An Interview with
MAYME W. HOOPER

An Oral History conducted and edited by
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Nye County Town History Project
Nye County, Nevada

Tonopah
1987

Mayme W. Hooper
circa 1930

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

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 McCracken interviewing Mayme Hooper at her home in Tonopah, Nevada
October 17, 1987

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Mayme, could we begin with you telling me your full name?

MH: Mayme W. Hooper. My maiden name is Williams.

RM: And what is your birthdate?

MH: September 2, 1909. I was 78 years old this September.

RM: Where were you born, Mayme?

MH: I was born right outside Fallon, out towards the reservation about 12 miles, towards Stillwater.

RM: What was your father's name?

MH: Fred Williams.

RM: Was he Indian?

MH: He was half; his dad was a white man.

RM: What type of Indian was he?

MH: He was a Paiute. [stress on the second syllable]. My mother's maiden name was Breckenridge; Lillie Breckenridge. Her brother was Willie Breckenridge.

RM: And was she Indian?

MH: Yes.

RM: And was her father Indian?

MH: Yes.

RM: And were they Paiute too?

MH: Well, I suppose they were.

RM: Were they all from up in the Fallon area?

MH: Yes.

RM: And where did you grow up?

MH: Right there in Fallon, till I was married.

RM: And whom did you marry?

MH: Mr. Albert Hooper.

RM: Where was he from?

MH: He was from Monitor Valley - at Pine Creek. He was Shoshoni, but his dad had a mixture of white.

RM: When were you married?

MH: Let's see, August 17, I believe, in '28. That's 'way back - I don't remember.

RM: Did you have brothers or sisters?

MH: There were 7 of us. I had 5 brothers and one sister. I was the 3rd youngest. I have a brother 2 years older than I. My sister was 3 years older.

RM: Are they still living?

MH: No, my sister died a few years ago. She had a big family, my sister did. Then another brother died a year ago in Fallon. He was a veteran, and . . .

RM: It sounds like they've all lived a long time, though.

MH: We have.

RM: Did you go to school at Fallon?

MH: I went to Stillwater public school in Fallon.

RM: And how long did you go there?

MH: Well, you know how youngsters were. So I got to thinking - some of the kids who went to Stewart, to the Carson Indian School, were telling me about how they had a nice place to go to school, and you could learn things, and go to dances and stuff like that. It [chuckles] was all kid stuff. And so I said to my mother, "Mom, I want to go to Stewart to school."

My mother said, "What?"

I said, "I want to go to school in the Carson Indian School." You see, I'd been with white kids most of my life.

She said, "No, you can't go to Carson Indian School. You're in school now." (I was going to school in Stillwater, and it was a white school.

I kept it up, and my mother said, "I can't tell you to go to school in . . ." Stewart, they called it. "If you want to go that bad," she said, "how would you take care of yourself?"

"Well," I said, "I'm going with these girls - these Indian girls." But I'd been around white people pretty near all my life.

So then she said, "If you want to go school in the Carson Indian School at Stewart, you'd better go and ask your father."

But I knew differently; I knew my father wouldn't want me to go away. But I said to my dad, "Can I go to Stewart to go to school? I want to go up to that Indian school with these other girls."

My dad said, "No, you can't.

"Why?" I said, "They have lots of fun going to school there and learn different things." [chuckles]

And so I tried to talk to my dad. And he said to me, "No, you can't go, Sister. You can't go up there." He says, "You're going to school here, in . . . " the public school right there in Stillwater.

So I said, "Well, but I want to go to school up there."

My dad said, "No. You can't. You have to stay here."

RM: He didn't want to lose you - was that it?

MH: He didn't want to lose me. He said, "No. You can't go up there. You're going to school now." And in the meantime I wanted to go so badly. And the superintendent - I think it was the superintendent of the Carson

Indian School came in a bus to pick up the Indians kids who were going the ones who talked me into going. [chuckles] I was determined to go to school there. My dad said, "You can't go, Sister. You've got to stay here, with your mother and grandma and your brothers." But I was still determined to go. Isn't that silly!

RM: Kids are like that, though, aren't they?

MH: Well - determination. Yes.

RM: Well, did you finally go, then?

MH: Then finally my dad said I could go. But I was to go to school, not monkey at all. Not - plain English, he was talking. (My dad could talk Indian.)

RM: Did you board over there?

MH: In the Carson Indian School - yes. But I didn't graduate. This other part of the story goes with it. [chuckles] My dad sent me, all right, but he told me, "When you go to school, you tend to business, and learn!" he said to me. But you know what I was after? Playing basketball.

RM: Oh, you liked to play basketball?

MH: I did, and that's why I'm lame, too. The arthritis has come out in this knee, where they knocked my knee out. We were playing the white kids at Gardnerville, and the guard who was guarding me ran into me and knocked my knee out. I flopped on the floor there, and the referee and some others brought a gurney and they put me on the gurney and wheeled me to the hospital. And I was there - almost 2 weeks, I think it was. And I walked on crutches. They let my father know, so he came on the train. And when he got there my dad was really blowed up. He said, "I sent my daughter - my 'Sister' - to the school. Not to play basketball." Then he said, "We're going back home." He took me out of school, and put me

back in . . .

RM: And that was the end of your basketball?

MH: That was the end of my basketball. I couldn't walk anyway. That was awful. I went back home.

RM: What did your father do for a living?

MH: My dad had a ranch. He was a kind of a farmer, back then. His dad had left him a place. His father was a white man - married to my Indian grandmother. He was a very nice fellow. [At first] my grandmother didn't like him, though. And he would bring presents to my grandmother. His people didn't like it, because he'd bring her a pair of shoes, and dress goods, and things like that. They said, "Don't take any more of what he brings you for presents. He just wants to take you away." That's his <u>own</u> people telling her that.

And she said to them, "You live your own life."

RM: Where was she from, now?

MH: She was from Fallon. He was a white man, and he had a brother. The 2 of them had come from back east. They got to Reno, and they parted in Hazen. My grandfather wanted to come this way, then he came and moved into Reese River. But that's where he found my grandmother. He fell in love with my grandmother, but my grandmother didn't care for him. So that went on . . . that's kind of weird, isn't it?

RM: Well, no; I think it's a nice story.

MH: [laughs] You do.

RM: Yes, I do. Because we're talking about the 1880s or something like that, aren't we? Way back there.

MH: Oh, yes. My grandmother was over 100 years old when she died.

RM: How old did your mother live to be?

MH: Well, not really old, old. She was kind of a young lady - nice-looking lady. And she had a mixture of white person. My father had a heart attack and died when he was 48 years old.

RM: So your father had the ranch, and you grew up there. And then, where did you meet your husband?

MH: I met my husband there in Fallon. My sister was married to my husband's cousin. She got acquainted with him, and kept on talking, and you know how this group . . . I guess when they want their girlfriend, it goes into romance. She married this husband of hers, and his name was Albert Hicks. So when I was a young girl I said, "I'm going to marry an Indian fellow with the same name - Albert." And that was my husband - his name was Albert Hooper.

RM: Yes. And he was from Monitor Valley?

MH: He was from Monitor Valley.

RM: So you got married, and then what happened?

MH: After I got married we went to Scotty's. He helped build that fence around Scotty's Castle. I got on the train at Fallon and came through Hazen that way . . .

RM: And then went on down to Scotty's?

MH: Yes, because his father and mother were over there. There were quite a few Indians who worked over there. Albert's father was a nice man. He talked good, and everything, and was interested in me, and liked me, because I was his son's wife. But his sister and his mother didn't like me.

RM: Why?

MH: Because I talked different tribe, I guess.

RM: Oh, they were Shoshoni and you were Paiute.

MH: Yes. Years ago, the 2 languages - Indian people - weren't real good friends.

RM: You didn't speak Shoshoni, then, did you? When you got married?

MH: No, I picked it up then - just in less than a month.

RM: You picked it up that fast?

MH: Yes. I'm kind of smart, you know. [laughs] I mimic lots of things. You see that Indian word up there?

RM: You've got a sign over your door which says q.u.i.t.u.p. Quit-up?

MH: Yes. That's a restroom.

RM: Oh, that means restroom in Indian. In Paiute, or Shoshoni?

MH: Paiute.

RM: That's quit-up?

MH: Quitup. You see, you're half Indian, too.

RM: Well, I am part Indian. I have a little bit of Cherokee. My grandmother was a registered Cherokee. She was a 1/16th, and my mother's a 1/32nd. I'm a 1/64th [chuckles]. Not very much, but just a little bit.

MH: But it's wonderful, isn't it?

RM: Yes, it is. I'm proud of it.

MH: Why, certainly. I think it's something to <u>be</u> proud of. I always say that to people.

RM: Yes, I think it is. Well, so now you were living down at Scotty's.

MH: Yes.

RM: What was that like?

MH: There were a lot of people working.

RM: It was mainly Indians, wasn't it?

MH: Mostly Indians from that country - toward around Beatty and the Grapevines.

RM: And Amargosa and down at Pahrump and Death Valley; yes.

MH: Yes. But they taught the Indians. And they smoked. I didn't smoke when I was young.

RM: You mean cigarettes?

MH: Yes. But they had another thing that they mixed up and took as a cigarette. I didn't, but I felt odd, you see, because I never smoked and I wanted to learn how. So I said to my husband, "Do you know what I'm going to do?"

And he said, "What are you going to do?"

I said, "I am going to learn to smoke the way these women smoke." So I studied while I watched them. They just smoked that to - they had it in a can. They'd shake it up like that and then put it in their mouth, and up their nose, and they'd sneeze.

RM: Oh, they sniffed it and chewed it. What was it? A native tobacco?

MH: I don't what kind of plant it was, but I know they ground it into powder. But I never tried it. You know what I tried?

RM: What?

MH: Bull Durham. [laughs]. Isn't that silly.

RM: Where did you live when you were down there?

MH: The Indians had a camp. And then, of course, when we moved down there, my husband took a tent. That was our honeymoon. [laughs]

RM: You had a honeymoon in a tent down at Scotty Castle? [laughs]

MH: I can just see myself. And then going into the castle, we had to go over a stile. And I used to go there. There were some people who lived here - they knew me.

RM: In Tonopah?

MH: Yes. He's dead, now. George Barra, his name was. I used to go

through there and greet him, and talk to him. I love to talk to people. Just a friendly way, I just get that way. Something interests me . . . But I used to go through there and I thought he was just wonderful, because he'd visit with me, and talk with me.

[a pause in the tape]

RM: Did you know Scotty?

MH: Yes. He was kind of a heavy-set fellow. He had a cowboy hat on, and that hair . . . hair band that they make on their hat. And then he had . . . well, like a western.

RM: Did you know Albert Johnson?

MH: He was there, I believe, but I don't remember him much.

RM: Was Scotty there a lot?

MH: Oh, yes. He was dressed like an old prospector.

RM: How long did you stay at Scotty's?

MH: Gosh, we must've stayed a few months, because they finished that fence. I don't know how many miles it was. My husband used to take a lunch.

My husband had a ranch in Monitor Valley, and we went back there.

RM: How long did you stay, then, up at the ranch at Monitor Valley?

MH: Until my husband died in 1980.

RM: Oh. So you lived up in Monitor Valley all that time.

MH: Yes. And here sometimes.

RM: Did you you have this house then?

MH: No, we bought this up on a delinquent tax.

RM: When did you buy it?

MH: I've got a record of it some place . . . Not too, too long [ago]; but it's been years.

RM: How big was the ranch?

MH: 160 acres. We had cattle. Not much, but enough to live off.

RM: And then you ranged the cattle on the open range there?

MH: Yes.

RM: Did you grow crops or anything?

MH: Hay; wild hay. And I think my dad brought some alfalfa up, and I think Albert and his dad then planted that. Our house was an old station house. And now it's caved in.

RM: And you lived up there from . . .?

MH: I was married in '28.

RM: And stayed there until he passed away in 1980?

MH: We lived there. And when my husband got sick, we came back to here and I put him in the hospital here. Then they sent my husband and me to Reno, to a doctor. And they told him that his prostate gland was what was doing the damage. They wanted to treat him, and see if they can help him - maybe have surgery, you see. I didn't want that done, not knowing what they were going to do to him. I forget the doctor's name. I used to see him, not long ago.

RM: Were there other Indians living in Monitor Valley besides you?

MH: His father and mother and Albert's old people. He had quite a few old people.

RM: Did you have children?

MH: No, I raised a foster son.

RM: What was Tonopah like for Indians in the early days?

MH: There weren't very many Indians here. They were mostly around Smoky Valley and Reese River and those countries.

RM: So in 1928, when you got here, there weren't many Indians?

MH: There were more Shoshoni.

RM: Where did they live? Did they have a camp here in the area?

MH: No, they rented places, just wherever.

RM: Were there Paiutes here at all?

MH: I think I was the only Paiute. [chuckles] But I learned to talk their Shoshoni language right away, you see. It didn't make it bad for me. But my husband - we lived together 54 years, I think, or 55 - my husband couldn't talk my language.

RM: Did he speak English?

MH: He spoke English and Shoshoni - their own language - to his father, mother, sister and so forth.

RM: Who did you talk Paiute to?

MH: Myself. And I tried to teach my husband, but he couldn't grasp it.

RM: What language do you think in?

MH: My own.

RM: You think in Paiute?

MH: Oh, yes. I can talk to you in Paiute.

RM: Why don't you say a few Paiute things.

MH: In Paiute? Now, I would say, in conversation - English conversation - this is what I'm going to tell you. I would say: <u>ny</u> <u>nywi'a</u> <u>ru'ahokY</u>. [y is the symbol for a high mid-vowel, rather like the e in unstressed English the. A j stands for English y.] It means, "I'll talk Indian to you." That's what I say now.

RM: Could you say that again?

MH: <u>ny</u> <u>nywi'a</u> <u>ru'ahokY'u</u>. That means, "I'm going to talk Indian." Then, what do you want me to say?

RM: Just tell me your name, and say . . .

MH: What would I say? What would I say?

RM: Say, "My name is Mayme Hooper, and I am 78 years old and I live in Tonopah, Nevada."

MH: [laughs] Could I get it together, do you think?

RM: I think you could, yes.

MH: nyryananitena means, "my name" - nyryananitena Mayme W. Hooper. ny jaa Tonapawai nobite means, "I live here in Tonopah."

RM: That's great.

Now, tell me about your hearing aid.

MH: Oh my hearing. I was on the telephone, and I was sitting there talking to a friend of mine on the telephone. She said the Ear Man - this Miracle Ear Man was in town.

RM: Oh, yes; I saw the van.

MH: So I went to him for 2 days.

CHAPTER TWO

RM: Well, Mayme, what was it like for Indians in Tonopah? Can you give me any feel for it?

MH: Well, I was a stranger. I came in here just married and I had to get used to listening to people, and so forth. I love to listen to people. I was raised that way, I think. My dad would talk English to us kids and my mother would talk Indian. My grandmother would talk Indian to us. You see, that's how I happen to know about talking Indian. But I liked it. If I got interested in something, I would go with whoever it is and say things, and pronounce it for them - things like that. But my poor husband couldn't do that. [chuckles] He couldn't understand.

RM: When you were living with your husband, up in Monitor Valley, did you practice any of the old Indian ways? For instance, did you practice an Indian religion?

MH: Not very much.

RM: What religion were you raised in?

MH: Well, when we were kids my dad was a believer of God. And my mother, and my . . .

RM: Of the Christian God?

MH: Yes. And we were taught: always listen to God's words, you know, and abide by them.

RM: Did you go and pick pine nuts and things like that?

MH: Yes.

RM: And did you have any ceremonies with the pine nuts or anything?

MH: Well, just to ask for a blessing on it.

RM: I want to find out as much about the Indians as I can from you, Mayme. Because you represent the older generation of Indians.

MH: Yes, I do!

RM: And I want to get your knowledge; do you see what I'm trying to do? I want to get your knowledge so that it's preserved.

MH: Yes. [But] they'll say, "Ah, it's just nothing but kuchukwitapH ['bullshit' in Shoshoni and Paiute].

RM: Did you practice any Indian medicine, or anything like that? Use any herbs or plants or things like that for illness?

MH: Well, we eat plants.

RM: You mean, for food, or for medicine?

MH: Well, some for food and some for medicine. Like that . . . Indian tobacco, they call it. You eat that, or you can smoke it for a cold, [or]

brew it and drink a little bit of it. And it helps. They call it toza'A - that means that plant.

And my dad liked greens. You know how some white men like you like to eat salad and stuff. [chuckles]

RM: Sure.

MH: They cooked brush - tonobi, they call it. That's 'greasewood.'

RM: Oh, greasewood. Really?

MH: When it's first going up green.

RM: That's the . . . creosote, you mean?

MH: Sure. They'd boil it. And sometimes my mother would cut bacon up in it.

RM: What other plants?

MH: Dandelions. [chuckles]

RM: OK, dandelions. You ate those in the springtime?

MH: Oh, yes. Dad loved those things. We also ate tules.

RM: What are they?

MH: Kind of like a water plant. You could eat the root part of it as a delicacy.

RM: What other plants did you use for medicines, Mayme?

MH: Others used other things, but I don't think I could remember.

RM: What was Tonopah like when you first got here?

MH: Have you been around Austin and Eureka?

RM: Yes.

MH: It was a town like that. I came on the train. My dad and mother took me to Hazen and put me on that train. And my husband met me over at the station down below - at Miller's. And the poor thing had a big Buick car . . . And when we were making the turn down below there, somebody

said, "Rise. It's time for you to get up." And I didn't undress because you're with strangers on a train. I just covered up with the blanket on my shoulders. When someone said, "Get up and get your face washed and comb your hair," I probably looked like a wild Indian. [laughter] But I made it, and my husband went from the depot - do you remember the depot?

RM: Oh, sure.

MH: Well, that's where the depot was. And we had to go out this way. And it came in, reverse. They backed up and parked the tail end of the train . . . They backed in. I came out the door right next to the engine there and my husband was there, poor thing. He'd come 'way out there [to Millers] to meet me, and came [back to Tonopah] along beside the train. The train was coming this way and he was in the car.

RM: Oh, is that right.

MH: Yes. Kind of real romantic. That's . . . my husband liked me, or we wouldn't have lived together for 54 years.

RM: Did you get home much after you were married?

MH: Not much. He'd say, "Well, let's go down and get some groceries." We had to go clear to Fallon, and bring a lot of groceries. Sacks of flour, sugar, baking powder; all the big staple things. And then we stored them at Monitor.

RM: You didn't buy your groceries in Tonopah?

MH: Just once in a while.

RM: How would you get to Fallon?

MH: Through Austin. We had a truck.

RM: How often did you go to Fallon to get groceries?

MH: Oh, every 2 or 3 months. My husband would butcher, and we had plenty of meat. We were raising cattle. And then he would sell the cattle to get

cash. We'd truck them to Fallon to what is now the shipping corral there.

RM: Does the family still own the ranch up in Monitor?

MH: No, we sold it because my husband got sick.

RM: And then you moved to Tonopah? Why did you move to Tonopah instead of Fallon or someplace else?

MH: Well, you see, we have 2 places. His father and mother lived a couple of houses over, here, and my husband and I bought this one [Mrs. Hooper's present home, located in Tonopah] on a delinquent tax. They took everything out. We had to go clear to Yerington - to the people who owned this - and had to buy all of this back. This stove and stuff. Because they had moved it away.

RM: Did your husband's folks have a ranch up there in Monitor, too?

MH: Yes. That was kind of an inherited place. You see, his father took a homestead up there.

RM: What was his name?

MH: Tim Hooper.

RM: That must have been in the 1870s. Were there many Indian people living in Monitor through the years that you lived up there?

MH: Not very many. They were more scattered around Duckwater and down toward Beatty, Fish Lake Valley, Reese River . . .

RM: Were there big ranches up there, or just small ones?

MH: Small ones, but my husband bought a lot of ground as he went along.

RM: So he ended up with a larger ranch?

MH: Yes. And we had about - over 200 head of cattle. But we worked hard. I rode with him, and if we had to break a horse, I had to go along to snub it to my saddle.

RM: So you were a good rider?

MH: Well, I could ride. I did everything.

RM: Did you learn to ride as a kid, or did you learn to ride after you got married?

MH: No, I learned to ride when I was a kid - going to school down at Stillwater. We rode in the saddle. The people down at Stillwater knew me [chuckles] - a lot of people knew me. They all would say, "That Mayme Williams - she gets on her horse and stands right on top of the saddle with the stirrups pulled up over the saddle horn, and stands along and sings loud as she can, looking at us, when we're haying in the field." Do you see how silly I must've been?

RM: Well, you were just a good rider.

MH: I was a good rider. My sister and I rode one horse sometimes, and my sister'd get silly. She said, "Sit good! I'm going to sit in the back and ride along in the back." And she'd carry our lunch bucket. Then I'd say, "Well, let me try to ride back there. You ride the saddle." And then I'd flank with my feet and the horse would buck around, you know [laughter], and he'd go around and round like this. So this one day we were all dressed up, going to school. She was in the front, and then she wanted to get in the back, so she let me get in the front, because she was going to do that to me, you see. She did that to the horse and the horse threw us off and our lunch bucket [went] in the water. We had to go to school like that. At lunch, we could hardly eat because it got wet.

You see the experiences I've gone through? Really lots. And I like that, because I always remember things. I don't know why I'm that way. That's what that hearing doctor said to me. He said, "You're something else. You say things and you mean it," you see. "And you never move your eyes away. You stare at a person." He said, "I'd really like to have a

picture of you."

"Oh, no," I said, "let's don't get into that."

He said, "Next time I come, I'm going to bring my camera, because I'm going to take a picture of you. It's not because I want to get a picture of you." He said, "You're so sincere."

"You have to be sincere," I said, "to make people understand what you're talking of. I can't talk good English, but I can understand quite a bit of it. But," I said, "I never went into the 8th grade." You see, I just entered, and then hurt my knee.

RM: And you didn't go back to school in Fallon, then, after you hurt your knee.

MH: No. Then I got married soon after that - that was more important. [laughter]

That's what the ear doctor told me. "No," I said, "I'm not that way."

He said, "Really, Mrs. Hooper, you make a person listen when you tell things."

"Well," I said, "I'm just used to that."

RM: How long did your husband's folks have the house here in Tonopah?

MH: Oh, years.

RM: Did they live here quite a bit of the time, rather than Monitor Valley?

MH: Yes. Then, Albert had old people - his people were old people. There's a picture over there of Albert and his mother and dad - I'll show you.