

Interviewee: Leland Shumway

Interviewer: Gary Shumway, Jerry Robinson,

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GS: This is an interview of Leland Shumway by Gary Shumway and Jerry Robinson on January 5, 2001, in Leland Shumway's home in Blanding, Utah.

Leland, as we were talking, the focus of this interview is on everything and anything you remember about Cottonwood. You were there very early in the scheme of things, and your family, of course, was prominent all the way through. Can you think back to the first time that you heard the family had discovered some uranium out there? Do you remember the first time you learned of that?

LS: My dad and I were the first ones to start mining there. We had those single jack hammers, and across the creek we saw lots of high grade trees sticking out in the rocks. We didn't do that too long before other people started coming in there and getting leases on them. Howard Balsley owned most of them. It kept growing and growing. Finally this California bunch bought them. I can't remember their names.

GS: This was Ken Garbutt and the Kimmerles?

LS: Yes, Kimmerle; he was the guy who bought it. There was a company from California who owned it. I was a kid but they put me staying at that mill at night. I had to keep that roaster going at a certain temperature. That great big thing was turning, and the vanadium had gone through a crusher, so it was just a powder. It had to get so hot. I ran it through that thing and into some tanks with acid in them. That mixed with the vanadium.

GS: What kind of acid did they use in that? Sulfuric or hydrochloric?

LS: Hydrochloric.

[Pause in tape.]

GS: While we were stopped, you had indicated you'd thought it might have been sulfuric acid, instead of hydrochloric; is that correct?

LS: Yes.

GS: Good. So you were the one who was in charge of it at night; is that right? You were the only one there at night?

LS: I was the only one there at night. The next morning Mr. Kimmerle would come up there and if that stuff got too hot it would start making rolls. He'd come up there and say, "I believe it needs a little more, kid." Morning after morning he'd say that; he'd turn the steam up on the boiler, and pretty quick it would start making those rolling things. He'd turn the heat down, but there it was with a bunch of those roller things in there. He didn't know what else to do, so he got his shotgun and he'd shoot those damn rollers to get them so they could go through the tanks. (laughter)

GS: He'd kind of explode them, in other words.

LS: Yes, with that damn shotgun.

GS: And everyone was wondering why there was so much lead in the ore, huh?

LS: [Laughs] Yes.

GS: How many times did he do that, do you think? Did it just happen once?

LS: Oh, three or four times. We'd draw that stuff into those tanks, and that acid would leach out the vanadium. We'd run this through this thing that fused it into liquid and then we'd let it harden in bulk. We'd get pieces like that [gestures]. In those day they had seamless canvas bags, and we'd fill those canvas bags and ship them to Balsley.

GS: And after they'd kind of fused in there you'd crack those pieces about how long?

LS: Oh, they just kept coming out of the thing there that would melt them. As they came out, they came out in long strings. As soon as they would get cold, they would harden and we would crack them up and put them in the bags.

GS: And how long of pieces would you get? Did it matter, or was it just getting them so you could put them in the sack?

LS: It was different. We'd do it one way and then another. It depended on the heat.

GS: Now, what color would this be when it came out?

LS: It was kind of a gray color, until after it went through that machine, then it was melted and it was black.

GS: So it was black oxide, ferrous oxide?

LS: Just like black glass.

GS: And it had kind of a sheen to it, like glass would?

LS: Yes. It would come up clear.

GS: So that was actually black oxide at that point. Was there a part of the process where it was red oxide, before you fused it?

LS: It was just sand, but heated so much that it melted. That's what they ran it through the little machine for, was to melt it. And it came out black.

GS: And this would be very high-grade vanadium, then, wouldn't it?

LS: Yes, it was almost pure. This guy who married the Redd girl . . .

GS: Gene Blickenstaff?

LS: Yes, he was a chemist, he ran the chemical works. He'd show how much acid and what kind of acid it would take. He had an office where he did the chemical work. But I did most of my work at night. I can tell you a real dirty joke; no, it would be too dirty! Kimmerle had a lady whose husband, I think, worked out there. She helped Mrs. Kimmerle cook.

GS: Out at the mine?

LS: Yes. We had a guy there who was full of wicked jokes. Anyway, this girl had to go out in the trees to go to the toilet. That didn't work too well, especially at night, so she took a pot and put it under her bed. This kid knew what was going on, and took that stuff that we'd put in our lamps and put it in that pan under her bed.

GS: You mean he put carbide in it?

LS: Yes. So she had to go in the night, and she got the pan out, did something in it and that stuff started to make a racket.

GS: It was foaming up?

LS: Yes. So she strikes a match to see what's going on.

[Laughter]

LS: Damn near burned the house down.

GS: And this was out there at the mines where this happened?

LS: Yes.

GS: She was living out there then?

LS: Her husband, I think, worked there.

GS: And where did they have their little house where it all took place?

LS: They had quite a big house that all the Kimmerles lived in.

GS: Out there at the mines?

LS: Yes.

GS: Do you remember who it was who built that house for them out there?

LS: I'm not sure. It was a carpenter from here. I think it was Glen Johnson, but I'm not sure.

GS: So it was a fairly well built house, from one of the good carpenters here in town.

LS: The one the Kimmerles lived in was quite nice.

GS: And where was it located?

LS: Right over what they called the Big Hole; the mine went right under the house. It was just west of the mills two or three hundred yards.

GS: Would you have enough energy to ride out with us tomorrow and show us some of these places? Devar is going to go with us, and he wasn't sure where that house was. Could you arrange to go with us in the morning about ten o'clock and ride out there, if we came and got you?

LS: Yes.

GS: I'd appreciate it if you would. It would be great. You could show us exactly some places like this. Devar was on his mission when some of these things took place. I'm glad you shared that little off-color story; it would be quite a predicament.

LS: I'll tell you one on Devar before we go out there. Me and my brother, Gilbert, had a mine that ran right out to the creek. Devar had a mine up the canyon there just a little ways. We used to have a little cave there that we put our dynamite in, caps, powder and everything. It got to looking like it wasn't all there in the morning.

GS: It kind of disappeared?

LS: So we set a trap. Devar was taking enough each day to last him that day.

GS: He thought that was the company powder magazine there, huh? (laughter)

LS: We told him we'd caught him, and it really tickled him.

GS: How did you set a trap to catch him?

LS: Oh, we counted it or something. I don't remember just how. We took so many sticks of powder and waited till he went to work, then counted them again.

GS: That's a good story. You should have set a bear trap or something like that.

LS: Yes. Then the government made a little mill there, where Asa Laws was killed.

GS: Let me ask you a couple of things before we get to that part. Where were these mines that you were mining, and where Devar was?

LS: They were just straight across the creek from the Big Hole; there is a little canyon there.

GS: Spring Canyon?

LS: I am not sure.

GS: You can probably show us that tomorrow, too. Let's talk about this first mill and then the second one, since you were there. Did you ever work in the daytime on that first mill, or were you always at night doing the roasting?

LS: I worked in the daytime in the mines, then at night I was just staying up there by the boiler, and I got to sleep in.

GS: Are you saying that at the same time you were operating the roaster at night, you were working in the daytime mining?

LS: Yes.

GS: So you'd work for yourselves in the daytime, or were you still working for Kimmerles?

LS: I was working for myself.

GS: And you'd get paid a wage for mining in the daytime.

LS: I'd just get the ore, and ship it to Balsley.

GS: You wouldn't give it to them for them to use in the mill?

LS: I'd get real high-grade trees and ship them to Balsley.

GS: So at night you had a job where you were working on the roaster. You were getting this stuff ready to be processed the next day. And you spent all night there watching that, keeping the temperature right. Could you adjust the temperature if you thought it was getting too low or high?

LS: Yes, we had a faucet there to put more steam into it. I had to watch it to keep it warm enough, but not so it would melt.

GS: Not to start those rolls coming so you'd have to shoot them with a shotgun.

LS: That's where we had the trouble.

GS: How did you generate the steam?

LS: We had a boiler that used oil. We'd ship oil in from Mexican Hat. Marvin Lyman was sitting on the oil well that furnished the oil.

GS: It was not refined oil; it was just as it came out of the ground there in Mexican Hat?

LS: Just as it came out of the ground. We put it in a tank up higher than the roaster and we would shoot it into the boiler. You'd turn a faucet and put in more oil so you'd get more steam. I went there

one cold night and the boiler was plugged up. It was cold enough that the oil was plugged up in the pipe coming out of the tank down into the boiler. Right where the pipe made a turn, they had a plug screwed into it. I took that plug out, but the oil still didn't come out, so I got a wire and stuck it up that pipe and there came the oil and just got all over me (laughter). I had a hell of a time getting that plug back on. It had a lot of pressure.

GS: And you were there all by yourself, having to cope with this problem of any time you let go oil would be squirting all over the place and you had to let go to get that back together again.

LS: Yes. (laughter) There was a boiler that I had to shoot the oil into. After I got everything put back together, I shot some oil into the boiler. It had rocks in the bottom that I would shoot that oil onto. Well, after shooting the oil onto those rocks, I threw a match into there or something and it didn't light so I took a newspaper and threw that in there and it exploded. The damn boiler was nearly my death. The two big metal doors of the boiler opened and knocked me into that damn tank. I thought I was dead.

GS: You mean it knocked you into the roasting tank?

LS: It knocked me clear across the room, and I hit into the roasting tank, on the outside. All of a sudden those two doors hit me across the shins. It didn't hardly hurt me at all, but when I flew across there, I figured I was dead.

It knocked me back against the boiler. The boiler was sitting right outside of it from the tank and it knocked me that far.

GS: If the boiler hadn't been there you may still be going!

LS: The boiler went on about its business. It was lit then.

GS: What did you do? Did you go over and prop the doors back on it?

LS: No. I just went on about my business.

GS: But the doors had been blown off, right?

LS: It just blew them open. They were two big, cast iron doors on the boiler.

GS: So you just closed those back up and it was working fine then. Is that the only time that happened, that one time?

LS: It was the last time it happened to me, anyway. The oil just got stiff from the cold weather.

GS: They didn't have a refinery there at Mexican Hat? It was just the plain oil coming out of the ground that you were burning there?

LS: Yes.

GS: Wow. I wasn't aware that they did that. So there was a connection between the oil wells down at Mexican Hat that they'd found and the mines out in Cottonwood, and Marvin Lyman was the connection. He was the one supplying the oil, right?

LS: Yes.

GS: Would he bring it out himself? Would he go down in a truck and get it at Mexican Hat?

LS: Yes. Later on he got in with those two guys from Cortez and mined the Big Hole. That organization was called Blanding Mines.

GS: We'll want to talk about that in a minute, because you were part of that, also. So, you're mining in the daytime, you're high grading, finding high grade trees around. Was this off from one specific mine or would you just go anywhere you found a high grade tree.

LS: There were several different people working up and down the creek there. You took what you could get your hands on. Howard Balsley had those claims and leased them to someone, then nobody else could go on that certain claim. But up and down the creeks there were high grade trees sticking out of the rim and if the trees were high enough grade we'd go take the vanadium. That's what we were after, was vanadium.

GS: The places that you took these high grade trees from, were they from Balsley's claims and you'd lease them from Balsley?

LS: Most of the claims I worked were the Balsley claims.

GS: What if you were going up the creek and saw a high grade tree sticking out over here. Did you ever go to the people who owed that and say, "Can I mine out that high grade tree?"

LS: Yes, we had quite a lot of that going on. We'd get leases.

GS: Can you remember a specific high grade tree you took out of Cottonwood? Can you remember the first time you ever mined a high grade tree and where it was?

LS: The rocks and things on the ledges have been moved but I could show you about where it was.

GS: Where was it? Was it on Balsley's claims?

LS: Yes, on Balsley's claims. This Big Hole was Uncle Harris' and Uncle Lee's. They took a lot of ore out of there. I shot it in after they'd mined it all out but there were still some pillars. I shot them down and after we got most of them out, it got to cracking. Me and my brother had gone around where the Big Hole came out into the creek again. You could go clear through there and out to the creek, right under the house that they built. After they had mined clear through there, I put equipment in there to shoot down those pillars. After I got nearly everything I wanted I could still hear that thing crackin' and there was still a little ore in there but I decided not to go after it. I took some sticks of powder and put one on each pillar and shot the thing in. After I shot it I could hear it cracking. It cracked there for at least half an hour. The Big Hole came out on both ends, and as it started caving in, the concussion threw rocks out of the mine from both portals. That was the end of the Big Hole.

GS: Did it cave clear to the surface so the surface when down too?

LS: Yes.

GS: The house that was there, was it close enough that it almost fell in?

LS: It was gone by that time.

GS: When was this about that you pulled those pillars and finished off the Big Hole?

LS: Probably seven or eight years later.

GS: So it was probably after the end of the war when you pulled those pillars.

LS: Yes. They told me if I'd keep mining there, they wouldn't take me into the Army, so it was right when they started looking for uranium. They almost took me into the war. I had a hernia anyway on my belly and they'd have to operate if they took me into the army. That Redd in Monticello, who was in charge of the draft board, told me if I'd keep mining that high grade uranium they wouldn't take me into the war.

GS: Was this during the war while we were fighting Japan and Germany that this happened or was this after the war was over that you pulled those pillars?

LS: It was before it started.

GS: So you finished off the Big Hole just when Union Mines got started, then.

LS: After they had quit I mined it. Everything was mixed up there. There were several different individuals who would mine the ore. They had a place up the creek a little ways. And up the creek several miners dug in there and went clear back underground on both sides of the creek. Where ever they could drill and hit something, they'd look. The Balsley claims were pretty important. The mines up and down the creek pretty much went clear down to where the highway goes through now.

GS: Just one little clarification on this that I've probably confused you on. I think I'm understanding what you're saying now, that when the war got going, you were told that if you kept mining you would be deferred from the war, since you had this hernia anyway. So you mined throughout this time. Probably most of the rest of the war you were mining there, right?

LS: Yes.

GS: And so it wasn't until after that you pulled these pillars, right? In other words you didn't pull the pillars on the Big Hole until possibly right at the end of the war?

LS: I was working in the Big Hole when they told me that. Right where the Big Hole went underground, where Lee and Harris had begun the Big Hole.

GS: And these pillars that you pulled where it all went down was sometime later, after this.

LS: Yes.

GS: I think that I have the picture. That house that was there, or at least one of those houses was one that Devar bought and moved into this little place that he had, remember down there where the Bates' had lived before? Where Devar used to live before he moved to Grand Junction? Down there by Beth and Earl Wright?

LS: It wouldn't be Grace's cabins, would it?

GS: No. Mother bought that place for Devar while he was in the service. You know where Inez Conway lived there, and Beth and Earl Wright, Devar had that house near the corner where Edgar Bates had lived before that. He bought a house out in Cottonwood and had it moved onto that property down there. Jess Johnson brought it in on his flatbed truck for him. He got it out there pretty close to the Big Hole before the Big Hole collapsed, I think, before you shot it. And he got that house after 1946 or right around 1946 after he came home from the Navy. Would it have been that late that you pulled the pillars on the Big Hole?

LS: I imagine it would have to be. Time didn't mean much to anybody out there at that time.

GS: So you worked there in the Big Hole and then did you work on other places up and down the canyon?

LS: Probably. I probably went so many places. I mined all over, out in Montezuma Creek, and down in Dry Valley.

GS: Before we go to those, I got you part way working at that mill and then we stopped and talked about these other things. Let's finish up with those two mills. You worked in the first mill working the roaster at night and keeping the boiler going, and then something happened to that first mill. What happened there?

LS: It burned down.

GS: Did you burn it down?

LS: No.

GS: Do you know why it burned down?

LS: I imagine something happened similar. Something with the oil or something. I don't know what started it. I wasn't there.

GS: Did you work at the second mill, then?

LS: I actually think it was on the second mill I had worked on.

GS: So what you're remembering about the roaster and all was the second mill. Did you ever work on the first mill.

LS: I think it was on the first mill.

GS: The two of them are pretty much telescoped together and it was a long time ago. Why did Kimmerle stop?

LS: I think the change over from vanadium to uranium probably did it, but I don't know.

GS: Was it just kind of a thing where the Blanding Mines said, "Look, you're just struggling along here, not doing too well, and we think we can make things work better," and they decided to make a bigger mill there? Do you know anything about the thinking that went into that?

LS: Not really, I guess.

GS: Did you ever work in the mill that Blanding Mines built there? That was where Asa Laws was killed, wasn't it?

LS: Yes, that was right up on the hill, right where that tank was that got me. It was a government deal, just a little outfit that didn't amount to much. They were just getting samples. They were using newspapers for their heating.

GS: Oh really? That was the big mill they built there called Blanding Mines?

LS: Blanding Mines would have to be the Kimmerle Mill. Blanding Mines mined all the uranium out of the Big Hole. Later, I went in there cleaning it up, then I shot it in.

GS: Why was it that you were given the opportunity of mining the Big Hole there, pulling the pillars and all that? Had you been mining it before then, working on the mine itself.

LS: No, I didn't work that mine. We mined the Balsley Mines. Kimmerle was in the deal. We were digging for vanadium. We'd shoot that down and Harvey Kimmerle would pick it up in his pickup and haul it to the mill. We got so much for a pickup load.

GS: Off the Balsley claims?

LS: Yes, it was taken off the Balsley claims and hauled off to the mill.

GS: To the mill in Cottonwood?

LS: Yes.

GS: So you did provide feed for the mill there off the Balsley claims. Now, when you found a high grade tree, it would be high grade in uranium as well as vanadium. Is that what you would take to Balsley in Moab, was the high grade from this high grade tree?

LS: Kind of on the end, yes. We took the high grade vanadium which had uranium in it and that went on a while until they started into things with the uranium.

GS: Howard Balsley, before the war would pay people for uranium as well as vanadium. For example, do you remember the Lonesome Claim Dad and Uncle Seth, I think, mined down there in the Butler?

LS: Yes.

GS: They hauled that up to Howard Balsley and he paid them for the uranium as well as the vanadium.

LS: It was real high grade.

GS: Yes, twenty percent or more. Did you ever get paid for the uranium when you'd take it to Balsley?

LS: Not for the uranium, I don't think.

GS: I wonder why he quit paying for the uranium? Maybe the government wouldn't let him pay for it during the war.

LS: He shipped it back east. He took it to Thompson and put it on the train and shipped it to Pennsylvania or somewhere in one of the eastern states.

GS: How much do you think you sent to Balsley of high grade? Do you think you sent five truckloads or three pickup loads or what?

LS: I imagine all together it would be twenty or thirty truckloads.

GS: And would these be in F-8 trucks or would they just be in pickups in seamless sacks? Would you put it in the back of the truck to haul up there or would you put it in bags?

LS: I put it in bags if it went to Balsley. I guess the other went mostly to the Monticello Mill.

GS: That was right at the end of the war?

LS: I worked at that mill, I wasn't mining at that time when the mill was being built.

GS: You worked on building the mill as a carpenter?

LS: Yes, and I sorted ore.

GS: You sorted ore?

LS: I might have in Cottonwood and Monticello.

GS: And this was later, after the war was over?

LS: I guess so. They were still buying ore there.

GS: Who worked with you in the Big Hole when you were working there?

LS: My brother worked with me part time, and I sold out to Glen. Glen and Gib made quite a killing there.

GS: Glen Shumway?

LS: Yes, Jelly Beans. This Glen who lived right over here (gestures).

GS: As we ended the other side, you were saying that you sold out your lease to Glen Shumway and Glen and your brother, Gilbert mined out there.

LS: I sold out the lease. I didn't own the mine.

GS: It was a Balsley lease.

LS: Yes. The other people had kind of missed it, but we ran into a real hot place there. That's when Glen wanted it.

GS: I didn't know that Uncle Glen had ever mined out in Cottonwood. I remember that he was later up on Shay Mountain. Did he actually do the mining or did he drive the truck out here in Cottonwood on the Balsley lease?

LS: Most of them hired a truck to take it in. They had a certain price they put on to haul it to Durango.

GS: From the money that you made from selling this lease, from giving Uncle Glen the chance to take over the lease, you did something interesting with that money. Tell about that.

LS: I built that store.

GS: What was the store's name?

LS: Westside Market.

GS: A good store. I remember when you put it in. There were three stores in town at that time, weren't there: Parley Redd's, Blanding Merc and Doug Galbraith's. I'm not sure if Blanding Merc was in at that time or not, but I think it was.

LS: There was the drug store, Parley Redd's, Doug Galbraith's and mine.

GS: How about Parley Hurst's Blanding Merc?

LS: Parley Hurst worked for Blanding Merc. Doug Galbraith and them guys were all against me. Parley was real good to me and I would furnish the nickels and dimes and things. I'd get lots of small change from the Indians, and there wasn't a bank so I had a lot of nickels and dimes and quarters. Parley treated me real well. Doug was the one that was against me. The salesmen told me that Doug was against me. They didn't like it.

GS: But you actually did pretty well there. What was the nature of your business, was it Indians who didn't want to walk all the way down town or was it people in the area who just needed a quick loaf of bread, or what?

LS: I got quite a bit of good business, the Burtenshaws and Harveys, and all of those who lived along that "Shumway Highway." It was my dad's homestead. The land was a quarter of a mile wide there, but we had to go to a spring down in Westwater to get our drinking water. Of course, that was earlier. We did that when we first settled there.

GS: But even later sometimes the town water would fail and I remember going to Westwater to get water.

LS: There was a pond right there where my wife is now [in the convalescent home]. She's been there better than three years at that place up there. But she had to have it. I put up with it for three and a half years. So has she.

GS: And you've missed her. I've talked to you before and the two of you have been close all your lives, haven't you?

LS: I go up there everyday for years. She's had several operations.

GS: Well, you two are getting along in years. How old are you?

LS: Eighty-five years old. Just a kid. I was the first kid born in Blanding. Of course the town had another name, Grayson.

GS: You were the first one born here? You mean the first Shumway born here.

LS: No, I was the first.

GS: After it changed its name to Blanding you were the first. I see.

LS: Aunt Myrtle Palmer was the doctor that hatched me the tenth of September of 1915.

GS: The first child born in Blanding. Anyone born before that was born in Grayson.

You started the store there and it did pretty well so you sold out to Riley Hurst. Why did you sell out? Did you want to get back into mining?

LS: I got tired. I wanted to do something besides sit there. I had most of the Indian trade. The Utes gave me lots of business. Well, everyone around here treated me pretty good. But I got tired of it.

GS: What did you do then?

LS: I'm trying to think if I got back into the mines or what. I suppose I got back into the mines.

GS: In Cottonwood?

LS: I don't know. I worked so many places. That book there tells of some of the places. I mined all over Indian Creek, Dry Valley, and on the north of the La Sal Mountains.

GS: Did you ever mine up on Elk Mountain?

LS: The uranium came in and Elk Mountain brought a lot of ore.

GS: Did you ever go up Cottonwood, up into the upper Cottonwood? Were you ever up there?

LS: Me and your Dad went up Indian Creek and turned around and up onto the Shay Mountain. Me and your dad found it. It didn't do anything for a while. It turned out that Uncle "A" and Uncle Harris had staked it.

GS: My dad was "A." Are you saying it was "A" that you went with up onto the Shay Mountain or was it Lee?

LS: It was "A."

GS: I didn't ever know that, that he had staked that property up there. Lee and Glen were the ones who ended up owning it and ended up selling it a few times. I'm not saying it wasn't my dad you had gone with, it may well have been. I just wasn't aware of it. I just didn't know he had ever staked the claims up there.

LS: Yes, we found the ore but didn't stake it. Lee and Harris and your dad went back to do it.

GS: How did Lee and Glen end up with it, do you know?

LS: I suppose they bought it or jumped it or something.

GS: So you did some prospecting with my dad and some others.

LS: He and I went up in Elk Mountain, up Indian Creek, clear up in there. We had a Geiger counter, and found a little ore. Your dad got away with that, too. He staked that area later.

GS: That was at Shay?

LS: No, on Elk Mountain, North Elk, up where the road now goes up on the north of the cattle....

GS: The Notch claims?

LS: I don't remember what they named it. I wasn't in on the filing on it, I was just with your Dad. But we got quite a lot of stuff.

GS: Did you ever work down in White Canyon?

LS: Yes, I worked up on that point just right up from that store down there.

GS: Fry?

LS: Yes, just on top of Fry Canyon . I worked there after the company had quit. Grant Shumway had the lease and I got it from him. That Navajo boy who Clarence Perkins raised was working for me down there.

GS: Tony?

LS: Yes. I had him working for me and every night he had to go to the store to get cigarettes. A miner had a wife who worked in the store and sold beer. This Navajo boy went to go to the store to get cigarettes but it wound up I was buying beer from that woman for him. He was helping the woman but he was working for me so I had to deliver the money. It was rough. There were lots of things that happened. Uncle Seth jumped one of my claims and the paper he used it on, he used an indelible pencil. When he told me that was a pen, I showed him that paper with that indelible mark on it (laughter).

GS: What claim was that?

LS: On the road to Eld Mountain, there is a canyon that runs up there. Whisker's Draw.

GS: And you had a mine in Whisker's?

LS: Yes.

GS: What kind of a mine was it?

LS: Vanadium.

GS: What formation was it on?

LS: The same as right there in Cottonwood, it would have to be.

GS: The Morrison formation?

LS: Yes.

GS: Was it where Whiskers ran into Cottonwood.

LS: Yes.

GS: Has anyone done anything with that mine?

LS: I think so. I'm not sure.

GS: When you and Gib went out to the mines, would you stay out there all week long or would you come in every night?

LS: We usually had a tent pitched and stayed out there for a few nights or a week or whatever. We went back and forth most of the time.

GS: The thing I remember is that you didn't stay out there all week long. You'd work in the daytime and then come home at night. Did your wives ever stay at the mines with you? Did you ever live out there with your family?

LS: At White Canyon there were some houses that that company had left and I took my wife out there. One day I took her out to the mines. The guys that owned the property had come out to see me and about that time Dora came out of the mine with that little car. She wasn't really working there at all. The two guys from Grand Junction who owned the mines were up there when my wife came out. One

guy said “Now there is somebody who knows what he’s doing!”

GS: He’s got his wife helping out (laughter)! She actually drove the shuttle buggy out?

LS: I’m not sure if it was a shuttle buggy or a wheelbarrow but we were just working there to tidy the entrance. She just went underground to sit around a while and I went out for something and started talking to those guys and out she came.

GS: But with a wheelbarrow—she was actually hauling a wheelbarrow of ore?

LS: Either that or I had a cart.

GS: Was this just a one time kind of thing or did she come out and help in the mines occasionally?

LS: I didn’t let her do anything.

GS: Why not?

LS: She had to take care of the house. I imagine she went underground a time or two. I didn’t keep her out at the mine too much. I had Keith Guymon and that Navajo boy, Tony.

GS: This was in Fry or close to Fry? This wasn’t at the Happy Jack? Because Keith Guymon worked at the Happy Jack also, and Tony Perkins did.

LS: He worked with me down the river from Moab, also. He worked for me at Temple Mountain south of Green River. That’s where Devar chased me off of working for Atlas. I was working there and he came in and took it over.

GS: You’d been working at Atlas before Devar started working there?

LS: I’d been on my own and had a lease from whoever owned it.

GS: The Eccers?

LS: It might have been. The guy from Price who owned it had a funny name.

GS: Migliache.

LS: Yep. I had a lease on that and Devar came in.

GS: Atlas? Or was in Union Carbide he came in with?

LS: I don't know which, but they were shooting timbers way back underground when I got there.

GS: Pulling pillars and things like that? The Migliache claims and Union Carbide were two different places, both on Temple Mountain.

LS: They joined together but two people owned them.

GS: Why would Devar feel that you couldn't work there, too? You weren't competing for the same ore.

LS: He was working with the company's equipment. They had a whole mine full of new equipment, and they just turned it over to Devar and, I guess it was Lark Washburn who didn't want me there. So they got the company to get rid of me. I had a good batch of high grade ore, a pile of it there, and when Devar got rid of me I told him to take that high grade and pay me whatever he wanted to. So he moved my high grade and gave me fifty dollars. He's a hard man, that Devar. **I guess we'd better not put things like that on the record.**

GS: It's interesting to hear your perspective on things and hear what took place. You've had quite a lifetime of experiences.

LS: Yes, it has been quite a time.

GS: You've got a couple of kids who are getting grown up themselves now. Where is Sonia?

LS: She's in California where the ships come in. It's an army base. She's lived there quite a while. My daughter works in a big store, she manages it. She's been there a long time. They depend on her. She goes to work sometimes at two o'clock in the morning. It's a big chain store.

GS: Where is Craig now?

LS: Craig is in Mesa, Arizona. He teaches school at Mesa College.

GS: Did you have other children besides Sonia and Craig?

LS: I've got two girls and Craig.

GS: Who is the other girl?

LS: She just retired from Coca-Cola. She's been working for them for twenty one years. She bought

herself a new home in Las Vegas.

GS: What is her name?

LS: Sylvia Joy. Now she's retired and has got quite a bit of stock in the company and says it's sure nice to get up and go and do what you want. She went to every state in the Union and Canada. She traveled to all the big towns in the states for Coca-Cola.

GS: Do you have some grandchildren?

LS: Craig has two boys and two girls. He has a girl who is being operated on today. She hurt her back.

GS: That's a serious operation.

LS: She's never married. She's only about eighteen years old.

GS: Do you have any great-grandchildren?

LS: Yes. This one girl made this for last Christmas.

GS: It says Michael, Heather, Brynne and Jake. So you've got four great-grandchildren then. Let me ask you one last question. When you worked in Cottonwood, would you take the northern route up at the corner of town by where Merwin used to live?

LS: That's the way we had to go for years until finally they made a road below. Me and your dad went on that road that goes to Elk Mountain and took our axes and made a road so we could take off the highway that goes to the mountain and come down to the mines in Cottonwood.

GS: You were the ones who built the road down from the road which went to the mountain?

LS: From the road that goes to the mountain, we went down through the trees and brush and made a road.

GS: So you took the first car down there?

LS: Me and your Dad. Of course I had to chop the trees more than he did.

GS: He was out scouting to see which one to chop?

LS: Yes.

GS: So you actually built that road then. You engineered that road and built it in there.

LS: Yes.

GS: Did you take the first car over that road, after you built it?

LS: Yes.

GS: So that was before anyone hauled any ore out of there or even started mining then? I'm glad to know this. I'd never known who had built that road down there.

LS: I cut down a lot of cedar trees with an axe. They are kind of scattered now. But me and Uncle "A" had a lot of cedar trees to chop.

GS: And you'd actually not only chop down the tree, you'd have to pull up the stump or else cut it close to the ground if you were going to get a car over it.

LS: We did it with a fire, mostly. Some of them we chopped down close to the ground, but most of the stumps we took out by building a fire on them.

GS: Did you have to blast anyplace or pick with a pick to get down off from the level top to the creek?

LS: We didn't blast any. We just cleared out the rocks.

GS: So that allowed you to go clear down to the creek.

LS: Yes. That road that goes on down further than that came in later when Lyman's got involved, and had the Big Hole and all of that and they built a good road through there, so the truckers could haul the ore away.

GS: Do you think you could find where yours and Dad's road went down through there, and point out some of the trees you and Dad cut down?

LS: I don't imagine I could. People chop wood there.

GS: It would be hard to identify which ones you cut down.

LS: Everybody hauls wood out of there.

GS: Well, I'm glad I asked that question. That a little question everyone had about how they first got down there to the mines and I guess we've got that answered now.

You've told us some interesting things about the very beginning down there. You were involved in it. Your dad himself was involved. He actually got killed in the mines not long after that. Where was that? Near Montezuma?

LS: Yes.

GS: It was right in Montezuma proper?

LS: It was in the canyon between here and Montezuma, Devil Canyon, right where it comes into Montezuma.

GS: Do you remember the name of the mine he was working on?

LS: No, I don't know that I ever heard. He'd just opened it up. Connie was there with him. It was about the second round that he had shot there. In the mines, after blasting, we always tapped with the pick to see if it would come down. He tapped it and the whole damn thing came down.

GS: If he had been using a tamping stick where it was out in front of him maybe it would have missed him, but he had been using a pick to test it with?

LS: Yes.

GS: You were already grown by that time so you were on your own, weren't you? Did you mention that he and you had actually done some of the first mining in Cottonwood?

LS: Me and my dad were the first ones out there.

GS: Are you saying that you were there before Dad and Uncle Harris staked those claims?

LS: We just went out there and went to work at a yellow tree sticking out of the rock. Nobody else was out there when we started.

GS: It was after the mines had been discovered, but before anyone had ever mined them? And it was on the Balsley claims that you did this?

LS: Yes.

GS: You can probably show us where it was even though the rocks may have been moved?

LS: Deloy was out there and tore up the whole country just recently with a bulldozer. I can still point out about where.

GS: We will look forward to that. We'll come in the morning and pick you up and have you go with us if you feel good enough to go.

LS: You'll pick me up about what time?

GS: A little before ten o'clock.

LS: Okay.

GS: I appreciate this opportunity to talk with you very much, and look forward to tomorrow. Thank you very much.

End of interview.