Nevada Test Site Oral History Project
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Interview with Gracian N. Uhalde

Adaven Ranch, Nevada
December 1, 2006

Interview Conducted By
Leisl Carr

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Produced by:

The Nevada Test Site Oral History Project
Departments of History and Sociology
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 89154-5020

Director and Editor
Mary Palevsky

Principal Investigators
Robert Futrell, Dept. of Sociology
Andrew Kirk, Dept. of History

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[00:00:00] Begin Track 2, Disc 1.

Leisl Carr: *All right, we're at the Uhalde Ranch, doing an interview with Gracian Uhalde, and he's going to tell us a little bit about himself, where he was born, and we'll move on to some topical issues.*

Gracian Uhalde: Yes, my name is Gracian Uhalde. I was born in Ely, Nevada. My parents [Gracian Michael Uhalde and Helen Uhalde] are lifelong ranchers in White Pine, Lincoln, and Nye Counties. We're now at the Adaven Ranch, which is Nevada spelled backwards, approximately 110 miles from Tonopah and a hundred miles from Ely. This is basically where my background with the illustrious atomic testing took place.

My parents were ranchers. I'm the third generation. My sons are the fourth generation to live here. I basically grew up here. We transported ourselves to town to school during the weekdays and back home on the weekends.

Where was school?

Ely. They had a program where they paid you mileage to go to school if you were out here in a rural place someplace. I forget what that [was]—it wasn't very much but it helped. And Ely was 110 miles which there's forty miles of dirt road no matter which direction you go, which nowadays is good.

My educational background is [that] I'm the smartest guy in the world and I have not graduated from the school of hard knocks yet. What is it like living—?

[Telephone rings]

[00:01:43] End Track 2, Disc 1.

[00:00:00] Begin Track 3, Disc 1.

We kind of started out on this baby.

School. School of hard knocks.

Oh, OK. What is your educational background?

High school?

Yeah, high school education, technically. I didn't have to go to college. I was already too smart at that point in my life.

Living in rural Nevada was great. It was the only way to go. You didn't see people very often and it was fun when you did. I wish I could say that today.

Did you grow up out here?

Yes, ma'am.

On this very property.

Right here, yeah.

Nice. And your sons did, too?

Yes, ma'am. They were home-schooled till the eighth grade and then they had to interface with society.

Did they go to Ely?

Yes, and Jordan Valley, Oregon.

Oregon?

Yes. That's where their mother is from.

Oh. Wow. I was going to say, that's a long drive on a regular basis. They did high school, too?

Yeah, they did high school. They've all been to college. I have a daughter who's a vet.

Are they the first that went to college in your family?

No, both my sisters went to college. I was the only one that was too smart.

You stayed here on the ranch.

Well, you couldn't have taught me anything anyway. I already knew it all.

And you said that your—was it your great-grandparents that came here to the States in 1881?

No, my grandparents. My grandfather came in 1881, and then he sent for my grandmother.

So that would make you third generation American?

Yes. And then my dad, they bought the other place north and west of Ely first and they went to school in the town of Cherry Creek. They took two years to learn English, so they repeated a couple of grades.

Only two years. I still can't speak French and I've had four, so good on them.

Yes, well, they spoke Basque.

Did they?

That's how they survived. But it was an interesting time, I believe. My grandfather had a brother who married my grandmother's twin sister. So there's a family in Ely, my aunt, that's a double first cousin on both sides.

Right, because the brothers married twin sisters.

And then the brother, his name was Gracian, he died of the Spanish flu out at Thirty Mile at the ranch in 1917? Is that when that flu—?

It was part of that major flu epidemic?

Yeah.

I don't remember what year, but I can look it up. [Spanish Flu pandemic 1918-1920]

Anyway, he died, and they couldn't get to town, so they wrapped him up in canvas and put him under the eaves out there and kept him in the ice until they could get [to town.] They didn't have

vehicles then, I'm sure they had to come by horse, so it must've been in 1917. I don't believe there were vehicles at that time. They put him in a wagon and hauled him to town in the spring. So then, that sister, the twin sister, married a fellow by the name of Bert Paris.

I've heard the Paris name.

OK, and then they ended up kind of like we did, coming south. In the winter we range in Garden and Coal Valleys and Sand Spring Valley, which Rachel [Nevada] is in. And then they came south and we kind of—besides being interrelated, we're intermingled in the range process.

I brought this map because I wanted to know exactly where this stuff is, and we can mark on this. Here's the [Nevada] test site, and here's Railroad Valley.

Yes, and here we are.

Right here?

Right inside the forest there, yeah. [Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest] Then this would be Coal Valley here, and this is Garden Valley. And Parises came over here but they went down Coal Valley, and then up at Thirty Mile we're intermingled, too.

Where's Thirty Mile?

It'd be in Butte Valley [about 30 miles northwest of Ely].

About right here?

Well, yes. The other ranch is Thirty Mile. It'd be right about there. And then Parises lived over the hill from Cherry Creek and that way. So the ranges both kind of sweep that way, then we come south down here for the winter, just like a bunch of gypsies, kind of moving all the time.

This is Coal Valley right here.

Yes. Then around in through these hills in Tempiute—in fact, actually, my uncle Bert Paris went south at Tempiute, down to the highway there.

You guys have been here since the twenties? Before?

Yes. It was kind of something that evolved.

Well, yeah, I'm sure. And then relative to some of the other families, like the Sharps and the Whipples and the Fallinis, I know they have multiple places scattered throughout here, but they're up in—

Railroad Valley and—

Just across the Grant Range.

Yes, just over the hill.

[00:05:00] *Do you know the mileage on that?*

The mileage?

Yes, how far, maybe as the crow flies?

Well, to the Bordoli place, would be the first place over the top of the mountain, I would say it's probably not over fifteen miles. There were two brothers there, too, two Italian brothers that are related to the Fallinis, Jack Bordoli—

Yeah, they married a sister, or the guy married a sister.

But they had a boy, Jack Bordoli had a son that died of leukemia.

Yes.

Same age as I was.

He was the same age as you?

Yes, seems like it.

He died young.

Yes.

He died at seven or eight.

It was a sad, sad deal. And they were great people, great neighbors, too. I remember the little kid, you know. We called him Butch but I don't know what his real name was [Martin]. It was Butchy Bordoli**.**

I'll look that up.

Basically we were about the closest neighbors we had.

The Bordolis?

Yes.

But they left.

Yeah, after Butchy died.

OK. So that would mean that your family and your relatives range here on this side of Railroad Valley, and then Railroad Valley itself through the Pancake Range, and how do you pronounce that, the Reveille?

Reveille.

The Reveille Range. These are Sharps, Uhaldes—

Sharps, Fallinis—

Fallinis. Bordolis. Whipples? Are they in there somewhere?

I don't think Whipples are there.

OK. I know I saw a Whipple Ranch down at—

Yes, in the Pahranagat Valley. Pretty strong [there].

How far do you think your ranch is from the border of the test site?

Oh, as the crow flies, I think forty miles.

I wondered about that.

You and I are going to take a ride up here and I'll show you. We used to go up to this pass and then look south and see where the pink cloud was and see who was going to get [fallout].

So you're a little kid.

A little kid.

You were born in '52?

Yes.

And you were a little kid when—you'd be ten when Sedan—did I write that down? I wrote that date down. [Sedan July 6, 1962]

Yes.

When the Sedan crater was made.

Yes.

Ten years old. Tell me about the "snow".

Tell you about it now, or tell you about it then?

Tell me about it back then.

Back then, I was probably scared shitless. Now I'm just mad beyond belief or—I don't know how you can say it. But all I can remember is, as a little kid, I can remember people coming around and they made us wear these badges that I didn't know what it was for. I didn't understand how something that you couldn't see could hurt you. But then when they shot the Sedan crater off and it looked like it was snowing here, I mean it looked like it was going to put down two inches of snow. I remember that well. That really—I think I had nightmares and everything after that because that kind of brought it home. Before, you couldn't see it, so I didn't understand how—but then, you know, you got this ash and dust sitting up here, stabbing you—

Who told you not to get it on you?

Well, my dad and mother wouldn't let us go outside. I think it was three or four days they didn't let us go out. And then, whoever the first people who came around were, and I don't remember faces and names until Don James, but whatever they instilled—I remember they came and took our milk cows because they wanted to test the iodine[-131], and the strontium-90 gets in the milk first thing and all that whole baloney. I can remember my dad being just livid because he didn't think they knew any more than we did about what the hell they were doing. He knew that they were being so secretive and so stupid about it that it could only mean something bad.

So before Don James, there were people that came out?

There were people, yeah. There was different versions of people. My mother, she lives in Ely, I don't know if she would remember names or not.

That's OK, it doesn't matter.

But Don James was basically the first person that infiltrated—or maybe he came over to our side or something—but everybody liked Don James because I think he didn't have all the answers and he didn't really care. He was just here basically to have a good time and to do whatever he could do. He was a real human being, you know. These other guys that came around in these monkey suits and stuff, you'd just as well shoot them as look at them.

Did he dress differently?

Don? Yes, just like us. He was always happy-go-lucky and girls hanging out the front and out of the back of the pickup.

I'm sure.

God, he was a dandy. He was the first guy I remember.

How old were you when you remember that? Little?

It wasn't too far after Sedan.

[00:10:00] *OK. I don't remember when Don James first came out here.*

In fact, I'm not sure he wasn't the one that gave us the word about it, because they used to come around and tell you, `We're having a shot,` and all this crap. `If it gets bad enough, we'll bring helicopters in and fly you out.` My dad said, `Bullshit, you'll never do that.` And they didn't. So my dad, being suspicious and not trusting the government and thinking they were lying, bought a Geiger counter and scintillator. I don't remember if the scintillator was a finer-tuning machine than the Geiger counter, but he really went off on this one. I do remember when they did the Sedan shot, we were haying and then after that, he took the Geiger counter over to the haystack and it just went berserk.

Wait a minute. So you had hay cut on the ground, drying, waiting to be baled.

Yes. Right.

And then Sedan was shot.

Yes.

And then he measured it. Did he keep a record of that?

No. He was just mad about it all the time. It was a constant state. Every time that subject came up, it just infuriated him.

What happened to that hay?

I imagine the livestock ate it. And to my knowledge, there weren't any deaths. But one thing I can tell you, and Kenny [Kenneth] Giles who works for DRI [Desert Research Institute] told me that—I remember with my own two hands and face that I saw a deer show up with patches of burnt skin. Kenny Giles says that couldn't have been and didn't happen. Well, bullshit, I saw it. I know what I saw.

Absolutely. That's an interesting thing that you, living here, saw things. It's not like you didn't see them. So what did they tell you about that? Like you said Kenny said you didn't see it.

Well, this is later. He said that couldn't have been, you know, nothing was that strong. Well, you believe what you want, but I know what I saw.

Did these kind of things get reported? Did you have to tell anybody about the deer? How did that work?

I think my dad probably told them, but he despised them so much for being liars—I mean they proved themselves liars. Stupidity ruled, time and time again. I mean it was basically there was no point in—it was nothing you could control, and there really wasn't a whole lot—he had no use for these people. There really wasn't a lot of use, you know, when we did wear the stupid badges and all that crap.

How old were you when you got the badges, do you remember?

I can't remember and I can't even—there used to be one around here and things and I can't even find that nowadays.

They're primitive things, the early ones.

They had the little clip you hooked here. They were something. And I guess they had a microfilm in them, didn't they? Come to think of it now.

Their proper name is a dosimeter badge, and they had film, and the film would apparently take measurements of radiation, and it would change color or something when it got to a certain point.

About the time you died.

Yeah, I don't know.

Something changed color. Maybe it was just you.

Yeah, maybe. I've never even seen one.

After rigor mortis.

Oh, God. So what kind of things would these guys tell you? I mean were these men in uniform that would come here and tell—?

It seems like there were men in uniform, from the Department of the Army, at different times.

Oh, I hadn't put that together.

Yes. Well, you know, when they first did some of those, they used military soldiers down there close to a lot of them.

Yes. The atomic veterans, I think is what they're called now.

Right. I think that is.

So the Army officials would come out. What did they tell you to do? Stay inside?

Yes, then they brought that little book. [*Atomic Tests in Nevada*, Atomic Energy Commission, 1957]

The Atomic Tests in Nevada*? And this was supposed to be your guide?*

Yes. It was a little cartoon book. This here is the hand manual, "Better Living Through Modern Chemistry."

In other words, how to avoid radiation exposure or something like that. Geez.

Oh, yeah. How many roentgens had this and this had and that had.

What did that mean to you, as a kid?

Hey, that was my first experience with the phrase, "I am from the government and I am here to help." And after that, I need to know no more.

Is that what they told you?

Basically, in a roundabout way.

"I'm from the government and I'm here to help." And how did that translate in your life. I mean what did it mean? You had to stay inside for three days.

On that shot, yeah.

On the Sedan shot.

It translated into my life as basically every time atomic energy or they had a shot or whatever, my dad would be mad for three days. They were using us for guinea pigs and they weren't fooling anybody and they didn't have brains enough to pull it off, not smart enough to fool someone.

[00:15:00] *What kind of things did your dad say? Can you tell me specifically?*

Well: they're sons-of-bitches, there's no use talking to them, they're just a bunch of liars and best thing they can do is stay the hell out of here. They're going to do what they're going to do anyway, no matter what it matters to us. And we don't matter to them either.

So your dad didn't feel like there was any recourse?

No, not really.

That he had no one to talk to. That's not a very good position to be in.

No. So we basically went on and lived our lives the best we could. But Joe Fallini's dad and those, like they were one of our closest neighbors. Then after Bordolis left, they were gone, so that—and I really don't remember a whole lot about those days in '62 when they set that Sedan off. That was the first time that the reality ever hit me that you know I could actually see something coming down that I knew was bad.

And you saw it. Thick?

Oh, yeah. I mean, July, and it looked like it was snowing in December here.

I forget how many tons of earth it moved but I took a tour and there's a plaque outside the crater that says basically how much.

Yes, I took a tour and went and saw that, too.

Did you? What did you think of that?

Oh, I don't know that I had any mixed emotions. I think what they did was all right for them, if they could've contained it and kept it there. But I mean there was—you'd just go up here and watch the pink cloud and figure out which direction it was going and who was going to get nailed. And it looked like verga, you know, basically.

Yes, the rain that doesn't quite hit the ground.

Yes, other than the clouds were always kind of a pink or an angry red, depending on how many kilotons or whatever, I believe.

I don't know why that is. I mean I've heard people talk about the pink cloud, but you actually saw it, and I wish I could tell you why it was pink. Do you know?

No, I really don't.

It's kind of an awkward thing to see in the sky.

Basically I think, for my family and things, the pink cloud meant, get ready, you know, either we're going to get it or somebody's getting it today.

But it's coming?

Yes. That it either was headed like up our direction, Railroad Valley, Queen City Summit, or towards St. George [Utah].

North or northeast, or east. How many times do you recall seeing a pink cloud? I mean literally seeing it coming.

I would say at least half-a-dozen.

Yeah? Between—you were about ten when Sedan went?

Yes.

Were they all after Sedan?

Some could've been before and some after.

OK, but around that time?

Yes.

By the time you were in high school, though, do you recall seeing anything after that?

No, I don't think. In the late sixties and seventies, no, there wasn't. After Don James, there were a couple of other people. There were some bigwigs that used to come around once in a while, but you'd have to ask Chuck Costa. He was, I don't know, kind of an all-right guy but not really. I don't know how you say it. He said all the right things, but my dad by then was so certain that he—my dad was certain by then of what they'd done and things, that he had no use for any of them. The only thing that got Jamesy by was that he was just a kid and here to have fun, too, so let him go. He got a free pass.

He got a free pass because he was just that guy. How nice.

Yes.

Between the chicks and the truck and—nice. Very cool. The business of the ranch at this time was cattle?

Cattle and sheep.

And sheep. Has it always been cattle and sheep?

It's always been sheep and cattle. Approximately five thousand sheep and five to eight hundred cows.

And you run your own pasture. You make hay?

Yes.

Do you irrigate?

Yes.

And the water source is?

Cherry Creek.

Which runs right out here?

Yes, it starts on the east side of the mountain but high up towards the top and then flows down the canyon.

And I need to get a picture of the cycle of the ranch. I know now you're here.

Oh, OK. Winter, everything? The sheep trail from White Pine County down here to Nye County and Lincoln Counties. The cattle are trucked. And then the first of April, everything starts back.

So by "trail" you mean they're actually run on the ground?

Yes.

Moved slowly?

[00:20:00] Fifteen days, yes, from one place to the other.

Oh, wow. Is that still done this way?

Yes.

When you brought the sheep down, that's how.

Yes.

Wow. Now, that I wouldn't have put together. But the cattle are trucked.

Yes.

Why?

Too many neighbors, I guess, for the cattle to go through, whereas sheep, there's basically Paris, Uhalde, and Carver Sheep Company, which was Tony Omancherria [sp], another Basque fellow that came down the White River. They went to White River along where the highway is and just north of Sunnyside, everybody split. Paris went down the middle, we came down the west side, and Tony Baloney, we called him, he's known as Tony Baloney, went east.

That's nice. So you all brought your sheep down together.

Yes, approximately. I think Tony had about eight thousand and Paris had about six thousand and we had about a little over five thousand.

Did you participate in this when you were a kid?

Yes.

And it's been going on like this since?

Yes, almost since before Jesus was a baby.

That's a long time.

Seems like it to me anyway.

When you're a kid and you're going to school, you'd be sent out during the winter to go to school?

My mother, we'd come home on weekends, depending on the winter. We always had a house in Ely, but if the weather permitting. And then summertime, my uncle took care of everything up north, the cattle and the sheep. My dad would get the cattle up there and then we'd ride and put the cattle on the mountain and come back here to hay, when I was a kid.

And the split between Ely and here is because of why?

Basically summer ranges and winter ranges.

OK, so it's just a matter of grass.

Winter pasture and summer pasture, yeah.

Do they irrigate up in Ely, too?

We have some irrigated ground, but mostly you need the hay and things for winter, so that's mostly grazing and rangeland.

So that rangeland up in Ely is pretty much natural pasture?

Yes. And I think total there's about a little over ten thousand acres.

Is this in Spring Valley, by any chance?

No, we're in Butte Valley. We're in Butte Valley and then two herds go to the Schell Creek Range in the summer on forest [land]. We've got basically that part of the outfit is summertime is about a third of the outfit and the rest of it's in Butte Valley.

And that's about ten thousand acres?

Yes, altogether. Private land. And then I think four hundred something thousand is BLM [Bureau of Land Management] forest lease.

So a little bit of government land.

Yes, well, four hundred thousand acres, approximately.

Oh, OK, that's more than a little bit. And what I'm interested in is the continuation between your lifestyle as a kid to now. Has it changed in any way?

Really, it hasn't. I think I've been very lucky.

OK, that's interesting.

But with this generation, my sons that are here now, it's different already.

How?

We used to live out at the end of the road and you didn't see anybody for months here and things. Now every year Vegas gets a little bit closer and the roads are better.

That's a pretty well-graded road coming down here.

Yes, and we see more people.

Who's doing the grading?

The counties.

OK. Not the BLM?

No, not on the county roads.

This is just an aside question. Can you tell me about the llama that I saw out here the first time?

Yeah, I can.

I almost drove off the road because I saw a llama.

We've had three or four.

OK. Their purpose?

Well, they're supposed to be with the sheep and guard the sheep.

Really.

Yes. There were two brown ones but I think they ended up being gay because they never did hang out with the sheep, those two. My son got mad last year and shot one, and figured he'd make the other one suffer a lonely death of old age.

The one I saw was brown, there was just one, and the sheep were in this pasture just west of the house here. So they're supposed to protect the sheep.

Yes.

Have you always had llamas?

No, that was the fad. The environmentalists and things say they're the cure and the answer but the llamas I've seen, every sheep would die before the llama got attacked, let's put it that way.

There is such a thing as survival instinct.

The dogs are good, though. I have to say the dogs—

Like this one? [Referring to the dog sitting near Mr. Uhalde.]

[00:25:00] No, the white dogs. Those pups you saw when you were here. Two of them have gone out with the sheep and then the other two and the mother are still up here. But they were there this morning, with the sheep.

What kind of dogs are these?

Those are Okbosh, out of Turkey. They're out of Turkey. They're shorthaired. The most common guard dog is the Pyrenees, which is long, bigheaded, and dumb. Kind of like the Basque, because the Basque were kind of not real bright. You put them in a pickup or something and they slobber a lot. Drool.

Oh, gosh. Those white ones, what are they again?

Okbosh. They're out of Turkey. That's where they originate.

They're beautiful. They're nice, too. They're real friendly. I mean I can't say they came up slobbering to lick me but they were definitely curious about who I was. And they weren't barkers. They just wanted to know. And this one down here, he's a cattle dog?

Border Collie. Part Border Collie and part McNab.

OK. Have you always used dogs?

Yes.

Your dad used dogs and—

Ever since I was a little kid, we've always had dogs.

But the llamas showed up.

Oh, when did they become the fad? What, late eighties, early nineties?

On the suggestion of whom?

Whenever they came into being a fad, then that's when all their particular uses came out as being pack animals and guard animals and all that stuff.

Did your dad pick it up or did you?

No, I tried them.

Yeah? How long was your dad around for? Can I ask that question?

He died probably eight years ago. He and my mother lived here until about '96, '98, and then—

[Telephone rings]

Well, he grew up in the age where the smoking was good and he got emphysema.

[Answers telephone]

[00:27:03] End Track 3, Disc 1.

[00:00:00] Begin Track 4, Disc 1.

What was I asking about? Oh, your dad. Can you tell me their names? Your dad was?

My dad was Gracian Michael Uhalde. My name's Gracian Neil.

And the Neil and the Michael just showed up?

Yes, that was my mother, the Neil part. She had a brother named Neil. She was from Wyoming. Her name is Helen Uhalde and she still resides in Ely. In fact, Kenny Giles takes her to breakfast, then whenever Jamesy's up they go to breakfast.

Did Kenny Giles show up after Don James?

Yes. There were a couple of real knotheads. One guy had a wreck over the hill here, and I can't remember his name. Jamesy would know him. And Kenny Giles, too. They weren't—I don't know how you say it—barely able to get around out here. I don't know. A little different folks.

Yes. I know. I know what that means, I think. That difference comes not just in dress. I mean I'm assuming they dressed differently. Did they?

How do you say it? I think they came like once a month. They could drive here five months and maybe the sixth month they'd forget how to get here.

Really.

Yes, I mean I don't know how you say it. Just—I don't know.

So you just had them—what was—?

They had an air-quality monitoring station here. Kenny Giles or Don James could tell you more about who they were.

They had a station here.

Yes, when my mother—

When was this? When did they put the station here, do you remember?

I think they just pulled it out about three years ago.

I'm trying to think of what group this is. Do you remember—?

Well, it started out at the Atomic Energy Commission [AEC] and then it went to the—who were they after that?

So this is a station that's been here since the AEC was—

Yes, since the AEC days.

OK. Continuously until—?

Oh, well, when my mother left, they pulled it out and took it down to Heizer's.

And your mom left?

Kenny Giles still monitors it, what, eight years ago or so.

That's interesting. That's passed through several different hands, then.

Yes. Finally in the end, it was still Kenny Giles but it was DRI. That's who's doing it now.

Yeah, that's the CEMP [Community Environmental Monitoring Program] Program, I think. CEMP, I believe. Where was it located on the property?

Right out there behind the generator house.

The generator house is?

That little building right there behind the garbage cans.

Oh, OK. That's pretty close in to the house. So whatever readings they would get off of that would basically be for this little area where the house sits and the first of the fields.

Right. But have you seen all the data that they collected and all that crap?

I haven't specifically looked it up. Did they ever give it to you?

Yes, I requested it.

And did you get it?

Well, yes, I think. How do you say it? I wouldn't trust that it was accurate. I mean, if you're writing the book, if the rules of the game are yours, then you can make it fit, whatever, so. But then I thought—well, my reason for requesting it was that I had a sister, my younger sister Susie had a brain tumor and they couldn't identify the mass. Then in '92 I got a tumor on my bladder. So I put in a claim, but then I got to thinking that I ought to at least have the information that maybe someday the courts would come out to where you could find out what they really did, then the information had probably disappeared, so at least get the information now so that if the truth ever came out you could have it for yourself.

Right, so you could have a copy of the actual numbers, whatever those numbers happened to be. So you have an older, younger sister, Susan?

I have two sisters, both younger than me. And the sister, Susie, that had the brain tumor is seven years younger.

Is she OK?

Yes, went to San Francisco [California] and the doctors. She was having epileptic-nature fits.

But she's fairly healthy now?

Yes, seems to be.

Good. I'm glad to hear that. I'm very glad. And your other sister, she's—?

She's a state health nurse in Ely.

Oh, OK.

Susie's the lab technician and does the MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging] and things in Ely at the hospital. My mother was a nurse, so they kind of followed that.

That's interesting. Did your mom practice when she lived out here?

No, she came to Ely with the copper mine and they had their own nurses and doctors. She graduated nursing training and came to Ely for a job.

[00:05:00] *How'd she meet your dad?*

At Ely. I don't know.

At Ely. Somewhere in Ely. Sometimes those stories always turn out to be really cute. I actually don't remember how my parents met. I know they told me, but it wasn't remarkable.

Yes, that's kind of how I felt.

It was somewhere in Scottsdale [Arizona].

There was quite a bunch of nurses left nurses' training in Holy Cross Hospital in Salt Lake. One was Madeleine Goikechia [sp], she was kind of the older of the three. And then the other one was Mary Hooley [sp] who ended up married to my uncle, Bert Paris, and then my mother who married my dad.

Where is your mom from again?

Casper, Wyoming. Her dad ran sheep on the Little Bighorn Mountains.

Oh, so this lifestyle wasn't a shock to her, then.

I don't think that exactly, yeah.

She came from a ranching family, she married into a ranching family.

I think the remoteness of this did kind of—you know, I don't think that was something she had planned in her life.

Now, speaking about the remoteness, these other communities or these other little homes that I see—

Yes, they've just popped up in the last five years, one or two.

Why?

There was another ranch down there at Wadsworth, the little white house. They were there pretty much forever. But then the Wadsworth people began to die off and then now we're seeing the heirs of that.

Are they family, is that what you mean?

Pretty much, yeah.

OK. So there's like a trailer home out there and then there's what looks like a log cabin on the other side of the road a little further this direction.

Right.

That's all family of the Wadsworth?

Yes.

I wondered what kind of people were moving there, whether it was just some people that wanted to get away from civilization, sort of drop off the grid independently or if it was a connection somehow to the area.

Mostly summer homes.

OK, so they just come up—

And get out of the heat, yeah. Alamo and Vegas.

Are the mostly vacant, then, most of the year?

Most of the time, yeah.

So you're pretty much up here—

I think we're the only full-time dwellers.

I met two guys when I came out here the first two times. And they're out here permanently?

Yes.

And then you come and go?

Yes.

Anybody else live out here?

No. We had a neighbor up the canyon, Ralph Canfield, that sold—we bought his place.

That's the Canfield sign out there?

Yes.

That's interesting. So you grew up and you lived in this spot pretty remote from everything else.

Right.

I want you to explain to me what the encroachment of Vegas means.

Basically I think the encroachment of Vegas and the times we live in now, I mean we never had a telephone forever. We've only had a phone for—

Really.

Yes. Probably since about, well, in the eighties. We didn't get power until probably 1982; we ran a generator. So basically I think what it means now is our lifestyle is changing, whether we like it or not.

You have access to more things.

Yes, the Internet and everything else.

Do you have the Internet here?

Yes.

Oh, wow. TV?

TV. Yes.

So that's the difference between when you were a kid.

Yes, other than more people showing up, which I don't think that's good. I don't like that but I guess it's a sign of the times.

Do people pass through this road? Because for a moment, when you first pull up on this property, it looks like this is it, this is the end of the road, but then it makes that turn to the right to go west.

Yes. In fact, the Forest Service is down there today. There's a fellow out of California that comes up every year for two weeks and the forest ranger was telling me that he saw this guy. He's got an old glass-lens camera and the pull-the-hood-over-you thing. But when you see that, what little I know about photography, it means that's when you're really serious into it and want quality photos. And he said that pictures up the canyon and the sunsets and that, the shadows and the contrasts, the air is so clean here that it was remarkable that you could get some of the best pictures in the world. And I've seen him. He looks like kind of a weirdo. I'll bet that's the guy.

Really. And he just comes out here and photographs?

Yes.

That's interesting. I've done a little reading about the geography of this area, and this might be one of the last truly isolated spots in the United States. You can drive around it on paved roads, but you wouldn't drive through it necessarily.

It isn't isolated enough anymore, to my liking.

[00:10:00] *No. I can sympathize with the guys that got lost out here because I rarely get disoriented, rarely, but it's possible out here, if you're not careful.*

Yes, that's very true, Leisl, it is.

Have you ever been lost out here?

No, ma'am.

I don't imagine, but I had to ask.

I've never ventured too far from my little anthill but I do pretty well know the anthill.

Yeah, I'm sure. That bluff you were talking about, is that it?

There's a pass around in back of it that we'll run up to.

I saw some people driving down it, on my last trip, on October 20th. Does that go anywhere?

Yes, it does.

Where does it go?

Well, it comes around out here and you can—basically it was made for convenience but my son Michael is trying to close the whole damn canyon off.

Why? Just he doesn't want people passing through?

Oh, yeah, well, we call this the Hump over here where you drive up and you see the place first. Well, two years ago a four-wheeler come through there going lickety-split, a sixteen-year-old

kid. Then where that horse trailer is parked today, he lost control. There was a trailer parked there. He's lucky he didn't leave his brains splattered on the kingpin.

He didn't have a helmet?

No. He was going so damn fast, he hit a post and ended up in the stockyard. And I mean, the meatheads, if they won't do something about it themselves, then here comes the parents knocking on the door, wanting to know, `Is your telephone working? Can we get help? What do we do for whatchacallit?` And I said, `Well, you dumb bastards, if you'd use your brain and get a hold of that kid and give him a boot in the ass, maybe he'd have some respect for himself and other things.`

So the recreationalists that are coming through here, that's the group that you want push a little further away.

Yes, ma'am. We just want what's ours. So that road is going to come—see, on your map—wait a minute, I've got a special map [walking away].

Yes, unfortunately this is just a road map out of a Rand-McNally.

[Sound of papers rustling and snapping – probably unfolding a large map]

This is all down on the test site.

This is a map of the test site, but not just the Nevada Test Site, the full gunnery range, the Nellis range.

Right. I don't know if I should be—I don't know if I'm privy to have this but I do have them.

I think it's just public information.

OK, here we are. Here's the ranch. That's where we are. So then that road—this is the road we used to go—that's Cottonwood—where in the hell am I, Leisl? Coal Valley, Garden Valley, Adaven. OK, so this road comes out and goes down, back down to the valley, and here's where

you came up, and then they connect, and then you go from there down and hit this road, and down through Cottonwood and come on around and end up over here in Rachel, if you want.

OK, so this road out on the back side is a connecting road?

Yes, it's just a loop.

OK. I just wondered where those people came from because it surprised me.

But yeah, nowadays you can't go out without running into somebody someplace.

Does it affect your ranching at all? I mean aside from the fact that that kid had an accident.

The annoyance.

Yes, that's basically what I mean.

I guess other than the nuisance factor, it's not [folding map]—that's just not what we're used to. We live out here because we like being by ourselves, I guess, as strange as that sounds.

No, it doesn't sound strange at all, actually. Another question. This is another deviation because I can't—sometimes I can keep a linear thought and sometimes I can't, and today I can't seem to. Tell me about the Wild Horse Commission [State of Nevada Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses], and the fact that you're a commissioner.

What is relevant to anything about that?

Well, no. Why [you are on the commission]?

Well, really I believe that if you're not a part of the solution, you're a part of the problem.

And tell me what the problem is with the horses and then what the solution is.

OK. The wild horse theory in Nevada is that out of the thirteen western states or any of the states that have federal grounds, Nevada has about 24,000 horses, which is 80 percent of the horses. And the Nevada BLM receives approximately 10 percent of the money to manage these horses. They're charged with managing them, yet it's another tangle of the octopus. The fiefdom has

[00:15:00] been established in Washington and they have a Washington horse office and it's part of the kingdom and everybody's fighting for their fiefdom.

Right. And the money that goes along with that.

Yes.

And Nevada's not receiving its fair share?

No, and Senator [Harry] Reid has been very good about time and time again getting money to try to get the horses not so much controlled, we're just about—there's an acronym, an allowable management level. So the AML on each herd management area is established and you have that number, and when the BLM does come in and gather them, they take them down plus or minus 10 percent of that AML. But the problem is then monies get filtered off or whatever for other things and the gathers don't happen and that's one of the main things. I've been on that damn commission for about ten years and I just hate to see Nevada's resources getting depleted. As far as the Washington office of the BLM horse deal, I don't think they care to solve the problem. But our habitat and our rangelands are getting depleted, being depleted, and if they'd just manage them, that's—you know.

Managing the pasture?

The horses. Manage the horses to where they're sustainable.

So if it's an overpopulation, that entails one solution. If it's an underpopulation, there's not so much of a problem. Am I understanding that correctly?

Generally it will build on its own, yeah.

OK. What do they do if there's an overpopulation?

Bring a helicopter. There are a couple of crews. In fact, down here on the test site, that's one reason I go to the test site is because I'm on this commission and they gather—one time in 1992

I think, they had an excess of 10,000 horses down there, and the horses were eating each other's manes and horses were dying and the water, it was a dry year. I mean it was a pathetic thing.

Oh, my gosh. So they pulled them off.

Yes, and then right after that is when I first got on the commission. But Cathy Barcomb, the executive secretary, she has pictures of all that and dying horses.

Oh, gosh, So what they're looking at is they need funds to round up these excess horses, is that what they want to do with them?

Basically manage the populations. They're working on fertility drugs and things like that, that they can give them that will last two or three years to keep—I think the recoupment rate on young horses and things on any average herd is about 24 percent because they don't have a whole lot of natural enemies. So, you know, they can expand the population pretty quickly.

And they want to prevent that from happening too quickly?

Yes.

Bring it down to a more natural level?

Yes, and dollars-and-cents-wise, that would make better sense.

Were you aware of these horses when you were a kid?

Yeah, I grew up chasing mustangs, but I mean my dad, boy, if you saw a bunch of horses, forget the cows or anything else, away you went chasing mustangs. But most of them weren't mustang—I mean the mustang variety. They were all horses that were bred different places. Around Thirty Mile up north there, there were a lot of little individual places like here that couldn't make it and they all had horses and they turned them loose.

Let them fend?

[A car drives up the ranch road.]

Yes. I've got to see who that is a minute, Leisl.

OK.

[00:18:28] End Track 4, Disc 1.

[00:00:00] Begin Track 5, Disc 1.

We were talking about horses, and you were going to tell me a story about when you were a kid, just experiences with horses.

Well, the first mustang I ever caught, I think I was about ten years old then, too. We were pushing this bunch of cows up Butte Mountain and my dad saw these mustangs up there. He had a horse that he called Viola. He was really proud of her. Viola was her name. But anytime my dad and my uncle—when they were kids in Butte Valley, there was an old Italian family that lived in Cherry Creek by the name of Salves [sp], Pete Curdano [sp] and Parises and them, when they were kids, for fun, they would go relay horses in Butte Valley. Mustangs or whatever, they were really blooded horses, and then that was when they still—

"Blooded" means?

You know, not registered but not inbred mustangs. In fact, one breed, the roans up there originated out of Burns, Oregon and things like that.

OK. So they came from good stock other places.

Right. And when they were kids, they'd go relay horses, and then catch the horses. The cavalry, they were still using mounted horses to some extent in those days, so they made money and things that way.

"Relay" means you run a horse from one station to the next, pick up a new horse?

Right. There was enough people, the Uhaldes started on the south end of the valley and bring them to Nine Mile, and then the Curdanos and the Salves took over and ran them north to the

Parises, and then on the tail end of the run, when your horses gave out, because a mustang will always have enough to outrun a guy on a horse.

Oh, yes. I know that. I owned one. Heck.

They always save something for themselves.

Yes. So did these horses suffer anything from the test site? Because you mentioned the horses on the test site. Were they impacted in the same way as the deer and the cattle and the sheep were?

They had to be.

Did you see any of that?

No. In fact, the last ten years that I've been on this commission, we go over to the Tonopah Test Range [TTR] and they have a funny issue over there with colts, horses with really crooked feet. But I think they figured—they've had them to vets and things and think that's something to do with the sand or I don't know, but maybe it's a mutant gene.

"Crooked" like they're pigeon-toed?

No, sideways.

Oh, no. Like completely facing—

Pretty much, yeah. Just ugly. I only saw one or two, so I don't know.

They're useless. You can't do anything with a horse like that. So they think it might be a genetic mutation like a—?

Oh, I don't know. When you said "genetic mutation," that's the first time it ever came to my mind.

Oh, yeah, that just popped in my head. So it's not that. That's not what you said.

I'm not saying that. Maybe it is. Maybe they're looking the wrong direction to solve this.

I don't know if I've read if there's any impact from the test site on the horses, but if they've run herds out there, then I suppose—I'll look up some information and if I find some, I'll send some.

Well, most of the test site—and they had really good horses there—a lot of the test site belonged to Lambs and Fallinis. They took that away from them.

Oh, I didn't know that. Who are the Lambs?

Senator Floyd Lamb.

No way.

From Vegas.

No kidding.

Yes. See, that lower Pahranagat Valley, that game refuge and things, that was all his ranch. But then it kind of started in decline when they came up here and grabbed his—that was his summer range. But I think they grabbed most of his range and a lot of Fallinis'.

And this is now the wildlife refuge? Or is it the test site's?

Well, then, he sold out to what's now the wildlife refuge, to Fish and Game.

Is that valley a natural—?

Kawich Valley or Pahranagat Valley?

Pahranagat. Is that a natural green valley like that?

Pretty much, yeah. Pretty much an oasis. Two or three big springs raise there: Crystal Springs and Ash Springs.

*And how did you get involved with this book? [*Honest Horses: Wild Horses in the Great Basin. *University of Nevada Press, 2006] Was it because of your work on the commission? This is a new publication.*

Yes, that gal called me one day—

Paula Morin?

[Indicates yes.] And I went to Austin and met her and, I don't know, we rode around. I don't like to sit, I'd rather be looking at the country, so we went up south of Austin and came out in Kingston Canyon and—I don't know.

What impact is this book supposed to have? It caught my eye but I've not heard any press on it.

I don't know. It's kind of a different—just cumulative reports of different people's views, looks like.

Yes, that's what I couldn't figure out.

I didn't see a real purpose. Maybe it's just a documentary snapshot, as you said. I've never even read the whole thing. I've read a few things here and there, and I don't think I sound particularly intelligent at any point in time, so I didn't read what I said.

Well, I think you should go back because I just read it and it sounds great. You're very articulate.

[00:05:00] Oh, yeah, I really am, I'll tell you that. You got a real class case here. That's why I went to look at the artist. I'm like, I don't know if I want to be a better contribution to society. [Laughing]

Well, I'd like to get out there, as opposed to sitting here and talking, I want you to show me what's out there. But is there anything else you want to say on the record as far as your experiences with the test site most particularly?

I think, to sum it all up, I think as far as my father went, he despised them so badly and things but he was a man who believed and instilled in us that if you're thinking it, either be honest enough to say it, or say nothing, if you can't say something good. So consequently, he was pretty much a man of few words. And I'm just the opposite. I'll babble on forever.

That's not a bad thing.

Spew verbal garbage all day long. So yes, I don't know. I think my whole—and now what makes me really mad again is this god-danged nuclear railroad.

Tell me about that.

So they're going to come over Timber Pass, which is one of our sheep allotments, come down through Coal Valley, through Water Gap, or that was their plan, then by Michael Heizer's, the art project, and on out through Sand Spring Summit over here, and in through Sand Spring Valley over to Reveille, tear up Fallinis' country. I mean it'll just be—how many people is it going to take to build it? How many invasive species of weeds are we going to get as a result of it? How many more people is it going to bring? And this is about the last area of the world that's basically untouched by human hands, so why can't they just leave the damn thing alone? I mean other than us few natives, really it's still pretty primitive compared to most of the world.

And if you're going to run your business, are you saying you need to keep it that way?

Yes. I really think it'll bring about some changes we won't be able to cope with. I really do.

I went through Water Gap. That's the way you told me to go, so that's the way I drive in to this valley, and that's exactly where they're going to put the railroad.

Right. It's going to come right through the gap.

Along the same route, basically, that I drove, all the way through here.

Well, to Heizer's, and then it's going south.

Oh, to Heizer's and then it's going to go south. Oh, right, south to the next—

Sand Spring Summit, down here.

OK, the next pass.

My thought on the whole damn thing is, right down here at the Nevada Test Site, they created Frankenstein and now they want to bring the son of Frankenstein home. Just that simple. You don't need any more words to describe it.

That's a really interesting description. It's kind of a vivid picture. Do you run your cattle out through that area?

Yes.

So those cows that I saw on my way in—?

In Coal Valley. They aren't ours. Ours are right here at the mouth of the canyon north, and then we go south.

Right. Who owns the ones in Coal Valley?

Robert Steel, I think, I believe is who's there now, from Alamo.

Those cattle I've seen, but then I didn't see the ones before, so I figured they must be yours, the ones on this side.

Yes, they probably are.

Is that why the gate is shut?

Yes.

OK. I came through and shut it.

Yes, our cows are, how do you say it, if they think there's a free meal, they want to get up here and get it.

So they'll just migrate this way to get whatever they can.

Well, and that cold weather, if it's cold or it snows, then they want to come home.

Nice. Now, if the cattle are out there, where are the sheep?

The sheep are further south on Horlington [sp].

OK. And you're going to show me this [the layout of the ranch]? You don't have to.

I can take you and show you more or less.

OK. Well, let's go do that.

OK.

[00:08:56] End Track 5, Disc 1.

[00:00:00] Begin Track 6, Disc 1.

[Interview resumes mid-conversation.]

So you're saying that if you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem, if you're not doing something actively. Is that how you phrased it?

Yes, that's how I feel. So that's why I'm on the Resource Advisory Council for the BLM and the Horse Commission.

Go through that list again. Resource Council for the BLM.

Resource Advisory Council. Wild Horse Commission. N-4 Grazing Board. I was the president of the Woolgrowers once. That was back when I was young. Nevada Wool Growers Association. So I don't know if I ever did anything or not, but at least you feel like you got to try.

Do you make a good living out here, with your sheep and your cattle?

I think so. I'm happy.

Well, yes, there's that, but financially, this is all self-supporting?

Yes.

That's great.

We haven't had to do anything else yet. Maybe the time is fast approaching.

That may actually be a rude question to ask but—

Three-dollar-a-gallon gas. No, it wasn't.

That's good. But with the cost of living going up around you. I didn't even thing about the price of gas relative to this. You just filled your tank up with diesel.

Yes, we are in the process.

And that's what you're going to use throughout the winter?

Yes.

And what was the other fuel that came in? I said propane but I can't remember.

Gas and diesel. Yes, you know, sometimes, depending on the winter, there's a couple of winters I haven't gotten out of here for two-and-a-half months.

Really. Not to go to town?

No. Nothing. Well, just basically, '92-'93 was the last winter so we had the CAT going and the road down here looked like a bobsled tunnel. I mean we'd have to plow the road every day, and the door on the pickup, the bottom part of the window on the side door, it was at that level, the snow on the level, for six weeks.

Is that typical or unusual?

Kind of unusual, but not uncommon.

How much snow do you get in the winter?

It depends on if it's coming out of Los Angeles and that way, if you've got an El Niño year and things, three foot.

But it melts and comes back and melts?

It depends on the winter, too.

It could potentially stay around all winter.

Six weeks or two months. So really, having it dry this time of year is a little bit unnerving because I'd really like to see some moisture but, on the other hand, at least it's not warm and

you're not—because if you get an early winter, you're fighting it from before Thanksgiving on, and it just gets to be a long, ugly old thing.

Was it like this when you were a kid, too, where it was just you were—?

Pretty much sporadic, yeah.

Yes. And you guys might be stuck up here—well, you would be in Ely, going to school, I think you said, but your parents were—

But I remember in 1968, they had the first snowmobiles came out, and it was like, I want to say after the 20th of March, because the sheep were getting ready to leave and things and we got three foot of snow. I got to skip school and come down—my dad and uncle, they were getting kind of on up there in years—my uncle never married, that's where I got my half of the ranch. So I came to Caliente and loaded up corn and things like that on a two-ton truck, and some hay, and then we came in through Sieman's [sp] [property] where you came this morning, and down there it rained. We had one herd of sheep there, which was the oldest herd, kind of give them the best country all the time because they need it, and then it rained there. But then as we got into Garden Valley and coming up and then down here at the bottom meadow where you saw the horses, the fence was covered. You couldn't see the fence. So anyway, we had these snowmobiles, they were a brand-new thing that came out on the market, and my dad's nephew had one, so we borrowed it and away we'd come and we were chugging up there about halfway down the flat, and then they blew a piston and we had to walk in. It was about a two-day adventure.

So much for newfangled devices, huh? What do you guys do for groceries? That may be a stupid question but what do you—?

Well, we usually stock up. We've got a cellar up here and we buy a ton of potatoes.

Canned goods and—

Yes.

And you've been doing this since you were a kid.

Yes.

Wow. That might be the part of the story, of your story in particular, that is really, really special. How many people do you know live this lifestyle?

Yes, I don't know, Leisl, but I like it, that's all I know, all that concerns me.

Well, I'm glad. None of your neighbors?

No.

What about people at the other ranches?

[00:05:00] I don't think too many of them—well, there's not too many of them that live at the end of the road anymore. Like even Fallinis have oiled road and, you know.

It's just different now. Do you know when that transition was made?

No, I can't say.

It wasn't abrupt, then?

No, it's been gradual. But I know—well, and then, the changing times, my dad and my granddad and all those guys all made their own wine. Being from France, they drank wine. And Parises made their own wine.

No kidding.

Yes. And the wine vats are all gone and stuff now but—

Where did they get the grapes?

Bought the grapes out of California and in World War II—I got some certificates in the safe, I couldn't find them offhand, but where they had—and then to buy tires and rubber, because of the

military use, they got a deferment to get tires, because agriculture was considered important. I've got those certificates and things.

Right. Wow! That stuff is really interesting. You've actually really given me a really good picture of what life is like out here. Have I forgotten to ask you anything? I mean, we covered groceries.

The important things.

Well water. You guys run off of well water. Is it filtered in any way?

No.

Or just straight?

Yes.

Nice. That's good.

So life hasn't changed too much so far, and I really have to say it's good because, I don't know, my grandfather came and brought [unclear] sheep from Shoshone, Idaho to Carson City. Before he left, they gave him a tent and a burro, and then about three days out of Shoshone, Idaho, the bears killed his burro, and he had to leave his tent. I think, you know, I'm made out of milk, I don't think I could do that. I like a shower, if not every day, every other day is about my max to go. So I think I must be made out of milk.

Yes. Me, too. It's just different.

But my poor mother, I will say, I can remember as a kid, she had—we've still got the washing machine over there with the motor in it. You kick-started this motor on the washing machine.

Really. And that was your powered wash.

Yes.

When did they acquire that?

Oh, I don't know. They were Maytags. They bought them out of Sears and Roebuck, I believe. But I can show you the washing machine. We still have it.

I would love to see it. I did remember one other thing. Just to refer back to when you said you got your share from your uncle, who were the other owners of the shares of the—?

My dad and my mother.

OK. Because you're the only son, did I infer that correctly?

Yes.

How interesting.

So my mother and I are partners now. My uncle never married, and when he died—and then we're in the process of doing something with these boys. We incorporated Sub S Corporation and we're gifting them some shares and things so that hopefully it'll go on.

How many kids did you have? You have four boys.

Four boys and a daughter.

And the daughter. What's her name?

Marjeanne.

And your boys are?

Mike, John, Tim, and then we ran out of names, so Gracian was the last one. He's the one that's sitting down at Apex.

Is that why you call him G?

Yes.

OK. I got it.

In fact, he just came home. Those guys went to Texas on, what, ten days ago, two days before Thanksgiving, on this big horse-buying spree. So G came home, just finished up his student teaching. So he's got to get to Ely and I think he said his material is due, oh, by the 4th.

So your boys, which one is in Illinois?

Tim.

Tim. And he's the electrical engineer.

He's the electrical engineer, graduated from Notre Dame.

Congratulations. They wouldn't let me into Notre Dame.

You tried to go to Notre Dame?

No, not specifically.

What in the hell would possess you to go to Notre Dame?

Not specifically, but that's a tier of school that I wasn't ready for. Isn't that interesting? Your son's quite a cat to get in. It's a big school.

He didn't get in there—he had to go someplace else as a student.

First? OK. And then—

He transferred in.

Good for him. He must be a smart cat.

But like you say, why did he always want to go to Notre Dame? I don't understand that, because I think UNLV, UNR [University of Nevada, Reno], I like UNLV, I think—really I believe they're—I think you can get as good an education as you need.

I think so.

But that was always his quirk, since he was a little kid.

Football, maybe?

Yes, maybe. Well, no, my dad had a scholarship to the University of New Mexico. So then one time we were sitting around the kitchen here bullshitting. Uncle Bert, he was the last part of the **[00:10:00]** family that—and my dad and things, and I asked Uncle Bert, or I asked my dad, I said, `Why in the hell didn't you get that big scholarship, football scholarship, and go to New Mexico?` Oh, my Uncle Bert started laughing and he says, You couldn't have drug him out of here with a team of horses.

Your dad was offered a football scholarship to the University of New Mexico, and he didn't take it?

No. He was [an] All-State or something player. He was a big guy.

That's great. Did he go to college at all?

No.

He just stayed here and ranched.

Probably like me, too smart. See, there is that point in your life when you think you know it all, you know. I think that's when learning starts maybe.

Quite. And Gracian is the student teacher?

Yes.

So he's going to be a high school teacher?

Secondary ed.

Oh, good for him. Subject?

Same as you.

History.

No, I don't know what his subject—I don't know how you say it, Leisl. I figured if they just went and got an education, my job was to give them the opportunity.

That's excellent. That may be a little surprising, too, because you seem to have a, from what you've talked about with your grandfather and your father, there at least was offers on the table for a higher education, and for you, you could've gone if you chose, am I correct in assuming that?

Yes.

Then, you know, you have a different kind of culture, I think. The horse trainer that I know, John Bassett, wanted all his kids to go to college, and it's taken the oldest one maybe eight years to actually get there, from high school. Took a deviation. Did you send your kids straight out?

Yes.

Was that something you told them?

Pretty much, yeah.

That they're going?

Yes. Because, well, I think we're at a crossroads where, you know, this way of life, I guess I see it fading out, to a certain extent. I think if you want to and you're hungry enough to hang onto it, there may be a chance, but the world changes so fast and things are, you know, it seems like it's a world of eighteen hours instead of twenty-four to make a revolution nowadays. It really does. So I think it's better you can prepare your kids for whatever event comes along.

Do you wish you had gone to college?

No.

[Telephone rings]

I think I had about as good a life as I ever wanted to have.

Good.

[00:12:39] End Track 6, Disc 1. End of interview.