Southern Utah Oral History Project

The Southern Utah Oral History Project was started in July of 1998. It began with an interest in preserving the cultural history of small towns in southern Utah that border the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. The project was managed by Kent Powell, from the Utah Division of State History, who oversaw the collection of oral histories conducted in Boulder, Escalante, Bryce Valley, Long Valley, Kanab, the Kaibab Paiute Reservation, and Big Water, by Jay Haymond and Suzi Montgomery. Also in cooperation with the state was the Bureau of Land Management and the people of Garfield and Kane counties, with support from the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. The goals of the project were first to interview long-time local residents and collect information about the people and the land during the first half of the twentieth century. In addition, the interviews were to be transcribed and copies of the transcripts were to be made available to the public at the Utah State Historical Society and at local repositories. Lastly, to build a relationship with state agencies and the local communities and provide a medium for the local communities to express their interest in preserving their own history and culture in the areas that are now included in the GSENM. Thank you to everyone who took the time to care and share their memories and stories.
INTERVIEW WITH: Valton E. Jackson
INTERVIEWER: Jay Haymond
INTERVIEW NUMBER: One of One
DATE OF INTERVIEW: May 22, 2000
PLACE OF INTERVIEW: His home in Orem
SUBJECT OF INTERVIEW: His experiences growing up and working in Kane County and in the northern counties of Arizona

TRANSCRIBER: Vectra solutions/LA
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JH: Let's start with your first memories in the Jackson home in Kanab.

VJ: I was born on July 24, Pioneer Day, 1927. I was born at the home of my grandparents, Heber Meeks, just up the street and they hadn't quite finished the new home where my parents were building. Dad was out to the sheep herd when I was born and in October of that year, they finally finished the home in South Kanab and mother and I moved into the new home there. At the time I was growing up, my dad's family are all from Fredonia, so he married the only daughter of Heber Meeks and she had seven brothers, and six of the brothers lived right in that neighborhood, so I had twenty-six first cousins. We all grew up within two and one half blocks of one another in the old Kanab South Ward. Grandpa Meeks was the Stake President and had large cattle holdings, property around Kanab. Homesteaded the place on the Arizona Strip called Hacks Canyon with one of his sons, Uncle Mason.

JH: That's H E C K S?

VJ: Yes. Hacks Canyon. That permits now owned by Fred E. Heaton and then they also, Uncle Dalton Meeks, nick named Dot, and Uncle Athe and others, they homesteaded a place called Burnt Canyon near Bull Rush on a water pocket that, where the water comes down a wash, it's a rock bottom wash with rock sides, so that any rain, it goes over about a thirty foot ledge and filled this water pocket and there's always water. There used to be some, well, still are the remains of some Anasazi ruins nearby who must have used that for their water supply, so
it's still in use by the people who own it. Growing up in Kanab, most everybody had some connection with livestock. Dad was out with the sheep and then ran some cattle. They did a little filing on some water at a place called Wild Band and were able to get forty acres and build a reservoir. That became part of our holdings. We'd winter the sheep out on the Arizona Strip and then we had a permit for about eighteen hundred head on the Kaibab Forest for five months during the summer time. Then, of course, like most of the people, we had a field about, oh close to a thirteen acre field on the outskirts of town and from there we raised alfalfa and grain for the horses and the milk cows and any sick animals or things that we'd have to bring in and look after them there. We had a nice garden plot and chickens and then with the mutton that dad could send in or bring in once in a while. We didn't know we were poor. I remember one year, just a kid, I didn't get to go along, but dad trailed the lambs that had been weaned and he trailed the lambs from Kanab to Marysvale, which was the closest railroad and sold them for $1.50 a head.

JH: Wow.

VJ: That was in the '30's. About the middle of the '30's, dad got a big old truck and then they would put kind of two floors in the rack, see, the cattle racks, and then they'd just lift the lambs up and put them back under on three layers and haul them up to the railroad. That would be around, oh, '38, '39. In those days things with the Depression, and then with the Taylor Grazing Act, which in Arizona, in Utah it was a little different, you had to have a base. For your cattle operation your base was property where you could raise a certain amount of alfalfa to feed them at least two months out of the year.

JH: For your winter feeding? Uh huh.

VJ: Yes. And for Arizona your base was your water filings and if you had a water filing then they'd kind of put a protractor on a map and they'd draw a three mile circle radius around that
water and you could then graze in that three miles. But then you had to work with BLM as arbitrator and your neighbors because you can't build round fences, so you'd square them off.

Grandpa's homestead, it still stands. Solid rock. One of those pieces of rock I measured is twenty-four feet long and then it's approximately eighteen inches square, just one rock. That homestead was on that water pocket and they ran the fence, it was half mile wide and two miles long, between Bull Rush Canyon and Grammar Canyon. They fenced it and then that gave them control of what we called the Burnt Canyon points down to the Clear Water Spring. That went to Uncle Dalton Meeks and then during the Depression years he got a job in California so he sold that permit and that brand, the Two Bar brand, to my father. With that water and then the water filing that we had at Wild Band, and then when dad would be out with the sheep, he would notice places where water would run after a storm and then he would, kind of in spare time while the sheep were grazing, he would build a reservoir and I don't know where he got the idea, but then he would always file on it with the Arizona Water Filing Department, so he would build the reservoir, put a little salt in it and then bed the sheep in that reservoir and they'd tramp it in so that they all held water real good and then from the rains they would fill and then hold and that way he could go farther out away from where it was overgrazed and take his sheep. Sometimes there were areas that they could only go when they had snow for water and when the sheep don't have a lamb, why they can get by.

JH: Let me back up just a minute and ask you about this soil treatment with salt. How did that make the soil impervious?

VJ: It wasn't the salt so much. The sheep would come in and lick the salt and then tramp.

JH: I see.

VJ: I think more the tramping, just making it real solid that made it seal. Maybe it was the
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manure droppings and all the other.

JH: Mix.

VJ: Yes. But anyhow it sealed them up and all those reservoirs, in later years when we had the bigger equipment, the big CATs, the Wild Band was enlarged and it would hold for two years and then at a place called Robinson and it’s on the map now, it’s called the Big Jackson and it held thirty-two million gallons and it would go two years without refilling, it usually filled every summer, but it could go two years. Those were the big ones and then at the Burnt Canyon, one of those drought years, about 1949, one of my uncles, working for the BLM down in New Mexico told dad there was an old Mexican that could water witch wells and he never hit a dry hole, and so dad had my uncle bring him up and he, instead of using the willow, he used a thick metal wire with handles and a twist on the end. I wasn’t there but dad tells that experience of how he started walking along over the ground and all of a sudden that thing started to turn in the Mexican’s hand. My dad was pretty skeptical, he said, “Give me that” and he couldn’t make it turn and finally the old Mexican, it kept turning one way and then it flipped back and knocked a button off of his shirt and he said, “Okay, there’s a stream running right here, now where do you want your well?” It runs this way. And they picked a knoll where they’d get more wind and drilled a well and they hit real nice water at 425 feet. Now it was almost in line with that spring that comes out at Pipe Springs and we often wondered if it was somehow in an underground stream because the Bull Rush Wash was 500 feet deep, Kanab Creek is 1000 feet, just three or four miles away and Grammar Canyon was 500 feet and here at 425 feet we hit water. Strange thing about that was, I can’t remember the year, but it would be in ‘57 or ‘58, the same year they had that big earthquake up in Yellowstone that formed that Hebdon Lake. There was a fairly good tremor that hit the Kanab area and that water that was drinkable, that was so good, somehow alkali started getting into it. It was still cool and the animals did well but it was a little too bitter for me to drink after that.
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VJ: Something broke loose to come in there. That was interesting. The old Mexican witched a well for the Sorensons and their allotment not far away and the Brooksby's and their allotment and also one on a church allotment out, now called Church Wells, out east of Kanab, just east of the Paria River. Anyhow he's the one that spotted that, plus one or two for Kanab City.

JH: Well that's interesting that this water witching was in, I was going to say endorsed, but that's not quite the word I want.

VJ: Everybody was skeptical. My dad was but it was a dry time and he needed water and so he was willing to try it. Even the well driller said, "You're wasting your time." I mean dad had had geological experts in and they said there's now way you can get water here. But he just, for some reason because this old man had hit the wells in New Mexico and my uncle had such great confidence in him, dad said, "We're going to do it." Maroney, the old well driller, said, "You're wasting your money and your time" and John Brooksby decided that he would stop and he had a flat tire and just as he got to the gate of his property on Sunshine, they broke through and hit the water. If he'd a got there an hour sooner they would have been a few feet from that water and never known it. (Laughter) Anyhow all those wells are still used; the water's still there. But with the water permits and then the water filings, dad ended up with the Bull Rush, he also had a water filing on the Bull Rush Spring which was alkali, it was not too good of water, and there he built a shearing corral and operated that shearing corral in the spring. Up until that time they sheared the sheep at a place called Goulds, which is not too far from Hurricane and one year they sheared two hundred and twenty-five thousand head of sheep at Goulds.

JH: How do you spell that name?
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VJ: Goulds. Down there they all just say Gouls.

JH: No 'L-D' on the end.

VJ: I'm positive it was Goulds, that was the name.

JH: Yeah, I think you're right.

VJ: Having done a little research on it. But at that point in time, say before my birth, but say the early 1900's through the 1920's, their sheep, dad in fact, there wasn't any limit, it was wide open and you just went and people kind started going in certain areas and the others would kind of respect that, "Well that's where he runs," but it was no private ownership. He even went as far as wintering one winter, the snow was a little heavy, he went clear down around Mesquite, trailing the sheep all the way across Arizona Strip into Nevada and spent a winter down there. Most of the men on the Arizona Strip on the, oh I'd say the eastern side, under the Kaibab, were from Panguitch, Hatch, and from Kanab, Orderville and Fredonia. A few in the middle area, a few from down in St. George; Gardners- one of those Gardners froze to death in '48?

JH: Yeah, the winter of '48-'49, ground blizzards.

VJ: That big heavy blizzard, froze to death. They recently put a marker out there for him. The Cedar City men, most of them went on what the called the West Desert and then up on Cedar Mountain. By the 1940's, Alex Findlay went totally to cattle. Dad was starting to move towards cattle and he and man, a Hatch from Hatch, Utah I think were the last sheep herds. The Hatch's would have been the last. We went total cattle in 1944.
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JH: Can you remember the reasoning or the discussion or was there discussion in your family about abandoning sheep. Was it strictly a market problem or what else?

VJ: Sheep had to have two men with them all the time and it just meant that men were away from their families a great deal, even though your only paying them maybe thirty dollars month and feed, made sure their fed right, but that was one problem. Actually at that time and in the early days of World War II, wool, with sheep you had a double crop. You had the wool in the spring and you had the lamb crop in the fall and there was demand for mutton in all of the Army and Navy camps and wool blankets, and so it was pretty good, but it was just that you had to be there. And it was hard to get good help. This is ours and as soon as school was out then I would meet the sheep out at Fredonia and we would trail them up onto what was called the north end of the Kaibab and then they would start to lamb, and I would be oh, 12, 13, 14, through 15, 16, through those years and I'd look after the droppers and every night there would be oh, fifty to one hundred lambs that was born on the bed ground.

JH: ...you didn't have to help the ewes much with the lambs?

VJ: Not much. Once in a while you'd have to pull but you'd have to watch the younger ewes, but after they'd had one they just didn't need much help. A lot of time they'd have twins after the first birth. But they got a long pretty well, it's just that a sheep and it's lamb first recognize each other by their smell. You'll see them all sniffing one another and so you can't go around and smell all the lambs in big herd so we'd leave them in bunch of say fifty to one hundred for six to seven days and then by this time they'd learned to recognize the bleat that each other makes and then they start finding each other by "baaaa" and "yaaas", you know. (Laughter) It's interesting to watch it happening. And so then we would start- we'd put his bunch in with this bunch and this bunch in and just keep putting them together and that way we hardly ever dogied a lamb. And there was not a lot of loss. I know with our own milk
cattle, a lot of times why we'd pick up, if we had any dogies, but some of the other sheep men that were around the area would let us and we'd take them in and put them on our milk cow and that's the way we raised some of our spending money was raising dogie lambs. They seemed to dogie a lot more than we did. Then we'd just kind of move up the mountain and, oh it's 89A now, before that highway that goes from Jacob Lake into House Rock, we had a docking corral where we cut off the tails and earmark them. We'd have them all lambed out usually by the middle of June and then we'd just graze on up the mountain and then turned around and grazed back. When they came off in the fall, when they'd come off, then we would select the lambs that were going to be sold and dad would select the ewe lambs that we were going to save for replacement and then they would winter without a lamb on them. Dad studied these things out and he bought choice bucks and he increased the wool rate to somewhere around fifteen pounds of wool for animal, and the lambs, he brought in some of the black face, but he sold every black face lamb. They're not so good for wool, but they put on a little more meat, they were a little bigger and so the lambs, you know, six months old, the lambs were up around 85 pounds, which is a pretty good weight. And then somebody would usually, like a lot of men up around Goshen Meadows around, and Ephraim, Sanpete County, sometimes they would buy them and feed them through the winter some way and then sell them after they'd gotten fattened up and gotten bigger, put some weight gain on them. A couple of reasons, the Kaibab started fighting all the fires, here the old Indians used to burn it on a regular basis and just clear out the underbrush and the little pines started growing up in thickets and it made it very difficult to herd sheep out there, my dad and my uncle, but my uncle had a drinking problem, and they were about the only two men that could really successfully do it, because those sheep get into one of those thickets and then all of a sudden they'd realize they were separated from the herd and almost invariably they'd panic and instead of running towards the herd, they'd usually run the wrong direction, and so we had to spend a lot of time, after we lambed the sheep out, it was one of my jobs while others were watching the sheep, was to just keep going in big circles out around to make sure that they hadn't got away and bring them back. Now sheep will usually
try to go back and they have a homing device, the lamb, if they get separated they'll go back to the last place where they sucked, where they ate and that helped. They'd be back to the old bed ground. But where those thickets had got tough, and then one year my dad got kicked by a horse and almost died from a blood clot that lodged in his lung and then broke loose and hit his heart, and my uncle and I lambed out, had a good year, that was in 1942 I think that was between my freshman and sophomore year, I had to quit school, I had to drop out, didn't go to my last term of school, I went out to help. And some people knowing his weakness come out with some whiskey and got him drunk and he turned the sheep over to me and left on a drunk and so I was there alone for about four days when I was about fifteen. I had to look after that whole herd, just hoping and praying that somebody would come. And finally somebody saw him and called my dad and he got the local Coconino sheriff and Deputy Slim Latham and they came out and finally found me. I had to leave the camp and trail them over toward where there was some wide-open country, where they could kind of graze and where I could look and keep around them. We still lost a couple hundred head out of that and that's when dad decided that's it, no more, and so he sold in the fall of '44, and they gave us in a trade on permits, six to one. Six sheep to get one cow and so in the summer, June, let me get this straight. It was June of 1945, he put the cattle, he'd been building a cattle herd along and that was the first year we put the cattle out on the Forest. I was working for the Forest Service. The next summer I turned sixteen and because I had been raised on the Kaibab and all the older men were gone- nobody knew the Forest- so at sixteen I became the head firefighter. They could find the fires from the fire towers and draw their cross lines and say on a map, here's where it is and then I knew how to get there and we also fixed the roads and we had the water at Ryan, we got the spring cleaned out and had the water there because they had to trail the cattle, they watered them in the Kanab Creek down at the Clear Water Springs and then trailed them out through the sagebrush. It took two days with one dry night to make it into Ryan. Later on we pushed a road through the sagebrush and they'd just trail up that road and we could do it in day, which made it a lot better, and then go out on top of the Kaibab.
JH: Let me ask about predators with the sheep, especially. Was it a problem with the sheep? In other words, did you have trouble with predators, like coyotes?

VJ: Always. There were a few government trappers around who worked with us, but dad hired trappers because there was some bounty money on it and there was a little value in the pelts. There was a local man and one of his sons, Dan Button- ever heard of Dan Button- the one that trailed the "Lobo Wolf"? Have you ever heard of the Lobo Wolf of the Arizona Strip? He was the one that, they put a thousand dollar bounty on him and Dan Button was the one that finally tracked him down and figured his habits and killed him. But that was about the only wolf that anybody knew about in that country, but it was the cougars and the coyotes. The coyotes were very thick. And his son, Arnold, would usually trap out ahead and behind our herd and then we had some pretty good sheep dogs that were aware. We had one big old German Shepherd that had been attacked as a pup, about six months old, by a couple of coyotes and he didn't like them too well. (Laughter) Then, most of the men carried a 30-30 and would kill the coyotes. But the thing with a coyote is they killed more lambs- most ewe sheep are just too timid to fight them. If the ewes made a stand and got bit and the carrion or whatever the coyote has been eating would get the ewes infected and sometimes before we'd catch them they'd be too sick with infection and they would die from the bites they got.

Cougars were fairly timid around men, but if they got into a herd then they'd just act like a cat, having fun and they might kill, say maybe twenty, twenty-five at a whack. But they weren't as much problem to us then, as the coyotes were. The coyotes were a real big problem and I've seen them, we got into quite a discussion in some of the later years, the Kaibab Forest, probably one of the most misused management of wild life and livestock that there's been. It was made a national game preserve by Teddy Roosevelt and no hunting, except he had a hunting cabin. (Laughter)

JH: (Laughter)
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VJ: The remains of it is still down in a place called Oak Canyon, not too far from Big Springs and it was kind of a private game preserve. But this was the place where the Navajos and the Paiutes always went to get their winter meat. They would go there and kill their deer. Then the government made it a game preserve and then the deer just multiplied and in those days along in my time in the 30's and 40's, if you were to take the old gravel road from Jacob Lake to the North Rim to what they call "VT" Park, why you'd count a thousand head of deer out into those meadows feeding. There were just so many, many deer and they would eat the Aspen as high as they could stand on their hind legs and reach. When we were building fences in those years, using the quaking aspen poles, we'd drop the quaking aspen and put them off into fourteen, sixteen foot lengths, and then there'd be the tops of them and we'd finish for the day and go home or go back to camp and during the night the deer would strip and eat all the leaves, they were that hungry. They got too thick. Zane Grey wrote this up in a book of his about this, but somebody got the right idea in the 20's of...

End of Side One, Tape One

Begin Side Two, Tape One

JH: Okay, we're at the point of hoping to experiment with the deer herd...

VJ: They got cowboys and Indians and everybody out there like an African animal drive, to drive the deer to the south Kaibab down the Bright Angel Trail. They started with a large herd, but the deer just came right back through. They finally got one old sick doe, kind of out towards the trail (Laughter) It wasn't successful. I think that book that Zane Grey wrote was "Dude Ranger", something like that. He came to live there in Kanab and wrote several of his books. A teenage book about hunting lions on the Grand Canyon. He did one called "Last of the Plainsmen", the story of Buffalo Jones who wanted to preserve a buffalo herd and finally brought a herd out into House Rock Valley. I think they still run them, around two hundred
head out there on that preserve. I started to say the problem, so then they opened up big deer hunts and they gave out a lot of hunting permits and lots of Californians came in. There was something like twenty-five thousands permits and there were deer camps over on the East Rim and Big Saddle Deer Camp and then they just killed a lot of deer and then cut the numbers way down and so then they had to start limiting the numbers of deer permits because they over killed. Then another time they killed most of the cougars, hunting them, to kind of keep the population down a little bit. And then they got so they would not let you hunt or kill a coyote or a cougar and we went five years riding out there without ever seeing a fawn because the coyotes were so thick and we lost calves during that time. A young calf, most of the time runs with his tail sticking straight out, and you see a calf with a little stub of a tail, you knew the coyotes had bitten his tail off. They'd grab that tail and then try to throw him down - the coyotes usually run in at least pairs, I've seen them run four and six in a pack, but the Arizona Game Department were going on this idea to preserve the natural animals so that they would keep a balance of nature, but they maintained, which is correct, that a fawn doesn't leave scent, therefore the coyotes can't find them. Well I knew that wasn't true because my old sheep dogs, while we were out, would find fawns because the mother leaves a scent and she lays the fawn down and walks away to graze, all a coyote has to do is hit her trail and smell her right back to where the fawn was, I mean, sheep dogs found them all the time, so we knew that wasn't true and we had big arguments, so finally the hunting population said, "Well there's something wrong because the herds just disappeared on the Kaibab." So then they started allowing some trapping, you have to keep the balance but man's messed it up and so now he has to help keep the balance.

JH:  (Laughter)

VJ:  We were building a reservoir, a place near Jolly Sink and there must have been six or eight of us putting this corral around it and we heard a crashing in the trees and looked up and her come a big buck, he had, oh, six points, it was a nice big buck and he came running down off
that side hill and then saw us and instead of running, he was so exhausted, his tongue was hanging out, he just stopped, straddled-legged and just stood there and we got looking around, we could spot two coyotes on one side of this little canyon and two up on the other side and they'd just been running him up and down until he got tired. If we hadn't been there, why they would have come in and cut his leg tendons and put him down and then killed him, a big buck, and they always tried to tell us that one, they couldn't find the fawns, so they didn't kill fawns; and two, they only killed the sick, the weak, the old, that way, but I know that's not true because I've seen with my eyes, them running them down, a full grown buck.

But anyhow, I loved those days, I just wished I'd have ridden out there with a camera. I've seen wild life, especially big bucks. You start to tell people today, you know, what you used to see, "ahhh, that's just a story", and I didn't have a picture to prove it. I saw, one time when I had ridden with the head forest ranger, Mr. Gray, we had had to ride horseback to a fire. We had seen the smoke for a long time, but we could only see it through one tower and I finally rode in to it on the east side called Dog Point and then I stayed there and Mr. Gray went back and then I rode out. My horse and a packhorse, two days later, up into an area east of the highway that runs just a little bit east of the Kaibab Lodge, and in this beautiful little valley were fourteen bucks. One herd, and they were from eight to fourteen points on those antlers. (Laughter). No camera. No camera. Those big, Kaibab, and over on the other side, I don't know whether it's the lime stone or what, but they have large antlers, if they live that long. Now days you don't see many big ones, they still hunt quite a bit and they're killed. So with the thick trees and my uncle getting drunk and losing the sheep, dad said that was it, so we went totally to cattle in '45.

JH: Do you think that, we're talking about Forest Service management of these resources aren't we?

VJ: Uh huh.
JH: Do you think that their wild life people were just unacquainted with the, let me use the word, "eco-system", so they didn't really have the knowledge to manage those resources?

VJ: Most of them are easterners who hadn't been in this type of a forest area. And so they have book ideas and plus, gradually, you know, early on some of the men that had a little western experience had gone and got a college degree and they liked the outdoors and they understood both sides, but then you get your programs set up back east where they don't understand and this is what we get and so through the bureaucracy, the ones out here that might even know better, that's what they had to do.

JH: Yeah. I understand.

VJ: When they got thick and they couldn't make the drive, then they trapped deer and transported them, or they'd catch fawns, they took some of our dogs and they'd catch fawns and raise them and then move them, and then they opened a big hunt up. Nowadays, I'm glad my dad told me of the problems with the Bureau and "environmentalists". I mean, we were fourth generation life stock industry, and you don't stay in the industry that long, not looking after your resources, which is your land and your vegetation, but we started having all these problems and we turned out, in the eyes of the environmentalists, "the bad guys". Trying to ruin the land, get rich off from it someway, which none of us ever did. We paid our taxes, built the towns and schools, churches and things like that while looking after the land, but not the way they wanted it. We started having all this trouble and my dad said, well if these things get too bad and the time ever comes that you think you ought to sell, don't hang on to all this just for sentimental reasons.

JH: Sound words.
I'm glad he told me that, because then I didn't feel guilty when we finally decided that. You're out in all kinds of weather; I didn't mind the hard work, or even the weather, but you work hard and then you don't make a lot of money off from it, and with dad gone and mother getting older and needing some help, anyhow we sold all of our Forest and BLM permits and I took mother's portion and invested it wisely and made more money for her on her fifth of it than we usually did off of the whole operation. (Laughter). I don't know whether this would be interesting, but in my early remembrances, especially this place called Wild Band, it was nick named that because it also had a long drainage, it extended and finally ran into the Bull Rush that runs into the Kanab Creek, but it had a rock bottom and there were water pockets and during, especially the summer months when the thunder showers would come across quite regularly, there was always water up this wash, and the mustangs, without any fences, the mustangs would come in and water and that's where it got it's nick name, The Wild Band, And we're talking thousands of wild horses. They would water on the alkali at Bull Rush and they would water down at the spring, Clear Water Spring in the bottom of the Kanab Creek and then farther on at a place called Yellowstone, and then, oh clear on out around south of St. George, at Little Hole. But anyhow, to see those mustangs, that was always a sight. And when ever we would approach the Wild Band, our small reservoir and the Big Wash, was on the west side of what we called the Wild Band Hills, there was a little pass and we'd just kind of carefully ride up through to where we could peek over and look and it's always a sight to see a band of mustangs trailing into water and it's something you always remember. The stallions challenging one another and trying to take control of somebody else's band and maybe a fight going on. They used to stack their manure by the trail in piles. I asked my dad, what's that? And he explained to me that different animals have ways to mark their territory and one would leave his pile here and then another one would come along and say, no, this is mine and pile his on top of it. (Laughter) But they, somewhere, I'm trying to remember when, it might have been '35, '36, Hollywood, which had discovered, I think the first film was 1922, made in Kanab, with Tom Mix, "Dead Wood Days" or something like that, but they had discovered the area, even though they weren't using the
colored films and so they'd come in and film now and again, and they brought their film crews, and I don't know who else was involved, but I know the horses were wild, nobody claimed ownership, so there wasn't anybody to control it, they may have just shipped the animals out for fox feed or something, I don't know, but anyhow, they had a total deal, they made a corral out in the Wild Band and then put wings fencing out from it and then they brought in a little airplane. The movie people were there with their cameras going and the cowboys with this plane, they went way out and stirred up and put these bands together and ran them into that corral. I've seen in movies, with pictures of stampeding horses that I know came from that filming, just because of the country. We were out there dad took us out to see that. We knew the day it was going to go and there was one mustang, young mustang stallion that got by the wings and the cowboys couldn't catch him and the people in the plane wanted to know how far he'd run and they run him from out the other side of the Wild Band clear down to Bull Rush, where he died, he never quit, he just finally died.

JH: That's the problem with horses. My understanding is they don't have enough sense to stop.

VJ: Yeah, he was frightened and he just kept running until I guess his heart went. That I didn't particularly care for, but they shipped a lot of horses out of the country. And then with the Taylor Grazing Act in, and then dividing up the permits, one of the sad things with that is that some of the older cattlemen who just always ran out there but who had never made any improvements and never found any water, so when it came time to divide up, they didn't have any permits out there so they could only have the few head that they could run on their little field and farm in town. It was quite disruptive to a lot of people who had been prominent names in the cattle industry. I know dad bought out a few smaller permits- you could have a little smaller operation, but you can't make a living. My Uncle Mason sold his little Hacks permit to the Fred Heaton family and they grew with what they had, the old Heaton and then Hacks Canyon Reservoir, which is right on that main road that goes out to
Toweap, that's where my uncle's was. Anyhow a lot of them had to sell out, you can't make
a living off from fifty head or something like that, so a lot of them ended up out of business.
Then with the Depression still on, they brought in and they set up that Civilian Conservation
Corps, the CC Boys, and they put a camp in south of Pipe Springs to pipe water down to the
camp. Took all these city boys in and boy that would be hot out there in the middle of the
summer and their mess hall and the barracks, just kind of like army, but they put them to
work doing different kinds of erosion control, putting in culverts in the road and putting rock
faces around them and then building the fences off in the cedar posts. We always kind of
chuckled because they only had to chop four posts a day. (Laughter) You get in a cedar tree
and if anybody couldn't do twenty or so posts in a day, that wasn't a good day, they had to do
four, and then with them doing the labor and the posts, then the permittees would do the wire
and the CC boys built a lot of those fences, and I think they finished, in our area they
finished the permits in '38 and early in the spring of '39 they finally had all of the permits
fenced. They built, that old road that your familiar with, it goes, the road from Fredonia to
Pipe, there's a dirt road, oh, about ten miles outside of Fredonia that goes south to Toweap,
Toweap Valley and the Toroweap Point, and they have a right-of-way, a driveway where the
sheep and cattle could drive along this half mile, following that road and on the east side of
the Wild Band Hill, over at the other side, there's a reservoir there that was built by a shovel
and wheelbarrow by the CC Boys. Let's see, that year of '39, I was twelve when they
finished the permits, but there was still on our permit, some of our neighbor's cattle and there
would be some of our cattle that somehow would be out in one of the other permits, so dad
left one of the sheep wagons at Wild Band and my older cousin, who was 16, I was 12, we
camped out there for two or three weeks. I think about that now, you know, I wouldn't send
a 12-year-old out there. (Laughter) My cousin was there and he was 16. We cooked, you
know, we had that little stove in the sheep wagon and we cooked and then we rode the Burnt
Canyon and the Wild Band area, and knowing brands, we'd find some of Heaton's or
Esplin's, we would put them out onto their permit and then we rode their permits and if we
found any of our cattle then we would put them down onto ours. That was kind of an
interesting and exciting time, and I guess that country, I loved the evening, cool, when it
starts to cool down and you get on one of those little knolls and you see those red hills and
you see Mt. Trumbull and if there's a few clouds there are some beautiful sunsets and never,
ever felt really alone or things like that. I always enjoyed being out there. My cousin was
very good with horses, breaking them and so he was kind of working on a 3-year-old colt,
doing a lot of riding to get it ready and we kind of rode out into Esplin's and we come up
over a little rise and there was a dead animal which we didn't know about and there were two
big eagles eating on it and as we came over that rise, those eagles were frightened and they
flew up in our horses faces and, my dad had let me ride one of his good horses, and we had
kind of a rodeo there for a few minutes. (Laughter) I remember that scene. And we rode on
up to the old Heaton, I'd only had a little pint canteen, and we made a little sourdough biscuit
sandwich and I had drunk all my water by noon, and the old Heaton, we come into the old
Heaton and got a bunch of our cattle and it's quite a ways on back to Wild Bank, We come
on over to Hacks and I was just choking. I didn't want to drink that reservoir water
(laughter), but a thunderstorm came across, a pretty good shower and we kind of hid up
under a cedar tree until it went by and it had rained hard enough and I said, "I think there'll
be some water in one of these rock pockets" and so anyhow we got looking around and we
found one that had about ten gallons of water in it and a coyote had left his droppings right in
the bottom of it. (Laughter) But I was so thirsty. That was some of the best water I ever
drank. (Laughter)

JH: (Laughter) Good flavor and everything. Yeah. (Laughter)

VJ: And then of course we went on over to Hacks and then on down and got our cattle back.
That was a big day, that big circle we made. But those were some of the real exciting times
that we had. The last mustangs, there was a little band of mustangs that ran on our Burnt
Canyon allotment and would water at that water pocket or down at Clear Water, but if we
disturbed them like when we were with cattle on our side, then we'd jump them and they were like wild animals, they would go down the creek and then they'd go out the other side to graze, but then if somebody spooked them on that side, they'd come back and come out on our side and I think it was right around 1960 that was the last little band, a little 4 and 5-year old stallion and he had, oh, eight or nine mares. Most of the mares had brands on them, so they had been somebody's tame domestic horse that had got loose. I don't know whether it's correct to call them mustangs or wild horses, I'm not sure there are any true mustangs left out there. They do have some of the mustang blood in them but a lot of it came from domesticated horses. That time we were out, my cousin and I, some of them got through the fence, that was the problem, they were used to just going wherever they wanted and now was under fences and some of them would get cut up pretty bad but somehow they got through the fence at Wild Band and my cousin roped one and the minute that rope went around its neck, it just kind of whirled and trotted up to him. It kind of scared him. (Laughter) But it was somebody's old mare that had a brand on it and everything, that had just either turned loose or that mustang had got it out of somebody's pasture and it had raised some colts and things though. We were out on the Burnt Canyon points and I run into this mustang herd coming up out of Clear Water and they were just, they'd go out two, maybe even three days, and then come in when they water and they'd just fill out and his sides was just full and I had a good horse and I think, I can run him down. They didn't know I was anywhere around and I just waited until they come up this little draw and then I took after it and sure enough, my horse could out run him with me on him, but I got right up where I was standing up in my stirrups, just leaning forward to throw my rope and we came to about a ten foot wash and he jumped it and I knew if I tried to hold my horse up we'd just roll into the wash so I let him jump. He cleared it all right, but when we came down on the other side, my left foot come down real hard and my stirrup broke and without anything to hold me, I was going off, caught my saddle horn in the crook of my arm and then I couldn't pull up on the reins and that threw my horse off balance and his nose finally went down and then he just flipped. Head over heals and threw me out (laughter), I did a somersault and I kind of looked back,
kind of stunned and I could see him rolling towards me and I just kind of opened my legs up and he hit right between my legs. So anyhow, the mustang got away. I was teaching early morning Seminary in Fredonia, that was on Saturday, so the next Monday I was telling them, I said, "I learned a real lesson" I said, "there was a real thrill in that chase, but here I am, married, three kids, and I'm getting caught up in the excitement of a chase. I'm looking after the thrill." I said, "the wind blowing, my hat blew off, you know." And I said, "it was really exciting until this happened." (Laughter) And I said, "I realize now there's more to life than just excitement." I said that was foolish. What do you get out of a mustang when you're riding a $500 half-thoroughbred/half-quarter horse, the best horse I ever owned. I could have broken his leg. I've got a wife and three kids. I could have been killed for a mustang that the most I ever would have got out of him was fifty bucks. (Laughter) But anyhow, those boys, they were from Moccasin and Fredonia and the Moccasin boys, they said, now where was that? And I told them and they went out the next Saturday and caught him. They roped him, and that was really the end of the mustangs in that country. That was the last little band I ever knew about.

JH: Yeah. Now that would be on BLM land wouldn't it?

VJ: Yes. That was all BLM.

JH: Do you remember the, like in '38 or '39, along in there when the rules that the Taylor Grazing Act brought went into effect? In other words, was there a difference in the way land was treated? Did it take awhile for managers to come out and start offering suggestions?

VJ: There were untold meetings. In the beginning the biggest problem was to get the allotments allocated and agreements drawn up and the water and everything. There was no question that the land, like when my great grandfather, Jesse Taylor Jackson, left Nephi, where he helped settle with his youngest son, my grandfather, Robert. They were on their way to
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Mexico and they had some blooded horses and cattle, but when they got out, they were going to cross at Lee's Ferry, they had kind of gone down old 91/1-15 and then crossed out on the Arizona Strip and come into Fredonia. They tell me that it still rains about like it always did, but the patterns had to be different because the grass was so tall and it was just great land and he said the grass was dragging their stirrups, you know, and he said, wow, we don't need to go to Mexico, let's settle here, and so that's why they settled in Fredonia and started grazing.

But no question with, you now, a quarter of a million head of sheep, all the wild mustangs, and then the cattle running and just selling them now and again, no real control type thing, water really determined where they grazed. If there was water, then they'd graze out from there and dad and a few who built some little reservoirs would try to put their sheep out farther away from where it was over grazed, and so it took a while to come back and then that dry way, it was really around Bull Rush, around the Wild Band, close into the water, it was really bad. But as I've said, if man wants to make a living out of cattle, he's got to look after that range. It's not like, I mean, they would come and in the early days you could sit down and you'd say, okay, my dad had a logic and would say, I could run this many head of cattle here, it will support that many. And then if it didn't rain or something, we were big enough that we, again, out there the rain would come, those thunderstorms do something in the sky, I've had explained to me that they actually, the lightning in those things fix some of the elements up in the atmosphere and fix the nitrogen in the air and bring it down in the rain and fertilize it and that's why it gets so green. Within two weeks of a good rain, then all the weeds that the cattle will eat are growing again.

End of Tape One, Side Two

Begin Tape Two, Side One

Dad was well read. He took a lot of different magazines and was willing to try lots of things. Usually in the early days of the BLM they lived in a community where, if they joined the Lions Club, both Forest Service and the BLM people they really felt more a part of the
community. But gradually over the years they trained a group who kind of felt like the
cattlemen and others were the enemy and really hadn't ought to be on the range, and they got
more picky and they got ideas on the value of the grazing and it should be what you would
get for a leased irrigated pasture. Well that might sound good if you're back east, but there's
a lot of difference between nice irrigated pasture and most of this western BLM range, and so
then they wanted us to set up, and they put a lot of pressure on to go into rotation grazing,
which in irrigated pastures is the only sensible thing to do, but we, dad met with them and in
fact one of the men that we met in those early days is retired now from the BLM and is my
next door neighbor.

JH: Here in town?

VJ. Here in town. Tom Jensen, down in the St. George Office, but he was also an Ephraim boy
and so he was raised up on the practical side and so were some of the other men and that was
good to meet with them, but we had in there that we would rotate through different pastures,
but we would have to agree that it was the weather, water, and feed conditions that would be
the final factor in whether or not we used a certain pasture at a certain time. Dad would not
sign one because what happens if it's time to go into this twenty-section pasture and it didn't
rain last fall in there so there's no water and no feed, we would bring more damage putting
them in there and in those earlier days you had men, they could understand that. But in the
later years, the young ones, an eastern fresh out of college, well, the program says you go to
this pasture so you go to that pasture. And that was part of it and then some of them were
just looking for chances to get you in trouble, to trespass you. Just an example, on my little
permit out on the Paria, a place called Flat Top, I brought them into the farm at least two
months out of the year, that's Utah, so you went on the farm as your base, and I'd take them
out in the hottest driest time to irrigated farm pasture and I was supposed to be off from there
by July and August, but I always took them off in June. I paid for my ten months, but I
usually kept them out June, July, August, September, and then depending, I might put them
back October and November; but I paid. Well when I gathered them out, I was out two pair. I went to the BLM and said, “Now they've probably gotten out and they might be in somebody else's permit, if you hear about them, why let me know and I'll go get them.” And so, I mean, I had them out a month earlier than I was supposed too, well July 5th comes along and I get a registered letter in the mail and in it is an official trespass. Two pair, and I go down and sure enough the neighbors out there on the north side, Church Wells, we used to call it the North Ward, when they gathered in June they saw my two pair in there and being good neighbors they came over and put them in and I don't know how long they had been there because they'd gathered out the second or third week in June to be out by the 1st of July, I think this one BLM man knew they were there and he waited until it was into July and then trespassed me.

JH: Do you think he was kind of peevish at you particularly, or did he just have you as a livestock man in mind?

VJ: He saw his chance, livestock man, and by the legal agreement my cattle shouldn't have been in there, but I explained this big country and so anyhow they trespassed me. And it's just little things like that. Then you had to go up, the head manager was more reasonable and they gave the minimum fine but it was still a fine. It was just lots of little ticky things like that that get you irritated and then a lot of the “environmentalists” are coming in and always saying, well, you're on a welfare program, we're subsidizing you because you pay such a small amount for cows per month, you're only paying two fifty a month per cow, why anybody that pays for grazing will pay nine, ten, you know, that's irrigated pasture by the way, and so you have all this pressure and not knowing what's going to happen and then always claiming that you're overgrazing and that you ought to have your permit cut. If we would see we didn't have enough food, we would cut it, we didn't always run as many as we actually paid for just simply because it wasn't going to be good for the range to do it.
This particular incident that you just cited, by then were you a community leader? Did you have...?

Yeah, I was Stake President and...

...did they use you to kind of establish their toughness with the whole community do you think?

I had never thought of that. (Laughter) But I'm sure they were just showing it didn't matter who you were, why you broke the rule, you're going to get it. (Laughter)

Yeah.

I had that happen again. We had a section or so right next to our farm, an isolated BLM piece that we used and I had always worked out a deal - we'd build a little reservoir out there, they could trail across from my water and so when it rained and was right, I usually paid to use it in July, but sometimes July wasn't the best time and we just had a working agreement that we'd put in there for the best month, and I only had about, oh, thirty head, and so that's the way we always kind of did it. Never had any problems and then you get the new group coming in that don't know you. That newer group weren't a part of the community like the earlier ones were as much, not as active, a lot of them were church members but they were still active in civic type things and so you all knew them, and anyhow, it was the wrong time, somebody that was out rabbit hunting had opened my gate and some of my cattle had got out through that gate, I hadn't driven them, I didn't really want them out there, but anyhow the gate was left open and they got out there and I was trespassed again and had to pay a fine, which is kind of embarrassing to me, and it wasn't my intent and again. The head man, well I, you know can't just let them go, so you have to pay, here's the minimum fine for doing that. (Laughter) It was just a lot of little things that irritated, just an irritating thing. And one
time we were working way out at a place called Hitson and we were busy working around and we could see a dust on a road out on the Grand Canyon National Monument, and we were always interested, you know, who's running around out here. Well pretty soon here come two BLM pickups. I didn't know, these were younger fellows in there and they were loaded with signs and they stopped and visited and I'd just finished my work there and I sensed they wanted to ask me something but were hesitant. And I finally said, "I've got to move on for this next reservoir, is there something I can help you with?" And the guy finally says, "Where are we?"

JH: (Laughter) Yeah.

VJ: And I said, "Well, you got a map?" And he, yeah he got his map out and I said, "Okay, you're here, this is the Hitson Pond." And I said, "Now I see signs in the back, what are you doing? Putting out signs?" Yeah, and he said, "Could you show me which signs go where?"

(Jaughter)

VJ: Been sent out on a detail without any good instructions.

VJ: So anyhow, there was a road going this way and a road going this way and finally we looked at his signs and I said, okay, you put this one over here; put this one facing this way and you put this one over here this way, and then he went down a ways and then there was another road that went on up to a place called Gump and Old Heaton, and I told them where to put those and I said, "I'll be down to the Big Jackson" and so I went down there and had a quick lunch and then we were busy working, fixing up the corrals and things and right about 3:00 they finally got down to Big Jackson, only had to put four signs up and there was six of them, but anyhow they finally got there and I said, "Okay, let's see your signs, all right, you put these signs here and then you go down here to this place and you put up these signs," and he said, "Oh well, we can't do that today, we won't be back to town by quitting time as it is
and they won't give us overtime, so we'll come back tomorrow." (Laughter) They had to drive clear into St. George and then turn around and come back the next day. But well, it's on tax payer's money and it's just a series of little things that create an irritant. They don't know really what they're doing and yet they can trespass you and give you a hard time. I used to, I'd get mad, you know, you'd get angry, you'd get stirred up and that's not a good feeling, you know, if you want to have the spirit with you, and you're upset over some meeting that you've been in. Finally we just decided to sell and it was the best move we ever made, the prices for permits, and there was a lot of money invested in those permits, and the prices were right, the range was in the best condition and it had rained good, it had been a good wet pattern, the reservoirs filled, cattle prices the best they'd ever been, and so we sold out. Just kept our farm. We had a base operation, an old homestead, about a 640-acre homestead just out of Kanab with a winter water right; we filled a big reservoir and then shares in the irrigation company. We put a sprinkler system in and at one time we irrigated about 100 acres and then if it was too dry in a certain area we'd bring the cattle in and run them at the farm and then when it would rain and things were okay, then we would move them back. But that was our base, which we still own, just got it leased now to a neighbor down there. Sold all the cattle. We finally even sold all the horses, so after four or five generations in livestock we were out of business.

JH: Amazing.

JV: Right, now I still go down. I can go anywhere I want to out there and see the old country and even go out and camp out a time or two. We still hike into Clear Water, the Kanab Creek, Clear Water Springs is that good water like Pipe Springs, it's drinkable and it runs down for about a mile and then comes to a place called Gun Sight Falls, where the rock walls come in at a narrow spot and then it goes over about a ten foot fall. Pretty nice swimming hole in the middle of the summer. And I'll usually take some of my kids, grandkids and we'll hike in and lunch down there and I'm getting to where it's a pretty good hike for me. I don't have a
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horse so I still hike in and out. (Laughter) It's nice to go to the old country, but I do miss a good horse and out riding, but you can't have one in the city, there's not enough to work them. So we don't go down as much as we could, but I'm glad we got out when we did because eventually with the weather conditions and all these others pressures, the value, I mean anybody, you didn't ever know when they were just going to cancel and they keep putting them into a monument first, under BLM direction. Now see they did that to this big section called the Grand Canyon National Monument, that's the area near the Grand Canyon from Kanab Creek west to the Lake Mead recreation area. And we tried to get them to just come back a mile, but they come back I think five miles and at first, well, we'll still let you graze it and all this, and then they passed the "Grandaddy Law" that when the present permittee, the present ones using it died, then it was canceled and so when my dad died that canceled that part, only there wasn't a fence there and our old cows didn't know they weren't supposed to go and they'd go out on the snow and still graze, but recently they just finished fencing the whole thing. When Mrs. Jensen died that canceled the Jensen permit and when Mrs. Heaton died that canceled the Heaton permit. We sold out to the Gublers from Santa Clara, but they made some trades around. When Sherm Jensen passed away he only had a couple of daughters and so the Heatons bought their permit and then somehow they made some trades between the Heatons and now they have a now they have a large family operation and so anyhow they still use the permits. But Gublers and Heatons kind of divided it up in a different way.

JH: I interviewed Vard.

VJ: Yeah, that's where Vard is, out there.

JH: And he's impressed by what his kids have done with the operation, but he's, you know, pretty concerned about what the future looks like.
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VJ: He's got a lot invested. And they don't recognize that monetary value that's in there and if they cancel it, it's just like giving up, you know. For an average permit you've probably got a hundred thousand dollars in it. And if they cancel it, you don't own it, you just own the right to graze there and if they cancel the right, you've lost your hundred thousand bucks plus all the improvements and everything else.

JH: Right. The present arrangement with the BLM managing those monuments, it's a little different than if it was Park Service management.

VJ: That is correct, but...

JH: Do you have any comment on that?

VJ: Well, I guess I'm going to say, "Wait and see." The time will come when the same pressure will be put on these monuments and they will "Granddaddy" all of the livestock permits and within the next generation there will be no grazing. In my opinion, they'll do the same thing they did to us on the Grand Canyon National Monument.

JH: That's the west end there.

VJ: Uh huh. They will cancel out. Now see, you've got that huge monument that, there are parts on it that probably are monument status as part of that Escalante River drainage, there's some beautiful spots blocked in there, there's some of that you know, and it's never changed in a hundred years off toward Smokey Mountain, Fifty-Mile Mountain, that'll never change, whether cattle or not, whether it's monument or not and now you have this newer one that they've made out there south of St. George and took in that huge big area and they say there going to allow the grazing, but the time will come, you know, then they will cancel or just "Granddaddy" and say, now when you guys are gone, that's the end of grazing on it. And
you've got another big area that won't look any better, it won't be in any better condition, and there won't be any of the income that will come to the local communities anymore. They're shutting down these rural areas where, like I have six sons, but I can see the handwriting on the wall and not one of them, nor would I want them to, would keep up the family tradition of ranching. There just isn't the money in it. It's a way of life and it was a good way to raise six boys, plenty of work, they're all good boys and so the little family operation there might be some big cattle companies that might can afford to buy some of them, but I see the traditional, just like the sheep industry pretty well went out, I see the cattle industry, the cowboy day, the day we knew, is ending. So many of these environmentalists they're extremists and they don't let you see their extremism. They take extreme points and in their own mind, what they really want, if they would level with you and tell you they just want it sitting there, just the idea that there is that piece of property untouched, unobserved, they don't want anybody on it, they don't trust anybody on it. They're not even sure about themselves, but they just want it there. (Laughter). That's really their idea. They want it and just the idea that it's sitting there and they have an agenda and they are succeeding with their agenda.

JH: Sierra Club?

VJ: That's part of it, uh huh. Different ones. That Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, and when you sit down as I have done with some of them and finally bottom-lined it, they just said well, we oppose everything. We win a few; we lose a few. But that's changed now. They win most of them. Because they somehow have the money and see now Kaibab Industries, that sawmill industry, and that was one of the best managed, the forest is in as good a condition, I still go out there all the time, I have a family reunion out there every summer in some of the areas where we used to run the sheep and cattle, they would clear the trees out, they would burn the brush in the winter time and they just rotated through the trees. You go out on the park service where it was never used and the trees die and fall down and it's a
jungle and now they're talking about controlled burnings trying to clear it out because when they do get a fire, it's a bad one.

JH: I heard about one recently in New Mexico.

VJ: Okay, that's where we're talking about. And then they do a controlled burn and they pick, that's the other thing, they do some dumb things and that was one of them. You wait until the right time of year.

JH: Right, temperature, humidity.

VJ: Yeah, and wind and that kind of thing. It's going to cost the taxpayers millions of dollars.

JH: A billion, I heard.

VJ: Yeah, probably will be a billion dollars and the taxpayers have to pay it. The bureaucrats won't do it. But they just started a fire in the wrong time of the year, the wrong season, the whole works and then puuuccccchu... The idea has finally come around to kind of burn, but you've got to do it right. And so anyhow, it's just, their control. I got into a discussion with one of them on the Rainbow Bridge and he said, you know, they just objected, I was talking about how wonderful it was now with that lake there and now they're after Lake Powell. To think of how many people got to see Rainbow Bridge, where back in the old days, coming in that long trail from Navajo Mountain, I can't remember the figures now, but it's been less then ten thousand people that had ever been in there to see it. We got into talking on what makes something real and I said well if you don't know that something exists, is it real to you? And he had to agree that it really wasn't, that it didn't exist until he'd seen it and I said, you know, with that lake there and people being able to come up in a boat and get out on that ramp and walk up and look at it, then Rainbow Bridge has actually been seen now by
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hundreds of thousands and so it's more real today than it ever was and so your idea of just having it sit there, just knowing it's out there and nobody being able to enjoy it, but that's kind of the idea, just for a select few. If they want to have these big monument areas, why don't they go back into New York and Pennsylvania and Ohio and New Jersey and set aside large areas where the people, the millions that could enjoy it, might could get to it, because those people will never get out here. They'll never see this. Make it available back there. They don't want to do anything back there because there's too many votes, we don't have them, so they put them here thinking they're doing a lot of good. And we really, in the majority, most men took care of their permits and if the weather conditions and the rain was right, their permits looked good. There's no question that some over-did it, but you don't stay in business long if you don't take care of your natural resources and that was improve water and did all those types of things. I mean I love this country and I don't want to see it messed up, but I like people to be able to enjoy it. I don't like to see it just locked up where a few people in good, healthy condition will be the ones that can go out and enjoy it. Those are the kinds of people that are winning out and locking up so many of these areas and now they're trying to shut down all the roads and they've got taxpayers money to support the bureaus and these small groups and then you have to go to the expense, it's started like the Kaibab, it would be good habitat for the Mexican Spotted Owl, so to continue getting the lumber contracts, then they would oppose everyone and then you'd have to go to court and spend all this money and finally the Kaibab says it's just not worth it to us, so they win. It cut down 200 jobs out of Kanab, Fredonia, Orderville, 200 jobs and what are those men doing? Now older, retired people are moving in, but the school has been diminishing in their numbers. They graduated 85 this year, which is a pretty good number for Kanab, but they'll only pick up 45 to replace them. And just like my boys and others, they had to leave.

JH: Where do they go? Just as your family, for an example? What's the substitute employment from land use to what? Where do they go?
VJ: Well, my dad, saw a lot of this coming on, so all of his children, the four children, we all graduated from college. Now I was able to go into education and ended up in the church education, so I was able to teach in the school year in the home town and then Saturdays, after school and summers, I could work the ranch. But with my boys, I could work them hard, but we'd have the majority of the work done and they could just look after the farm, the hay, so they went to work for the Forest Service. But they all went to college. I have a son who teaches and is a football coach at Gunnison and there's one that's a football coach and will be the principal of Manti High School next year and then another son and his missionary companion, have a large greenhouse operation in Highland. His partner knew how to grow them and he knows how to sell. Another son that, they all graduated from college and went out in the business finance area and he's the manager of an investment firm, it's part of U.S. Bank Corp/Piper Jaffrey, and so he helps people knowing how to invest their money and set up funds for retirement and things like that. Then another son went to the police force and he's the Chief of Police up in Harrisville. He and my nephew that lived with us, my brother that was in the FBI that died quite young, they're the Chiefs of Police in Harrisville and Pleasant View, near Ogden.

JH: Well, it's interesting to think about that transition from rural Southern Utah. It's more or less a diverse distribution of the family...

VJ: My nephews have had to move here, Vegas, and we just get back for a reunion or a visit. We still have the old family farm and we still have the family reunion the last of June out on the Kaibab. But they had to go elsewhere for employment and that's what is happening in Kanab. There's still some employment in the motel, but with the gas prices and other things the motel and the restaurant businesses, there's some nice ones in Kanab, they have some real nice ones, but they get families- I was talking to the principal of the high school and he was just telling me they just have too many young families that are having to move, they're having to go somewhere else to make a living and though they get a lot of ....
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End Tape Two, Side One
Begin Tape Two, Side Two

JH: Okay, we're talking about this adjustment that we're going to have to make.

VJ: There's something that's so peaceful about small town values. Oh, we had kids into mischief, but they were raised up with some values—hard work, honesty. You live in a town and you kind of have to be good because the other people in the town know what's going on.

For example, we were getting ready to go on the roundup and one of the cowboys said he would be up to the pool hall. So we finally got the trucks all loaded, the supplies and the water and everything ready to go, and my dad said, "Run up to the pool hall and get that cowboy." So I run up town and stepped into the pool hall and said, "We're all packed and ready to go." "Okay, I'll be right down." By the time I got home, somebody had already called my mother to say they'd seen me going into the pool hall. (Laughter) You look after one another. There's values and there's people in the town, who, you know, we don't do these kinds of things. That didn't go on in this town. Kanab you know, has a reputation of honesty and hard work and these types of things, but we look after one another. Somebody has a problem or if they're sick or something, we go do the gardening for them, we milk the cow for them. They have a fire, why we go put the fire out and then we help them rebuild their house and donate the stuff to help them get started again and everybody you hear or we're talking about, we need those kinds of values and it's kind of interesting that Mrs. Clinton, heard her talk about that it takes a village to raise a child, that's kind of socialistic communism, but there's a great truth in that, that you can. In a smaller community you have that. But now they're doing things that are really destroying our small rural traditional values by a lot of the things that they're doing with the tax situation and especially what their doing with the BLM, Forest Service and the environmentalist thing and so we've got to move to
towns and here we get into bigger cities and now we don't have a lot things for our kids to do, in fact it's against the law for them, or if you get them out to work then they're out of the home in another environment and then we're wondering why the kids are going to the dogs and why you've got so many troubles and you're just going to have problems when you move into huge population areas, and where nobody knows one another. I knew the people in my hometown, but with our boys playing sports around the other small towns, I mean, I knew people all over Southern Utah and Northern Arizona, so I knew the majority of the people or they knew me. We had strong ties with all the old cattle and sheep men. I dated the daughter of one of the sheep men over in Cedar City (laugher) and then another one up to Panguitch, you know, and some of them that I knew down to St. George, we'd do things, we'd go to the rodeo and you'd meet all those and you'd meet their families and you had reputations that you lived up to and there was just certain standards. I had me a checking account as a teenager, go into J.C. Penney's 'cause I needed some money down there and I said, "I'm from Kanab and I'm out of money, can you cash a check?" "Who's your dad?" "Elmer Jackson." "Yeah, we'll take your check." It was just, you know, they knew him. That was the way and if one of the Foremaster that run the cattle out there, the Gardners, Hafens, or Atkins, Clayton just died, he was my age, down there, yet you know, you knew all those people and Dick Leigh over at Cedar City, his sister and I, we used to date, he just passed away; one of the old time sheep men. In fact he married a Kanab girl. You see that generation gone. And I don't know, the transition, I just hate to see it. I was up in, there was a faculty group that was looking up the history of say, Oakley, Idaho and talking to some of them. That beautiful little town of Oakley, but their real concerned there because their population is down to not quite 600 and they're having to move away with the way things are. This one old fellow told me that, he says, you pay more for a bag of fries at McDonald's than I get for a 100 pounds. You pay more for a loaf of bread than I get for a bushel of wheat. (Laughter)

JH: That's quite a comparison.
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VJ: And he was saying what's happening is that a lot of the smaller farms are going out of business and bigger, like Simplot and others, are moving in.

JH: Right. Agro-businesses.

VJ: Uh huh. And buying it out and the sad thing like that, they can buy out and then they do have what I call true subsidies, where you're paid for not raising grain and they'll get thousands of dollars because they buy up those types of things from small farmers and I think a big company like that hadn't ought to be getting a subsidy for not raising grain. It's going to be a challenge and I see the rural communities, especially in the west, the rural communities are just going to diminish. Unless you're in some kind of tourist-type or the school-type, there's not going to be a lot of business, unless through the use of computer, people are smart enough to know how to live in a small town and run a business by computer. There might be some of that.

JH: That was going to be my next question. As I review how people came into Garfield and Kane County, they came in and adapted their way of life to what the land mostly provided.

VJ: That's right.

JH: And that changed over time, but they continued to adapt. And I think that process is continual. How is this population that lives in a place that is referred to by, and I'm not going to say that the environmentalists speak with a forked tongue, although they might. (Laughter)

VJ: I'll say it. (Laughter) Because they do, they have their hidden agendas; the real agenda and then they have their propaganda that they give.
JH: But they're calling this paradise, "wilderness paradise". Well, how can those who live there know it and love it, adapt again, and you know, you've hinted at some things that might be possible. Do you have anything else? Any other ideas?

VJ: The tourist industry just cannot carry it, because, well now this year, unless of course with the election, so much of this politics, they might get the fee asking prices down, but a lot of people that would have been coming to see this area probably won't come this year because the gas prices are too high, unless wanting to win votes they get them lowered by election time. But that won't help us this year. It will help the next year. That same problem, see, when the gas prices rose, where along in the 60's and 70's we could buy a gallon of gas for thirty-five cents, and then you're up to seventy-five cents or a dollar, that doubles and that really increases your expenses of running a cattle operation in that area. You almost have to go back to trailing the cattle rather than hauling them from summer to winter range and that's something that's hard on cattle and men, but that can't be it. The only thing I can see is that if you could set up some smaller type business, it would have to be something in the electronics or computer. Now we had a young couple had an idea. Her dad moved out of California and came into Kanab and was able cause he wanted to raise his kids... so many people like that smaller environment, a good place to raise your children, and he bought equipment, but he could do it by telephone and with a lot of travel, but anyhow, she got an idea of creating these stamps that, I don't know just how all it works, but they call their business "Stampin' Up", and they bought an old building, Shelly Gardner and her husband, out east of Kanab in the mouth of Johnson Canyon and they set up a million dollar business, making stamps that you can stamp cards, make birthday cards, party invitations on cloth for different designs and somehow it got on the Internet and people would order their different types of stamps. But, they still, in fact, they may be the biggest industry in Kanab right now, other than maybe, the biggest hire might still be the school system, but I think they were the biggest. But as they expanded, all of a sudden they realized that they can make a lot of the stamps and things down there, which they're still doing, but they had to move to Salt Lake to
be more efficient in shipping. And so they met as a young couple, wonderful kids, great idea and encouraged to follow through on it. But not a lot of people have the insight or courage to figure some business out like that. But that's what it's going to have to be and maybe with communication around the world, maybe now you could do that. I see a few, this is tourist again, Bed and Breakfast. There's one in the old Jonathan Heaton home. Royce Young passed away of cancer, but his wife is running it. Our old family home in Fredonia, the Jackson House, and then the Judd Home there in Kanab, there might be some others, maybe with Internet, where you could advertise all over and people come and stay here at Alton and see Bryce and see all these things and then come to the Jackson Home, but that's still tourist industries. Mel Heaton, my cousin's son, decided to go in, we started the reenactment of the "Honeymoon Trail" and the 100th anniversary of the Kanab Stake and the St. George Temple. I was Stake President down there and so the people in Arizona, when they wanted to be married in the temple had to come that trail, cross at Lee's Ferry and then wagon train to Pipe Springs and then on down to St. George, they called it the "Honeymoon Trail", so we reenacted it and got my cousin's boy, Mel Heaton, to run a wagon train from Pipe Springs to the St. George Temple.

JH: That's quite a trek.

VJ: It is, and we found a couple that wanted to be married that would make the trip. They'd get off Friday night so she could get cleaned up. Then we advertised so local people did it and then to tie it in with the temple; it was being re-done that year in '77, brought it back up to dedication type standards and everything, we collected, we did it in connection with the Dixie Roundup, the rodeo, and it was harvest time and then we collected garden produce people donated and we had covered pickups pick it up out in Glendale, Orderville; the High Priests donated a couple of beefs, some of the people there at Pipe Springs, they had a little church cow herd and they made cheese, so we had a lot of people that knew how they made cheese and then some of us rode with the wagon train and then others brought the food down.
and we all came to the temple at the same time and made our annual donation to the temple with all that food to go to the kitchen and the bride and groom met us just on the outskirts and rode up to the temple to go in and get married. But he started the business and now he has contacts and so he does that almost every year, but again, he's on public land and sometimes they're giving him trouble. Lots of Europeans are coming, but I got a film down here of one of those, "60 Minutes" and of course Arizona Highways did a special and National Geographic did one on it and it got him a lot of publicity, so he went full time now and does these types of rides and dinners. He has one that goes from up around Bryce Canyon and meanders down through the country and ends up out on the Arizona Strip.

JH: Does he go into Alton and Johnson Canyon Road?

VJ: I think he comes, one of them he comes down through that way. I'm not just sure on the route. He's invited me to come and go with him but it just seems like I always get so involved up here, other than the ones we used to do from Pipe to Fredonia. He still does the "Honeymoon Trail" almost every year. But he does others now. But again, it's a lot of hassle because of permits and you have these fanatical groups that don't want you on any public ground, so I don't know how long that can go on. But those types of businesses, people really like a taste of the old west. There in Kanab they do that "Denny's Wigwam Meal", I don't know whether you've ever been there?

JH: Never did.

VJ: They take groups to experience kind of western style cooking, plus they do the reenactment of a wild west movie and they get people out there to come and be the hero and the heroine and the villain and the soldiers and the Indians, right out of the group, say they're going to make a movie. It's a lot of fun, they have a lot of pictures. That does a lot, they feed a lot of people, a lot of the tourists, they just love that and they sell a lot of pictures of them in their
costumes of the Wild West. One of the local boys, the bookstore, used to have the newspaper and they'd do the photo part of it and that seems to be catching on pretty good. So you've got to be really enterprising. Down on the other end of the street they brought some of the old movie sets in. They had that old movie set out on, it's on BLM, out on the Paria where they filmed some of the Gunsmokes and early on they did Union Pacific and Buffalo Bill and Western Union, Sergeants Three; was more recent, Outlaw Josie Wales, and the environmentalists put so much pressure on and without saying anything, the BLM went down and moved that movie set. Oh, that was a tourist attraction. People loved to go down there and see that. Too many people on the road- might cause erosion- and so they're doing away with that. It's interesting, you know, when you think up some idea, now the old movie set in Johnson, it was privately owned, it was on private ground, so that one's still there. I think the old movie fort out across the creek where, what was the name of that movie? Anyhow, I've seen it in a lot of different movies, but it was used as a fort for a TV troop, early army with old Forrest Tucker and some of those guys in it, but that was on private land so that might be used. Somebody unhappy, smarter than I am to figure out how to make, you know, how to still live in this rural area. It's a concern in the small towns all over the west. I was just talking to a man, one of the wealthy, big homes over here, and he and a few men have just bought, and I'd just gone through there, up on Goose Creek which runs off into Oakley, it's over the hill from Grouse Creek, Utah, and they've just bought one of those ranches up there, a group of them, I'm not just all sure, and then they're hiring a manager, they're looking right now for a manager.

**JH:** What are their plans? Are they going to run a livestock operation?

**VJ:** They're going to run the livestock but I think they might have some "dude ranch" ideas or just a place for them to get away. They're wealthy. I'm not sure what all they have in mind. There's a nice little stream that runs down through these meadows.
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JH: Simplot has been buying up the land at Grouse Creek for years.

VJ: Yeah. You hate to see that, but there's a quality of life, it's hard, but you enjoy it and a lot of us have it in our blood. I really miss it but we're here and established now and I can't afford to go back. And even though one of my sons and I still have my old home where I was born and raised; we own it, bought it from the rest of the family. I don't get down there enough, but I really love what I experienced. I would love it to be grandma and grandpa living in that home and having my six sons and my grandkids still living like we used to.

JH: Sure.

VJ: Before, you'd have a little influence where you'd see them everyday. My boys just loved it. When they walk home from school every day, they just go out of their way, walk over and stop in at grandma's house and visit, go over and mow her lawn and play in the barn; we kept our horses there all the time and there was a relationship, a closeness to family. We're going over tonight to the Summit. We own a house and last night after we got through with church meetings we went to Gunnison and had family home evening and supper with our two sons that live there and tonight and will go to some out here. One of our sons had meningitis as a baby and is handicapped and he lives in a professional home here in Lindon. Our youngest son, that's where I was this morning. Talking to him, and we'll pick him up or they'll drop him off and he'll go with us. But it's harder, Thursday I'll go up to Ogden, Harrisville, to our granddaughter's dance recital. But there was just something about living in that town, having my uncles, even when I went to Fredonia, most of my Jackson uncles lived down there, and having all those cousins and my grandfather was Stake President when I grew up and there were certain behaviors that were just expected of us because kind of who we were. But it was that way, you know, all over the town and I like that accountability. A juvenile delinquency study connected with the Harvard study of what makes a healthy or a good family is, they used fifty thousand families, but in a side study of that they found that in a
certain area in Boston, they found an area even though they came from... and I can't remember the foreign country, and a lot of the people didn't speak too much English, but they had a high success rate, strong families and hardly any juvenile deliquency at all and as they studied it out and what they found was that these families, they had family traditions and they had certain, what we call, value systems that the whole area of Boston, that area of Boston had it and they all associated with families that had the same kind of socio-economic background and the same values so that this family had five other families that they knew, and the older folks, if they'd see somebody that wasn't their kid but he lived in their community and they'd see somebody out of line, they'd say, "We don't do that, you know, I know your mom and I know your dad and if I see this behavior again your folks are going to hear about it." And people let them know and that's kind of the way it was in my home. You got into some mischief, they might, like that one lady that called my mom to tell her that they saw me in the pool hall, but they'd let me know they don't appreciate that kind behavior in this town. (Laughter)

JH: (Laugh) Well it's interesting to have that built-in expectation so that the values are communicated. You know, the values are maybe there in lots of kids, but there are no other voices besides the parents.

VJ: Well, you know, in a big city like Orem is getting to be now, the only time, other than just the few close neighbors, the only time I see certain members of the ward, now I'm up to the MTC, so I don't even go to my ward, the only time you see them though is on Sunday. I never see them out in the community. It's too big. And I hardly ever see the kids. They go to school and other than maybe the real young ones kind of running around, like here, but we don't have that association like it was in the small, rural communities where you see them around the town, you see them at the functions of the town, the church and the school and you're having an inner relationship with everybody and you know everybody and you know their children and sometimes that creates a little problem 'cause you know each other so
well. Like one of my sons, I didn't know he was going to do it, but a flock of starlings come in our big old tree, we lived just outside of town on a field, but we had a few neighbors around and he grabbed his shotgun and went out and fired up into that tree, up into the air this way. Well about five minutes later, his Scout Master, our neighbor about two hundred yards away, "Is anybody up here?" he came knocking on the door, and he was mad, "Who fired a shotgun?" (Laughter) Those pellets had got high enough that he was taking the trash out of his backdoor and they went clear up over his house, two hundred yards away, through the fields, and peppered him as they come down out of the sky. (Laughter)

JH: Any injury?

VJ: No, just peppered him a little bit, the dropping of it, but he kind of got after Max, my oldest son, who's the Chief of Police now. He's the Scout Master and there were all these good friends. Yeah, he had a few problems like that because everybody knows one another's business, but when somebody's sick or somebody's hurt, or there's a death in the family, I mean there is a support; people coming from all over. Somebody is out of work, food coming in, you don't even have to ask the Relief Society. People just start bringing the food in or. There's a closeness and you work through your little differences, you didn't go to court all the time or all this kind of thing. I hate to see America miss all that.

JH: Yeah, well it's an important part. That's Jeffersonian democracy you're describing. The yeoman farmer was the highest form of citizenship, where the farmer owned and farmed his land and closeness to the land.

VJ: Right, well it was kind of also part of the Zion dream of Joseph Smith.

JH: It definitely was, right.
VJ: You know, small communities go over here and build another one, and of course our society is so complex today, I know you can’t ever go back to that, but I hate to see it destroyed so that those that could can’t anymore. Those that wanted too. If somebody really wanted that lifestyle, it would be nice to do it. There isn’t one of my boys or my grandkids that, they’d love to go back to Kanab but they can’t make a living there and so we tried to get away and I see my grandkids, they’re good kids, but there’s no way you’re going to let a 12-year-old go and camp out and ride the range. (Laughter)

JH: Take care of the herd.

VJ: And then were saying to them, “Why don’t you ever grow up.” We can’t give them the responsibility and the type of work and assignments that help kids to grow up. It’s a challenge.

JH: Well looking back again, that process of adaptation took a lot of strength, a lot of creativity. I hope we still have it.

VJ: It takes work, I think. Even if you have some creative abilities, you’ve got to have the discipline that comes from the value of physical as well as mental work. I mean, we have a lot of it in our society today, but I see so many that don’t have much direction and I got into kind of trouble with some of our people in the ward that teach the adult Sunday School class, and I said, “You know, I think it would be a good thing if they took half of us in Happy Valley and spread us out in the mission field.

End of Tape Two, Side Two
End of Interview
Dear Val,

Thank you for your participation in the Southern Utah Oral History program. Your time and recollections are greatly appreciated and your stories will help others to understand your community and allow them to value the land and area that you belong to and hold so dear to your heart.

I have enclosed a copy of your interview on tape that you may keep for yourself. In addition, a copy of the transcribed interview is included for you to review and then donate to the historical society with your corrections, after-thoughts and any edits, if you so desire. If you do decide to donate this interview to the society, could you please fill out the release form included and mail this back with the corrected interview. This will allow people using the Utah History Information Center here at the Rio Grande and other local repositories to access the information within the document for research and publications. We will then make the necessary corrections that you have specified, and then send you a final copy for your own purposes. If you have any concerns or questions, please call me at (801) 533-3597. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Suzi Montgomery

PS. Thank you for the great interview with Jay and your time. It was interesting to hear about the sheep herd and the switch over to cattle. I haven’t got a better account then this one. I appreciate your insight and sharp memory. Jay says “HI” Love, Suzi

P.S. [Handwritten note]

[Handwritten note: Tal Jackson is recovering from a heart attack and subsequently had a open-heart surgery. He says that he has corrected it and given the permission for it to be used in anyway you desire.]
Interview Agreement and Deed of Gift

In view of the historical value of this oral history interview and my interest in Utah history, I, __________ Val Jackson __________, knowingly and voluntarily donate to the Utah Division of State History the audio tapes, any transcription, as well as any and all copyrights and other rights, title and interest that might exist. I also permit the Utah Division of State History full use of this document for whatever purposes they may have.

Interview Description

Date of Interview: __________ May 22, 1990 __________

Primary Subject: __________ Livestock Industry, Sheep, Cattle, Environmental Movement __________

Impact on Ranchers __________

Other Topics __________ Land Use, Deer Hunt, "Zane Grey," Mustangs, "Cowboying" __________

Number of Tapes __________

Signature __________ Val Jackson __________ Date __________ 5-22-90 __________

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