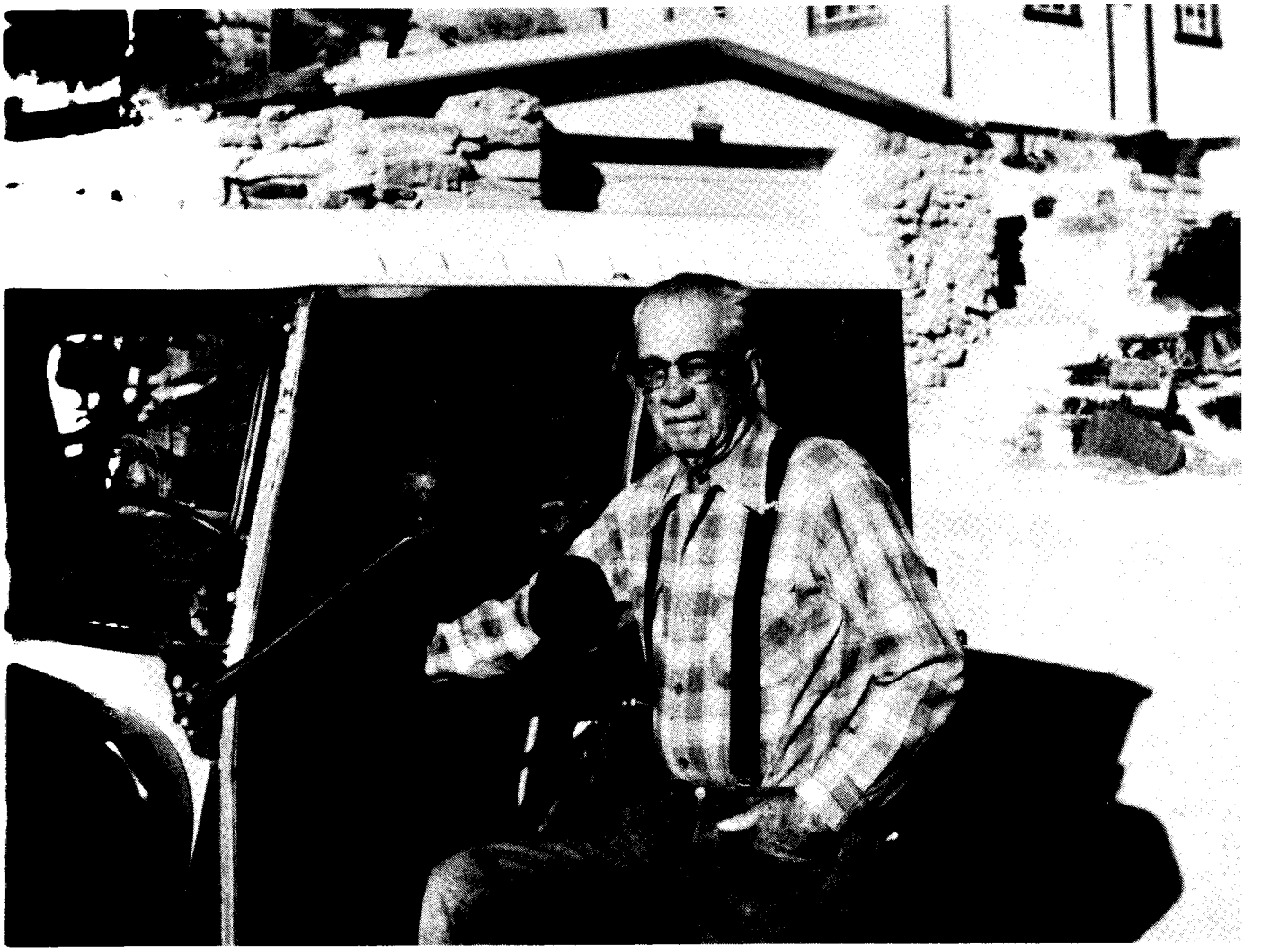
An Interview with
EDWARD R. SLAVIN

An Oral History conducted and edited by
Robert D. McCracken

Nye County Town History Project
Nye County, Nevada

Tonopah
1987



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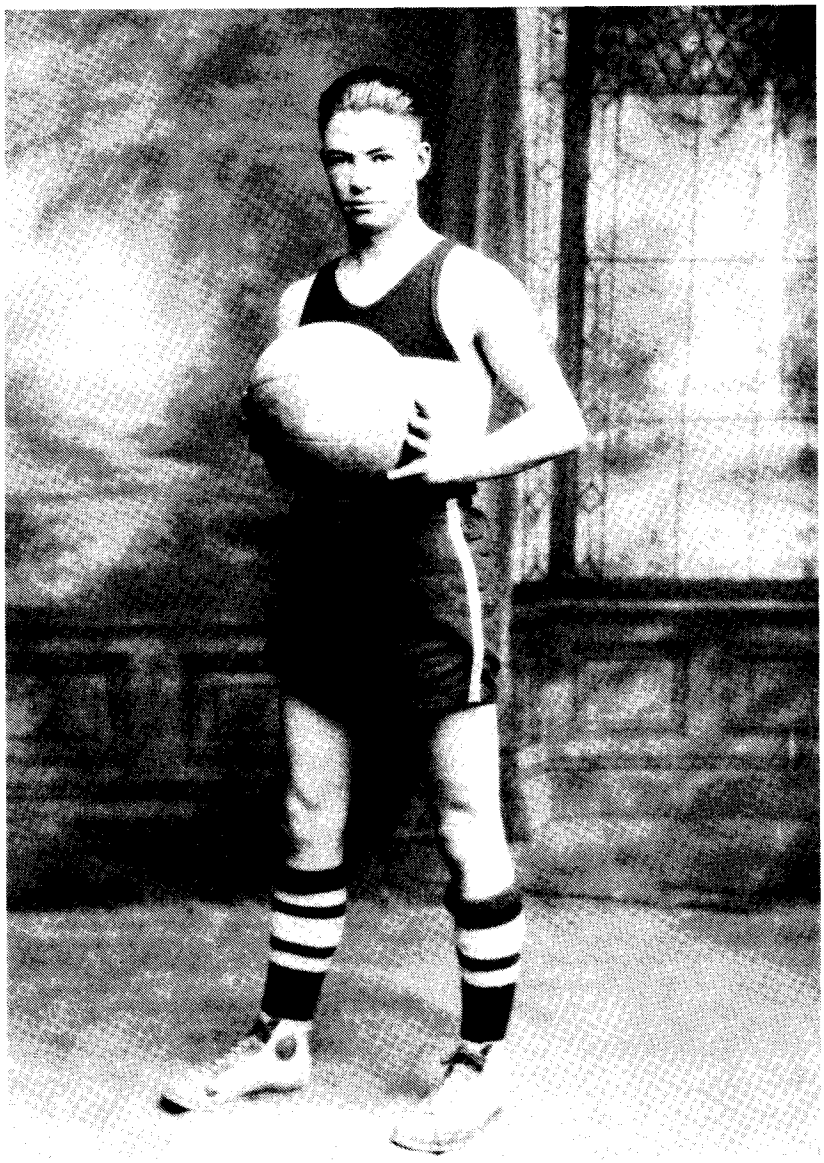

Edward R. Slavin
1924

PREFACE

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

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

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

in preparing a text:

a. generally delete false starts, redundancies and the uhs, ahs and other noises with which speech is often sprinkled;

b. occasionally compress language that would be confusing to the reader in unaltered form;

c. rarely shift a portion of a transcript to place it in its proper context;

d. enclose in [brackets] explanatory information or words that were not uttered but have been added to render the text intelligible; and

e. make every effort to correctly spell the names of all individuals and places, recognizing that an occasional word may be misspelled because no authoritative source on its correct spelling was found.

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

Appreciation goes to Chairman Joe S. Garcia, Jr., Robert N. "Bobby" Revert, and Patricia S. Mankins, the Nye County commissioners who initiated this project. Mr. Garcia and Mr. Revert, in particular, showed deep interest and unyielding support for the project from its inception. Thanks also go to current commissioners Richard L. Carver and Barbara J. Raper, who have since joined Mr. Revert on the board and who have continued the project with enthusiastic support. Stephen T. Bradhurst, Jr., planning consultant for Nye County, gave unwavering support and advocacy of the project within Nye County and before the State of Nevada Nuclear Waste Project Office and the United States Department of Energy; both entities provided funds for this project. Thanks are also extended to Mr. Bradhurst for his advice and input regarding the conduct of the research and for constantly serving as a sounding board when methodological problems were worked out. This project would never have

become a reality without the enthusiastic support of the Nye County commissioners and Mr. Bradhurst.

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

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

--Robert D. McCracken
Tonopah, Nevada
June 1990

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

A survey of written sources on southcentral Nevada's history reveals some material from the boomtown period from 1900 to about 1915, but very little on the area after around 1920. The volume of available sources

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

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

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

Collection of the oral histories has been accompanied by the assembling of a set of photographs depicting each community's history. These pictures have been obtained from participants in the oral history interviews and other present and past Nye County residents. In all, more than 700 photos have been collected and carefully identified. Complete sets of the photographs have been archived along with the oral histories.

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

The town history project is one component of a Nye County program to determine the socioeconomic impacts of a federal proposal to build and operate a nuclear waste repository in southcentral Nye County. The repository, which would be located inside a mountain (Yucca Mountain), would be the nation's first, and possibly only, permanent disposal site for high-level radioactive waste. The Nye County Board of County Commissioners initiated the NCTHP in 1987 in order to collect information on the origin, history, traditions, and quality of life of Nye County

communities that may be impacted by a repository. If the repository is constructed, it will remain a source of interest for hundreds, possibly thousands, of years to come, and future generations will likely want to know more about the people who once resided near the site. In the event that government policy changes and a high-level nuclear waste repository is not constructed in Nye County, material compiled by the NCTHP will remain for the use and enjoyment of all.

--R.D.M.

Robert D. McCracken interviewing Ed Slavin at his home in Tonopah, Nevada
November 16 and 17 and December 1, 1987

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Ed, could you tell me your name as it reads on your birth certificate?

ES: Edward Robert Slavin.

RM: When and where were you born?

ES: I was born on the 5th day of January, 1906 on Capute Hill, La Cannanea, Sonora, old Mexico. The revolution was going on. My mother and father were citizens of the U.S., and I was born in old Mexico because they wouldn't let any of the "gringos" of Capute Hill go to Arizona, which was only 18 miles away.

This caused me a lot of trouble in later years, because the records were not too good. I tried to enlist with the Seabees. They came and asked me - they wanted an expert in demolition, and I was qualified by Hercules-DuPont companies - and they wouldn't take me because they wanted to know why somebody born in Mexico wanted to get into demolition in the Seabees. I spent around $2,000 checking things out and finally got mad, so I telephoned Pat McCarran and told him my problem. "That's OK," he said, "tomorrow morning we'll pass a law." The next day they passed a law where I became a citizen at the hour of my birth. This didn't only help me, it helped about 27 other young guys in the Tonopah-Goldfield area who were down there at the same time.

RM: That's really interesting. Did you know McCarran well?

ES: Yes. My dad and McCarran were real good friends. Of course, I knew him since I was a little kid. My folks bought his house here and that's where I was raised.

RM: What was your father's name?

ES: Charles L. Slavin.

RM: Do you know when and where he was born?

ES: He was born in New York State - the town I don't know. He came to Colorado and then to Tonopah about 1908. He came over here as the deputy chief of police. He worked as a deputy chief of police, and he worked as a deputy sheriff, then he was elected as sheriff, then he was elected as county clerk and treasurer, where he stayed for about 30 years. So he had a political life here.

RM: He was not a miner, then?

ES: No, he was a tool-maker and blacksmith.

RM: What was he doing in Mexico?

ES: He was down there working in a blacksmith shop making tools for a mining company.

RM: What was your mother's maiden name?

ES: Frances Rose Garaghty.

RM: Do you know when and where she was born?

ES: New York.

RM: Where did they meet?

ES: Colorado. My grandfather Garaghty was in the army. He had bad asthma and was traveling around and found out that Cripple Creek and Salida, Colorado, were the places where he felt the best, and that's where he was living. And my dad was out there with his father, who was a blacksmith. They met and that's all there was to it. (My dad did not work <u>in</u> the mines; he was always on the surface as a blacksmith.)

RM: Do you know what year they got married?

ES: I've got it all written down.

RM: My dad and mother met in Cripple Creek-Victor. My dad mined there a long time. So they got married in the Cripple Creek district?

ES: In Canon City. They went to Bisbee [Arizona] and then to Mexico. My dad worked for various mining companies. If they had a problem in tempering steel, or making some special part or something, they would always send for him and his dad. [I still have several pieces of hand steel in the garage that he sharpened.] They worked in Montana, they worked here, and they worked all around when he was really young. Of course, kids went to work young then.

One of the stories these old miners told me was that my grandfather and my dad were up in Butte, Montana, and Mr. Blackburn was the superintendent of the mine. They came out there to weld a shaft that had broken. The shaft was 2 inches and they welded it and the last anybody knew, it was still running. They did it by hand and flux. That was before the day of the torch. They still have some hand steel out there that he sharpened.

RM: So you were born in Mexico. When did you come back to the States?

ES: Oh, I don't think I was 2 months old. They were able to get out of Mexico and they went to Canon City. That's where my grandfather and grandmother lived, along with an older daughter. She's 8 years older than I am, and still alive; still bossy as ever.

RM: So she's about 89 years old.

ES: I'll be 82 in January. I'm the only one of the kids who didn't go to college. I could have gone. Coach Marty at the University of Nevada wrote me a letter and wanted me to come up the same time that Jake Lawlor did. He was a freshman that year, too.

RM: That was when you were on that great basketball team, wasn't it? So, you moved to Canon City as a small baby.

ES: Then I moved to Goldfield when I was one or two years old.

RM: You don't have any memories of Goldfield, do you?

ES: No. We moved over here [to Tonopah] when I was 4 or 5. I can remember the houses we moved to as we changed houses. I can remember the police officers. With your dad being in politics, you would know them.

RM: So he got out of the blacksmithing and into police work and politics?

ES: He got hurt down in Mexico. They had that revolution, and he got stabbed in the back one night coming home from work. Not a knife or anything, they made punctures in his back - candlesticks. The guys who had stabbed him brought him in and they said to my mom, "We are sorry, we stabbed the wrong man." They went down and got the doctor and took care of it, and I guess that's what brought my birth on; all the excitement.

My dad stayed in [office] until he died, and my mom took his job as the county clerk and treasurer. She was there 2 or 3 years.

RM: So you started school in Tonopah in about 1911?

ES: Yes.

RM: Do you have any memories of school? What was it like in those days?

ES: Oh, it was hell. They wanted me to do too much, and the kids were down on you because your dad was a cop. I had lots of fights and got into lots of trouble because of that. Somebody'd say something about a cop and I'd take it personally. I might beat the hell out of them, or I might get beat up. I was in the office all the time. Of course, if I had to go into the office, I got a licking [at home]. I went home and I didn't say a word, because there was another one waiting for me at home.

RM: So they whipped you in the office?

ES: They used to tan your butt good. Old Man Dillworth used his hand. He was a great old guy; I loved him. He gave me several spankings, but I had them coming.

RM: And then you'd get another one when you got home?

ES: If I said something; if they found out. It isn't like today. If you're bad at school, you go home and your mother gives the teacher hell. My dad said, "You're going to school to learn."

RM: Were there a lot of different ethnic groups in the school?

ES: They all got along well. We had one Chinese boy, and a couple of Negro kids, and Irish and English. There wasn't any clannishness going on - everybody got along well. Nobody seemed to care whether you were Irish or what - you were you.

RM: What did the kids do for fun in those days?

ES: Oh, we had lots of fun - throwing rocks and riding burros, mostly.

RM: The burros ran wild in the streets, didn't they?

ES: They weren't wild, they were just abandoned by the prospectors. Some of us kids would buy one from a prospector. But they were a nuisance because they tipped the garbage cans over at night and ate the garbage. I was working at the Butler Theater and they had great big signs advertising the coming features. They were paper and they put them up using flour paste. The burros would come along and eat those big posters, which cost a dollar or so apiece. Old Jewell Smith said, "We've got to find out what kids are doing that." Well, we sat there and watched and it wasn't kids; just the burros. They got chicken screen to put over the signs, on hinges, and that stopped that. They furnished a lot of amusement for us kids.

In the summer we'd put 2 burros on a little cart we had and a couple of us kids would take off for the hills. We'd be gone all summer. We'd get to Rye Patch the first day, and then the next day we got up to Spanish Springs pipeline, and the 3rd day we pulled into Belmont early. We'd stay around there a couple of days and then we'd go on to Meadow Canyon and stay

there awhile. Sometimes we'd work a few days, [because] McAfee was running the place then. [Sometimes we would work a few days because we needed more grub.]

RM: What was Meadow Canyon?

ES: It was a ranch out there. In those days they were good ranches. We'd leave Pine Creek and go across the valley to Barley Creek, stay there awhile, and then cross back over to Cline Creek and stay there awhile. Then we'd go to the old Cook Ranch, go up on the summit to Moore's Creek, go down Smoky Valley, go up into Jett Canyon and end up at Peavine. By then it was time to go to school.

RM: You were gone all summer.

ES: What do you know about that! You know what happened? We threw the packs up on the burros and took off over the tops of the mountains. Two days later my dad came walking over the top of the mountain and he said, "Edward, you were supposed to be in school last week."

I said, "Oh, I though we had another week."

He said, "You know you didn't have another week. Come on, let's go." My dad was the kindest man in the world - everybody loved him. He was in office so long they all liked him; but oh, he'd scold me.

RM: But you had a cart that the burros pulled?

ES: Yes, a little 4-wheel buckboard with 2 burros. Then we had another burro that we took along for a spare - we'd ride it. After we were out of town a couple of days the extra burro would follow that buckboard just like our dog. We had a lot of fun. The first time I went out, I was 12, and I went to McKinney Tanks with a little fellow named Anis Casella. He's been gone from here for years. We had one burro on the cart and we were out there 3 or 4 days. My dad didn't own a car. My mom was worried, so my dad

hired a taxi - I think it cost him $25 - to come out there to see if I was all right.

We were up to Barley Creek and Mr. and Mrs. Nay came up to our camp. We were about 3 miles above Barley Creek ranch, and she came up there and I was the first one she grabbed. She looked behind my ears, my neck, and everything. She looked at Willie Tival. She made us get in the car, ride down to the ranch, take our clothes off, and get into the bathtub and take a bath. She washed our clothes and fed us. Then she said, "Now you can walk back." After that we stayed a little bit cleaner.

RM: You had to walk back from McKinney Tanks?

ES: From the ranch; it was only about 4 miles. Another time, we got out to Peavine and Auntie Saylor's mother came up to camp. She told us to come down and take a bath. The next time she came up and looked behind our ears they were damn good and clean. We got to know those people. They all looked out for us. I've had a good life.

RM: How did your dad get his job as deputy police chief?

ES: Well, he [went to St. Mary's College] in Kansas City, and there weren't too many people who [had gone to college] in those days. He started working [with the police] and I don't think he intended to stay there, but he did. I wouldn't have stayed there because . . . I remember [a] 4th of July when I was about 11. I was downtown early and [I saw] a group in front of the Model Cigar, which was just below where the Ace is now.

RM: Was it a tobacco shop?

ES: Well, they had the cigars in front, and then the bar. It wasn't a bootleg joint in those days. But I looked and by God, my dad's on the ground and a bunch of Irishmen are kicking hell out of him. Barney Moran

came up the street in a Model T, and I yelled, "They are killing my dad."

He said, "We'll stop that," so he went in, but I grabbed a piece of pipe and crawled in and was pounding them on the shins. I was pounding hell out of their shins and Barney finally discharged a gun and they backed off. They broke some of my dad's ribs and everything. I said to my dad, "You had the gun, why didn't you shoot them?"

He said, "Well, they were my friends."

My friends don't do that to me. All those big Irishmen always said, "Well, that kid of Charlie Slavin, if somebody doesn't kill him, he ought to grow up to be a hell of a man." They realized afterward what they had done. Well, they were loaded. Boy, did I hit those guys on the shins, and they did bend over and grab their shins. They didn't have time to kick me or anything.

RM: What was high school like?

ES: We had a good school and a good basketball team. The kids worked hard. We were older than the kids now; we graduated when we were 20, and these kids are 18.

RM: Why were you older - did you start later?

ES: We started later and, in my case, I missed one year being sick. Then when I was a freshman I got my knee hurt, and I missed out that year. So actually from when I started high school until I got out was 5 years. But we had a damn good basketball team. We had good coaches and some damn good teachers.

RM: You had a famous basketball team; I guess it's never been equaled in the history of Tonopah.

ES: Oh, I think they've had just as good teams; what the hell, we were just lucky. But they didn't have any tournament that year - 1925. Down in

Reno they had a kind of a smallpox, scarlet fever, diphtheria scare, and they didn't have the tournament. But the Block End took a vote for the best team that had played in Reno during the year. We had played up there, and they gave it to us. So Northwestern University of Chicago [held an] invitational tournament, and they invited us to go back there and play. The town thought we were the best in the world, and they raised $2,400 in about 2 days, I think. We were playing in Ely when they sent a telegram over: "Beat Ely and Chicago next." We had been monkeying around, and when we got that telegram, we put the heat on Ely, boy.

We went back in a Pullman, first class. We didn't do very well. I can't remember the first game . . . but they didn't show up, so we played a voluntary game to fill in the gap. Then we played them that afternoon and they beat us, and we got beat again. These guys were big and they didn't graduate; as long as they went to school, they could play basketball. And they'd only go to school half a year because they had to go home and work on the ranches. One guy - whenever they wanted a basket, he'd plunk himself about in the middle of the floor and they'd work the ball up and throw it back to him. He would take his time and it went in every damn time. You had to put 2 guys watching him because he was big - about 6 feet tall, and I guess he weighed about 200 pounds, and he was young. He could move.

RM: What teams did you play in the area?

ES: We played Yerington, Reno, Carson; we played Winnemucca one year. Anybody that played. Owens Valley, Big Pine, Lone Pine, Independence.

RM: How did you get there?

ES: We had automobiles.

RM: You didn't have a bus?

ES: No, the people would furnish cars. The guys running the line were good for a car. The girls down there would donate their car. They always furnished the money for the gas, too. I've got no complaint against those girls. They never bothered me, and they always supported everything that went on in the community. The school didn't have a bus - they didn't have any money. I can remember my book didn't even have a cover on it. But it got us by and in later years, the superintendent, Mr. Anderson, had a Chalmers car. He used to take his car and [when] the school got to where they had money enough, they'd give you enough for gas.

I had a big Paige one time - a big, fancy automobile. The first one with balloon tires on it. [It was] Ted Kennedy's. He ran the Big Casino. I don't know how much gas it used between here and Las Vegas. I got down in Las Vegas, and it was such a stylish car, they washed it and put it in their showroom at the Buick Agency. I had my orders not to run it around after I got there, too.

CHAPTER TWO

RM: Who was the Stanford you were mentioning?

ES: Stanford Galvin; Doc Galvin. He was chief of police during Prohibition. We'd be playing baseball. We didn't have but one ball park, so we'd fix our own. We'd get a lot, clean it, and some of the neighbors would come in and take the ball away from us. But old Doc Galvin would bring us a ball. He'd talk to people and tell them what we were doing. We were not in trouble. He said, "We'd rather have our kids playing than getting in trouble."

One Halloween they dumped a lot of outhouses over, so the next day Doc

came up to the assembly at school. Or he could have called the superintendent up at school and said, "I want a general assembly [with] everybody there," and they would have it. He came up and the first one he came to was me. He said, "You, go stand over in the corner."

I wondered, "What did I do?"

Well, he got about 10 ring-leaders up there, and he said, "Come on." We had to go set all the outhouses up and bank them good. You know, there wasn't one dumped over the next Halloween and there were 10 special cops working. That was a good time; I liked it.

Then I stole something one time [from] Frank Hill of United Cattle and Packing Company down there. Somebody threw a rock and knocked a hole in the window. There was a box of tangerines in there and I went down and stole one for my mom and one for my dad and one for my sister and one for myself and one for Walter. I went home with them. My mom said, "Edward, where did you get these?"

I said, "Frank Hill give them to me."

She called Frank Hill up and asked him and he said, "No, I didn't give them to him. I think he stole them out of that window."

So my mom said, "You stole them. You have to bring them back."

I said, "OK." She told me to go get my bank. I got my bank and got the money out of it - $1.86. I went down, and it took me a long time to get enough nerve up to walk in, but I finally did. He took the $1.86 for the tangerines, too. Every time I see a tangerine I think of it. Oh - we used to steal hay for the burros.

RM: Where did you steal it?

ES: There were a lot of delivery stables . . . from Frank Whittenburg, who had a big barn down there and a lot of horses. He hauled freight to

Manhattan and Round Mountain with a team. We would go to the delivery stable and steal the hay, but one time the sheriff caught us and we had to go to the judge - Judge Cutty, a nice old guy. Old Frank Whittenburg was in there and he was presenting a case against us kids. We admitted we stole the 4 sacks of hay. Old Judge Cutty looked right square into old Charlie Whittenburg's eyes [and said], "Case dismissed. [They're] damn poor kids that won't steal hay for their burros." But he had asked us before, "Who did you steal that hay from - did you steal it from Charlie Whittenburg's horses?" Four sacks of hay wouldn't have amounted to 25 cents.

We had to put the hay in the sacks so we could carry it. When they break a bale of hay open and feed, the crumbs that drop are mostly wasted anyway. Because the guy feeding wasn't going to pick it up.

RM: So you gathered all that up and put it in sacks?

ES: Yes, we did them a little favor, cleaning the damn floor. It was a good town. During Prohibition, every so often [Chief of Police Doc Galvin and one of the deputies] would call me and I'd go down and they'd say, "Well, they are out of booze up to the County Hospital. Johnnie Mitchell is carrying it; go get a gallon of booze from him." So I'd get a gallon of booze and take it up to the hospital. The bootleggers furnished booze to the old guys at the hospital. I think some of it was as good booze as you're getting today.

Oh, there were a lot of things . . . A little town, [if] somebody gets hurt or something, you take up a collection to [help]. One kid got hit in the face with a baseball and it busted his nose all to hell. They took up money to send him to San Francisco and he got a new nose. It still looks good today.

One time my oldest daughter was pretty sick and we had to take her to San Francisco, so I went downtown to Johnnie Mitchell, the bootlegger, and I said, "Johnnie, I got to take Lucille down to San Francisco; she's sick. The doctor said get her down there. I've got to have some money."

Johnnie said, "How much do you need?"

I said, "Well, $1,500, I think."

I came home and Helen said, "Did you get some money?"

I said, "I don't know, but I think so."

About half an hour later, Johnnie Mitchell drove up in the yard and came in and said, "Here."

RM: Had he collected it, or was it his money?

ES: It was out of his own pocket. Johnnie Mitchell was an Irish bootlegger. The bootleggers dressed; they always had good cars; they were all generous. They always knew when the [Pro-his] were coming.

RM: They had warning, didn't they?

ES: Yes. It was a nice town. When I got out of school, I went to work at the Union Oil Company first. Of course, I had worked all the way through school. I worked at the Butler Theater as an usher and I delivered papers.

And the best story of the bunch is that we got to be delivery boys for the grocery wagon. You'd ride around and deliver groceries to all the houses. You got to know all the ladies and all the men and all the kids. And kids were always born at home in those days. I saw a lot of new kids before anyone else in town except their mom and dad. It made it nice, and hell, they'd always want you to eat something. That's one job the kids today miss out on. You got to know everybody and visit. Sometimes you'd get hell because you were half an hour late getting the groceries there for supper, but you'd spent half an hour visiting somebody. All these stores

had a delivery boy.

RM: Did the people call in their orders?

ES: Yes. They phoned their orders in in the morning, up until about 11:00. At 11:00 no more orders, and they'd be delivered by 12:00. Then in the evening they had to be in by a certain time. Now, I'd get out of school at 11:00 instead of 12:00 and go down and deliver groceries. And then at night . . . We got $20 a month. The most you'd work would be an hour in the morning and maybe an hour in the evening. It was good money.

Then the Butler Theater paid $45 a month for the head usher, [who] wrote the signs that were put on the screen: "Buy your booze at Johnnie Mitchell's." They had a machine with all the letters of the alphabet on it and you would punch the letter out of the card and the projector would shine the light through the punched-out letter onto the screen. And quite a few grocery stores would advertise. [They cost] $2 a month. Those slides paid all the ushers' wages. I was the head usher the last 3 years I was there. I took tickets and watched the other 3 guys. If there was trouble you'd have to go down and settle it with the kids. You never had any trouble with grownups, but the kids raised hell down there. I think they gave me the job because I was supposed to be tough.

RM: You were tough?

ES: Oh, yes. I could take care of myself, even if they were bigger. I got it from my dad . . . the way they picked on the cops' kids. You'd take a lot of teasing and you'd get pretty peeved when they'd say, "Cops are no good," and things like that. You'd take it personally, [though] maybe they weren't talking about my dad. We had a lot of cops - a chief of police and a deputy and 5 more. We don't have a police force anymore.

RM: That was in the '20s?

ES: Yes. That's one thing I got mad about. They abolished the chief of police's job and I like to vote for guys. Next they abolished the state superintendent of public instruction. It makes me mad - I don't get to vote anymore. The next one was the mine inspector. I [went] to Carson to Walt Simmons and had a row with the governor over that. He said, "Springer got in and he isn't any good."

RM: What governor did you have the row with?

ES: O'Callaghan. The governor's going to appoint these people, and I said, "Yeah, but the same damn fools vote for governor that vote for mine inspector." I don't like that. I think we should be voting for the mine inspector and the superintendent of public instruction and the chief of police. The next thing will be the president - there'll only be one guy to vote for and everybody else will be appointed.

RM: Was Tonopah a tough town?

ES: It was under control all the time, but it had some tough people in it. The last I can remember was that bunch of Oklahomans from Silver Peak - Nivlock. They came into town and were going to take the town over one night. They didn't get very far. They ran into the wrong crowd and started to push them off the sidewalk. Well, it was your home town and they started to push you off the sidewalk, "We're going to take this town over." Ahh . . . that was the last.

Goldfield and Tonopah would always fight. There would be a basketball or football game and there'd be a fight after the game. My wife was a Goldfield girl. She was raised on a ranch and went through grammar school on the ranch, but went through high school in Goldfield. I'd go over there to see her and they'd beat me up. But there were some darn nice people who came out of Goldfield.

RM: You must remember Sheriff Thomas, the Nye County Sheriff?

ES: My dad was sheriff. Bill Thomas ran against him and beat him. Thomas was the only sheriff in the United States running on the Socialist ticket at that time to be elected. All over the U.S., that year, they had Socialists on all the ballots.

RM: What year was that?

ES: It was about 1916. They were only 2-year terms then. A fellow by the name of Happy Jack Barrier beat Bill Thomas. He ran as a Socialist for years, and then he ran as an Independent when the Socialists abandoned it. He was in 2 years and he got beat again by Happy Jack Barrier. I forget who he ran against the next time, but he was elected and he stayed in 40-some years. I liked old Bill Thomas. We got along all right. My dad and he got along well.

RM: But your dad worked for Tonopah, and not the county, didn't he, as chief of police?

ES: Chief of police was the town. Then he got in the sheriff's office, which was county, and the county clerk and treasurer was county. He stayed there for many years.

RM: About when did he become county clerk and treasurer?

ES: Well, let's see. Larry Glass was the county clerk and treasurer. My dad was working for him as a deputy and he died and my dad took over. I can't remember the exact year.

RM: Would it have been in the 1920s?

ES: Oh, before that.

RM: How long did he hold that position?

ES: Thirty-five years or more.

RM: And he had to run county-wide, didn't he?

ES: He knew everybody in the county.

RM: There wasn't much down south, was there?

ES: Beatty was the kingpin about that time, down there. You had Bullfrog and Rhyolite and Carrara.

RM: There wasn't much in Pahrump, was there?

ES: No. There were a few ranches down there . . . Frank Buol was there. I don't think there were over 5 or 6 there at that time. Then up north . . . Gabbs wasn't anything, but we had Ione, Manhattan, Round Mountain, Tybo.

RM: Did you ever, during this early period, get out to the Kawich area? Out to Reveille?

ES: Sure. My wife was raised on her dad's ranch at Hawes Canyon, which is just above Silver Bow.

RM: What was it called?

ES: United Cattle and Packing Company. His name was O.K. Reed.

RM: Oh, your wife's father was O.K. Reed? I'll be darned.

ES: I dug this out the other day. That's the girls when they were young at Hawes Canyon. That's Helen. This was Florence, the oldest girl. And this is Katherine May, a cousin, and this is Lucille, the youngest girl. That's the way they were dressed when they came to high school in Goldfield.

RM: So the kids in Hawes Canyon went to school in Goldfield?

ES: Yes, to graduate. They had their own school out there for years. There were the 4 girls and then there were 2 boys, Jack and Frank May, then there were 3 Indian kids. They had about 10 kids in the school at Hawes Canyon.

I know those mountains better than anybody, I think. When you get up there, there's a lake. You'll see my initials up there on a rock right up

on top of Kawich Peak.

RM: What's the best way to get up to that lake?

ES: I would say, go to Bellehelen then go up the canyon 2 miles and angle off to the right always going up. Don't try to go straight. First, I'd say, fly over and see if there is any water in it.

RM: There's not always water in it?

ES: In a dry year, no. It's only about 3 feet deep. There are no trees or brush or anything growing up close to it, but it's pretty country.

RM: Do you remember much about what was happening down at the Reveille mill and at Eden Creek?

ES: I think the Fallinis ought to be able to tell you about that. They lived there. Solan Terrell lived at Eden Creek.

Helen - at this end - and Lucille would get on horses at Hawes Canyon and ride over the hill and go down to Eden Creek to visit the Terrells. There were the 3 boys and one girl. Solan says, "I used to be so damned jealous of those girls, come over the mountain on nice horses." Well, they could ride! They'd get up at 4:00 in the morning, get on a horse, and go out. At noon they'd give them another horse. They'd come in at night, and they were tired. They weren't allowed to rope or wrestle calves to the ground. Anything that could be done on horseback, they were supposed to do for $45 a month.

RM: O.K. Reed had a big ranch, didn't he?

ES: He had a pretty big ranch and then O.K. and his brother Ed had Hawes Canyon; they had the Breen Ranch.

RM: Where's that?

ES: That's a split on Silver Bow. You know, you get up there and there is a stone house . . . well, the Breen ranch is the other ranch. The Breen

ranch comes down like this and goes down and when you come over the hill you drop into Silver Bow like that. The left hand is the Breen ranch and the other one is Silver Bow. And then you go down below Silver Bow and you have the Golden Arrow and Silver Bow . . . go down and you have Barrow Springs, Oak Springs and then you get down to Cedar Pipeline. Below the pipeline there are wells drilled in there now. But then they went in with the United Cattle and Packing Company. They started to get bigger, and they went from . . .

RM: Who did you say they merged with?

ES: Herman J. Humphrey. There were three Humphreys.

RM: Where were they located?

ES: Well, you've got Monitor Valley out here and the north side of Monitor Valley past Belmont, Meadows Canyon, the stone house and on up to Pine Creek. There were some ranches in between there - Trudgeons, Billy Marsh; Barley Creek belonged to someone else but they had the . . . and then we go over to the next valley and they had everything but Eden Creek. Fallinis had Eden Creek, and down below Fallinis had one spring up on the hill, but they consolidated it in. Fallinis only had Bellehelen and then you get over to the next valley. Twin Springs belonged to Lorigans. Then you get into Railroad Valley. They started at Cedar and they came from Cedar all the way up . . . they had Big Creek, Dry Creek, Ned's Cash and then Nyala - Emery Garrett had Nyala. Then you had 3 Sharpes, each with a ranch, which brought you up to Cherry Creek. Then you go over to Sand Spring Valley and they had everything but 2 places in Sand Spring Valley. It was a hell of a big outfit. I've got pictures that show cattle strung out from Ned's Cash to Cedar . . . you can see that string of cattle for 15 miles.

RM: They must have been pretty well off, with a ranch like that.

ES: They were until the dry years hit them.

RM: When were the dry years?

ES: In the '20s. By '25 they were beginning to fold up. They'd shipped the cattle out, loaded them in the box-cars here and shipped them to Mason Valley. There was nothing here to eat. In the spring of the year when they folded, they had just gotten enough money to pay the feed bill for the winter.

RM: How long did the dry years last?

ES: Ten years.

RM: Is that the reason they abandoned the ranch then? Or, what happened?

ES: Well, that and a couple of bum investments that they had made. They had a lot of money. O.K. wanted to sell when the price was up, but Humphreys didn't want to sell on account of the income tax, which came in about that time. That was one mistake he made. And when they pulled out, the little outfits like Fallinis, Sharpes, Cliffords and the others were able to get by, because they pulled this tremendous herd off, and the other guys got to use the range. They ended up buying Twin Springs from Lorigan, and Fallinis bought it from the United Cattle and Packing Company. They owned Warm Springs. Oh, it was a big outfit. I'd go out there and try to visit Helen. I'd pull into one of those camps and I'd ask them, "Where's O.K.?"

Old Johnnie Richard's little fellow would say, "You ain't looking for O.K., you're looking for Helen; they just left." What the hell, it might have been a week ago - I never caught up with them. That was big country out there.

RM: Is there anything left of their buildings at Hawes Canyon?

ES: Well, there's the cellar and the first part of it where old Jack

Longstreet lived. O.K. and Ed bought that ranch from Jack Longstreet in 1905, I think, or 1906.

RM: Is that right? I knew that Jack Longstreet had a ranch out there somewhere. You're the first one who could tell me where it was. Later, Jack Longstreet moved up toward Stone Cabin Valley.

ES: Yes, he moved up to Longstreet Mine Canyon, about 26 miles above Stone Cabin, on the same side of the valley. I've been there. You name it, I've been there.

Jack Longstreet had Hawes Canyon going on south down to Wild Horse. Ed and O.K. put that 14-mile pipeline in there. That Jack Longstreet was something.

CHAPTER THREE

RM: Why don't you tell me more about the Reed ranch out in Hawes Canyon?

ES: I think 1924 was the first time I was up there. I was working for the United Cattle and Packing Company in town here, in the butcher shop.

RM: Where were they located?

ES: You know that alley between the Post Office and McGowan's? Right there. The street was over a little farther.

RM: Was it a full grocery store, or meats?

ES: Mostly meats and vegetables. We'd go on the roundups and go out on Sundays and deliver fresh food and whatever they'd want us to bring to the company out there. When they'd ride, we used to go out to Pine Creek well and different wells and deliver things.

RM: So it was the company store delivering to the company.

ES: Yes. We rode out on one particular day when we had fresh fruit, and

we went to the Number One well where the roundup was, and delivered the rest of the fresh fruit, and O.K. was there. That was the first that I knew O.K. He said, "I wish you boys would take some of this fruit and deliver it up to the ranch." We didn't know where the hell the ranch was, and he pointed it out to us. We went up and delivered apples and oranges and bananas. The family was up there and that was the first time I was up there.

RM: Was it known as the United Cattle Company then?

ES: Yes. It started out as the Reed Brothers - Ed and O.K. Reed. When they made the money at Gold Reed [in the] Kawich about 1900 or 1901, O.K. and Ed were riding up Stone Cabin Valley past Silver Bow. O.K. said, "You know, Ed, this ought to be damn good ranching; lots of grass."

Ed said, "Well yeah, but who controls it?"

O.K. said, "I know who owns it. Let's go in and talk to him." By God, they bought it.

RM: Where were the Reeds from?

ES: They were native Nevadans from Unionville. What was Unionville then is Lovelock today (I think).

RM: Was their father a miner?

ES: No, he was a teamster and a farmer. O.K. was the only one who was a miner, I guess. He and Jake went to Alaska during that gold boom, and instead of having pack animals like mules and horses, they had one ox. This was the story. As I've heard them tell it, they had this big, white ox and they went on in and got in so far and then they had to build a boat so they butchered the ox and sold the meat for a tremendous price per pound. They were building this raft to go down the rapids and O.K. cut his leg pretty badly, so Jake had to carry him out. Jake was a big man - 6'6",

250 pounds and not a bit of fat on him.

O.K. got well and he came down to Tonopah and got his eye hurt working on one of these leases, but the lease was making lots of money so the leaser sent him to San Francisco to get his eye fixed. After O.K. came back from San Francisco he was grubstaked. They were prospecting down at Trapman, which is at the lower end of Stone Cabin Valley. When he and Jack May sold out that's where the money came from to buy out Jack Longstreet.

RM: How much did they pay Longstreet, do you know?

ES: Oh, I don't know.

RM: Did Longstreet have a homestead there?

ES: No, he had some patented ground in there. Jack Longstreet bought Hawes Canyon from Hawes.

RM: Oh, he didn't homestead it himself?

ES: No. Maybe he just took it over; I don't know. It was a nice little place. I liked it after I got to going out there in 1926 and '27 - I went quite a few times. Of course the outfit was folding up then.

RM: Well, he had all those beautiful daughters, didn't he?

ES: I thought they were. And one little boy who died at 14 years, of leukemia. But Ed and O.K. started at Hawes Canyon and they drilled wells. They dug some by hand 100 feet, but they got a drill rig in and they drilled with that. The deepest well they drilled was at Pine Creek, about 17 miles east of Tonopah. And they had big Fairbanks Morse motors on them. They didn't run very fast; they'd explode once and then they'd coast a couple of times.

RM: Oh, those old one-luggers.

ES: I enjoyed watching those and O.K. showed me how to fix them when the points would burn off on the distributor. It was pretty crude. "You don't

have to go to town and buy those fancy spark plugs," he said, "just take these nails, cut them off and just rivet them; they'll work. Maybe they'll work for a week, maybe they'll burn up quickly. They work." By God, they worked. They had wells in the lower end of Stone Cabin Valley. One at Number One was a stage stop to Silver Bow, and I forget who . . .

RM: Was it a big ranch when they bought it or did they make it bigger?

ES: They made it big. They bought a little, just the lower end of Stone Cabin Valley there. They had Hawes Canyon and they had an interest in the Breen Ranch, and then there were four springs going down that valley. They brought the pipeline from Rose Springs in the mountains to Wild Horse in Stone Cabin Valley and they were growing fast and furnishing beef to Goldfield and Tonopah. In order to get rid of the beef they got tangled up with Jake Humphrey and built a slaughterhouse in Goldfield.

Then they started to go to town and they went up Railroad Valley and bought 5 or 6 of those small ranches out up there and drilled wells in Railroad Valley and bought into places. They owned part of Warm Springs, Lorigans owned part of it, and they put the pipeline in and piped the water to Cedar. Old Mr. Fallini owned part of that springs up in there so they consolidated and they could use the water there, and they just kept buying places out. They ended up over in Sand Spring Valley with 5 or 6 ranches [that] they bought over there. I'd say it was a 120-square [mile] area that they controlled. They did not own it, they owned water rights.

RM: Could you describe the borders of it? I've got this map, Ed, but I think it's messed up. It's hard to read, but here's Railroad Valley and here's Reveille Valley. How far did it go?

ES: Sand Spring Valley is the next one over here.

RM: From Railroad?

ES: Yes.

RM: So they were clear over on the other side . . .

ES: The next county.

RM: You mean they were clear over by Timpahute and that area?

ES: Yes. Quinn Canyon goes right down into Timpahute. It went up Railroad Valley as far as . . .

RM: Moray Mountain?

ES: Moray Mountain would be to the north.

RM: Did they go up as far as Locke's?

ES: Currant Creek.

RM: Oh, they were clear up to Currant. Did they control Currant?

ES: No. They went to Locke's ranch here and in Railroad Valley they had Crow's Nest and then there's the artesian wells and they got down to Big Creek, Deep Creek and Saw Mill and the goat ranch, then they dropped down into Quinn Canyon and the next canyon over was Sand Spring Valley . . . They had interests in Sand Spring Valley and they went as far north as Pine Creek out of Tonopah, going up Ralston Valley. It was a big outfit.

RM: How far south did it go?

ES: It went down below Cactus in Stone Cabin Valley and below Cedar in Reveille Valley. It went down as far as Paiute Mesa . . . where the mesa starts up there. Then in Railroad Valley it went down past Gold Reed, which is in the bombing range today.

RM: How did they ever manage it with that kind of dimensions?

ES: O.K. was a tough guy. Hours didn't mean anything to that man. He never thought about his own well-being, but he'd say, "Don't abuse my horses." He organized all the ranches, not only the ones he controlled.

For instance, when the roundup would start . . . "We're going to start here, we'll be at your ranch on a certain day. You can furnish men to ride 2 days out, 3 days out if you want, 3 days past, to protect your interests. And when they got on your range, all the mavericks (orphaned calves) - the calves they couldn't prove had a mother - would go to you on your range, with your holdings. That's the way they worked it and they got along well. They didn't have any trouble at all as far as I know.

RM: How many cattle do you think they had at the peak of the operation?

ES: I've got a picture someplace here . . . From Ned's Cash coming into Cedar you can see the stream of cattle all the way across the valley - that was 14 miles. You can figure it out: if there's only one cow in the line, and that's taking up 6 feet . . . lots of cattle. I don't know if I can find that report Helen wrote - she had good information on it.

O.K. told me a couple of times what happened to them in 1924. He wanted to sell the cows, but by that time it was no longer Reed Brothers, it was the United Cattle and Packing Company, which was 3 Humphreys and 2 Reeds. They didn't want to sell on account of the income tax. O.K. said, "We got too many cattle on the range; we gotta sell." But they didn't sell them that year. About 1926 or '27 they had to ship. They shipped them into Mason Valley. I remember because I went out to Pine Creek Well. I wasn't working for the company then, I was working for Union Oil Company, but I'd go out on Sunday. The cows were so damn poor that [when] they started those cows coming the first bunch arriving here the first day were the strong ones, the next day there'd be another bunch arrive in Tonopah, next day another bunch. By the 4th day it would be the poor old cows that could barely make it.

They shipped them into Mason Valley and then the next spring, when

they were able to sell them, I think they got $6 or $7 a head for them - just enough money to pay the feed bill for the winter and maybe the railroad, which came in here at that time. I think they were the last cows that were shipped by rail here to Tonopah. The railroads pulled out and now they ship them by truck.

RM: They pulled the railroad out in the '40s.

ES: Yes, but all they were doing those last few years was handling ammunition for the air base. They didn't care about anything else.

RM: They didn't ship cattle?

ES: Hell, no. The trucks would go out there and get them. But the gasoline that they shipped in during the war, God - the outfit that bought it - the Tonopah Mining Company owned or controlled it. They sold it just at the time when this fellow from Morgan . . . he made a fortune. They were shipping in 50 or 60 tanks of gasoline a day and made money hand over foot.

But that's getting away from the ranch. About 1927 they were going downhill pretty fast and the range was gone pretty bad. They weren't making much money, but I guess they were staying alive, and they finally closed the store here in town. It had a couple hundred thousand dollars on the books, which they never got, and that didn't help the company any. They lost money in Goldfield and they had another store in California they lost money in. I imagine that the managers were like they were here. Like O.K. said, "We got it, they're hungry, give it to them."

RM: Because the economy was starting to deteriorate then. It wasn't just the range, was it?

ES: Everything was going to hell. I had a wife and one youngster at that time, and I figured if I could make $35 or $40 a month, we were doing well.

I was a good worker and I could do anything. I went out to Tybo in about '33, the first steady job I'd had for 4 or 5 years. In the meantime, I was leasing. Things got better. At least I got enough to eat.

RM: The first time you saw the ranch, you were delivering vegetables and fruit, weren't you?

ES: In about 1924. I didn't go out there . . . There was good deer hunting, but I didn't know it. There was no fish in there, so I went mostly where was good fishing and I didn't know there were deer in there till after Helen and I were married. After we were married, I used to go out and hunt deer quite often. It was good hunting if you were tough - steep hills and very rugged. The deer were in good shape. It was a good outfit and they folded up and Fallini bought part of it. Jim Butler, who was married to Florence Reed, bought part of it.

RM: Where did they have their ranch then?

ES: They had the Hawes Canyon. They had Reveille Valley and did not have Monitor Valley and they went on into Hot Creek and Little Fish Lake Valley. I forget the name of the guy who bought this other one that went up to Pine Creek. But that was split up and Sharps got some of it in Railroad Valley. Fallinis bought everything south, down to Cedar, from when you come out of Twin Springs Gap. They already had Bellehelen and Reveille Valley. And, so they bought some more . . .

RM: I thought you said Jim Butler had Reveille Valley?

ES: Stone Cabin Valley.

RM: Did the Cliffords buy any?

ES: No, they just sat there. They've been buying in the last couple of years. They bought the range that one time belonged to Barley Creek, and the range rights that somebody had on the other side of the mountain and

they had a pickup on the west slope of the Kawich Mountains. They had to do it or they were going to get crowded out. Acularis told them, "If you don't buy it, I'm going to buy it." If they had bought years ago, it would have been a hell of a lot cheaper.

RM: Has there been a deterioration in the quality of the range over the years? People say it's drier. What do you think?

ES: It is drier. There is no doubt in my mind. It was drier in 1927 than it has been lately because I can remember how dusty those roads were. But it's dry. I was just talking today about the weather; Mrs. Hage said they did have about 2-1/2 inches of good rain this year, once. Well, once doesn't make it. What makes it is the snow in the winter. Barley Creek is dry this year, Peavine hasn't got much water, and those were big streams. If you go out to Hawes Canyon, I'll bet it hasn't run at all . . . Breen Ranch, Silver Bow.

RM: Was there more grass in the old days?

ES: Oh, God yes. The sand grass, or rye grass, as they call it, would be all over the valleys and the sage would be in good shape. Last year I made 2 trips out to Railroad Valley and the whole thing between here and our camp was, as far as I am concerned, dry. I've been watching it for years and years. If they don't get moisture, either rain or snow, they aren't going to have any feed.

RM: And they used to get more snow?

ES: I think that years were a lot wetter then. I know in town when I was a kid here you'd have snow 2 and 3 months at a time on the ground. Now if you have it 2 or 3 days, it's gone. We'd get rain that would come down and pour on you and make your roof leak and wash the roads up. There used to be wild geraniums out there on that desert - miles and miles and miles of

them - beautiful! I haven't seen them lately. I haven't even seen a lot of cactus blooming. Going down that slope at Warm Springs, pretty near every year, all those cactus plants would be purple, blooming there. Maybe those atomic bombs going off down at the Test Site are pushing us further south, getting us out of the rain belt. I don't like the bombs.

RM: You don't like the testing?

ES: I think they've done enough tests. They ought to be able to figure out, after they exploded the first 2 or 3, what they can do. With all the machinery they've got, they could figure out, "Well if that's twice as big, we'd get twice as much . . . " I don't know. I don't think they need it anymore. They know what the hell they are.

RM: And they have a lot of them, don't they?

ES: I send for everything - books, pamphlets, any information I can - on radiation.

RM: What did you think when they restricted a lot of that area out there, including a lot of your old stomping grounds?

ES: You'd have to turn that machine off if I started telling you. We had property at Cactus, Trapman's, Gold Reed, Silver Bow; and actually we got nothing for them.

RM: They basically took it away from you?

ES: No, they went to court honestly. We're a democracy. They don't take things away from you; this is not Russia. We went to court and they finally said, "Well, this is what it is."

And I said, "I'm not going to take it."

They said, "You don't have to take it; we'll put it in a bank in your name."

RM: And that was it?

ES: That was it. Gold Reed right today, if I was down there . . . with the price of gold. I could go down there with my little old trailer, haul 5 gallons of water in and I wouldn't make a fortune, but I could make myself a good little stake.

RM: And it's on the Test Site now.

ES: It's getting tested, all right. It has been tested. Those boys were good with those bombs. They blew everything to hell.

RM: A-bombs or regular bombs?

ES: Regular bombs.

RM: When did they take it? In the '40s when they had the Tonopah Air Base, or later?

ES: When they started it up they weren't too strict, but they keep getting more strict all the time. I guess if you went in to Gold Reed now, they'd be right there on your neck. It's right about in the middle of whatever the hell is going on.

RM: And that's at the south end of the Kawich? How far below Cedar pipelines?

ES: About 21 miles. We used to go the other way, though. We'd go out and over the Silver Bow dry lake, where they've got a big camp now. If you were to go out there, they'd have lots of vehicles there to stop you. Then we'd go up over Cedar summit, then turn south, go down the valley to Gold Reed, and come in right below. I think that's where Florence and Jim drove that last well.

ES: I'd better go back to the ranch with you. When they got the ranch, there was no nice house there. Jack Longstreet had a hell of a nice cellar that he lived in. The first year that O.K. and Maude were married and she was out there with him, they lived in a tent.

RM: They didn't live in the cellar?

ES: No. If you go out there today, it's a nice cellar. Then they built the big house up there about the time Florence was born. The Indian camp was about 4 miles down below. The Indians all respected O.K. and they respected the Indians, so Maude was able to get the Indian women to help do the housework. Florence was born in 1906, Helen was born in 1908, and later Lucille and little O.K.; they were all born in Tonopah. They had their own school and their own teacher and of course there were Indian kids living there, to help keep the school. The girls went to school out there until they graduated to go to high school. At that time they went to Goldfield instead of coming to Tonopah. The company had the slaughter house in Goldfield and it was closer.

RM: They'd just cut across, wouldn't they?

ES: They came from the Pine Creek road straight through Diamond Field and then to Goldfield. I think it's about 9 or 10 miles shorter. They used to drive the cattle to the slaughterhouse in Goldfield, not Tonopah, although we had a slaughterhouse north of town here when I was a kid. I don't remember who owned it.

They'd come to town with a big wagon kind of like those prairie schooners, only they didn't have any top on them. In later years they [used] army wagons with 4 horses. They'd come to town twice a year and load them up with groceries. Of course if somebody got sick or something, they had their teams on the light buggies that could travel. They could make if from the ranch to town in one day with the horses that O.K. had.

He had some good horses - he liked horses. When he was younger, he used to break his own. When I knew him he had a buckaroo he hired, which was smart.

RM: How old was he when you knew him?

ES: I guess about 50.

RM: So he must have been born about 1875?

ES: I looked for 3 hours today and I couldn't find [those papers].

After they got organized they were some of the first ones to have Model-Ts. Of course, they had lots of ground to cover. Ed would be on horseback with a pack animal, and be gone a month at a time.

RM: Did Ed have a family?

ES: No, Ed was a bachelor. He had to quit riding. He was a hell of a good cowboy and a good roper. He roped a bobcat once. He started dragging the bobcat and the bobcat says, "Hell no, I don't like this" So he lit on the back of the horse. Ed, the horse and the bobcat ended up in the bottom of the canyon. His back was broken. Ed said, "Don't ever learn to rope. You might get crazy ideas." You'd love him - he was a lovable man. O.K. was strict and stern, but Ed was a cheerful guy.

He told a story one time - he and old Jack Longstreet were down in the Big Casino. There was a lot of money on the poker table. Ed said, "I was down there watching of course, like everybody else, and Jack pulled me back in the corner and said, 'Here, take this gun.' I says, What the hell do I want a gun for?' Jack says, 'Hell, we're going to hold them up and get that money.' Ed says, 'I got all the damn money I need.'"

RM: Was Jack just kidding?

ES: I don't know. I was scared of old Jack Longstreet. I suppose he figured those guys had more money than he did. But Ed was a good-natured

fellow and a hard worker.

[One time I was] changing the column in a 100-foot well with Ed Reed. He was pulling it up by hand. I told him I wouldn't work that way for nobody, not even myself. Ed said, "What the hell is wrong with that?"

I said, "Over at the well there, Number One, there's a block and tackle. I'd go over and get it. It's easier."

He said, "Too much trouble to go get it." He was a big man. Everybody liked Ed.

RM: Was Ed older?

ES: No. There was O.K. and Jake and Bob and Ed, Ken and George. Then 2 girls.

RM: What happened to the other brothers?

ES: They stayed up north, wherever it was easier. Bob had a big ranch up in Elko County, he and Taylor, one of the biggest outfits up there. Bob had a big ranch. Ken had his own ranch, not so big, but . . . George had his own ranch. He was a half-brother.

RM: What accounts for their success?

ES: Hard muscles, hard work and long hours. The boys put the 2 girls through college at the University of Nevada. Flossie married Paul Schrap, a good geologist, and they lived in South Africa most of their lives. Mabel lived down in California.

RM: And of O.K.'s daughters, Helen married you, Florence married Jim Butler (not the Butler who discovered Tonopah), and Lucille married John Carter; she divorced and married George Murnane and they were divorced.

So it was the drought and the deteriorating economy that spelled the end for the ranch?

ES: If it hadn't been for the drought, they could have kept the cows. You

can imagine if the big outfits ship their cattle out and you are a little guy, sitting on the fringe of an outfit, getting their cattle off the range left enough feed so you could stay alive. That's how Cliffords, Fallinis and Sharps and the rest of them all stayed alive.

RM: When did the drought begin?

ES: About 1927, and it lasted about 10 years. Then the next 10 years were pretty good. I think we're headed into another 10 years of tough . . . I think we've had about 3 of them already.

RM: Is it a cycle?

ES: It could be. I'm entitled to think the way I think and talk the way I want to talk. I think it is. People say, "You haven't got an education, how the hell do you know?" I don't think everybody has to have an education to think.

RM: I agree. One of the things I wanted to ask you was, how did he finance all of that acquisition?

ES: Well, the grass was good and they could see ahead and they were getting money for selling the beef. They were selling their own beef in their butcher shop, and getting more for it than if they were shipping it out. And then they would go up and buy an outfit. One outfit they bought was the 7L up at Big Creek all the way down where Sharp's is - Railroad Valley. There were Mormons in there and all the way down and going through Quinn Canyon, and then the church called them back. Of course, some of these guys were doing all right so they stayed, and they bought the 7L at Big Creek, and the next one up, and then they bought Crow's Nest. They bought these outfits out.

They moved the cattle closer to where they could watch them and they always ended up down at Wild Horse, where they could fatten them. I saw

that rye grass down there at Wild Horse 1-1/2 to 2 feet high. You couldn't see the sagebrush. You had feed like that, and then the water at Cactus and the water at Diamond Field.

RM: I've never heard of the grass being that high since I came around here in the '50s.

ES: No, it's getting worse. Going up that slope to our camp in Railroad Valley the Fallinis have a drift fence, and they stay on the lower side of it, and on the upper side is Sharps, and the upper side is a little higher elevation, closer to the hills, the grass is higher up there than it is down below. So I don't know. I'm glad I'm not in the cow business. I like a good piece of beef, but I wouldn't. If Howard Hughes were still alive and he came and said, "I'll give you all the money you need to fix Hawes Canyon up."

I'd say, "All right, we'll start with about $2 billion."

RM: What is left out at Hawes Canyon?

ES: Oh, it's gone to hell.

RM: The buildings aren't there, are they?

ES: No, John Casey bought it. Hell, how did he get in there?

Florence and Jim owned it, so O.K. kind of stayed out there. Casey bought Jim Butler out and he burned . . . he wouldn't admit it, but he burned the house down at Hawes Canyon. Set it on fire and burned it up so he didn't have to pay taxes on it. He burned the God-damned houses down up at Fish Lake Valley and the barns, so he didn't have to pay taxes on them. I think I've got a picture of the house over here, that shows you something of it.

When Lucille wanted to get married, she and John Carter went up to the courthouse to get a marriage license, and my dad, who was county clerk and

treasurer, said, "Lucille, I can't give you a license; you're too young. You've got to get your dad's consent."

We went out that night and went up to Longstreet's Mine Canyon. I got out of the car and Helen was there with Lucille and John. We began calling, "O.K., where are you - I'm looking for you."

I stuck my nose around the corner and old Jack Longstreet yelled, "What the hell you want." He had a gun with a hole 3 inches big. I told them and O.K. gave her his consent to get married. I don't think she should have married him, but I didn't have anything to say about it.

RM: Why did you go to Longstreet's to find O.K.?

ES: He owned an interest in that mine. He used to go visit Jack up there. They were good friends. If they hadn't been good friends, old Jack wouldn't have sold him that ranch; he would have run him off.

RM: Tell me about your dad being the recorder here in town.

ES: We were in Goldfield, at Diamond Field, and my dad came over here and worked. Ed Malley was the chief of police and he was married to my dad's sister, so it was kind of in the family. He sent to Goldfield and had him come over because he needed a deputy; one with some education. My dad went to Catholic school at St. Mary's in Kansas for a couple of years, so he was educated. He came over and was doing the bookwork and everything.

Then Ed Malley ran for sheriff and got elected, so my dad went up there as a deputy. Ed Malley got elected state treasurer, so my dad got elected to the sheriff's office. They were only 2-year terms then. Bill Thomas ran against my dad on the Socialist ticket and beat him and my dad went to work in the clerk and treasurer's office as a deputy for Larry Glass.

Larry Glass died, so my dad took over and was elected and he stayed

there 30 or 40 years. It got to where nobody would run against him. Everybody liked him. Hell, they had to; he was so kind. He wasn't even mean to me. He should have tanned my butt, but he scolded me. He expected me to do the honest thing and comply with the law. I did all right I guess; didn't end up in the penitentiary. But people loved my dad. Everybody is dead now, I guess. He'd get up in the middle of the night and go help people. In those days, a guy out of college was pretty scarce in this town - he'd have to be a lawyer or a doctor.

My dad was always annoyed with me because I didn't want to go to college. My argument was I was making $6 a day driving a truck, and by God, that's more than a teacher was making. Well, truck drivers were pretty scarce too, you know. Pretty near all the old guys were teamsters.

RM: Who didn't know how to drive a truck.

ES: Yes, and it was the young guys who always monkeyed with the . . . Hell, I even drove for the highway department, and they shouldn't have allowed me because I wasn't old enough to get a chauffeur's license. Of course they didn't have licenses then. You had to cut the crank off and shorten it to crank it. I was too short. But they put up with me. Of course, I worked. I built roads too. I ran a Fresno with 4 mules on it. My ribs were always raw from that old Johnson bar.

RM: What's a Johnson bar?

ES: That handle you pull down. You had to learn to hold it right. The blacksmith liked me and he bent it down so it kind of came to my hip. You see, when they'd hit a stone or some hard rock [it would] swing and hit your hip, and push out of the way. When it was way up here, your ribs were all . . . I always liked to work. I still like to work. The biggest disappointment of my life was when there was no work to be done to make a

dollar.

RM: Who were the guys who were partners with Reed - the Humphreys?

ES: They were from a big family in Reno. Jake, Herb, and Jim. Jake was running the butcher shop in Goldfield. I don't know where the other ones were.

RM: When did he go in partners with them?

ES: I think it was about 1908.

RM: When do you think he bought that ranch from Longstreet?

ES: He bought it right after he made that money; 1906 or so.

RM: Was it before Goldfield?

ES: No, because his wife Maude came to Goldfield.

RM: What brought her there?

ES: They lived in Grass Valley and Nevada City and they were stenographers, and there was money to be made. Then she ran a clothing store for some guy, and then she married O.K. She and her sister went from Goldfield out to Gold Reed because they offered a free lot and a building for anybody who would come out there and run the post office and restaurant - the only postmaster they had at Gold Reed. Florence was born in 1906, so they must have moved up there about . . . they could have bought the ranch before 1904; I'm not sure. I'll still look for those papers.

RM: I'd love to have a copy of that.

ES: If I ever find them, I'll give them to you.

CHAPTER FIVE

RM: Ed, tell me about Jack Longstreet.

ES: Well, the first time I met Jack Longstreet was about 1914. I had a

little black and white dog that could do all kinds of tricks. Being Irish and half smart, I'd get downtown and the dog would do tricks and I'd pass the hat. I got hell for it from Dad. Moocher, he said.

Anyhow, Jack Longstreet saw the dog and he grabbed it and was going to take it. I was over there fighting with him and the police station was right across the street. My dad looked over and saw what was going on and he came over. That's the first time I met old Jack Longstreet. He was going to take my dog, but he didn't.

RM: He was going to steal your dog?

ES: He wasn't going to steal him, he was just going to appropriate him. He wasn't stealing, it was broad daylight; he just picked it up. I ran into him a lot of times after that.

This is hearsay now, but I was told by my wife and by her mother that he'd come into the ranch. He got shot in the right arm one time, and he never had it taken care of properly. He'd come into the ranch and get Mrs. Reed to dress it for him. It was a mess, she would say. And he would always want a cup of tea. Now, this is the biggest voice I have, and it isn't near big enough: "I want a cup of tea and I want it boiled!" I remember that because I was there one day.

He was married to an Indian lady by the name of Fanny. After Jack sold, he and Fanny moved on up the valley to Longstreet Ranch and he also had Longstreet Mine Canyon. Jack had a fight down at Ash Meadows with an Indian man down there older than he, but he won. I don't know whether he killed the guy or not. Fanny was a nice lady and she was about average for intelligence. They didn't have any children, but they adopted a little girl. She's the one who was breaking the horses for Dad. When they went out of the cow business they went up north and all he had was a herd of

damn good horses.

They lived there quite awhile and O.K. was in on that Longstreet mine with Jack. They made a deal and Jack got some money. He bought a Model T and they already had pneumatic tires. He told them he wanted hard rubber tires on it and he got it. Nobody knew why, but he wouldn't have to change a flat tire if they were hard rubber. He went to L.A. (he wouldn't come to the doctors here) and got his arm fixed. He lived quite a few years and he got sick and died in the hospital up here, and his car was parked down at the Mizpah Garage. Everybody always said that one of his ears was cut off. He always wore a bob - or, Buster Brown hair. Anyway, this is the story and it's kind of botched up. Lee Henderson went up there and looked at his ears. It was off. He went back down and was going through Jack's car and Jack's .44 fell out, hit the cement floor, went off and shot Lee in the leg. You can take it for what it's worth. It sounds like a hell of a good story. I've heard people say that and I know Lee got shot in the leg, and I wouldn't put it past Jacks's gun to do it. He was a big man. When they buried him they got the biggest coffin that was made and had to put him in sideways.

RM: What other characters did you know back in the '20s?

ES: I knew Death Valley Scotty. He wanted lots of work for his money. I went down there and was putting [in] cement poles instead of wood poles and we were hauling the cement from Death Valley Junction. I think it was old man Belleville who had the trucks. They were Duplex - hard-tired son of a gun, slow and powerful. We were hauling cement up from Death Valley Junction, and he thought we ought to make a round trip every 2 hours, I guess. He was raising hell all of the time.

Of course, I knew O.K. Reed.

RM: Where did the Reeds come from?

ES: Unionville. Ever hear of Unionville? I think the name was changed to Lovelock. There are a lot of Reeds. Grandpa Reed came out from someplace in Canada with an ox team in 2 trips. They had 2 girls [and 5 boys] - O.K., Jake, Ed, Bob and Ken. They were all ranchers. Ed and O.K. came down south here; O.K. was prospecting. That was in 1904 or '05, because they discovered the Kawich or Gold Reed before 1906. They made their money in 1906, and they were prospecting.

RM: Where in the Kawich?

ES: They call it Gold Reed too. Of course, you can't go in there now; it's right down the middle of the bombing range. Fred Ninis told me you could stand off 50 feet and see the gold in that outcrop.

RM: Let's note that Ed showed me a piece of high-grade gold from Kawich, or Gold Reed.

ES: They sent a couple of shipments to the Mother Lode country - I don't know whether it was Nevada City or Grass Valley - and a lot of shipments up to the Belmont mill here, but I think most of it was carried off. But that's where O.K. got the money to buy the ranch. There were 3 of them in on the mine: Austin Wardle's dad, Jack May, and O.K. Reed.

RM: What kind of workings were there?

ES: A shaft 450 feet deep. There was a nice stone house made out of that same rock the courthouse in Tonopah is made out of. They hauled it from here out there. I had a 2-room cabin out there.

RM: Did you work there?

ES: I had some ground out there. Oh, I worked. But they made short work of that outcrop. They put one of those big bombs right in the middle of the little house; you can't even find it. And they bombed the gallows

frame - shot the hell out of everything. They paid, but they didn't pay near what it was worth. I had 2 claims down there and 2 claims in Silver Bow. Helen had 3 in Cactus. What the hell, we didn't get $5,000 for all of them. I spent nearly $10,000 in Silver Bow just in supplies. I got mad, went to court and lost my fight and lost my money.

RM: To back up, you had a job after high school working on the delivery wagon.

ES: After I graduated I went to work for the Union Oil Company as assistant manager and it lasted about 2 years. In '25, '26 or '27 the town just went like that. We were selling maybe 500 pounds of grease a day, and it dropped down to nothing; maybe once a month you'd sell some. And the gasoline went down. The mills consumed oil and grease. And in the early days Standard Oil Company's biggest commodity was candles and kerosene.

RM: What were they using underground?

ES: Candles.

RM: Oh, they were? Why weren't they using carbide?

ES: Well, in about 1908 they had a crude carbide lamp. Before then, they used candles all over. The oldest light they have is that mine safety lamp, as we call it today, from England. It goes back for centuries.

RM: And that's what - an oil lamp?

ES: Yes.

RM: Did they use the kerosene for lamps in the mines?

ES: They burned naphtha. I don't think they ever used kerosene - it smoked too damn much.

RM: And your first job was with Union Oil?

ES: That's where I lost my finger. I was trying to load too many barrels

in one truck. My foot slipped and the . . . cut my finger off. I never even knew the damn thing was gone. A guy working with me said, "Where'd all that blood come from?"

I said, "Damned if I know."

RM: And the end of your right index finger was gone.

ES: So I went up to the hospital and got it sewed up and I only lost about to the nail. The stitches came clear to there and they turned the fingernail up, and the fingernail started growing straight out of the top of that. Jesus, it hurt like hell. I had to go to Reno and get it cut off a little bit more. But it's good now.

After Union Oil I went to work for John Conley for about 2 months. But I didn't like it; it was hard work. I was unloading coal and timber and lumber and so forth. Doc Galvin was chief of police. It was Thanksgiving time - this was about 1927 - and he said, "Hugh Hurd needs a clerk over there. Why don't you go over and talk to him?"

RM: What did he have?

ES: A men's clothing store and women's shoes and things. I went over and asked him and I got the job, and he spoiled me. I was the highest-paid clerk in town. Of course, I worked. I'd go down early in the morning and get the store ready for business at 8:00. I got $50 a week.

RM: That was good money, wasn't it?

ES: Big money.

RM: You weren't married yet, were you?

ES: Not yet - just about getting there. I saved a little money and of course I'd asked Helen half a dozen times. She said, "No, I got to stay out there with Dad." She came to town one day while I was working for Hurd. She said, "You still want to marry me?"

I said, "Yes, sure I do." She said she was sick and tired of bawling cows and eating dust all day long. So we got married.

RM: Where did you meet her?

ES: They [spent some time] down below us when we were kids. I used to throw rocks at her.

RM: Over in Goldfield?

ES: No, they came over here to visit with the May family. The Mays lived below us. That was before Mr. May abandoned the family. They got divorced, and the Mays went off and lived at the ranch then. Oh, I knew her. I married her and we had 2 kids. We were married for 54 years.

RM: By the time you married, was Reed pretty well out of the cattle business?

ES: Oh, yes. When we got married, he was going out quickly. But, you see, when they were going out of the cattle business Florence married that young fellow, Jim Butler, and they were making money at the mine, and they bought part of the company.

RM: Was he the original Jim Butler?

ES: No; no relation to the guy who owned the mines. But he was a foreman before I was and he made a lot of money. He was lucky and he got some good leads. They bought the ranch and O.K. stayed out there with them. Then after Hurd closed down . . .

RM: Why did Hurd close?

ES: Well, the town was just going to hell. The price of silver went down to 25 cents. It started to drop in 1925. It had been $1. Pittman put that Pittman Act in and it subsidized the silver mines and stabilized the price of silver at $1 an ounce. But when that bill [ran out] it started dropping. I think it got down to 25-7/8 cents an ounce. I was

up at the mine then, because I shipped one carload of ore. I'd mined it and then all the time I was mining, my samples were running around 35 cents silver. Between the day I shipped it and the smelter made the return, it was 25-7/8th. A few pennies made a lot of difference.

RM: Now, what year did you make that shipment?

ES: About 1930.

RM: But the price started dropping about '25 or '26 and the town started dying?

ES: The mines just had to start laying guys off. It ended up that the first one that started leasing was the West End, and the Tonopah Mining Company was the last one because they had their mill down there at Millers. The Belmont had their mill up here but quit long before. But then they all started leasing.

I went up there and I was at the Tonopah Mining Company, Mizpah shaft, for 2 or 3 years. I had to have a job to make money someplace. The Tonopah Mining Company had about 52 miles of underground workings. It starts from the Desert Queen shaft which is on the Tonopah Mining Company property, though it belonged to the Belmont. They had the Silver Top and they had the Mizpah shaft and they had the Red Plume, and they had the Sand Grass which is pretty near that whole side of town over there. There isn't any ore below the 600, but every one has a level and I figure about 52 miles. When I was up there, we had between 200 and 225 leasers scattered over the 52 miles. On the surface I had Ben Holloway, Jim Curry, Ned Bell, Callie McCloud, Emerson King, and Bill Farris. That was the top crew. Some I couldn't put underground, and some I wouldn't.

RM: Why couldn't you put them underground?

ES: Well, you have to leave your engineers on top. And the top man had to

stay on top to handle the cages. He was capable, he would go, but they had other work they had to do. But there are a lot of people who say, "You're the boss." You're the boss, but about 3:00 in the afternoon your stomach starts rolling around and you say to yourself, "Well, I wonder who is going to get hurt." In 52 miles you don't know if anybody is hurt until those tags are all hanging up that night. After all those tags were hanging up at night I'd give a big sigh of relief and come home and sit down and have a drink. I did that every night for 14 years.

RM: Did the guys work alone?

ES: They weren't supposed to, but they did. Well, they had to. One Mexican, the only one I lost up there - Juan Venagis - had another Mexican working for him. I went down and the place wasn't safe, so I told him, "You can't work this man - this place isn't safe."

Which he knew, but he told Luna, "Well, I got to lay you off, you can't work in this place."

Two or 3 days later his boy came up in one of the hoist houses and told the engineer, "My daddy got blasted down there; he got blowed up." Kid shouldn't have been down in the mine either. He was sneaking the kid down there.

RM: What happened?

ES: From what the kid said, he had 9 holes drilled into the bench. Going down, what I raised hell about [was that] the ladder came down like this, and was leaning like that, which is against the law. He got partway up after he spit the round, dropped his carbide lamp, and went down back and got it. And then, being in a hurry getting on it, he missed the step and fell back in. Well, I used to have lots of respect for a lot of people, but there are 6 guys I have no respect for. They didn't have guts enough

to go down in that hole with me to get that guy out. One Mexican guy and I had to go down. Those guys were all drawing $10 a shift, because that was the rescue crew. They were afraid there would be another shot. Well, suppose there was; what the hell, it would just kill you. I got him out of there. I drank half a quart of booze and it didn't even put the color back in my face. That was the only one I lost. I brought lots to the hospital, though. And it always seemed that if somebody got hurt I'd just happen to be walking by.

RM: How did you get to be the boss? And when did you start your underground mining career?

ES: Well, I'd mined a little bit off and on all the time. I mined out at World Exploration Company at Hannipah - the first place I ever worked underground - and I was 14 years old. And I got hell. My dad found out I was underground . . . I had to give it up. They paid $4.50 a day.

When Jim Butler, Florence's husband, had the ranch out there, he wasn't feeling well and he had to leave. Johnson, the superintendent, brought one guy back to take the foreman's job.

RM: Wait; you had been mining at Hannipah and then where?

ES: Out of Weepah, [and then] Silver Peak at the Mary Mine. Not long periods of time, but enough to know what the score was. And, of course, at the mining camps you were always digging holes. But they brought this one guy back, who had been the foreman up at Tonopah Mining for awhile, and leasers went over to the office and raised hell. They didn't want him. He had been a foreman there before, and most of them had worked for him and didn't like him - they just came out and told Johnson. So they brought another one back; same thing. The office said, "We have to have somebody as foreman to take care of that place out there."

Well, I'd been doing it for a year and a half, since [when] Butler was there he was sick most of the time, and the leasers said, "What's the matter with Slavin? We like him."

And Johnson said, "I asked him already; he said he didn't want the damn job."

So that night they [the leasers] got me in the cage room, backed me up in a corner and said, "You take that foreman's job, or else." I took the foreman's job.

There's one request [I made] of them. I said, "Don't ever lie to me, when I ask you something." In 14 years, one guy lied to me. You couldn't take care of that place, that many men and that many miles, if they'd lie to you. I got along well with them.

RM: What did they pay you?

ES: I got $200 a month for half a day's work. I thought I was doing real well.

RM: That was a hell of a deal, wasn't it?

ES: I wouldn't take it otherwise; I didn't want it.

RM: What did you do the other half of the day?

ES: I'd work for myself. Most of the time I worked for them anyhow.

RM: You mean you were putting in a day, even though you were getting a half day's wages?

ES: Well, yes. And then sometime I wanted to do some work for myself. I had 3 leased and 6 guys working. I might want to go down there with them.

RM: How did the leasing work?

ES: Well, you had to put up $100.

RM: What was the price of silver then?

ES: I have the records here from Tonopah Mining Company [for] December 16, 1935. Gold: $30 per ounce. Silver: $0.26-6/10 per ounce.

RM: That was in 1935. But the mines had started folding 10 years before.

ES: Yes, but they leased up here for years. They were still leasing in '47 after I'd left.

RM: When did you become the foreman up there?

ES: I think it was in 1935.

RM: Tell me, how did they work a lease?

ES: Any 2 men could go out there.

RM: One guy couldn't do it.

ES: No, you had to have 2. You had to get a prospector's permit from the Tonopah Mining Company first, for $10, I think. That covered your industrial insurance for 10 days, and a charge for hoisting up and down the shaft. Then you could go around and look and if you found something you liked, you'd take a sample and bring it to an assayer and have it assayed. If it looked good enough, all right.

RM: What did they charge to do an assay?

ES: Seventy-five cents for silver and gold. Then if you had a place you wanted, you had to put up $100, because you'd have to have supplies - powder, caps and fuses, and air. They'd give you nothing. That outfit was about as tight as you'd run into. Horace Johnson had the reputation of being tight. It was company money and he <u>was</u> tight. He did a good job, he handled it fine and he was fair; and on his own he was as generous man.

RM: Johnson was the manager?

ES: He was the superintendent on the job.

RM: Then you had to put up $100.

ES: Yes, and then you could go to work.

RM: How big was your lease? How much ground would they give you?

ES: One hundred feet on the vein. They would specify that it would go from the lower level to the upper level, but we did not enforce that. It was 100 feet in length and 100 feet in width. Of course your vein could be flat like that and you'd have more than 100 feet. You could follow the vein, but at the next level somebody else might be working.

When you shipped . . . For instance, this shipment ran $34 in gold and $10.47 in gold and $21.25 in silver [for] a total of $31.72. All right. Royalties that the company took out of the check were $213.95. They charged 25 cents a ton for hoisting and applied on the lease account was $25, because on the last amount of money you had you didn't have enough to square your accounts. Then on account of the bullion tax, don't forget that, we have to take $22 . . .

RM: What was the bullion tax?

ES: It's a state tax; they still have it. They use a similar tax on the oil wells out here now. And you have a check here for . . . the amount of the shipment was $1,069.75 and expenses against it were $270, which left you $795.16. Which to me at that time was pretty good. We don't want to forget the smelter took 1.75 percent moisture out. And it was probably the dustiest damn rock you ever saw.

RM: Where did you ship it?

ES: American Smelting and Refining Company, Garfield, Utah.

RM: Did you ship it up there by rail?

ES: Yes, the Tonopah and Goldfield Railroad. Of course the first one that jumps on the shipment is the smelter; they get their money first. The next

one to get it . . . we all used to ship through a sampler. They'd take your whole shipment and crush it and sample it, and they'd send you 10 pounds, and then 10 pounds would go to the smelter.

RM: Was the sampler at the smelter?

ES: No, they were independent. You could send it to the smelter and they had their own crushers and everything.

RM: But there was no point in trusting them?

ES: Well, we didn't. Oh, some of them did. Then the railroad came next and the royalties, and then the expenses. And you got what was left.

RM: The guy who did all the work got what was left.

ES: Well, if you were lucky. It comes out pretty fast after you get organized. You can take a 4-inch streak and you get it stripped underneath, drifted on underneath, and then you start stoping on it, and you can go pretty fast. Of course, it's cheaper to mine going up than going down. We always tried to get going up, but then you get in some damn places . . . the last shipment I made, I did right well on - I got close to $5,000. Of course, I'd worked about a year getting in there. But I hit the ore and 28 days later I had a shipment out. I had all the ore out. That was one segment. The vein was sliding down to the north and hit something hard and pushed one piece out on the hanging wall and then went by it and went on down. I found that piece on the hanging wall. It was 59 tons I think, in 28 days. But I'm telling you, we put timber in there - 18-inch timbers - every 3 feet, and they'd be crushed in the morning.

RM: What was causing it to move like that?

ES: The whole damn country was . . . Did you ever see a timber crushed?

RM: No.

ES: Here they are, like that.

RM: It spreads apart?

ES: It buckles. And in places that cave in it'll push that timber so damn tight an ax will bounce off it. It makes it hard.

RM: It compacts it?

ES: Yes; I had to straighten a few places out. Oh, it was interesting work if it was healthy. I don't think I would have ever quit.

RM: Did it bother you to work in ground like that?

ES: I could leave faster than anyone else, when it popped. It's just like a gun going off - boom - big racket. The rock will break, or the timber will snap and you could hear it moving, grinding, growling.

RM: Does it still move, grind, and growl, Ed?

ES: Right now, I think. You've been up there and seen that glory hole up there. Well, this is the glory hole like this, and the bottom is like that . . . it goes clear over to the shaft. They drew that out - they called it the automatic stope. It went through sooner than they thought because the assay office and a couple of buildings went down in there. I wasn't up there then.

RM: Ed, what if you didn't have $100 to get a lease? That was a lot of money then.

ES: Yes, but a lot of these business houses wanted guys up there on that hill working, and they'd put the money up. You'd find, 9 times out of 10, there would be a business house putting the money up.

RM: What do you mean by a business house?

ES: Cable and Ward were interested in 2 or 3 leases, Harry Polin was interested, and the guys who owned the Mizpah Hotel at that time. So there were people around who would put up the $100 if you didn't have it. They'd think, 'Well, this guy knows what he is doing.' We had very few that

didn't come off.

The only ones I had trouble with [were] the guys [who] would go up there with an alarm clock and set the clock and go to sleep all day. You know, that rock won't get in the box by itself. Two different times I had guys like that. It's very unhealthy to sleep underground to start with. And I talked to them. I told them, "It's unhealthy, you're not going to make money; you're going to get consumption out of it." And they did, they died - young men.

RM: Now, you have 52 miles of workings up there. How in the world did a guy ever find a lease?

ES: We had that figured out.

RM: Ed is showing me a map here.

ES: This is the Mizpah hill. The shaft isn't on this map; it's somewhere else. That says 628 there? That's the 600. [If] it says 444, that's 400.

RM: Here's a 505.

ES: If you follow that around, you see that it's the same one. This shows ore here, this shows ore here. These are beautiful maps. I think they are in San Francisco right now. They are glass maps, a big piece of glass, and the levels are drawn on them, and you could look right down the shaft, that is on the map. The veins were tipping to the northeast.

RM: So you could go down there and think, "By going here, I'll cut this vein here." Is that what you did?

ES: You could find some small places.

RM: You had to basically drift on something, didn't you?

ES: You started drifting on it and opening it up, but if it's good ore . . . you sure didn't make much ore the first month. By the end of the first month, you're in there 100 feet and you've got that ore stripped.

The next 2 weeks, you take that out and you'll be up there another 3 feet. You're up 9 feet and then you lag it off, and then when you knock the waste down, it stays on top of that lag, and then you've got your drift underneath. You put little chutes in, throw your ore in the chute, take it out, and the waste piles up. Every so often you have to draw it out. But you can move a lot of rock.

RM: Could you work on an inch vein?

ES: If it's high-grade, yes. I could work on this one right here - 1/2-inch.

RM: What would this specimen you showed me run?

ES: That was supposed to be $30,000 a ton. That was $20 gold. I'd like to have a ton of it today.

RM: Most of the ores that were found in the mines you worked in - how big a vein could you work?

ES: I've worked them at 4 inches, $60 a ton. The company had veins there that were 40- and 50-feet wide. The Mizpah vein at some places is 500 feet long and 45 feet wide. Down in the Victor - I've never seen it, but I've heard of it - the Murray vein is supposed to be 1,200 feet long and it's over 50 feet wide and 500 feet deep.

RM: Good Lord.

ES: And part of it is still down there. There's only one thing wrong with it today - it's full of water. Up here, we didn't have any water - [just a] little spring, a little mud once in awhile. No real water.

Suppose you went down there and you came up and said, "I'll try that."

I'd go in the office with you and I'd say, "Have you got your assays on it? It isn't taken out. You can go uphill and come out here and cut that vein, 300 feet ahead, and see if it's good for 300 feet."

Or maybe . . . I used to run a diamond drill. You could set it up in one day and drill it in 2 days, tear it down and get the machine up on top in 5 days.

RM: How much could you drill in one day?

ES: It all depends on the ground. If the ground was loose, granular, cracked up, not very much. If it was good, solid ground, you could buzz right in there - 60 feet a day.

RM: What about the dust up there?

ES: There was so much dust I wore a respirator all the time. Even the first 2 days I was up there I figured I couldn't stand that dust getting in my nose and the next day getting in my eyes. I wore one all the time and there were places where I worked that I would build a door and hang burlap over it, put a pipe with little holes drilled in it, and drip it down [over] the dust from the other guys. Once a month you'd take the burlap sacks down and wash them out, and I'll bet you there would be 40 or 50 pounds of dust.

RM: Why didn't you get silicosis?

ED: I have it. They don't call it silicosis anymore; they call it sand-blasted lungs. They just took another piece out.

RM: What's that? Ed's showing me about 1/8th of an inch of a specimen.

ES: They go down with that probe in there and [bring out] a little piece of silica. It gets in there and as time goes by it forms scar tissue. It shows up as if you've got consumption or cancer. "God, you're full of cancer," that's the first thing they said. The last 4 or 5 years, they've gone in twice to get a little biopsy - no cancer.

RM: So you picked up quite a bit of dust in the years up there. How is it that you didn't get it badly enough that it would kill you? A lot of guys

died of it, didn't they?

ES: Oh, yes; if they didn't take care of themselves. I wore a respirator and I always took pretty good care of myself. A lot of these guys would get drunk and lie in the gutter at night. They didn't all die of silicosis - the biggest part of them died of pneumonia.

RM: Was the pneumonia caused by the silica?

ES: Yes. Your lungs are weak. I've seen a couple of guys die from silicosis - they hemorrhage like hell. It spurts out - pink, and foamy like blood. They were dying right then.

RM: Did you drill with water?

ES: All the time.

RM: Did a lot of guys not use water?

ES: I used to fight with them. They had to have that water there or I'd turn the air off. There was one place on the 600-foot level where you never walked from the Desert Queen to the Mizpah - you always walked the other way around. You've seen [what] the ocean [looks like] when they walk in sand. It's just like that, only after you start down that one drift for 200 or 300 feet you can't see a light in back of you when that dust is coming to you. But if you walk the other way, you're kicking the dust up and it's going the other way. You learn those things when you're a foreman. You cover a lot of miles - 10 to 18 miles some days.

RM: And it was all on foot, wasn't it?

ES: Yes. You learn to go where the dust is coming from you instead of to you.

RM: And it was because of the draft down there; which way the air was moving?

ES: When they had the last Belmont fire, everything changed. The shafts

that were updraft changed to downdrafts. All the air was going over to the Belmont. Going out and that fire was . . . the 8 x 24-foot shaft sounded like a blowtorch. They had the shiv wheel up there 128 feet, red hot.

RM: The heat was drawing the air from everywhere, wasn't it?

ES: We had to shut down for about 10 days and the Bureau of Mines came in and we went down and checked it and watched it for 3 or 4 days and they said it was safe enough, the gas wasn't coming into the Tonopah Mining Company property.

But we had to go down and check it every morning before the shift went down. It took 2 of us to get to all the openings. I'd take the lower 3 levels and a little fellow, Brick Martin, would take the upper ones. We'd check it every day, and you could see that gas. We had what we called a "mechanical canary." We'd squeeze the bulb and the gas was sucked into it. We changed the granules - I might be wrong about this - they were grey and the [gasses] change it into a blue and then into purple. The scale was on the side. That gas would be coming down the drift like a wall - straight like that. You'd stick your hand out there and get it, come out here, clean air. It would just stop. It was where the heat and the cold air met and stabilized.

RM: Just like a weather front.

ES: Yes. Damn, it was funny. We had to watch it and about 5 or 6 months after the fire we were able to go into the 1,200 in the Belmont. It was so damn hot that it heated the rails up and burned the ties out for 300 feet back and big slabs came off in the drifts.

I stayed up there quite awhile and then I got on the bum. I dropped through. There were 2 stopes paralleling each other, both tipping into the hill; big ones, and they had both been backfilled. When they filled them

they soaked it, forming a crust about that big. I knew they were drawing on the 600 and I thought it was this one over here. I had it blocked off. I was coming out this night, I'd been on top by 3:30, and anyhow, I had that one blocked. I went right through that son of a bitch. Forty-eight feet down there.

RM: You fell 48 feet down a stope?

ES: No, this is what happened: I rode down. I rode that slab the mud had packed. If I'd falled straight down, I'd have been . . . Then the muck rolled in on me. I was caught like that - buried up to my waist.

A rock bounced off me and everything else, but I always carried candle stubs, short pieces in my pocket, because I was alone so often that my lamp might go to hell. I was able to get one of them out and put it in my mouth and then I got a match out and got it going. It didn't look too bad, but the son of a bitch was straight up and down. You don't see too well - your eyes are full of mud, you're not breathing too well, your nose is full of dust, your throat is full of dust, but anyhow . . . rock for rock, you have to take the last one off you so you can pull it out. Well, you can see the scars on my fingers.

RM: Just from pulling those rocks you wore your flesh off your fingers.

ES: I got out and about that time I ran out of light. I got down on my hands and knees and I crawled to the station, following the track. I got out there . . . the shift would always hang their lights up, so I got a light. There were cans of carbide there and I got one going. Then I had to walk out of that son of a bitch, from the 500 to the surface, and it was about 5:00 A.M. when I was walking through the change room when the boss from the hoist and the engineer and the help were coming up there to get me. They brought me to the hospital.

RM: A close call!

ES: Oh, yes. I could have been buried and they'd never know where I was. They'd never have found me. Look at all the trouble I would have saved myself.

RM: How did you keep from getting lost in all those miles of drift?

ES: Well, if I was in a new area, I had it marked and nobody else could use it. I'd make a circle with a dot in it. When I went in here, coming down the drift here, and they split, I'd put a circle with a dot in it. And when I came out, I'd rub it off. There are places up there I never did know. But you have to go in several times and then you could go up and look on the map.

RM: Did they keep updated maps of the workings?

ES: No, they weren't kept up; they quit in the '20s. Most of the work was done then. I'd say during the time I was up there I ran about 2,000 feet of new drifts that are not mapped.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RM: I was wondering if you could talk a little bit more about what a foreman did up at the mine - what kinds of problems you had and exactly what your duties were.

ES: My duty was to keep harmony with the leasers and advise them if they wanted help. Show them where their ore faulted, explain to them why it faulted, and if they wanted, after looking at the map, where they could pick it up again. Keep the time records, keep track of the shipments and all the supplies. Make sure the men all got out of the mine at night. That was the big problem. Some of them would get over-enthused with their

vein and wouldn't come out at 4:00. I'd have to go after them. Pretty nearly always, when I went after somebody [who was] late, they were all right. I'd never bawl them out or anything, I'd just tell them they had caused me a lot of inconvenience and I didn't get paid after 4:00.

And problems would come up - fights. I'd have to straighten them out. You see, the police officers in town had no jurisdiction underground in the mine. The Bureau of Mines had knowledge of workings and everything before you could go down in there. They'd pick them up at the collar of the shaft, but they never went underground. It's something like that on Indian reservations.

RM: I'll be darned. Is that true in all mines?

ES: I don't know.

RM: What if somebody committed a murder underground?

ES: The company would have to take care of it. But they never had any fights underground. That was the law - no fighting underground. I never knew of anybody getting in a fight underground.

RM: Too dangerous?

ES: Yes, you might risk your own life and the other guy's life and maybe others too. Once in awhile when they came off the cage at night they would fight. They got along pretty well, for that many men and all nationalities. We had some Mexicans who were awful handy with a knife - they didn't carve anybody up underground. They'd fight downtown.

RM: What were some of the nationalities?

ES: Swedes, Serbians, Dagos, Irish, Cousin Jacks, Indians. We had Negroes in town, but I can't remember one underground.

RM: Was that because they weren't allowed?

ES: No, they could have worked if they'd wanted to.

RM: Any Chinese?

ES: No, no Chinese. We had Chinese running the laundry and restaurant in town, but to my knowledge not underground. They were smart and didn't go underground. If it had been a gold mine, you might have seen them, where they could carry a little high-grade home.

You could always expect that when they got their check and cashed it, the miners wouldn't be to work for awhile.

I liked it. If it had been healthier, I might have stayed there. The reason I left it was because I got hurt. I got crushed and was unable to work for over a year.

RM: Who were your superiors?

ES: Horace Johnson was the superintendent. I think his title was Superintendent of the Western Division, because he wasn't only the superintendent here, he was superintendent of the property they had in Tonopah, Arizona and at Silverton, Round Mountain, and a lot of places. He traveled around a lot.

RM: So he wasn't there that much?

ES: He went underground with me twice in about 8 years. I'd give him my report and he'd read it and everything was all right.

RM: What kind of a report did you file with him?

ES: Well, the tonnage that we could expect to ship during the next 30 days and the value of it so we could fluctuate our expenses. We knew that if we didn't make expenses 3 months in a row they'd close it down, bang. They said, "The first time you go in debt for 3 months in a row, you're done."

RM: How long were you there?

ES: From 1933 to 1945.

RM: And what year were you made the foreman?

ES: About 1934.

RM: What kind of deal did the leasers get, and how was the money divided up?

ES: The expenses were all charged against the lease - the powder, caps, fuse, insurance. You had to pay insurance; you had to pay so much for "rental," they called it. That covered the use of the jackhammers, the stopers, and the steel that was furnished, and you had to pay 25 cents a ton to hoist the ore out. And then the smelter took their cut, and the railroad got their cut, and then the company took their royalties. The expenses came out and you got what was left.

RM: What was the royalty?

ES: It was a sliding scale, from low grade, around $15 - I think 5 percent or something like that, up to the top royalty on high-grade at 30 percent.

RM: What was considered high grade?

ES: Anything over $90.

RM: What was silver then?

ES: The lowest it was when I was there was around 27 cents. Gold was at $20 and then it went up to 97 cents for silver and $35 for gold.

RM: Was there much high grade?

ES: Oh, yes; we had some damn good ore. It was a good mine.

RM: Was most of it low grade?

ES: Well, Tonopah Mining Company's average was about $48 a ton, which was good.

RM: While you were there?

ES: From the time they started to lease. They only wanted around $9 ore when they were running the mill. They could mine some awfully low-grade

on their butt.

RM: Did a man hold more than one lease?

ES: Oh, yes. I had 3 myself. I had men hired. I paid $6 and $6.50 a day - $6.50 for the machine man and $6 for the mucker and trammer. And as long as I made money I kept going. It was hard to make money and pay that kind of wage, though.

RM: Did you make money?

ES: Oh, I made a good living. I didn't get rich. I was in debt when I went up there and I paid all my bills off and had enough money to put the oldest girl in college. The second year they had their own money and they didn't have to depend on me anymore. I have no complaints. I liked that hard work.

RM: Did you like mucking and . . .

ES: Oh, I like it. I still like to sweat. The nicest smell in the world is when I'm sweating to beat hell. I don't care if I stink to somebody else or not, but I figure I'm getting rid of a hell of a lot of poison. I really sweat. It would be just pouring off you.

RM: Was it hot in the mine?

ES: It's a funny mine. It's well ventilated because all those stopes you can see on the hill come to the surface, some from the 500. You can start walking down the Valley View vein and you can keep walking right on down it and get down to the 500. Of course, if you know your way around, you can keep on going deeper. You can get down to the Red Plume and be down 1,200 feet underground, not using a hoist or anything else; just climbing.

RM: Oh, you have to use ladders.

ES: Yes. Oh, it's big. I'm telling you. If you add them all together, the Belmont and the West End, the Extension and Halifax and all, I'll bet

you have 300 or 400 miles of underground workings. I know there are 52 in the Tonopah Mining Company because the map shows that.

RM: You started to tell me about temperatures in the mine.

ES: Well, on the 200 of the Tonopah Mining Company there was one spot on the Mizpah vein where the cave and crushed timber and everything in there, the draft that was in there was cold. In the wintertime the snow would pile up on the surface and then it would stay well into the year. But a lot of the mines were a pretty good temperature. There were places that were hot, where there was no circulation. The air was bad, especially if the ground was a little bit damp from sweating. We had no water to pump in the Mizpah.

RM: But a little water would sweat out?

ES: Yes. The temperatures condensed. And of course that was causing an oxidation of what minerals there were in there, and the air would be bad. If anyone went in one of those places, they'd have to put ventilation in. The other places were pretty hot. The Halifax had places in there that were as hot as Virginia City. The Extension, getting down lower, had hot places. It had a big blower, about 8 feet in width and 24 feet long, just blowing air down to the Victor workings, for ventilation on account of the heat. The water that came up out of the Victor . . . When I was a kid, we used to go down there and it would come out and go into a big wooden tank. We'd take our clothes off and go for a swim and it was hot. Then when they put the swimming pool in, they started pumping directly. You'd have to wait a day or two for the water to cool off. [Those] places were real hot underground.

RM: Did you ever work in any of those mines down there?

ES: No. I was in them as a guest or an inspector, but I didn't work in

them. I went down in the Extension property - they called it the Murray vein. I went in with Mr. Johnson just to look at it. It was nice, pretty, good ore, and oh, man! it was big. I also went in the Belmont.

RM: Were they digging on it?

ES: You bet they were digging. They were rolling it out of there pretty fast.

RM: How many ounces did it run?

ES: Oh, I couldn't guess at it. I never knew what the samples were on it. I think they had a 400-ton mill, and they took 400 tons of ore out a day, but as I said before, none of these mills wanted high-grade. They wanted a uniform grade of ore because if they got high-grade in it, it took more chemicals to dissolve it to get your recovery. They'd get the solutions all set up and they controlled it pretty well. The Belmont had big veins. It was a good camp. They produced a lot of money.

RM: Would they blend when they got high-grade with low-grade?

ES: Yes. If they were developing a property on a low-grade vein, instead of throwing it over on the dump they'd throw it in the ore bin to get maybe a little value out of it. They had it figured out. Those early-day guys, the men putting the money up, were pretty sharp cookies. The only things were the strikes that they had. That's one of the things I figure started the camp going downhill - they got behind.

RM: Who got behind? The miners or the company?

ES: Oh, the miners lost out altogether. A lot of them just had to leave town.

RM: Which strikes are you talking about?

ES: The one that I remember most was in the '20s, when they brought the Mexicans in.

RM: Was the IWW behind that?

ES: I don't know. The miners and machine men wanted 50 cents a day more. The miners were [getting] $5 and the machine men $5.50. The companies all got together and said no. Well, the deadline drew near and the only ones that were still not paying it were the Belmont and the Extension. The Tonopah Mining Company and the West End and the rest of them all paid. They were the biggest companies and employed the most men. I don't know why they didn't want to pay them, but they didn't. The Mexicans came in and they were damn good chloriders, but I think they were lost on those big veins.

RM: Why don't you explain what a chlorider is, for the person who will read this?

ES: A chlorider would work small veins and small and narrow places. They would strip the vein and take the waste out first; they'd cob the ore off the walls with the hand steel and the chisel and take it out clean so they were not paying for a lot of waste. A good chlorider is hard to find. I don't think you could find one today.

RM: Why?

ES: Nobody wants to use hand steel anymore. A new outfit with a machine, you put a moil in it and it's like . . . it's not like a jackhammer, but like a pavement breaker. All you have to do to make a jackhammer into one is take the palls out of it and there's nothing to turn the steel. Or if you're going up, you have the stoper.

RM: It would take a hell of a man to take a jackhammer and hold it up like a moil.

ES: Yes, but you don't use a jackhammer going up, you use a stoper. The stoper is 2 machines. It's got the drilling part on one, and it's got a

hydraulic leg in the other end that pushes it. You don't push it - the air pushes it, going up.

RM: But did guys hold a jackhammer up like that? You'd have to be strong.

ES: Well, miners are strong guys. I've seen them do it. Good drinkers.

RM: Do you remember anything else about any of the other mines?

ES: Well, they pumped water from pretty near all of them. The Victor pumped on the west side of town. They pumped a lot of water on the west side of town. The Belmont pumped a lot of water and the Halifax had water.

RM: Tell us a little bit about the miners' night life. You said they were good drinkers.

ES: A lot of them would get drunk and get up the next day and go to work and put out a good day's work. These guys would walk up the street hardly breathing and, by God, they'd go down in the mine and work like hell. I'd often marvel. And [they'd be] full of dust.

RM: Did the dust slow the guys down much?

ES: Go down to the cemetery and look around. That old cemetery was full of guys 30, 35 years old. Great big guys, too. They went over to Czechoslovakia and got them. If they weren't over 6 feet tall, they didn't hire them. You could only put 9 of those big guys in that cage and get the cage closed. They didn't last like a little Cousin Jack, and an Irishman was [even] smaller.

RM: Why was that?

ES: I don't know. Maybe they were breathing too deep, breathing too much air and getting too much dust. We lost lots of friends I grew up with. Widows would have to raise the kids with boarding houses and laundry and so forth. If they got killed in an accident, the most they got was $10,000. They lost 17 men in the first Belmont fire, I think, and I think those

widows got $10,000 each. They had to go to court to get it. At the last Belmont fire there was no one underground, but it burned the Belmont shaft up.

RM: Tell me a little bit more about the dust. How did it affect the miners?

ES: You'd just get skinny and go downhill. They'd catch every damn thing that came along; had colds all the time. I don't know what the doctors decided - I know that if you breathed that dust you didn't live very long.

RM: Why didn't they use respirators?

ES: They did, but I don't think they wore them religiously. I can remember I wore a sponge when I first went up there because they were developing the respirators just about that time.

RM: Why don't you explain what a sponge is for the reader?

ES: It's just a sponge, about 4 inches thick, with rubber bands on it. You'd put them around your head and over your nose and mouth and you'd wet it. When it got full of dust you'd have to rinse it and put it on again. It would actually get muddy. I used to take mine on top all the time. Most of the guys would hang them down in the station but I'd bring mine on top and every night I'd wash it good. Then I'd douse hell out of it with Listerine and hang it in the sun, and wear another one. Of course, when they got the respirators with the filtered paper in them, you'd throw that away underground and put a fresh one in. Those paper filters would plug up. You'd have a hard time sucking air through it and you'd throw it away. Some of those places would be terribly dusty. Somebody would be working up there 50 feet running one of those wiggle-tail stopers (widow makers) and you'd see that little light up there and that's all you could see. About that time I'd go over and turn off the air. Then he'd call me everything

he could think of.

RM: Why wasn't he using water?

ES: Some of them said they'd get rheumatism.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RM: Ed, we were talking about the dust. Why couldn't people wear their sponges and respirators or use water when they could see people dying?

ES: They had no water in the early days and the machines were not made for water. But they came out with machines that had water and air hoses on them. It would be mud, not dust, flying around, but during the early days when they didn't use water, all that dust was accumulating and stopers, or wiggle-tails, had a spray on them. Well, you'd get very wet running them; they weren't controlled too well. In later years, when they had rotators and the water was controlled through a needle inside, there wasn't any reason for anybody to drill dry. A lot of that dust had been there accumulating for years. Between the Red Plume and the Silver Top on the 600 I'd say it's about 4 inches deep and it's just like powder. You step in it and it comes up, so it gets moved around. Somebody pushing a mine car creates a draft and stirs it up.

RM: Is there a way of ever dealing with the dust?

ES: Well, to start a new mine out and take care of the dust at the very first, there'd be a good chance of controlling it.

RM: Did you get a lot of dust when you blasted?

ES: Oh, yes.

RM: Did they spray down the muck pile then?

ES: Nobody went to work until the next day. They blasted at quitting time

because of the powder smoke, carbon monoxide that floats around the mine. If you let them blast all day long everybody would be eating dust. They blasted at quitting time and during the night it had a chance to clear out. The first thing they did in the morning, if they had good sense, would be to wet the muck pile down.

RM: Did most fellows do that?

ES: It was hit and miss. Some of them didn't give a damn. But I used to wet it down all the time. And they'd dump it down the shoot to the next level and that would stir up a lot of dust. It was hard to control. On the lower levels in the Victor they shouldn't have dust because it had water all the time. If the ground was wet, you had another problem - it caves in. But in the Mizpah, dry, it didn't cave any. There wasn't any moisture in the cracks to let it slide. Oh, it was a great life, if you didn't weaken.

During the days of the Halifax they had surface water, good drinking water. Then when they got down and got the hot water, it was all minerals and chemicals and you couldn't drink it - it had a lot of arsenic in it. But the horses and burros and cows drank it and it didn't kill them.

RM: When did they start drilling with water?

ES: I think there was a state law that came in, before my time. God, these guys were dying like rats. Go down to that old cemetery and look around. A lot of women got it too. The chambermaids taking care of these rooming houses got silicosis from . . . there were no change rooms in the early days. You changed in your little room in the rooming houses. The rooms were about 12 feet square. They'd hang their mine clothes there and street clothes here, with maybe a pitcher of water to bathe and a bed and a thunder mug under the bed. That's all there was in the room. That's the

way those women got it. Hell, with all that dust they'd go home and their clothes would be full of dust. I know they didn't like these miners to go into the bar unless they changed their digging clothes.

RM: Was it because of the dust?

ES: I don't know. They wanted their money, though. They didn't treat the miners too well. I used to get annoyed at what they did to them. For instance, they had free flour for people who weren't working. I had a couple of Mexican guys who tried to get some and they wouldn't give it to them because they had a lease. I went down and put in a big bitch. I said, "They got a lease, and they are working, but they aren't making any money. And they ain't going to make any money for another month." The flour wasn't any good anyhow, but they didn't have anything to eat. God, I couldn't lend every one of them $5.

RM: Did you lend a lot of money?

ES: Oh, yes. They'd come and they'd have bad luck and if I had it, they got it. All but one guy paid me back and he died. So I have no bitch against miners.

RM: In the old days they did a lot of charging, didn't they?

ES: Oh, yes. The grocery stores suffered to beat hell. The grocers were very liberal. They'd ask for the money - there was a limit to what they could do. They were good.

RM: Did they lose much?

ES: I think they lost quite a bit of money. I know a lot of them went bankrupt in this town.

RM: Grocery stores?

ES: Mostly groceries. It's a bum business to get into. People have to eat and if you've got it, and he's got a wife and 2 kids, and the kids are

hungry, you're going to give it to them. I know I would. I always figured the business to get into would be a mortician.

RM: Tell me a little bit more about the night life. Were the miners hard-livers, mostly?

ES: Oh, yes. I don't know too much about them because I wasn't allowed out. During my times they had quieted down. Most all those guys were married. At the University of Nevada, in Reno, they have a tape that covers the early days pretty well.

RM: Who is the tape with?

ES: Helen [did it]. It was a good tape of Sheriff Bill Thomas, Johnnie Combellic. He was a Cousin Jack. When my wife was first recording these old people in Tonopah, I didn't come. Some of them didn't want me around because I knew too damn much. But I heard Johnnie Combellic say something interesting on one of those things. He said, "And every evening the girls would come uptown and call the boys down home." The entertainment at the Big Casino in those days was on a par with what they have in Las Vegas today in the upper crust. First class entertainment from San Francisco - live music and the best entertainment.

RM: How much do you know about the Big Casino?

ES: Oh, I don't know a lot. I used to sell newspapers. They wouldn't allow kids in bars. If you went in a bar selling newspapers, you'd go down the bar, "Paper, paper, paper," and if you stopped and started looking at something, the bouncer told you to go and not come back. If you'd stop and look at a gambling game out you'd go. But as long as you went about your business you might be able to sell 5 or 6 papers and you always went by where the free lunch was and you'd take a free lunch. They usually had them with the beer - a glass of beer for a nickel. They were small

sandwiches, 2 inches square - roast beef, roast pork, ham. Eggs cut in half, nice lunch stuff, cheese.

RM: Was this at all the bars?

ES: This was uptown too. Right next to the post office, where the Elks' Lodge used to be, they had the bottom part rented. The Mizpah Hotel had a bar, and the Tonopah Club. This was in the early days when I was a kid. When I was grown up, you couldn't get anything free to eat.

RM: The bars were doing so well they could afford to give those lunches?

ES: They didn't have any liquor tax in those days. When the liquor tax came in . . . They had a little town tax, I think, but since then, somebody in Washington D.C., figured out that the tax is a nice thing.

RM: What was the favored beer in those days?

ES: I've seen old kegs with the San Francisco Brewing Company on it, and I've seen bottles [that say] San Francisco Brewing Company. We had a brewery in town, too.

RM: Do you remember it?

ES: No, I just heard about it. I was rustling bottles.

RM: Oh, this was before Prohibition?

ES: Yes, this was when you could get good liquor and good beer. Of course it didn't make much difference here when Prohibition came along that I could see. There were a lot of bootleggers. The Italians and Serbians made wine. Of course, that was legal, I guess, during Prohibition - so much wine. But we had the Sierra Brewery in Reno and a big one in Carson City. Las Vegas didn't amount to anything then. Winnemucca and Elko and Ely had breweries.

RM: Tell me more about the Big Casino.

ES: It was a big dance hall and it had gambling and a big bar. It had

live music on a platform for the dancing. When the music stopped, the gentlemen would toss money into a big horn that was like on an old-time phonograph. They'd throw the money into that and after a little bit the orchestra would go again.

RM: Was that how the orchestra got paid? Where was the horn located - up on the stage?

ES: The girls were supposed to take the gentlemen to the bar and the gentlemen were supposed to buy them a drink. Well, they said 9 times out of 10 the girls got tea and the men got the booze. This was in the early days and it's mostly hearsay. I have a story I wrote on that. I'll let you see it.

RM: I'd like to see it. Did the guys have to pay for a dance?

ES: Oh, yes.

RM: Did the guys pay the girls for the dance?

ES: No, they bought the drink, which was tea. The girls got a check from the bar. At then end of the evening, they cashed their checks in. Now, those were the entertainers. The hookers . . .

RM: Oh, these girls were not prostitutes?

ES: Oh, no. They were class, boy!

RM: Were they good looking?

ES: Well, the guys thought they were. The entertainers were different - they were singers and dancers. The girls in the cribs, from what the guys say, never came in there.

RM: What would the girls wear in the bar?

ES: I never saw them, but they were dressed to entertain; show dresses. Respectably, as good as they were now; probably better.

RM: Where did they keep the hookers?

ES: They were in cribs. From what they say, they didn't let anybody get to them; the joints protected them pretty well.

RM: Where were the cribs located?

ES: They had them on the back streets. St. Patrick Street had stalls like you run horses in, I guess. And there were more places - they had some right off the dance hall.

RM: Then the prostitutes didn't come right in the Big Casino?

ES: No, there wasn't any business for them there.

RM: How did the guys find the girls?

ES: They used to have tokens and they'd send somebody uptown with the tokens and they'd go up to the bars and hand them to the guys in the bar, and they'd say, "Good for . . ." whatever joint they were from and they'd go down and use them.

RM: Did you know much about guys getting V.D. down there?

ES: I guess they had a lot of it, from what the doctors say. That's why they passed the law that they had to go every Tuesday. I don't remember when they passed it, but I remember that they did pass it. If they were working in a joint, they had to go up to the doctor every Tuesday. I know you didn't go to the hospital on a Tuesday because the doctor was so damn busy.

RM: I've heard there were hundreds of girls in town in the '20s and '30s.

ES: Oh, I don't think so. In the '20s the town was going downhill and there might have been 100 altogether. They weren't scattered in the streets like they were in other places. They got picked up if they were on the street. And the cops knew who was who. I worked on the police force for awhile and the first thing a girl would do to work was go to the police station and get checked out. That gave them a chance to go home if they

wanted to. And if they didn't want to go home it was none of your business. I think that's the way to do it.

RM: They shut the red light district down at the beginning of World War II, didn't they?

ES: I don't remember them shutting down. I don't think they would have gotten away with it. There was one prostitute down there. They arrested her, went to court . . . She had to hire a lawyer and she said, "I'd rather represent myself." She made a monkey out of them. She was a Harvard graduate in law.

RM: Is that right? What was the charge?

ES: Prostitution.

RM: How did she make a monkey out of them?

ES: She just won the case. She was pretty damn smart.

RM: What did the prostitutes charge in those days?

ES: I guess the going market was $2 and whatever they could get.

RM: Was this in the '20s?

ES: I don't know; the '30s, [I think]. The price went up after the air base came out. Bobbie's over here made a lot of money. I'd rather see it controlled than closed. If they close, they're going to get on the street. They closed it in Reno and it went right into the hotels.

RM: That's right. That's where it is in Vegas.

ES: Years ago, Reno had it all in one place. Then they booted it out or something. Well, as soon as you get any kind of a business going and you begin making a lot of dough, people have a way of finding out if you're making money. And then they start riding you. Just like up there, some of those leasers got pretty well fixed and by God, somebody would tell about it, and they began to have all kinds of trouble, lawsuits and every other

damn thing. If they didn't have any money, why, what the hell, nobody bothered you.

Like these ranchers out here, getting up in the '40s. When the price of cattle went up high, people who were neighbors for years, born there and grew up together . . . The first thing you know, by God, some lawyer went up . . . your water rights aren't secure. The bank had told this guy how much money he had in the bank, so he said, "We better check." He started checking. Two good friends go to court, fight each other, [the] lawyers are back there laughing. There ought to be 2 laws: open season on lawyers and it's against the law to be one. Some are pretty good, but, damn it, you get these guys who just stir up trouble.

CHAPTER NINE

RM: Let's see, Ed, one of the questions I have is: you were working for the Tonopah Mining Company in the '40s. I thought they shut all the mines down with World War II.

ES: Oh, no. Tonopah Mining Company and I were deferred because we were producing silica, which was in demand at the smelter for treating copper - the strategic minerals. The gold and silver mines that had 90 percent silica were allowed to run through the war.

RM: What other mines kept running through the war?

ES: Oh, we had the Silver Peak . . .

RM: Which mine at Silver Peak?

ES: I think the Mary mine. We didn't produce any copper; Ely produced copper. They were exempt. There were quite a few. The reason for it was because the silica was needed. I didn't know that my boss had gone down to

the draft board and had me deferred. I didn't find out until just before I left up there. I wanted to enlist with the Seabees [and they] sent a spotter around looking for guys. They were looking for demolition experts. I qualified as a demolition with Hercules-DuPont. I used to go out with their agent on the flat where there's a lot of room and get rid of the old powder that was in town here. This spotter came and asked me. I said OK, so I applied, took the test and examination, but . . .

RM: Was this in World War II?

ES: Yes. But he wanted to know why the hell I wanted to get in demolition, being born in Mexico. That's where I had the trouble with . . . I didn't go back to the Tonopah Mining Company after I left [after that accident], but I still had my job. I was about a year getting well, and then I went to work for Roy Wolfe and then the job in the post office came up.

RM: When did you do your demolition training?

ES: All the time I was in the mine; I took mine rescue first aid right along. It's always good to have it. I could take care of the guys when they got hurt up there. Back in 1933 I took the training about 5 different times, and I took it after I was postmaster because I was thinking about all this old powder around town.

RM: When did you quit at the Tonopah Mining Company?

ES: About 1945, I think.

RM: Was it getting hurt that turned you against mining?

ES: No. I just figured, what the hell, I'd had enough of it. I went down to 98 pounds.

RM: What kind of injuries did you have?

ES: I couldn't breathe; that was the biggest thing. And I had some

broken ribs and my neck and shoulder were hurting.

RM; And you had crawled out on the track with all those injuries?

ES: And my head was cut. Oh, I had a lot of cuts, all right. Those rocks were sharp; they'd grind you. I'm OK now. I wasn't so worried about being hurt as I was so damn mad that nobody came after me. Of course, that might have had something to do with leaving there too, because the engineer wasn't supposed to go home until I was out. All he had to do was step down from the hoist, open the office door, and look and see my hat hanging there.

RM: He didn't even do that? So you never went back.

ES: I didn't go back. Oh, I went up there on leases for some of the guys who were there, to advise them. I ran a lease for 2-1/2 years for an outfit and things like that, but I didn't go back.

RM: But you didn't actually do any digging.

ES: No.

RM: So then what happened?

ES: I went in the post office.

RM: How did you get that job?

ES: I didn't ask for it; I didn't want the damn thing. Everybody loved Mrs. Malone - she was the assistant postmaster and Doc Burdick was the postmaster. He was a Vet. He was Charlie Whittenburg's brother-in-law. I think they told me he was getting old and would retire so the job was coming open and Mrs. Malone came and talked to me. I was working for Roy Wolfe. I told her no, I didn't want it. Well, she kept pestering me and pestering me, because I had worked at Tybo. I ran the post office at Tybo years ago. Well, she kept after me and one day there were about 25 people who came in the store to put the heat on me. So I said all right.

RM: What year was that?

ES: I went in there the 31st of March, 1947, so that would have been in '46. In '46 I was running for county commissioner and got elected [and served] for 3 months.

RM: Why were you only there 3 months?

ES: The post office job came up. [I was a commissioner] in January, February and March of 1947. When I got the appointment in the post office I had to quit as commissioner; it was illegal to have 2 jobs.

It was an experience, because it was not like a post office today. In those days you had 8 bank accounts and they all had to balance to the penny. All the times I was audited my accounts were always right on the penny. There was one for stamps, one for defense stamps, one for revenue stamps, one for money orders, one for postal savings . . . 8 accounts. You made your own payroll in those days. Now, nobody makes their own payroll; a computer does it. They don't have the bonds anymore, they don't have postal savings. We were a big office in an isolated place.

While I was in there they inaugurated airmail 4 times a day. This was a little after '47. We had it all organized and set up, ready to go, our forms and everything sitting there, and here comes a team from San Francisco. They'd come to set us up for the airmail flights. What the hell, we'd got it set up already. They said, "We'll see you the next time they want to send us for a ride." I had a couple of good guys - good workers.

RM: Where was the post office located?

ES: Right where it is now, [for] the whole 25 years I was in there - 25 years to the day. I went in there on the 31st of March, 1947, and I went out the 31st of March, 1972.

RM: Did you like being postmaster?

ES: Yes. It has a challenge to it. You have your people to deal with. I liked it until the last year, and I had a couple of people in there who were devils - they could make your life miserable. They just hated you, so that was one reason I left. I didn't have to. I was 67 when I left and they told me I didn't have to retire. I could have stayed there as long as I could do the work. I said, "No, I want out."

RM: Did you have to stay 25 years to get a pension?

ES: Well, I got a fair pension. I can get by on it. I don't get as good a one as if I'd stayed another 3 years. If I had stayed 3 years longer I'd get 3 times as much as I get now. It runs from $12,000 a year to $24,000 a year. It would have made a big difference.

Oh, I don't know, I'm glad I left because Helen and I were together those 3 years and we were eating and most of that time we were out in the hills all summer. That's where we were when she got sick - out at camp. We have a little fluorspar property out there and we were there and she wasn't feeling well, and we came to town. By God, she passed out colder than a wedge. I brought her to the hospital. The next day they flew her to Reno and the next day she was dead.

RM: What did she die of?

ES: She bled to death.

RM: Tell me about her, Ed. She must have been a remarkable woman to write poetry like this.

ES: She was a cowgirl, too. She could ride the horses; bucking horses too. She worked for her dad.

RM: And she was raised out there in Hawes Canyon till she was how old?

ES: Well, they were in Goldfield when they were freshmen in high school,

at about 14 or 15. She graduated there. They were always on the Honor Roll. She went to the University of Nevada one year and she was elected president of the chemistry club. That shows that she was pretty smart. She could do anything. She wasn't afraid of work . . . she dug holes. She was a good cook. She'd give you hell good, too. Her dad was divorced and she took care of him when he got sick.

RM: When was he divorced?

ES: That was about the time the kids went to school.

RM: What did his wife do?

ES: She went to work on these ranches.

RM: What was her maiden name?

ES: Maude Hanley.

When Helen came to town to go to school Florence, the oldest girl, married Jim Butler right away. Helen and Lucille went to Reno. Helen went to college and Lucille went to high school and they took care of themselves. They lived in the hotel in Goldfield.

RM: That's a remarkable story. So they didn't live with friends or family or anything - just these girls living in the hotel.

ES: With all those old bachelors. I used to go over there and take her out to a dance. Boy, I can tell you I'd rather meet her dad than those old bachelors who were watching out for them. Those old guys were something.

RM: Did they go back out to the ranch very much when going to high school there?

ES: No, they stayed in all the time. Their dad would come in and see them. They went out and worked on the ranch in the summer.

RM: I wonder what room they stayed in in the hotel.

ES: It's marked down in some of her books.

RM: Did she have dairies and things?

ES: She had all kinds of things. She was never quiet a minute.

RM: Did they eat in restaurants?

ES: Oh, I've got to tell you that - that's a good story. Marco Dobro - I don't know if you knew him.

RM: I've heard his name.

ES: Well, he ran a restaurant here for years - a fine man. He ran the restaurant in Goldfield. The steam pipe went up like that, you know. If they weren't down there at 7:30, he'd beat on that steam pipe and when they came down, their breakfast was on the table. He got them to school every day. Their dad paid Marco so much a month for board. He never let them miss school.

RM: Did Helen and Lucille share a room?

ES: There's a picture of that room here someplace. They had a worn-out broom they used to sweep. Lucille was a lot younger.

RM: And you married Helen after she got back from college?

ES: Yes. I'd asked her before that, but it didn't do any good. I wanted her to go to school. I wish that she had finished, but she didn't.

RM: She stayed out at the ranch taking care of her father. He still had the ranch?

ES: Yes, he still had the ranch.

RM: This would have been, when - 1928? He was still on the ranch, but it was folding?

ES: It wasn't folding, it was crumbling. It was too bad. I never knew anybody who worked as hard as O.K. and Ed did. I went with them and I had to tell them a couple of times, "I'm not going to work this way." They worked too hard. For instance, they'd pull a 100-foot column out of a well

by hand. I said, "What the hell, they make tools for that."

They'd always say, "Haven't got time."

RM: What was wrong with O.K., when she went home to take care of him?

ES: I think his heart was broken. He lost the outfit, his son had died, then the divorce. I always said his heart was broken. They had worked so damn hard on the outfit. It wasn't his fault it folded up, because if they had listened to him, they could have cut that herd way down. They could have gotten by with enough seed to start again.

RM: Right. When did the ranch finally fold?

ES: About '31. That's when Butler bought it.

RM: So he sold it to his son-in-law?

ES: Yes. He bought Stone Cabin Valley out there and he bought Little Fish Lake Valley. Fallinis bought Reveille Valley and Wild Horse, Twin Springs.

RM: When did you and Helen get married?

ES: In 1928.

RM: What happened to O.K. after you got married?

ES: He lived in town with us, then he would go down and stay with Florence. He'd rather stay here, though.

RM: What finally happened to him?

ES: He died, that's all.

RM: Was he an old man by then?

ES: He was old; not in years, but he was old.

RM: What made him old?

ES: Well, working so damn hard and everything going to hell. But losing the boy, mostly. I think that was the worst. If the boy had lived, he would have put up a fight to keep that ranch.

RM: When did the boy die?

ES: After '28 or '29. The first year we were married he stayed with us that school year.

RM: How old was he when he passed away?

ES: About 13 or 14. Just a little fellow - a nice little guy.

RM: That's sad.

ES: He used to always say, "Ed, you always give me hell cause I don't have A's all the time. Did you ever have an A when you went to school?"

I'd say, "No, but they didn't grade with A's when I went to school."

RM: How many children did you and Helen have?

ES: Two girls. Lucille was born in 1929, and Kay was born in 1937. Helen had a bad time; she damn near died. And then about 7 years later, she said, "Well, we're going to have another one," but the same thing happened when we had Kay; she damn near died again.

So I said, "No dice. I'd rather have you than a son."

I think riding those damn horses too long shook her up. The other girls didn't ride as much as she did. She'd ride all day long with her dad. Florence didn't ride much at all. O.K. would say, "My middle girl is a better boy than most of these other ranchers have." Yes, she was something!

RM: So you worked at the post office for 25 years. Were there any highlights in your life during those years?

ES: Oh, we had a lot of things happen. The town got flooded, but I can't give you any dates. The post office building was under the GSA. I called them and told them I had 3 feet of water in the basement and to send us up a pump to pump it out. Pretty quick they called back and said to go up to the firehouse and get the fire department to pump it out. I said, "You think the fire department is crazy? That's muddy water down there. They

ain't going to put that through their pump. Better send up a pump." We finally bucketed it out. We got that mud off of everything.

Then they had that fire, when the Elks' Lodge burned down. We didn't lose the post office, [but] we lost some of the floor inside.

RM: The Elks' Lodge was where Coleman's Market used to be?

ES: Yes.

RM: Do you remember when that was?

ES: I don't remember dates too well. What happened was that the 2-story building leaned over on the post office. I was fighting with the undertaker about who had the hose. He wanted the hose on the morgue, and I wanted it on the post office. I was a volunteer fireman, so I got the hose. We kept the roof from getting on fire. Of course it had a good copper roof on it, but keeping it moist helped.

RM: Is it the same building that's there now? Was it there when you started?

ES: It was there. They moved in there the day of Pearl Harbor, when they opened it up and moved in.

RM: That post office was built in '41? I didn't realize it was that old.

ES: Well, I guess it's the newest building, and the only building in town that's really built well. It's a great building. We used that Number 4 oil for the furnace. It was like tar; you had to pre-heat it. The furnace didn't run when the power was off, and the power was off for 58 hours. When the oil congealed, you couldn't get it going. My custodian went down there, and I said, "We've got that 15-gallon tank and my little jig. Take it and go down and get some stove oil." We took that Number 4 heavy oil and unhooked it, and of course we had it running, and I was fighting with the GSA all the time.

And they said, "We'll send somebody up there." That's all they wanted to do, when they came up here. The only thing was, they put a 200-gallon tank of stove oil just like I had.

RM: So that was the end of the Number 4 oil?

ES: That was the end of the Number 4 oil. They pumped it out and it's been on the diesel ever since. We had flashlights, lanterns and gas lights. I even had my carbide lamp. I could work to beat hell with it. And it was just around Christmas time; a busy son of a gun. But we got all the mail out and everything delivered.