

**Ryder Ekker**

**Interview**

**By Gary L. Shumway**

S: Do you have a middle name Ryder? Is it Charles Ryder? This is an interview of Charles Ryder Ekker by Gary Shumway on July 25, 1991 in the Ekker home in Hanksville, Utah. Why don't you tell me first what you know about the early days of mining up on Temple Mountain. Some of the early people and what you know about that part of it.

E: Well, like I told you the other day, I was...do any mining, I rode up this george-type of rail. We lived in Green River at that time.

S: You did?

E: Yes. I was going to school at that time. But when school was out we would move to the ??? until the kids got old enough to go to high school we ???? back in the spring. It was on weekends or something you know I put george out for a little bit, 4 hours at Temple Mountain. We would haul it over there so they could put it on the rail.

S: What year would that have been?

E: About '23.

S: Could it have been a little earlier than that?

E: Yes. It could have been. I was about 13 and Sarah was 20. I think I was in the third grade.

S: You were in the third grade?

E: I think so.

S: Then you wouldn't have been 12 would you?

E: Seventeen. You know I was born in 1913 plus seven is 1920. Bob would be 25. That's the first I knew about Temple Mountain. With old George Magrell.

S: How do you spell his last name?

E: Magrell. I thought of his brother's name since that. George and Joe.

S: Good. Now when you went out there to Temple Mountain, why don't you describe what it was like and where you were mining, where you picked that ore from, off what part of it.

E: We were mining on the south end of Temple Mountain it comes out there a long ways from where the temple stands.

S: Right where those holes are now?

E: Yes. Right where the holes are now. A lot of them were mining there, but they had several people all around. From the outsides. Later on there were calix holes.

S: Now at that time besides that, George was mining right there on that south-west end there. Were there other people mining up on the north end at that time?

E: Yes. Along going up towards the temple. They would run the ridge back in there.

S: On the west side?

E: The ridge stands right out there, it goes all the way up to the temple.

S: There on this west end right where the temple is, you can see some holes there just poked in just right on a straight. Were they already mining those at that time?

E: Yes. That's where Charlie Dans had the big tree. About so big.

S: About a foot?

E: Yes. About 18" round. Old Yeller ran him right out of there with a hose. I held the sack. They would fill it up and put it in the sacks.

S: You say this was on that north end.

E: The west end. It was on out towards the temple. On the west side.

S: Where those holes are now?

E: Yes. They drilled those holes. They found ore still back. The old timers they didn't go in too far because it's all shoveling and you get a little ton work cars or your wheelbarrows mostly.

S: Were they single jacking that?

E: Yes. Single jacking then.

S: But you actually went up to that other part and you helped some of those seamless sacks for Charlie to put ore in.

E: It was about 100 pounds in the bags. About 25 in a good horse team.

S: And you would haul bags of that high-grade ore?

E: Yes.

S: Did you haul that with him?

E: Yes. I did my mining but I would help.

S: But Charlie Lance wasn't working for....

E: I don't know who he was working for then.

S: He wasn't working with Magrell though?

E: No. Magrell ran a store and a liquor stable. This old man, his brother got the job hauling the ore. But they had two looms and two horses. They had a four horse teams.

S: And you just did that because you liked to get out of ....

E: Yes. He ..?? pretty good, you know.

S: Where would you camp?

E: At Armorsh.

S: Coming down? Or would you camp there going back up, too?

E: Coming in we could make that in a day. But going back we would have to stop there overnight.

S: So it would take you 2 1/2 days to make the round trip?

E: Yes.

S: Now when you came down in one day, where would you stay there at Temple Mountain?

E: We would stay right there. That's all they had there were horses. And then north temple it was warped. The Temple washes come together. North Temple and South Temple. North Temple had the water in it. And then some days, sometimes we went when they had the wash here like a ??? in the spring, water right then. Tax. Tax in the bronx.

S: Now would you stay there where that old cabin is?

E: Yes.

S: That rock place there, is that where you would stay overnight?

E: Yes.

S: Who built those?

E: I don't know.

S: Were they old when you got there?

E: Oh, yeah. Yes they were about 10 years old, because they started in 1914. That's when they started working. And the Japs, when did they come?

S: I'm not sure.

E: I'm not either.

S: Did you ever see those Japanese?

E: No. Old Madame what's her name?

S: Curie.

E: Curie! She bought a heck of a lot of that ore. And a lot of that was stored in the old depot on the railroad. They had to have a big ??? of it. They put a lot of that high-grade ore in there. I guess it's still down in there, I don't know.

S: You think there's ore still there in Green River?

E: Yes. I think it's still there. Some of it, as I remember, they just filled that old basement over with dirt and made a new store there, you see, for the Green River people.

S: That would be interesting, wouldn't it? To go and see if that's still there.

E: I've wanted to go along there...

S: With a scintilometer or something.

E: Yes. Or else just go along there with a air truck or something.

S: Yes.

E: Heck there's a lot of old ??? left just about where it is. I don't remember...???

S: That would be so interesting. Man would that ever.

E: My goodness that there is 45% ore.

S: Now would you take it in sacks in to Green River? Or would you put it into the wagon?

E: Yes. And store it down in that basement.

S: In sacks?

E: Yes, in sacks.



S: Because later some of them said they would empty the sacks into a wagon bed, or a box, and take it in and save their sacks to get another load down, or something. But you actually used new sacks every time?

E: Yes. There was a time when I went where we had to take the sacks down in the basement and we would all go on the wagon.

S: Now you wouldn't carry the sacks down in the basement would you?

E: No, no. I couldn't do that.

S: Yes, they're a hundred pounds.

E: But there was a bunch of fellows along. ??? few minutes to unload.

S: So your job was just kind of to keep him company.

E: Yes. Ride along telling me stories of ??? back east. Back east coming over to Green River.

S: What nationality was he? Scottish, or Italian?

E: No, he wasn't Italian. He could be Scottish. There was lots of people coming there who would start farms and baked the fruit. 1919 froze killed all freeze. Every darn tree. Lots of trees over on the Algin side. Oh, they had big orchards.

1919 it got to about -40 and stayed that way for 30 days. I remember them old power lines would be that big with the frost. My dad worked down there cutting ice and storing it in an icehouse out on the railroad. They would put it in sawdust.

S: So after that early time, when was the next time that you remember going back out to Temple Mountain?

E: Well, we went back there and dug straight vanadium. That was in the '30's I think. ??? Bound and rifle. Yes. And we went back there and dug them. We owned, dad and mother owned a bunch of claims out there.

S: She got them from her father, did she?

E: Yes.

S: He had been one of the original stakers?

E: Yes. He was one of the original stakers. Charlie Gibbons.

S: And he actually mined up there for that first time, didn't he?

E: Yes. He mined there.

S: About 1914 and through there.

E: No. They could have been there in 14, but I wouldn't have ? there then. I would have only been a year old when they started first mining there. When they first started to mine my grandad and my dad both ??? one of their starts. My dad came here in 1892.

S: Oh. And did he have his name on some of those claims, also?

E: I don't think so.

S: It was Charlie Gibbons and who else?

E: Oh, there were several different people as I remember that had claims on Temple Mountain. O.k. the oil claim in those days.

S: On the asphalt?

E: Yes. He had a place there on the road to Green River. ??? He did the assessment. He dug up four ?? at four feet deep and six feet long. That was the assessment work for the year. Put so many holes to the claim. He shipped quite a crew there when he did his assessment work in the spring and he would have to buy them. He had a crew there digging them holes. He had a heck of a lot of oil claims.

S: You never worked on those, did you?

E: No.

S: Who did? Do you remember?

E: My brother, Harold, the one that just passed away. And I think Kora did assessment work.

S: When you went up there in the '30's, did your father go with you?

E: Yes.

S: And who else?

E: I think old Billy Hayes, he was an old ?? miner. Frank Laughler. He's from Missouri. He came in here and worked on the Great Salt Lake. Worked there all summer and then he went there for ??, Salt Lake, then came over here camping. And this thing up at old ?? City. Camping and trapping furs.

S: Where was it he stayed up there?

E: Eagle City. Down where they had that first gold strike, broomhide, in 1892, or something.

S: So who else was up there then with you when you were working for vanadium?

E: Grandad Gibbons, and Drew my oldest brother. There were four of us and I can't remember just who it was now. But I know it was a family.

S: Of your brothers?

E: Yes.

S: Horris and Harold?

E: Yes. They would be old enough so that they could do some work, you know. In the '30's I was pretty old. Then we worked backed there in the '40's.

S: O.k. Let's talk about this 30's one for awhile first. Do you remember what company? Was it just you individually as independent miners there? Or was there a company?

E: No. It was just independent.

S: And you sold it to Rifle? The VCA?

E: Yes. Right.

S: Would you take it there on the railroad, just take it up to Green River Steel?

E: Haul it in there. And it was sacked.

S: It was sacked?

E: Yes.

S: Oh, wow. Where were you getting high-grade vanadium?

E: Down around the Temple, just under the Temple where the temple sticks out. Right down along the west side. Right there.

S: On the very west side of that highest temple part there?

E: Yes.

S: That's where those holes are that you can still see poked there. You can see an old truck parked up above there. Right there is where you were getting high grade vanadium?

E: Yes. They didn't go underground or anything but they could find it on the streaks going right along the ledge.

S: How high of grade was it of vanadium?

E: I think it ran around 5%. We got \$.28 per pound.

S: How long did you work there?

E: Only just over six weeks. ???

S: Did you get a railroad car full or how much did you get.

E: I think we got a car load.

S: And that's what, about 40 ton, is it?

E: Yes. 40-50 tons.

S: Was the VCA pretty good about paying you for it when you got it up there.

E: Yes. Nice people. We never had any trouble.

S: Were you dealing with Denny Viles at that time or was that before Denny's time?

E: We got there before Denny.

S: Do you remember who was there?

E: Before Denny Viles. In Rifle there was just a lot of it. We dug a lot of vanadium out of Rifle.

S: Oh, yeah. That roscoelite. They didn't pay you anything for the uranium in it?

E: No.

S: It probably had uranium in it, didn't it?

E: Oh, yeah, I think so. I know we dug some out here and Frank had to haul it. Rifle from here in international ?? But that was in the 40's. They weren't paying for the uranium then. But we shipped down a ton right along the ?? up here 30 miles out. Averaged 75 hundredths in uranium and they wouldn't pay us. Because it was uranium and it wasn't vanadium. \$.28 or \$.29 per pound.

S: Well, actually during the 1940's, maybe we finished the earlier part up there, you don't remember why you quit up there during the 30's?

E: No I don't. We had a drank up here, we had called for frank just 18 miles out of town and dad owned that place. And he had a few cattle. Just on the side. He had a house, a big, pretty good sized house and we would stay there. We would always raise a garden and fruit and everything.

S: So this was just kind of something to make a little extra money with. You knew it was there.

E: Yes.

S: Do you remember if you made fairly well on it? Did you do all right?



E: Yes. We did pretty good on it as I remember. It was cheap to what it is now.

S: Boy, I'll say. Wouldn't you love to have that vanadium right now?

E: Yes. Sure.

S: Now in the 40's did you work up there during the Metals Reserve program? When they started paying quite a bit better? They paid up to \$.50 per pound. Is that when you went up there was during that?

E: Yes. They did pretty good as I remember.

S: And where did you mine in the 40's? Just right at the same place?

E: Over the hill on Avery Mountain.

S: But didn't you say you went back up there during the 40's?

E: Yes. That's more predictable.

S: At the same place there on the west side?

E: Yes.

S: And sold it to Metals Reserve.

E: Yes.

S: Probably under VCA.

E: Yes under VCA.

S: And did you ship it to Natarita or to...

E: No, it went to Rifle.

S: Rifle still. It was still to Rifle in the 40's?

E: Yes. I have hauled a lot of ???

S: How long did you work then? Did you work from about 42 to 44 there was a pretty good market, did you work then?

E: Yes, all during that time.

S: How long did you work up there do you think?

E: Well for about a year.

S: For a year?

E: Yes.

S: Who was up there then?

E: My dad and brothers, just family.

S: And were there any other people mining up there at that time?

E: Yes. They were around on the north side. Malachi [Migliaccio].

S: Migliaccio?

E: Yes. On the north side and mined quite a lot. Shipped it to Salt Lake.

S: And he was mining during the 40's?

E: Yes.

S: He wasn't mining there during the 30's though.

E: No. There wasn't much mining that i can remember over on that north side. Most of it was on this south side and on the west side. The south end and the west side.

S: Do you know how the Migliaccio's got their claims there?

E: I don't.

S: Well I'm going to talk to one of the members of their family and so they'll probably know how they got them.

E: Yes.

S: O.k. So this was during the Metals Reserve period then? Right during World War II that you mined there.

E: Yes.

S: And you didn't have to go to the service because you were exempt because you were mining?

E: No. It was just my wife and my mother. They got married in 1933, my father-in-law bought this for a ranch, he owned half of it and his partner wanted to sell out. So we bought that and we had a permit for 480 cattle. Then the BLM came in 1934.

S: Taylor Grazing.

E: Taylor Grazing. That was the Taylor Grazing Act. We were getting along pretty good with the Taylor Grazing. Every dollar we paid would be ?? for range development. We tilled out here in the 30's was awful, we had a heck of a drought.

WE drilled a well out here and wherever there was a seep or spring we would trough it out and they would work right along with us. Then he died in 1937.

S: Your dad?

E: My father-in-law.

S: Oh, yeah.

E: ??? And the BLM came. The Bureau of Land Management. They came in and Richard Greenland, he was here for two or three years. They came for Richard. He would go over and stay a night or two. Two or three days or something. And the troop would take him around. While he was with me he said, "It's awful dry out there. There isn't much feed out there. I'm gonna have to cut you." And so he cut 160 head in one boat. That's what happened to us then. And you see Peter, this partner of my father-in-law's, wanted \$25,000 for his shares. A cow was only worth \$40 a head. We finally lost it.

S: Oh, you lost the ranch?

E: Yes.

S: That's too bad.

E: Yes. We lost the whole darn thing. We pay a 10% increase on your money you

see. By gosh. Then they had the drought ?? way over 200 or 250 but nothing for it ?? We got by. We never lost any. Then we weren't all tied up. Now they're in here and got it all fenced. When some days it would just go wherever it wanted to. Down the channels, on the rivers, anywhere. It just done and did that. It was just turning loses. ?? They tried to half us with water and everything.

S: Did the CCC help develop some water holes for you?

E: Yes. They built some roads. They did a lot, the CCC. We had to for awhile. About two years I guess. I think they came here in 1939. Then they weren't blowing the rivers ??? this old river ?? done a lot of them.

S: O.k. So you went out there in the 20's and then you went...

S: After we talked on and on we discovered that the tape recorder stopped without either one of us hearing it, so let's go back. Now we've talked through the 40's and then in the 50's you went up there. Why don't you talk about that involvement in the 50's.

E: I took a lease there in ??

S: About 1953 was it? After the lawsuit was settled.

E: Yes. And then we worked there a while. I think we were putting the U there.

Thorn close.

S: Where exactly was that?

E: Right on the west side and south side, where that fort runs up there.

S: Yes. The south side where that first old work had been done. Did you go up the west side up to those old holes on the west, too?

E: Yes.

S: You did some there too?

E: Little paths that ran through there. And they had a road. My lease ran up to that and I came back this way about 800 feet from the top and then we started stripping there.

S: You were stripping?

E: Drilling there.

S: Now you stripped it in the 50's?

E: Yes.

S: There on this west side? South west side?

E: Yes.

S: And up to kind of where you can see that fault going through there? You went that far up?

E: You go up there on the west side and you go up and take a little path. Right there was my line. South of that road. Down that point.

S: O.k. Now the road goes through a pass inside of Temple, between...

E: Yes. We were up in Temple Mountain ground a lot.

S: It goes really just to the east of that high view there.

E: Yes.

S: And you went up to that pass then?



E: Yes.

S: You really had later where they had calex 8 and calex 7, didn't you?

E: Yes.

S: Did you ever mine there that much or did you stay pretty close to the rim?

S: No. I stayed pretty close to the rim and out on this point. You can see them old holes going there.

S: There on the south-west side.

E: Yes. And we didn't strip that, we shot it. We all had these ?? what we needed were the pillars. Well we stripped that and it satisfied the oil and gas of Utah so I guess that was good enough. We weren't making more than a dime there.

S: It just wasn't very high-grade ore.

E: No. You see, Temple Mountain has had it. What I mean is there's darn near as much underground but they did all this on top. Went down those calex holes and then take some off. The only ore that I know that's left in Temple Mountain

is up on the east side and out on the top. ??Right up there we drilled four holes. We hit some 38 and 40. My gosh we had to try for 50 or maybe 300-400 feet before you got there. And then you didn't know how big it was because you couldn't get back at it because the reed came up and you would get the drill-reed factors. So we don't know if there's so little ore left there. But I don't know of anything left anymore. So that and all were the 50's in the south end. Harold, my brother that died several months ago, he's done the shootering and then shipped a lot of ore in the 50's. I shipped it quite a lot of ore here. Everybody seemed like that anybody that had a claim or a lease they worked.

S: Now you went up there one more time after that, didn't you?

E: Up to Temple?

S: Yes.

E: Yes. I went up there in the 70's. That's when we were dumping ?? We were up there. And then we were there and picked ?? and so, so dangerous you know. You just go from one hole to another and there's a law under my arm.

S: You were trying to strip it and you were trying to drill and you're drill rig would just fall right into one of those old holes.

E: Yes. That was way back. Now that must have been those Japs in the 1910's.

S: In the 1900's? 1914-1915, in through there?

E: Yes.

S: It may have been.

E: Yes, I think that's what it was.

S: So really you just stripped that and got, did you say, about 500 tons?

E: Yes.

S: But it was pretty low grade?

E: Yes. It was low-grade.

S: Between 8 100's and 18 100's? Most of it around 8 100's.

E: Yes. They took ??? Your overhead was too ??

S: Well you've had quite a time of it and you're still mining, huh?

E: Yes. I have to do something. I have a couple of ?? There's from Price. Old Val or they are older folks. This younger generation. But there were folks I knew years back that were in the cattle business and in the sheep business and I knew them well. Jack Cottner's son. He loved that mine. He had a gold mine. When he first came down here I went up there and we had enough water to run the old trommel. I think we ran it about an hour. Then water ?? we had it stored up there. ???

S: An hour a day or just one hour altogether?

E: About an hour, about 20 yards of it.

S: But an hour a day?

E: Well, no. Just one day and then you have to bring it all the first time or something. We could get a spring there. But it's down in the gorge, you see. We planned on damming that gorge off. Damming it up. It runs about a 1/2 second foot of water all the time. Down in the gorge.

S: Why couldn't you damn it all?

E: Yeah you could. But you have to go through all those permits and then you have to go to the state engineer and get his sanction on it and the whole deal. But we kept fighting there and proved up on 15 second feet of water. There's a creek that runs a lot of water when they're slow. It lasts about 90 days because it lives on the north side. And they got 6 second feet plowed on in Copper Creek. Well it comes early. When we got snow we can work there for about three or four weeks before the other creek starts. And we plowed on it. And we got that spring that leads pretty. We got some of that creeks that's 15 second feet up there. And we got it. Because you can't use it if you ain't got it.

S: No. If there's no snow...

E: No. My gosh we used to work there 90 - 100 days. Back in the 30's we ?? We got snow up there and when you get the snow then you get those snow slides down onto that canyon about 40 foot deep and then why they will last for quite a while.

S: You bet.

E: I remember that place. We used a hydraulic. Dad and I hauled pipe and the old giant they called it, from Green River on to whitey. It took us about a month. We would haul 10 four inch pipes. It was 8 inch pipe. Sterile pipe.

S: Was that the wooden pipe that had wire around it?

E: No. But it's kind of like a band.

S: Yes. I know what you mean. It is steel pipe...

E: Yes, steel pipe. ? two years ago and it had a 10 stock. Put your one pipe in there, the pipe that you're going down the hill with for pressure. And you got this 10 stock that holds probably 5-600 hundred gallons of water in this. And you got a petition in it so that any dirt or anything that comes in the water will hit first and then not go out in your pipeline. So it hadn't ever been, I don't know how many years. I set it up and got it to go. To get enough pressure we would back it up against this pipe-line until it would run over the box up there. Then you put a two inch nozzle on that eight inch pipe and I could shoot a hundred and twenty-five feet. Just move those banks under ?? Gosh that was pretty good, although you couldn't bet on ?? you had a lot of chevron because you couldn't put that water too close to the good spots because it would throw the gold away. You had to be awful careful. It cut down the dirt, I'm telling you. You get maybe a hundred yards a day slick.

S: Have you ever hit a nice little pocket of gold in your mining?

E: No, we didn't. We got some nuggets like kernels of corn and wheat.

S: But it's pretty good size gold then.

E: No. It seems like it's distributed through that gravel. You hit a rock and there would be that table. ? a bunch of bowels sitting around up there that doesn't seem any better there than it does for the first 12 feet high.

S: Pretty evenly distributed.

E: Yes.

S: How about right down against the bedrock?

E: In between the bedrock that's right where it would be. We got a false bedrock there, it's a clay bedrock. But it made it pretty nice to clean up because you could shovel and take two or three inches of it because when it went that gold would come in at two inches. I don't know what our fellows would do if they had sandstone or bedrock, I'd clean it up. There's always little cracks you know, I figured it would be quite a job. That clay bedrock works good. You take it down feet in the trumble it takes down that much bedrock. And this spring went up there one of the fellows from Nevada. I sent him up there to sample it. Below that clay

bedrock, false bedrock, down to the sandrock was another 20 feet. He had the cutest little outfit you have ever seen to sample with. You could get it with a loader. But it had two plastic bowls to concentrate with when you've got the gold. And he took about 4 feet of that, two ? buckets. Took that up there and I've never seen so much buying gold in all my life.

S: Below the false clay down there.

E: Yes. That would narrow it down.

S: It was fine gold.

E: Yes, it was fine. There was a problem with trapping down under there. Decomposed. Dad said, "My gosh, don't you take down that old gravel there, it ain't worth a damn."

S: And now there's quite a bit of gold in there.

E: Yes. In two buckets you can find gold that long.

S: An inch and a half of it or so.



E: We dug down there two years ago. There was a big back hole sitting on tracks. We went down 21 feet and hit the sandstone. We ran it through the trommel and we didn't get anything. Nothing. So I don't know what they're talking about. You can follow the tidily gold up just two or three or four inches. ?? It would be half a mile low with 160 acres in that train. Years ago we dug out there on the ridge and it was 85 feet to the sandstone. At \$20 gold it went \$.29.

S: Yeah, that's a good bar.

E: Yeah. Oh, there was a lot. This fellow from Nevada said, "I've never seen so much gravel in all my life." Rock.

S: That's great. Well I hope you just keep on mining. Keep yourself young doing those good things.

E: ?? now. The boys, well they're farming up there in northern county. They want to go up there and do some work. Just sitting his hay up one of them.

S: Well thank you very much for talking to me.

E: That's fine, Gary.

S: I'm sure glad to get to know you.

E: For heck's sake tell Dan [Shumway] and his wife hello.



