother in Pennsylvania would send boxes and boxes of tree trimmings every Christmas. And Grandma Roberts always sent dolls for us. And then when my grandmother Roberts died, my mother and my grandmother Hermi would remodel the dolls and put all the an and legs back and dress them up so gorgeous you'd just think they were new dolls. I think I had the same doll until I was married, and my little brother and little sister demolished it. Other than that I'd still have it. But the tree was simply gorgeous. It's just unexplainable, the way that they

RM Did they use icicles?

MH Oh yes. And I can remember candles on it but they never lit them –the old candle holders with wax candles in them. And tinsel - a lot of tinsel.

RM: And was Thanksgiving a big day too?

MH: Oh, yes. Dad always had a football and he always had us kids out there and . . . well, I don't think my sister Frances ever liked to play ball - she never went out to play it. I didn't either. I was a little bit of a thing. I didn't think I'd ever grow. But my brother . . . and my sister Isabelle was a husky girl, and Dad would find somebody to kick that football for him.

RM: On Christmas did you exchange gifts with family members?

MH: No. I can't ever remember exchanging gifts.

RM: Did your parents give you presents?

MH: They gave us presents but we didn't give them presents. We were too poor to . . . and Eureka's 50 miles from here, Hamilton's 40 miles I guess and Ely's 70 miles. We were a poor family and we just had to take what we got. Sometimes we only got a dress or a pair of shoes but we were satisfied with it. Nowadays the kids can't get enough. If they had to do that nowadays I think the children'd be better off.

RM: Did you have a big Christmas dinner?

MH: Oh yes.

RM: What would it usually consist of?

MH: We always had turkey Thanksgiving and Christmas.

RM: Did you raise your own turkey?

MH: Most of the time my great-aunt Imogene raised them. And she always gave us turkey for a Christmas present, or a ham.

RM: Did you have a big Thanksgiving dinner?

MH: Oh yes. Every holiday was special.

RM: How about Fourth of July? Was that a big day in the valley?

MH: Well, most of the time on the Fourth of July they took a big picnic. My dad was great for going to the mountains so we'd go to the mountains or else we'd go over on the Irwin ranch under the apple trees and have a picnic there. There was always potato salad and lots of good things to eat, you know. Most everything that we ate was raised right on the ranch.

RM: How did your father earn a living?

MH: He worked for the ranches there. He'd work at grandfather's and my great-aunt's and my great-uncle's. Lots of times he had to take food instead of pay, but it seemed to work out. To me it's amazing. My brother and some of my sisters thought we had a terrible life growing up but I can't see that - I think we had a wonderful life because we weren't the only one who had to live like that. The whole community was like that.

RM: So you didn't know any better.

MH: No. Your neighbors were just as bad off as you were, and everybody helped one another. If they had a little something extra it was given to those who could use it. And that went on for years and years.

RM; Did you wear hand-me-down clothing?

MH: Oh, absolutely. From sister to sister to sister.

RM: Did you help your mothers with chores and things like that?

MH: Oh yes. We all did.

RM: What were some of the things the kids did?

MH: Oh, we washed dishes and ran errands and got potatoes and set the table and swept the floor. And we were supposed to make up our bed, but I think 90 percent of the time we forgot to.

RM: Did you all sleep in one room - how did that work, with that many children?

MH: Well, as early as I can remember we had one bedroom for 4 of us. I can't remember where the one brother slept. I imagine he slept in the front roan on a cot. The cot was different than couches are today. They were just metal, they folded up in the day.

RM: Where did you kids go to school?

MH: The Irwin ranch donated 5 acres of ground . . . We had about 1-1/2 miles to walk over a hill and we walked to school for all the schooling we had. We went to the eighth grade, and that was all our education.

RM: They didn't go past the eighth grade in your school?

MH: No.

RM: And it was on the Irwin ranch?

MH: Yes. Years before it was moved down there, it was right over here on the end of the lane as you turn in to come into my place. But I can't remember it being there. I don't know who built the schoolhouse down there, but I can remember somebody building it because Ed Halstead took down the schoolhouse from the end of the lane and used it for a bunkhouse, which is gone now.

RM: Is the school on the Irwin ranch gone too?

MH: My brother has it for a blacksmith shop. The county wanted to get rid of it and they let him have it. He's quite a mechanic.

RM: Would you describe what the school looked like?

MH: Oh, I imagine it was about 20 feet wide and about 30 feet long. It was just an empty schoolhouse with desks and a blackboard.

RM: And it was one room?

MH: One room. And we had outside toilets - one for the boys and one for the girls.

RM: Did the teacher's desk sit up on a platform?

MH: No, the floor was level. There was a wood stove.

RM: How many children do you think went to that school when you were going there?

MH: Maybe 8 or 9.

RM: I see - mostly your family.

MH: Yes. Until later years, and then some of the Indians started to come.

RM: Where did the teacher stay?

MH: The teacher boarded with one of the parents or my great-aunt, who never had any children. She stayed there most of the time. The first teacher was Ike Irwin's sister, Hattie Irwin.

RM: Did she teach at the school that was down the lane here?

MH: No, I don't think so. Evidently it was earlier because in her letters we learned that she came out before she finished high school and she taught . . . well, one of her letters said she taught 75 years between here and all around Eureka and through Newark Valley - and she didn't have a teacher's certificate. And after teaching that long, for \$100 a month, they made her get a teacher's certificate.

RM: She taught for 75 years? That has to be a record, doesn't it?

MH: She wrote letters back home to Michigan and we have copies of them.

RM: She must have been 90 years old when she was teaching then!

MH: Oh, she had to be.

RM: I'll be darned.

MH: From some of the letters I read, she had to be about 16 or 17 when she came out here. And she never married.

RM: Was she your teacher?

MH: No. I think my first teacher was Roy Dean. I know he was my sister Frances's and I think he taught me maybe 6 months out of the year.

RM: Did you go to school about 6 months a year then?

MH: Oh no. We went the full 9 months but I can't remember whether he left and another teacher come in . . . The one I remember best was Jeannie Locke and she became Jeannie Titus - she married a Titus boy. She was from down here off of the road at Locke . .

RM: I'm trying to think who she was.

MH: Are you a Tonopah man?

RM: Well, I've spent some time there.

MH: Do you know Madison and Clarence Locke?

RM: I knew Madison, yes.

MH: Well, Jeannie was Madison's sister. And she taught up here. I don't know how many years she taught here at Duckwater. And my great-uncle was on the school board, and in those days there were all kinds of ads coming from young girls from the east and he'd get somebody to come from there out here and teach. Sometimes they'd stay 2 years and sometimes they'd only last a little while. But most of the time they lasted the 9 months. I can't tell you all of the teachers that were here. There's a girl up in Fernley who's writing on Nevada history and she wrote me a letter and wanted me to tell her all the teacher's names.

RM: Who can remember all their teacher's names? I sure couldn't.

MH: Oh, I sure can't.

RM: What was your school day?

MH: Nine o'clock every morning and then we were out at 3:00.

RM: Did they give a lot of homework then?

MH: Oh. yes.

RM: Do you remember any of the books you used?

MH: If my granddaughter hasn't taken them I have books out in the cellar. I collect old books and my mother had a lot of old books. I just brought them up here and she went wild over old books, and I think she took those old readers and spelling books. Now they have just paperback books that the kids spell out of. They're so different from my book. They have the picture and then they spell it out, which I think is crazy.

RM: Did you use the school for community meetings or anything like that?

MH: Once in a great while. Not often. It was seldom used for anything but school.

RM: How was the school heated?

MH: With a wood stove. If my dad didn't haul it, why some of the other parents would haul it and cut it. They didn't have saws those days - it was all chopping.

RM: Did you wear the same clothes every day?

MH: I think we had 2 dresses.

RM: One for being washed and the other for wearing? And that would last you all year?

MH: Yes.

RM: And then one pair of shoes?

MH: Well, if a sole wore out on our shoes my dad would half-sole them. The kids nowadays don't know what it is to . . .

RM: And then, what kind of coat did you have?

MH: Oh, we always had a good coat. My grandmother Roberts, I think, sent us coats most of the time. I don't know how she got them because she wasn't so well-off herself, but . . .

RM: Do you remember where in Pennsylvania she was?

MH: I know it was around Hatfield. There's another little place and I know they didn't live in Hatfield, but . . .

CHAPTER THREE

RM: So you grew up on the Irwin ranch and then you got married. Who did you marry?

MH: I married a boy from Garfield, Utah, Bill Hawkins, who was in here working on the ranches. His uncle lived in White River. His uncle was Owen Caziar, and that was an old, old family. Some of Owen's brothers lived on Currant Creek and Bill worked back and forth on the ranches. He came over to the Florio ranch and was working there when I met him. And we were married in 1933, and then we raised 4 daughters.

RM: Did he stay here in the valley, basically?

MH: Oh yes. He mined and ranched - worked on the farms mostly.

RM: You raised your family, much of the time, here in the valley then, didn't you?

MH: Oh yes. They went to school here until high school and then I spent 2 years in Tonopah and one year in Eureka and then I boarded the other girl out in Eureka until she went through high school.

RM: Why did you send some of your kids to Tonopah and some to Eureka?

MH: We didn't know when to go when the 2 oldest girls got ready for high school, and Charlene and Madison Locke had a big house down there. They said if we'd take David and put him in high school, we could have it rent free. So I spent 2 winters down there and Bill stayed right across the ranch in the old Saphine Rogenteni store. He stayed there and worked around on the ranches while I was in Tonopah.

RM: Let's back up a little bit and talk again about when you were younger. What did families do here for medical care, being very isolated and all?

MH: Unless they were desperately sick my grandmother took care of them; she was almost as good as any doctor you could get. She had a company where she sent and got medicines and she'd mix her own pills to whatever the druggist told her to mix them to. And for cough syrup she got horehound candy and mixed it with something else. But it was wonderful. She came and practically stayed with us whenever any of us got sick -through the flu or anything. One time one of the boys working on one of the ranches got diphtheria and she took him home and isolated him in the cabin and the doctor came out clear from Ely or Eureka and said that she couldn't save him - that he would just slowly die But she saved him and then he lived for years and raised a family. She was pretty wonderful. RM: Do you remember any of the cures that she practiced?

MH: No, she'd never tell any of her potions. That was a secret of . . . the older people were like that. Everything was a secret with them: Their life story and their life, how they had lived and what they did when they were young and how much schooling they had.

RM: Why was that?

MH: I don't know. I often wondered why they kept things such a secret. RM: Yes. You mentioned that even the family history was a secret. MH: Yes. They'd never tell us anything. We'd ask when we were kids and they'd say, "Oh, we'll tell that to you after a little." And they never did. And from the way they said it, we weren't supposed to ask them again either. And I never could understand what was the secret in back of that.

RM: It wasn't as if they had anything to hide, was it?

MH: I don't think so. Nowadays everything is just public. If somebody goes to jail, they go to jail. It's no disgrace. But in those days everything was secret. My great-aunt would come up and tell Mother some family secrets and we 7 kids were scooted outside someplace and we'd better not get caught peeking, either.

RM: Did you try to listen?

MH: No, it didn't bother us. We knew we weren't supposed to be there and we just went on about our playing or reading or whatever we were doing.

RM: How were you disciplined as children when you misbehaved?

NH: Outside of a scolding, I don't think we ever got spanked. I never remember getting a spanking. A scolding from Dad was worse than 10 spankings. He'd rant and rave for hours afterwards. We'd just fade out of the country. We had a big ranch to hide in.

RM: What about law enforcement here? You were a long ways from law and order, weren't you? Did you have a constable?

MH: Not outside of Ike Irwin when he was living; he was the Justice of the Peace in Duckwater.

RM: What happened when he was gone? Did somebody else become a J.P.? MH: No, by that time . . . well, the Nye County courthouse was in Belmont, Nevada, at that time. And after he died there was nobody to take over the justice court. My daughter has a record book of his justice court book.

RM: I'll bet that's interesting.

MH: It is. They say he was strict, but he was honest.

RM: Well, what did they do with troublemakers and so on after that? MH: I don't know. I just guess they just took care of it and then it was over with.

RM: Tonopah was a long ways off.

MH: Yes. Well, when we were growing up there was that old guy who was down there for so many years . .

RM: Bill Thomas?

MH: Yes. He'd come up here. There were a few who made bootleg whiskey, and when it got too tough he'd care up and settle it and he'd go home. When they really needed somebody he'd come up. He was in office for many years, wasn't he?

RM: Yes, he was in office about the time you were born. He took office in 1918, I think.

MH: Well, I was born in '14.

RM: So, you were just a child when he took office and he was there until the '50s.

MH: He and my great-uncle Ralph were very, very close friends.

RM: Do you know much about Bill Thomas?

MH: No, I don't. But you know, I read a piece in the Nevadan magazine -I think it was the Nevadan magazine - and it said Solan Terrell and Curly Coombs were about the best and most honest people and know about Tonopah people and everything. So they might tell you something about Bill Thomas.

RM: Yes. I've talked to them. I just try to collect information on Bill Thomas because I think he's a real interesting person.

MH: My brother Bub could tell you more about Bill Thomas because he was interested, and he can remember things better than I because I've had several strokes and some of my memory is just gone.

RM: Well, then Thomas came out here then from time to time.

MH: Oh yes. He spent a lot of time out here. He'd always stay with Ralph and Paul - well, if Paul was there, that is - but he'd always stay with Ralph. As far as I know he never stayed any other place.

RM: And what was Ralph's last name?

MH: Ralph Irwin.

RM: Oh, and he was the one who had control of the ranch?

MH: Yes.

RM: Did the Irwin ranch have grazing rights in addition to the land they owned?

MH: Well, when my great-grandfather came in here there were no ranches at all.

RM: But did he also have grazing rights to the federal land? I mean, did he graze his cows out in the range?

MH: He grazed them but there were no federal laws or anything. And that's why he cleaned out the land to make the 2 springs, Little Ike Springs and Big Ike. He developed those so he could put his cows down there and graze them, because after the end of Duckwater and on down there's no water - especially in the summertime. This time of year the Duckwater water goes clear to Highway 6.

Now the Bradshaws have it out in ponds and things for the cows, but it never was like that. And that big springs is all deeded out to each rancher's name in so many second/feet of water. The Irwin ranch gets the second right and the Florio place (it was the Deflon place then) has the first right. And then the rest of the water is all out in so many second/feet, and they are supposed to use that water on the ground - it is deeded to them. But in later years they've modernized it and they can take it out up and down the valley wherever they want to and there's nobody here to say that they can't put it on this section of land when you're supposed to have it on that section.

RM: Could the Irwin ranch take and use their water up here on some other ranch if they wanted to?

MH: No. Years ago when I was a kid they could let their sisters borrow that water. But their sisters lived on homesteads that Ike Irwin had taken up for them because it was all under the same name. But the rest of the water up here has to be on the water that is issued to them.

RM: OK. It has to be on the property that it's issued to.

MH: Yes. And if they went right back to Carson City, if anybody hollered they could make them use it for the ground that it's deeded to. But, I don't know. Things are modernized and maybe it's better, because . . . at least they had lawsuit after lawsuit here over the water.

RM: What is the source of the water in Duckwater?

MH: It's just one great big spring - the Warm Springs. The water just surges out. My husband, Bill, was water commissioner and I know that 28 second/feet of water came out of that spring

every summer. In bad years, it'd go down to 19 second/feet of water. Now the water commissioner tells me that there's not over 18 second/feet of water in there and I can't understand it, because it looks to me as if it never changed in those years.

RM: Maybe it's just unusually dry now?

MH: No. Don't get me wrong - I have nothing against the fish company - but they have a big catfish farm up there and they have backed that water up into the main spring and I think it's affecting it.

RM: Whose property is the Warm Spring on?

MH: Well, the reservation says it's theirs, but I can't see how they can get it when it was the state's. The reservation is supposed to be the Florio ranch and the Florio ranch was never out there, so I don't know how it runs.

RM: But anyway, the ranchers here have rights to that water.

MH: Oh, yes. Absolutely. So many second/feet of water for each ranch.

RM: Is there a lot of conflict over water in the valley?

MH: Not anymore. But when I was a child it was a fight all the time. In one of those papers of Ike Irwin's you can read that he spent \$10,000 one year just trying to get the water straightened out. They were suing him and . . . Mostly, at that time, the Mendezes and the Irwin ranch were quarreling. In fact there was a gun battle. The Tognonis and the Mendezes were after Ike Irwin and somewhere somebody has a picture of 4 or 5 horsemen. Joe Tognoni stood right out my back door (it should be the front door but I call it my back door because there's no way in through it anymore) and he took a rifle and shot old man Mendez in the heel from here, where the water comes out of the ditch right here. That's how bad it got. But nobody died over it. They just settled their difficulties and went back to fighting again. [chuckles] It's sort of funny, you know.

RM: Is there water north of Warm Springs?

MH: No.

RM: So all of the development of agricultural land is south of Warm Springs. And then how far down does the Warm Springs water run? You said it runs to Highway 6. Does it go past 6?

MH: Well, only in the wintertime. Then, if no one's using it on the meadows to keep their meadows wet for next summer's hay, all that 20 second/feet of water goes clear down to Highway 6 right down through the valley.

RM: Does it go past Highway 6?

MH: Well I imagine it would, but for the last 100 years it's always been used.

RM: But there is water on down in Railroad Valley, too, isn't there?

MH: Well, there's water at Lockes' and there's water over at Blue Eagle.

RM: Is there water out in the middle of the valley on down there? Kind of a marshy area?

MH: There's just that big dry lake. That holds water for ever and ever until the sun comes out and dries it up.

RM: How do the people here feel about Clark County trying to get the water from Railroad Valley?

MH: Oh, they're all after them. I didn't know anything about the meeting they had at CUrrant Creek where they all were vetoing it and trying to find a way to keep it.

RM: Do they feel it'll spell the end of their way of life here?

MH: Oh, absolutely.

RM: Because what's Clark County trying to do, isn't it - get all the water from Warm Spring and just take it on down to Las Vegas.

MH: They say they're trying to get the whole valley.

RM: Is there any thought that there's oil under this land here?

MH: Well, I don't know. My brother's the only one who says he thinks that the main body's under these big wild meadows. But I don't think anybody's ever been able to seismograph it, though they have on the both sides.

RM: Why haven't they seismographed the meadows?

MH: They just don't want all that traffic over there.

RM: Oh, I see. The ranchers don't want it. How many cuttings of hay do they get here a year?

MH: The wild hay is only one cutting but now the Irwin ranch had all alfalfa so they'd get 3.

RM: Are most of the madams in wild hay or alfalfa now?

MH: Wild hay. They're still native meadows.

RM: Oh, I didn't realize that.

MH: Oh yes. From the top of the reservation down to the Irwin ranch is all wild, meadows. It's never been changed.

RM: Oh, that's wonderful. But why didn't they go to alfalfa?

MH: Alfalfa needs more water and it takes more to work with.

RM: And they could get by with the wild hay?

MH: Yes.

RM: When do they hay it?

MH: About the 1st of July.

RM: And then what do they do? Put the cattle out there, or what?

MH: Not till fall - until it comes up 6 or 8 inches. They water on it as soon as they get the hay off and then when they bring the cows in, in the fall

RM: Is the wild hay considered good food?

MH: Oh, absolutely.

RM: Better than alfalfa?

MH: I don't know whether it's any better but it's really good. Animals do well on it. About the only thing they feed the alfalfa to is sheep. Sheep don't do too well on wild hay.

RM: I'll be darned. I wonder why.

NH: I don't know. I think it's hard for them to chew that grass.

RM: Oh. Could we talk a little bit about raising a family here? You raised a family for many-years in the valley, didn't you?

MH: Well, I raised 4 girls.

RM: Where did they go to school?

MH: Well, 3 of them went to the school I went to - the 3 oldest ones. And then the fourth one went to the Nye County School that's up on the summit here now.

RM: When did they build that school?

MH: Oh, sometime after 1954.

RM: So then they abandoned the old school.

MH: Yes. At the time they abandoned the old school it had been moved from where I went to school up 3 miles and just across from the Duckwater cemetery and put right over there. They had to carry all their drinking water and everything over there. But the county wanted to get rid of the building and I think my brother gave them \$50 for it. He took it down for a shop, which he still has to this day. And I found the old bell. I gave it to him and I found a piece of hardwood so he could put a handle back on it and it looks just like it did.

RM: Was there any difference in the life that your children experienced growing up in the valley as compared to the way you grew up?

MH: I don't think so. I think we had just as hard a time a-raising them as my dad and mother had a-raising us 7, outside of the younger girl. She was 14-1/2 years younger than the next youngest one, and I think she had a little better time of it because she had a better school and more modern equipment and better teaching and . . .

RM: When you were a child they didn't have electricity here, did they?

MH: Oh no.

RM: When did electricity come in?

MH: I don't think it came in until around '71.

RM: So your children grew up, without electricity, or at least some of them did.

MH: Yes. Everyone but little Martha. We had kerosene lamps and gas lights.

RM: So they didn't have TV or anything like that, did they?

MH: No. We just had a battery radio.

RM: Did you listen to the radio as a kid here?

MH: Oh, when I was growing up we didn't have radios.

RM: Did you have phonographs?

MH: Oh yes. We had wonderful phonographs. My dad bought a Edison phonograph, and those records were about 1/4 inch thick, and heavy. But he had all instrumental music, you know. There was no cowboyish stuff or anything else. [chuckles]

CHAPTER FOUR

RM: So your children grew up without 'TV and just had the radio. Do you remember what stations they used to listen to or what programs?

MH: I have no idea. I probably was too busy even to pay any attention.

RM: And it was as hard for you and your husband to make a living here and to raise your children as it had been for your parents?

MH: Oh yes. It was hard. In fact, if it hadn't been for Edie and Ed Halstead I think we'd have done 'without food once in a while.

RM: Because they would keep you employed or . . . ?

MH: Well, they saw to it that we never went hungry and Bill worked for them now and then, but . . .

RM: Did they do that for other people in the valley, too?

NH: Oh yes. They really did. People in the valley looked after each other.

RM: If a person needed help on his place would the others come and help him?

MH: Oh yes. They all went to help. My grandfather, though, seemed to be a little better off than anybody and I don't know whether it was because he was a Scotchman or what, but people didn't care to go help him. Of course, that's my opinion.

RM: Was that because he didn't help them or

MH: I never remember him helping anybody.

RM: He was very independent, then?

MH: Yes, very.

RM: But he got by all right?

MH: Oh yes.

RM: In growing up, what were the relations here in the valley with Currant Creek? It was quite a few miles down the valley; what was at Currant when you were growing up?

MH: Well, when my mother grew up, Currant and the Irwin ranch were really close. But when we grew up we never went over there - maybe once in 20 years did we ever go over there. It was completely out of the area.

RM: Because it wasn't on the road to either Ely or Tonopah?

MH: Oh yes. It was on the road to Ely.

RM: But you just didn't go to Ely that much?

MH: Oh no. We just didn't have the facilities to go.

RM: Was there much at Currant when you were growing up?

MH: There was nothing but ranches.

RM: There wasn't a restaurant or anything like that there?

MH: Oh my, no. Ahoy just called me up to go with him and his wife to the mountains Sunday, and he got to talking about it - the roads that had come down the contour of this big Duckwater Range from Hamilton, and the road to Duckwater would come in, oh, 3 or 4 miles up here and come through into the Mendez place or something like that. There was no road going right straight to Currant Creek.

RM: Oh, there wasn't?

MH: No. You had to go against the hills and then circle down. And if you went down to Tonopah you went down to the lower end of Duckwater and then took off - oh, it'd be almost directly south - to a hand-dug well, and you had to pull the water out of there for your horses. They'd stay there all night and the next night . . . well, sometimes they passed Blue Eagle to the lower ranch. And then from there they'd go to Troy Canyon, which has water running out of it 90 percent of the time. And if they didn't have water at Troy they always went to Nyala and old man Reischke - do you remember Mrs. Reischke?

RM: Well, I remember the Reischke sisters in Tonopah.

NH: Her parents had that relay station there at Nyala and they stayed there.

RM: Do you mean a telegraph relay?

NH: No, just an overnight stop. And then the next night they'd go to Fallinis' and [then stop for water at] each place - let's see, Fallinis' and then Warm Springs and then McKinny Tanks and then . . . what's the other one?

RM: Well, Stone Cabin maybe or Salisbury Wash?

MH: Salisbury Wash. And then the next day on into Tonopah.

RM: Wow. So you didn't go down to Currant to get to Tonopah.

MH: No, you just went down through the valley here and .

RM: What was that hand-dug well called?

MH: All I know is Ray Sharp's well.

RM: Did you have much interaction with the Sharps who were on south?

MH: None whatever. We were middle-aged before we were connected with any of the Sharps at all.

RM: So you didn't have any connection with the ranchers south of Highway 6 when you were young?

MH: Well, we did with the Lockes. Because when my mother and dad got married, adman Locke hired them to go to the ranch down there and I don't know how long they worked on the Locke ranch. But that was 1910.

RM: So the ranchers on down Railroad Valley formed a different community from the ranchers in the Duckwater area.

MH: Yes, and that was also true for Currant Creek.

RM: Did the ranchers in Railroad Valley and Currant associate to some degree?

MH: Oh, I imagine they did. I think the Manson lived over here on the Irwin ranch on some ground just where our schoolhouse used to sit. But as far as communicating back and forth, I just don't know. My mother talked about them communicating and visiting with Currant but when I grew up they didn't visit.

RM: The Currant area includes going up the canyon, doesn't it?

MH: Yes.

RM: Were there very many ranches there?

MH: Oh, let's see. There was the Caziar family . . . I think there were 3 families there. When I was a kid it was the Rutherford place, but what it was before I don't know. And then I can't remember the next ranch.

RM: That'd be going up the canyon?

MH: No. That'd be coming down the canyon. I can't remember anybody but the Monzonis having the Monzoni ranch and there was somebody else on that ranch.

RM: What was where the restaurant is now?

NH: Bill Horton, I think, was the first owner they ever had. I don't know how long he was there because he went from there to Blue Eagle. If you want history on that I can give you an address where you can find out - a woman who's a Horton girl; she has all that information. I don't know whether they lived at Currant Creek first and to Roy Sharp's place last or were at Roy Sharp's place and came back to Currant. But this girl can tell you - Helen (and Ed) Sutliff.

RM: OK. Let me write that down. Helen and Ed Sutliff of Spring City, Utah, would have a history of the Currant Cafe and what was there at one time.

MH: That's right.

RM: When did they make the road in Ely like it is now, so it went past Lockes' and . . . ?

MH: I can remember them putting it in but I don't know what year. I imagine it was in the late '20s.

RM: Before that it went on down south and around, didn't it?

MH: Before that it went just below Currant Creek and went . . . well, it'd be just below Currant Creek and then it went into the south side of the mountain and down to Blue Eagle and down to Tray and to Nyala and Fallinis' and . . .

RM: What was Hamilton like when you were growing up? Was it still in business?

MH: Well, there weren't too many stores left. The old Louie Zadow store was still running and there were several other stores. Carl Muir and . . . I guess the old hotel was still working too. But that's all wiped out. Everything's gone except the old Zadow house up on the hill. I didn't even see the old smelter on the hill.

RM: I haven't been to Hamilton in ages.

MH: Well, I was up there last summer. I lived in Eberhardt 11 years -that's 8 miles south of Hamilton. Bill cyanided the mill tailings there. RM: Did you go to Hamilton when you were a kid?

MH: We only went to Hamilton once or twice when we were kids. We seldom left the ranch. Dad'd go, but if we went anyplace we'd go to Eureka. In fact we almost always went to Eureka on Memorial Day, because my mother's father was buried there. He got killed in the Diamond Mine when Mother was 3 years old.

RM: So she went up there to take care of his grave then on Memorial Day?

MH: Yes. And she spent quite a bit of her time up there when she was a girl. For some reason she always liked it.

RM: Why did your dad go to Hamilton?

MH: He was mining up there with a couple of other guys. Outside of building a big mill he was just as broke coming out of there as he was . . . [chuckles]

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

NH: Helen Sutliff is related to the Caziars - she was a Horton but her grandmother was a Caziar.

RM: How did you get to Hamilton?

MH: There's a road that's still there. You went to Green Springs and then on up through Cathedral Canyon. In later years they had a road around it because Cathedral Canyon is always torn up and the water comes from clear at the top of Hamilton into Cathedral Canyon. But now that the mine is there at Green Springs they have that all closed off and the road is open for 4-wheel-drives to go through Cathedral Canyon.

RM: And then you say you used to go to Eureka every Memorial Day.

MH: Yes. The only time we ever went anyplace was to Eureka.

RM: How often did you go up there each year?

MH: About once a year.

RM: And that was the only time you got off of the ranch?

MH: That's it.

RM: How long did it take you to get to Eureka?

MH: Oh, by the time we went to Eureka we had a little old Ford. I don't know how fast those old Fords went, but it was a one-day trip. It's only 50 miles, but it's through a dirt road and it's still a dirt road. Everybody in Nye County keeps a-saying, "Oh, you're going to have so many miles this year and you can have so many miles of oiled road that year and . . ." I just got after Jerry Millett and Bob Kechum. They said, "Well, Ely's stopping it." Well Ely isn't stopping it. They could go around those 2 miles in Ely and White Pine - they'd get the road out of the bottom of that big wash out on the side hill where they'd have a far better roadbed, and it'd be all in Nye County.

Now why in the world can't Nye County put a road through there? We have high school kids going to the reservation up there. They promise us . . . I know for a fact that a priest, Father Mannicky, had the money all in Tonopah for that road to be oiled. When Ed Alworth went out as a county commissioner, he had it there to be built. When Ed Alworth was here several years ago and I took him all over; I should have taken him clear through. We found a woman who had spent all night there with a 2-year old baby. He said, "Now you're going to have 11 miles for the next 3 years oiled." That's been 4 years. Where is our road money? What do they do with our road money that goes through there? And the reservation . . . Jerry Millet was a-hollering about it in Nye County. I said, "You don't stop and protest to Nye County." I said, "You just sit here and complain to people about it." I said, "I've offered to take your petition around. If you deliver me a petition, I personally will get that petition signed 100 percent." And they won't get the petition up. They just like to holler.

Now I know for a fact that there are between 8 and 14 high school kids who go to Eureka from Duckwater to high school - Indian and white. Sometimes they spend 24 hours there before they realize that their kids haven't come through one way or another. Since my daughter's been working there . . . Mr. Casey is quite a wonderful person. If those kids don't show up a half-hour or an hour after [they should], [the school is] phoning this bunch down here on the reservation, "Where's your kids? Did they come to school? Why aren't they in school? You better go find them." Now, as dry as it's been for the last 2 years, if we get a good rain there's no way in the wide, wide world those kids could go through that mud. That's a sore spot with me because, you know, this is the third or fourth year and they could have had that . . . I think there's 36 miles and if they just cut out White Pine and . . . all the road does is come this way and around this way. They could go out there by Albert Springs and go right in and make it shorter.

RM: What was Eureka like when you were young - was it a going place or was it a pretty small town?

MH: It was a going place. It almost died, but now the mines are in there and it's just growing like weeds, you know. I bet you there are over 100 new houses in there since the mines are open.

RM: Were there a lot of stores when you were there as a kid?

MH: I don't know; we never went shopping or anything. We mostly bought from Montgomery Wards and Sears and Roebuck catalogs.

RM: You didn't go to a movie or anything when you were up there?

MH: Once in a while, if we stayed overnight we'd go to a movie. In fact the theater still stands

RM: Shall we talk a little about radiation and nuclear testing? You indicated that that's something you're interested in and have some views on.

MH: Well personally, every time they put a blast off down there it rocks my old house until I think I'm going to have to go outside.

RM: You mean even today?

MH: Even today. In fact, in the front room, just 3 years ago, I had a boy put new wallboard and everyplace he put a nail has been broken by the shaking.

RM: Just from the shaking of the ground?

MH: Yes. It rocks this house almost every time. I asked 2 young mining engineers - I said, "I must be on a fault."

And they said, "No, you're between 2 faults. As long as they put those blasts off down there you're going to be rocked." When they first put that blast off and lost it, these hills were covered with radiation.

RM: You mean an underground shot?

MH: Yes.

RM: What did they call it?

MH: I have pictures of it, but . .

RM: They got a lot of radiation up here, didn't they?

MH: Oh yes. Even up in Newark Valley when we were there . . . And we had an old guy from Tonopah who had a Geiger counter. He went out there and he thought he had uranium. And as soon as Bill threw water on it, it was gone.

RM: [chuckles]

MH: But I would dance a jig, even if I've got a crooked leg, whenever it closes down. I'm absolutely against it. I don't think we need atomic energy and the waste that they have. What good is it? It does nothing but harm people. It doesn't do any good.

RM: How has the testing affected the valley, in your view?

MH: Well, I don't know. I never talk to people because I get so rabid and so upset over it that . . . I don't know whether it's affected other people as it has me. I see what it does to people and the cancer, and then they come over the TV and say that Nevada's full of cancer from that radiation from the Test Site. So what can you think? What can you do? RM: Were you here when they started open-air testing back in the '50s? MH: Yes. I was in Tonopah when they put that first blast off and I saw it.

RM: Did you see it from Tonopah?

MH: Yes. We lived in the Locke house. It's back up on the hill there a little ways - I don't know who owns it now. Maybe it's torn down for all I know - I haven't been into Tonopah for years. Oh, well . . . you know where the Silver Claim Motel is, back up the hill a block.

RM: OK.

NH: We saw it from there.

RM: Did you see the flash?

MH: No. We saw the mushroom just go like this.

RM: Really?

MH: Yes - you can ask my girls.

RM: Well, over the years, how did the open-air testing affect you here? MH: Well, as far as I know it hasn't affected me any. My dad got leukemia from it; we always said it was from that because he was down in that area just at the time.

RM: What area was he was in?

MH: In around Bordolis'.

RM: Where's that? I'm not familiar with that.

MH: I call it Bordolis', and in later years they call it Little Meadows or something. They had a dude ranch there, but Jack Bordoli lost his little boy from leukemia at the same time.

RM: Is that on down south of here?

MH: Yes; just above Nyala, up in the mountains there.

RM: So your father died of leukemia and this man lost his little son to leukemia?

MH: Yes. His wife, Martha, is [now] married to Cecil Laird in Carson City. In fact, she's a sister to Helen Fallini. If you knew her . . .

RM: Yes, I knew her. In fact, I interviewed Helen.

MH: Well, Martha's the younger sister. I guess she's still in Carson City. But I know Martha was married to Jack and had that little boy. And that was a pitiful sight. They gave him transfusions and . . . well, my dad, too. They just screamed. It was unbearable to see anybody take transfusions for that.

RM: Did radiation from the shots ever spread up this far?

MH: Oh yes. The Geiger counters picked it up lots of times. In the last few years, though, I haven't had anybody out with a Geiger counter.

RM: But in the '50s it did.

MH: Oh yes.

RM: Did people here ever notice any immediate effects from that radiation?

MH: Not that I know of.

RM: It didn't affect the cattle or the sheep or anything?

MH: I don't think so. But if you're not working out with the cattle and anything . . . I never worked with cows or sheep. Some of the bigger ranchers probably could tell you more than I can.

RM: Could you see the open-air shots from Duckwater?

MH: No.

RM: They started in '51, I think.

MH: Yes. I was here for a while and Chuck Costa was supposed to come up and make sure where we all lived. Well, he never knew where 90 percent of us lived. I don't know whether he's still down there or in Vegas or . . .

RM: Was he with the AEC [Atomic Energy Commission]?

MH: He was with the government, I guess. In fact, Carl Hanks could tell you more about Chuck because he was always down there. He was supposed to make sure that if radiation did fall in

here we would be evacuated. And, as Carl Hanks and I told him, "You don't know where 90 percent of the people are. You don't ever come around to find out where we live."

"Oh," he said, "we could find you."

I said, "If you don't know us how can you find us?"

And he said, "Well, that radiation just goes on the ground and goes down into the ground."

And we said, "Well, what's going to become of the radiation?" "Well, it's in the ground."

"Well, what do our vegetables get with radiation?"

And he said, "Well, it'll take about 7 years for that radiation to go in deep enough so you won't get any of it." Well, who wants to wait 7 years before you can plant a garden or anything?

Martha Hawkins is going to give us a tour of the Duckwater, Nevada, area and we're going to record her comments.

CHAPTER FIVE

RM: Your home is probably one of the most historic places here because of the old post office in the dugout there, isn't it?

MH: Yes. And those rock buildings were built there over 100 years ago. And then here was a big barn which was torn down and the sheep corrals are there.

RM: OK - the sheep corrals in the gulch, coming out in your place.

MH: What we can see here is all the Mendez place.

RM: OK. The pastures going to the north and east of you - coming from your place - were Mendez property?

MH: Yes. And here where the sheep are was the Tognoni place.

RM: OK. This little pasture right to the east of your place was the Tognoni place. This was when you were a child?

MH: Yes.

RM: OK. And you told me that the big range to the east of the valley is called the Duckwater Range now?

MH: That's right. That's a portion of the Duckwater water.

RM: OK. This is the water coming under the little bridge going to your place. Water is really flowing out of it now.

MH: That's Duckwater water. This was all Mendez fields up here where the horses are.

RM: This big pasture to the north and east of your place.

MH: Do you see the rock wall up there?

RM: Running up the hill?

MH: Yes. My great-grandfather had it built from where the schoolhouse was, way down there to the south. It was built completely up here. They gave the Indians 25 cents a day to take the rocks off of the hill. RM: Why did he build the wall?

MH: Well, they didn't have anything to . . . they had [fence] posts but no wire. I don't know why he had to have it all the way up the country. RM: Did he fence the other side?

MH: No, just the east side. I don't know what the deal was.

RM: How could your grandfather afford that? I mean, even at 25 cents a day it was expensive when you figure the labor that went into that wall.

MH: Yes, but if you have strangers caning in and saying, "Can you feed me?" . .

RM: But where did he get the money? Did he have money when he came here?

MH: As far as I know he didn't have a dime when he came here. But he had a sawmill. He went to (Keen Springs and got cottonwood limbs for trees so he could have wood for apple boxes and then he found a saw and he sawed those cottonwood trees for fruit boxes and freighted all the fruit to Eureka and Hamilton.

Now this isn't the Mendez house above us here. That's a new house. But there was a 2-story house that old man Mendez built for his family. He had 3 children - 2 girls and one boy.

These roads leave something to be wanted this time of year.

RM: Are they always bad this time of year?

MH: Only when it's this dry.

RM: The pastures we're looking at to the north and east of your place are all native grass?

MH: Absolutely. All the way up and all the way down as far as you can see.

RM: That must be really unusual, isn't it? To have that much land in native grass?

MH: Well, we never thought it was unusual. It just happened.

RM: There aren't that many places left, I'll bet, that haven't been plowed and broken.

MH: I don't know. I think up and around Jiggs there should be lots of ground like that.

Now this is the old Jessie Mendez store.

RM: We've got an old building here that is to the north and east of your home. When did that close down? Do you have any idea?

MH: No, I don't.

RM: And then what's the log cabin?

MH: That was their dwelling home.

RM: Oh, that's where the Mendezes lived?

MH: Yes. That's where old Jessie Mendez . . . he never married.

RM: Nov, Mendez had his store here when you were a kid, right?

MH: Yes. They talk about Coke and pop and stuff, but they can never make a bottle of pop or a Coke taste like the old soda did. I don't think that old soda'd harm anybody. But this pop that we get nowadays will kill you off.

RM: Now we've climbed the road and we're going north, basically, aren't we?

MH: Yes. That's north because Hamilton's directly north right over there.

RM: Right over that volcanic peak there.

MH: Yes.

RM: We've climbed out of the valley and the pasture area and now we're coming onto the pavement of the Duckwater Road, aren't we?

MH: Yes. You know, I've never gotten a ticket in my life. I'm 75 and I started to drive when I was 17.

RM: Boy, I wish I could say that.

MH: I don't know what I'd do. I think I'd sit down and cry if I got a ticket. If you look and drive right you don't get them.

This is the Nye County School and it's a fairly new school - it was made after 1954. It goes to the eighth grade.

RM: Where do most of the kids go after the eighth grade?

MH: Well, they go to Eureka or Lund or move away. I cooked for the school for 13-1/2 years. I still miss cooking with the kids. I'd go back if they had a school lunch there, but that's a long story and we don't want to get into it.

RM: How many kids were you cooking for?

MH: Thirty-five. They had the Indian school and the white kids together.

RM: And now they're not, are they?

MH: No. They're separated now.

RM: So this school is just white kids now?

MH: Oh, there are one or two Indians kids who come down.

RM: But most of the Indian children go to school on the reservation?

MH: Yes. Those that want to come, come here. They're not segregated; they can go where they want to.

Now, I think on the earlier maps you'll find that they call this McGary Summit.

RM: McGary Summit. Does that volcanic peak off to the northeast have a name? It's not a very big mountain.

MH: No, my kids always called it the "chocolate ice cream cone." Usually it gets a cap of snow and then . . . and on the bottom it's sort of hot.

RM: Most of the children don't go to high school in Tonopah, then? NH: No. I went to Tonopah mainly because the Lockes were really good friends of ours and it was convenient.

It's warm today. We might get a snow out of this.

The old road used to go through the hills there.

RM: I see. The old road up Duckwater.

MH: Yes. It's really all Duckwater, but the Indians call this Duckwater up here and I don't know what they call us down there.

RM: it technically you're all Duckwater, right?

MH: Yes. Duckwater is about 12 miles long and about a mile wide. In places it's wider than that.

RM: Now we've crossed over McGary's Summit . . .

MH: Yes. Nag this is all reservation to the west of us, and these are all new reservation homes. (I was wondering whether to take you to the Warm Springs and come down that way . . . Well, we'll do it one way or another.) [laughs] These buildings off to the right here are the old Indian houses - except the one, and it's government made. They've taken the roof off of it. And the old guy that had it had a nice little garden back up under the trees and a little orchard. But he never

had any children. He was married but he never had any children. But all those rock buildings are old, old Indian homes.

RM: OK. We're past the old Indian homes . .

MH: Now right here by this tree is the little Warm Springs, we call it. This is all warm water. It's 92 degrees, or something like that.

RM: Do people swim up here?

MH: Oh yes.

RM: So the water that comes out of the ground at Duckwater is warm.

MH: Yes. It's all warm. It cools off when it gets down to my place. And off to the left is the catfish farm. They have a big processing plant and all . . . If you ever see catfish from Duckwater you'll know where it comes from. It goes all over the country. They take quite a bit of it to Vegas.

RM: Do they grow their own feed here?

MH: No, they have it all shipped in. It's alfalfa processed in pellets. In fact, those big tanks are full of feed. They have the fish in raceways about 4 or 6 feet deep. I actually think they have too many fish in one raceway, because they have a lot of trouble, but I'm not doing it, so . . . Now the reservation, I think, claims this land.

RM: We're kind of east of the catfish farm now.

MH: Yes.

RM: How did the reservation get that land?

MH: They bought the Florio ranch but I don't know how they got ground out here, because Florio never owned it. I don't know how it's situated. RM: You say they bought the Florio ranch?

NH: Yes. In 1933, Florio from Eureka had 3000 or 4000 head of sheep here and he got 28 inches of snow on the 21st of April. He had all his sheep up in the hills, and he lost them in the deep snow - they smothered to death.

RM: So this is the Warm Spring right here?

MH: This is our Warm Springs right here.

RM: Well I'll be darned. We're at the Warm Spring now at the head of Duckwater. Boy, that's nice.

MH: And then the water goes clear down to those trees and then it goes down past the fishery and on down over the hill. And you can see how pretty and clear it is.

RM: Isn't that beautiful? Has it always looked pretty much like this?

MH: Yes, but not so full because they have it backed up so badly.

RM: Oh, I see. How much fuller is it than it used to be?

MH: Oh, about 2 feet. I've been swimming in there and it usually comes to right here. See how that surges up there? That's where the hole is.

RM: Is it a deep hole? If you waded out there, what would you find?

MH: Well, you'd find a big deep hole - I don't know how many feet deep, but my brother tried to go down there and it narrows down and he said he couldn't even get his head in, the way it surges where it comes out of the ground. One of the teachers here on Duckwater had those webbed-feet things, and he went down and said the same thing. But you can't tell water depth until . . . I can't swim. In fact, I was 16 years old before I knew there was a swimming place up here.

RM: So you never came up this way?

MH: No. We were very much by ourselves.

RM: What a resource this is in an area like this - water coming out of the ground like that.

MH: All through Nevada you'll find these warm springs, though not as big as this one. There's a big warm springs out of Eureka at the Saddlers' place, but most of them are smaller than this. Now this is what they call the Bank Ranch. As I told you, Mrs. Rich lived up here.

RM: OK. This is the ranch that's a little bit north of the Warm Springs.

MH: The bank in Eureka bought it at one time. And everybody calls it the Bank Ranch, and now it's reservation. But there are some old buildings there. They're made out the limestone off of this warm water.

RM: Oh really?

MH: Yes. If you go back down in there behind those big flat rocks, they're all full of lime and everything.

RM: Do people live on the Bank Ranch now?

MH: Yes. A friend of mine . . . This fall I had a boy come and insulate my kitchen and put new wallboard on and the boy here came down and did all the crack-pasting for me. He wouldn't take any pay so I made him a great big afghan for a double bed for him and his wife. It sure helped that kitchen. The house doesn't belong to me but I don't pay any rent. I just live there, you know. It belongs to the Halstead family. But they let me live there for nothing so I just keep the house up and do what I can.

RM: And you've lived there for 33 years?

MH: Yes.

RM: Did you raise your children there?

MH: Just the little one - Martha.

RM: The Bank Ranch seems to be above the water - where do they get their water?

MH: Well, the water runs this way.

RM: Oh, it runs north a little way.

MH: It runs clear down . . . when we get through here we'll go down and around and come in through the top of the reservation.

RM: Oh - it comes out of the Warm Spring and then runs north and then circles around? I see.

MH: They made the barn here on the Bank Ranch all out of native rock. Now this is Linbeck's home. (Once you get me out you've got to see everything! [laughs])

RM: I appreciate the tour - I really do. The stone building on the Bank Ranch is one of the oldest dwellings in Duckwater. It's got a front door and 2 big windows, one by [inaudible]. It was built in the '20s sometime. The Halstead ranch is the biggest in the area in Duckwater now, isn't it?

MH: Yes, because they bought 2 other ranches besides their own. They had the original Halstead ranch and they bought the Mendez place and the Beach place.

RM: Now, the road going past the Bank Ranch is the one to Eureka. Where is Eureka from here?

MH: It's about 40 miles straight north from here. Now, if you go to this oil drill and turn left at this oil road we'll be out of Duckwater.

RM: Now, the Bank Ranch and all its pastures are Indian reservation.

MH: Yes.

RM: What about the house down there at the end of the Bank Ranch?

MH: One of the families lived there and they all came down with tuberculosis. In fact, the woman lost 3 children from living there with the dust.

RM: It's that dusty here?

MH: Yes - especially in this valley up here. And the doctor said it was from the dust So then they moved lower down and then in later years when this halogeton came in, it held that dust down and now it's not so bad.

RM: What's that?

MH: That's that weed along the road there.

RM: Oh, I see. It didn't used to be here?

MH: Oh no. It's a transplant from God knows where.

RM: But it came in and dampened the dust down?

MH: Well, it started to grow. It used to be very poisonous to sheep and cattle, but anymore it doesn't seem to bother them. They seem to survive with it or they don't eat it or something. But they call it water weed because it holds the water in the ground so well. Now we're on the top of the Duckwater.

RM: OK. At this oil road at the top. Now why is the road oiled here? I don't understand that.

MH: Well, because it's an Indian reservation.

RM: Oh, I see.

MH: And that's the road out onto Eureka that I was telling you is all dirt Years ago there were big cottonwood trees all the way down here - when Florio had it.

RM: So Florio had this whole big area? And there were big trees on the north end of his property.

MH: Yes; he'd steal water at night from the lower end. He got caught several times but they never could do anything with him. I wonder what those birds are getting out of that water.

RM: How many Indians are on the Duckwater Reservation?

MH: I don't really know, but I'd say around 200.

RM: And you say they've come in from other areas.

MH: Oh yes. Some come from Smoky Valley, some from Fallon and Reese River and

RM: Did they come in by marriage?

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: And the U.S. government came in and paved part of the road that's on the reservation?

MH: Yes. The reservation has a big irrigation well there.

RM: Right by that old house at the north end of the . . .

MH: Right here. They say it's a wonderful well, too. They think they can pump as much as Warm Springs holds. But they don't seem to use it too much except for over here. Now that's Warm Springs water.

RM: OK, we just crossed over the Warm Springs water.

MH: It used to all come around this way. Now it drops over the hill there.

RM: Oh, I see.

MH: This is run in here for cattle - you can see it going out through there. They used to have a house under this tree and it burned down and Mother and I were on a Red Cross committee and we went to Tonopah and got them a house and they brought it up here. But I don't know where they've moved it to. This is a new Indian home here - this is one of the latest homes.

RM: A yellow home on the left as we're going south on the north end of the Duckwater reservation.

MH: That other one - the white house on the right - is one of the older homes. Those are the coldest things God ever made. They're just old cinder blocks. There's no lining or anything in it.

CHAPTER SIX

RM: You probably know all the Indians here, don't you?

MH: Yes, 90 percent of them. I went to school with some of them. Then for my pacemaker check I come up to the health center here.

RM: Do you know the name of the big mountain off to the west with the snow on it?

MH: That's Portuguese Mountain. It was named for a Portuguese guy. Somebody went over there and . . . that's how everything got its name around here. Up this canyon (to the west) is McClure Springs. An old man by the name of McClure camped up there.

RM: Portuguese Mountain looks like it's pretty high and rugged.

MH: It's just amazing how tall it is from the other side - the Sand Spring side. I never knew it was so rugged-looking till I went over there this summer. It's the first time I've ever been into Sand Springs.

RM: Is that Sand Springs Valley or . . . ?

MH: No, over the mountains into the other valley. This is the Allison's'.

RM: OK. A red house on the left is the Allison'.

MH: Andrew Allison is one of the older Indians Oh, look at the colt. Isn't that pretty?

RM: Yes.

MH: All the water used to come down through this area.

RM: We're kind of in an area with a lot of willows, or whatever they are.

MH: Yes.

RM: And all the water used to come down here but now there's just a little bit of it.

MH: I'm surprised to see water there. I haven't seen water there for a long, long time. All that rock in those rock buildings comes off of these hills up here. I saw on TV here, not long ago, that a couple came into the Elko area and they didn't have any money to build a house and they discovered that they could build with the rocks. They thought they were the inventors of that, and that's all we've ever had in this area rocks to build with.

RM: Yes, that's funny.

MH: It's funny what the younger generation can think of - that they're the first people that would think of that.

RM: Each generation rediscovers the world, don't they?

MH: Yes. [laughs] Right through here is a wonderful place to find arrowheads.

RM: OK, we're in a spot where the water's coming down off of the hill.

MH: Yes, and there's someone fishing, see?

RM: There's fish in there?

MH: Yes - catfish that got out of the catfish farm up there.

RM: Can you still find arrowheads here?

MH: Yes, but you're not supposed to pick them up. I doubt if they'd let you in on government land at that. You see, there are 3 of them.

RM: Is that the natural path of the water, Martha - caning off the hill like that?

MH: Yes. All that water used to come up around the way we came.

RM: OK. It didn't used to run down there.

MH: No. And then they put it down over the hill like that. I don't know why; they did that after it became a reservation.

RM: Did they plant those trees?

MH: They just planted themselves. I like to fish. I could spend days and days fishing. I used to come up here and fish quite a lot but I didn't last summer. I didn't feel good then. I think it was mainly because I lost my best pal - my sister - and it just did something to me.

RM: Oh, I know what you mean. It's a terrible experience.

MH: Whenever I felt downhearted or something, even though I've just had a telephone not too long, I could write to her and she'd write right back and . . . It was a experience that I never went through. I didn't miss my dad and mother like that. And I still miss her. It's just something I can't get over and it sort of made me sick. Now this building off to the left . . .

RM: OK. There's a cement block or rock foundation off to the left here.

MH: In 1862, I believe, a man by the name of Brown was going to make a flour mill and he was going to use water power to grind the flour. The strike for gold came to Alaska before he got it finished, and he was broke, so he went to Alaska to get money to come back and finish his mill, but no one's ever heard of him since. So the foundation still sits - it used to be built up a little better than that. But he never got his water wheel in or anything.

RM: Where was he going to get the grain?

MU: Oh, years ago there were fields and fields of grain in here. That's how Duckwater got its name, you know. There were so many ducks in here off of this . . . When the Indians were in here they never cut the hay, and they had grain of all kinds on the wild meadows. Then when the white people came in there were grain fields, so the ducks come in here by the thousands. The white people did raise a lot of grain, but nowadays they don't raise any grain fields at all.

RM: Where did they raise it - on the meadows?

MH: Well, this was never meadow here.

RM: OK. They were going to raise grain on the field to the east of the foundation . . . or west.

MH: Well, all the way down they had certain plots of ground that they'd plow up for grain.

RM: Oh, I see - even though they left most of the pasture in native grass.

MH: Oh, all the native grass they left that way.

RM: Can you get grains out of those fields? I mean, do they produce any kind of native grains?

MH: Oh yes. There's wonderful feed for ducks and geese on the grass if it goes to seed. Before this was a reservation this was all the Florio place in there, and now there's just 2 buildings from the old Florio place and all the rest are modern and new from the reservation. When I first got married this was the Florio place and this was a big potato field here. RM: OK, just south of the old mill foundation is the headquarters of the old Florio place. And then on the west side of the road from there was a potato field. Where were they selling the potatoes - in the mining camps?

MH: Oh no. This ranch had about 20 men all the time. And I don't know, everybody bought potatoes. They were just wonderful. In later years my dad raised potatoes. Heck, he'd have potatoes that long sometimes.

RM: A foot long?

MH: Yes. You could cradle them in your arm like you would a stack of wood.

RM: Were they tasty?

MH: Oh yes. They were super. Everything that grows in this valley is just super good. Now this is the tribal hall on the reservation.

RM: We just visited the tribal office, the block building just down from the Florio ranch headquarters. And the school is behind it and it used to be the Mormon church, is that right?

MH: Yes.

RM: And they told us there were 55 Indian households on the reservation.

MH: Yes. Oh, there are a few white people live up here. There used to be a big orchard and a great big garden all in where the tribal headquarters are now. And the post office is headquartered in the tribal office. And this is the old Florio blacksmith shop.

RM: The building that's falling down at the curve of the road was the old blacksmith shop.

MH: And that white building in front of us is the senior citizen dinner hall. And this is the old Florio home. It isn't the original Florio home but it's the last Florio home.

RM: I see. That's kind of south and east of the tribal headquarters →an old rock building.

MH: Part of its rock and the other's all adobe. My rock buildings down there are all put in with adobe. It's made of diatomaceous earth and all kinds of garbage - manure and greasewood and straw.

RM: I'll be darned. You mean in place of cement for the . . .

MH: Absolutely. Oh, I cemented the outside because the adobe was coming out. But the material that's holding the rocks together is all adobe. All the old buildings here are fixed with adobe.

MH: Did you want to go see the fish?

RM: Yes. That might be fun.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: . . . on top of the Duckwater mountain there.

MH: I've been right on that peak.

RM: Which one?

Nil: The one right there.

RM: The one to the south.

MH: That bald one up there. In fact we call that Bald Mountain.

RM: Bald Mountain Kind of the southern-most peak of the Duckwater Mountains?

MH: I think on the map they call it Duckwater Peak. It's 11,000 feet up there and right in back of that peak you can find fish bones.

RM: They usually get a lot of snow, don't they?

MH: Yes, they do. I don't know whether I'm on the right road here or the wrong road.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

MH: . . . 1st of January, too, and stayed till the middle of March. And then we can stay just like this all winter, too. This is the way it was last winter.

RM: Is the feed really bad for the cattle outside of the valley?

MH: It is now, yes. It's terrible. Up in Eberhardt where there were just waves and waves of weeds and grass and everything, this summer there was nothing. The cows wouldn't even stay up there. It was pitiful to go back there after so many years and see it like it was.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: . . . the fish farm. They call it Don Ray Desert Fisheries. Home of the fillet of something. Hey, that's a pit bull. They've got pit bull dogs here, don't they?

MH: Don Ray doesn't . . . He's a big newspaper guy - he owns the Daily Times in Ely and he owns several papers in Vegas. He's a bigshot.

RM: So this is not a Indian enterprise here.

MH: Oh, no. Some of the Indian people work here skinning fish. I don't know where these 2 boys are from but they're nice boys.

RM: Do they live right here?

MH: Yes. The whiskered boy lives over here and the other boy lives here. His wife doesn't have anything to say. But the whiskered bay has one baby, 9 months old.

Now we're going to go light back to the Warm Springs, if we want, there.

That's the Pancake Range, and it goes through Duckwater. It goes from the Eureka road clear down to Lockes'. That's the full length of the valley.

RM: And Portuguese Peak is probably the high point?

MH: Well, Portuguese Peak is in Sand Springs, so I don't know whether they consider it the Pancake Range, or what.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

MH: . . . Portuguese someplace on the Sand Springs side.

RM: They're supposed to what?

MH: Drill for gold this year.

RM: . . . left the fish hatchery and we're back on the pavement. And this is the reservation road?

MH: Yes. This is the reservation road. We'll have 3 or 4 miles of reservation. And this is all reservation down in here. It's all wild meadows down in there.

RM: Off down to the south of here.

MH: You know your directions well. My cousin's from Utah and he never did know his directions.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: . . . [do the Indians] practice a lot of their old ways, or are they pretty much . . . ?

MH: They're pretty much into the white ways. But their funerals are very, very much Indian.

RM: In what way are they Indian?

MH: They just bury them the old Indian way. They bury them in a casket and dig a grave, but the ceremonies are very much Indian.

RM: OK. We're kind of west of the community center. Boyd Graham - is he an Indian?

MH: Yes. Boyd's dad was from Fallon but he died quite a few years ago. This is all Boyd's place here. I think this field above us, too, is Boyd's. You know that nest of kids you asked me if I knew the names of?

RM: Yes.

MH: Well, the boy who lives here is one of them and the others are his sisters. And one younger brother's dead - he died of leukemia of the throat. He came out of the army and wasn't home over 6 months when he died. Don't they have nice homes here?

RM: Yes, they do.

NH: I'll have to make those kids, both of them, some cookies or doughnuts or something.

RM: Sounds like you're kind of the valley baker.

MH: I'm the valley baby. Any time I want something done they do it -except [haul] coal. [laughs] But I do that myself.

RM: You've lived here longer than anybody, haven't you?

MH: No. Willie Blackeye's been here longer than I have.

RM: And he's Indian, right?

MH: Yes. I love to tease these Indians up here. I tell them, "I'm a better native than you are." I say, "You're a transplant and I was really born here."

RM: What do they say?

MH: They just laugh at me. That's what I say - they all baby me. When I get to feeling bad I go see them and I say, "I need a hug today," and I get a hug. They're really wonderful.

RM: You get along with them really well, don't you?

MH: Oh yes.

RM: You're just really like one of them, aren't you, because you've all lived here so long?

MH: I guess I'm just like one of them. My husband had 90 percent of the older Indians up here believing that I was half Indian Oh, I got the biggest bang out of it. About 3 years ago my sister Helen and I went to see my older sister Frances in Sierra City. And I'd heard this for years, "You're half Indian," and "I know you're half Indian," and all this and everybody else got to saying, "Well, you're half Indian," and so [chuckles] we got to talking about nationality and I

said, "Oh, now wait a minute. As long as I've got you two here, I want to know something." I said, "All these years everybody says I'm half Indian." And I said, "Am I Abe Collins's kid or am I Truman Collins's kid or am I your dad's kid?" And bay, they liked to put me out of the house, you know. [laughter] I got to laughing . . . I couldn't stop. Now this is where Jerry Millett lives. RM: OK, Jerry Millett lives west of the village.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

MH: . . . fandango festival every fall and they had certain dances and songs for each dance. But they all left their homes - I'll take you around up here where they held their fandangos. They'd sleep in teepees or out on the ground; they never went home during the week that they had a fandango. And if it was a good pine nut year they had a song about a pine nut, how God was good to them and they had plenty to eat that winter and they had stored a lot of meat and such as that, you know. My mother could tell you all about these Indians up here.

RM: I wish I could talk to her or somebody . . . I've worked with a lot of Indians around the country - probably 7 or 8 different tribes - and they don't always tell you very much.

MH: No. They're always reserved and they laugh at you because they think it's . . . well, I don't know whether they think it's not your business or what. Now, that belongs to Bill Mendez and he donated it to the Indians.

RM: Oh, I see. We're talking about the pasture that's kind of to the north and east of the village.

MH: Yes. And you see the houses in back of the trees? That all belongs to the Mendez family. He donated 40 acres in there to the Indian people.

RM: Was the rest of this Florio land?

MH: No, this is just property that the reservation bought. Now this is all Indian grounds up here.

RM: To the right of the . . .

MH: Yes. And they'd hold their fandangos up here in the grounds sometimes.

RM: Now what is the fandango?

MH: Well, it's a fall festival.

RM: And they called it the fandango?

MH: Yes. They don't call it that now. All the old, old Indians lived down there.

RM: Down there in the trees on the Mendez part.

MH: They just had wickiups and teepees to live in.

RM: I see. And they lived like that when you were a kid?

MH: Yes.

RM: How many Indians do you think lived here when you were growing up?

MH: Oh, maybe 25 or 30.

RM: What would that be - 5 or 6 families?

MH: About that. They were all related to one another. The Blackeye and the Johnsons and . . . Billy and Bert and Charlie Bullcreek weren't related to anyone.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

MH: Now, that person belongs to the Blackeye family.

RM: Where?

MH: Right there. That last red house on the left as we came out.

RM: OK - before we got on the highway.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: I asked why you live in Duckwater. Tell us why.

MH: You can see the mountains and you can look for miles and miles and miles, then you can turn around and see mountains right close to you. It's just a gorgeous place to live. And everybody's so wonderful to you. You can go fishing when you want to. You're just free.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

MH: . . . on the left was Sephine's store.

RM: This little building down here past your mailbox.

MH: That's the cellar that he had, but the store was torn down.

RM: You said you lived in Sephine's store for a while. And now we're past Sephine's store going south and there's a complex of buildings.

MH: Mrs. Vanover used to live here and it went from Vanovers to Straights to Halsteads, I guess. And it's the Halstead place now.

RM: This is the Halstead ranch. Is it their headquarters?

MH: No. The old Halsteads lived here. And this trailer house has just been put in here.

RM: Yes. It's red and white.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: OK. You were born in a cellar where?

MH: Right there. A big, long, rock cellar with great big pine timbers for the top of it.

RM: And that's where your mother and father lived when . .

MH: Yes. They lived here and worked on the ranch.

RM: What ranch was this then?

MH: (It's going to storm with those horses running like that.) My two older sisters were born in that house.

RM: I see. There's a kind of a cream-colored old frame house there.

MH: These are all newer buildings.

RM: The yellow house that's behind the fence is a newer house.

NH: The Halsteads put that in. And this is all adobe building and . . .

RM: Yes, I can see that - rock and adobe. Did your father build that house?

MH: No. I don't know who built that house. It's quite old.

RM: Yes. When horses run around like that it means it's going to storm?

MH: As a rule. Unless Alan's in there trying to catch them, but I don't see him. I do see Alan's pickup there. But they're playing for some reason. These corrals are all new. They used to have cedar posts.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MH: I was going to show you where the schoolhouse . . . Now this is the Beach house and it belongs to the Halstead family new.

RM: OK. We're down in the pasture from where you were born and it's called the Beach place.

MH: And that's the Duckwater cemetery on your left. That's for the white people - the reservation has its own.

RM: Has the Duckwater cemetery always been there?

MH: As far as I lam it's always been there. But the Irwin ranch has a private . . . I think there are about 6 or 8 people in there from down on the Irwin ranch - my great-grandfather and my great-grandmother and my grandmother and 2 great-uncles and 2 babies. This is all new - they aren't the original buildings.

RM: This is a little ranch south of the cemetery. But this is all Halstead property?

MH: Yes; until we get to the next division fence. Those are all native meadows, too.

RM: I see. And these meadows were here when your great-grandfather came in.

Mil: Yes. That's why he settled here. They were here for years and years before because Indians came through here. The old Indians said that lots of Indians would starve to death if they didn't go south. They said 2 Indians would take 2 days to run down a jackrabbit and they ate tule roots to survive in here.

RM: What is a tule?

NH: You mean to tell me you don't know what cattails are?

RM: I know what a cattail is. Is that a tule?

MH: That's a tule. They don't eat the roots off of a cattail, but there's a round tule that you can eat the roots off of. I've eaten them lots of times.

RM: Are they good?

MH: Yes. They're sort of like a celery. But we only ate them early in the summertime because the tules get sort of tough in the fall. But you just pull it up and there's sort of a skin over it like an onion. You can take that off and it's just as crisp and nice and nutritious as . .

RM: What does it look like?

MH: It's just the round, green stem. It comes up like that. The Indians used to eat the sugar off of the sugarcane that grows along the ditch, too.

RM: You mean there's wild sugarcane here?

NH: Oh yes. Sophie told me not too long ago that when you bend them over and let them dry, then when you take them off you can just roll them like a roll and eat them. She says she ate it lots of times.

Oh, that division fence back there was the end of the Halsteads and now we're on the Irwin ranch property.

RM: OK, we're still going south on this dirt road.

MH: And where these trees are off to the right down here at the corner of the mountain, there was a building there; there was a building across the field there, and a family there; and those trees - we call them the Jim Beach trees - there was a family there. And after they proved up on the land, Ike Irwin bought them all out. There's lots of native land here if they have water for it, you know. They could prove it . . .

RM: Why do you think your great-grandfather chose this part of the land to stake out rather than up, say, near the spring?

MH: It's better ground out here. There's no alkali down here - up there it's all alkali. He came from a big farm country.

RM: So he knew his farmland.

MH: Oh yes.

RM: Are these all in alfalfa?

MH: Oh no.

RM: OK. This is still native grass on the Irwin.

MH: Yes. It's not very good anymore. It doesn't get any winter water. There's nobody working the ranch anymore and it's a disaster area. A rich man by the name of Sprouse bought it and I don't know what happened to him, but the alfalfa fields and everything are just wiped out and the land just sits.

RM: When did he buy it?

MH: Not too many years ago.

RM: Your great-grandfather and your grandfather never had to level this pasture, did they?

MH: Oh no. It's natural. There's one big ditch - the flood ditch -going right down through the middle, and it's about 15 or 20 feet deep. Lots of times we get terrible floods in here in the springtime. I saw this whole ground covered with flood water. Now, the house was right there. See those rocks? Either the Manson lived here or the Cobbs; somebody lived here.

RM: And there's a big old cottonwood tree that must be pretty old, isn't it?

MH: Oh yes. It was there when I was a little kid. Now, do you see the rock foundation right here?

RM: Yes.

MI!: This is where our schoolhouse sat - right on that foundation. We walked on that trail from my home up over that hill to school here every day.

RM: Oh, I see. The fence going up over the hill kind of the south.

MH: Yes. And when it was really windy and cold we'd come around the hill. But all that lower fence from this rock fence here (this is all new fence put in here) . . . the rock fence went clear down there.

RM: That your great-grandfather had the Indians build?

MH: Yes. Except just over the hill and then it was all post and he had copper wire strung through the cedar post because they didn't have any staples.

RM: Oh - so all those had to be drilled.

MH: This road was never here until later years. We have what we call a cactus berry [bush] here and around the 1st of August you can take all the stickers off and eat them. They're the most delicious thing you ever ate.

RM: The berries or the cactus?

MH: The berries. But the last few years it's been so dry that we haven't gotten any.

RM: We're on kind of a rough road, aren't we?

MH: Yes. And you have to open a gate or two. You've got to pay for your ride today, boy.

RM: OK. We're at the top of the knoll, looking east.

MH: This is all posted ground that Grandfather Irwin took up - all this that you see over there.

RM: I wonder how many acres he had.

MH: We could find out, because surely he had to pay taxes. There were 4 homesteads, and a homestead is 640 acres.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RM: OK, so there were 4 homesteads and the main ranch. Now, what year would that be?

MH: Oh, you'll have to look in that book and see when my grandmother Hem; Irwin was born and then go back a couple of years.

We've come to a fenced-off area. There used to be beautiful trees around it and rose bushes, but the people that own the ranch now just let everything die. And where those willows are in the distance and halfway across that field beyond the willows and clear from the top of the clump . . . the ranch there as far as you can look down was a fruit orchard. And when he thought that in the spring he was going to lose all this fruit, he'd dig ditches around each tree and put the water in there and freeze it to hold the flowers back so he'd have fruit every year.

RM: I'll be darned.

MH: Nowadays you can put the sprinklers on the fruit and save it.

But the main road used to go right up along here. Well, it'd come in over that hill there and come right through there and go right up through there and go around to the schoolhouse.

RM: I should point out we're looking southwest - at the graveyard.

MH: And we walked . . . See those buildings over there?

RM: Yes.

MH: We walked from there to this . . .

RM: Oh, I see. That's where you lived - over there.

MH: Yes. All this, from here down as far as the ranching goes, is quite a bit of ground.

RM: That's amazing. Where was he selling his produce then?

MH: To Eureka and Hamilton - anyplace that he could take it.

RM: But those were the 2 big camps going at that time. This was way before Tonopah and Goldfield and . . . I think it was before Ely.

MH: Before Ely, but Goldfield was going.

RM: No. Goldfield didn't start till 1902.

MH: Well, when they said that he cut those shakes long before that and took them to Goldfield, I guess that's wrong.

RM: Yes, it must be. I wonder where they took them.

MH: God, I don't know.

RM: Tonopah was 1900 and Goldfield was 1902.

MH: He was here before 1902.

RM: We're down on the Irwin ranch now.

MH: The area from that dead tree there back this way was never under cultivation. And the main ditch ran right down to where that ice is down there. But all along here were great big trees and those wheels that you looked at today were all along this fence here. That's a different fence. That isn't the original fence. And right in this area he made an adobe house when he first came here.

RM: Oh, your great-grandfather had built an adobe house on the spot where you come on the property off to the north.

MH: The adobe walls were about 3 feet tall when I was a kid. There was a row of trees right up this way, right alongside the adobe house.

RM: So the adobe house has fallen back and become a part of the earth here now, hasn't it?

MH: Well, they just plowed it up. My great-aunt had an orchard in there. And the barn is about where it's always been. But that isn't the original barn; there's nothing original here. But there was a row of trees that came down along here, almost to the barn. And the last house was right over there where that pile of rocks is. It had 11 rooms in it. And all down in this field was his vegetable garden and apricot trees.

RM: What happened to the 11-room house?

MH: My son-in-law pulled it down. This is all new here. They had sheep in here at one time. The road came down and came through the corrals, and just this side of those bedsprings right there, there was quite a big . . . my mother never told me how big a building it was, but that was their original home. And where that culvert is in the ditch, right alongside of that ditch was a great big rock cellar - his ice cellar. And he kept all the sawdust that he made when he cut the trees, and carried it out of the mountains when he was pulling in lumber. He'd freeze the meadows over and they'd go in there and chop that 3- and 4-foot thick ice and put it in there to have ice all summer.

RM: And this ditch has water from the Warm Spring?

MH: Yes. This is main water. And in the wintertime it just goes down in the valley if they don't put it all on the meadows.

RM: Does the water run here all summer, or are they taking it all up above?

MH: Oh no. So many second/feet of water at 7-1/2 second/feet of water comes down here. it is supposed to be out on the ground, but look at it.

RM: But in the winter it just runs on down to the highway?

MH: Yes. And this road was never here. The road through here was the worst road in the country. You got stuck every time you came through.

RM: Going over to where the houses are now? When did they build these houses over here?

MH: Oh, my mother's house has been there for years and years and years.

RM: Oh, OK. That was the home that she had that you were raised in?

MH: Yes. Not the white one that we can see, but this one back here with the white strip.

RM: The one on the east side.

MH: Yes. This here all had orchard in it and this had orchard down through here, and then the asparagus just went wild after everybody left and you can get it everywhere. For years and years when we were kids this never was in a field, and then all of a sudden they put alfalfa in it. But there were big cottonwood trees along here and, oh God, they were dangerous when you walked under them when the wind was blowing with their old limbs and everything. Then my grandmother lived down there to the east and my great-aunt lived down there.

RM: Where those trees are?

MH: Yes. See the house down in there?

RM: What was your great-aunt's name now?

MH: Imogene Vanover. And there was a house right here and I tried to think who lived in it when my dad and mother got married. It sat there for years after we were kids but I can't remember.

RM: Looks like they've got peacocks here.

MH: Oh. Those are my brother's.

RM: Does your brother live here in the house your mother lived in?

MH: No. He has his own house. There's no one in Mother's house. In fact, when my younger brother really actually retires they're going to take it down because it's so dilapidated inside.

RM: How do you feel about them tearing it down?

MH: Well, it's all right. You can't save something like that, because it's going to fall down.
And that's our schoolhouse.

RM: Did your brother put the addition onto it?

MH: I think it was a porch in later years.

[tape is turned off for a while]

MH: In later years, after Ignacio took all the trees out he put it all into alfalfa. So then they baled all that hay.

RM: And then when they broke the bales down to feed them, then they.....

MH: Well, they always had a bunch of sheep and a bunch of cows. Sprouse has sheep and cows. And in the wintertime they fed everything up that they raised during the year. So naturally, baling wire just piled up.

RM: How long did the ranch stay in your family then?

MH: It ended as the Irwin ranch sometime in the '70s. It was sold to another individual - Tony Omar Echavarria. He's a Basco [Basque]. I don't know how many years he ran it - he had sheep. And then he sold it to Clive Sprouse, who was from Utah someplace. And Clive Sprouse still has it.

RM: I see. And he's the one that's kind of let it run down.

MH: Yes. He's close to 90 years old and his boy just . . . well, his boy has a place in Wellington, Utah. His boy's supposed to be taking care of it out here but he doesn't.

RM: And then you have that 5 acres that was given to your mother.

MH: Yes. It was a squatter's right because they lived there all their life and her uncles just gave it to her.

RM: When did they give it to her?

MH: Oh, years and years and years ago, but not before I was born.

RM: And that's what your brother has there - Monroe.

MH: Yes. And he and his wife got it all turned into . . . it's all under his name and my younger brother's name.

RM: So he has a legal deed to that.

MH: Oh yes. He has a legal deed to that. And he's worked on all the machinery you see there, and he's got 90 percent of it working. He's quite a mechanic. He can make anything in the world that you want, if he wants to do it. My great-uncle was like that. They're really geniuses because they've never been to a school higher than the eighth grade in their lives for mechanic work.

RM: What was your great-uncle's name, now?

MH: Ralph Irwin.

RM: I haven't interviewed a family in Nye County that has as deep roots as this. I believe you might have the deepest of all. Maybe the Cliffords go back as far.

MH: That could be. But I didn't think they were there in 1908 and 1907.

RM: I think they were there before Tonopah. But you go back to the '70s, apparently, or earlier.

CHAPTER NINE

RM: We're going to pick up a few points here on when they established the Duckwater Indian Reservation, and what the ranch was like and so forth. Tell me about the Florio ranch as you remember it, Martha.

MH: Well, in 1933 it was one of the biggest ranches on Duckwater. Florio had been trying to sell his ranch to the reservation for several months in that year. We had a big snowstorm the 22nd of April, and when it came - there were 3 or 4 feet of snow - it killed over 3000 head of sheep. And a few years after that, he sold out to the reservation.

RM: It must've broken him, to lose all those sheep.

MH: Oh, it did break him.

RM: How long had Florio been here, Martha?

MH: I don't know. I heard of him from the time I can remember until he left here.

RM: So you were a small child when he was there?

MH: Oh, yes.

RM: Was it mainly a sheep ranch?

MH: No, he also had lots of cattle, and he put up lots of hay and raised lots of potatoes, just like all the other ranchers - they always raised most everything they fed to their cows, and themselves, too. But he had a beautiful home in Eureka. His children went to school there and his wife seldom ever came and lived down here on Duckwater.

RM: Oh. Did he stay here much?

MH: He stayed here quite a bit of the time. He'd go back and forth.

RM: Did he have a lot of hired hands?

MH: Oh, yes. I can remember a few times when he had 15 to 20 men -especially in the wintertime. And then in the wintertime he'd sell hay to the sheep men, and they'd all be there to be fed - the sheep men as well as the sheep.

RM: They'd bring their sheep to his place to be fed?

MH: Oh, yes. At that time there were always a lot of bands of sheep that came down through this area for winter grazing - over in Sand Springs and clear over into It Creek Range. They'd go clear down below the Lunar Crater.

RM: Where were they coming from?

MH: Most of them came out of Elko.

RM: What kind of a man was Florio?

MH: Oh, I don't know; he was always nice and polite. He was sort of an excitable man. He got excited quite easily.

RM: When you knew him in the 1930s, was he an old man, or middle-aged?

MH: Well, he was middle-aged when I knew him.

RM: Where did he go when he sold out?

MH: He went home to Eureka.

RM: And you say that he was not Basco [Basque] - is that right?

MH: That's absolutely right. He was an Italian.

RM: Where do people get the idea that he was Basco?

MH: I never could understand that - so many people thought he was Basco. And he couldn't speak a word of it, either.

RM: Was he dark?

MH: Oh, yes - he was dark, and small - compared to most men. He was so excitable, though, that he'd just lose control over anything.

RM: Was his the largest ranch in the valley at that time?

MH: No, the Irwin ranch was. But he was more productive. He was on the top of the creek and he could take water whenever he wanted it. They always tried to catch him, but they never did. He raised lots of hay and.....

RM: I see. So he got water whenever he wanted it, and sometimes you didn't get water, down below?

MH: That's right. There were lots of lawsuits over that (all those lawsuits should be on file in Carson City).

RM: Was there a lot of fighting over the water in the valley through the years?

MH: Oh, yes. Hattie Irwin said it cost her brother \$10,000 to get the water settled.

RM: For the Irwin Ranch?

MH: Well, for all the ranchers.

RM: Was it because some ranchers would try to take more than their fair share?

MH: Yes. At that time there were no official laws about the water, and they finally had to divide the water in so, many second/feet of water. The first settler here got the first water right and the second settler got the second water right and it went down from the top of the valley like that. The Tognoni place didn't have any water right at all, and the ranchers got together and took a little bit of their water and gave Joe Tognoni water to put on their ranch.

RM: When was that?

MH: That was long before my time.

RM: OK, where is the Tognoni ranch?

MH: We're sitting on it. It is now the Halstead ranch.

RM: Then, how did things change when they started the reservation?

MH: What do you mean, change?

RM: A lot of the Indians worked for the Italian, didn't they?

MH: All the old Indians worked for him. A lot of them would've starved to death if it hadn't been for him - especially the Blackeye family. He was always just wonderful to the Indians.

RM: Well, when he sold out and his ranch became the Indian reservation, were there a lot of Indians here in the valley?

MH: Oh, no, not immediately. But now there are a lot more than there were then.

RM: When they established the reservation, Indians started coming in from other areas, didn't they?

MH: Yes. Outside of the Blackeye family and the Adams family there are none of the original families left here. They're all transports (I call them transports; I'm not insulting them or anything, but they were from somewhere else). Some were from Reese River, and Smoky Valley and Round Mountain and . . . I don't know where they're all from.

After they sold the ranch I think they brought 11 families in, if I remember right. And [the only Indians there were] the 11 families, besides the one who were already here, for several years. And then the government gave them more money for more houses, and then I don't know how many they brought in. Now I think there are about 120 Indians up there; I'm not really sure.

RM: Did the character of life change in the valley when a lot of Indians came in?

MH: No. It didn't change anything. We just went on living the way we always did. And we just accepted them; they accepted us.

RM: Have the relations between the white community and the Indian community always been good?

MH: Always.

RM: Why don't you describe the Pataloma press that your great-grandfather Ike Irwin had made in Hamilton?

MH: It goes back to when he first came to Duckwater. To get money to start his ranch up, he took a scythe and cut the wild meadows and put the grass in 500-pound bales and freighted them to Hamilton. Then when he got enough money ahead, he had someone in Hamilton make him what they called a Pataloma hay press. I think it took about 3 teams to drag that down into the meadows. And from when I was a kid until about 15 years ago, part of it stood over here against the fence. And then Ike got enough money to buy all his trees and buy out the homesteaders' ground he wanted. And he went from there to what he . . .

RM: How did the hay press work?

MH: From what I'm told, it works just like one of the old hay balers –the horses went around and around and around. It took about 4 or 5 men to feed hay in it and to drag the bales out and stack them.

RM: And it pressed the hay into bales, and then . . .

MH: They tell me they were all 500-pound bales when he got through. Ed Halstead said that he took several to Eureka on the wagon, and in a big, good, wet spring, he'd get from the mouth of Warm Spring Canyon to Hogues', which was a relay station. He said that hay was so heavy the wagon wheels would just disappear, and they'd have to unhook and stay all night and dig it out. So it had to be a big, heavy bale.

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