



Dave McKinney

Great Basin Indian Archive

GBIA 014



Oral History Interview by

**Norm Cavanaugh
November 30, 2006
Owyhee, NV**



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Interviewee: Dave McKinney

Interviewer: Norm Cavanaugh

Date: November 30, 2006

C: And today our guest is Dave McKinney. He presently resides in Duck Valley, which is called Owyhee, Nevada. And Dave is going to be sharing with us his childhood, and what he recollects of the years he has been living and residing in Nevada and northeastern Nevada. Dave is a member of the Western Shoshone, and he will share that with you, and other stories that he feels are important to preserve and to share with the students. And the stories that he shares here will be recorded and shared with his grandchildren and family members in the future. So, good morning, Dave! To our recording this morning, and you may go ahead and begin. [1:42] *E naniha nanike'here ne taikwatse*. [Your name, tell about yourself.]

M: I'm Dave McKinney.

C: Where were you born, Dave?

M: At Gold Creek.

C: And what year was that?

M: 1907.

C: Who was your mother and father?

M: My father was Bill McKinney, and my mother was Sadie. Sadie, **I guess in Owyhee, you know, don't quite remember that.** [2:15]

C: What tribe were they from?

M: The Shoshones.

C: They're both Shoshones?

M: Yeah.

C: Was there a colony or a reservation there in Gold Creek, or...?

M: No, they were just working over there.

C: Oh.

M: You know, mining, I guess. Jobs. Lots of mining over there.

C: What kind of mineral did they mine?

M: Gold.

C: Gold? In Gold Creek, huh?

M: Yeah.

C: Was it, the mine, by the stream, or were they digging, or what were they doing?

M: It, what do you call that?

C: Panning?

M: Yeah. With the Chinese. **Were** Chinamen over there.

C: They were the miners, huh?

M: Yeah.

C: Was it a big operation?

M: Yeah, I think so. [__Phone rings; inaudible at 3:20__] Some of them went back, some of them died over there.

C: Was there many Indians there that mined?

M: Yeah. I didn't quite remember that well, I was about four years old, I guess. Anyway. We moved out, out of there. To Mountain City.

C: Oh. How big of a place was Mountain City then?

M: Well it was, kind of... Little, little more than it is now, I think.

C: Was there any stores there in Mountain City at that time?

M: Yeah. **One of them stores.** I can remember that one. *Two* of them, I guess.

C: Uh-huh. About what year was that?

M: Well, that's when I was about six years old, or four years, I don't know.

C: And so, was there a school there in Mountain City?

M: Yeah. One. One year. Didn't learn nothing. [Laughter]

C: Oh. What was the name of the school?

M: It was up that gulch. Well, what they call way up that mountain at Mountain City, east.

C: How many students were there?

M: I don't know. There was me, and my sister, and **Frank Keefe**, someone else. About... maybe about eight of them or so.

C: What was the school like? Was it a big, just a big room?

M: Yeah. Not a very big room, I guess.

C: But it was one room?

M: Yeah.

C: So it was like a one-room schoolhouse?

M: Yeah.

C: Oh. And do you remember who the teacher was?

M: I think it was her name. **Majorie Sherman**. That his sister, what's name? **Jalbert's** wife. One of them.

C: Oh. What did she teach?

M: [Laughter] Oh I don't—couldn't quite remember that!

C: So how long were you there?

M: One year. Went to school one year, then we moved to, down to Devil's Gates Ranch. We stayed there about three years.

C: Where's Devil's Gate?

M: It's on the Humboldt River. This side of Fort Halleck. There's a ranch over there.

C: Was it a big ranch?

M: No. Well, it's cattle ranch, you know. Yeah.

C: Who owned the ranch, then, at that time?

M: That time, I guess... I think the **Clayton** brothers. We stayed over there three years. Same ranch there. Rancho Grande, that's where we moved. We stayed in a white man's house first year. We stayed over there about ten years.

C: So was that you and your family? How many brothers and sisters did you have?

M: About four, I think.

C: Four brothers?

M: Yeah.

C: Were they older than you, or younger, or...?

M: Yeah, younger. They're younger than me.

C: They were younger than you?

M: Yeah.

C: Oh. You were the oldest.

M: Yeah.

C: How about, did you have any sisters?

M: Yeah, one of them. The oldest one. Her name's Bessie.

C: So what'd they do?

M: They don't do anything, just... Just stayed over there. It was wartime, I think. What's the—World War I?

C: Oh, World War I.

M: My mother and my grandmother working in the fields. There's no man in that ranch.

C: So all the men were at war.

M: Yeah, uh-huh.

C: How about your dad? Did he go to war?

M: Yeah, he did go to war. No man over there. That's because all of them went to war.

C: So how long were you guys there? Was this that Rancho Grande?

M: Yeah. Ten years, we were over there.

C: Ten years. Then did the war end after that?

M: Yeah.

C: And did the men return?

M: Yeah.

C: And then what'd you guys do from there? What'd you do from there?

M: When I grew up?

C: Yeah, after you grew up and left Rancho Grande.

M: I was quit school, and start trapping. Coyote. Coyote furs, worth about thirty dollars.

C: Was there a school there in Rancho Grande?

M: That's the one place I ever went to school.

C: What was that like? Was that a one-room schoolhouse, too?

M: Yeah. One building.

C: Who all went to school there?

M: I guess **Frank Keefe**, and **Joe Yates**, and Ed Hammond... I guess that's... and we, we schooled there.

C: How many grades did they have?

M: Up to eight, it went to.

C: Up to eighth grade? Oh. Who was the teacher there at Rancho Grande?

M: First one's name was **Jerrilene... Jerrilene Clayton**, I guess.

C: That was the first one? And then there was another teacher after that?

M: After that, yeah.

C: Do you remember who that was?

M: That was one of them. Uh, let's think... **Laura Hammond** was another one. That's the last one I went through.

C: So after that, you started trapping, and begin to work and do your...

M: Yeah.

C: Were you still with your family, or—

M: Yeah. Had me start working when I was fifteen years old. Hay field. Rake. After that, I would work in the summertime, you know. There's no jobs for kids, you know, at that time.

C: So where did you work at that time? Rancho Grande, or...?

M: Yeah.

C: How long did you work there?

M: Oh, I don't know, let's... Worked there about three or four years, I guess. Then work at another ranch over there. **Hibben's** [11:31] Ranch. I work over there, and **Chester Lang's**. Work over there, too. Stacking hay.

C: Did they stack the hay loose then?

M: Yeah. You have to cut them. With a team. Mule team. Mule always run.

C: So did you run, did you work with horses? Was it horse rake? Was it horses that were used?

M: Yeah.

C: There was no tractors then, huh?

M: No.

C: It was all horse?

M: Yeah, mule. And horses too.

C: How were the mules to work with? Were they ornery?

M: [Laughter] Heyyah, they were mean! About noontime, they want to come home. Every time I turn around, one come home... You can't let them go ahead; run away. [Laughter] They were smart! I stack hay over there, too. With the **Jenkins** stack, it went over there like [pantomimes motion].

C: What was the **Jenkins** like, how did that work?

M: They got a buck rake **put on top of it. She** goes like that, pull them over, then pull them up like this, and dump it. Pretty hard to stack with.

C: Huh. How many stackers were there?

M: About two. Two man up from that.

C: Two stackers?

M: **How it works**, two. One team just keep running around, fast. Didn't give you a time, sometimes.

C: How high was the hay stacked?

M: Oh, about, put out about sixty ton or seventy ton.

C: Uh-huh, but how high did you stack the hay?

M: Oh... I don't know, about, what, fourteen feet. Eighteen feet, sometimes.

C: Did anybody ever fall off?

M: Some of them get hurt. Yeah.

C: So, do you remember... So what did, then what'd you do after that? How long did you work there after, uh...?

M: I think that we... Before we went there, though, we were—there was a bunch of sheep that died over there between Deeth and that ranch. They died over there, and then whole bunch of Indians from Deeth pulled the skins, put them in a sack, sell them. They got lots of money, doing that.

C: So was there a lot of sheep, over—

M: Yeah. I don't know why, but they had all died. We went clear back to, way up on, close to Charleston, from Deeth. That way.

C: So was that all open range? There was no fences, and...

M: No, no fence.

C: How many sheep did they run in that country?

M: I don't know. There was a *lot* of them. We look for them in a sagebrush, or the **musk** or whatever you call it.

C: Did you ever shear sheep? Were you a sheepshearer at any time?

M: What do you mean?

C: Cut the sheeps' hair?

M: Sheepshear?

C: Sheepshear, yeah.

M: Yeah, one year I sheepshear for what, **Fernando Bruishi**, in North Fork. I sheared about forty-five or fifty. That's first time I shear sheep. Never tried it after that.

C: So what was the pay, back then? Did you get paid on a daily basis, or by the hour, or how did you get paid?

M: By the head.

C: Oh, by the head.

M: Twenty cents, or fifty cents, a head.

C: For shearing the sheep.

M: Yeah.

C: How about with ranch work? How much did you get paid per day for ranch work?

M: When you worked on the ranch, you get \$45. That's the wintertime when you're feeding. But in the summertime, you're haying. You get about two and a half, day.

C: Two dollars and fifty cents a day?

M: Yeah. Stacker get three dollars. Fifty cents more.

C: So you worked on the ranches almost all your earlier years when you was a young man?

M: Yeah. Then we come here to the reservation. 1927 or [19]28.

C: You came to the Duck Valley reservation? So it was already a reservation then.

M: Nice reservation then.

C: How many Indian people were here then?

M: **I'd own** that's quite a few.

C: Was there any work here at that time?

M: Not that I know of. Only in 1932, or '31, lot of time I worked **wranglers**. Then CC [Conservation Corps], they'd pay dollar and half a day.

C: Dollar and a half a day?

M: Forty-five a month.

C: What kind of work did you do?

M: [Laughter] We were building this road here. With pick and shovel, whole bunch of 'em. We get all this road cleared to Mountain City.

C: Oh, you mean the highway that's between Mountain City and here today.

M: When they get machinery, then they [audio cuts out at 18:36]

C: Uh-huh. So when you guys first built the road, what did you use besides pick and shovel? Was it horse-drawn equipment?

M: No, they had a Cat. Little Cat. Pull that grader. But I didn't run that grader. But some of them, had some white guys running it.

C: This was part of that, the Conservation Corps?

M: Yeah.

C: How much did they pay then? Did you say they paid \$45 a month?

M: Yeah.

C: How long was that available, the Conservation Corps?

M: I don't know! Can't quite remember that. Then they start clearing roads. I help, all this road here, on pick and shovel work.

C: There was a lot of people working on that, huh?

M: Yeah. That's only job they got. Yeah, they was tough.

C: How long did it take to build these roads?

M: Part of them CC, they build it then after that. And road departments start **milling** with machines.

C: But it was all dirt road?

M: Yeah.

C: So, about how old were you then?

M: Well, not... Maybe about 25.

C: Were you still single, or...

M: Yeah.

C: You were still single at that time.

M: Yeah.

C: So what was life like here on the reservation? Did people have houses they live in, or they build their houses, what did they live in?

M: You got to build your own house. Anything they could find.

C: And that's how they built it?

M: Yeah.

C: Where did they get their water?

M: They drink out of this river.

C: The river water?

M: Yeah. Big well. Some of them was was drinking the canal water, any water.

C: Where did the water come from? Was it just from the river, or was the dam built then?

M: No, 19... when'd they build that dam? I didn't quite remember. I work over there, but I didn't quite remember.

C: What was there before the dam? Was there anything there before the dam?

M: Yeah. There's ranch up there.

C: Ah. Where the dam is now.

M: Yeah

C: Oh. Who owned the ranch?

M: Forget their name now... Geez, what's their name? **Johntree's** their last name. Then...
Cuvery bought that ranch. That time, they build that.

C: But that was all a ranch before they built the dam?

M: Yeah. Yeah, I help on them, that surveying too.

C: With the—

M: Rod, **mounting**, chain.

C: So you worked as a surveyor?

M: Yeah, with a surveyor.

C: Oh, you worked with him. So about when did you get married? Do you remember?

M: [Laughter] You know, I don't quite remember that! No, I don't remember that.

C: So what did you do after working with the roads and so forth? When did you get into ranching?

M: Yeah, I been working for when this road goes, when [__inaudible at 23:24__] comes in.
When road department **was active**, I work for that.

C: Oh, is that the state highway?

M: Yeah, that's what it is now. First time they was [__inaudible at 23:41__].

C: Oh. How long was the Conservation Corps? How long did they exist, or how long were they here?

M: Oh, I don't know. About maybe ten years or fifteen years?

C: When they phased out, was there another program that replaced them, or...?

- M: Yeah, when they put up that dam up there, there's lot of work here. Digging them boxes for the turnouts. Yeah it worked like, I dunno, same model **mind you**.
- C: So what was that dam—what was the intent of the dam? Was that dam to provide irrigation for the valley here, or what...?
- M: Supposedly for that, was Shoshone Dam.
- C: Were people farming then, or were they...
- M: Yeah, they start farming.
- C: What did they grow when they first started?
- M: Well, they raise hay.
- C: Raise hay?
- M: Yeah. Bundle it. That's the way I worked in them days. **Would carry them**. All throughout here. **Stop at the** [__inaudible at 25:06__] **ranch**.
- C: So was it all sagebrush and willows, or what was—
- M: Yeah, it was all willows. **Has to work always, running**. [__inaudible at 25:21__]. We was going to rake them in. Jim... What's his name? Now I forgot the name. [Laughter] Wait until they dry, burn 'em up. Then, see that's the **Newes**. Then the contractor, contractors, all worked all this, all this tribal land.
- C: What kind of machinery or equipment did you run?
- M: They had the **Carryo**. **Carryo**, and bulldozers.
- C: So you learned to operate the bulldozer, huh?
- M: Yeah. I learned the **Carryo**. I helped them **spray** all this canal, **back to that high land**.
- C: So, all this land was level then? About what year was that?
- M: Somewhere around 1960, I guess.

C: Did you go to the World War II, in the [19]40s?

M: No, they didn't take me. I've got a bum arm here, a broken arm. All broke. That's why they didn't take me. I want to go that time. I tried it once. After that, they told me, "give you six months." They gave me [__inaudible at 27:26__] over six months. Because the war keep on going, then they'll take me. But I sure like to go over there. Can't make it.

C: Did many of your friends go? Or people you knew?

M: Yeah. Two of my brothers went. Yep. A lot of them boys here.

C: Did they make it back safely?

M: Yeah. Most of them. Only two of them here that are killed over there. Yep, they come back. In that war, the World War II. I don't know about this other war. Lot of young guys, they go in that.

C: Where'd you meet your first wife?

M: I don't remember!

C: Was she a Shoshone, too? Same tribe? Or...

M: Yeah.

C: Was she from this area, Duck Valley? Or where was she from?

M: From Austin, I guess.

C: She was from Austin?

M: Austin **somewhere**. What they call that, on the other side? On the other side. What they call that ranch? They're from over there.

C: Where did you meet her? Did they have gatherings like Fandangos, or get-togethers for Indian people back then?

M: Yeah. They had Fandango. Sometimes, they had a white dance, too.

- C: Where was that at? Where did you meet her?
- M: Down here, down where the celebration go on.
- C: Oh, here in Duck Valley?
- M: Yeah.
- C: So what did they do during the celebrations?
- M: They play a hand game, card game, race, foot race, rodeo...
- C: Can you share with us about the hand game? How the hand game works? Or how's that game played?
- M: You got to have a bone, what they call it, one of them white, one of them black.
- C: Were they real bones, or what did they use?
- M: They used a willows, or them deer bone, some kind of bone. Had about twelve sticks, I guess. When you take all them sticks, then you win.
- C: So they had, did you have two teams? Or how many teams played?
- M: Two.
- C: Two teams.
- M: So you got to get somebody over there.
- C: How did you pick your teams?
- M: You just **speak** it up, "Anybody want to play?" And they would **stand** up.
- C: And how many sets of bones did you have?
- M: That's two and four.
- C: So there was four bones all together?
- M: Yeah.
- C: Two sets. Were they marked? The bones?

M: Yeah. One of them's white one. The other one's, with the tape, I guess. Black ones. You got to guess them with that white one.

C: So you guess for the white one.

M: Yeah. That's the way they play.

C: So the person hides the bones?

M: Yeah. You got to hide them bones.

C: How do you pick who's going to hide it?

M: Well you've got to get, well, anybody wanted to.

C: So how many people do you usually have on a team?

M: In a match, there are about six or so. I guess, they got to give me them bones, which one **he holds. Get the right one, get sticks.**

C: How many sticks do you have, when you start out?

M: Twelve altogether.

C: Oh, is that twelve? So do you divide the twelve sticks between the two teams?

M: Yeah.

C: So does each team have six?

M: Yeah. That's what they used first. Now they're using only ten. Change that.

C: So it used to be twelve sticks altogether, guessing sticks. And each team had six.

M: Yeah.

C: So how did you determine who started with the bones? Who started with hiding them?

M: Well, anybody. **And the money, bet money.**

C: So what did you bet back then? Was it money, or was it other things?

M: Yeah. Money.

- C: How much was the pot? Did you match each side, or how did that work?
- M: Yeah. The other guys, and maybe put out fifty dollars at least, **you guys call it**. And that *inni mase* [33:14].
- C: But it's always even?
- M: Yeah.
- C: Each side puts up a even amount of money?
- M: Yeah, even [__inaudible at 33:22__].
- C: And then they, where did they put it?
- M: Right in that center.
- C: Right in the center, where everybody can see it?
- M: Yeah.
- C: Uh-huh. So how did you determine who was going to begin with the bones? Did you flip a coin to decide who's going to start with hiding or guessing first?
- M: There's a way that they start, I think. Whoever bet first money, some them other guys could take the bones and start.
- C: What type of songs did they sing?
- M: They had a stick, log up front, and they hit on it. Handgame song. Not the dance song.
- C: Uh-huh. So what was the reason for hitting on the stick?
- M: Make your team go, I guess. [Laughter]
- C: Do you know any of those songs?
- M: Yeah.
- C: Do you? What did they sing about? Was it about anything? Did the songs have words, or...

M: Yeah, some of them have got words, some of them don't.

C: Did you have a favorite one?

M: Yeah.

C: That's a favorite song you sung?

M: Yeah.

C: Is it a favorite because it helped you win, or how did it become your favorite?

M: Yeah. Hide it, try and fool the other guys that play with you.

C: How long did those games usually last?

M: Sometimes, they go all day long and night. Depends on how much money you got. Yeah.

C: So the team that starts playing and hiding the bones, they have the other team betting—or guessing—with their sticks?

M: Yeah.

C: Who usually does the guessing for the other team?

M: One of them's special man.

C: Do they have like a team leader?

M: Yeah. Yep.

C: So, do they guess one stick at a time, or two sticks at a time, or how does that work?

M: Well, depends on how many you guess right. Maybe you guess both of them. Maybe you lose. Maybe you never guess both of them. Then, throw, two sticks.

C: So each time you guess, you have to give up a stick.

M: Yeah.

C: So these songs that you talk about, do you need a drum? Do you sing with a drum, or do you just beat on the stick?

M: Nowadays, they usually got drum now. Most of them never did. Long time ago, they never did.

C: They just sung without a drum.

M: Yeah. Now they use that drum. Because they're playing that outside way, of that way in Washington. They use drum. That's why these people use it now.

C: So these, so the favorite song that you have; what's it about, your song?

M: Not anything, it's just, that's the song.

C: Can you sing part of it for us?

M: Now, you mean?

C: Sure.

M: Don't remember! [Laughter]

C: Okay! [Laughter]

M: [Sings; sounds like a chant. No discernible words.]

C: Okay. So that was your favorite song when you're doing handgame.

M: Yeah. Yeah.

C: Did you win a lot of money in those games over the years, when you played?

M: Sure. And then lose sometimes. It depends—I don't know. You know. It's the same like any game. Sometime you're lucky, you win.

C: Uh-huh. But it was fun, though, huh?

M: Yeah.

C: Do you remember how that game came about, or where it first began?

M: No. They already had it when I was born. Long time ago, I guess, they use that when they—that's only game they played, I guess.

- C: When people got together at gatherings?
- M: Yeah.
- C: So what else? Was there any other games besides the handgame?
- M: Card game [__inaudible at 39:15 __].
- C: Card games?
- M: Yeah. I don't know what they use before. Before they used card game.
- C: With the hand game, was it both for men and women, or did they—
- M: When they first started, the ladies one side, ladies on the other side. Just the ladies. Now they don't. They just mix with the womans.
- C: So when it first started, it was just women and men?
- M: Yeah.
- C: Oh. Why was that?
- M: I don't know. Just the ladies against one another. They don't go with mens. That's they way they had it when first I seen. Now us Indians mix with ladies and men.
- C: Were kids allowed to play, or was it just for adults?
- M: Nowadays, they're using kids. Yeah.
- C: But in the old days, it was just for adults?
- M: Yeah.
- C: So when these Fandangos, when people got together, what other kind of activities did they do? Did they dance, and—
- M: Yeah, that's what they doing. Dance, play handgame, any kind of race, I guess, footrace.
- C: How long did they run, or how far was the footraces?

M: Well, some of them were here in Owyhee. There's one man, name Race Harney, he run long ways. Run over there at **Cornwall** [Pass? 41:17], what they call. He run with a horses, saddle horse. That butte over there? You make one round. Them horsemen, you got make two rounds.

C: He raced a horse?

M: Yeah.

C: His name was Race Harney?

M: Yeah.

C: How did he become...?

M: He was just born that way.

C: He was a good runner?

M: Good runner, yeah. Horses [__inaudible at 41:46__]. My old man was with him, and he told us that always had it galloping fast. Because it gets slowed down, doesn't go fast. That's why there's no fence over there.

C: So he had a race here in the valley?

M: Yeah.

C: Where did they start?

[Phone rings]

M: They'd start from over there, when they had a Fourth July going over there.

C: The Fourth July run was over...

M: Yeah, over there in, uh, where the—what they call *Honopah*.

C: Oh, over there.

M: You know that David?

C: By David Premo's house?

M: Yeah. Right from there, out to that butte.

C: Is that by Sheep Creek?

M: Yeah, this side of it.

C: This side of that.

M: *Tisi Goei*. [42:33] ["Just a bare mountain," south of Owyhee on the Sheep Creek Road]

C: *Tisi Goei*, uh-huh. And so they raced to there and back?

M: Yeah.

C: Oh. How many times did they race? Or was that just a one time?

M: They race on the road. Here, I guess.

C: So who won that race?

M: Race Harney was the best runner here.

C: He beat the horse?

M: Well, I don't know. He just doggone try to beat 'em, I guess, want to show them what he can do.

C: So he raced the horse.

M: Yeah.

C: Who was the rider? Do you remember who was the rider?

M: Yeah, my old man was one of them. There was whole bunch of 'em.

C: Oh, your old man—

M: My dad was.

C: Uh-huh. What was his name?

M: Bill.

C: Bill McKinney?

M: Yeah.

C: Oh. He was riding the horse?

M: Yeah.

C: So he raced the horse, huh? This Race Harney?

M: Yeah, that's what Race was doing.

C: How old was he?

M: I guess he was young back then.

C: Race Harney was young?

M: Yeah.

C: How did he get his name Race?

M: I don't know.

C: But that's what people called him?

M: Yep. Race Harney.

C: Okay, Dave. To finish up on Race Harney, did you know him, or did you meet him? Or what was he like?

M: Yeah, I met him when he was old.

C: Oh, when he was really old.

M: Yeah.

C: When he was young, in that race against the horse, was there people betting on him, or what was...?

M: No, I guess it was just run.

C: It was just—

- M: Just he want to show them what he can do.
- C: But he was a runner, huh? Did he go to other reservations and race?
- M: I don't know. He did race with one of them over there, one of them Paiutes. They bet money on it.
- C: Oh, they raced for money?
- M: Yeah, bet money. And that man race with him. They started from here, I guess. Where the hospital is. The road was different then. **Went to** race down to the **salvation yard**. They put out money, least that Paiute put out money. Shoshone. They run race. Then Race hadn't beat him. [__inaudible at 45:22__] Before he get down through the base, to the **salvation**, he said he hurt his leg. And he sat down, halfway over there. Then the people know he don't win. They just, they **lost** money.
- C: Who was it he raced? Do you remember?
- M: They called him, *Washikanpiku* [45:54]. That's his Indian name. I guess he was runner, too.
- C: How far was that? How many miles, would you say?
- M: I don't know how many miles from here to that. About a mile. More than a mile, I guess.
- C: Yeah. About four miles.
- M: Yeah. And he says he hurt his leg. His leg here.
- C: Who said that?
- M: That guy.
- C: Oh, the Paiute guy?
- M: Yeah. That's what I heard. But I never did see it.
- C: Oh. So, but Race was a good runner, then.

M: Yeah.

C: What are some of the other things you did in your life?

M: Yeah, I worked for a **Bureau's** first. When they come here. Cutting brush, when Tom Premo was my boss. Canal over there. Cutting willows over there, for two and a half a **day**. Then I work for road department here. Drive a truck first. First time, I was helping surveyors. Rod, and them chains.

C: Was that with the BIA, or who was that with?

M: Yeah. Then, later on, I catch on and grader, run grader, blade this road here. That was a dirt road, all this. That's what I do.

C: How did you learn how to run the grader?

M: Well, **on the cement** grader. See, and even the BIA doesn't let you run it, try it.

C: Oh. So you learned on your own.

M: [Laughter] Yeah. **I just try on my own**. Let you work that. And work on that dam, too. I don't know what year.

C: The Wild Horse Dam?

M: Yeah.

C: Were you a grader operator then, or...

M: No, with a pick and shovel. They shoot 'em with a dynamite. You got a **shovel** with a short handle, round **handle**. But they didn't fit over there, they got [__inaudible at 48:38__]. Boss watching you whole time. Sixty-two and a half cents an hour, that's what he give you over there.

C: That was hard work, huh?

M: Yeah. Then I work on this diversion dam, too. That was hard work, too. Nine hours.

C: A day?

M: Yeah. Run the wheelbarrow. Going with big rocks about that large. And down **the engine with that mixer**. Yeah, that was hard work.

C: So you hand-mixed the cement?

M: No, with machine. Big one. Different sizes. Have four different size, I think. I don't know where they put it. Small ones. Sand. Yeah, that was hard.

C: How many of you worked on that? Was there other people that you know of? Your brothers, or...? Family, or...?

M: Yeah, me and my dad, and... **Allie Gilbert. Jimmy Leach, Junior**. We're the one that finished that one. Other of 'em couldn't stand it, they quit. **Shelly** tried to get on there, he went only half a day. He come home time for dinner. Never go back.

C: So it was hard work.

M: Yeah, that is. He told me his hands hurt. Yeah, that, it was hard work.

C: Oh. So when did you get into ranching? Did you start your ranching business?

M: Yeah, I was still working **then, over here at road**. Trying to run my cattle, make the loan. Couldn't make it. The cattle price was way low!

C: How many cattle did you run?

M: Well, we started out with about sixty head. Cattle price went way down then. Couldn't make your loan, you had to pay it. They finally settled me. Sell me out.

C: Sell your cows out.

M: Yeah. When I get home, try and tell me. **Raymond Thacker?** He got money, he say, "I know how it is when one man trying to run ranch." He says, "I help you." I told him, "Oh, I give up." So I quit. Sell all my cattle.

C: Do you remember what year that was?

M: No! [Laughter] I don't even think about that!

C: So how old are you today?

M: I was younger then.

C: No, I mean today. How old are you today?

M: I'm 98.

C: You're 98 years old. Oh! When was your birthday?

M: My birthday July 28th.

C: Oh, so you just had a birthday this, not too long ago.

M: Yeah.

C: Well, you do well for 98. Okay, well, I know it's time for you to eat, so we'd better let you go. And I want to thank you for today.

M: Okay.

C: Okay.

[End of recording]