

Emery County Archives
Oral History Project
May 2010
Bill Branson

Interviewed by Dottie Grimes and Bernice Payne,
Gene Brown (who worked with Bill's son) was present

Dottie: Okay, let's start by you telling me your name, where you were born, who your parents were and that kind of thing.

Pause. . .

Your full name is what? William or Bill?

Bill: Llib Nosnarb.

Dottie: What?

Bill: Llib Nosnarb

D: That's your name?

B: Down at therapy down there—my friend down there—he runs the. . .he's boss. So he spelled my name backwards: Llib Nosnarb, and he introduces me that way! And he introduces me to everybody that way! Well, hey, my name is Bill Branson. (laughing) I hope you're not recording. (laugh)

D: And when were you born?

B: January 20, 1927.

D: Who were your parents?

B: William W. Branson, Sr., of course, and my mother was Zelpha Irene Petersen Branson.

D: And where were they from?

B: Castle Dale. My dad was raised in Texas. He came up here with the oil rigs. They was drilling oil, and he was the head driller down there, and they sent him up here to work on it. He even worked on a. . .what's that hill outside of Castle Dale, you go straight out of Castle Dale before you make the turn? Then you've got some big hills out there?

Gene: Oh, by the old corrals?

B: Yeah, you go to the corrals and then they're up past the corrals.--them big hills.

G: I know where you mean, but I can't think of the name of them.

B: I can't say the name of them.

But he worked on that, but it was a dry hole

D: Is it out on the San Rafael Swell or towards the Swell?

B: No. It isn't that far.

G: Tan Seeps?

B: Well you go to the top of it, and go right into Huntington Creek.
When you get old you can think of everything but the right thing. (laugh)
But anyhow, he was from Texas and he come up here.

D: Was the same company drilling?

B: Yes, The same company.

D: Was he married then?

B: No. I shouldn't tell you this part, I guess, but he was walking down the street in Castle Dale, and he looked across the street and saw my mother walking on the other side, and he just whirled around and said, "Heck with it." Across the street he went and he looked at her and said, "You're the most beautiful girl I've ever seen, and I'm going to marry you!" (laugh)

D: Oh he was one of those charmers!

B: And he did! (laughing) I still can't believe that. I've told that so many times. I shouldn't waste your time with that.

D: No, no! We want that?
And who were her parents?

B: James E. Petersen, and Agnes Livingstone Petersen.

D: And she had lived in Castle Dale all her life?

B: Yeah they lived in Castle Dale, just about all of their life. They come over here from Manti. If they wanted to come over here, they'd just get up and walk over here, just like they was going up town, huh? I remember my grandpa telling me all that. I got this book... My brother, he spent, I don't know, a few years writing down our history and all that. (inaudible)...until I get to the genealogy part and I stop there.

D: Gets a little boring?

B: It got a little boring...but I really appreciated what he did.

D: I would love to have a copy of that.

B: I don't know, we could probably do that. I bet there's an awful lot of stuff in there I bet you'd like.

D: Yeah, if we put these histories in the Archives, then they are available, you know, for the next several generations.

B: Yeah, there was a bunch of them guys—one of them come over here and made some dugouts in the hills just here in this side of the mountains. I guess they got down in the Mancos Shale. They made dugouts and they lived in them in the winter. They brought a load of potatoes with them. It was so cold, they was afraid they would freeze, and they were going to make seed out of them. So they dug like a great big cave and put them back in the cave and sealed it off, and the next year they came back and when they got the potatoes out, they was just fine. They would do this...you know walk across the mountains to do these things. Sometimes they—a lot of times, they had some oxen to take with them, or horses to pull a wagon.

D: It was just part of life to walk that far, huh?

B: Well they didn't seem to think anything about it. I remember Grandpa telling me, one time when we were walking out to the field, which is about two miles or something, and I said, "Where's Uncle Will? I haven't seen him for a while." He said, "Oh he walked over to Manti." I tell you, "What?" He said, "He walked over to Manti." I says, "My good gracious!" He did. He walked over there, and he would walk back a few days later when he'd get his business done.

D: Wow. That's amazing.

B: Yeah, it really is.

D: So where did your grandfather ... did he homestead there in Castle Dale area?

B: Well he just apportioned land out and I don't know if they called it homestead or not. He just went out and got a few fields and marked them off and had them recorded in the courthouse, and they would pay a ...I don't know how much he had to pay for it. He had some pretty nice fields that made some very good crops.

D: So you were born in Castle Dale?

B: Yeah.

D: So your father met your mother and they got married and stayed in Castle Dale?

B: Um-hm.

D: Where did you live there?

B: Oh, you know where the park is, of course, well up on the west side of where the park is—right across the street to the left—it was Kevin Cox moved in to that. He bought my mother's....(inaudible) we didn't know we was poor!

D: That's what everybody says! Did you live in Castle Dale all of your life?

B: I lived there until I went into the Navy in 1945, and after I came back from the Navy, I came here to Carbon County and got a job with Utah Power and Light, and then I worked 36 years in these power

plants, and retired—took an early retirement. I'd have been crazy if I didn't because I was making just as much as when I worked.

D: Wow. Where did you go to school? Did you go to Central High?

B: Yes. I went to Central High until they burned it down. And that was no accident! I know about that! That was no accident!

D: Really? What happened?

B: The county and everybody was arguing about building a new school, and so many people were against it; somebody went up there one night and torched it. I know that just as well as (inaudible). I run up there and looked and I could see all them telescopes (probably microscopes) and that in there. It just made me sick. I wanted to get in there so bad. I would have died if I had.

D: Oh! Do you remember when they closed it down and tried to get everyone to go to Huntington and Ferron?

B: No, I'm sorry. I don't.

D: But you did graduate from Central High?

B: No, I graduated from Ferron—over to Ferron, and I was in the Navy when I graduated. I hadn't graduated when I went in the Navy. I went in the Navy, and they said if I went in there, they'd give me enough schooling so I could graduate. That's what I did. I come home and graduated with my class.

G: Bevin had mentioned to me about homesteading some acreage down at Fuller's Bottom.

B: Yeah.

G: What year – how old were you then or what point in time was it?

B: Oh boy! I know when we first went down there, I was pretty young. They wouldn't let me chase horses. A lot of wild horses—was a big thing back then—they chased them a lot. My dad loved that. They'd take me out with them, and I'd hold the fresh horses, and I'd hold them until they came back and wanted a fresh horse, and they'd come back in and ride them again. We had one horse that was really mean. He was really mean, he stomped my grandpa, broke his ribs and my dad always said, "Whatever you do, don't ever get on Rex because he's mean." Then this one case, he left me out there, and it was dark, and I could hear the coyotes howling, and I knew they was going to get me. (laughing) I don't know how many horses were there, but I just got on old Rex and took off for home, and just let him go, and he took me to the homestead—where the cabin was. When my dad seen me coming in on him, I guess he just held his breath. He said, "Bill, come over here. Don't do anything out of the ordinary, just get down." I got off, and he told me, he said, "How many times have I told you not to get on him! He's mean!" I said, "Oh he really likes me, Dad. He won't hurt me."

D: Did you ever ride him after that?

B: Oh no. Dad wouldn't let me do that! (laughing)
I was about six years old.

D: Did you have a cabin that you lived in?

B: Yes, we had a cabin and a cellar underground. We put our milk and everything down there to keep it cool.

D: Who else lived down there? Did you have any neighbors that live miles away?

B: Just snakes. No we didn't have any neighbors. Clawson Bottoms over there; Clay Clawson lived over there. I've been trying to find out where the name Fuller's Bottom came from.

D: I think I've seen that; she was working on it. I think I can get it for you—her research. So tell me how long you lived down in Fuller's Bottom and what happened there?

B: My dad was trying to live there to prove-up on the place—what they call proving-up on it. He worked so hard on this ditch—digging this ditch down by our place. Some nights he would come home so tired, he'd just almost pass out on the bed. I felt so bad for him; he worked so hard. We started to get some crops in; we had some pigs and chickens down there, and then up on Salt Wash—that area up there—a flood come down and washed everything out we had there. It killed all the crops and all the chickens and pigs and everything! He had worked so hard and it washed all his ditch out—most of it. He finally just give up and went back to Castle Dale.

D: Where were you when the flash flood came? Were you okay?

B: Yeah. In fact, I think I was up in Castle Dale. I don't remember seeing it. But he had worked so hard, he just couldn't see that he could flat start all over on that ditch.

G: That had to be so disheartening.

B: He got back, and he was just so depressed after that, I think that's what caused the whole thing—but him and my mother got divorced.

D: Did he leave?

B: Yeah he left one day. I remember that like this...I hated that so bad (emotional); I loved my dad; I loved my mother. He took off and took a bunch of horses with him. We didn't see him for quite a long while. He got high blood pressure, and the doctor would tell him he had to go up in high country—you got to go up to Wyoming, or something like that. He'd go up there and it would get worse. They'd tell him up there, you got to go down low. He worked for Governor...Barton? Anyhow, the governor of Colorado. He worked for him for quite a little while, but they told him up there—you got to get out of that elevation—you've got to get to California. He went to California, and he just got worse and worse. He died at 51.

D: Oh, that's sad. That had to be hard on you kids.

B: Oh, boy! It was!

G: How old were you when the flash flood occurred?

B: Oh, I'd say about nine.

Then we went back later when my mother got married to Loren Anderson, we went down for two years. We worked on it and claimed it again.

D: Fuller's Bottom?

B: Yeah. Loren and I and Jim—my brother Jim built a cable car across the river. When you have high water—high river—they call it high water every spring. Every spring it got so high, you couldn't hardly get a horse across it. We built that across there—it was kind of like a car thing you'd get in and pull ourselves across.

D: How cool!

B: One day we was going across there, and it broke, and I and my brother and Loren was right in the middle of it. It took us down stream, and it was pulling me down. I was hooked in and couldn't get out. My brother Jim run down there and finally got a hold of me and and pulled me to shore. It was the first time he saved my life. He save my life a couple of other times.

D: Wow! Is he older than you?

B: Three years older.

D: Were there just the two of you?

B: No, there's Jim, and my sister Mary. I had a sister Imo. She died, at I think seven, years old of spinal meningitis. I've got a brother Lane. He's still alive; he's 76. He lives back in Minnesota.

D: So what were the other two times Jim saved your life?

B: Well we had a car that when you opened the door, it opened from the front instead of the back, and it just...I was holding onto it, and it opened and I flew out, and I was just there hanging, because we were going pretty fast. He reached out and got a hold of me, and he had a hard time getting me, because that door wanted to stay open. He finally got me on to the seat.

D: Oh! My sister fell out of the car that way. They call them suicide doors, now days. That's how she fell out; she was hurt badly.

What kind of car was it?

B: It was a Dodge—an old Dodge. My brother Jim was probably the best brother anybody could ever have. He died about six years ago or something like that. I can't remember dates like I should.

D: I know; neither do I.

What was the other time?

B: I don't know. It was something to do with horses like dragging me or something. He got me stopped. I can't remember exactly what happened. That was a lot of years ago—60 or 70 years old.

D: So you guys were probably good friends. Pretty close?

B: We talked all the time. We never stopped until the day he died. We still talk to each other.

D: That's so sweet! I love that.

B: Then I had a half brother. My dad had one boy when he come to Utah. He had a boy. Of course he was my half brother because my dad was his dad. Let's see Le (?), Eric(?)—their both dead. Mary died down her in this rest home down here just a few years ago—I'd say three or four years ago.

D: Well, who were your friend in high school and growing up?

B: Ted Wilberg...Lloyd Moffit...Oh all of them. We were just all friends.

D: You kind of hung together as a group?

B: Yeah, we kind of did.

G: Did you know Monte Swasey when you were in high school?

B: No.

G: You became acquainted with him through the mountain men?

B: Ah, I think we might have been the same age. I might be a year older; I'm not sure; we might have been the same age.

I can look at them spears and things up there and I think of him. (Looking at a shelf and with Indian artifacts and pictures of Mountain Man days) We drank a lot of coffee on that (inaudible) from that old big coffee pot. I quit drinking coffee when I got out of that. I loved drinking coffee every morning. In that area you just kind of look forward to it. That was it. Right below there there is a bowling ball—bowling tournament award—right below that spear. My mother got that when she was about 70 years old—78, seems like. She loved to bowl. She was a wonderful mother. Isn't it funny, she's been dead a 20 years, anyway, and I think of her *every* day! You never forget. A lot of people think when you die, it's over; you never have to worry any more about them. But I think about her and my brother Jim every day. There's never a day goes by...

D: That's how I am with my parents—every day I miss them.

B: Is your parents dead—all three of you?

G: Both of my parents are gone.

Bernice: My mom's still here.

B: Now wait a minute. You're not sisters?

D: No. She's my assistant.

B: Oh, I thought you said sisters, back there.

D: Well, we're kind of sisters.

B: Kind of like sisters. Well that's the way I was. In fact I've got a friend in Salt Lake now, he's into

rocks a lot like I am. He's just like a brother to me. Nicest guy in the world; he's LDS; he never smokes or swears or drinks anything he shouldn't—just a wonderful guy. I just really fell in love with him as a friend. He's really a nice guy.

D: Oh, that's nice. What is his name?

B: Steven Holmes.

D: So, when you went in the Navy, how long were you in the Navy.

B: Two years. I went into my commander Hoastes and told him I was going to take my discharge papers and I was going to go home, but I told him I would probably be back and re-enlist, and I did. I went home and I don't know, got with Ted Wilberg, Lloyd and all these guys. We started chasing girls and having parties—I didn't want to go back to the Navy (laughing).

D: Where did you meet your wife?

B: She worked down to Utah Power and Light down to this office, and so did I.

D: Where was “this?” What office?

B: Price office. I was store keeper in the office. That's how I first started out.

G: You started out in Lines and Services then?

B: Yeah. Right.

G: Did you go to Carbon when they built it?

B: Yeah. I went up there. They sent me up there six months before they it was finished, so I could study it and know how they worked and all that. That was a lot of fun. I loved that old plant up there. Oh, that was the best plant in the world.

You're probably wondering about my black dog there (statue of a life sized dog). His name is Killer. I just got finished painting his eyes and mouth. He got his legs broke and that. You'd be surprised to see what he does to people when they come down to my yard and there he sits watching. A lot of them just turn around and take off. (laughing)

Bernice: He's a good guard dog.

B: It is so funny; we bought him in old Mexico when we was down there at one of the rock shows. I seen him and said, “I got to have him!” I love Rottweilers anyway. So I bought him. He cost me an awful lot of money--\$11.00. (laughing) We set him in the front between my friend and I. When we got into town and was driving slow, people would look at us like (double take). (launging) Some people would come over and want to see what we had there. I'd say, “His name is Killer, but I don't think he'll bite you.” They'd come over and ...they had his eyes painted so good, and I've been trying to think what color his eyes should be. Did I get close, do you think? (to Bernice-she's an artist).

Bernice: Yeah. You did good.

B: For his tongue, I just took a spray thing and put it down his throat and it was coming out up here.
(laughing)

Anyhow where were we?

Bernice: How did you meet your wife?

D: You were working at the power plant.

B: Well I worked...I was Store Keeper down at the office down here, and then after I was there for about a year, I got a promotion and went into heavy equipment operator which is quite a bit more money. And I figured maybe I could make it if I got married. I had my eye on Faye for a long while, but she didn't know it because a few times I caused her to get really angry with me, and she told me off so bad! (laughing) I just did it to irritate her.

G: You weren't as bold as you father, then?

B: Well...not quite, I guess. I took her out to my corral one day with me to see my horses. She'd never seen my horses. I asked her if she would like to go out and look at them. She said, "Yeah, I sure would." So we went out there and she got a little more friendly then, because she had been really mad at me for a while because of something I said to her one day. (laughing) She got up on the fence and watched me work the horses, and when I got through I walked over and leaped up and kind of grabbed her and lifted her off and set her on the ground and kissed her. That was it! I said, "Oh my Lord I just feel like 45,000 volts just went through me." She laughed. (laughing) We've been married 78 years, I think. (He meant 58.)

D: What year did you get married, do you remember? Was it in the 50s?

B: No, it was earlier than that.

Bernice: You came back from the war in '46. That's the same time my dad came back.

D: Did you fight in the war?

B: No I signed up and went out. I was just getting on the USS Missouri—that was my dream ship—that great big ship.

D: Oh! Yeah?

B: I was standing right to the side of it; it was as far as here to the wall from me, and I was ready to get on, and a guy come up and said, "Can any of you guys type?" And like an idiot I said I could, and there was 15 more guys—my friends—they all said they could. We all thought we would have some good duty going over seas. We'll be sitting in an office typing. He said, "Oh, okay. Fall out!" We went out and they took us up to Treasure Island and we spent the rest of our time in the Navy there. Never could get off it. (laughing) But that was good duty, so I didn't mind it, but I really wanted to go on the war ship.

G: Was that before or after the signing—Peace Treaty?

B: Oh no. That was before.

G: I suppose the Missouri was over in that vicinity when they dropped the bombs.

B: Oh yeah. They were over in that vicinity at the time protecting, as much as they could, the planes going over there.

D: Where did you say you spent your time?

B: Treasure Island.

D: Where's that?

B: Well if you go to San Francisco and cross the bridge, you hit Goat Island – there's a little island called Goat Island and then you go right straight on –keep going you go to Oakland, and that island has Treasure Island farther on to the east there. Well, that was a beautiful place—good food! We had it made, I'll tell you! We had a commander there, an older guy, and ...wonderful guy!

D: Do you remember his name?

B: Commander Hoastes. I'm pretty sure that's how you spell it.

D: So you stayed there two years?

B: Yeah. Until I was discharged.

D: Do you have any Navy stories you want to tell us?

B: (laughing) Well, I don't it's the kind of story you want to hear. We had a lot of WAVES that was stationed there too. This one, I went with her for a long while. Her name was Rose. She was from New York—beautiful gal! When I left her we said that we was going to keep in touch and thought even maybe some day get married. I never wrote to her and she never wrote to me. I can't imagine what happened 'cause we was so close. I went with her for a long while.

D: Just wasn't meant to be, I guess.

B: I guess it wasn't. Well, I think the main reason, when I knew when I come home, I was going to be broke, and she was used to living high on the hog! She didn't hold it over me or anything. The funny thing of it was, we went swimming at to Lake Anza—out there, let's see that would be east of San Francisco. We was all of us swimming in this lake, and come in and lay on the beach, and I met her and started talking to her. I just thought she was one of the girls from town there. I said, “Well, I'm going to go get dressed.” So I went and got my uniform on, and I was really surprised when she came walking out in her uniform too! (laughing) I about died, because I didn't know she was in the Navy and she didn't know I was in the Navy. We hadn't discussed that.

No, I can't think...we did a lot of things in the Navy that was pretty neat, I guess, but I can't think of anything that you'd like to know. I don't mean anything bad. My mother always taught me, “Respect girls when you go out with them!” And I held that even when I got home. Some of the guys kind of made fun of me because I respected the girls so much. My mother taught me to do that and said, “You'll never be sorry that you did it.” And she was right. I was tickled to death that she taught me that.

D: That is so neat! So do you remember what year you got married? And what's your wife's name?

B: Faye F. She was a Fox. Faye Fox. Did you know Lan Fox over to Castle Dale?

D: Uh-uh.

B: You don't? Everybody should know Lan Fox. He was game warden for quite a while, and he worked for the (inaudible). He was a real nice guy. He was a relation to my wife--kind of a distant relative. And there were two guys that were kind of drinkers there in Orangeville—they was cousins. George and ... George and...they were twins...Anyway they were twins, and they were a little bit wild. Everybody just really liked them. They were quite the drinkers. I guess they finally got in trouble. I think they both died young because of their drinking.

D: Where was she living?

B: Faye? She lived here in Helper.

D: Oh. And so where were you living when you got back from the Navy. Did you go back to Castle Dale or...?

B: No, I moved over here. I got an apartment from a lady named Mrs. Jones. That's all I can tell you. She had a place where I could eat and sleep. She had a nice apartment. She was a good cook! I just loved her.

D: That's neat! So you got married, do you have any children?

B: Well, I think it was three years after we was married. We was married in '35. We had one--a boy named Bevan. You know Bevan (looking at Gene).

G: Yeah. It would have to have been '45.

B: No. I wasn't even out of the Navy!

Bernice: you would have only been 8 years old.

B: What did I tell you?

G: '35.

B: Oh Gees! No.

Anyhow about three years after we had been married we got Bevan and I think two years more in '58 we got Jason, and that's all we had. And less than a year ago, I got me a grandson. Jason got me a grandson—the first boy I'd had—well the first boy he had. He had three girls. He was so excited and so was I 'cause I got me a grandson. He turned out to be the smartest kid I ever met. He could talk to you in sign language when he was two years old.

D: Oh my gosh!

B: He'd count to 29, I remember he came over here one day, and he talked like a grown up, not a little

kid. He'd say, "Grandpa Rock..." He called me Grandpa Rock for all these rocks. He loves the rocks. He said, "Grandpa Rock, I can count to 29." I said you cannot. "One, two, three, four, five..." and then he said, "I can say my ABCs too." He said them off and he missed one. I said, "You missed one. You missed G." "No," and he went through the alphabet and said, "Yes, maybe I did." And there he was 2½ years old!

D: Wow. Well, how fun!

B: When I had my operation, he came to the hospital to see me—him and some of the family, and he was talking to his mother in sign language. A lady sitting there said, "Oh, that's a shame is he deaf?" She said, "No, he's not deaf. He just likes to talk in sign language." She said, "You've got to be kidding! He's perfect!"

None of us could get over how he...well, she started teaching him before he was born, and I'll tell you want, anybody who doesn't believe that works, we've got proof right there! When he goes to first grade I don't know what the teacher is going to do. He'll probably run her out of class. (laugh) Sweet little guy, just go, go, go. He never stops for one second. But he is the sweetest little guy in the world. He is so smart. This scooter right here (an electric wheel chair), he come in here one day—I've taken him on a ride on it—he said, "Grandpa Rock can I take this scooter?" I said, "No, you'll have to have Grandma with you." He said, "I can drive it." I said, "No you can't." He reached up and got the key and turned it on and backed it up here, and took off down the road, and said, "Grandma this isn't fast enough, let's push the rabbit button instead of the turtle." So he'd push the rabbit button so he could go faster. Can you imagine a kid 2 ½ years old being able to get on that and know everything about it? I hadn't taught him, I was just giving him a ride. I didn't think he was paying attention to what I was doing. I sure proud to have him as a grandson.

D: I bet! You should be!

Tell me about how you got into rock hounding and mountain man stuff and all that.

B: Did any of you know Owen McClennahan?

D: I don't but I've read so much of what he's written. I'm so sorry I didn't know him.

B: Oh everyone should have known him. I went downtown one day in Castle Dale. I wasn't married yet. I went downtown, and he had a rock saw down on the corner down by the service station, and he was cutting rocks. He cut this one that was round like that, and he cut this one, and I thought that will just be a rock. He opened it up and it looked just like a lake—a blue lake. Oh, good gracious! That looks fun! I watched him cut some more and more and more, and next thing you know I was in it. And I'd go out rock hunting, and didn't know any thing about where to hunt them. You've got to know that, if you don't know it, you might as well just give up. You've got to know your formations. I took two years of college from Don Burge. Well I've done so much field work, getting dinosaurs and lot of fossils that they use there at the museum. When I left there, he said,...years after I left there...he said, "Now if you guys want to, call Bill Branson and ask him; he can tell you about that. It was kind of embarrassing, because I wasn't no geologist or anything, but I think I know more about geology than most geologist did, because I could go with geologists and I'd be driving along and say, "See that formation over there with gray with red on top and red on the bottom?" They'd say, "Yeah." I'd say, "What is it?" They just guess, and I'd tell them, "No, that is wrong." I'd tell them what it was...right now I can't say the name. (laugh) But I knew the formations really well, so they'd get so when they'd go with me, they'd say, "What formation is that?" I'd say, "Moenkopi and that one right there, right in the bottom, that's where you want to go if you're hunting rocks. That's where all the

dinosaurs are in Mancos Shale—not Mancos Shale—Summerville—no, pardon me, Summerville is the next one up. Oh, since I've had my stroke I'm starting to think that maybe I do forget some things.

D: (Showing him a book,) right in the front of that book is a little map showing the formations.

B: Morrison! Morrison formation. I've walked almost the whole Morrison formation from this side of Utah clear to Colorado hunting rocks. Old Marvin Mabbit and I would take a truck and he'd drive it down a ways and I'd hunt rocks, and then I'd take the truck and pass him, and he's come and get it. We did that...we've hunted rocks so much down there, we know pretty well (inaudible).

I have people come here...there ain't hardly a week goes by that somebody don't come in here and say, "Bill, we got a rock and we don't know what the heck it is. Will you identify it for us?" There's only been one guy bring one in that I didn't know. And that was my son. He said, "I've got one now, Dad, you're not going to know, because I've never seen this one before." It's the one right there (pointing to a rock on the shelf). It looks like it's got eggs in it; some of them are 75 lbs down there. It looks like little eggs in them. I said, "Yeah, I know what it is." He said, "You do?" I said, "Yeah, it's a darn rock that I don't know what it is." (laughing). He said "How are we going to find out?" I said, "I can find out." I sent it to Colorado—a friend of mine that was really into that. He couldn't identify it either. I've never seen a piece of in the Morrison Formation. It almost looked like it had landed there, like a meteor or something. That's what we thought it was at first, then we found out it's not. It comes out of magma—the lava flows—and when it come out, the lava had bubbles of a, gas bubbles in it—I can show you a picture in a book I have. It leaves little caves in it, so we pretty well know how it's made, but we don't have a name for it unless we want to name it ourselves. I named it Jason Branson. I've got some rocks up there named after me. Tidwell from the BYU, he named that because it had never been found before. It's petrified wood and its name is Mundi(sp?) Arcarius Bransonite. So my name's on it.

D: Wow! Did you ever do some prospecting along with your rock hunting—like uranium or gold?

B: I've got quite a bit of gold. If it wasn't so much work getting into it, I'd hold it up and let you see it. I got quite a bit of gold in there (in a safe).

D: Where did you get it?

B: A lot of it I bought and some of it—we went down to Blue Mountain and panned down there—down down by Blanding, and Nevada, over in Nevada, Arizona. We hunted quite a few places.

D: But you didn't find any around here?

B: No, this is the wrong formation, you couldn't have found any here. There's gold here, but they say it's micro-gold, and if you swallowed it, you couldn't even see it in a microscope. So it wouldn't pay anything.

D: What about silver?

B: Oh yeah, we watch for silver as much as we did gold. Like today, silver is going up faster than gold now. Lot of people are selling their gold and buying silver because silver is in demand so much—especially in a place like China and that. Where they made these machines like these games that they play and scientific things that they need silver to make connections with. I still like to hunt gold. I love it!

A guy, a friend of mine that came from Australia, I met me and we got to be real close friends. He had one about that big around, and I says, "How much do you want for that?" He told me, and I said, "I'll take it." So the next time he came over he said, "Bill, I got something to show you today, hold your hand out like this and close your eyes." I did and he said, "Okay open your eyes." I did, and I looked and he had a gold nugget that completely covered my hand! Oh, that was unbelievable! If I'd have known then what I know now, I'd have bought that too. It would have been a lot of money, but nothing to what it is worth now. Gold is way over \$1,000 an ounce—course I guess it took a drop the other day down to \$700. This gold that I've got, I bought, a lot of it I bought was around \$35.00 an ounce. I wasn't about to pay them any more than that.

D: Gee! Tell me more about Owen McClennahan and other guys you knew that were characters.

B: Well, Owen knew more about geology than any other geologist that come here. He studied it so much and he was sharp! We'd find crystals and that and bring them to Owen to get him to identify them for us. He could do it; he was so smart!

Look at the books I've got there. I've got books on just about anything you can imagine. I got one on Patagonia, Argentina. I went down there to hunt rocks, and right now it's so dangerous to go down there, you're crazy if you do. They'll kidnap you and call you and get the ransom money, and when they get the ransom, then they'll just kill you. It's real dangerous. It was getting that way when I was there. I sure enjoyed it; we went down looking for petrified pine cones. I came back with 82 of them, I think. It cost me \$5,000 to go down there, but I came back with \$10,000 in pine cones. I went with a nice guy; right here (pointing to a photo)--see these three over here together, there are some gauchos down on a two million acre ranch. This guy in the middle is my friend, Lloyd ? Santos. I went with him—that's him over there with the meteorite. That's a big meteorite in a museum, that I and him was looking at. That old lady, she owned the ranch, and cooked and that for us. She was a good cook—real old—but she did all the work. Her son is the laziest thing I've ever seen. He made her go get the wood and everything else. I enjoyed the trip; we had a good trip. I'm sharpening a knife there. She said her butcher knife was dull, and I said, "Here, let me sharpen it for you." That darn stone that she used was just like that—it had been sharpened on for so many years it was just like that (demonstrating the form of the stone.) I got that knife so sharp you could almost shave with it. She said, "I've never seen a knife this sharp. I have some more, would you sharpen them?" I said, "Sure." She brought out 21 old knives. I sharpened them all.

D: Oh that's so nice!

G: (looking at the pictures on the wall) Looks like that cat not at all ...

B: Oh, he's a tame old guy. He sure liked me; he was on my lap half of the time.

G: Is that knife you're sharpening got a stag horn handle?

B: Yeah, that's a stag horn handle.

D: Did you ever go rock hunting with Owen?

B: Oh yeah. We went hunting together.

D: Did he take expeditions out?

B: No, not that I know of. As far as I know it was Marvin Mabbet and I. I'm sure was somebody else.
He was a neat guy. His wife's name was Jane. What was her name? Moffit? McClennahan's her name, but before that. I think she was named Moffit.

Bernice: Is she related to Lloyd?

B: It seems to me she might even be his sister. I don't know. I used to know, but it's been too many years.

Bernice: I'll ask my mother when I get home. My mother's pretty good friends with Lloyd.

B: Oh, I liked Lloyd! I could tell you about him, but you don't want to know...because I was with him. (laughing)

D: Was he a rock hound? How do you know him?

B: I went to school with him. I and him and Jeff (?unsure of the name) were real good friends.

Bernice: He married Lois?

B: Lois?

Bernice: Lloyd and Lois Moffit—is that the right one? They have a daughter my age.

B: It sounds like the right name, but its been so long, that I just—in fact I don't even know when he got married. I wasn't around him.

D: What about Monte? When did you get acquainted with Monte?

B: Just through the Mountain Man Rendezvous.

D: When did you join that?

B: I had a big beautiful tepee, I had when...we got 32 of us in there one night. We decided to have a party that night in my tepee and then we decided we'd see how many people we could get in that tepee. We got 32 people in that. We sat and told lies and stories...

Oh, that's us! Me and Monte (looking at a photo)

G: Is that your tepee?

B: Yes, that's my tepee. I gave that to Jason. Yeah, that's my tepee. We'd take these pictures out of these caves and that and then we'd shine them on the side of the tepee and we traced them. I have a full headdress all around the door of the tepee.

D: Did you make it?

B: No. It was made by the Indians. Everything I had was original. That one is really beautiful. I've got lots and lots of pictures.

D: How did you decide to get into that?

B: Oh, I've always liked guns. This was a gun shop here (the shop we were in). But a thinking I was going to get robbed, finally I changed tit over to just a rock shop instead of a gun shop to a rock shop. But that's where I met Monte—just through guns, and pretty soon he got me into the mountain man. He's the one that talked me into going. Lane Grouse (? name) and I both got into it.

Do you know Vaughn Franson? He and I were good friends when we was kids. We was friends all our lives. We call each other brother—he was Franson and I'm Branson. To go from his place to ours, we just ran up this plant up this fence post and another plank down into his place. We lived that close to each other.

G: There is Castle Dale?

B: Yeah, in Castle Dale.

D: I need to come back and take pictures. Could I do that?

B: Anything you want.

Bernice: Do you have old pictures of your parents and your grandparents in your genealogy?

B: Yeah, I'm trying to think where I've got them put away.

Bernice: Maybe when we come back we could scan some of those and these pictures in here?

B: I might be able to get some of those out.

D: Tell us what you know about Monte. What kind of character was he?

B: He was a character! He had a birthday on every rendezvous we went to! People bring him prizes and all kinds of stuff, and old Monte would live it up just like it was his birthday. For quite a while I thought it WAS his birthday, and then I got to thinking, wait a minute he had a bithday on the last one we came to and the one before that! He was a funny guy. Oh I liked him; I really liked him! And that daughter of his...I can't think of her name.

D: Elaine?

B: Well, Elaine too.

D: She's the only one I know.

B: Elaine was older, but this one came to our rendezvous, well Elaine came too! Then she married that guy from Colorado. He had a mountain man name to start with like Elijah or, no...

D: What would you do on your mountain man rendezvous?

B: Oh we'd have shotting contest, knife throwing contest, running contest, trap beaver—all kinds of stuff—see who would have the best food?

G: Dutch oven cookoffs?

B: Oh we did a lot of dutch oven cooking. I've got five dutch ovens. They all used to like to come to my place to eat, especially if I brought chili that my wife made. I don't think anybody in the world knows how to make chili better than her. It's the best chili I've every tasted! Well she was a good cook. He mother was French. She came over from France after the first World War with her dad.

D: What was her name?

B: Suzane. I can't say her last name. But I think that's a pretty name, Suzane. If I had a girl, I wanted to name her Suzane(?sp). She was not very big, but she was a good cook, I'll tell you, if there ever was one.

D: So does your wife still cook French things?

B: Oh, yeah. Well not much now, afterI got through with all these things that happened to me. They had to put me on a diet for sugar diabetes. I haven't really got it, but I'm close to it, so I have to be on a a strict diet. She gets tired of cooking the way she cooks all the time; she can't hardly cook anything without my blood sugar going up. She's one heck of a cook—one heck of a good wife, I'll tell you! Sticking with me for 76 years.

Bernice: You're only 83, aren't you? so she hasn't stuck with you for that many years. (laughin)

B: No.

D: It must be 60 something years.

B: I don't try to keep track of things like that. I just don't have any reason to. Sometimes people come and ask me, and sometimes I know, sometimes I don't. I think she was born in 1935. I'm not sure.

D: I'm like that too.

So do you have any stories to tell us about Monte or Owen?

B: If I could think of some, I'd have a hundred. He's the kind of guy you can't be around without having experiences.

D: How many years did you do mountain man with him?

B: I imagine we did it for about six years. I've always said that's probably the best six years of my life. We all had our own tepees...'Course my tepee, my buddy just come with me, he didn't have to make one. I had this real nice tepee.

D: Did you make it or buy it?

B: Well I made part of it and had part of it I bought. I couldn't do the sewing on it. In fact I think I took it to a Ute Indian and had her sew it for me.

D: What was it made from?

B: Canvas—heavy canvas. It was a good one. I'll tell you what, you would get in the hardest rain storm, windstorm you could believe—you didn't have to worry. You'd just sit there warm and comfortable. It was really wonderful, I'll tell you!

D: What tribes did you pattern your tepee after? What tribes around her had tepees?

B: Well the ones we kind of patterned our life of mountain man with was...Chief Joseph.

D: Was it the Utes?

B: No. He's the one the army chased clear up over the Columbia River and...

G: I think Chief Joseph was Nez Pierce.

B: Nez Pierce! Chief Joseph! He's my hero. He was a great guy. They're still using, today, his tactics that he used for war on our soldiers. He pulled things on our soldiers here that they would never forget. He just out tricked them all the time, but they finally wore him down to where he couldn't take it no more.

D: So what happened to him? I don't know his story.

G: He was up in Washington and British Columbia and Montana.

B: They chased him clear up there and couldn't catch him. Anyway, they got the Indians one time there, by this one big river. They told them to cross the river. They said, "No we can't. We'll drown." They crowded in and made them cross the river and a lot of them people drowned—women and children and everything. They was real neat people—you might say educated. In their way, they was real educated. They was real neat people.

D: Oh, I hate those stories.

B: Me too. When I think of them.

I've got a story to tell you. See that rug right there? Take that rug off that. See that rock?

D: Oh! Yeah!

B: How much do you think that's worth? Guess high because it's worth a lot.

D: I don't know. What is it?

B: It's a Cycad. See that picture up there with the dinosaur eating the bark of that plant? That's a Cycad. It had leaves coming out of the top like that. We've got a live one growing in the house, and we baby that like we would a little kid.

D: Oh, my word!

B: I've been offered \$50,000 for that lots of times. I've got one guy now who thinks he will pay \$100,000. But my wife doesn't want to sell it. Can you imagine that?

D: So it's a plant.

B: That one there is considered the most beautiful Cycad in the world.

D: Where did you find it?

B: I found it down in the Henry Mountains.

D: Really?

B: Yeah, and people from all over the world have seen it, because I've taken it to the Tuscon Show and the Quartzite Shows—people from all over the world seen it, and everyone whose seen it says it is the most beautiful Cycad in the world. I talked to a guy who wrote an article for a magazine, and he said, “It was the prettiest, most beautiful Cycad in the world.” (laugh) Prettiest, most beautiful.

D: Tell me about the trip when you found this?

B: Well I knew for two years that it was there somewhere; I'd found a piece of it. I looked for almost two years. Every time I was down in that area, I'd look for this. We was coming in one night, Marvin and I, to get back to camp. It was just about dark. I come up over this rise—there's a hill there, and I come up over that and just walked a little ways and I seen it, and he'd walked within 10 feet of it and missed it. I fell down on it and laid down, and Marvin said you could have heard me yelling clear to Price. Because I knew what I'd found.

D: How did you know?

B: I've studied so much. These kind of things that look like lumps—that's where the fronds came out just like on a palm tree. Except they weren't very big.

D: Was it the only one around or did you find...

B: Oh no I found a bunch of pieces off of it where the dinosaur on the one side there pulled the bark off it; it was laying there to the side of it was petrified and got it. I sold them for \$25,000. I got that much off it, and still got seven of them. There's a lot of guys wanting to be on the list if I decide to see them—they want to be on the list.

D: Auction.

B: That's what I'm thinking of doing—get pictures of it, and me with it and all the history I know about it—take a two full page ad on it, and say, “If you're going to put a bid on this, don't go lower than \$50,000, because it's got to be more.

Bernice: Well don't put your address. Somebody will come and knock you over the head and take it. (laughing)

B: You can't believe how...see the bars on the window? I've got one on that door right there that would be darn hard to get through too. I've got a great big Schnauzer in the house. I'll tell you what, if anybody even comes around the house he knows it. He can be sound asleep and he'll jump up and start barking.

D: Where did you get that picture? (the one the dinosaur is eating the cycad.

B: There's a guy over in Huntington made that picture for me, and he used just colored pencils. That guy is so good they call him Google.

G: Noodle. It's Eldon Holmes.

B: Noodle

D: Oh, it's Eldon!

Bernice: He just moved to Cleveland.

B: Oh that guy's a genius, I'll tell you. He's a genius at a lot of things not just that. I said Google—it's Noodle.

D: What did it the rock (Cycad) look like when you found it?

B: Just like this except the top was on it. (He has cut the top off and polished it.)

D: It looked like this on top (pointing to the picture)

B: The top part of it was up—this side of it was laying up. I knew exactly what it was, because I'd found a piece of it about this big right on the hillside right above where I'd found this one. We put two 2x4s on that and thought we'd just put it on our shoulders and carry it up—we had a 10 foot ledge at the top to get over. There was a trail down there; we had a trail down there, and we put that on our shoulders and had a heck of a time--both the 2x4s broke, so we decided we can't make that. So we took and had a good idea—this...it was sitting on kind of a hill there. We rolled it over and rolled it down in a wash, then we dug a hole right above it. Looked like somebody had taken a piece of wood out of that hole. We dug that hole and all the dirt that come down and covered that. Then I had to go home for three days! I was just dying because I knew this was worth at least \$25,000 –at that time, and that's a lot of money. I sold it one day for twenty five, and these guys showed me how they were going to cut it, and I put on it and said , “Not for sale. You're not going to cut it because it's the only one in the world like it.” Boy they was mad and they was irritated. And now, good Lord, it's up to \$100,000. I got quite a few guys to give me \$65-75,000.

D: It's so beautiful. Did you have a clue what it would look like when you cut it?

B: Yeah, I knew what it would look like, just about. But it was pretty rough on top. It had kind of broken off.

D: That would have been so fun to be with you when you found it. Who was with you?

B: Marvin Mabbet. A lot of guys say, “Yeah I was with Bill when he found that. That's a bunch of baloney. Marvin and I were the only two. And old Marvin, I kid him about going 10 feet from it. “I didn't go 10 feet from it, or I'd have seen it!” I say “We was walking right together and you was walking out in front of me!” (laugh)

G: Bill, is Cycad the name of it petrified, or is that the name of the plant?

B: It's the name of the plant. We've got a Cycad in the house in there that's got live leaves on it. Let's see, there should be some leaves here.

D: There's some fronds on that picture. Is that it?

B: Yeah, they're fronds. That one we've got is a lot like that there, only it's not that big. Old Noodle did a pretty good job, didn't he? That is all just colored pencils. He is unbelievable!

G: Yeah, he is.

D: When did you have time to do all of this? Weekends or evenings?

B: You just take time.

D: Would you take your vacations and do this?

B: Oh, we took vacations and would go to Wyoming, Oregon or somewhere like that to shows or maybe just rock hunting.

Right behind your head—that green one—you ought to taste that one and see what it tastes like.

D: This one?

B: Yeah, look at that close?

D: How would you know that was anything?

Taste it? (Licks finger and touches it and touches finger to tongue.)

G: Is it salty?

B: That's Copralite.

Uh, now she says, "What's Copralite?"

G: Copper oxide or something?

B: That's dinosaur dung. That red one behind you is too.

D: (laughing) Someone should have taken a picture of that!

B: I bet I've sold 50 tons of that. Not 50, but I bet I've sold 25 tons of it.

D: Really? Where did you find it?

B: Most of it we found in the Henry Mountains up by Bull Frog. Quite a few people find Cycad. That brown one—you go down a little ways and that brown one is from Argentina. See the polish on that and tree frond on it? I ain't going to fool you on that because it is a Cycad. This yellow and red one just this side of you is Cycad too. Well all of them are Cycad, except that pink one. That's a another Cycad. That's from Argentina too.

G: Same plant species lives down there too?

B: Yeah, some places they're still alive.

D: Now, Cycad is this?

B: No, the shelf is labeled wrong.

D: Did you find all of these (looking at other rocks)?

B: No I bought some of them, but a lot of them I found. Just before I decided I'd cut rock, I had about 30 tons out here, and sold them all to a friend of mine for a real cheap price. He sent them to China and had beads and carvings out of them. He'd take and send 55 gallon drums of rock—now that's going to cost some money just to send them. He'd get them carved and they'd send them back.

D: (looking at petrified wood) I've heard that petrified wood can contain some uranium.

B: Yeah. That there don't have any.

D: How do you know it does?

B: It just looks different. It looks like it's more granulated—maybe around the bark.

D: What about yellow carnotite? Does that have uranium ore in it?

B: Yellow Carnotite IS uranium.

D: That's what I thought. Somebody told me the other day that it wasn't.

B: Anybody that told you that doesn't know anything about uranium.

D: He picked up a bright yellow piece of petrified wood and said, "I bet this is hot!"

B: If it's that hot, you'd better get rid of it. Carnotite, especially.
What's that other one—the black one that the millionaire found?

D: Pitchblend?

B: Pitchblend.

D: Steen?

B: Hey, you're good! He gave me a piece of it one day. He said, "That's almost 100% pitchblend uranium. When I found about it—how dangerous it could be. You put it under a Geiger Counter, and it would just scream! I saw him later, and I said, "Charlie are you sure it is safe to have this?" He said, "No. It's not. It's dangerous to have it." I said, "Here, you can have it back."

D: I heard one of the guys had a bolo neck tie slide made from it.

B: Um. Right by his chest. The thing of it is, they're not stupid, they just don't understand what it can do. He'll get cancer from it if he wears it every day.

I have two little pieces and I've got them kind of hid. Do you know Elwood or Ted Miller? He wanted me to find a piece of it for his relative, and I've got them over there hid. I wouldn't want the kids to get them. I'm going to get rid of them if he don't come get them soon. I've kept them about two years now, but I don't like even having them around here.

D: This says, "Utah Dinosaur Bone."

B: That's another show case that I used to have before the kids--I told them they could have anything they want in here. I used to have some beautiful bone in there, but they took that. The signs aren't right on most of this stuff because I've given most of that away.

That little piece of green agate right straight in front of you—it's kind of dark with blooms in it. That piece is well over 3,000. That is really a rare piece. The flowers and that are very unusual in silica—green silica. It's green silica and the blooms in it—that's rarer than heck! You see some of them still have price tags on them 3 or 400 bucks a piece, and I marked them 10 years ago, so they are worth more than that now.

Bernice: My husband and I were out on the desert and we picked up some greenish blue things and they looked like miniature marbles—they were round as round.

B: How big were they? Like marbles?

Bernice: No, they were just like a miniature marble.

B: They were probably azurite balls. I bet they were azurite. I've seen them before. Where I seen them, they got up to be that big.

Probably azurite balls. Where I found them, they were that big.

D: Is Azurite copper?

B: Yeah. Copper ore.

D: What about Malachite?

B: Malachite is too. Them fish over there in that case; they're malachite too.

Oh come over here, I've got one thing interesting to tell you—just about as interesting as the cycad. Can you read that thing in the center right there?

That come billions of miles to be with me.

D: A meteorite?

B: Meteorite. It weighs 14 lbs., if you can imagine.

D: Where'd you get it?

B: From a guy from Africa. He had it marked \$80.00. I headed over to my trailer to get some money. I got a lot more than that. I come back and said, "is that the right price on that? \$80.00?" He said, "Hell no! That's \$450.00!" So I said, "Oh, okay." I gave him \$450.00. I got the best deal in the United States

on that one. It's worth \$5 or 6,000.00. These over here are worth \$500 a lb.

(inaudible)

D: You could open this as a museum. It's like a Smithsonian.

B: Smithsonian wanted it!

D: Really?

B: Yeah. You know how much they offered to pay for cycad? \$5,000!

D: Ah.

B: I said, "I'm not going to sell it to you for \$5,000.00, when I could get \$50,000 any minute for it. I've got about 19 guys who would pay me \$50,000, and I'm going to get a lot more than that for it." He said, "I don't blame you."

D: They basically wanted you to donate it.

B: Well most museums do that. They don't really have the money to pay much.

D: So how do you know where to go hunting for rocks?

B: Well this stuff here is stuff I got over in Argentina.

D: Oh! The pine cones! Do you ever find them around here?

B: Oh yeah. Once in a while we find them around Hanksville. I tell you what, my wife went out to the barn the other day. I sold that 30 tons of rock I had. But there's a rock—they cleaned it up pretty bad. There's a pine cone sitting right there. My wife found it out by the barn in a pile of rocks. She said, "That' looks almost like a pine cone."

D: What's this?

B: It's a fossil. This one here was about 10 feet long. They looked like a squid. I know the name... I just can't say it.

Continue looking through his collection, but most of it is inaudible.

D: What's this? It looks like glass. Is it glass?

B: There was a house burned up or a factory, burned up near Bicknell. They started selling it when they found people were interested in it to make spears.

D: My mother in law tells about her grandmother's house burning down, and where the food storage or all of her bottled food was, there were big glass globs.

B: Where was that Huntington?

D: No she lived in Georgia.

B: There was a house burned down over in Huntington and they had a box of 7-UP. It all melted down into one big lump, so when I heard about it, I went over and bought it and made that spear.

D: Wow. You can see bubbles in it. it looks like petrified 7-UP.

B: (laugh)

D: (looking at Jewelry) Did you make jewelry?

B: Yeah, I used to make a lot of jewelry.

D: Wow. You've sure got a lot of gorgeous things. Where did you get this rose quartz?

B: South Dakota...

(Wandering through his shop, he is explaining some more rocks to us, but the microphone is too far away to get continuity of the conversation.)

D: Well, we've probably worn you out. Do you have any other stories you want to tell?

B: I can't think of much but I thought maybe you wanted to know about things that happened in Emery County.

D: Yeah. So let's talk about a couple more things. What did you think about the power plants coming into Emery County?

B: Well—wonderful! I think they made this county! There's a lot of people against them, I know that, but I don't think they've hurt anything.

G: They've provided a lot of opportunities...

B: Yeah, look at me. I retired after 36 years, and I made more money than I did when I was working.

D: I heard the motto was : Sacrifice now for our children's future.

B: Yeah.

D: The farmers sold their water.

Bernice: If it hadn't been for the power plants and the coal mines that supplied them, what would our kids have done for work? Or us?

B: They would have had to leave. I would have had to leave; I couldn't have stayed here. When I came home from the Navy, I couldn't find any work. A guy named Wally Condor was walking down the street one day and I knew him well, so I stopped and talked to him and said, "Do you think I can get on at the power company?" He said, "Come over Monday and we'll see." So I went over Monday and they hired me on the spot.

Bernice: Well you think about the coal mines, the power plants, the power lines, the repair shops, the trucking lines... it seems like the whole county is connected with them. And what isn't connected, you give them money that gives life to them, so...

B: I'm sure glad they came here.

D: What did you think about I-70 going through the San Rafael Swell?

B: Probably the best thing that ever happened. (laugh) That way we don't have all that traffic coming down this highway. We've got more traffic than we can handle right here. The traffic here is getting terrible here. That one, they can cut across there and thousands of them; thousands of them probably every day go that way instead of coming this way.

D: It provided work too.

B: Yeah, and I don't think it's hurt anything. I just love to drive over that and see that scenery! Even though I've been over it a hundred times, I still like it.

D: It is beautiful, isn't it? It's the perfect spot for viewing. But I just brought the world in.

B: It done a lot for Utah.

D: What store do you remember? Did you shop at when you were young?

B: Shop? Oh, Huntington Brothers and CoOp. Hunter Drug. Mr. Hunter had his own drug.

D: Do you remember him?

B: Oh yeah. I worked for him. I used to haul his trash out and do things for him. He was a pretty good friend of mine, I thought. I used to come in there and I'd only have a nickel. He'd say, "What do you want?" I said, "Oh, I was going to get a malted milk, but I only have a nickel, so I guess I won't." He'd say, "Let me see your nickel." I'd show him, and he'd take it and look at it and say, "This is my nickel not your nickel..." things like that, kidding me. He'd say, "Just a minute, I'll have your malted milk ready for you." He'd do things like that.

D: Oh, and I heard the same kind of things about the Huntington Brothers. Somebody told me that they would say to the kids, "Do you have money for lunch?" And if they didn't they'd give them some money for lunch, and say, "Well you do now."

B: I hadn't heard that, but that's the kind of people they were. They would; I'll bet you!

Then Kelly had a pool hall, beer parlor—that's Owen McClennahan. We called him Kelly.

D: Why was that?

B: I have no idea. I think when he was young they called him Kelly...

D: You have a beautiful home. When did you build it?

B: We bought it. We lived down in Price and we heard that this house was for sale, and the guy that

knew about it come and told me and said, “Bill that house is up for sale.” I said, “How much?” I didn’t talk to him—I talked to the guy that owned it but not his wife. He said, “\$18,365.00.” Anyhow I told him, “Yeah, I’ll take it.”

D: When was that? When did you buy it.

B: About 50 years ago. Back then we didn’t know, my wife and I, whether or not we could make payments on it—big payments of \$107 a month. We didn’t think we could make that kind of payment on it, and we was afraid we’d lose it. But we did; we worked real hard, both of us and paid it off as fast as we could. We’ve been offered over a hundred thousand for it.

D: I bet; it’s beautiful.

B: (inaudible) was up here and wanted to buy it; said they’d give us a hundred thousand for it. That was 10 or 15 years ago. I don’t know, I’m getting tired of this traffic. I still love this place because we’re right on the river. In the summertime if you want fish for breakfast, you run down there and throw a fly out and get you one and bring it in.

D: Wow. Did you buy it in the 60’s or 70’s?

B: I don’t know—50 years ago.

D: Sometime in the 60’s I’ll bet.

B: Yeah, it seems like to me; I don’t know why but ’64 rings a bell.

The reason I wanted it is because I knew I could have horses here. I wanted a place to put my horses, and this was perfect, I’ll tell you.

D: Did you raise horses and sell them or just ride them?

B: Oh, I rode them, went to horse shows, showed them in contests, and then I had two stallions that I bred mares with. I had a big black Appaloosa. He had a great big white blanket with black spots that big on his rump. The perttiest thing you ever seen! A piece of plastic flew off a truck coming down here and flew out here and wrapped around him, he took off and broke his leg. We had to kill him. When the vet said he'd have to be put down, I went up the river here, I don't know how far, and sat down on the bank and just bawled for four hours. I just loved that horse. He could be up in the field up here and I'd whistle at him, and he'd come running just as fast as he could, down to me. Guys around wondered how I ever trained a horse to do that. It was simple! He's a stallion, every time I whistled at him, I'd put a halter on him and he'd go breed a mare. (laughing) So he knew what the score was! I never told them that part of it. They just wondered how I could train a horse to do that.

D: When your family was down on Fuller Bottom, doing the wild horses, did you know the Swaseys?

B: Oh yeah. My dad knew the Swaseys down there where the Swasey's Leap is and around there. He knew all them. I never did.. Lots of people come through there at Fullers Bottom. I remember one guy came through there one morning. He was kind of a rough looking guy—a nice looking guy—but still kind of rough looking. He had a bay horse and a black. He was riding the black. He took saddle off and tied him up there and said, “I'd like to have some breakfast.” My mom and dad said, “Come on in.” He said, “I don't have no money to pay for it, but I'll pay for it.” We was all wondering what he was talking

about, you know? When he got through eating breakfast, he thanked us for it, and went out and took the saddle off and put it on the bay horse instead of the black horse, and talk about buck! That horse bucked, and he never got threw off. He said, "Thank you. Am I paid for now?--Is my breakfast paid for now?" They said, "Yeah. Definitely! We've never watched anybody so good as you are."

But they'd just go through there, and you know, you'd not ask a guy many questions. Some of them were with Butch Cassidy, and some guy...we'd ask them sometimes...well that guy there was going to Texas. Can you imagine going through there to get to Texas? I can't even imagine it in a car, to say nothing of a horse. There were trails they knew—some way how to find...

D: So you didn't ask them where they were from or where they were going?

B: No you didn't ask them very much of that. If you got to know them very good, you might ask them where they were going.

D: So you just fed them and acted nice?

B: Yeah. Some would say, "I've got to get going. Some guys are trying to catch up with me here.

D: Oh.

B: And then some would say, "To be honest with you, it's the sheriff." They'd tell you that much if they trusted you. They'd stop and a lot of times trade horses with us—something that wasn't wore out. Their's would be wore out. A lot of guys would...I don't mean a LOT. But like maybe one a week or something like that.

D: Did you know any guys name Tidwell?

B: No, but I got some of his whiskey out here.

When they robbed Castle Gate, they took off and went to Price and stopped and bought some whiskey, and then they took off and had the sheriff's posse behind them. When they got to Green River—they was just running their horses to death, so they took a couple of cases of whiskey and found a big brush and buried it—dug out some holes and buried it. Me and my friend were rock hunting down there and he found this one bottles. We started digging and found a whole case of bottles. I got one of them that was full; I've still got it in the house. There was a big article in the paper; they were sure they traced them down to Butch Cassidy and them. It was kind of exciting to find something like that.

D: Yeah!

B: Yeah, that is aged pretty good isn't it?

D: That is really valuable, having the story that goes with it.

B: Yeah, I wish I still had the newspaper clipping; he's got it. I guess I could get it from him to copy.

D: Yeah, we would be glad to make a copy of it and things like that. We would be glad to copy your pictures and put them on a disk for you and give them to your family. Then we have them in the Archives for history's sake and then you have copies to pass on and recopy. We'll even print them all for you, if you want us to.

B: I'll have to see if I can help you out. I think that book that I got...that my brother...we each got a copy of that—just one to each family—my brothers and sisters.

D: We can copy that for you.

B: Well I don't need you to copy it for me, but it has some good information in it.

D: But you'd have one to give to your kids or grandkids.

B: (to Gene) Where do you work now?

G: I'm retired, Bill.

B: I thought you was. Buy you look to young to retire. Bevan is about retirement age now.

D: Well, we'll leave you; we've kept you long enough. I'll type this up and bring it back and maybe we can borrow your pictures and that book that your brother did for you and make some copies for you.

B: I'll see what I can do.

D: You've got some good stories. We like to get stories about what the towns were like and the outlaws.

B: My wife says I never run out of stories.

D: Did you know any bad guys or do you remember any stories about...

B: Yeah you know all the bad guys. (laugh)

D: Any bullies or ...?

B: One bully—he was always bullying me. I won't even mention his name. My brother caught him doing it one day and in school, he grabbed him and threw him up against the locker one day. I thought he was going to bend the locker, but he never bothered me anymore. I was real small; this kid was a big, big, husky kid. A lot bigger than me.

D: What else did Owen McClennahan do for a living? I heard he prospected and had a saloon.

B: He done a lot of prospecting, and he sold some of his claims. I'm sure he sold claims. I don't know what else.

D: Did you ever use Hunter Druggist—L. T. Hunter as an assayer to look at your rocks or gold...?

B: Did what?

D: I understand that L. T. Hunter was also an assayer. Owen Price said he was.

B: Oh, Hunter. Yeah. If Owen said he was, then you could bet on it.

D: Did you ever know a guy named Frenchy that lived in Castle Dale?

B: I knew him WELL! I used to go up and stay with him in Huntington Canyon. He was an interesting old guy.

D: What do you know about him?

B: Well he had a big old sorrel mare, and every once in a while during the week, he'd get up in the morning and that sorrel mare was gone and so was he, and when he come back, he had a bunch of gold—enough to live on. He did that a lot—always on his sorrel mare.

D: Do you know where he got his gold?

B: He told me exactly where he found it. I went up there and I couldn't find it.

D: Really!

B: It was by Burnt Tree Springs up on East Mountain—right down below there where that ledge is. I thought it was impossible. There is no gold there. But I looked down over that ledge there, and it is very possible there are places where minerals could be. But I didn't find any gold. I was too busy chasing rocks, I guess.

D: Well some people tell me he prospected for gold and found the gold, and others say he ran with the Butch Cassidy Gang and he buried some gold on the desert.

B: I don't know. I never heard...he was a good friend of mine. I'd go up and stay with him, and some of the stories he'd tell me would just get my old back quivering, you know?

D: Like what?

B: Well just the way he'd get to telling about some of his life experiences. I can't tell them now because it's been too many years.

D: I understand he came from France and worked his way to Utah herding sheep...

B: Probably. There's a good chance of that. I don't remember him telling me that, but he might have done, and he might even have told me.

D: And he worked for the Wilbergs and Johansens just for a place to stay—never let them pay him because he had his own supply.

B: Yeah. If I remember right, he had a shoebox, and in that shoebox was the gold. When he come back from his trips, he always had a bunch of gold in that shoebox. I wasn't lucky enough to be there when he brought it in. Excuse me, I did see the shoebox that had the gold in, I mean, when he first came back I never got to see it...

D: Did you stay with him up in Joe's Valley in that cabin?

B: Yeah. In that cabin there of Huntingtons. He was a neat old guy! The Queen of ...a...she come over

here and bought some uranium from him. He went and dug it out and got gunny sacks...

D: was that Madame Curie?

B: Yeah, thank you. She came and got it and took it back to China—wait a minute, she's from France, and she took that uranium over there and it was all carnotite. It guess it was so rich you can't believe it. (laugh) people carrying that around! They've probably all died from cancer by now.

D: So you heard that she came here?

B: Oh yeah! I know she came here! Because I and him were very close friends. He was practically an old man; I was just a kid.

D: Did you know Wayne Wilberg?

B: Oh very well.

D: He said he followed him around when he was a kid too.

B: Did he? I didn't know that. Wayne Wilberg was cousin to Ted Wilberg. Ted was one of my very closest friends. He died of some mysterious thing he got when he was in the navy when he was down in the Phillipine Islands. They didn't even know what it was. I was working at the power plant and somebody come and told me he was dying and he wanted to see me. So I went and told my boss, and he said, "Take off right now. I'll run your shift for you." So he run my shift for me. Anyhow, I just walked in and he went like that to me—and I went over and gave him a hug and he said, "I'll see ya, Bill." And he died right there. Oh boy! It brings chills over me whenever I think about it.

D: Oh, it was a good thing you went right over there.

B: Oh yeah. I went out on the lawn and his brothers were out there, and we had a crying match to see who could cry the most.

D: Oh. Now who were Ted's parents?

B: Oh,...they had the coal mine.

D: Was it Rufus?

B: No.

Bernice: No Rufus had the farm. It was Helen's husband that had to coal mine. I can't remember for sure. I did her history, but can't remember what she said her husband's name was.

B: It would easy to find out. I can't believe I can't remember his name. I used to stay at his house all the time. Ted and I were really good friends.

D: Where did you say you lived in Castle Dale?

Bernice: Where the Cox's live. Didn't you say the Cox's bought it from you?

B: Yeah. I lived there until I was 18, and the day I turned 18 I joined the navy, and I never go back there.

D: Why did you do that? Because there was a war on?

B: My dad was in the Navy, in the 1st World War, I think, and I wanted to be like him; I wanted to join the Navy--he had told me so much about it. And there was a war on. I thought it was my duty to get in there and join.

D: Kids at 18 seemed anxious...

B: Well you can't get them to...lucky we got the soldiers we've got now going in there. What are they?

G: The National Guard?

B: Yeah, the National Guard. Good thing we've got them or we'd be in real trouble. Well, they'd just have to have a draft.

D: Well Bill, we're going to leave you now, because I'm sure you're pretty tired of this, but thank you so much for your history! If you think of another story, could you just jot a note down so you can tell us later?

B: Alright. I'll do that. I didn't know what to expect today.

D: We didn't either; we just wanted to know you and what your life is like.

B: I've had a good life.

D: Yeah, you have!

B: The Lord let me have 75 years of good health and then he said, "Bill I've got to talk to you a while, you're too wild." (laughing)

D: Well you are still doing great. Your spirits are so good.

B: There was a guy out to the power plant there that called me Wild Bill. One weekend I wanted to go to the West Desert and just live off the fat of the land. I took a bow and arrow with me, a frying pan and salt and pepper. I was out there for a week. When I come back, my boss named me Wild Bill. Everybody started calling me that. The day I retired up there they was still calling me Wild Bill.

D: Well, I think it fit.

B: I shot some ducks believe it or not. He said, "How'd you ever do that?" I said, "I sat down in this swamp the night they come in and they were so thick, you couldn't have missed. I shot some ducks and some jack rabbits. Some of them are good and some of them aren't.

D: So that's what you ate, huh?

B: Yeah. I did good though. I found wild onions and wild potatoes.

D: Now how did you learn all that?

B: Probably was scallion, most of it.

D: Wow. What are wild potatoes?

B: It's the bulb of the plant that comes in bloom on Mother's Day. I used to pick some for my mother and take them to her every Mother's Day. She really appreciated that.

G: Is there some kind of bulb on a Segó Lily?

B: Segó Lily. That's what it is.

D: What color was the potato?

B: Kind of white.

G: I was going to ask you something. (looking at a photograph) Is that a coyote or a coyote cousin that you have on that stretcher there?

B: That guy was a gaucho.

G: Is that in Argentina?

B: From Argentina, and that guy's name was...let me see...Juan, and he apologized like heck to me, when I got there, because he got that red fox for me, and he said, "I wanted to get you a big one." I said, "A big one! That's bigger than our coyotes, for heck sakes." He says, "Is that right?" I says, "Yeah. Our coyotes aren't that big, and they kill a sheep." Yeah. I never heard of any sheep being killed by foxes. I saw some tracks out there and I thought they was dogs, but they was foxes.

D: Wow. Do you have any other questions, Gene?

G: Boy, I can't think of any. I'll probably be back and bug you. When I come over to bring Pat over for dialysis.

B: You got somebody you bring for dialysis every week?

G: My wife. I bring her Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

B: God bless her! I've got a friend that we go and get and bring down to the hospital for dialysis. I haven't been getting him the last while. I don't know what he's doing. We was hauling him...I ride the bus every week down to Fairfield (?). Take the old wheel chair and we can fit it in. And we always took him. I asked him about it, and he said, "It's no fun, Bill, but it's better than dying." Oh, three times a week? Oh!

Bernice: She's such a sweetheart.

D: Yeah. She's a sweet lady; she's a trouper.

B: She's a keeper...

G: She's tougher than I am for sure.

Bernice: Thanks for this. It's been fun listening.

Computer turned off.