An Interview with
ANDY THOMPSON

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

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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 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 Jodie Hanson, Alice Levine, Mike Green, Cynthia Tremblay, and Jean Stoess. Jared Charney contributed essential word processing skills. Maire Hayes, Michelle Starika, Anita Coryell, Jodie Hanson, Michelle Welsh, Lindsay Schumacher, and Shena Salzmann 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.

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--Robert D. McCracken
Tonopah, Nevada
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 1,000 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.

This is Robert McCracken, talking to Andy Thompson at his home on the Duckwater Indian Reservation, February 15 and March 22, 1990.

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Let's start by you telling me your name.

AT: My name's Andy Thompson.

RM: And when were you born?

AT: July 10, 1915.

RM: And where were you born?

AT: In Beatty, Nevada, in the sagebrush. [chuckles] Beatty had bluffs sitting up across the river, and that's where the Indian camp was.

RM: What was your father's name?

AT: Bob Thompson.

RM: Was he Shoshone?

AT: Yes - a full-blood.

RM: And what was your mother's name?

AT: Minnie . . . I can't remember her maiden name. She was married 2 or 3 times; the last time [her married name] was Blackeye. She was married to Tom Adams - he's the one who raised me. And then he died (he died here) and she got married to Blackeye.

RM: Was he related to Willie Blackeye?

AT: Yes, he was his brother. He's got a son down here - his house is right down here - Henry Blackeye.

RM: How long did you stay in Beatty?

AT: Well, I was just born there, and then we roamed around in that country. That was before the Indian got picked up . . . I guess I roamed all those mountains. My dad was kind of a miner and he had pack burros,

and he and my mother would go . . . My grandmother is really the one who raised me. She stayed around in different places.

RM: What was her name?

AT: Ginnie - that's all I knew her by.

RM: Was she Shoshone, too?

AT: Yes.

RM: Was your mother Shoshone?

AT: Yes. She was a half-breed. My grandma was raped by some soldiers, and that's how my mom turned out to be a half-breed, and that's why I'm light.

RM: Is that right. Were your people part of the Beatty band, or . . . ?

AT: Yes. It's kind of a band all around there.

RM: Could you tell me a little bit about the areas that you roamed in, there?

AT: Well [chuckles], I was a baby - I don't know just where we roamed.

RM: Do you remember your folks talking about it at all?

AT: They didn't use the English names for the ranges - you know, they named a lot of them in Shoshone. And I don't even know what Beatty's Indian name is. [chuckles] We used to roam around White Rock . . . my grandma used to tell me about that - on White Rock, where the Test Site is. I don't know what that lake is called - in Shoshone it's nukind - the one with water . . . it means "running water."

RM: How long was your family in the Beatty area before you left?

AT: Not very long. I was the last baby, then my dad and mom had some problems and she left him. She came into the Tonopah area and I came into the Reveille Mountains with my grandma. That was all our range right through there.

RM: I used to live in Reveille at the Reveille mill in the '50s!

AT: Oh. Hell, I used to ride that country for O. K. Reed.

RM: Oh, man! You've got some stories to tell!

AT: Yes, I used to punch cattle for him.

RM: Is that right! Well, then when your mother left Beatty, how old were you?

AT: I don't know - I guess maybe a year old. She met my stepdad at that spot below Adaven.

RM: Oh, I don't know this valley.

AT: Oh, you don't. Well, I went to school down here at Pine Creek and Sharp.

RM: Not Pine Creek up by . . .

AT: No.

RM: Pine Creek down here out of Railroad Valley?

AT: Yes - the other side of Railroad Valley.

RM: How old were you when you started school there?

AT: Well, I took first grade in Ely. Then my stepdad didn't like it there. He was another prospector, and we had a sheep wagon and we moved down to Pine Creek - it took us about 5 days. We stayed there a long time, and he'd go out mining. My grandma was still taking care of me. And I have a sister who lives in Ely now - Marie Blair.

RM: Was she older than you?

AT: No, she was younger; she had another father. I think they called him Pat - I never did see him. They just were married for a little while, I guess, enough to have a baby [chuckles] - maybe a year or so.

Freiburg's the name of the place where my stepdad met my mom. I must've been maybe 4 or 5 years old, and I was sick. There was an Indian

doctor over at Sharp, and my mom found out that I was sick and brought me over here and they doctored me and got me well. And then they headed home and this cowboy came riding up and they fell in love, I guess. [laughs]

RM: Is that right. He was Indian?

AT: Yes, he was Indian. He was a brother of George Adams - the buckaroo who used to ride broncs in the rodeo, I guess clear into New York or something. He was a good rider.

RM: Who was he buckarooing for here?

AT: He was buckarooing for O. K. Reed, I guess, because O. K. Reed owned that part clear down on the other side of Freiburg and all - they call it Sand Spring and Cedar Pipeline. O. K. Reed owned a hell of a big country that . . .

RM: It was huge, wasn't it?

AT: Yes.

RM: How long did you stay down there at Sharp?

AT: Oh, I stayed there till 1940; that's when they came to this reservation.

RM: And after you got older, you started riding for Reed?

AT: Yes, I started riding when I was about 17 years old, and I rode for him for 4 or 5 years. I don't know just when he died.

RM: He died about 1941.

AT: Forty-one - yes. Well, he went out of business about '39.

RM: Tell me about riding for O. K. Reed.

AT: Well, we rode a lot of country. We rode all of this valley - Railroad Valley - and those numbered wells and stuff this side of Tonopah?

RM: You mean the Number One well over in Ralston Valley?

AT: Yes, and the Number Two.

RM: You rode in Ralston Valley? And then he was in Stone Cabin Valley.

AT: Yes - Stone Cabin Valley. I was a wrangler, then. One time I had a mule I was riding and he had some sores, so I had a loose saddle on him. And the day before there were some duck hunters or something out there and the mule got scared. I had the horses all rounded up, waiting for the cowboys to come get their horses, and that mule got scared again and started bucking with me. And my saddle turned and I stayed with it. My spur got stuck and my foot got stuck and he went round and round. He didn't go out in the open - otherwise, he might've killed me.

RM: You were under his belly?

AT: Yes, I was under his belly, slipping around. [chuckles]

RM: Oh! How did you survive?

AT: The only thing I can figure out is that he was going right around where I'd been holding those horses, and it was so dusty he couldn't see me. He would kick me, but the last time he kicked me it was on my butt and he lifted me up and that loosened me up. [chuckles]

RM: Is that right - that got you out of it. It was lucky you weren't killed.

AT: I had to ride that mule for 2 days after that. [laughs] He started stumbling over . . .

RM: Well, when you were riding for Reed, you were riding all over the ranch, then?

AT: Yes all over. It was because we were branding all over. He owned Twin Springs, he owned Reveille - right through there . . . and Fallinis too. They were all running their cattle together. Another old guy who

used to live right up Reveille - I forget his name - was a kind of an old bachelor. His brand was a telephone. [chuckles]

RM: And you went down to Cedar Pipeline?

AT: Oh, yes. I got on another bucking horse right there; I got thrown right off. I was still wrangling. That's when I first started - I was wrangling. Toward the end, I started punching cows. My buddy and I, Willie George (he's deceased now), wrangled. He was a wrangler for Fallinis and I was a wrangler for O. K. Reed. We came off a mountain, and we got the horses out to the spring, and this doggone horse never did buck with me (just like that mule), and by God, it surprised me that morning. I took after a horse. The horse didn't want to stay in the bunch, and I headed him off, so I got him and he ducked his head, and he bucked round and round. I stayed on a long time. Everybody was hollering, "Stay . . . " [laughs] and I got dizzy - I didn't know where I was. [laughs] When I did fall off [laughs] I just . . . [laughs] I didn't know where I was. And O. K. Reed's daughter Lucille was there. And the other sister broke that horse - it never did buck. [laughs]

RM: [laughs] Did you know Johnny Reed? Was he there?

AT: Yes; he was one of my uncles. So was Pigeon Sam. He was a good roper - a fat guy.

RM: Did you know Cooney Clifford?

AT: Yes. He was another uncle. He got killed in Tonopah in a car. He and John Charles were drunk and hit a telephone post.

RM: There was an Indian camp right up against the mountains from the Reveille mill, wasn't there?

AT: Yes. One of my grandpas lived up there - Pedro Sam. And the Little Pete [family] lived there, too.

RM: When were they living there?

AT: Oh, they lived there quite a while. I guess it was around '41 when my grandpa came up here to live with me. There was nothing there for them to live for. Old man Fallini died and left the old ranches go, and the Fallini boys moved over to Twin Spring.

RM: Were they working for Fallini?

AT: Yes - and O. K. Reed, too.

RM: Did Fallini have a big operation there?

AT: Yes, he had a pretty big operation. There were 3 brothers, and they had a pretty good bunch of cows.

RM: Well, his ranch was kind of surrounded by Reed's, wasn't it?

AT: Well, kind of. It was open range at that time - there wasn't any Taylor grazing yet. And there were quite a few . . . a lot of boys used to come in from Pine Creek even, up in there. Some of the boys from Fallon . . . The first time I saw this George Adams was when he was riding for the bunch out at Pat Ranch. Have you been there?

RM: No.

AT: It's up Monitor someplace.

RM: O. K. Reed's ranch went up there, didn't it?

AT: No, at that time Stone Cabin was what we used to ride to. They used to send a bunch of cowboys up Pine Creek to get after strays.

RM: The Cliffords had a ranch in there too, didn't they?

AT: Yes. That was afterwards. I heard he had a buffalo.

RM: Yes, I remember when he had that buffalo. Tell me about O.K. Reed.

AT: Oh, he was a hell of a good boss. He would ride with the cattle all the time. He rode right with it - on the tail end. If you'd whip the cow you'd damn near get fired. He said, "No matter how . . ."

We drove a lot of poor cows out of there. I don't know when that was - 1932? - but the government was shooting them for $20 in those days if they quit walking.

This'll be a worse drought than that was, if it keeps a-going - if we don't get any storms. But it was over-grazed - they had too many cattle in there. I don't know how many cattle he had - 6000, 7000, 8000.

RM: He did have that many cattle?

AT: Yes. Fallinis had a lot, too. The Taylor grazing cut them way down. So he was overgrazing, and then the drought hit. At least we'd get a rain once in a while, and that's a little better than we did this year.

RM: Yes. When you were working for Reed and Fallini, what kind of house did you live in, or did you camp out?

AT: We had to camp out. O. K. Reed had 150 saddle horses for 10 men. Fallini had another hundred-and-something for his gang. And that's what we herded - about 300 head of horses. We used to take them up in the rocks.

RM: And that was your job?

AT: Yes - that was my job. Every night, after dark, my buddy and I would take them - and we'd get bucked off sometimes in the nighttime. It would take about 2 hours to take them up to some bluffs where they wouldn't stray away. And if they did stray, one of us had to follow them. I followed one bunch of about 14, 15 head from, I think, the Number One well clear over to Hawes Canyon (that was O. K.'s old ranch). I never had breakfast or dinner. [laughs] I picked them up towards about 3:00 and started back with them, and I got back to camp . . .

RM: What would you do if just one of them ran off?

AT: Well, I'd have to try to follow him.

RM: Was taking care of the horses your job year-around, or just at roundup?

AT: Just roundup. But a roundup would last for 4 months in the spring and 4 months in the fall. It was about an 8-month job. Through the hard winter they just had a few cowboys.

RM: Did you work during the winter?

AT: No, I never did work. I came home.

RM: Where were you living then?

AT: I was living down at Sharp. Sharp was the real name, but they call it another name now - Adaven - Nevada backwards.

RM: Was it on the Sharp ranch?

AT: Yes. Well, we camped around there. Then my stepdad bought a ranch down there on the bottom of Sharp, down a canyon, in 1935 or something.

RM: Tell me a little bit more about what you remember about O. K. Reed.

AT: He was a hell of a good guy [chuckles] - that's all I can say. He was a hard worker. He was up with the cows early in the morning and worked late at night.

RM: You must've known Ed Reed, too.

AT: Yes. He was a good guy, he didn't cause any trouble, but he wasn't as interested in cattle. He had an interest in it, but he was more of a business guy, I think. He'd come and tell the boss, O. K., what the deal was on some things and stuff like that. He used to live in Five Mile toward the end.

RM: What caused the ranch to fold up - was it the drought, or what?

AT: The drought, I guess. I don't know, we were used to having a lot of water in the olden days and then all the springs started drying up and

everybody started moving out. For instance, the Fallinis had 2 farms. I don't know what the other one's name is.

RM: Is it the one at Eden Creek?

AT: No. They had a gold mine in there.

RM: Oh - Bellehelen?

AT: Yes, Bellehelen. I was trying to remember that name - I tried to tell my wife about it. We used to ride in that . . .

RM: My dad and I used to live in that house up there, when I was a kid.

AT: You did? [chuckles] Bellehelen. Yes, he had a gold mine in there. I guess it's still there. It was a placer mine. I never did go up to it.

RM: I don't know if I've been to their mine. I know the Cliffords have a mine up there. Did you know Joe Clifford?

AT: Yes - I knew him, but that's all.

RM: When the Indians were living at the camp in the Kawiches there, what was at the Reveille mill?

AT: Nothing. Well, nothing when I was there. You could tell there was a mill there once.

RM: Was there water there?

AT: Yes, there was . . .

RM: They piped the water down, didn't they?

AT: Yes - cattle water. I used to take a bath there. [laughs]

RM: Yes, so did we. [laughs]

AT: It was a long time taking a bath, sometimes.

RM: Yes. [laughs] What did you do in the winter, then, when you weren't working for O.K. Reed?

AT: Oh, I trapped.

RM: Where did you trap?

AT: Down at Sharp - Coal Valley. And then the Sharp Valley. And then a part of this valley here - Railroad Valley. I came over - I forgot the name of that summit down there . . . It's way down south, close to Cedar Pipeline. I used to come there, and then up through this valley - up at Bordoli's. I had my gas there. I had a Model-A Ford . . .

CHAPTER TWO

RM: What kind of animals did you trap?

AT: Coyotes, bobcats, swift fox and grey fox, badger . . . rabbit, mostly. [laughs] The rabbits weren't worth anything. [chuckles]

RM: You couldn't sell their skins?

AT: No. But I made more money on the trapping than I did riding. I was riding a rough string - common wages were only $40 a month, and I was getting $45 for riding a rough string, toward the end.

RM: What's a rough string?

AT: The ones that buck. [chuckles]

RM: You must've been a good rider.

AT: Yes, I was a pretty good rider. I was pretty good with horses.

RM: Were a lot of the Indians good with horses?

AT: Oh, most of them.

RM: Why was that?

AT: Because that's the way they made their living - riding. You rode when you were just a little boy. Even O. K. Reed was a good rider. I saw a horse there - the old devil bucked Reed . . . [chuckles]

RM: Where did you sell the skins you trapped?

AT: Well, I sent them off to Massachusetts - to Massen Steffans Company, they called it.

RM: Would you just mail them off and they'd send you a check?

AT: Yes. A coyote was only worth $10. A bobcat wasn't worth much, either - about $5; swift fox $1, grey fox $1.50 and badger maybe $10. Still, I made pretty good money; I'd make around $500 in 3 months.

RM: What months did you trap?

AT: December, January and February - all the cold ones.

RM: How did you know where to trap?

AT: There were a lot of coyotes then . . . There were just a lot of animals. You'd just see them trotting along - a lot of animals.

RM: You never see them now, do you?

AT: Now you never see them. Yes, the coyote and the rest were common to see. We wouldn't shoot them because the bullet would tear a hole in the skin. Now you've got to shoot him to get him, beause they're pretty smart.

RM: How did you know where to put your traps?

AT: Well, you'd see their tracks - I'd just trap in whatever sagebrush looks good, or tree - set them there, is all.

RM: What did you use for bait?

AT: In those days you could bait them. I used to shoot a mustang and use it for bait. Then I had rattlesnake scent . . .

RM: What's rattlesnake scent?

AT: Just kill a bunch of rattlesnakes and keep them in a can till they ferment and get rotten. And I used to go down to Hiko to get some carp. They made good scent in those days.

RM: Did you mix the carp with the rattlesnake, or . . . ?

AT: No. It was all separate. If they didn't bite for snake or carp you'd try something else, like mustang. Mustang was real good for coyote. It was common to shoot a mustang; you'd shoot a mustang anyplace, then trap around it, and you'd get maybe 10, 20 coyotes right around it. And you'd use a drag.

RM: What's that?

AT: You'd have a drag - a rock, or something like that, and they take

off when they get caught. That way your setting would be good, yet. [If a coyote died there,] that would scare the others off.

RM: How far did they run with the drag?

AT: Not very far - maybe 500 yards.

RM: And you could follow the trail?

AT: Oh, yes. It was a heavy rock.

RM: What did you use - spring traps?

AT: Yes.

RM: So you would kill a mustang, and then put the traps around it?

AT: Yes; maybe 20 feet away, something like . . .

RM: Did you butcher the mustang at all?

AT: No. You just keep it clean as you can. Otherwise, they won't come there. I'd let them come in first. I'd kill a mustang and not put any trap there for maybe 10 days, till they started coming in. Then I'd catch a bunch. [chuckles]

RM: Were there a lot of mustangs?

AT: Yes. There were a lot of mustangs all over these valleys. Every valley had about 400 or 500 mustangs. That was one reason, I think, that O. K. Reed had to quit - there were just too doggone many mustangs. Shucks, he had - I don't know, about 5000 down there in all the valleys. For 5 miles down there you could just see mustangs running.

RM: Is that right. Well, when you staked out a mustang, did the bobcats and the other animals come in?

AT: No; mostly coyotes. Once in a while a bobcat, but pretty much that's all there was - coyote . . .

RM: How did you know where to trap for a bobcat?

AT: Well, I wasn't too interested in bobcats - just if one got caught in

[my trap]. You see, I was in their range over there. That's one thing I hate about this [Fish and] Wildlife [policy] - they open a season on coyote and swift fox early - around November. I wrote to the Wildlife people once - I said, "Why don't you put them together?" The swift fox and coyote range right where the bobcat range. The bobcat is there on the flat or up in the mountain or anyplace, and the grey fox is the only one that has its own territory. They have to take the foothill and then go up into the mountains.

RM: So the bobcat is all over?

AT: Yes. They'll be down in my chicken house. [laughs] When I used to have chickens here they killed a lot of them.

RM: And then the grey fox is in the . . .

AT: In the hills - the foothills and clear on top of the mountains. I guess they want to get rid of all of them. This year they've got an open season on bobcat and grey fox till the end of February. It used to close up on it about the 15th of February and now it goes straight up to March.

RM: Do you still trap?

AT: No. I did try to trap last year, and I caught a couple of coyotes. I was so damn mad. [chuckles] I got about $3 apiece for them - and all the trouble I went to - there was a lot of snow last year, too. [laughs]

RM: How many traps would you have out in a season?

AT: At that time, I had 350 traps.

RM: How often did you visit each trap?

AT: Well, I guess I moved about every 2 days. I'd take camp along with me, too, and I'd stay wherever I was.

RM: Oh - you would camp out? You were camping out in the cold, weren't you?

AT: Yes.

RM: What kind of a camp did you make?

AT: Just my bed - a lot of quilts. Just canvas; I'd just throw it on the ground.

RM: You were sleeping in the snow?

AT: I used to, yes.

RM: Would you build a fire?

AT: Oh, yes, I'd have something to eat. I'd try to find a tree with a dry spot under it or something.

RM: And you say you had a Model-A . . . ?

AT: Yes, a Model-A Ford.

RM: How wide of an area were your traps in?

AT: I think it was about a 150-mile area. I started from Sharp, and to about Cedar Pipeline - this side of it - then I came up this Railroad Valley to Bordoli's. I had my gas there in drums - I bought them by drums. And then over the mountain. I think it was about 150 miles.

RM: Gee. And what did you do about snow? Did you get stuck or anything?

AT: Well, I don't know. Those Model-As were pretty good. I guess there were times I had to quit taking care of the traps. When we got too much snow, I'd just let them go.

RM: Were there a lot of Indians trapping?

AT: Yes, quite a few.

RM: Were there a lot of whites trapping, too, or was it mainly Indians?

AT: There were some white trappers - John Ferguson was one of the white trappers. I think he was a government trapper. But there weren't too many - not like there are now. This is worse. They put a trap right by

yours, and whoever's trap it comes to, it's his. One Indian boy got one stolen there just the other day. But the skins aren't worth anything now.

RM: You didn't have that trouble then, with people coming into your territory?

AT: No, they'd leave your territory alone and I'd stay out of theirs. Oh, once in a while we'd have a same line for maybe 4 or 5 miles so we could use the same road. There were a lot of country roads and we took them most of the time.

RM: Did you trap in the same area year after year?

AT: Yes.

RM: Then in about 1940 you came up here?

AT: Yes - 1940. I didn't want to come up here. My stepdad was getting pretty old, so I said, "I'll stay down here [at Sharp]." I had a bunch of cattle already - 100 head. And I said I'd take over the ranch there - it had a pretty good range. So he came up and in about 2 months he said, "I can't handle it." He said, "Sell your cattle and we'll go 50-50 on mine." He had around 110 head.

RM: And his cattle were up here?

AT: Yes. We'd brought them up, and I had mine down there. I drove his up here in 1941, I think.

RM: Why did he move up here to Duckwater?

AT: He wanted to be with the Indians. We were the only Indians living down there then. There used to be a lot of Indians but they all moved up here.

RM: When did the Indians start moving in here?

AT: In 1940 and '41.

RM: And why did they start coming here then?

AT: Well, the government bought this reservation.

RM: Oh, I see. Do you know who they bought it from?

AT: His name was Florio - he was a Basco [Basque].

RM: And what was it - just a big ranch, here?

AT: Yes - it was called Florio ranch then. He had sheep and cattle.

RM: And the government bought it to make a reservation in 1941?

AT: Well, in 1940. It was open for 20 families - I know we had it full with 20 families. I think we had them all full by '41.

RM: And what year did you come up here, again?

AT: I came in '41, I think. I had 2 businesses - and getting my cattle sold and stuff, and I stayed down there, and I think in December of '41 - pretty close with '42 - I came here.

RM: Where was your stepdad running his cattle up here?

AT: Well, they've got range around . . . They've got one on the other side of here - Sand Spring, and around the Duckwater range. Then they've got Fish Creek range over there, and . . .

RM: Were a lot of the Indians running cattle?

AT: They started a business on what they call "repay." The government got cattle from Schurz and wherever they could buy them - then they called it repay. They got 50 apiece, or . . . it depended on how much hay they had put up and things like that. Did you know Willie Johnny?

RM: No, I don't think so.

AT: He's the only Indian who came with cattle. He was from Fish Lake Valley - his dad was.

RM: But they were all Shoshones that came in here, weren't they? There were no Paiutes or anything?

AT: No. You had to be Shoshone.

RM: Did they have to be a full-blood, or a half-blood, or . . . ?

AT: At that time it was half, then they passed a deal and made it one-fourth. And the chairman we've got now is trying to make it one-eighth. Shucks, that's pretty near a white man, isn't it?

RM: Yes, it's pretty close. I'm part Indian.

AT: Yes. You might be one-eighth. [laughs]

RM: [laughs] Yes, right. Not quite an eighth, but . . . [laughter]

AT: There'd be a lot of them, you know.

RM: Could you name some of the first families that were here when you got here?

AT: Well, let's see: Charlie Mike, Raymond Graham, Danny Millett (he just died, just the other day), Weaver Mike, Frank Sam, Willie Johnny, Andrew Elson . . . he's a native here - he lived here. And Willie Blackeye - he got a site and it's right . . . And then he dropped it, then he picked it up again when he came back from the service. There's another Sam - Louie Sam - from Tonopah. Cleve Charles - he was from Warm Spring, I guess. That's where he lived, right in there. And my old man, Tom Adams.

RM: And the two of you went in together?

AT: We were together down at Sharp and we went together here. That's open range down there. The only thing was, he had the forest down there and I stayed in the flat. There was no BLM then, and the forest was the only range we had. So I ran mine on the flat and he ran in the mountains. Then he was running in the flat, too. I don't know how much hay we used to put up down there - 60 ton - just enough for weaners and such.

RM: Where were you putting up the hay?

AT: This was on our ranch, on the bottom of Sharp. There's a rock grade that goes around and right down below it . . . We sold it to Yuawleys. It's a nice farm, now. They've got pipes all running down to it.

RM: Did the Indians who moved onto the reservation have to buy the land?

AT: No, it's given to them - awarded . . .

RM: So you came in here with some money, didn't you?

AT: Yes. It wasn't much. The cattle were only $30 a head for a good cow. I don't know what I got - $3000 for the whole 100 head, I guess.

RM: But what about the pasture where you were putting up the hay? Was that your land?

AT: Yes, it was our ranch. The old man's ranch, really. We divided that, too. I don't know how much we got - I think only $1000.

RM: How many acres did you have?

AT: A hundred-and-fifty acres under cultivation.

RM: Did you have a house on the place?

AT: Yes - a log house. It had just a tin house when we bought it. There was an old ranger camp about 10 miles from there and the old man made a deal with him and got it and we dragged it down there. It's made of those Nevada pine logs - it was a pretty good house. But I lived in a tent house most of the time.

RM: You didn't live in the house, then?

AT: No. My wife and my . . .

RM: When did you get married?

AT: I got married in 1938 to Perline Behank.

RM: Is she Indian?

AT: Yes, she's a native Shoshone from right in here.

RM: Now, when this reservation was a ranch, owned by the Basco, were there Indians living here?

AT: Yes, they worked for him.

RM: Were there many Indians here?

AT: Yes, I think quite a few. I don't know, maybe 50 Indians or so, counting wife and all. The men worked and they had wives and then they had kids, so I think there were around 50 of them.

RM: The Indians have been here for a long time, haven't they? With the water here there must've been game and everything, wasn't there?

AT: Yes, there used to be lot of Indians, they say, but the smallpox came by, and the clap.

RM: The clap got them?

AT: Yes - a lot of them. I guess there were a hell of a lot of Indians in Duckwater - 200 or more. If they hadn't had the smallpox epidemic . . . It killed a lot of white people, too.

RM: Were there Indians on down Railroad Valley - like, down around Sharp?

AT: Yes, there were a lot of Indians there when we first came there in 1922. There were just a lot of Indians all over, camped here and there - wherever they could find work from the white people. They just all camped out in tents.

RM: Even in the winter?

AT: Yes. I lived with my dad, and they lived in big tents.

RM: How did you keep from getting cold?

AT: Well, you just get enough blankets. Sometimes I had a rabbit blanket - those are nice and warm. We'd kill a lot of rabbits and my grandma'd make blankets out of them. She'd roll them up, spin them, and

then get them long enough . . .

RM: She would roll up the skin?

AT: Yes - make it round. Then she'd let it dry. Then it stayed that way - because of that spinning, you know. Then when you'd get a whole bunch of them, wide enough to make a bed, she'd sew them together.

RM: What did she sew them with?

AT: I don't quite remember that. Just string, I think. I had a rabbit blanket that was . . .

RM: Did they last quite a while?

AT: Yes. They'd last 3, 4 years. I don't know how they kept it from getting moths and stuff like that. You'd just use it in the wintertime - it was too hot in the summer.

RM: What did you use for a bed inside the tent?

AT: Oh [chuckles], if we had hay, we'd put hay in there. Or cut pine limbs small . . . I guess most of the time they used the pine limbs. You couldn't get the hay too easy. Sometimes . . . every ranch had grain fields then. And the old folks would go down and get straw after they'd slash it with the horses and it was all in one place. They'd take sacks and made kind of a mattress out of that - it was real good and soft.

RM: What did you put on top of the straw or the pine boughs, or whatever, then?

AT: Mostly canvas - old canvas that had been worn out and was soft.

RM: And then what did you put on top of that?

AT: Well, quilts and blankets.

RM: Where did you get the blankets and quilts - buy them?

AT: They'd buy a lot of the blankets, and they made the quilts themselves.

RM: The Indian women made quilts too?

AT: Yes. The white folks would give them a lot of rags. Sometimes they'd get a whole bunch and they'd all get together and quilt them. They'd make good quilts. My wife still makes quilts.

RM: And then of course you'd have your rabbit blanket. Did you use any other kinds of skins?

AT: No. They tanned deer hides and made gloves out of them. My people never did use deer for bedding.

RM: Well, the hair is not good, is it - it breaks.

AT: Well, they'd pick the hair off - they'd make buckskin. There's some buckskin right there - my wife's making a glove.

RM: What kind of clothing did the women wear back in the '20s and '30s?

AT: They all had gingham dresses, as they called them.

RM: Did the women wear long underwear, or just a dress?

AT: I don't remember.

RM: I mean, in the winter.

AT: Oh, I think so. They were pretty warm - they wore the dresses way down to here.

RM: And what kind of shoes did they wear?

AT: The same as ours.

RM: Just like modern shoes?

AT: Yes. You know, you could buy a shoe for $1.50 in those days - a pretty good work shoe, too.

RM: What about coats - did they make their own coats or buy them, or what?

AT: I guess they'd just buy them.

RM: And then, what did the men wear?

AT: Levi coats and Levi pants and long underwear.

RM: Wool underwear?

AT: Yes. They wore them through the summer. We had to pitch hay in those days, and they said that it was cooler if they wore their long johns.

RM: Was that true?

AT: Well, I never did try it. [laughter] It must've been true, because they had to sweat.

RM: Did they wear a shirt over the underwear?

AT: Oh, yes.

RM: They did? In the summer! Wow.

AT: Yes. They said that Charlie Mike wore long johns all the time, and Raymond Graham said it was cooler. Raymond Graham was my partner - I got in business baling hay for people here with him - and he wore his long johns. I said, "How in the hell can you stand it?"

"Hell, it's cool," he said. But I never did try it. [chuckles]

RM: What kind of shoes did the men wear?

AT: Well, just work shoes - they'd come up to here. Most of them wore boots.

RM: What kind of boots did you wear when you were riding?

AT: Justins [a brand of cowboy boots]. I also had the real handmade boots - the Blucher boot.

RM: Did you only wear cowboy boots when you were riding?

AT: No, a lot of times, I wore them all the time. Some people do, yet. They seem to be comfortable; I don't know. I quit wearing boots a long time - 40 years ago. I don't know why I quit - I thought shoes would be easier on me.

RM: What kind of shirts did you wear?

AT: Pretty much the same as this shirt here.

RM: Just a regular kind of work shirt.

AT: Yes. But it was blue . . .

RM: What kind of hats did you wear?

AT: John B. Stetson hats.

RM: And what kind of coats did you wear in the winter?

AT: Well, I don't remember. I think I wore Levi's all my life - the Levi jacket lined with wool.

RM: Did you wear chaps when you were riding?

AT: Yes.

RM: What kind of chaps did you wear?

AT: Wing chaps, they call them - made of leather.

RM: And what kind was that?

AT: Well, they come around here, and then they've got a wing out from the side of the leg.

RM: What was that wing for?

AT: It was kind of to keep the rain from getting on to you - there was more space for it.

RM: Did any of the guys wear fancy chaps - like fancy fur or anything?

AT: A lot of the riders used goatskin chaps. It was pretty when they got a wing chap along with it. Either way - they could have it just around [their legs]. Yes, it was pretty fancy.

RM: Is that right. Did they buy those, or make them?

AT: Some of them made them - if there were any goat hides someplace. But most times they'd buy them.

RM: Where did you buy all your clothing? In Tonopah, or Ely, or what?

AT: Well, because I was working over there by Tonopah, I bought all of my stuff at Tonopah then. But my dad used to come to Ely. He'd step on that sheep wagon and buy our groceries - one winter's worth. We used to have some wheat flour ground in Lund - we used to come up there with 2 or 3 tons of wheat on that sheep wagon.

RM: Was that your own wheat?

AT: Some of it was. We'd bring that wheat and they'd grind it for us.

RM: When you were living in the tents, what kind of food did you eat? For instance, what did you have in the morning?

AT: I don't know - I guess bacon and eggs. My sister and I would fight over the grease. We'd have biscuits made out of flour, and [laughs] after everybody got their dish, we'd fight over the frying pan. [chuckles]

RM: Where did you get the bacon and eggs?

AT: Well, the ranchers butchered hogs all the time. We'd buy a hog or something and whoever we worked for would butcher it for us. And we'd go down to the farmer and get eggs. Everybody had eggs in those days.

RM: Did you make your own bacon then?

AT: Yes, we made a lot of bacon.

RM: How did you do it?

AT: I don't know about my dad, but I used to make salt pork and I smoked bacon. There was a smokehouse over here - it's caved-in now. When you come off that hill, on the right side you see some rocks - that's where the smokehouse used to be. The Indians had the right to go in there and smoke meat.

RM: How long did you smoke it?

AT: Oh, just till it was cured, I guess. I don't remember - about 2 or 3 weeks. It took a long time. You'd get the apple . . .

RM: Did you eat a noon meal, typically?

AT: Well, mostly whoever a person was working for would feed them. And they'd feed them breakfast - and supper.

RM: What was a typical lunch?

AT: Most of the time it was beans - there were beans on the table all the time. And then meat - all that stuff. Then bread - homemade bread - biscuits, whatever. Supper was the same thing.

RM: How often did you go to town, Andy?

AT: Oh, I think every 6 months. Whenever we ran out of groceries, we'd take that old sheep wagon and the old man, and we'd take off and get a load of grub.

RM: Did you like to go to town?

AT: No. I was a little bit bashful. There were a lot of people in town, you know . . .

RM: Were people nice to Indians, or were they discriminated against?

AT: Well, I never was; my folks never were. They said that Fallon used to be bad. The only ones I think were kind of bad were the Mormons. Even if we were friendly with them, they wouldn't let you come and eat in the house. They'd feed you outside - on the porch or something. That's about the only one I've heard of, but they never did do it to me. I was free all the time.

RM: They didn't send you away to Indian school, did they?

AT: No, I went to public school.

RM: I've talked to other Indians about your age, and somehow they made them go to Indian school. They didn't try to do that with you, though?

AT: No, they needed kids for the school at Sharp, so they just let us go to public school. I went to school at Pine Creek and Sharp - 2 different places.

RM: How far did you go in school?

AT: Seventh grade. I had a boss, Henry Bordoli, who lived on the other side of the mountain. I was about 14, I guess, and he came over and wanted me to go to work for him. Well, I took eighth grade 3 times, and he came and got me just about the time I was going to take an examination. [chuckles] So I never did get my diploma. He said, "Hell, you don't need school." There were a lot of jobs then.

RM: There were?

AT: Yes. There weren't too many people; they had a job for everybody. So he came and got me around March, I think. I'd be out there plowing fields and marking them, and stuff like that. No, the guys from, like, Austin and Carson went to all those Indian schools. They were having a battle over it, too - getting the Indian kids from Arizona and all over.

RM: Did you hear about kids going to Indian school at all?

AT: Oh, sure.

RM: Did you want to go, yourself?

AT: No - I had too much to do. I made my first living trapping gophers.

RM: Who paid you?

AT: The farmers. They'd pay a nickel a tail.

RM: Where was that?

AT: That was down at Sharp, when I was going to school there.

RM: Was there more than one ranch at Sharp?

AT: Yes, there were 4 ranches.

RM: Whose were they?

AT: Young was the first one. He was the first postmaster up there. He's the one who called it Sharp. Then he sold out, and this guy who got the post office then called it Adaven, so it lost [the name of] Sharp. But the main ranch was named for Sharp.

RM: And it was owned by Sharp?

AT: It was owned by a Sharp, I guess, at one time. He must've done a lot of work - there's a lot of old buildings around there. Then the next ranch was Grant Welch's; he died in Tonopah. Then the one we bought . . . I can't recall the name of the guy we bought it from - the folks didn't know him much. He was an old guy, and he bought another farm up here at

Lund. Ray something - Ray is the only name I can think of.

RM: What did you pay for the ranch?

AT: I think it was around $1000. I don't think we made anything on it.

RM: Whereabouts is Nyala from Sharp?

AT: It's over the mountain on . . . Railroad's down here. Emery Garrett used to own it.

RM: And Nyala was a ranch?

AT: Yes.

RM: There used to be a gas station there, didn't there?

AT: Yes, a gas station, bar . . . Emery Garrett had a bar there. I used to go over there and work for him, and he'd say, "Well, the drink's on me." And when we'd get our pay, he'd have that marked down - $1 a shot, or something. [laughter] Everybody - all the workers, you know - would get pretty mad at him. We didn't work very long, maybe 10 days, but he damn near took all our wages - we were only working for $1 a day. Fifty cents a shot, I guess it was - or 25 cents a shot. [chuckles]

RM: Now, you mentioned most of the families that lived here at Duckwater when you came in. Where did they come from? Could you go through their names, again, and say where they came from?

AT: Well, Danny Millett, Will Millett, Charlie Mike and Raymond Graham came from Smoky Valley. Cleve Charles was just a roamer. I think he was here in this valley already, or he was down at Warm Springs - one or the other. Then . . . Frank Sam was from Smoky Valley and Louie Sam was from Tonopah. My old man and I were from - I guess Adaven's the name of it now. [chuckles] And then the Blackeyes . . . Willie Blackeye was a native here.

RM: Had he worked for the Basco here?

AT: Yes, he worked for the Bascos, but he worked mostly for Ed Halstead. I worked for Ed Halstead too. I used to work for him at lambing time.

RM: And where was he?

AT: Down below, here.

And then Mike Blackeye is a native, too. Johnny George was around my country down through Sharp and all over, just camping around here and there. I think he was camped up Currant Creek when he took an assignment over here. There was another Sam - I think I said Frank Sam already. He was down here. He'd lived up at Bank Ranch; it's on the hill, here, about 4 or 5 miles up the . . . Then Oliver Ike lived here. I think Oliver Ike came from Smoky Valley - there were a lot of people from Smoky Valley.

RM: Did you ever get up to Smoky Valley?

AT: No, I've never been over in there. Danny Millett used to tell me what it was like.

RM: Were there Indians living at Warm Springs?

AT: Yes. Little Pete did; he got an assignment over here, too, later on.

RM: When you say an Indian got an "assignment," what does that mean - that they assigned him a lot?

AT: Yes, they assigned 80 acres to a family.

RM: And are those acres still in the families?

AT: No. We couldn't make a living on it. [So we enlarged the assignments] when a lot of them left (a lot of them got some money and started drinking). I was chairman here for probably 20 years.

RM: Oh, I didn't know that.

AT: Yes. And I told them, "Well, you can't make a farm if you drink."

You've got to keep from liquor. I kept them from liquor pretty well and they worked for me pretty well, but they got a pretty good herd of cattle - around 75, 80 head . . .

RM: You mean, each family?

AT: Yes. They started with 14 or 15 cows. When they gave them a repay, they weren't supposed to sell any heifers unless the cow boss would say, "OK, there's something wrong with this heifer," or something; then they'd sell it. So the only thing they'd sell was steers. So their herds were building up pretty fast - in 10 years a lot of them were up to 70, 75, 80 head - and they got to drinking. Then they came to me and they'd say, "Oh, I'm going to quit."

RM: Oh. What happened to their allotment, then?

AT: It was vacant and somebody else could take it. (I guess only 2 are vacant now, but there are less Indians.) But we put 2 assignments together to make 160 acres to an assignee, and that's what they've got now. So that makes about 10 assignments.

RM: So when assignments were vacated then you would give them to people who were staying here.

AT: Yes. If nobody wanted it, after so many years . . . But the main business guys saw that we couldn't make it, because everything was going up - BIA and BLM fees, water fees and stuff like that. And food is getting higher and we try to get better cars and things like that. So we couldn't live on that 80 acres and we made them into 160-acre assignments.

RM: But there are more than 10 families here now, aren't there?

AT: Oh, yes. There are families that are just living here. Well, they're working over here - I don't know who's paying them - the

government's paying them wages, I guess.

RM: Oh. But they don't have an assignment. Do you still have your assignment?

AT: No. I gave it to my boy.

RM: I see. Can a person sell his assignment?

AT: No. I couldn't sell it. The only property I sold him was my balers and things like that. I had everything pretty well equipped.

RM: Can you pass the assignment on to your children?

AT: Yes - that's what I did. They weren't going to let me pass it on to my son. They said it had to go through council first, and then if council thinks he's good enough to ranch it, they'll assign it to him. Well, I said, "Doggone it, I got all this property and I worked like a son-of-a-gun down there fixing that farm." That was just nothing but rye grass. I couldn't put over 30 tons of hay down there. When I got through with it, I was putting up 150 tons. I don't know how many cows he's running now; I turned them over to him.

RM: How many children do you have?

AT: I had 13 but I lost 4, so I have 9.

RM: Do they all live in the area?

AT: No, there's one boy in Carson, 2 boys in Ely, one boy in Lund, then the rest of them are here.

RM: Are they all working on the ranch?

AT: No - I've got a boy working down at the oil well and one of the boys in Ely is working for the highway department. The other one is working as a truck driver for mining equipment.

RM: Did most of your children marry Indians, or did some of them marry whites?

AT: Well, I've been real lucky; they've all married Indians. I told them from the start, "I want you to marry an Indian." One of them, in Carson, is married to a Paiute, but still, it's Indian. I told them I didn't care what kind of Indian it was as long as it was Indian. [chuckles] I want my own culture, so . . .

RM: What year did you become chairman?

AT: I think I became chairman around '43. I was the only one who really knew how to farm, you know. A lot of the boys worked for cattle people, but for small outfits. So they appointed me cattle boss and foreman, too. And we had nothing to live with - not like now. Hell, our chairman's making $2000 a month now. I don't know; that's pretty dirty. We never got anything.

RM: You didn't get anything from being chairman?

AT: No, we just went out and worked - fixed our range. Everything's going to hell, now - the range is going to hell. I don't know, there's a lot of them that think they can get title to this Indian land that was marked out for us in 1863. And I went to a meeting in Salt Lake, and they thought they had it worked into our head, all of us, that they were just giving us an award for aboriginal rights - where the Indians lived and died and so forth - and that's all. And now these younger guys say, "Well, hell, we get the title for the land," and I don't know what they're going to do with it.

RM: Are we talking about the Shoshone claim on this whole part of Nevada?

AT: Yes - clear down to Beatty and over the Round Mountain, up to - I don't know, up to Owyhee, I guess. A hell of a big country.

CHAPTER FOUR

RM: Andy, as chairman, what kind of duties did you have?

AT: I was the chairman, the secretary and everything. I had to make reports to Stewart, Nevada - what we were doing over here, what kind of stuff I needed and things like that. Then I had to make reports on how many cattle we had and if somebody was leaving an assignment and . . . there was quite a bit of duty. And I was honest. I think this chairman over here's giving us the dirt right now. [chuckles] I don't know - $2000 for doing no more than what I did. And he's letting the reservation go to hell.

He's working on this outside title thing - shucks, I've been against it all the time. I said, "Hell, I was the guy that signed the aboriginal rights . . . " Two other guys and I signed that it was OK. We wanted to get the money for the aboriginal rights for where our people lived - for our bones and for our old folks' bones. And they stuck it in our heads, plain enough, that there was nothing else. But these guys got to talking about title and . . . I think what they should do is ask for a claim - [chuckles] they'd be better off than asking for title. I don't think the president is crazy enough to give them title . . .

RM: No, I don't think they're going to give them Beatty and Round Mountain. [chuckles]

AT: I don't care if it's the alkali flat - there's profit in the bottom of that thing.

RM: Yes, right. How much did they give you for your aboriginal rights?

AT: Well, we don't know. I don't know just how many Indians there were, but they gave us around $25 million.

RM: Oh, I see - for all the Shoshone.

AT: Yes. They approved it in 1969, so from there it's been getting interest - I think the interest is up to $60 million.

RM: But that has to be split with a lot of people, doesn't it?

AT: Oh, yes. So I got another attorney from Salt Lake - he's around here - and he'd said he'd get us the money. Well, I got disgusted - in all the years - 45 years - nothing's been done. All the Indians have got their money but this place. They did what the government asked for. This dumb bunch [chuckles], I don't think they'll ever get that. I have to pay another 6 percent to this attorney. The other attorney, the one who got the claim, got 10 percent. The claim was approved, and it's 20 years ago . . .

Everything was going OK, and then the doggone BLM ranger, or whatever they call him, made an error. He said that, "Well, the Indians have sold their title." That's when the backfire came.

RM: How did you become chairman?

AT: I was elected by the people. My daughter is going to run for chairman. They had an election here about 2 weeks ago and she got over there with about 5 minutes left to sign her name for election. She thought, "Well, since everybody's against this chairman we've got . . . " - about 60 percent - so she thought she'd take it down. [chuckles]

RM: She's going to do it, then?

AT: No, the chairman said, "It's all closed." So she's having a battle in here. I don't know if she's got a chance or not.

RM: Have things changed very much since you first came here?

AT: Yes - there are all these buildings here now. They've got a big tribal hall over here.

RM: Were those built while you were chairman?

AT: No, they weren't here then.

RM: The government started coming in with some money then?

AT: I guess so. We had a public school here, too. And those long-haired guys with whiskers - the hippies . . .

RM: They changed your school, didn't they?

AT: Yes. The whites and the Indians used to go to the same school, and now the Indians go to their own school.

RM: Do you like that?

AT: Not too much. I think they learn more with white kids. I don't know. It's all right, I guess. My daughter works there, but there are too many teachers. And they've got their own school board, too. The public one had their school board over at Tonopah - it still does, I guess.

RM: If a Shoshone wants to become a member of the tribe and he's got enough Indian blood, can he just move into the reservation?

AT: Yes. He can get a membership card over there.

RM: And then what does he do - get a lot, or, how does that work?

AT: Well, right now they've got 2 assignments open. There are also a lot of vacant houses over here along the . . .

RM: Could somebody just claim an assignment if he wanted to?

AT: I guess so. If you can farm it and take care of it . . .

RM: What about the old Indian ways? Is there still much practice of trying to keep the old culture on the reservation?

AT: In June they have a festival, they call it, and there are little bits of culture in there - hand game, some dances - not too much, though. And there's some beadwork and stuff like that.

RM: Do you still eat any of the traditional Indians foods that used to

be gathered in the mountains and that kind of thing?

AT: Some of them bring those to the festival. And people still collect pine nuts, but that's getting bad - that's getting commercial. Doggone thing, we can't pick very much - 25 pounds is all - and that's nothing to last. Might as well steal the rest of it. [laughs] I'm getting a little bit old for that, but I can still get around. [laughter]

RM: What about some of the other wild food that the Shoshone used to live on? Do you still collect any of those?

AT: Well, deer jerky and chokecherries, sometimes. But that damn chokecherry doesn't produce like it used to. The silkworms get them. There's a lot of trees on the range to the east of here.

RM: Is there any effort to practice the old religion?

AT: Well, I was just talking with my daughter on the phone. She's having a heart problem now. And my wife had it, too. She was pretty sick for 2 days. So I don't know . . . We kind of think that there's still a medicine man around here.

RM: Do you mean, someone who can treat it?

AT: Well . . . or affect you, sometimes. Sometimes they work either way.

RM: Oh - you mean, a medicine man that's kind of putting a curse on you?

AT: Yes. And there's another doctor who'll cure you.

RM: Is that right - an Indian doctor?

AT: Yes - an Indian doctor. If a white doctor can't find anything on you, you've pretty well been cursed, so you go to an Indian doctor.

RM: How does the curse work? I mean, can anybody do it, or does a medicine man have to do it?

AT: A medicine man. My older sister was killed by one of those witch

doctors. She was about 10 or 12 years old, and she and my mother and grandma went to Moapa. On the way, there was a butterfly - one of those big yellow ones - that kept coming to her and she kept chasing it. And my grandma was worried about it; she said, "That's something no good that's coming to you - keep away from it." Anyway, they kept on going, and the butterfly did quit her. But when they got into Moapa, she only lived 2 days. The curse was there. It was done by our own relation, too.

RM: You found out who did it?

AT: We knew it, but we couldn't do anything; had nothing to prove.

RM: How did you find out? With another doctor?

AT: Yes. After she was dead, they told them that that's what happened.

RM: So there are still some Shoshone medicine men in the area.

AT: They're still all over.

RM: Are there some in Duckwater?

AT: No. We've got one old man, our doctor. He's not a witch doctor, he's a good doctor. And he's about 80 years old - but he's quit now. He's Willie Blackeye.

RM: Oh - Willie Blackeye is a medicine man?

AT: No, he's a doctor.

RM: Oh, I see - there's a doctor and then there's a medicine man.

AT: Yes.

RM: What is the difference?

AT: Well, the witch doctor will come and tell you . . . let's say you're a doctor. A witch doctor will come here and tell you, "I want you to doctor me; I'm sick." So you believe him, and you doctor him. And I don't know how they do it, but while you are doctoring him, to find out

what's wrong with him, he's working on your brain - and he'll take your doctor [power] away from you. And then it's used for [being a] witch doctor. It's a danger.

I had a doctor who used to doctor me. I was sickly, I guess, when I was young - like 4, 5, 6 years old. She was an old lady - I guess she was 100 years old - and she'd cure me for a little while. That fall when this witch doctor killed my sister, she came pine nut gathering up to Sharp. Once she got through pine nutting, she went down to that old lady and said, "I want to be doctored; I'm sick." So she doctored her for 3 days - 3 nights. [She'd spend] about a couple of hours on this person - when it was just one person. And the second night that old lady said, "Oh, I can't find nothing wrong with you. You're perfectly all right."

"Oh, I'm sick." So the second night she doctored her again.

"No," she said, "I can't find nothing wrong with you - you're perfectly all right."

The third night she doctored her (she had to doctor for 3 nights, anyway). So she was doctored for a third night, and still the old lady said, "I can't find nothing wrong with you." And that night, they moved out in the nighttime - midnight. And about 2 days later, that old lady went crazy. She went crazy and they had to take her to Caliente - they had a crazy house there. And she died over there. She was a perfectly nice old woman.

RM: Is that right - and she was an Indian doctor.

AT: Yes - she was a Paiute. And the other one was a Paiute Indian witch.

RM: What finally happened to her?

AT: I don't know, maybe she's still alive.

RM: Maybe she's still doing it? And she can turn that force, then, for bad.

AT: Yes.

RM: What would make a person want to become a witch doctor?

AT: I don't know. That sister of mine wasn't harming her at all, but she knew that they were coming, some way.

RM: But your mother was suspicious, too - or was it your grandmother?

AT: Grandmother - well, both of them were suspicious. For 2 night rides, you know, it kept coming to her.

RM: Do the good Shoshone doctors use herbs and things like that?

AT: No - just power. I don't know . . . next to Jesus Christ, I think they're just given power by somebody up in heaven.

CHAPTER FIVE

[Transcriber's note: Shoshone has certain sounds that English lacks. I use ^ to stand for a high mid vowel, somewhat like the e in English the. I use gh to stand for the voiced velar fricative, which is like the Spanish g when it occurs between vowels, as in lago, 'lake'. If I hear variation in Mr. Thompson's speech, I sometimes record it - for instance, 'owl' is both muumbich and moombich.]

RM: Andy, we're going to talk about some Indian names for things in this country. Now, you mentioned Tonopah. What does it mean, and how does the Indian say it?

AT: The Indian says tonobah.

RM: Tonobah. And what does that mean?

AT: That's 'greasewood spring'. There must've been a lot of greasewood where they found that spring. I don't know just where the spring is.

RM: I think the spring is to the north of Tonopah, just a little ways up there, but I'm not sure.

AT: That's where Jim Butler camped when he found his mine.

RM: Yes. What's your name for the Cedar Springs?

AT: Oh - nokwind^. That means 'fast water running'. It's a pretty steep hill, and the water, I guess, used to run pretty fast, so 'water running fast' is what it means.

RM: Do you have a name for the spring where the Reveille mill gets its water?

AT: I never heard that name. I know the English name - White Rock.

RM: How about Eden Creek? Does that have an Indian name?

AT: It probably had an Indian name. God, I believe those are the only 2

Indian names I know. [chuckles] There's a spring in the hills here that's called by the Indian word for 'wild potato'. I don't think it has a white name.

RM: What is the Duckwater Spring called in Indian?

AT: I don't even know that. They don't use the names for the springs and mountains any more, and a guy keeps forgetting. Well, I never did hear very much. I mean, the old folks didn't always . . .

RM: What were the Kawich Mountains called in Shoshone?

AT: I think it's actually an Indian name. I know what wach means. It's like you 'watch it', but I don't know what kawa means.

RM: What about the Reveille Range - did it have an Indian name?

AT: It did have. It's a shame, a guy forgetting it. We had a guy here that we called Jocky Jimmy - Jimmy Adams. He's the one who really could name all these mountains.

RM: How about Railroad Valley? Did it have an Indian name?

AT: Yes, it had an Indian name; I never did hear it. All of these valleys had . . . I used to try to listen to the old Indians. They'd be talking about a certain spring and so on, all in Indian, and giving their Indian names. It be pretty interesting, but . . .

Other Voice: How about Willie Blackeye? Would he know?

AT: Willie Blackeye might know some Indian springs - I don't know. I don't know if the white people got the name Duckwater from an Indian word, or not. Bi^mbah would be the name of it. I guess there used to be a lot of ducks here.

RM: And what does it mean in Shoshone?

AT: 'Duck' and 'water'. [chuckles] This used to be a lake, I guess, and there used to be a lot of ducks here. And they might be in that name

bi^mbah - I'm not sure if the white people picked it up from the Indians or what.

RM: Was there an Indian name for Currant Creek?

AT: There must've been . . . All of these springs had a name. And then, in those days, the old folks would talk to each other and they'd name a rock and things like that - for the ways they came through, riding on horseback, back in those days. So they had a name for everything - even a rock - if a white rock, for instance, was by a trail, or something. But I was just a little kid then - I [chuckles] didn't know the spring names. But, by God, if I can think of any . . .

RM: What about the things you did in wrangling? Were there any Indian names for things associated with wrangling, like Indian names for the saddle and the rope and the horses and all that?

AT: Oh, yes. I got cussed out one time. Jack Bordoli asked me what was the name of the saddle and I told him, "nadanoo." [sounds like 'I don't know.]

He got mad. He said, "Why are you saying you don't know?"

I said, "It's the name of the saddle." [laughs]

Other Voice: And he thought you were saying you didn't know?

AT: Yes. [laughs] He started cussing me out. He'd sit there and ask me a lot of Indian names. I spoke Indian pretty good, then.

RM: What do they call the bridle?

AT: d^bezhaneya. That's 'bridle' - the whole set of bridle. And 'rope' is tuubu.

RM: How about a branding iron?

AT: tuupo.

RM: Do they have other meanings? I mean, when you're saying that, what

does the word mean in Shoshone?

AT: Well, that means 'branding iron.'

RM: It just means 'branding iron' - it doesn't mean 'hot iron that you put on the cow' or something like that?

AT: No. You'd put in some other word: ^r^ is 'hot.' ^r^ dur^.

RM: How about boots?

AT: I think I've always called boots just boots - there's no Indian name for it. Well, it . . .

RM: How about 'horseshoe'?

AT: 'Horseshoe' - pungun^mbh. That means a 'horse shoe' - the same thing as English. They've got a Shoshone book over at the tribe, I think, that has some of these words in it.

RM: What did you call the camp that you made when you were wrangling? Did that have a name in Indian?

AT: No, I think that wasn't really part of an Indian's culture. They just used the whites' word.

RM: What did you call a rabbitskin blanket?

AT: kamuwigha.

RM: OK. What did you call a rabbit?

AT: kamu - that's the same word - kamuwigha.

RM: OK. wigha means 'blanket'?

AT: 'Blanket'; yes.

RM: What did you call a kit fox?

AT: 'Kit fox'? woziatse.

RM: How about a bobcat?

AT: tukuwich.

RM: How about coyote?

AT: ijap^.

RM: What about pine nuts? What do you call them?

AT: t^va.

RM: What about snow?

AT: takavi.

RM: OK. Rain?

AT: paamor^.

RM: Do you have a name for the different seasons of the year?

AT: Yes. Let's see - tommo is 'wintertime'; tahmone [or] dahmone is 'spring'; taza is 'summer'; and y^vane is 'fall'. I used to know the names of the months, too, by the moon, but I forgot all that.

RM: You mean, you had the different months by the moon?

AT: Yes - the moon was more the Indian calendar. They knew by that what spring was, what summer was, what . . .

RM: You could tell by the moon what season it was?

AT: Yes. They had the watchman, I guess, watch the skies a lot. They knew all the constellations and things like that. They've got one bunch - I don't know what the white man name is - that they call soond^ - that means 'lots' - for a lot of little stars. Soondat^ n^n^mai miand^ means 'a lot of little stars going together across the country'. That way they knew they were far from . . . no daylight.

RM: What's the name for 'moon'?

AT: m^a.

RM: But you can't remember the names of the moon months?

AT: No, I get them all mixed up - I wouldn't be able to tell . . . I haven't heard them [in] 50 or 60 years.

RM: But they weren't like 'January' and 'February' in Shoshone - it was

different, wasn't it?

AT: Oh, yes. They went by animals. The new year month was isham^a. Coyote's breeding at that time.

RM: Oh - in January?

AT: Yes. All the animals - like wildcat, and fox, are breeding about then. This is a naughty boy, this coyote. He was naughty in their story-telling. [chuckles]

RM: Do you know any coyote stories?

AT: Oh [chuckles], I used to know some. They used to be dirty stories.

RM: That's all right. [laughs]

AT: There used to be a story about Coyote and Cottontail. You know how Cottontail's neck is brown. He went to kill the sun - he was mad at the sun that time. He walked and walked and walked and walked toward the sun, every day, so that he got to where the sun comes out - someplace up in the high mountain or some doggone thing. Coyote was with him and Coyote got killed first thing. He roasted because it was hot. (They were just so hot that they wanted to kill the sun.) So Coyote got killed first. And Badger was there too, and he stayed on the ground a lot, and he made it quite a ways. There were some more animals - I don't remember just who. But this Cottontail made it all the way. Then he shot at the sun with his bow and arrow [chuckles], and he got scorched - that's why he's got that little brown [mark] on the top of his head. That's a long story. It's real cute - there's a lot of singing with it and things like that.

RM: Was there any reason why the cottontail lasted longer than the others?

AT: I don't know.

RM: How do you say 'cottontail' in Shoshone?

AT: It's tabutsi. We had one Indian man - my stepdad - who was named by tabutsi. And Henry Blackeye down here has a daughter named by it. [chuckles]

I don't know why - of course, the cottontail goes under brush a lot. That might've been the reason - he could go under brush [and] cool off, then go again. I don't know just what the reason was; I was a kid, and didn't have time to ask questions. [laughs] Old Willie Blackeye said, "I wish I'd taped in them days." He said, "I could've taped a lot of them [stories]. There's some good ones."

RM: Do you know any more stories?

AT: Oh, there's one about Bobcat and Coyote. They wanted meat, and there was a mountain sheep going across a mountain like that. So they were the brave ones to go get it - Coyote and Bobcat - so they took off. Old Coyote was just a big old showoff. He started to run and he got up to the mountain sheep and the mountain sheep knocked him down. [laughs] And Bobcat went along, sneaking around behind trees all the way up. He got to the mountain sheep and they were all standing up there behind each other - trailing, you know. So Bobcat [thought], "Well, what I'll do, I'll shoot him in the ass. And from there, it'll go up through his mouth and kill all of them." [laughter] So that's what he did, and the story ended that all the Indian woman started skinning them. And there was a creekbed that was running red. [laughs] That was a long story, too.

One story I used to like is about Owl and Bullet Hawk. They were pretty smart guys, you know.

RM: What is a bullet hawk?

AT: Oh, it's a little hawk - a lot smaller than an owl. And it's got an

elbow here with a little hook right here. He can come flying along and cut the head, right in here.

RM: Oh - hit them in the neck?

AT: Yes, they go up pretty high - maybe 500 feet, or maybe more.

Other Voice: They whistle, too, when they come down.

AT: Yes. When they get up there and see a rabbit down below . . . One time when we were just kids my partner and I had a gopher. I caught the gopher in a trap - he was still alive - so we were setting a target for us to use our bow and arrows on it. He was putting the gopher on a bare spot, and we were pacing it - how many feet, you know - trying to see how many feet we'd shoot it at. And when we were walking back, we heard this whistle [chuckles] and we looked over there, and our gopher was gone - dead. [laughs]

RM: Is that right - the bullet hawk had gotten it?

AT: Yes. That little gopher wasn't very big, and it [the hawk] was coming about 100, 150 miles and hour and just - phwwt!

RM: So then Owl and Bullet Hawk were out. And what happened?

AT: Well, they'd shoot targets and Bullet Hawk would beat Owl all the time. (Owl is muumbich [or] moombich, and Bullet Hawk is ginniih.) And they were shooting targets and the ginniih beat him. He had that hook, you know. [chuckles] I don't know; I've heard the Indian stories clear down in New Mexico and clear up in Oregon.

RM: Did you hear the stories first from the old people, or your mother or your grandmother, or . . .

AT: My stepdad was a good storyteller. He could remember those things. And my grandma used to tell me a little - not much. My stepdad was really good. [chuckles] He would only tell them in the evening, at

bedtime. He'd tell the story and you'd go to sleep. I used to go to sleep on that Cottontail story; [it would last] for about 3 nights. I mean, maybe 2 or 3 hours in the evening every night. And I used to copy him; he wanted me to mouth copy him, and I was pretty good. If the tape recorder had come 10 years earlier, I could've taped him.

RM: That would've been great, wouldn't it?

AT: Yes. And I never taught anything to my kids. I never did tell a story. I guess I could've kept telling the story - maybe I might've remembered it. But . . . too busy, too tired.

CHAPTER SIX

AT: I wanted to talk about what the Indian believes causes cancer. I told it to a lot of white guys - even a man from the Soil Conservation Service. I thought he might be interested.

RM: Well, tell me.

AT: [chuckles] OK. The Indian belief was that what causes cancer is little ants. They live in logs and they're black, or . . . well, I saw them up in North Carolina and they were white - they were going into the tobacco areas. These around here, in Nevada, are black and they usually go for timber - logs. And the Indians call them honas [or] hunas. That means 'cancer'. I guess they used to have cancer a long time ago, just like we do now. They told me, when I was young, that whenever you fall [an ant's nest] or get bucked off in one of them, you should make a big fire, then jump over and call that cancer - honas, hunas, hunas - and you won't get cancer, then.

RM: Oh - and if you don't, you will?

AT: Yes. I was scared of them, a little bit. With fallen wood and so forth we get a lot of them.

RM: Did you do the fire, then?

AT: Yes. But . . . well, as long as you don't get hurt - get a scratch or something. So I was just wondering . . . they've got a cancer smell - they get a hell of a whiff on them, those hunas.

RM: You can smell them, then?

AT: If you disturb them; if they get mad. They're like a skunk; ready to throw a perfume. They're just little devils. [chuckles] And people are blaming cancer on certain things - cigarette papers or cigarettes and

food and stuff. Well, I believe in that Indian idea. My stepdad is the one who told me, when I was raised by him. That was one important thing they taught the children, is to do that. I got thrown off in the sagebrush once, and my buddy was with me. "God damn, there's them cancer bugs." So we built a big fire and jumped back and forth. [chuckles]

RM: You have to do it right away, don't you?

AT: Yes - right away. That kills that germ. I guess the hotter you get, the better it is. So they say cigarettes . . . when I was up in North Carolina, there were those white bugs in that tobacco - they raise tobacco there. And there's timber there, too - they always have trails. Jesus, million of them . . .

RM: You think maybe the ants are in the tobacco?

AT: Well, they get mad when they throw that perfume. They live in logs - they cut holes in them. Here it's pine trees and things like that. I told this Soil Conservation guy, "Well, I'll bring you a jar - maybe you can have it tested." But I never could find an ant up high yet.

RM: Is it the perfume that does it, or the ant itself?

AT: Well, I think it's [the perfume]. I think that's what the Indians said. I wasn't paying much attention. Yes, that's when they get mad, you know. Otherwise, if you don't get them mad, they don't send anything; they can be right there.

RM: What other Indian beliefs are there about sickness and disease?

AT: Well, the red ants are supposed to be a blood dryer. If you've got a nose-bleed and it's bleeding all the time and you can't stop it . . . hell, I was like that. I'd bleed there for a long time - feel like I was about near dead - I was getting real white and yellow. So my mother said, "Take it over to them red ants. Bleed in it. Whenever it bleeds

like that . . . " I'd bleed about a quart a day.

RM: You were bleeding a quart a day? [whistles]

AT: Yes, I'd bleed, bleed . . . It would just run out both nostrils. And I was just about near dead. She just told me to take it to the red ants, so I did.

RM: What did you do?

AT: Whenever I'd bleed I'd go over to their house. You know, those red ants have got their place. I'd bleed on it and they'd eat it, I guess. I did that about 3 times and that was the end of it; I never bled in there any more.

RM: You didn't let them bite you or anything - you just bled there?

AT: No, you'd just stand there . . .

RM: You'd just stand there and let it bleed.

AT: As long as you're not disturbing them, they'll go for that blood.

I guess the Indians knew about tuberculosis before the white people came, and I guess they cured quite a few people. Well, I cured one of my kids that way. The Indians use stinkers. They didn't use the skunk stinker, but badgers have stinkers on them, and coyotes have 2 of them. So do swift fox and other animals.

RM: It's a scent?

AT: They used to eat badger, you know. So they saved the stinker, and they'd make soup out of it and give it to whoever had TB, and it cured it. They used to get the stinker off anything they ate that had one - some birds have a stinker on them, too. I used chicken on my boy. He had a touch of TB, and my wife had to go to Weemah. And she wouldn't drink that stuff. [chuckles] So I said, "Well, I'm going to have one boy here, so I'll try it on him." I bought a lot of chicken, and I'd get

the stinker on the end of the tail - there's a little bump right under the tail.

RM: I didn't know it was on chickens.

AT: Yes. Ladies cut them off all the time. And I used it and just made soup out of them. I had half a dozen chickens and just cut them off and made soup, and I drank it with him so he wouldn't be thinking [chuckles] anything was wrong. When they took an X-ray again, he was clear.

RM: Is that right - that's interesting.

AT: Now, you know, they can purify skunks and so forth, so they could purify them.

RM: Yes. But the Shoshone didn't use the skunk.

AT: No. I guess they figured it was a little too strong. It might have been the best one. They'd never eat coyotes or swift fox or grey fox but they'd eat the bobcats and badger and rabbit . . .

RM: But they would use the stinker of the coyote and fox?

AT: Yes, they'd cut that stinker out. And then they'd boil it separately so it would be strong enough. It would spoil the food, I guess, if you left it on. I think deer have stinkers too.

RM: Do they?

AT: I'm not sure - I never did cut them. But I know antelopes have one. If you just touch that stinker you can't even eat the meat - it just ruins it.

RM: What does the food taste like, I wonder?

AT: Well, that chicken didn't taste of anything . . . there was enough meat there and I didn't see any bad taste to it. Maybe our mothers used chickens that were a little stronger. But that's the one they cured TB with . . .

You've seen these other ants that build their house with straws and pine needles - their houses are about that high?

RM: About 3 feet high - yes.

AT: Well, Indians used to eat the eggs off of that.

RM: Just for food, or for medicine?

AT: Food. Then they'd get pets - like mockingbirds - and they'd get that to feed their mockingbirds.

RM: Oh - they had mockingbirds as pets? How did they keep them?

AT: They'd weave willows.

RM: How did they catch the mockingbirds?

AT: They'd get them when they hatched. When they'd see the mockingbirds, they follow them. It's pretty good, too. When the bird's close to the nest - maybe 200 yards away or something - they drop down to the ground and run a foot on their feet, and then get to the nest. They're suspicious. [chuckles]

RM: Oh. And then they would get the little baby mockingbird and then feed it, huh?

AT: Yes. They'd get 2 or 3 of them - until they found a male - and then turn the others loose in the fall so they could migrate back south. They'd just take the male - the singing bird.

RM: Oh - the female doesn't sing?

AT: No. My mama used to get one mockingbird pretty near every 7 years; that was all they lived.

RM: What other kinds of pets did you keep?

AT: Well, magpies.

RM: What did you keep them in?

AT: Same thing - they'd make a willow cage.

RM: How big was the cage?

AT: Pretty big - about like that. [About 3 feet by 3 feet.] The mockingbird was the only kind of bird we used to get. A lot of Indians got the magpie. kwitawoyo is the name.

RM: What's the mockingbird called?

AT: sayam^ [or] sayamb^.

RM: Did you ever catch baby coyotes or anything like that?

AT: They had coyotes for pets, but my folks never did. I had a pet deer once - a buck. He got mean toward the end. He stayed with us 2 years, I guess. He'd butt somebody every once in a while. [laughs] He was crazy.

RM: Did you keep him in a pen, or what?

AT: No, we left him outside. He just roamed around. About the third year, he'd run away in breeding time.

RM: And he would butt you?

AT: Yes, sometimes he'd butt you. And he'd butt a stranger. The Forest Service was . . . they got after us once, and we told them he was our pet and [they said] we had to tie him up. Boy, he was mad. [laughs]

They say badgers makes real good pets. A lot of Indians out there had them. They dig a hole and stay there . . . I don't know how long. And they can tell when a stranger's coming. I don't know what kind of cry they made . . . They were a good pet, they said. And we never did try it. Badger is huna [or] hunaa.

In the story telling, he's supposed to be the doctor. [chuckles] Well, like Currant Creek. If somebody wanted to get doctored, he'd dig a hole, and in a little while he'd be over there - because he's a fast digger. [laughs]

RM: Coyote was the naughty boy, wasn't he?

AT: Yes. He was always getting killed. [chuckles] Badger'd come along and get his doctor stick and poke him in the butt. [laughs] Coyote'd jump up and say, "What happened!" [laughter]

Here's a story about the Coyote and the Porcupine. They were coming off a hill and they spotted some ladies down below. I don't know what kind of ladies they were, but they might have been badger, too. So they sneaked along down the ridge, and Porcupine said, "We need leather." And they were going to use the cunts for leather. So they sneaked along, and they got pretty close - maybe 100 yards or a little more. They were on top of the hill and the ladies were down there. I don't know what they were doing; I guess it was a camp. And Porcupine said, "I'll go down there - we'll need that leather - and you stay up here." And, "When I give you a signal, then you come running down."

"OK," said Mr. Coyote, and so he stayed there and watched them.

Porcupine went down and started singing a song. I don't remember the song, but it was a kind of cute. He said, "You ladies dance around me - I'll be the singer." So he got in the middle and started singing his song. They danced a couple of rounds, and then Porcupine sang another song and that's the song for Coyote to come down quick if something happened.

So the ladies noticed Porcupine - he's getting all humped up. "Aie - what beautiful clothes you got - it shines - it's got black ends. Boy, that's beautiful clothes you got." And he kept a-doubling up. So he started singing that song, and then he let go - spread those quills of his all over, in their eyes and everything. They started hollering, crying. . . . So here comes Coyote, just full speed, coming down from

that hill. He's just coming, boy - he's going to get that leather. And he never slowed down. When he got down there, he made a big old yelp [chuckles] . . . he's down on the ground, rolling over - all his feet have quills in them. He's just as bad as the ladies. So Porcupine had to pull his quills out before they could get to work. [laughs]

RM: And they just took the cunts, right?

AT: Yes. They just cut that cunt. I tried to ask my dad how that made leather, but he didn't know, either. I guess it's spongy or something.

RM: Were the ladies talking about his coat when they they said it had black tips?

AT: Yes - he had black tips and it's got white on the quills. [chuckles]

But the cancer idea is kind of interesting; it might be what we need. It could be, with these ants, that we're letting them go and they might be the ones that are giving them cancer - the ones that should be killed. I don't know how much cancer we get in Nevada, but . . . take pine nuts. You eat the pine nuts, but there might have been a bird or someone that got them mad and they perfumed them. I wash all my pine nuts. I don't take a chance on atomic bombs or anything.

RM: Ants or atomic bombs.

AT: And making papers. One time my uncle and a guy named Little Pete got in an argument over at Eden Creek. I was about 15 years old, I guess. And Little Pete took a Look magazine and hit him across the nose with it, right here. I was visiting then - I went over there to get a horse; my grandpa wanted to give me a horse. Little Pete and my uncle were drinking, and they kept arguing over something, and he hit him across the nose.

About 3 months after that he was down trapping coyote at Twin Springs, and I went to visit him up there. I was in a car, going to Sharps. Both my grandpa and he were trapping on horseback. And this uncle told me, "See, I'm getting a lump right here under my nose where that guy hit me." And he had a big lump under the nose. About a month later, they took him to Schurz. (It was 1932, I think; it snowed like hell.) My dad was the only one who went over there. He was in bad shape - he had cancer.

So that's one place . . . I used to be the school bus driver here, and I didn't like the kids to hit each other with books. You know, books [are made of] what those black ants live on. And something might have got them mad, and maybe they had that wood perfumed. Or maybe what they eat there makes the cancer.

RM: Yes; that's interesting.

AT: It might be the thing we need, to find out what cancer is - nobody knows what cancer is.

RM: That's right.

AT: I was surprised when I went up to North Carolina to see those doggone stink ants all over - trailing out to the tobacco plants. And they were cutting timber there, too. I don't know what they eat out of the pine trees - timber, I guess. The Indian doctors can cure a cancer.

RM: They can?

AT: Yes. But they won't bring it out in public.

RM: Have you seen cancer cured that way?

AT: Yes. There's one right over here - a woman. She was supposed to have died 30 years ago. A doctor told her she had only a few weeks or maybe a month to live. So she made a reservation for her 3 daughters at

the Stewart [Indian school] for them - to stay there to get their schooling. (Now she's the only one left.) And this Willie Blackeye I told you about doctored it.

RM: And cured it?

AT: And cured it. They couldn't find any cancer. She went back to the hospital and they couldn't find it.

RM: What kind of cancer was it - do you know?

AT: It was a stomach kind.

RM: Do you have any more incidents like that?

AT: Well, my wife had a cousin in Fallon. I don't know what she died from; she was drinking too much. But she got an Indian doctor in Oregon for cancer, and he cured it.

RM: How does the Indian doctor cure it? Is it by spiritual power, or . . .

AT: Singing, and - I don't know - some power comes down . . . it's not them, when they start doctoring - that's what Willie Blackeye says. It's not him that's doctoring - it's somebody up there, telling him what to do, and he's just a believer.

RM: Does he believe that it's God, or the Great Spirit, or how do you . . .

AT: The Great Spirit, I guess. I don't know just what it is. I'd like to know. [chuckles] This Indian doctor who cured my wife's cousin could make her feel good just by talking to her on the telephone. She died 15 or 20 years ago. She was drinking heavy all the time. I don't know if the cancer came back or . . . They said she had a heart attack; I don't know.

Willie Blackeye was the same way on the telephone. Then there was

arthritis - he said it's something else.

RM: What did the Indian doctor say it is?

AT: He didn't say much - he just doctored. I didn't have to tell him where I was sick.

RM: He just knew?

AT: Yes. I thought it was pretty cute - he told me what happened, I guess 50 years ago. He said that my leg was wrapped up with rope, "And it got hurt pretty bad, and you was real sick. And the guys you was with left you." He told me that. And he doctored 2 nights. So I slept on it that night, and the only thing I could think of was that story I told you that happened down at Cabin Spring - over Five Mile. I was holding a bunch of horses and cutting holes in my boots and there was a sore-cinched mule so I didn't tighten the cinch on him.

RM: Oh, yes - the saddle turned over on him.

AT: Yes. But he told me that my leg was wrapped up. So I told him, "Well, the only thing I know, I was about 19 years old, or 20, when a mule bucked with me, and I got stuck in the reins and a spur got stuck on the cantle and the mule kicked the hell out of me. And when I did go, them cowboys left me." I guess that's what he meant.

RM: They did leave you?

AT: Yes, they did leave me. But there was one guy there - the cook. So I thought, "Jesus, this doctor's pretty strong." To know about 50 years ago and tell you about it.

AT: I was just thinking about 2 rocks down at Sharp - one of them's called gwidatz and the other one's called w^a.

RM: What do they mean?

AT: gwidatz means a 'cunt'. [chuckles] It's in a rock.

RM: And it looks like a cunt?

AT: Yes. And the other one stands up on a hill - it looks like a prick.

RM: Are they big rocks?

AT: Yes. You can see them when you go down to Sharp.

Then going on the Nyala road, over the summit, there's a rock, standing up right in the wash. I guess it's 50 or 60 feet high or something. There wasn't very much game back then, and if the Indians wanted game they'd hunt that rock, and sneak up on it, just as close as they could go - maybe from here to that shop [about 50 yards away]. Then they'd shoot one or two arrows into it. And when they did that, that was supposed to kill the deer already. They'd walk up onto the deer, and shoot him from just a little ways away.

RM: Is that right. By hunting that rock, it made it easier to get a deer, then.

AT: Yes; in those days. When I first was big enough to remember, there used to be lots of arrowheads stuck in the cracks. And a lot of them were made out of greasewood. The tourists, I guess, or the farmers, got most of them. There was one greasewood arrow that was in there so tight they couldn't get out, but they broke it right on the arrow part. But a couple of years ago I was down there and they must've got that other point out.

one kid here who got a knife stabbed in his throat in Ely. [Some] medicine men were trying to kill him through the telephone. Nobody knows who stuck that knife in his throat. I'd like to be an Indian doctor.

RM: How do you become an Indian doctor?

AT: Well, I guess God gives it to you.

RM: And he gives it to some and not to others?

AT: Yes.

RM: Apparently he gave it to Willie Blackeye, but he didn't give it to you. How do you know when you've been given that?

AT: Well, I guess they see a lot in the night - spirits and stuff - curing and things like that. I don't know just how . . . I'd like to know, myself.

RM: And then, how do they learn how to do the right thing?

AT: Well, that guy up there . . . The doctor sings the same songs all the time. He sings 2 or 3 songs and the spirit comes to him, and he . . .

RM: Where does he learn those songs?

AT: That spirit gave it to him.

RM: Oh - the spirit gives them to him. So he doesn't study with another doctor?

AT: No.

RM: So each one has got his own songs and his own medicine and everything.

AT: Yes. After the last time I saw you I went up to Elko, and there was an Indian doctor up there. He was from Washington state. They said there was a good doctor, and my feet feel a lot better than they did. A white doctor says it's arthritis, but the Indian doctor didn't say it's

RM: What's the rock called?

AT: There's no name to it. The Forest Service should go down there and clean up around there. I don't think the Forest Service even knows what it is - that it's [something from] Indian culture for hunting deer.

RM: Is the rock considered sacred?

AT: Yes, it's sacred. It's under brush, now; you damn near can't see it. Over the summit, just about 200 yards above the rock, there's a waterfall. I guess that's where the Indian used to camp, too, and the game was right there. If they could hit that crack, that deer was dead.

RM: They had to hit the crack in the rock?

AT: Yes. That arrow had to stand there and quiver.

RM: Oh. And the deer was dead then?

AT: Yes. He . . .

RM: Now, it's on the summit between . . .

AT: Over the Cherry Creek summit, going to Sharp. If you go over the summit, [it's] about 5 or 6 miles down there. If you're going this way, you'll see that waterfall on the left side of the road. It's a little waterfall, maybe as far as from here to that door, there - maybe farther. A black rock.

RM: (Ten yards - yes.)

AT: There are little streaks of water that come over there. I guess a long time ago there must've been a lot of rocks. There's a lot of water there all the time - the deer water there and everything. If you want to go run that down, just go from this side and watch for that bluff on your left side. Then right below there in kind of a wash you'll see a rock sticking up. It's under a lot of sagebrush now. I guess they believed in it a lot, because when I first remember it, gee, it just looked like a

porcupine. There were thousands of arrows in it. All kinds of people made them, too.

RM: And when you shot it, you didn't take your arrow out, did you? You had to leave it there?

AT: Oh, no - that's sacred; it was there to stay. When you missed, it flew off; then you could . . .

RM: But it had to stick in it?

AT: Yes - stick in the crack. I don't know how many cracks - I think there were 3.

RM: How big are the cunt rock and the prick rock?

AT: Oh, I guess the w^a stands up about 200 or 300 feet. When you get down from that arrow [rock], go down about another or 3 miles and there'll be a road that turns to the right. I think there used to be a ranger station there. But you can see it from the road - there are a lot of yellow rocks on the left side there - and you look north and you see that w^a. A little bit farther, when you go on that road, you see the gwidatz on your right. It's in the bottom.

RM: Does that have any special meaning to the people?

AT: I don't know what kind of meaning it had. The w^a was a marker, I guess. They used it for a marker - I think the gwidatz, too. They might've tracked a deer along through there, or something like that. I think you could climb on it. I think when I was a kid I used to climb on top of that w^a. On one side it's a little steep, but you had a lot of footholds.

RM: Now, let me get clear where . . . it's down Railroad Valley?

AT: Yes. You go down by Sharp . . .

Other Voice: There's a road about a mile from [someone's] house - you

turn left.

RM: And go down Railroad Valley?

AT: Follow that road right on down.

RM: And how far down do you go to get to w^a?

AT: About 50 miles.

RM: What's close to it?

AT: The Sharp Ranch. You keep on going down and you come to Sharp Ranch.

RM: And then you can get to that sacred rock by turning west?

AT: Yes - on the same road. And there's a "Y" down there - there's a bunch of yellow rocks, and a Y going up to the ranger station.

RM: What other rocks are there like that?

AT: That was about the only one I know of. Another place was right up - they used to shoot at moss or something. I've never been there; I've been wanting to find it. My dad used to tell me about it. The trees there have got moss on them. I guess I could find it, if I could find the Indian trail. It's up Granite Canyon someplace, and I don't know if the white people pulled all the arrows out of it. But it was thick moss - it was really nice to shoot at. [chuckles] It was moss on a cedar tree or pine tree or something.

RM: And that would help them get deer, too?

AT: Yes. The Indians never [pull out the arrows]. It's sacred to an Indian; you might get sick.

RM: That's really interesting, Andy.

AT: Yes. If a guy just knew where the . . .

RM: Andy, how did your Shoshone figure their kinship? You know, some Indians call their aunts 'mother', too. Who do you call 'mother' in your

culture? Are you related to both your mother and your father's side, or just one side?

AT: Well, my stepdad is the one who raised me, so I called him 'Dad' all the time. On both sides . . . 'grandma' was called a kaghu. And your mother's name is pii and your father is ap^.

RM: What did you call your mother's sister?

AT: paha.

RM: And then, what did you call your father's sisters?

AT: [chuckles] I think that's the same thing - paha.

RM: OK. And how about your father's brothers?

AT: aragho - it was the same thing.

RM: What did you call your mother's mother?

AT: I called her kaghu - on my mother's side.

RM: What did people call their mother's mother? I guess mother's father is togho.

[tape is turned off for a while]

RM: You just mentioned Timpahute. How do you say it in Indian?

AT: timb^yuth.

RM: What does it mean?

AT: The first part of it means 'rock' - timbi.

RM: Do you know what 'Pahrump' means? Now, that's supposed to be Paiute, but I just wondered if maybe it might be Shoshone.

AT: No, it's Paiute. I don't know very many of the Paiute words.

RM: Do you know what Toquima means? Is that a Shoshone word?

AT: No, it doesn't make sense to me. There are a lot of words that don't mean anything, just like there are English words that don't mean anything.

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