

Another conversation with Ned Chaffin

The following is the transcription of an Oral History Interview with Ned Chaffin which took place at his home in Bakersfield California on November 20 and 21, 2002. Gary Cox was the principle interviewer.

Ned Chaffin is the son of Louis Moses Chaffin and Alice Chaffin. Louis Chaffin and Ned's older brother Faun Chaffin ran a cattle operation in what they called the under-the-ledge country – the area that stretches from the Maze south to the Dirty Devil River, under the Wingate Sandstone or Orange Cliffs – from 1919 to 1947. Ned assisted with the operation until he moved to California in 1936. He also assisted with the first geologic survey of the area in the mid-1920s. Another of Ned's older brothers Clell and his younger brother Gay are mentioned in the interview.

Initially in the interview there was a technical problem which resulted in nothing being recorded on tape number 1.

The interview was transcribed by Gary Cox in January and February of 2010.

NC - Ned Chaffin

MC - Marjorie Chaffin

GC – Gary Cox

CB – Cynthia Beyer

GC: Did you ever meet Andy Miller?

NC: No sir, I never met Andy Miller.

GC: Ever hear any stories about him?



[The inscription reads: A. H. Miller Dec. 28 1900]

NC: No, I'm honest with you, I never did. He's sort of an enigma as far as I know. I mean I just don't know whether he was with the early day sheep herders or whether he was just a guy goin' through. I really never heard nothin'. In fact, I didn't even know that there was any sign that Andy Miller had ever been there. Except the guys would say, "Well it was named...." We always said it was named after some sheep herder when we didn't know what we was talking about. You could say that, you know, 'cause that'll end the conversation. "Oh, that's some sheep herder", see. But, I really don't know. Well, that, that's fascinating to me. That is really something.

GC: Can you tell me anything about the original Deadman's Trail?

Uncle Johnny Armstrong, who was a United States marshal, and Dad's uncle chased some outlaws down into Horseshoe Canyon, and went up this trail and he told Faun about it, gettin' out of there.

And we was over... (This was before the road was across Horseshoe Canyon) and we wanted to go to the springs there right up above Tidwell's ranch. So, Faun says, "Well, it's a lot shorter if we go here and go down into Horseshoe Canyon and go out that Deadman's trail. Now Uncle Johnny says there was one real bad place on it but we could make it all right." And when he said there was one bad place on it for horses, well, he knew what he was talkin' about. We even took the saddles off and the packs off our horses and packed 'em up this rim. 'Cause you went up this rim, about that high, and then real steep slickrock for a little ways. And boy it was a scary place, I'm tellin' you. But anyway, we took our saddles and our packs off, and put 'em up by hand, then led the horses up there. And we got them and the mules up there, we got 'em all up there alright. But that was a precarious trail.

GC: You know where the name comes from?

NC: Well, Uncle Johnny Armstrong told Faun that some guy, his horse fell on him and killed him there, some outlaw. Now that was a story that Uncle Johnny Armstrong told, now; I don't know nothin' of this from personal knowledge. Naturally this was before my time - in fact, I was just a kid then, see, I was only 13 years old when Faun and I went up there. Course Uncle Johnny Armstrong was already dead.

GC: About when would it have been that he chased those outlaws?

NC: I would say about probably around the turn of the century.

GC: Wow, so the trail was there at that time?

NC: Well I don't think there was any trail there, I think it was just a place to go and where you could get out. I don't think there was a trail there ever. There was damn sure no trail there when Faun and I went up there, I'll guarantee ya, unless you was a mountain goat or a bird. That was a bad one.

GC: Now, which homestead is this one... this photograph? [We are looking



at a photograph of an old homestead along the San Rafael River]

NC: You know that kind of looks like the old Gillis ranch. Is that livestock back in there? No. There's nobody livin' there.

GC: We didn't see any livestock the whole way down.

NC: There's nobody livin' there or nothin'.

GC: No.

NC: No, it's abandoned right?

GC: Yes.

NC: That could be the old Gillis Ranch, I don't know.



NC: [We are looking at a photograph of another homestead site] And this one's gotta be the old French Ranch right here. Yeah, well this is the old French Ranch and the other one you have is the old Gillis Ranch.

GC: Who ran the old French Ranch?

NC: Well, when I was there, a bunch of Frenchmen ran it. And they was connected with the sheep business of course. They had a store there. That was the mail station for the mail. They had a post office there and the whole nine yards. This is where Bill Tomlinson would pick up the mail to take it horseback to Hanksville. There at the old French ranch. They had a regular post office there. Yeah. Oh sure, old Billy Tomlinson... I was tryin' to see if I couldn't get a better look at it so I could show you the hill that old Bill, where he could come down with his horses. His track was still there, but I don't... It's been so long since I was there, that, well, I bet a hundred dollars that's the old French Ranch.

CB: These had old sod roofs, there's still sod on the roofs.

NC: If this is the old French Ranch, that's the ranch that Andy Moore had.

GC: When did he have it?

NC: He bought it from the Frenchmen when they moved out. And man there's some big logs in there isn't there. Huh? Them old cottonwoods, they didn't care how big they was, did they. He bought that ranch... I can't remember when he bought it. But he bought it so he'd have some property to go with his water out there so the BLM wouldn't kick him off. Well I'll be doggoned. Isn't that something? I can't tell. It changes a lot. You go to place when you was a little kid, there was lots of people around there and...

GC: So, you've known the Gillis's for a long time. Now, Pearl talks about Charles Gillis.

NC: Charley.

GC: Was he the father, grandfather?

NC: No, he was one of the boys.

GC: One of the boys. So who started the ranch?

NC: I don't know whether the boys started it or whether their father started it.

GC: What was their father's name?

NC: Good question, I don't know, I never met their father. Their father and Butch Cassidy's mother was brother and sister. They've got a connection there. She was a Gillis, Butch Cassidy's mother was a Gillis.

GC: Oh, Butch Cassidy's mother; and Dunc Gillis?

NC: Duncan Gilles was one of the boys; Joe and Duncan and Charley and Eb and Bob, yeah. I can remember Joe Gillis, he worked for the railroad. I can remember that. He was quite a guy. They was quite a family, those Gillis's. Old Charley, he'd never come to town; never shaved; just stayed

out there at the ranch all the time. I did see a picture though some place in some magazine of Charley there in Green River with a bunch of guys, but I don't know, it was taken a long time ago, but I don't know what the occasion was. I don't even know where I saw the picture now. I should have latched onto it. Charley was very, very, very sure that nobody took his picture. I wonder why? Well, he stayed out there at that ranch. He was always out in the coral when you rode up there, 'cause he wanted to be sure he knew who you was.

Good, good hard working people. And Eb, Eb, he'd punched cows around there for a long time, ran the cattle operation while Charley did the farmin' and Bob worked for the railroad. Then the railroad moved the division from Green River there and they fired all their help of course, you know. So they let Bob go, and Bob went out to the ranch. When he went out to the ranch, old Eb all a sudden, he got religion and heck he went on a mission. He could pound that old bible and tell you all about it, boy, at the drop of a hat. Eb was a super good roper, had a good hand with cattle and horses, Eb was exceptional, really a super good roper. He says he got lots of practice roping for us ridin' bog along the San Rafael River, that's what he said. I've got his spurs; I'll show 'em to you. You can see that they'd had a lot of wear and tear.

After they'd sold the ranch, I went there to Green River and I was visiting with Bob and Una. See, Una was my school teacher, (that was the girl) she was my school teacher in school. Anyway, I went back there, and I was visitin' but I was collectin' some spurs and I asked Bob if I could have one of those pair of spurs he had and he give me 3 pair of spurs.

And he had one pair of spurs there; these Mexican spurs like you buy on the streets down in Tijuana. "Now you can have all those spurs except those Mexican spurs, you can't have that - you leave those Mexican spurs right where they are". And he gave me those spurs. This one pair of spurs that was made that I'm tellin' you about that Eb wore all the time; it was made in prison, they got the guys number on it, I don't know what prison. They got the convict's number stamped right in the spur. And 'course the spurs are all beat up, because he'd used 'em. You know, that's the way you tell a cowboy, you look at his spurs. Don't look at his hat and don't look at his britches, and don't look at that shirt, or that neckerchief, that tie and all that junk. Look at his spurs. Then you can tell whether he's a rider or not.

The Gillis's was all talkative people; you know "babababa", all of 'em.

GC: Storytellers?

NC: About like me. You know what I mean. No, not necessarily storytellers, just blabbin' all the time, you know, like me, just about the same. And they was really nice guys to be around.

GC: What kind of operation did they have?

NC: Well, they had a couple hundred head of cattle that they run along the river there.

GC: Year round?

NC: Yeah, oh sure, hell yes. Hell, you'd run year round in those days. That old movin' 'em in and out, in that country was, anybody with any... well, I'm not gonna say anybody, but I mean for a guy to have to move cattle in and out of that country, well, he better get in the sheep business. You know what I mean, something you transport but don't cost you an arm and a leg to do. In fact, that's a hell of a lot better sheep country than it is a cow country in the first place to start with.

GC: Did they do pretty well in the cattle business?

NC: Oh, heck, I guess most everybody made a livin'. Very, very few people left there with any money. You know, some of the guys maybe had a dollar or two when they died.

GC: So they just managed to make ends meet pretty much.

NC: Well, hell, you was lucky to do that most of the time. There for a while you couldn't make ends meet. It was a rough go to make any money. But, I always said that there wasn't a heck of a lot of people left there with any money. Now, as I say, some of 'em had some net worth when they died, but they didn't leave with it.

Let's see, ol' Joe Biddlecome... There was one year there, I can't remember the year, but there was a couple of guys come out there from up in Wyoming or some place and he was gonna sell 'em the whole outfit for I think it was

90,000 dollars. And they come out and looked at it and once they looked at it 'course you couldn't give it to 'em let alone sell it to 'em. That is rough country! Man that's tough, man you look that old thing in the eye, say hey I'm gonna stay here and punch cows and make a livin'. Rough go for short dough. All I got to say about that. But anyway, most all the guys that stayed there they all ended up with a few bucks. And then of course the people that really made the money were the people that was there that owned some property and when Utah Power and Light came through and bought the deeded property from 'em, they did alright.

GC: Anything more you'd like to tell me about the Gillis's

NC: Hell, old Charley was quite a guy. He sure would like to see you come and stay with him and he'd talk and he'd never shut up, really. Very, very intelligent people, all of 'em, you know what I mean, as us humans go. All the Gillis people were, I'm not gonna say they was smart, I'm gonna say they were intelligent... they were intelligent people, you know - knew how to talk and how to tell things, and knew a lot. You know Charley was out there on that ranch a lot. He knew a heck of a lot.

GC: Where did they run their cattle; out in the desert there, and then in towards the river?

NC: No, no, no, they just ran along the San Rafael. They didn't run out on the desert at all. Just along the river there. They'd run cattle from Spring Canyon up to the Hatt ranch. Up along there, I don't know, they had the best cattle of any outfit in the country, the highest quality cattle. In fact, I accused... to show you how you can get when you big mouth starts runnin' too hot, how you can get in trouble, you know? Anyway, you could get a group of Gillis's cattle in mixed with all the other cattle and you didn't have to look at the brand, you could just pick 'em out just to look at 'em. Number one, they was that much wider across the hips. You know, more cow, back where the meat is. And they was that much longer, you didn't have to look at the brand, you just look at the cow. And they was good cattle; All of 'em; Herefords, no red eyes, no brockle face, no Durham in there at all, just plain ol' Herefords. Now I said to Faun, I says, "Faun", I says "those Gillis cattle are really high quality cattle", he says, "Yes they are". I says, "You don't suppose that they stole those cows from some purebred outfit someplace, do you?" And that old red headed Faun, he jumped down my throat, and boy,

he called me everything in the book, and told me I better not accuse the Gillis's of stealin' cattle or I was gonna have to answer to him.

I don't know where they got those cattle, where their foundation came from. The more I think about it and the more I've been interested in breeding cattle, the more I think that that's where that original stock came from, was a purebred herd someplace. Now I'm not gonna say they stole them, 'cause they probably didn't. Some guy went broke and he probably gave the Gillis's the cows to get rid of 'em, or practically give 'em away, you know what I mean. But anyway, they was a good quality cattle.

Eph Moore, when George Franz bought Eph Moore out, they was the worst as far as quality cattle was concerned, of anybody in the country. There was a lot a Navajos in 'em and a lot of them old narrow back long legged stock.

GC: Longhorns?

NC: Well, they wasn't longhorns. They was built like longhorns, but I don't know... Of course they was all dehorned. But they was narrow and long legged, and not much. And after George Franz bought it out, he got ol' Clell... (Of course old George had a little money, you know) and he'd get ol' Clell and they'd go up there to La Sal to ol' Charley Red and buy some of them good bulls; and in just a few years, why they had good cattle too.

Then the Biddlecome cattle was always light. One of the reasons the Biddlecome cattle was light was because Joe ran just as many cattle as he could, you know, he didn't want anybody ever comin' in there; you know he ran lots of cattle. He ran just as many as he could. And I don't believe they had the nutrients that those other outfits had; poor growth. Our- under- the- ledge steers usually outweighed everybody else's when we took 'em to the scale, but then that feed is strong feed down there. It might be rough and rocky and all that but when they eat that food there's lots of food value in it to make the big calves and made the cows give maybe a little extra milk too.

GC: What kind of breeding program did you have for your cattle?

NC: Oh, just be Jesus and be damned. When they first went down there they primarily had Durhams, and then they always ran Hereford bulls.

GC: Anything more on the Gillis's?

NC: I remember the little pretty gal Josephine. She was Joe Gillis's daughter. She was about, oh she was just blossomin' good when I was left there - about 15, boy she was a cute little ol' gal. And then Jack Gillis, that was also Joe Gillis's boy, he was a good kid. And then Dan Gillis, they lived right across the street from us, him and his family, Sinclair Gillis and Edmond Gillis. Maybe you've met Sinclair. I understand he comes back to that country every once in a while.

GC: No, I never met him.

NC: He's probably dead. He's older than I am. He's, oh, I'd say he's more like Clell's age. He's probably about 3 years older than me. I don't know if he's still alive or not. But I understood that Sinclair used to come back every once and while. But, anyway, they was a nice family. Good neighbors and I always considered them good friends.

GC: Always put you up when you came by to stay there before heading on? I guess that's just what everybody did?

NC: That was just the way it was. Hell, you went to somebody's place you just went there and made yourself at home. If they wasn't home, you went in, started up the fire, went and found some groceries and cooked 'em. You'd just put a little wood back in the wood box when you'd leave though, so if they come in and its rainin' they don't have to go out and chop wood in the rain. Oh, yeah, we never had any locks on our doors down at the ranch, and none of those other guys did. They didn't know what a lock on a door was.

Have to tell you a story about a locked door. About a locked door - tell you a story, it might be interesting and it might not, I don't know. But let's go back to ol' Joe Biddlecome. And as we all know, Joe Biddlecome was a character, and we all know that Joe Biddlecome was kinda one way about lots of things, in fact, most things. But anyway, that's all beside the point. He was a good neighbor and a good friend too. Anyway, ol' Joe, he went, and I'm going to use the word borrowed, a bunch of lumber from over from the Texas well, you know, over from French Springs, to come and build that house up there. And the doors that he got had the old fashioned square locks on 'em. Anyway, Prommell and Faun and Dad and I and Bill Crum and the whole gang, we went there, and it was rainin' and somebody had told Faun

that the doors was locked to the cabin. So, one of us could camp down in the little cabin, the others we stayed on the porch - there was a big porch across the front of the house, we stayed on the porch. Of course, the porch leaked.

So later we was hollerin' because the porch leaked. Joe says, "Well I know the porch leaks, why the hell didn't you go inside?" Faun said, "Well, Dad said you told him it was locked". "Hell no I didn't lock the door; that door's never locked. I don't even have a key for it! Nobody ever locks that door, I wouldn't lock that door. Hell, you lock the door and then somebody if they want in, they'll break the window, and I'll have to fix a window." But, there we stayed out on that porch and got all wet in our sleepin' bags and the whole thing and all we had to do was open the door and go inside; plenty of room for all of us and nice and dry, and a nice stove to cook on. Nobody tried that darn door. Oh, heck, that was great. Well, that was something. Us out there in the rain, and all we had to do was open the door and walk in. "Well, I had thought it was funny you'd locked that". "Hell, nobody locked that".

But, that was a pretty nice house. What he did, he got those one by twelves, put 'em on both sides of the studs; and then as he put 'em up he filled 'em full of sand. You know, for insulation.

GC: So, it was a pretty good house.

NC: Was a good house. I'm sorry to hear that thing burned down.

GC: What can you say about Millie Biddlecome?

NC: Well, how should I say it? I remember Millie mostly as an outspoken, hardworking, honest, dependable, capable... I could just sit here and pull out adjectives all of 'em I ever known, most of 'em all would apply to Millie Biddlecome. She was part Indian. And, I don't know, Millie was just... she was just in her heart a good, wonderful person. She'd get after me and she'd really straighten me up, I'm tellin' you. She didn't take any crap off of me; I'll guarantee ya that, when I was a kid. She'd really make sure I was towin' the mark all the time. She'd send me up to Crow Seep after two buckets of water and when I got back there with 'em I better not have half the water slopped out of 'em, you know. But anyway, we had a great relationship. That was before automobiles and everybody got on wheels. We used to go

up there and help Joe brand and vaccinate his calves and everything a lot. He'd come down and help Faun. And we had a wonderful relationship with Joe and Millie.

GC: And Millie was a good cook?

NC: Oh yeah, she was a good cook. Oh yeah, she could fry you up that ol' beefsteak, boy I'm tellin' you. Make that gravy, take the grease, throw a little bit of flour in it, maybe if the price of steers went up a half a cent a pound, maybe put milk in the gravy instead of water, you know, condensed milk of course. Now, no milk - never had no milk - had too many cows to have any milk. None of us had any milk. We was damn lucky to have money enough to buy the canned milk with. It seems to me like that canned milk used to cost six - I think it was six cents a can. I don't know why that figure sticks in my mind. But, anyway, it was expensive. And it cost money, and money's one thing we didn't have.

Few people had money. Old Joe, he and Millie had a little money. And as far as money was concerned, there just wasn't too many people... George Franz had some money of course, and old John Beyers had some money, Cecil Thompson. But most of the people, money was a foreigner to 'em. They didn't. Money; money was pretty scarce there for several years, hard to come by. But, people would share.

Those guys'd come down from up out of Monticello, you know, that dry farms those beans down there on those hills. You've saw 'em I'm sure, if you've been through there. They'd come there with a wagonload of beans and trade 'em beef for eight or ten sacks of beans. I'm talkin' about a sack of beans. I'm talkin' about a gunny sack, that tall and that big around. Put 'em down in the basement, then when winter time come you had beans to put out to people who didn't have nothin' to eat.

GC: So they'd bring the beans to Green River?

NC: Yeah, sure. They'd put 'em into a wagon or an old truck, and then just go around and peddle 'em. You know, we didn't have Archer Daniels Midland to do our peddlin' for us then like we got now, farmin'. 'Course they make all the money and the farmer don't make none now, but then... oh don't get me started, you don't want to get me started, please...Please,

please don't get me started on politics. You don't want to hear it. I might learn Cynthia some new words in the English language.

GC: Politics was different, though, among the people back in those days, how they dealt with each other and traded back and forth.

NC: Yeah, well, you kinda had to look out for each other, those days. I don't know what we'd have done if everybody'd been on their own.

CB: With the little bit of money you had, what were some of the food, items you had to buy, like flour, beans?

NC: Flour, rice, and of course the beans that Dad would trade for. Baking powder, salt, sugar, rice, we ate quite a bit of rice. Habit I never got over is eatin' rice. I'm one of their best customers - still am. And of course potatoes, we ate lots of potatoes with beef, and whatever we could get out of the garden. And then of course Mom would can vegetables and fruit all summer, you know, you know put 'em up in the mason jars.

CB: So you had a big garden then?

NC: Yeah, and had the big basement down in the ranch house. That thing was always full of food. There was always enough food there to last us for a year I think. When Mom moved out of her home over at Payson, she had a big basement in her home. And honest to god Gary, she had enough, I call it canned food, that's what they call it, was the food in the jars that she'd put up. She had enough in there to last all four of us from now till Christmas next year. Those walls was just lined with shelves and they was just full, all kinds of fruit and vegetables, I mean you wouldn't believe the food that was there. That's just the way they did it; if somebody said "Hey, my cherries is getting' ripe", "Hey, ok I'll be over and get some". You go over and pick a bushel of 'em and bring 'em home and put 'em up, see, to have something to eat in the winter. Either that or you didn't have anything to eat. You know, it wasn't necessarily a matter of not wantin' to see the stuff go to waste, it was a matter of would you like to have food to eat. Then also, they would put beef in jars too, and deer. Hey don't tell anybody about the deer. But take that deer and cut it up and fix it and put it in jars - good stuff.

GC: So you could have meat for the summer.

NC: Sure. Couldn't keep no meat out there with no refrigeration or you know, it'd spoil faster than the dickens. If you kill a beef if you didn't eat it all today it'd all be spoiled by tomorrow. So we didn't kill any beef in the summer.

Oh yeah, that eatin' in those days... there was a lot of people who were really a little short on groceries those days. It's sad but that's the way it was. Lets hope it don't get that way again.

GC: What about fish? Did you ever catch fish out of the river?

NC: Well, yeah, but not as a source of food really.

GC: Not as a staple.

NC: Maybe go down and go fishing maybe some Sunday afternoon and catch some fish and have fried fish for dinner that night; but we really never ate a lot of fish, even though there were lots of catfish and carp down in the Green River. There wasn't any fish in the San Rafael of course. There was lots of fish down there in the Green River.

I don't know, who was it; somebody fixed a trap of some kind, about like that, put screen on it, put a little funnel in there, put some food in it, and catch that thing full of catfish. Like, throw it in tonight, go back there tomorrow, or throw it in this morning and go back there tonight and the darn thing'd be full of catfish, or fish. Snake the thing out. Have a big fish fry. 'Course I think that would be frowned on to do that today. In fact, I don't know whether that was really kosher back then or not, come to think about it. I really don't think you was supposed to trap fish. I can't remember, I don't think so, come to think about it. You didn't have the license to go fishin'. You just went fishin' if you wanted to go.

But I don't know what ever happened to any of the Gillis family. Except as I say, except Sinclair, who was Dan Gillis's boy and who was a couple of years older than I. And I had heard that he came back to Green River every once in a while. I don't know whether any of the family's still there or not because see Eb didn't have any children, Bob didn't have any children, Charley didn't have any children, Una didn't have children. These are the ones I primarily associated with, the boys from the ranch.

And then Una Gillis, Miss Gillis, teaching me, - or trying to teach me, let me rephrase that. And I think Una Gillis, had one year of junior college, maybe two. But anyway, she taught school there for several years. And there was a kid there by the name of Dick McClurg that was my buddy. He and I was the same age. His dad worked for the railroad and he was one of the big shots on the school board. And as soon as Dick and I got out of elementary school they fired Una. And old Eb was so mad that he confronted Mr. McClurg about firing Una. And you know what he told Mr. McClurg? Can I use some vile language? He says, "You dirty son-of-a-bitch," he says, "You wait till your kid is out of elementary school then you fire Una. Why the hell didn't you fire her before your kid went to school; why didn't you fire her six or seven years ago?" He said, "I'll tell you why," he says, "you wanted your kid to be taught by her so he could learn him something".

And Dick, Dick McClurg, my buddy, he went on and went to college and he was quite an athlete, quite a basketball player. Was quite a guy, really, Dick was. I don't know what happened to him. He's been dead a long time. He got married and had a family; used to go by visit Dad all the time, up in Payson. My dad lived up in Payson. But, I haven't saw Dick since I was, well, since I left Green River, because he was off to school after we graduated from high school. But he was quite a guy. He and I had a million dollars worth of fun and got into a lot of trouble; he and I and Walt Smith and Guy Robison. Oh yeah, I'm tellin' you, you talk about the four horsemen.

GC: What kind of trouble would you get into?

NC: What kind? What kind of trouble is there that you can't get into? One of our favorites, when we was little, was goin' down and crossin' the railroad bridge and goin' out along the railroad tracks and takin' rocks and breakin' the insulators on the telegraph lines. That was one of our favorites,. Well, you know, the Western Union kinda frowns on that.

GC: You ever get caught?

NC: Hey, boy, listen, that old constable, he got us four dudes one day. He didn't catch us, he didn't see us doin' it, but he got us four guys one day as we was comin' off the bridge there, and reads us the riot act. Old man Farrell, we called him. He was the constable there in Green River. He was a big, old, tall, grouchy, ornery guy. Boy I'm tellin' ya, he had us kids

buffaloed. But, boy he reads us the riot act about it, he says, "I know what you guys been doin', you're breaking those insulators. You're gonna get thrown in jail and I'm gonna see to it you get time." And oh he was really raising heck with us.

Get into trouble, we'd steal, steal tobacco.

GC: Where would you steal the tobacco?

NC: Where would we steal it? Hell we didn't care, anyplace we were where there was tobacco - in the stores, from our folks, anyplace - we didn't care. Heck when you want to smoke man your in big trouble. Oh lord have mercy! I remember Magarell had a little ol' store there, down below the canal, down close to Gillis's house, where the old Gillis house is, up there a little bit. There used to be one of the ol' Magarell guys, he was about half blind; I'd go in and start talkin' to him and I'd get him all engrossed in an argument and then this one kid would sneak in the back and get in the cigarette case and steal the cigarettes.

GC: You had it planed out!

NC: Oh sure, hey, I tell you, conspirators. Then ol' Dick McClurg - his dad smoked, and he'd steal cigarettes from his dad. And, if we could scrape up any money, we'd send Dick over to the pool hall and tell them that he was buyin' 'em for his dad. And Dad, my dad, he smoked what they called old English rough-cut. Did you ever see any of it? It came in a little red can about that long and that wide and about that high and it was in sheets, it wasn't fine like the tobacco in the cigarettes; it came in sheets and it was pure, hundred percent burley tobacco, which is very strong, that's where you get really the strength in tobacco, or that's what they tell. Anyway, we'd steal a couple of sheets of that then we'd get us some newspaper and roll that up and smoke it.

GC: Did your dad ever catch you?

NC: Well, the funniest thing stealin' tobacco from my dad; Ryder Ekker and I and Dad, we was shootin' the trail from Water Canyon over into Shot Canyon, you know that, you've went on that trail I'm sure. Where goin' up that one little rim that's been blasted out? Well that's what we was doing, we was blastin' that out. And Dad always smoked a pipe, and he quit

smokin'. He had a pair of those old US army saddle bags, you know, like the old Calvary used to use, and he kept his tobacco in those saddle bags, and he just had this one can of tobacco. Anyway, old Ryder and I, we stole this can of tobacco, went out and had us a smoke and Dad come back a little quicker than we thought, so we didn't have time to get it back in his saddle bag. Anyway, here come Dad cussin', he was mad - it wouldn't rain and the cows was all gonna choke to death and I mean, everything... "Goddamn it, I'm gonna start smokin' again." I thought, uh oh. He went over to his saddle bags and no tobacco. You can imagine how a guy that's mad and disgusted, ticked off at everything and everybody would be. "You guys take my tobacco?" "Yeah, we took it." "What'd you do with it, what'd you do with it?" "Oh, we got it over here hid." So I went and got it and I brought it back. And I handed it to Dad, and Dad always... he came out with his standard one hundred percent operating procedure for all us kids smokin'. "Goddamn it, when you get ready to smoke, I'll get you a pipe and you can smoke. But you're not smoking them GD Cigaretts." And that's what he told Ryder and I right there, when you're ready to smoke he was gonna get us a pipe. And that's all he said, he never said nothin' more about it.

But I'll never forget the first time I smoked a cigarette in front of my dad. We was down on the Green River in the winter cuttin' ice, you know, we had the ice house there for that, put the ice in the house, we was cuttin' ice. Here I am, dying for a smoke, been workin' all morning, no smoke, no way I was about to have one. You know what a nicotine fit is, I was about to have one. And the wind was blowin' and I put my back to the North wind and I got my sack of tobacco out of a pocket or wherever I had it hid and I rolled me a cigarette. And I lit it and just as I lit it, and I went like that, I turned around and there was Dad about that far away from me. And he says, "Well I'll be goddamned". And that's the last word I ever heard him say about smokin' cigarettes until he told me that I couldn't quit. And then I quit just to show him I could. Glad I did.

GC: I guess he used reverse psychology.

NC: I guess so, I don't know. Oh my god. How them people ever raised families those days under those conditions, and the women especially; I don't understand how they would have the strength and the fortitude to do it. Good Lord that was something else. Kids was just as ornery then as they are now far as that's concerned. I think we was ornerier though, Dick and Guy and Walt and I.

CB: Who was John Byers?

NC: John Byers was an old bachelor and he was part owner of the garage that became the Moab Garage Company. He was a director of the little bank there in Green River, before it closed up, it was the Commonwealth Bank; he was one of the directors. And he had a lot of that property over at Elgin, you know the old property. He owned a bunch of that. And he was from back in the Midwest someplace, and I don't know where he came from or nothin' about him. But he had some money. He was a heck of a nice guy, too. He and Dad were very good friends. I think he owned some farmland there in Green River but I don't think he was a farmer. I can't remember John Byers farmin', I can't. He was more, more of an automobile man; he was interested in the little garage there. I think they called it; did they call it the Midland Garage? But he had an interest in all that someway. I know he was from the Midwest. He came out to the ranch one year because he had an interest in the ranch. You know what I mean, loanin' the Chaffin boys money. So he had an interest in the ranch and he came out there - got back to Green River and I was sittin' there by the pool hall this one evening and he says, he says, "What do you mean corn?" he says, "Those guys got corn out there, you cant touch the top of it with a pitchfork," he says, "I never saw nothin' like that back.." wherever he was from, Nebraska or back there someplace. He said, "Hell I never saw such corn," he said, "You couldn't touch the top of it with a pitchfork," he said, "Man that really grows." But anyway, John was a real good friend of my dad and my mother's, well all my family, really quite a guy when you thought about it.

GC: Tell me about the cow you called Millard Canyon Red.

NC: Yeah that's what we called her, was old Millard Canyon Red, and anyway, got her in there and she went in and of course the canyon narrows in like this to where there's nothin' there. She came back down through the little bunch of cattle that we had in there, toward us and when she saw us she turned and she started back up in there and I'd like to show you where that cow jumped out of there.

GC: What happened?

NC: She just jumped out of there, period.

CB: How high did she jump?

NC: It gets higher every year you know. But I've showed other people where she jumped out of there and I've been called a liar right there on the spot too. But no, no animal, maybe a leopard or something that can really jump might jump out of there, but no cow. But she jumped out of there. I'd like to show you that spot.

We went and got her and brought her back in there, because that's when we was branding 'em over from Eph Moore to George Franz's. I want to tell you something else about that ol' cow. We had a hell of a time findin' room on her to put George's brand, that cow had every damn brand on her you ever saw in your life. She'd been stoled a hundred times. And I don't think a man on earth knew who she really belonged to. Her legs was about that long and she was about that wide. And her nose was long and thin and skinny, and I don't believe she had a white hair on her, boy she was red, I'm tellin' you. And boy she could run and she could jump, oh. Wow, I can't believe it. But I would really love to have that hide. I wonder what a hide like that; if you'd take it and tan it good today would be worth at one of these cowboy auctions. If the right guy was there you might get more money for that thing than you ever dreamed of havin'. I tell you the brands that was on that cow was really amazing, really amazing.

GC: Did any of the folks in your outfit ever sit around the campfire and recite poetry?

NC: You know, this poetry deal, as far as I know from my experience, is a modern day phenomenon. No, we never did sit around the campfire and recite poetry – ever. The shepherders would get those little western magazines, - 'course cowboys couldn't afford 'em. And then when they'd leave camp in the spring then maybe they'd leave their magazines under a tree or somethin', we'd get them and they'd usually have a, a poem or two in 'em. And course you'd read 'em, but I mean, as far as memorizin' 'em – no. But poetry was never no big deal. After we got civilized and got us a tent, you know what I mean, so you take the candles to light it - sometimes you'd take some magazines on those long winter nights and read. And if there was more than one of you there, one guy would read by the candlelight and the other guys would listen. But this wasn't poetry this was wild shoot 'em up stuff. But as far as this poetry's concerned, this poetry is new, as far as I know.

GC: As far as just sitting around the campfire at night, on a long winter's night, you guys just didn't recite poetry?

NC: Poetry wasn't any big deal ever, any place I was at. Now, I didn't go very far, remember that. My circle was very, very, very small. In fact you can get in your gizmo out there and cover it from sun to sun, you know what I mean. In other words, I don't know what they did over in Colorado or what they did up in Wyoming or over in Arizona or over in Nevada until later, you know. We bought the ranch over in Nevada and we had that for about a year and I never heard one mutter of poetry over there. I learned a couple of new words in the English language, but damn sure wasn't poetry. But this poetry phenomenon, it's just something that... I call it a Hollywood - a 'r-e-e-l - cowboy instigated, promoted for them. 'Course us ol' guys we like to listen to it too 'cause its kinda fun, it's good to pick up. But poetry was never a big thing around any place I was.

GC: How about singing?

NC: Oh, now that's a horse of another color. Singin' was... even when you was down there alone you'd sing.

GC: What kind of songs would you sing?

NC: Oh, mostly what was popular, you know, whatever was goin' on or anything you think about, nothin' in particular - 'course I was a pretty lousy singer - nobody liked it when I sang. Clell was a beautiful singer, a good singer; if he was alive now why these Hollywood boys would probably grab him and make one of them r-e-e-l. cowboys' out of him because he had a nice voice. Mother could sing like a whippoorwill. She could play any kind of a musical instrument that wasn't broken or damaged. Dad, my father, couldn't even hum a melody. Lou Chaffin couldn't hit one note; he'd sing a whole song at somebody's funeral - Amazin' Grace - and never hit one note, not even one. And it's amazing. That man absolutely could not carry a tune no way or shape. And Faun was almost as bad. Maybe I'm gonna say I was a better singer than Faun, and that isn't sayin' a hell of a lot. That's not braggin'. But singin', yes; like if you got on your horse and you was goin' over to Red Points to see if there was any water runnin' in the trough, you had to ride from the Chaffin Camp there on Waterhole to Red Points, you didn't have a thing to do, only go. And so you bust out in song. I don't

know what the hell we had to sing about - but it was better than cryin' I guess.

GC: Did you sing cowboy songs?

NC: Well, cowboy songs and the modern songs, and then the old songs that you'd learned when you was a kid in school, you know that you got out of the old songbook out of school.

GC: Did you like the singing cowboys?

NC: Yes, yes, yeah, the old original one, the first one I ever heard was over to the Roost. And it seems to me like this was after Joe had passed away. Anyway, Pearl had a radio and had a little windmill set up to charge the batteries. And I went there and took care of the horses for her for three or four days one time and I don't think I ever shut that radio off. And boy did I enjoy that music 'cause we never had a radio, period. We had a radio down at the ranch, I can remember it, a big ol' zenith, 'bout that long come over like this and then up like that. But the only time you could get anything would be in the wintertime. The static in the summer... it wouldn't play. Then of course in the winter it was nice, you know.

And the people I liked the best, the best music I liked was a group called the North Americans. And they come on for an hour during the week, along in the evening from a station up in San Francisco. And they played the old-fashioned big band music. Anytime I had an opportunity I always listened to them. That was really my favorite - that was my favorite all time radio or television show because, well, music was somethin' when you was out there you didn't have - it was something you appreciated when you did get to hear it. Yes, they was on for I don't know, I guess a couple of years; North American Insurance Company. They didn't spend three fourths of their time advertising like they do now. They spent most of their time playin' you know that old fashioned pretty music, jazzy music; then the waltzes of course. I can still hear those old saxophones goin' right now.

But I don't know; music was a big, big thing. Most, most families had some kind of a musical instrument in their home. They might not have much food to put on their table but they'd have a piano, especially a piano.

GC: What about guitars, banjos?

NC: I can't remember many guitars or many banjos. Ol', Harry Tasker, he had a banjo. Guitars; very few guitars, very few; I can't recall anybody that had one. And the Ekker family, the Ekker family was all good singers. Maybe you've heard some of 'em sing, maybe this is a trait that's carried on. But all the Ekker family was real good, exceptionally good singers. They was good singers, but I can't remember any musical instruments being in their home.

CB: What about in your home? What did you mom have?

NC: Piano.

GC: She played; did anybody else in the family play?

NC: Oh she made the girls learn how to play and tried to learn us boys how to play but hell we was too smart to learn, we didn't want fool around with learning how to play music. You know, that was sissy stuff. No, I never did learn to play. I couldn't go over to that piano there and play you one note if my life depended on it.

GC: So nobody down under-the-ledge out there camping had any musical instruments, any of the sheep herders, anybody?

NC: Oh, sometimes some of the sheep herders had a little phonograph. You know what I mean, that had the crank on 'em. You see the problem with trying to have a radio down there, it'd be fine, but what would you use for batteries?

Now the winter I worked for George Franz and my headquarters was there at the little cabin on Anderson Bottom, we had a radio there; a nice one, a good one. And I'd sit there in the little ol' cabin all alone listenin' to the beautiful music. One night in particular, I remember, was along in March and you know sometimes in March after a long cold winter - and that winter was cold and icy - lots of ice and snow and you thought we'd never have another decent day in a lifetime. And it was one those first days in March that's nice. Sun's come out, you take off some of your clothes, peel 'em off and everything, and it was a nice day. Anyway, I went in and turned on the radio, and this music was coming from... it was the senior prom at one of the big universities back east - Georgetown or one of the big classy schools

back there. Can you imagine sittin' there in that cabin all alone listenin' to that beautiful music, hearin' those beautiful ladies laughin' in the background and enjoyin' theirselves, the whole thing? That's one night I will never ever, ever forget, that was something else.

Ol' George Franz, he went to town and he was supposed to bring a set of batteries down, he was supposed to be back and he never come back and he never come back and he never come back; and of course I played the dag-gone radio every chance I get. And long before he came back I ran all the batteries down. That was my fault because I know it wasn't designed, that thing wasn't put there for my entertainment. That thing was put there to listen to the news and to listen to a little bit of music and to turn it off. And to be sure to have the news, the KSL on at seven o'clock because if anything went wrong and they wanted to notify me about anything, he would, he made a deal with the station up in Salt Lake, that he could call 'em and they would broadcast it at that time. So at seven o'clock every night we'd turn on KSL.

And then Clell was with me most of the time, Clell and I was together there most of the time. But Clell would have to go over under-the-ledge and take care of the cattle. And I'd stay there on Anderson Bottom and take care of the cattle there, and when he came he'd help. And we were both doin' it...in fact that was quite a winter, really.

GC: What winter was that?

NC: That was the winter of thirty one – thirty two, the year I graduated from high school.

GC: So you made a point of keeping up with the news?

NC: Well, yeah, we'd listen to the news, yeah. Yeah, of course, fortunately the news then wasn't like it is now, you know what I mean.

GC: Wasn't the depression going on?

NC: What depression?

GC: The Great Depression.

NC: Hell, I was down there sittin' there and I had a venison and half a beef... you know where right around that rincon, the point up in there where those rocks is kinda like this and there's sort of a little overhang in there; had a venison hangin' there, had a half a beef hangin' there, had a big ol' sack of beans, had a case of canned milk, had a great big sack of rice and a sack of salt and some sugar and plenty of coffee. Hell, I wasn't worried about it, heck eatin', hell I never ate better in my life. Get the old saw, go down there, grab a hunk of that beef, saw you off whatever you wanted, 'course it's froze solid, you know. Saw off whatever you wanted. You want to make some stew, cut you off some stew meat, if you wanted some steak, cut that. Oh sure, heck, boy, you talk about eat. Hey, that's one thing I'll say about ol' George Franz, he always made sure you had plenty to eat; when you worked for him, you didn't want for too much really, as far as the times were concerned, because George had a little money.

GC: Made sure his cowboys were well fed.

NC: Yeah, that's for darn sure. Yeah, he was, he was wise enough to know that; yeah, ol' George, what a pistol - what a guy.

GC: So you weren't too concerned about the stock market crashing and all that?

NC: Well of course the stock market crashed before that. But, boy times was hard. There wasn't any money, I mean, nobody had any money. And them that had it was damn sure hangin' on to it. George had a little money, John Byers had a little money, old man Azmus - 'course they said he was rich, and I imagine he was, the prices he charged for things, for the times. Because he'd charge you a penny more for a can of milk than Bebee and Sons right down the street would. And of course you see the problem was, with those days, a lot of times, if you could go in the grocery store or the hardware store and buy somethin', you was at their mercy because you didn't have any money to pay 'em with. They had 'em a little ol' rack built there and they had L. M. Chaffin on it and when I'd go in there and buy somethin' he'd grab the old L. M. Chaffin and write down whatever he wanted to. Hell, I didn't know what he was writin' neither did anybody else. I'd sure hate to do business that way now - well you couldn't, because people would... these go-go boys would be wantin' to make a little extra profit so they'd get a bonus, and there you'd go.

But, anyway, they was pretty honest. But I'll never forget the one year, little incident there at Azums's maybe I told you about it before, about Azmus and ol' Carl Hunt. Anyway, the melon season came, they shipped their melons back to New York and they didn't even sell 'em enough for enough to pay the freight. And of course, them railroads, you know they was kinda funny - they wanted that money in advance. They didn't want to say, "Well hey, we'll wait and you pay us when you sell your cantaloupes". Anyway, all the boys, all the melon farmers there in Green River shipped their melons back there and they didn't get enough for 'em, to make their expenses. So ol' Carl Hunt he was in there talkin' to old man Azmus, old man Azmus he had that had that long narrow store and he had his office way back in the back but he was up to the front - and ol' Carl was standin' there like this with his head down a little bit and he was telling ol' Azmus how he'd sold his cantaloupes and didn't get enough to pay the freight. And old man Azmus, he says, "You know the trouble with you goddamn farmers now? You're always raising something for somebody else and never raising nothin' for yourself. Over in the old country," he says, "we filled our own cellar first," then he says, "We didn't have to go around and beg somebody to give us credit to feed our family in the winter." He says, "Raise something for yourself, fill up your own cellar, then sell what you got left." See, he read old Carl the riot act; he gave him the credit all right. But he wanted to give him a lecture.

But old man Azmus, he was a pistol, grouchy lookin' ol' guy, big guy, German, or, Dutchman I guess. Anyway, don't matter, Belgium, I don't know, but from one of those countries right there. And he was a great big old kind of lumbering sort of a dude, and he wouldn't smile for a million... well he might for a million dollars. But, he was kind of a crabby old guy. But, if you didn't have any money and you needed a sack of flour you could usually go up there and he'd reach up there or have his man who was taking care of the front reach up there and grab that thing and put it on your tab.

Had a tab there and down at Bebee's too and over at Politano's. Politano's Market was down the street and across, down by that garage you know, right up in there; old Malcolm Politano's, not young Malcolm. But old Malcolm, he had his store down there and he was the same way. But one thing I liked about old man Malcolm, I liked him better than I did Bebee's or Azmus, because right in the front he always kept a box of loose candy, like hard tack there. You know right where you could, as you went out you could sneak a piece. You know you could steal a piece of candy. 'Course he knew you

was doing it because he isn't blind. You couldn't walk through that isle and take a piece of candy off of that without him seeing it. But he never would say nothin', I always remember that, always. Boy and sometimes that piece of candy would taste like it was worth a million dollars.

You just didn't; there just wasn't anything there. It was just a poverty area - period. There was the old boys workin' over on the railroad, they made a little money, I guess about 70, 75 dollars a month. And they all drove nice cars and had the best homes in town, which - none of 'em was that good as far as that's concerned - but the best. And they was pickin' in tall cotton, and then when I went back there, along just before World War II, there was a big difference. Those boys workin' for wages and was poor and the farmers was rich; and it was hard for me to make the switch.

Hell, all your cowmen out there, hell none of 'em had any money, they'd just get by and maybe make a little money and get by and pay their bills and so on and so forth. But, you know you sell a big old fat yearlin' steer for 14 dollars a head, there's a lot of difference in that than selling him for a 150 dollars a head. Especially in those conditions, where your expenses is - well it don't cost no more to raise 'em this year than it did a hundred years ago. You know, you turn 'em out on the range and you brand 'em and you dehorn 'em and you go make sure they got some water and you wean the calves and everything.

I know old George Franz, when he sold out his outfit, he gave me one cow. No, he gave me everything that they'd missed. You know, the brand - like his brand was my brand. Because he didn't pay me for that winter that I punched cows for him down on the Green River, when I was down at Anderson and down there, I didn't get any pay for that. Many, many years later when I sold out he said that I could have the brand. Anyway, they missed one cow, and old Art Ekker got this one cow. And this one cow in just a matter of a couple or three years turned into five cows. So I used to correspond and to talk with Art on the phone a lot. And he says, "Hey," he says, "You got five head of cattle here." He says, "Goddamn it," he says, "I can't run these for you for nothin' forever." He says, "What do you want me to do with 'em?" I says, "Well, I appreciate that, I appreciate you keepin' em, I never even gave it any though really." I says, "Why don't you just sell 'em and take out what I owe you." He says, "You don't owe me nothin', you don't owe me nothin'." But he says, "If you want me to sell 'em I'll take 'em in and sell 'em - it's a good price." He says, "Probably be a damn

good time to sell 'em, get rid of 'em." So anyway, he did. And hell I got more money out of those five head of cows than I did for my share of the ranch and all the cattle and all the horses - as far as actual cash dollars is concerned, almost as much.

That shows you the difference in the times. That's, that's about the best way I can compare it really - was the times - people just don't realize how poor people were. How they just... even if you had something you was still poor. You lived poor. Oh yes, that was quite a deal really. Anyway, I guess everything turned all right for most everybody now.

I guess the tourist trade back there brings in lots of dough. I know I made a lot of the boys angry because I made an observation. And sometimes when you make observations it's best if you keep 'em to yourself. The last time I was there I just looked at the tourists there and the people that came to the motels and the people that came to the cafes and the people that bought gas and what it cost me for when I was there and I figured, hey wait a minute, this is a big deal, this isn't penny ante stuff. Anyway, I made the statement that the tourist business brings more dollars into Green River now in one year, than all the cow punchers put together ever sold their cattle for in that whole country. That's what they sold 'em for; not what they made, not what they cleared, not what they had left. There's more money hits Green River today from the tourist business than all the cattle that all of us ever sold. And hell, what few cattle we ran out there and what little bit of money everybody got out of 'em, - they damn sure earned it and it really wasn't that much. They got a good price for their cattle startin' about World War II. And now cattle's been a good price.

GC: But there was no tourism going on back in those days, back in the early days, was there?

NC: Well, not that I know of. I know we always said, you know - Whitmore Bridge, George Whitmore, who ran the drive-in down here on the corner; as far as I know, he was the first tourist, actual tourist that ever went down under the ledge there period. Just to go see the country. He knew me of course, but he didn't have any cattle, he wasn't lookin' for gold, he wasn't lookin' for ore, he wasn't huntin' robbers, he wasn't hidin' from the cops, he was there just to see the country. I tell you that ol' man, when we got back home, anytime I was around him, that's all, he would talk about. He would say, "Bring me five cases of beer and five cases of root beer." And I'd waltz

'em in for him, then he'd start talkin' about the trip. That's all he could talk about - he really got that old red-rock blood in him real quick back there. But as far as I know he was the first tourist. 'Course there was a lot of guys went in there that went in there to look around, but most of 'em was lookin' for something.

Another thing, while we're talking about this, we might keep in mind, I've did quite a bit of research on this and I believe that that piece of range from, I'm gonna call it Ernie country, you folks call it the Maze, from the Ernie country to the Dirty Devil that we ran our cattle in there, I actually believe that that was the last piece of public domain to be inhabited by cattle on a permanent basis. I believe that was the last one. I've never found or never been able to hear of one that was after that, which was 1919, that's when Dad and Faun started puttin' those cattle in there. See there was cattle over in Big Water and there was cattle down in Hatches Canyon that ol' Les McDougal ran from Hanksville, he'd come down Poison Springs cross the river and come up there. But then he finally moved, sold out, went broke, somethin' I don't know what happened. Les was a hell of a good hand. But I believe, as far as I know, that's the last piece of actual range that was left.

In fact, we went over to Wayne County there in that Entrada or what the heck ever their name is outfit, they had a little powwow up at up at Barry Scholl's place there in Torry and there was a bunch of naturalists and scientists and smart people and college people and everything, and Dick Negri put on this little slide show for 'em about the country. And one of the ladies said, she says, "I've been down in that country," and she says, "Why in the world did your parents ever go into that god-forsaken place?" And I jumped up real quick and I says, "Because it was the last place left." And after I'd made that statement, I got thinkin' about it, hey, maybe I said something there that wasn't even close to the truth. I know it was the last place in that country to be taken up with cattle, I know that. And every place I've went I've inquired when, when was this range first used? "Oh, 1800, 1805, 1905, 1910." That was about the last country... I don't know when Eph Moore and the Tibbett and the Allred outfit went into Big Water, I don't know what year. Maybe Ray might know. Those cattle was there runnin' there when they drilled the wells there in Elaterite Basin and that was the end of 1918 and the start of 1919. And his cattle was there then. Eph Moore and Bill Tibbitts and Kenny Allred and they had a sister that had a bunch of cattle there with 'em too. Those guys were all kinfolk. And I don't know their connection or anything, and I was hopin' that Ray would

come over to the Caucus. He was workin' as a real estate agent there in Moab and I was gonna call him up and tell him I wanted to buy a piece of real estate then I'd know he'd come a-runnin' – knowin' real estate men. But I always wanted to chat with him because I always wanted to express my appreciation for his father givin' me the last of his water on that hot summer day. Yeah, that was a good deal, that was nice. I wonder if there's any nice people left. I guess so, lots of 'em probably. But I don't think you see a lot of 'em drivin' cattle down there on a hot summer day now would ya.

GC: How far back does the melon farming go in Green River? When did they start growing melons there?

NC: Do they still raise the round green watermelon?

GC: Yes.

NC: Well now that was the melon they raised when I was first there. We never had any of these, we call 'em California banana watermelons because they're good for ya and they got lots of healthy vitamins in 'em and lots of fluid in 'em but they haven't got no taste - like a banana. But those old round ones, oh man, go over there about one o'clock, you know when it first starts gettin' cool in the fall; you know cool at night and then warm in the day. Be out workin' real hard, sweatin' and everything, and go over and get one of them big old cantaloupes about that big that's been in the shade, you know where the shade was on it. Drop it on the ground, reach in there and grab that heart, just the heart, you wouldn't eat that... hell, nobody ever ate the melon, just the heart, big old heart about that big around, no seeds or nothin'. And you talk about good melons. Boy those were super good. I didn't know whether they still grewed those round melons or not, but boy those were good.

The commercial melon farming I'm going to say really, really got started, let's see... It seems to me like I was out of high school and it was early in the thirties. And old man Wilson, not Stu or Fad or Francis that you might have known but the old man; he shipped a carload of melons back to New York. And the guy sent him a wire and they got about three times as much for 'em as they thought they would and the old wholesaler back there sent him a wire to ship him 'every one he could'; at a price that took old man

Wilson's hat off. – Unbelievable! Anyway, the first year they did great. That year that they shipped him the carload and old man Wilson, they sent him back to hurry up and get him more melons 'cause he wanted all he could get. And they really made a lot of money that year. And then, let's see, let me think, was it the next year that when they shipped 'em back that when old Carl Hunt... they shipped 'em back and they didn't even pay for the freight, anyway it either was the next year or about the year after that that they shipped the melons back there and they didn't get enough for 'em to make their expenses.

But they stuck with it, and, of course as more of your brokers come, this makes more demand, you know what I mean. But, this dealer back there they shipped those to, the Waldorf Astoria was callin' him wantin' a truck load and all the big places in town was all wantin' to get all those melons they could get their hands on. They all said they was the best melons they ever tasted, which they are, they are the best. There's none... they talk about Rocky Ford Colorado, they don't compare with them for flavor. There just somethin' there that, or was there, I hope it's still there, that puts that little extra something in those melons that the other places don't have. And anyway then I guess afterwards they started doin' pretty good really, they did all right.

But I remember a year or two they had a bad time. I can always remember old Harold Halverson... they had a model A Ford coop there in the Midland Garage, sittin' there. 'Course they sold them. And he and I would get in that car and he was telling me how he was gonna buy that car as soon as they sold their melons that fall. Anyway, that was the year that they didn't get nothin' for the melons. So he never got his car. Old Harold, he's dead now, God love him, and he was a good friend of mine. He and Elton both, Elton was kind of a loner, but they were nice people. They was Scandinavian people. They was pretty good people. Oh, they had the most beautiful Navajo rug collection you ever seen. All over their home and their living room, these big Navajo Rugs, I mean huge. They probably traded some Ute Indian a beef for one of 'em or for four or five of 'em probably. You know, heck, Navajos those days you could buy a Navajo saddle blanket for two-fifty, two dollars and a half. This old expensive stuff didn't start till these r-e-e-l cowboys' got in on it, on the western lore. Then somebody saw that they could make a lot of money. And you could see now why they cost so much on account of the time that they have to put into it to weave 'em, you can see the value.

Well, when the old man died Elton and Harold took over their farm there in Green River and they ran some cattle down where Loren took ya down around Nine Mile down there. They had cattle down there for years, for a long time... yeah, Elton and Harold. Harold was my age and Elton was Clell's age, so that gives you an idea of how old they was.

GC: Can you tell me anything about Harry Tasker running horses in Millard Canyon?

NC: I don't know nothin' about Harry Tasker havin' any horses in Millard Canyon, he could of did, but not in my time. That would be before my time. See, Harry Tasker, he was an old timer. He was mixed up with old John Byers and George Franz in that garage deal over there some way or another, Harry Tasker also rode down the river with some of those r-e-e-l people. You know, went down there on the river takin' pictures - runnin' the river and everything, Harry went with them. I can remember him making one trip down there with a bunch of those guys and I think he made more than what I knew. But Harry was a great big guy, nice guy, smiley sort of a person - the kind of person you like to associate with. But I never heard of him havin' any horses in Millard Canyon, that's news to me. And he could have did, in fact him having any horses is news to me. I would class him like George Franz, as a as a motor vehicle man, not a horse man. I could be wrong, and I probably am, because you probably got that from somebody.

But as I say when you get into this oral history I'm well aware you get a lot of history from what I think I saw, and what I thought I saw and the way I saw it. Then you get oral history from somebody else that saw it different. Then you get oral history from somebody that got it all by sittin' around the big ol' cast iron stove or under the shade of a cottonwood tree, that's where most of it comes from. And that's why the oral history is, well, may not be just exactly like it was. But Harry might have had some stock but I can't never remember of Harry Tasker bein' in the stock business.

GC: Did you ever see wild horses under the ledge or in Big Water or Horse Canyon; or did you ever hear any stories?

NC: They tell me, well they tell me, I asked Dad how Horse Canyon got its name and it seems to me like somebody went down there with something and there was a gray mare and two fillies down in Horse Canyon that had no

doubt been stolen and put down in there. This was way, way back and that's why they called it Horse Canyon - on account of those stolen horses bein' in there; but as far as wild horses runnin' in Horse Canyon, not in my time.

GC: You never saw any in Big Water or Millard Canyon.

NC: No, no, no, there was wild jackasses in Millard Canyon, lots of 'em. 'Course now George Franz and his old thirty ought six got rid of a lot of 'em. There was a lot of jackasses that ran up Millard Canyon and there on the Millard Canyon Bench and 'course when George Franz bought the outfit, why his number one priority was war on those jackasses. And boy, I mean he was a good shot and that old thirty ought six you can shoot quite a ways with it you know, if you're a good shot. And he really slaughtered those jackasses. And they saved one or two of the pintos. I think they left one little bunch of 'em. All that was left there at one time was seven or eight fillies- I mean mares - whatever you call a mare jackass. I guess it's a mare and then the one jack. And they was all pintos and of course all the colts was pintos too. They left 'em there because that was kind of unique. I don't ever remember any wild horses... there was no wild horses under the ledge on our side, however, a guy by the name of Sam Adams had a bunch of wild horses down in Happy Canyon.

Yeah, he had the horses in Happy Canyon, and he never came and got 'em, he never did nothin' with 'em. Of course everybody if they'd see a good looking colt they'd run him up one of them side canyons and catch him and get 'em a fresh mount.

GC: So did your outfit use wild horses much, catch them and use them? Out on the desert or in Happy Canyon?

NC: Why sure - that was a good cheap way to get horses, but these horses that Sam Adams had was a little class above... or two or three classes above the horses that ran out on the desert. Sam Adams had a big old bay stud, I can remember him, big ol' bay stud; he had one white foot up about that far. That was the papa of that outfit there. In fact, I'll bet some of them big old stud piles is still down there in Happy Canyon. No, they've probably washed away by now I guess, that was a long time ago. There was some pretty good horses come out of there. Let's see, we got old Sport, we got Happy, we got three or four of 'em, Joe Biddlecome got I don't know how

many. But of course you'd always tell Sam and maybe slip him five bucks or ten or whatever. Say, "Hey, I saw a horse down there and we caught him," So they would negotiate to make a deal, it wasn't just horse stealin'. You know horse stealin' was frowned on. Horse and wife stealin' was frowned on. They was all his horses. When he turned those first in there all of 'em was branded and they all had his brand on 'em and his brand was... I've got it on my gizmo over there; A for Adams.

GC: I've seen that brand on the rocks down there.

NC: Arrow A. That's Sam Adams' brand. That brand's been on more horses back in that country than all the rest of the brands put together, twice as many as all the rest of 'em put together.

But old Sam, he'd chase them horses. And he had a big ol' long legged horse, and that ol' horse couldn't run very fast, but I'm tellin' you, he could run all day and ol' Sam would chase those horses. And if you ever saw Sam there on the desert, he'd holler, "Hey, head those horses, head those horses!" And I mean he was always chasin' them damn wild horses. I don't know what happened to the Adams family. I just lost track of 'em, all except Orson that worked for Andy of course. But all the rest of those boys, they was quite a family of 'em, and I just don't know what happened to 'em, don't know where they went, don't know whether any of 'em's still alive or anything about 'em really. But old' Sam, he was a pretty good ol' boy, 'course nobody liked him on the account of nobody liked wild horses.

You know a horse is a hundred times as hard on the range as a cow and that's one thing that really pees me off. They allow all these damn wild horses to run over here, hundreds and hundreds and thousands of head of 'em, and they say, "Ah, that's wonderful, that's wonderful!" Why the hell don't they get rid of them damn horses and let somebody run some cows over there. I can't understand, I can't understand. The horses aren't any good. These hog wild horses you get off these deserts aren't any good after you catch 'em. They're inbred and everything so darn many years that there isn't one out of a dozen of 'em that's worth their salt.

Burros is the hardest on a range, worse than a horse because their feet is smaller, they'll get into harder places to get to, especially in that rocky country. Boy, there when all them jackasses was in Millard Canyon, you'd

go up them slopes... Does the big old bunch of grass hill grow on those slopes down in those red canyons?

GC: Yes.

NC: Yeah, well it didn't when them jackasses was there cause they'd climb up and eat it. And then what they didn't eat they'd paw up.

GC: Did you have much to do with Millard Canyon; did you ever get in there and do anything?

NC: Why sure. I'll tell you a tale. Guy Robison was workin' for Pearl, and Clell and I decided that we was gonna drop down off that trail there in the head of Millard Canyon, and go down to Anderson Bottom. Well, old Guy, he was gonna take the day off and come down there with us and chase some of them wild burros there in the head of Millard Canyon. So we went down there and we chased burros and everything and we camped down there. And we used to take our honey and it came in a five pound can, and it had the slash-in lid on the top. And you could put it on your pack and like if a mule rolled over why it wouldn't come out. But anyway, the darn lid came off this honey, on a hot day and of course the honey gets runny; and it ran all over the pack and the whole thing. And ol' Guy, he actually, to show you what kind of a sense of humor he's got, he actually thought that was funny. And he tells that on me to this day about me and the honey in my pack. Anyway, it run out and ran out all over in the pannier and man that's the only sweet stuff we had was that can of honey. Hey, that was it man.

GC: So what did you do?

NC: Well, salvaged all of it we could - might have been not that clean but we survived. But we went down there and chased those jackasses. And that little piece of range right there in the head of Millard Canyon that feed there was so strong, such good feed. That was the best place in the world to wean calves, you know, put young stuff up there that could kinda climb around those hills a little. They really did good in there. And yeah, Franz had cattle in Millard Canyon all the time.

GC: Once he got the jackasses out.

NC: Well, 'ol man Franz, he declared war on those jackasses. Boy I'm tellin' you he declared war on 'em, and a lot of 'em would water at that spring right at the mouth at Millard Canyon there, you know, that's in Millard Canyon. Some of the springs up and down the wash would dry up in the summer when it was hot, but that one always ran lots of water. And those ol' jackasses would come in there to drink and he'd be back there under a rock... and if you ever do this, always wait until they drink and get full. 'Cause then they can't run so fast. And hell, 'ol George, he'd kill five or six of 'em at a time there - there was the damndest pile of corpses there ya ever saw; there was just hundreds of 'em. Anyway anyplace he went, he he'd sneak around and get close enough to them jackasses or he'd hide on a point someplace and have you go up around to haze 'em back down to him just like huntin' deer. Boy he was a good shot, and that old thirty-ought-six, that's a good gun too. Man, I'd sure like to have that old gun.

GC: Can you tell me more H. W. C. Prommell and his crew? Why did they come out there to begin with?

NC: To reconnoiter, to bring an expert geologist out there to reconnoiter for oil structures.

GC: And who brought them out there?

NC: T. C. Connelly brought 'em out. Prommell was workin' at that time, he must have been workin' for T. C. Connelly, I imagine, because T. C. Connelly was a promoter. He's the guy that did all the drilling work there at French Springs. What he'd do, he'd go back to Texas and get enough money, you know go around and promote enough money to come out there and work for a while. And then they'd work for awhile, then he'd go dig up some more money. T. C. Connelly paid Dad for Dad furnishin' the horses and all his help for 25 dollars a day until the Texas Company took it over. And then when the Texas Company took it over, then the Texas Company... Well they took it from Connelly. Connelly got enough good geological work and so on and so forth that the Texas Company was interested in it enough that they wanted to explore it further. That's why they drilled the well out to the Flat Tops.

T. C. Connelly was putting all this information together to interest a big time operator, somebody to go out there and maybe drill an oil well, and as you get big oil and you've got an interest in the oil well, why then you don't

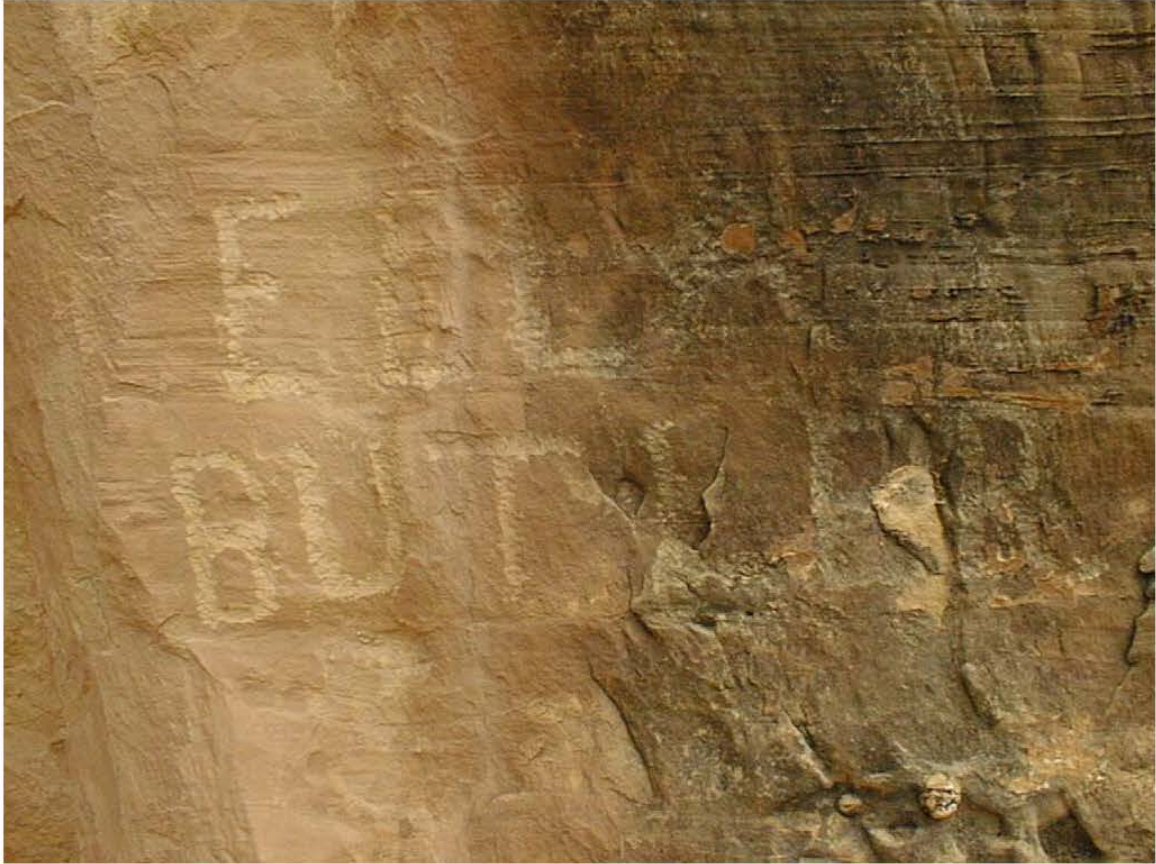
have to promote any more, you can live it up. And he did that because he really believed that there was a big body of oil under the thing there at French Springs on account of those little old seeps down in Big Water, T. C. Connelly did.

Oh there's one picture that's real good of him and Prommell and Dad and it show's old T. C. to the tops because T. C. was sort of a, uh... What do I want to call him, I don't want to use the word stuck up, that isn't the word. He always seemed like he was in control and the whole nine yards and a heck of a nice guy and a swell guy to be out with and he always shaved when he was out there and if you had an extra gallon of drinking water he'd wash his shirt - all that good stuff. Anyway, when they first came out, we met 'em there at Flint with the horses they had a young guy with 'em from New York, a young nice looking guy, I'm gonna say, in his middle to late twenties. And his dad had sent him out with T. C. Connelly because he wanted to get him away from the partyin' I guess. Anyway, they came there and the next morning when we got ready to go this guy was sick and couldn't go, this kid. I forget his name, but some big family back in New York some place, one of the elite. But he decided he didn't like the looks of that country so he was sick.

But anyway, T. C. Connelly lived down in Texas, I don't know where, but he was from that country. I don't know whether he was a Texan or a transplanted. He was pretty honest, so I think he was probably a native Texan, I don't think he was one of those transplanted Texans. But T. C. knew lots of people and he did a lot of promotin' and one thing and another and he actually promoted the deal and got those people to come there and paid them money and to drill a well out at the Texas well at French Springs, which is where Mr. Prommel, well, it's close to where he wanted it drilled, it's within a couple of hundred feet of where wanted it drilled.

The Nequoia Arch Survey was the preliminaries to the Texas Oil Company comin' out there and drillin' the well and of course the Philips Petroleum Company too, they worked off the same information that the Nequoia Arch Survey, that Mr. Prommel and Mr. Crum and whoever else was there to help 'em that they worked out, that's why those wells were drilled. Mr. Prommel set the locations for both the wells. And the Phllips well is drilled off a little ways from where it was supposed to be too, the one that's drilled there on the Spur. But T. C. Connelly promoted that deal and that brought a lot of money into Green River.

That practically saved the town of Green River. Because the winter they built the road across Horseshoe Canyon that was the only job in town, outside of those few people that worked for the railroad. There for awhile you couldn't buy a job. You couldn't even go work for a guy for nothin' 'cause he couldn't give you lunch. And the money that come in off that road across Horseshoe Canyon that Dad and Uncle Arth built... 'course they hired all their own relatives and all local people, they never, they never let none of it get very far. But anyway, it saved a lot of people from goin' hungry that winter, I'll tell you that right now. I think if I remember right, they paid 'em four dollars a day, which was pretty good money for those days. And, they didn't work by the clock, they worked by the sun. When it got light enough out there, 'course it was in the wintertime, short days, as soon as it got light out there you went to work, and you worked as long as you could see good. And that was the workin' hours, on that road job. But anyway to me, buildin' that road was quite a thing really. The whole deal was almost unbelievable; why would old Frank Phillips give a job of that magnitude to a couple of guys, neither one of 'em even went through the sixth grade. Frank Phillips himself gave them the contract for that. Hell, people don't do business like that anymore. Man you'd have to have a string of college degrees reachin' half way from here to Green River before old Frank Phillips would even talk to you now, if he was still alive, of course he's gone.



NC: Ella Butler is a very, very, very familiar name. Ella Butler. According to Pearl, according to Pearl, now this is not according to Ned, but Pearl said that Ella Butler, she was a daughter of one of them big cattle men over on the Henry Mountains, she wasn't one of the outlaws. Now I don't know whether Pearl Baker knew or not. Sometimes Pearl knew, and sometimes, most of the time, 99 and nine-tenths of the time yes. The date on that, there's a date; her husband's name is there someplace. I think his name was Jack and I think it was 1896. But, Ella Butler, according to Pearl, I've got it written down someplace for sure who she was. But she wasn't one of the outlaws. It seems to me that her husband's name was small, not written big like that.



GC: This is interesting, this one's at Meat Hook Spring, J. B. Silliman.

NC: J.W. Silliman was the guy that ran the dairy there in there the Green River in the Silliman family. I think, well some of 'em's probably still alive, all his kids. They ran a dairy then and J.B Silliman; it was his family and, well and his friends and connections that got the money for the boys to drill all those wells in Big Water. He and they formed together and they all put in x number of dollars I guess and whatever. But they didn't waste any money on wages. Those guys got all excited when they saw that oil laying on the ground there, hell, all you have to do is dig a hole and you're rich.

GC: And the other one, 'W' star 'K' 6-15-05, was that a lawman?

NC: That W Star K I can't come up with anything.



GC: I asked you this one before, but I thought I'd throw that one up on the screen again; O. D. Kimball 1893.

NC: Kimball - Dad had a partner by the name of Kimball, his last name was Kimball. Was his initials O.D.? I don't know. He might have been with Dad on some trips down in there.

GC: Can you tell me anything more about Happy Canyon?

NC: Yeah, ok, good ol' Happy Canyon. The French Spring Fork is nice, you been down in there; down in there where the trees are and the water comes up out of the bottom of the wash? I'll tell you a little story about Ryder Ekker and I and that very spot there where the cottonwoods are, kinda up to the head where it first starts to narrow up. We was up there and there was an old ewe and a lamb there, you know, that the sheepherders had left or missed or somethin'. So we decided we was gonna catch the lamb and have some mutton. Ol' Ryder and I, we chased that damn lamb all day, up and down that canyon, up through them rocks a-foot, horseback, anyway we

could go and we still ended up that we didn't get to catch the lamb. No doubt it got so darn tired that it just went up behind one of them little rocks and maybe crawled in a little hole and just laid there. We probably walked right over the top of it. Yeah ol' Ryder and I, I'll never forget that. Boy, ol' Ryder went up there and chased that lamb around one of them rims, the little old lamb "BAAA", callin' for its ma. "I'm gonna get it, I'm gonna get it!" Then it come down, it'd come down into the wash and then I'd take after it a-horseback and it'd run for a little ways and it'd take up one of them little draws and away it'd go up in the rocks. Boy we had a heck of a time. But we didn't catch the lamb; the lamb was still there someplace. We didn't have no mutton for dinner.

GC: So did you ever do much down in Happy Canyon, with the cows?

NC: Yeah, yeah, we had cattle in Happy Canyon, quite a bit. We weaned calves in there quite a bit. And of course you know, the forage and so on, you wouldn't have very many in there. It was a quite a do, it's a long ways from where the ol' trail drops down into the head of Happy Canyon to the Dirty Devil River. People, you tell them how far it is and they call you a liar. Dad asked me how far I thought it was and I told him. And he says, "Aw, "he says, "What's the matter with you?" He says, "It can't be that far, what, what are you talkin' about?" When he made the route, he did concede.

If there was good water down there I never found any. Now, that place there in the head of French Spring Fork where it comes up out of the ground wasn't too bad if you dig down a little bit. You know, it wasn't it wasn't too bad. Now you get further down the canyon in the bottom of that that comes up the water is pretty alkaline. But listen, when you're thirsty, it's wet and it tastes good even if it isn't good.

GC: So did you put the cattle down there mostly in the winter time?

NC: No, we didn't do that; we would run all the time. Happy Canyon was just a little bit different. Sometimes we'd take a bunch of weaners in there; and you know, take 'em in, in the fall when you've weaned 'em. And then the next year, the year they was yearlings, we wouldn't breed 'em. And then we'd get 'em the next year when they was two year olds and take 'em back on the other side. Then that way you didn't have two year olds havin' calves. That is where you have lots of trouble. You have lots of trouble with the animal actually surviving; it's just too young, under those harsh

conditions that they had back there to do it. But we was the only ones that ever did that.

GC: And the trail you used to get down in there, that's the one that comes down off of the South Gordon?

NC: No. We used the one down from Flint down there, down from Harness Up Spring. I'll bet you can't even get down there now. Was steep, you've been down that trail I'm sure, but it's steep and there's places where, if I remember right, where it could wash. I'll bet that would be impossible to take stock down there now.

GC: Can you tell me how you handled the cattle over the course of a year, how your year would go - a typical year. What you'd start out in the spring doing and then how you'd end up in the fall.

NC: Well of course the main thing in that country was water for the stock. You know, as far as, as far as feed was concerned, there was always some feed someplace Under the Ledge, always, but lots of times there wasn't any water. Now, like on Waterhole Flat there before we built the pond there at the Chaffin Camp, the only water you had was the little ol' spring over at cottonwood, and then those tanks, like Willow, Willow Tank was good because it was a big tank and it was up there close to that red clay where the water would run off and come down there. It was pretty good. And then out to the tank on the flat that would get water in it. But water was the main cry for that country. But as far as feed was concerned there was always somethin' for 'em to eat. But, sometimes the water was short. And of course we finally got some of those springs troughed up and so on and so forth.

We sold calves at weaning time and we sold 'em when they was yearlings'. If you sold the calves at weanin' time you'd sell 'em in the fall of course, and if you wait till they was yearlings then you'd sell 'em in the spring. And weanin' the calves was quite an adventure of course. We'd bring 'em there at the Chaffin camp and put 'em all in the corral. We'd cut the cows out of the coral and leave the calves in the coral. Cut the cows out and leave the calves in because the calves, some of 'em was a little bit wild, if you let 'em out they just take off, they'd go hide someplace because they knew their mother would find 'em, see. Or they'd find their mother, one or the other. And so we'd put 'em all in, leave 'em in the corral together and we'd put the

cows out. Well now the cows of course wouldn't leave without their calves. So what we'd do is we'd drive the cows up to the point of rocks, give a good hard twist to any of them that didn't want to kind of mosey along. Then we'd lope back down there and let the calves out of the corral, then we would go right up over the pond and ride up over toward that rim to go get down on that rim that goes over into where the calf pasture is. When them calves come out of there they'd come a-runnin' and you'd have to keep 'em all together and keep 'em pointed the way you want 'em. And it really didn't take very long... that was one time you made good time on goin' from there to the calf pasture was when you had those calves because their mommas was gone and they was all uptight and they was worried about what you was gonna do to 'em. Then we'd put 'em down in the calf pasture and then of course they was behind the fence. Then the poor little old fellers, they'd come up against that fence and sit there and bawl for two or three days. Wouldn't eat or wouldn't drink wouldn't do nothin'. Finally then, they'd go back down in and drink at the tank - seems like there's always water in that darn tank.

Faun and Clell and I we fixed that trail in there, shot that thing in there. That was after Joe Biddlecome learned Faun how to crimp that dynamite cap with his teeth.

And when, if we sold 'em, why we'd take the ones that we was gonna sell, we'd cut them out and head for Green River; that was an adventure too.

And then a lot of times we'd take our weaner calves and put 'em over in Happy Canyon, or sometimes we would take 'em down and put 'em on Spanish Bottom, you know, where they could be down by themselves, where there was someplace to where you didn't bother 'em. You know, if you took them and dumped 'em off down in Happy Canyon then you could forget 'em until next spring, they was just down there and they'd take care of theirselves, plenty of water down there and plenty of feed, they'd just be down there and hustle for themselves; and the same way on Spanish Bottom. Maybe we lost an animal or two by puttin' 'em on Spanish Bottom in the in the winter but not much.

We lost one to some river runners that caught one there. We had some old cable there. We had a place behind a rock kind of fenced off with cable to where the cattle couldn't get into it 'cause it was boggy and they'd get into quicksand. And the river runners got down there and got stranded. No food

- and they took some of this cable and caught a calf, and killed it and ate it. Then they started rowin' back to Moab. And we came along right after they had been there. And, god I'll never forget how mad ol' Faun was, "Oh, goddamn river-runnin' tourists, down there trying to find hunks of gold," and eatin' his calves. Boy he was mad. The river runners went into Moab to the Times-Independent and reported it in there and left their names and their address and everything. And then of course as soon as we come in to Moab and got mentionin' it and got talkin' about it and everything why, old Taylor gave Dad their names and address. 'Cause they didn't know who owned the calf or nothin', you know. Dad sent 'em a note that he was the guy that owned the calf and they sent him 50 bucks! Hell that was as much our whole heard was worth!

GC: So did you have a specific time of year that you'd mix the bulls with the cows so the calves would be born at the right time.

NC: Yeah Joe Biddlecome would put his in along in June, but most of the time we'd just let ours go. We'd take the bulls and put 'em all over in Ernie Country together because in the non-breeding season, bulls have a tendency to want to bunch, you know. Well, I guess companionship, like you and I wants to go and watch the ball game tonight or whatever. And then of course when the breedin' season starts, then it's a different story. But we usually put our bulls over in Ernie Country and just left 'em over there and then when we went down to fix up all the springs and make sure everything was alright for the hot weather, why we'd let 'em go. And that's when the fightin' would start. You saw the picture of the bulls fightin' in the old pond didn't ya. Yeah, them damn bulls, ol' Bill Racy and I we spent four hours tryin' to break up that fight. We had work to do. And them damn bulls, boy, that one bull, boy we'd cut him out and start him up that flat there out from the pond up there and I'd hard twist him boy with that old double roll of hard twist raising welts on his back that high. And the minute I quit chasin' him he would beat me back to the pond to fight that bull. And he wasn't lookin' for no cow, he was lookin' for that other bull. Goddamn, I never saw a fight like that one.

I saw the tracks of the worst bull fight. This was Joe Biddlecome's bull there at the Gordons. Now Joe kept his bulls out and didn't turn 'em until a certain time and he got the notion that he was gonna cut his bulls horns off so he dehorned 'em. And he had these two big ol' bulls, big ones; and from the corral all the way down to the road and beyond, there wasn't a one piece

of earth there that wasn't tore up from them bulls fightin'. And those bulls' heads, you know - if they've got horns they won't slide. You know, if you hook horns, you and the other bull got something to hook to and you'll do this. But if you haven't got no horn there you slide and you slide. Neither one of them bulls had one hair on their face, not one, they was the damndest looking things you ever saw. What a mess, bloody, I hope to tell you, to see that ol' skin to skin, hey listen, your skin only stretches so far. And you get a bull that weighs twelve, thirteen, fourteen hundred pounds pushin' one way and you pushin' the other you've got a lot of friction there and when it starts to slide it, woo. I'll never forget how they looked.

We had a little ol' bull, we got him from Tidwell's, we traded him from Tidwell's; his name was Dempsey. He was a little tiny bull, little tiny dark red bull, as small a bull as you saw in the whole country. But he was all muscle. And he was the damndest fighter I ever saw. In the off season, he was the boss of the whole bunch; he'd whip all the bulls. He wouldn't let none of 'em whip him. 'Course when the season started, why then some of 'em was just bigger than him, and they would whip him.

We had a big ol' bull - we called him Pedro, and he took on ol' Dempsey and shoved ol' Dempsey all over; this was right there at the Chaffin camp. And later I had 'em out on out on Little Ocean, and went in and brought 'em in and brought 'em down the side of that hill right up above the Chaffin camp. And this little Dempsey got behind old Pedro, comin' down that steep hill and he made a run for Pedro, and I saw what he was gonna do. I yelled "Hey!!!" - started hollerin' and he hit old Pedro right in the fanny and he just tipped old Pedro right straight over, like he was makin' a perfect summersault, like that, he hit him so hard and knocked him over like that. And when Pedro got up, he took off for the boondocks. He didn't want no more of that. That was really funny. Boy, if old Pedro didn't let bellow out of him you'd thought the world was comin' to an end, you thought somebody was killin' him. I think ol' Dempsey would have killed him if he had a chance.

CB: How many bulls did you have at a time approximately?

NC: Oh, you'd like to have one bull with about every 20 cows. 'Course, kinda depended on the way you split up. Some places like over at Red Points there's only enough water for about 15 head of cows. But bulls was quite a subject of conversation when I was a kid. In fact the only thing that

that the guys talked about was bulls and horses. Never talked about ladies, never talked about food, it was always bulls and horses; hour after hour after hour. In fact, some of those ladies, I'd get a kick out of Mary Tidwell, Frank's mother, she'd say, "Don't you guys ever talk about anything besides bulls and horse – ever?"

GC: Did your cows have horns that were sharp and long?

NC: No, no, no. We dehorned 'em. Hey if you ever find my dehornin' outfit down there I want it. It's made out of a little handrail about that long – well, however long your piece of steel was, that's how long it was. Then you make a little cup or a little spoon-like thing out of this, out of this part, kinda like a spoon and you'd get it just as sharp as you could here on the end. Then you'd take that... I can still remember the first time I did it. Put that down over their horn and you go around and of course just as soon you'd hit the veins the blood will just spray. You know it doesn't bleed like a bleed, it sprays, actually spray ya. And boy you talk about bellowin', them little old cows would really be bellowin'. And boy the first time I dehorned them, boy I would have gave it a million dollars if I wouldn't have had to do it. But you really just gouged the horn out with this particular tool. Then you would take some caustic and you would, after the hole was there, where the horn was there'd be a hole about like say that big, if the horn was small, then you'd take some caustic, and you had a pair pliers to hold the caustic stick with so it wouldn't burn you and you'd cauterize the inside of it there to stop the bleeding. But oh that blood, as soon as you'd hit those veins down there, especially about the time you dug that horn out, kind of pop it out like that. Ol' Faun Chaffin and ol' Joe Biddlecome could pop them horns out of there like you and I pop popcorn. I never did hardly get used to that. Anyway, I lost mine, it's down there someplace; if you ever find it by gosh that's mine.

GC: So did you do the dehorning at the same time that you did the branding and the castrating?

NC: Right yeah, uh huh, right at the same time, yeah.

GC: What time of year was that usually?

NC: Well, you'd usually start along late in June. Then of course you wanted to get it done as soon as possible, sometimes you'd have some calves come late and you just did it more or less when you when it was to be done I

guess, whenever you could. It was primarily a summer job, the brandin' and not only that, that's a good time to bunch the cattle up on account of the breeding process. To bunch cattle up makes 'em more sociable for some reason or the other, I don't know why. Or so that's what ol' Joe Biddlecome and Bud Milton told me. Now I don't vouch for that personally but that's what they said so I'm gonna have to take their word for it.

GC: So then in the fall you'd gather some to sell, take them to Green River?

NC: Yeah, yeah in the fall, you'd either sell 'em in the spring or the fall; hardly ever both times. Normally you'd try to get enough when you sold 'em to pay the interest on the mortgage and pay the bill up at Bebee's and up to Asmus's 'Cause that's a long ol' trip for the cattle there.

Uncle Arth had three head of old Jersey steers down on Ticaboo. He and I went down the Colorado River to Ticaboo, went up on Ticaboo and got these three steers. And I drove those three steers all the way from Ticaboo, all the way up under the ledge, all the way up Andy Miller Flat, over to Waterhole and put 'em down in the calf pasture with our stuff and then brought 'em to town and sold them. Now that's a poor way of serving the Lord I'll tell ya. And he gave me the instructions exactly when I sold these, exactly what I was supposed to do with the money. Let's see, I was, I was supposed to pay the garage; he owed them eight dollars and somethin', supposed to pay that. And how much did he owe at Asmus? Just a few dollars, four or five dollars or six dollars or somethin' and I was supposed to pay that too. So we sold, sold his ol' three Jersey steers and paid the bills and he had money left. So he had a pretty successful cow operation goin', This was Uncle Arth, when he was down at Hite, yeah before it got flooded. That's a nice place there at Hite, I liked that.

GC: So in the wintertime, where would you keep the cows?

NC: Same place. Yeah, the only thing when it gets winter and you get snow then the cattle will eat the snow and you don't have to worry about the water, you know what I mean. Also this enables 'em to go up where the feed's maybe a little better.

GC: Did you bring them up by the ranch on the San Rafael and keep them there at times?

NC: Well of course we brought cattle from under the ledge to the ranch, when we first started the ranch, and then we brought another bunch, Eddie Pearson and I brought another bunch up there in 1936, this was a bunch Eddie and I had down on the Dirty Devil, down in god's country. Yeah, and we came out and we went up the Twin Corral box and went out on the right hand side of the box. And went up; there was a little ol' spring up there underneath the rim up pretty close to the top and then we went across Twin Corral Flats and come down to Hans Flat and drop down into the upper pasture there and down Horseshoe Canyon. That's the way we went with 'em that time. That was a long ol' trip too. Oh lord that was a long trip. One place there, comin' up coming up the Twin Corral box we had to do a little bit of work on it, there's one rim there that was, it was pretty high. That's a, really a pretty good trail, really except that one spot. As I remember it, there was one of those rims that was a little high, and of course the cattle wouldn't want to go up the way it was because, well it just wasn't a natural way. Anyway, we made it. More good luck than good management that's for damn sure. That was a long old trip.

CB: So you normally didn't trail the cows back and forth that long distance, you kept them in the same area down in Waterhole Flat?

NC: Oh sure, just kept 'em there all the time. We didn't have the Bureau of Land Management to tell us we had to move 'em then.

CB: Do you know about how many cows total you ever had that you were running, in that area; Cows, calves?

NC: Oh, I think the most we ever had down there would be about three hundred - then, probably had about a hundred or hundred fifty out at the ranch. It was just a little old hardscrabble outfit.

GC: Did you ever run your cattle down in Horse Canyon and in the canyons of the Maze?

NC: We had cattle in Big Water, several times. I don't know what the year was, but the year that Faun and I went on the Dirty Devil we had all those steers down in Big Water for about a month, before we took 'em out of there. But no, that was Eph Moore's range. Then Eph Moore sold out to George Franz. Then when George left, Faun moved cattle into Big Water

and Horse Canyon. I been in Horse Canyon many, many, many times - many times. That's a nice spot. I bet that's really pretty now.

GC: What can you tell me about a gentleman by the name of Buhr; B-U-H-R.

NC: Buhr! That's who... Ella Butler is Buhr's daughter; according to Pearl. Buhr is whom they named the Buhr desert after, over out of Hanksville. That's the same guy. That's Ella Butler's father. Now this is accordin' to Pearl Baker. Not accordin' to Ned. Now Pearl knows and I don't. But I didn't know. I thought she was probably one of them fancy outlaw ladies. But according to Pearl she wasn't, but she was Buhr's daughter. And this is very possible, I mean I don't know. That's what I've heard about the Buhr family. Fawn worked for old man Buhr when he was a kid. He ran lots of cattle over on the Henrys and out below the mountain and all out in that area.

GC: I'm really curious about exactly how the cable drilling method worked. How did they do that cable drilling? Could you describe it?

NC: The old cable drill, it worked on a beam that was run by steam, in our time. Like down in Bigwater they run that little rig by steam. It's pretty damn complicated, I'm tellin' ya. And I never worked on one of 'em myself. But I have saw 'em and was around 'em. But they would run a pulley from their power, from their steam engine, they would run a pulley from there and then they had a big belt and this belt would turn a big wheel, and they called it the bull wheel. You saw the big wheels, pictures of the big wheel.

GC: Well there's still an old bull wheel at the old Tidwell Ranch site.

NC: Yes, there's a big wheel there. That is the bull wheel. And what that did, this belt went around it, and that belt worked this thing it went around, it was connected to the middle of the bull wheel. It went up like this and then it had a head come out on it like this and come down like this. And as the wheel went around, that would lower the bit, and then as it went back the other way, it'd raise the bit up for power, see. As the wheel would turn around, it would either raise the bit or it would lower the bit. Then they had it rigged up to where as it made the hole, they could give it the slack on the cable that it was hooked to, to keep it drilling. That's what the driller did.

Them old drillers, I've saw many a time, grab that line with their hand and could tell you exactly what that bit was doin' down in the hole. It was amazing.

GC: So the heavy weighted bit, when it slamed down into the rock, it would make the hole a little deeper.

NC: Yeah, that'd just cut it. And of course, those bits was good steel to start with and then they would temper 'em theirselves, they'd sharpen, temper 'em right there on the rig.

GC: So they would have an anvil, and all that sort of thing?

NC: Yeah, had the thing there and they had them big old sledge hammers and they'd bring that big old bit up, it'd weigh about seven or eight hundred pounds, they'd bring it up and they'd start beatin' that thing with the sledgehammers - the driller and the tool pusher and the tool dresser. That was their titles. The driller, he was the boss, then the tool dresser he was the second in command, and they would sit there and they'd pound that bit, and those guys would swing that, and they'd swing it in unison, to where, when one of 'em was hittin', the other guy was drawin' up, see? Just go bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, - just like that. And they'd never get caught up with their sledgehammers they was swingin. And that would just pound the hole. That's why it took so long.

GC: How did they get the pulverized rock out of the hole then?

NC: Well, they had a bailer, and they had fluid down in there, and they'd run the fluid down in there and they'd run the bailer down that had a little trap on the bottom that when it would hit the bottom it would, well like the thing in your sink, in your wash basin. And as soon as they'd pull it up, as soon as the weight got against it, it would shut the end of the bailer, and they'd bail it all out, and they'd just swing it out, and they'd just dump it and they'd let it run wherever it went.

GC: And they had to have water for that.

NC: Yeah. Oh yeah. They never drilled dry.

GC: So working down there in Big Water, they'd have to haul the water.

NC: Hauled water - Sure.

GC: A lot of work. And they worked a whole year down there on the drill rig and didn't make any money?

NC: Yeah, well that was the times. You know what I mean. You went out and worked for a guy, and he owed you money... if he didn't have any money, he didn't owe you any money.

GC: They got food though.

NC: Yeah, they got food. And he gave Dad a check, and Dad's check cleared. But, Fawn, and Paul Saltgaver and Dubinkey Anderson, and the other guys, their checks all bounced. Hell, you never heard a one of them say a damn bad word about old man Silliman or 'ol Wolverton or nobody else.

GC: What can you tell me about Paul Saltgaver?

NC: Well Paul Saltgaver was an Australian; came over from Australia; a handsome man. Boy I'll tell ya. If you had him around today hell he'd run Clark Gable out of business; just a swell lookin' guy, just a happy jolly man. Oh I don't know. I always liked Paul, because he always gave me a quarter, and a quarter was a lot of money in those days. But Paul hung around there and odd jobbed around for quite a bit. He worked down on the rig there in Elaterite Basin, and afterwards he worked around odd jobs for a while. I don't know when he left, I don't know where he went; I don't know what happened to him. But he was a pretty swell guy.

GC: What can you tell me about Dubinky Anderson.

NC: Well, old Dubinky Anderson. That's who Dubinky was named after. And he was a, just a guy that was around and... He worked in the cattle business and worked around and he worked down there in Elaterite Basin and helped them. But anyway, those guys, they were all good guys. But I can't remember too much about old Dubinky. Even though I think he stuck around the country. And the family, his family stuck around the country there a lot more than ol' Paul did. But ol' Paul, I imagine some rich gal saw him and probably said "Hey, let's go," or something, I don't know. Gosh

dang he was a swell lookin' guy; tall, dark haired guy. Had that Australian twang in his voice, you know. He was a nice guy. Boy the ladies, I tell ya - they just went screwball over that guy. He sure never had any trouble gettin' a date, even in a little town like Green River.

GC: Was Anderson Bottom named after Dubinky Anderson?

NC: I can't say whether Anderson Bottom was named after Dubinky Anderson.

There's only one name I know, and I don't even know whether you even have it on your map or not, and that's Arlys Bottom.

Everybody I ever talked to ...well do you know where Turkhead bottom is? Ok, go down the river. Turkhead bottom hits the ledge don't it? Then it goes over, and the river hits the ledge on the other side. On your side of the river, there's a little bottom, a little long narrow bottom there that goes down to the mouth of Deadhorse. That's Arlys Bottom; named after Arlys Franz. A-R-L-Y-S. And I've told everybody to listen to me a thousand times, goddammit, that's Arlys Bottom! That's the only name I ever heard applied to that bottom.

GC: Now that was George Franz's wife?

NC: That was his wife. And we always called it Arlys Bottom. That's where George Franz kept his bulls in the winter - was there on Arlys Bottom. There a place, kinda in, well I can't remember where it was, you can get down into it right from the top, and ol' George would put his bulls down there and leave 'em there all winter. Yeah. That was a nice place too.

GC: I'd like to know a little more about E. T. Wolverton.

NC: Well of course now old man Wolverton, when we moved to Green River, he moved out and we moved into his home. And his home was right...you know where Pearl Baker's home was, there in Green River, well his home was a little old red house about a hundred feet away, it's gone now, a hundred feet that-a-way from where Pearl's house was. Kinda sat out there by itself. And we moved into Mr. Wolverton's home there. Everybody I talked to liked Mr. Wolverton. Now Ted, I can remember Ted. I can remember Mr. Wolverton's son. I can remember him. I can remember Ted

because Ted was, see he was Faun's age, and those guys, always, they'd get together, and get a bunch of bootleg whiskey and go and chase the girls, you know what I mean. I'm not tellin' any secrets on 'em – this is a well-known fact, but that's alright too. And I can remember Ted, but I can't even remember what Mr. Wolverton looked like, to tell you the truth.

GC: Can you tell me more about T. C. Connelly?

NC: Now remember one thing – T. C. Connelly was a promoter. He would go out and get money and they would drill a well, if they got a well he would get a percentage. He was a promoter. He'd go get the money, here's the money, I'm gonna pay you to do this, you go do it! If we get a well, fine, I own one percent of it, or two or whatever deal we'd make. We'd make this deal ahead of time. We don't do it with a bunch of lawyers; we make it, you and me.

And I really never saw Connelly do any work, period, none, even when he was out there on that survey he was more of a tourist than he was an assistant. As far as him goin' out and surveyin', and takin' one of them...gettin' on a mule and takin' that big ol' thing that they use to - collapse it up and then take it out and stick it up in the ground and sit there and hold it for an hour or two - I never saw Connelly doin' any of that. Connelly wasn't even there. He wasn't even around. He wasn't there doin' the Nequoia Arch survey. He never had nothin' to do with the operation. He'd go out and make the promotion and do the stuff, and then if they found somethin' he'd get a little cut. And maybe they'd give him a little salary and a little expenses, because, especially if they felt he was onto something, you know. But I mean, he was a promoter, he never went out there, and he never drilled that well in French Springs.

GC: Who worked on that rig?

NC: I'm pretty sure was the Texas Company. Not Texaco - The Texas Company. Not the Texas C-O; The Texas C-O-M-P-A-N-Y - The Texas Company; a hell of a bunch of swell people. Drillin' that well there at French Springs was sort of an on and off operation. Because Connelly would go get some money, and then they'd come there and drill, and when they ran out of money, they'd quit. In the meantime, maybe ol' T. C. would run out and scare somethin' else up, and they'd go again. But T.C. wasn't a workman; he didn't make his livin' workin'. Lettin' somebody else do the

work... Now there's nothin' wrong with that. That's no criticism now; don't misunderstand me - especially for those times. Because T. C. Connelly did more for Green River than all those other guys put together, Joe Biddlecome and Lou Chaffin and Andy Moore and the whole damn bunch. T. C. Connelly did more for Green River than the whole damn bunch of 'em did. 'Course, God, don't tell nobody I said that, I'll be ostracized again. But that's the truth. He sent more money through Green River than all those guys put together.

GC: And he's the one that brought in the Nequoia Arch survey and H. W. C. Prommell?

NC: Yeah that's right; he's the guy that brought 'em in.

GC: And they worked for two years. Was that pretty much steady, they worked the two years down in that country?

NC: Pretty much.

GC: And covered it from one end to the other?

NC: Yup.

GC: And they mapped it?

NC: They did a pretty good job. Yup they really, that was really an operation. Yes it really was. But ol' T. C., he was a likeable chap, ya know, and a good lookin' man, too, ya know what I mean. I mean a straight, strong-lookin', I mean a manly lookin' sort of a dude, ya know what I mean. I always liked him, he was always nice to me, he never did give me any problems. He didn't even give me any problems the time ol' Dick McClurg and I washed the clothes in the trough there at Outlaw Spring. He's the only one that didn't though, those others did.

GC: That was a good story; I like that story from our last conversation.

NC: Oh boy! Thought about that the other day, I started laughin' and I thought, my God, if a guy would do something like that now he'd get killed...well, you wouldn't even be allowed to be in the outfit now. See, when I was there, it was my job to take care of the camp. To make sure

there was water at camp, wood, and to take care of the horses. Like if they was out workin' I was supposed to go get the horses and bring 'em in and make sure they was all watered, the ones that we had left like our pack string and everything. And hey ol' Lou Chaffin got an extra buck a day for that. So I was really on the payroll. I was 13 years old. Goin' on 13, I wasn't 13 yet. And Gay was only goin' on 11. We each got a buck a day apiece. Gay went with the troops out in the field. He'd help 'em build monuments, or they'd send him over on some hill to set up one of them sticks for 'em to shoot. Anyway, old Louie Moses got a buck a day a piece for us. He didn't get no buck for Faun and Albert Weber, though, they was on the payroll; that was part of the cut.

GC: Can you tell me anything about Mel Marsing?

NC: Well Mel Marsing, that's Pearl's husband. Mel Marsing was Amsie Larsen's son. Amsie Larsen was an old cowboy; had him a ranch up on the Price River; and was in partners with a couple of ol' boys that run butcher shops there in Price, to furnish meat to the mines. And Amsie would raise the cattle and they'd take 'em up there and butcher 'em and sell 'em, and was supposed to divide the money someway or the other. But it seems like the boys that was sellin' the meat and gettin' the money was a little delinquent at giving old Amsie the money. And he had a lot of trouble with those boys; in fact, they tell me that old Amsie put his 6-shooter in one of 'ems neck and told him to give him some money, and he said he was sorry, that he'd just sent it all to Greece. You know, back home.

So anyway, a big flood came along, came down that canyon. This was between Woodside and Wellington, in that canyon. That's where the ranch was. I guess they had a nice place there, had it fixed up nice. Nice homes, nice corrals, the whole nine yards. And this flood came down and just washed the whole bar away; corrals, house and all. And Mrs. Marsing is buried up there someplace, out on one of those hills. I don't know where. I don't know whether anybody else knows where or not.

But Mel Marsing, even though his dad was a super-good hand with cattle, horses, or anything around, Mel was not a horseman, he wasn't a cowboy, he hated cows, he hated horses, he loved anything that went putt-putt-putt-putt. He could fix any kind of an engine that was made. And he just loved workin' with... he was a natural born mechanic, he loved machinery. He just loved it. But he didn't cotton to where he was raised or his upbringing,

he didn't even want to be a cowboy. He wanted to drive truck, and work on engines. See when Joe died, Mel was runnin' the pump stations over at the Tasker well, pumpin' the water over to the Texas well. That's where he and Pearl was livin' - over there, in that little cabin when Joe died. Then of course when Joe died, why they moved on over to the Roost. But Mel was more interested in mechanics. And as I remember, Mel was a hell of a nice guy. All the Marsing boys, they was all good riders, and they was all good ropers. They was good hands around cattle 'cause they learned this from their father.

GC: How was he related to June Marsing?

NC: He was June Marsing's full brother. He and June Marsing were brothers. June had a physical disability. I don't know what it was but he couldn't do too much; but there's one thing June Marsing could do and that's handle that rope. He was a roper that you don't see the equal of, well, no place. June could really handle that rope. And I always liked June. I always had a soft spot in my heart for old June. He and his family stayed in a tent one winter down below our ranch, down by the Green River, down there where the San Rafael goes in. They lived down there all winter, him and his family, and they didn't have a dime. That was before he went over to June's bottom. And I don't know I just always liked June. I really knew June better than I did any of the other boys.

Lon that was another one of the boys; Lon Marsing was a government trapper, he trapped for the government for a lot of years, and of course he would come down under the ledge down there in the winter and trap coyotes. Yeah, and I stayed with Lon a lot, in fact he helped me a lot down there in the winter. Because, you know, ridin' the trap line, you ride your trap line maybe everyday, or every 2 or 3 days and that's about all he had to do, and maybe skin a coyote once in a while. But he worked for the government trappin' there for 2 or 3 winters. Lon helped me several times. And besides, he didn't have a tent like a sheepherder's; he had the big tent that had the pole up the middle; ya know - a pole up the middle, like a teepee, then it come down like this, and there was always lots of room in this big ol' tent. Boy that big ol' tent sure would look good along about dark when it was about 10 degrees below zero. Yeah. Go in there and old Lon laughin' and carryin' on and tellin' lies, you know, like me.

GC: Did you ever have much trouble with coyotes down there, getting your calves?

NC: Very few I would say. Coyotes are mostly after sheep. They didn't get many calves, I don't think, not that I ever knew.

GC: So they didn't chew the tails off?

NC: Oh yeah, they'd chew their tails off once in a while, yeah, they'd do that but...coyotes are smart, when them shepherders would leave they started sniffin' around and hey what happened to our groceries here? Ya know. They're gone? Well hey, well we'll go too.

GC: You said the French shepherders or the Basque shepherders would gather their sheep in at night to keep the coyotes away.

NC: Yeah, yes they would. They would bring their sheep to the camp. Well I don't know that they took better care of 'em then the other guys, because in the daytime of course they'd go out, but they liked to bunch their sheep at night. You know what I mean, and bed 'em down. And usually it'd be close to wherever they had their tent pitched. But hell, them old city boys they'd just turn 'em out and let 'em go. Hell maybe they wouldn't see 'em for a week. You know what I mean. They'd get wandering around.

GC: Coyotes would get them?

NC: Well coyotes would get 'em anyway. A coyote wants something to eat; he'll... pretty smart animals, especially when they get hunting. And another thing a coyote will do sometimes, they'll get a little bunch of sheep off to themselves sometimes and they'll kill several of 'em. I know there was one time there... well it was on Andy Miller Flat; Quince Crawford was the owner and ol' Leland Baleen was workin' for him, and the coyotes killed about twenty of 'em; one night, twenty sheep. The sheep just sat there and rot; then the coyotes had food all summer; or most of the summer anyway. I remember seein' those old rotten bones drug around that old thing, and smell, man oh man.

CB: What about mountain lions?

NC: No, we didn't have any... no bears nor no mountain lions.

GC: Well Mel Marsing didn't last very long did he; he got blood poisoning and passed away.

NC: Yeah he got blood poisoning and he just went... it was really, everybody was really surprised, I mean because he really...he really... it was really sad.

GC: Can you tell me more about the Thompson boys? You mentioned them in the last interview.

NC: Yeah, they was primarily sheep men, the Thompson family. They was primarily sheep. The Thompson family was a progressive sort of a family - good speakers, good talkers, well mannered. They was good people, all the Thompsons. Warren Thompson. Warren Thompson married one of my old gal friends, a Wilcox - old Horace Wilcox's youngest daughter, what was her name? I can't remember. Warren Thompson worked with us when we did the work on the Devil's Slide. In fact, he was the camp cook. We was speakin' about readin' by the candlelight, he was the camp reader too. That was Warren. He was one of the youngest ones. And they was always hangin' around with Ken and Faun, those Thompson boys, they was always runnin' around tryin' to make somethin' out of nothin' like the rest of us.

GC: Well, you mentioned in passing, in the last interview, putting a bunch of cattle down Horsethief canyon; that there was a story about that?

NC: Well, yes, that's a good story to tell - that one that's a good tale. That's a good Western tale. I told you about Clell and I comin' up Antelope Valley, the night everybody was all out and it was so cold; the night that George Franz almost ran off the curb there goin' down into Horseshoe - that night. Well, this was between Christmas and New Years. See, that was the day after Christmas; or the day after that. And in the meantime ol' Clell and George, they go to town the next day. They get in the truck and head for town, and they was gonna go in and get a bunch of stuff and come right back, and we was gonna take this bunch of calves down under the ledge that George Franz had bought from us. We was gonna take down the other side and down on the bottom. Anyway time went on, time went on; we looked down the road, no Clell, no George. Well hell you don't think that old Clell and George was gonna come out there just before new years, do you? Not unless they had to. Anyway, we said hell, they're not comin' till after new

years, and Delbert Tidwell said he wanted to get those cattle down into Horsethief, to get 'em down on the river where the snow wasn't so deep because the snow was about that deep up there and oh, terribly cold, boy that was a miserable thing. So we gathered up these cattle, and we started to put 'em down into Horsethief Canyon and they had one little ol' cow, she was a three year old or four year old, or maybe she was only a two year old, hell I don't know, she had horns about that long, and she had a calf, and she was poor. You know, not in prime condition. She wouldn't go down off that trail. There's a bad rim, right there on the top. She wouldn't go down there for heck or high water. And she'd go out, and she'd come back, and she'd just run right over ya. So I finally hard twisted her good and got her over there, and she was the last one over at the trail and here she come back she's headin' back and old Leland Tidwell - that's Frank's uncle - Leland, grabbed her by the horns - she had little horns, about that long, one of the very few cows in the bunch that had horns. He grabbed her by those horns, jumped off his horse, and drug her off that rim. That was New Years Day, 1932.

And here ol' Clell and George was in there, chasin' girls, drinkin' whiskey, and listenin' to the music, and here we are out here tryin' put a bunch of wild cattle down off that rim. Oh, anyway, we got the cattle down there alright. Sure was glad of that. And sure was glad to get back to that little shack over to the Philips Well too. We had us a tent, three of us in the tent; one of them little ol' 8 by 10 tents. But anyway, we got 'em down there. And that was quite a thing, but I'll never forget ol' Leland grabbin' her. 'Course she was thin, poor, not in good condition, she was weak and everything, and he just practically drug her over there. He was a big man, Leland was.

CB: Did the Tidwells use that Horsethief trail a lot?

NC: If they put any cattle down on the bottoms they used it, 'cause see that's the only access they had to it, unless they wanted to go down Horseshoe. I think if they went down Horsethief, I think that was more in the middle. Ya know. And they wintered cattle down on those bottoms a lot

GC: Well did you end up putting any cows down off the Devil's Slide Trail in that same episode?

NC: No. I kept 'em there and I had to go out and round 'em up every morning, I'd go out and kind of shove 'em in together, plenty of snow for

water, didn't have to worry about water, but just try to keep 'em from wanderin' off too far so we'd have 'em in a bunch when they got ready to come back.

So here along after New Year's, here they come, Clell and George, and away we went, we went down the Devil's Slide and put 'em down on the bottoms. That was the winter I spent down on the river. Feedin' them calves cake, and a bunch of ol' cows. Old Clell he'd go over into Big Water and he'd come back with 4 or 5 of them ol' cows that was poor and wild and mean and ornery and everything, and we start feedin' 'em that cake and pretty soon they'd run over you when they saw ya comin'. Boy, you sure can make friends with an old ornery cow with a little bit of cottonseed cake.

GC: You said they floated that cake down the river?

NC: Yeah, George floated it down the river from Green River. Yeah, we didn't have to pack it in, I was glad of that. Boy because I mean heavy packs and that Devil's Slide wasn't made for each other, it's so steep, and a heavy pack, oh, that was a doozy alright. It was a way down though; it sure saved a lot of miles.

CB: What all was in the cake?

NC: Cottonseed.

CB: Just cottonseed?

NC: Cottonseed, yeah; yeah, pure old cottonseed - run about, what, about 40 percent protein? Real good feed; if you can get an ol' poor cow to eat a pound of cake it'll save her life. I don't care how poor she is. Boy I tell ya. I saw some of those old cows, really poor, and start eatin' that cake and start survivin' - it's really, really healthy for 'em.

CB: So explain to me what you mean when you keep talk about giving that cow a hard twist.

NC: Your lariat, it's what you rope your cow with. It's a hard twist. See we didn't have all this fancy nylon and everything like these new classy cowboys has got, we had that old hard twist, it was twisted hard in small strands; because it would either be a half inch in diameter your rope or five

eighths of an inch. And they called 'em hard twist because it was twisted so hard. And what you would do, you'd take the end of your rope and you'd double it.

GC: One more question did you ever have to deal with cows getting into the potholes and tanks and not being able to get out?

NC: Once in a while. In fact you might as you look around there someplace see someplace where maybe part of the rim's been shot out of a pothole. You know I was thinking about those over right around from red points, as you start down from red points and you go around the actual red point and right down in front of ya down here where that – not where this canyon comes, but where that other canyon goes down in there was some real bad ones, we called 'em drowners. And you'd go along and you'd come to one of them and you'd find it full of sheep and boy it smells good. Thinkin' you're gonna have water to camp on. And ya know the one there on Andy Miller flat, right where the road goes? Goes by? Right there where the road comes... Well the nearest place as it comes to the ledge there. Goin' south just before you go on Andy Miller flat; Cross Cove canyon, go around that rim, cross the wash there where that wash goes in, that one there, that was a real drowner. That thing always would have sheep in it...we always called it the tank that never went dry.

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