JH: This is an interview with Vaughn A. Judd. The date is March 6, 1999. We are in his home in Kanab, Utah. We are going to be talking to him about his experiences here in Kane County. My name is Jay Haymond. Okay, first of all, give me a little background on yourself. You grew up here in Kanab, I guess?

VJ: I was born and raised here in Kanab. Yes.

JH: When were you born?

VJ: 1924, April the sixth.

JH: Great. Tell me about your father and mother.

VJ: Well my Dad was an old cowboy. When he was a young man they’d run on the Arizona Strip between Fredonia or the Kaibab to St. George, they’d run probably fifty, sixty thousand head of cattle, and he was one of the cowboys. Almost all of the young boys at that time worked there. They’d work for the Bar Z and, I guess there’s only one or two left. I think Fred Heaton. He’s probably the only one that I know of that’s left now that was a cowboy at that time. Dad grew up in a family of eleven. He couldn’t get along with his older brother, and so he went and lived with his oldest brother, Dan Judd. Well, I guess he was twelve when he really left home, but he lived with Dan. He never had a lot of schooling, but he was a good man and he had a good life. Should of been put on tape like this (chuckle). He
really had a lot of experiences, a lot of color in his life. My mother, she was born and raised here in this country. She was a Robinson. She grew up on what they call Dairy Canyon in Johnson Canyon. That's where she grew up, and that's where I grew up later on. It's been a good life. A hard life, in 1924 and 1930's when the bottom fell out of everything, dad worked for the Forest Service for quite a few years after they were first married, and the fact is they were out here on what they call VT, one year. I was probably two years old then. I had a sister that was four, and I was two- and he caught fawn. We had probably 75-100 head of fawn, and we took cows from here out to VT. There was lots of grass on VT, and he'd catch these fawn and raise them, and then, in the fall, after they was about four to six months old, the government would buy them and take them around and stock. They were like turkeys. They'd live for four or five months, and then just lay down and die. They didn't have very good luck with them out there. My mother's father died when I was about three. I just remember seeing him in the coffin, and, of course, that left the ranch with no one to take care of it. She tried to get her sons to take care of it but none of them wanted it. The youngest decided he try it. He took it for a year or two and never could make anything go, and so finally grandmother told my mother that if they would move on the ranch, they could have it. So, they moved on the ranch when I was five years old, and that's when life really started, I guess. I learned to ride when I was probably three. My Dad would put me on an old horse he had there, and we'd go off for a little ride. I'd ride for a little while, then I'd fall asleep and then fall off. He'd make me get back on. When I was seven, I had a little mare that he caught when I was just a little baby. He caught a broomy out on the mountain when he was cowboying out there. He caught her colt. The old mare jumped the fence and ran away, so he just caught the colt, put it in the back of a Chrysler and brought it home. The colt wasn't very big. She probably weighed six or seven hundred pounds when she was full grown, but on my seventh birthday, she had a colt. I
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called him Goldie.

JH: Say that name again.

VJ: I called him Goldie.

JH: Goldie. Yeah.

VJ: I woke up that morning on the sixth of April and looked out the window, and I said, "Old Paul’s got a colt." Now Paul was an old horse, but, anyway, this little mare, she didn’t want to have that colt. She didn’t want to have anything to do with it, so Dad had to tie her up and tie her leg up so the little feller could suck. After that it was all right. When we went on the ranch, why there was a big bay, thoroughbred horse, just about three years old, I guess, when we went on the ranch. Dad decided that he was going to make a racehorse out of him. He had good blood and he was a beautiful horse; big, long horse. Anyway, he broke him and we bred him a couple of years, and I had this one colt. I think there was about four colts we got from him before Dad had him taken care of, and we should have got a lot more. He was really a good horse and he throwed good colts, but anyway, this colt grewed up. When he was about two years old, we proceeded to break him. I wasn’t very old. I had rode quite a bit. I could ride like a burr on a horse. My Dad had gone down to the field and I decided, well, I’d get on that horse and try him out, and so I did. Of course, he bucked me off. He ran under a clothesline. He didn’t actually buck me off; he just pulled me off. Then when Dad got back, I wasn’t going to get back on him. He scared me. He made me get back on him, and I guess that’s the way it is. You’ve got to get back, when you get knocked down. You gotta get back up.
On the east side of the house there, probably seventy-five acres. We made a track around that, then I’d train him and Pack. Packolet was his dad. This old Packolet, he stood about sixteen-hands high and probably weighed twelve to fourteen hundred pounds, and he just give ya all he had. You never, ever had to lay a whip on him. He’d just give ya all he had. But when I was about eight years old, they started having races here in town. We’d come in and race. There wasn’t many horses.

The fact is, is I don’t remember any around here that could out run him. Then we went into Panguitch, and the first year up there, Dad figured I was too small. He wouldn’t let me ride. He hired a couple of jockeys up there and, of course they’d lay the whip to the ol’ feller, and then he’d just quit. So the next time we went, I was the jockey. My mother would go, but when I’d go to ride, she’d go hide. She couldn’t watch; I was pretty small. I’d have to carry forty pounds of lead to make weight.

JH: Wow! Big handicap.

VJ: So I was pretty small, but that old horse would just give me everything he had, and I won all the races. We went from there over to Parowan and Cedar.

JH: Ogden?

VJ: Payson. And we’d win a lot of races. Finally, we broke the old feller down, and I guess we broke him down over to Parowan, so we come home and didn’t race for quite a few years. But, then to go back to when I was about seven, between seven
and eight years old, that’s when the movies started in this country. “Bad Man of
Brimstone” was the first film filmed here, and I remember my dad. They wanted
dad to come down...it was filmed down at what they called the Hamblin Ranch.
That was at the point of the mouth of Johnson Canyon, so we saddled up and he
took me with him. I was about seven, I guess, seven or eight, somewhere in that
neighborhood. But we went down there and he got a job working the movies,
doing that, and then they filmed that show, a good share of it, there on the
Hamblin place, and then they moved up to Johnson up at Lamar Johnson ranch,
and done quite a bit of it there, and then dad lived just on the west side of the
creek, but our bridge was out, and they wanted to get over there real bad. We had
an old two-story adobe house, and they wanted that house in the picture. So they
negotiated with my Dad and helped him put a bridge in, went over, and filmed the
rest of the show there on the ranch. I remember ol’ Wallace Barry coming out of
the house. It was on old two-story house, but it was built up quite high so it had a
big porch on the front and had four or five steps up to it.

JH: (Laughing)

VJ: Then we had other shows that come in, and as time went on, they started filming
around ’32-’33. I think ’33 is about when that first show was filmed, and they
started pictures from then on. I mean, they must have filmed two or three hundred
films here in this area, and Johnson Canyon – it’s a beautiful canyon. Can’t
remember this film that...I was probably twelve. They filmed at the fort.

JH: A fort?

VJ: A fort that was up Johnson Canyon, right up by what they call Bally Rock.
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JH: This was a movie set?

VJ: It was a movie set. Beautiful thing. I mean, it was huge! That was the first picture that I was in, and I played Indian and cowboy!

JH: Very good.

VJ: I was playing Indian one day, and I rode my horse behind another horse and he kicked me. He kicked me on the foot. Of course, that ended my movie days for a while there (chuckle). They had to bring me into the hospital. But if the BLM would have left that fort there, it would have still been a tourist attraction. It was absolutely gorgeous! It had everything, and it was in a beautiful location. It was a good show. I can’t remember the name of it. Then, there was lots of shows after that, lots of shows. I grew up there on the ranch and just had a good time. Good experience. My Dad was a man that...I just loved to be with him. I wanted to be with him all the time and, of course, we’d go over there and spend the summers and never get to town; maybe once or twice a year we’d come back to town, for the fourth of July and maybe the twenty-fourth of July.

JH: Yeah.

VJ: But when I’d come to town, I’d ride my horse. I’d bring my horse over to town, and that’s what I’d play with my horse. I had a lot of friends here, a couple anyway, that I’d really run around with that had horses, and we got so that when we’d leave town, the men around the town would watch us. They knew where we was going and they knew what we’d do. We’d go rope their calves (chuckle). Lots of calves, but we had a lot of fun. The fourth of July was a big time. We’d have races – didn’t have much fireworks. Don’t recall ever seeing any fireworks. It
would always rain. And then the fourth would just be a beautiful day, but it would rain on the third.

And growing up there in Johnson canyon was, we’d start hayin’ in June, and we’d never quit ‘til it was time to come home for school in the fall. I grew up to be a pretty good hand, I guess. I could pitch hay along with my dad. We pitched lots of hay.

JH: Was this wild hay or was it alfalfa?

VJ: It was alfalfa and grass, both. We had a big meadow and we cut that. We’d cut that in August, but our alfalfa would start in June. We’d start cutting alfalfa in June, then the latter part of July and the first of August. We’d start cutting grass hay, and that was bad stuff. I mean, it would blow and you’d have to have a wagon with a basket on it to put it in to keep it on the wagon.

JH: Did you make a basket out of sheep fence, or something?

VJ: No. We’d use net wire and raise it up. We’d put a pretty good load on it. It was real sandy from the house up to the meadow where the road went. It was a sandy son-of-a-gun, and had one of these old wide-iron-tired wagons. It was all that team could do to pull a load of hay back down and put it in the stack. Then we’d take it off with a derrick. For a quite a few years, my dad would always run the fork and I’d run the horse, either that or on the stack. I had a younger brother, he was five years younger than I am, but he’d generally ride the horse and I’d work the stack, then he finally let me run the fork, and then he’d work the stack. I knocked him off the stack one day with the fork. He says you got to watch that son, that’s a pretty good-sized fork. It was probably a five-foot fork, you know,
and when that old derrick starts to movin’ (chuckle), it comes with a pretty good blow! But anyway, years went by, and they developed a pool-type baler. Well, Dad was one of the first in the country to get a baler. It would take two men, one on each side of it; one to poke the wires and one to tie ‘em. My brother and I would do that. I’d poke the wires and he’d tie them. Dirty, dirty job! Dirty job.

JH: How’d you filter it out so that you wouldn’t breathe that dust?

VJ: Oh, we’d take a sack and put it over our head and put a little fan right in the top of it to try and keep some of the dust out, but it was still terrible. Dirty! But we done that, and then we got to doing custom work. We went all over the country baling hay for everybody in Johnson Canyon. We even went into Panguitch and baled one year. Then we got a thrasher. I was about sixteen years old, I guess. We raised a lot of grain that year! I remember coming to town. My dad says, “You go into town, son, and see if you can find somebody to come out and help us with this grain.” The WPA was on then, and there wasn’t much work around, and the men that was workin’ for the WPA, they’d work so many hours and then they was off, and I came in and there was, oh, fifteen or twenty men around town, but none of ‘em would come and help. And so, at sixteen years old, I took care of all the grain that come off of that thrasher. That was a big job, but it made me grow, and we got it up, and time went on and...

JH: Let me ask you a question about labor supply. Would working for you disqualify them for the WPA job?

VJ: Yes. That’s why they wouldn’t come. They didn’t want to lose that twenty-four dollars a week that they was getting off of the WPA. Yeah, and they just absolutely wouldn’t work. A lot off ‘em just didn’t want to work anyway; and
that’s hard work. I mean, feeding a thrasher and picking up grain is hard work!

JH: You bet.

VJ: Anyway, they wouldn’t come out, so we had a few neighbors there that come in and helped us, and then we’d go do theirs, but that’s the way we got by. Our neighbors would jump in and help. This area that I used to train my horse in, why, my dad always says, “We sure oughta drill us a well.” He had a friend that run goats, Burt Leach, and he run up on what they call the Ball Knoll country, and he never, ever had any car or anything for years. Dad finally got an old model A Ford, and that’d bring us back and forth to town. When this old Burt wanted to go to St. George, why, he’d kill a kid and come down. He had a pair of mules, and a little, light wagon that he’d come down in, and he’d bring that goat down that he’d killed and give it to mother and then have dad take him to St. George and do his business down there, but that’s kind of the way they got around out there in them days, is help each other. Times were pretty tough. We’d milk fifteen to twenty-head of cows, night and morning, and mother’d make butter and cheese. That’s the way they made their living.

JH: Did they have vegetable garden?

VJ: Had a few vegetables and, we had a lot here in town. Out there it wasn’t very good water. It was water, but we didn’t have it where we could handle it very good for a garden, so we didn’t raise much of a garden out there, but we’d raise a few potatoes where we could put the water out of the lake on the field. We didn’t raise much corn or anything like that, but we had plenty of butter and cheese, then in the fall, why, we’d put a few deer down and a few pork, so we had plenty to eat. We always had plenty to eat, even though I think, I look back and I guess we
were poor. We never had a lot of money, anyway. Dad had problems. He'd take the ranch in the summer time and rent it out for the first three or four years to a sheep herd, then they'd go in there and just absolutely gut it. Finally, I told him he had to quit it. He had to leave it alone, get him a few cows, so he finally got a few cows, and then things just kept getting a little better, and a little better. Then our neighbor, about a couple of miles away, was handling his cattle one day and went off in the crick, and his horse fell on him and killed him. So dad started to negotiate to buy the place. It was a bigger place than his, and he had a friend in California that told him, “If you can buy it, he'll buy it.” And then he'd lease it to dad for twenty years, and then it'd be his. Well, dad went ahead and negotiated and got the ranch, so we moved from Dairy down onto the ‘Lower Place’. We called it the Lower Place. It's the old Johnson ranch. It used to be a town- the old Johnson town. There was a schoolhouse and two or three homes there, but most of 'em had fallen down by the time I got there. The schoolhouse was still standing, but it was pretty rickety, and I remember we had a bad winter and went back the next spring, and it was down. It fell over, but dad rented that ranch and run it for twenty years. That's where I kind of grew up, really, is down there. It was a bigger place. Dad run about a hundred and fifty to two hundred-head of cattle then, and we'd summer there, and winter out on the Paria or out on the Wahweep. He finally bought a permit out there. He bought it. It was a five hundred-head permit, so he went to his brothers, Elmer and Carlos, and talked them into coming in with him, so they bought the permit, and we'd summer there on the ranch and gather them up and trail 'em from Kanab out to the Wahweep in the winter time. We'd leave about the middle of October and there would always be a stormin’. Cold! Boy it was cold and miserable! But they had to take 'em out there. It would take about four days.

JH: How would you dress to keep warm on that kind of a drive?
VJ: Oh, you’d bundle up! Put your chaps on, all your clothes you could wear. You get off, you couldn’t get back on! Try to keep warm, but it got so them old cows knew where they was going, and it wasn’t any problem. They’d just get ‘em started and get ‘em strung out, and away you’d go. It was coming back in the spring that was tough ‘cause they’d all have calves, and then they’d want to go home, and they’d leave their calves, and then you’d have problems every night trying to pair ‘em up, but it was a good experience. It was a good life. When I was probably twelve or fourteen years old, I started punching cows for my uncle out on the Kaibab. We’d go out there every spring, and that was quite an experience out there. Wild country and wild cattle! They’s always real wild cattle out there.

JH: Were they literally wild feral? Had they been there for years?

VJ: Well, they never, ever gathered ‘em. They’d lock up the water and gather ‘em in the spring and brand the calves, and that’s what they’d get.

JH: I see. So the mothers would still be out there year after year.

VJ: Oh, the mothers would just stay there year round, and some of those old girls would get pretty raggy.

JH: I’ll bet.

VJ: One of the experiences I had that really bothered me, is we had a fellow who had a few cows out there with us, called Cowhide. He was a good cowboy, but he was rough. He had a lot of horses but he never had a horse he could trust. I couldn’t
understand him. He would abuse his horses, so he never, ever had one he could trust, but the thing that bothered me the most in my young life is, one day we’d gone down to bring a bunch of cattle out of what they called Sowetts.

JH: Spell that, would you?

VJ: (laugh) I don’t know how to spell.

JH: S-O-W-E-T-T-S?

VJ: Somethin’ like that. Yes. Anyway, it was a mean country down in there and it was a long ways. You’d have to bring ‘em up out of a pretty deep canyon for a long ways, and after we hit the top of the canyon, he had one cow and calf, and this old cow; she wanted to go back all the time. Cowhide would just take his rope and just whip that cow until it was just absolutely terrible, and so the old girl finally got on the fight and just wouldn’t go anywhere, so he whipped her until she fell.

JH: Did he think that was education?

VJ: I guess. Anyway, he finally got off, and he got a stub and he beat that cow literally to death. I wasn’t very old. Like I said, I was twelve or thirteen years old. I went to my uncle that night and I said, “What in the world is the matter with Cowhide, that he’d do a trick like that?” He said, “Well, he just lost his temper.” But I never could respect the man after that. I cowboiyed with a lot of good cowboys. I had Tuffy Swap, and he was a real good cowboy, Jack Butler, oh there was a lot of ‘em out there. Tuffy, I asked Tuffy one time about it. He was there with us at the time, and Jack Butler, both, and he says, “Well, a cowboy
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gets mad at a cow and then they lose their temper,” and that’s a fact; they do. You lose your temper, and he just plumb lost it, and he beat that cow to death.

JH: I guess they can be infuriating...

VJ: Oh, they are. They’re stupid, and yet they’re not. It’s just the way you handle ‘em. It’s the way you handle anything. As a young man, I was, well, I guess I was taught to be mean to horses, really, and I was. I was mean to ‘em, but as I grew older, I learned to respect ‘em, and the last horse I had I could do anything with that horse, and all I had to do was talk to him. I never ever abused him, and he’d just do about anything I’d ask. Earlier in life we was rodeoing. My dad used to rodeo a lot...

End Side One, Tape One

Begin Side Two, Tape One

VJ: So we came in to rodeo, and this old horse had a big belly. He just come out of the grass out of the field, and he didn’t want to do what I wanted him to do, so I took my rope down and I wrapped it around him a couple of times, and that made him mad, and he just come right over backwards with me, and the cantle of the saddle caught me right across the left leg. Everybody thought I broke it, but I kept telling ‘em I hadn’t broke it. It was all right, but it left a dent in my leg I still carry today. They cut my pants off, took me to the hospital and give me a Demerol, and I didn’t want that Demerol ‘cause I knew what it’d do. It’d just make me sick to my stomach. Anyway, I learned my lesson there that you don’t abuse ‘em. You treat ‘em like you want to be treated and they’ll just do anything you want ‘em to do.
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JH: Good rule!

VJ: But, getting back out there on the mountain, why, it’d take us about three weeks to a month to gather the steers, and then we’d have to trail ‘em from Big Saddle to Kanab. One year, we was trailing in and we got out to Ryan and the CCCs were working there. It was on a weekend, and we pulled in there, and Carlos went to the main office and told them to be quiet that night because they were drinking and carousing around a little, and he told ‘em, he says, “Now you tell them boys to be quiet tonight because we got a herd of cattle out here, and if they rouse ‘em up, they’ll stampede.” Well, they got to playing and got pretty loud, and those cattle stampeded. Just took the fences and come right out over the top of their camp, and I tell you there was boys runnin’ everywhere.

JH: I’ll bet! (Laughter)

VJ: Well, it took us about a day and a half to gather the cattle up. We had one cow and calf that they couldn’t find, so Cowhide, he went out to find it. It was his cow, so he stayed, and Carlos told me to stay and help him, so I went with him and we finally found the cow, and Cowhide says, “Well, I’ll go on back to the herd and you can bring this cow,” and so, of course all I had to do was just drive her down the road. It was probably six or seven miles up to where the herd was, so I says, okay, and so we proceeded. He went ahead and got to the herd, and I brought the cow in, but it’d take us about five days to come from Big Saddle to Kanab with that herd, and then, of course, they’d bring trucks in from Cedar City, and they’d be trucked out from there. That went on for several years, and we just kept growing and doing things at the ranch, and enjoying things out there. Make a little money at the movies. As I got older, why, I found a young lady and married her. I met her in a roller skating rink, and of course, it was just about war time,
and everybody was going to war; World War II, but my dad got me deferred for six months right after the war started, and I stayed and helped him for that six months. And then they finally called me and drafted me. I’d met this young lady. We corresponded. That’s the way I courted her for two years. I courted her by mail. She lived in Junction, and of course, I went into the service and when I got up to Salt Lake, I was going through the line there, and a guy asked me, he says, “Where do you want to go? Do you want to go in the army, navy, or marines?” I says, “Well, I don’t like water, so I guess I’ll take the marines,” and so they put me in the Marine Corps, which I think was a mistake, but, anyway, ya take what ya get... and I went in. Before I was finally inducted, I had six or seven doctors that would sit there and examine me, and I’d run awhile and sit awhile, and run awhile, and they’d each listen, and they said I had a murmur in my heart and they was not going to let me go in. Finally, one of them said, “Hell, he’s bigger than any of us, let him go!”

JH: (Laughing)

VJ: So I went into the Marine Corps. That night we was supposed to come home and the bus went on strike, so there wasn’t any way we could get back home. I and three or four other fellows that was left because of this strike- to come back to Kanab-they had a train that come from Salt Lake to Marysvale. Man, I could have walked faster than I rode in that thing, but, anyway, I had a little money and these other guys didn’t. They’d all gone out the night before and spent theirs, so they didn’t have any way of getting’ back, other than hitch-hiking, and I says, “Well, I’ll buy your tickets.” So we got on that train and rode to Marysvale, and when I got to Marysvale, they had a freight-line from Marysvale to Kanab, and I knew the guy that drove the freight. It was Robert Birch, and so I went to Robert and I said, “I need a ride home”, and he said, “Okay, get in,” and I says, “These
other guys do too," and he says, "Well, they can ride in the back." So (chuckle), I got to ride in the front. We got to Panguitch and none of us had anything to eat. Of course, I’d spent all my money for those guys, and so Robert took us all in and fed us there in Panguitch, then we come on home. And of course, I went in. I went to San Diego and went through boot camp. From there, I was sent right overseas. I never did get home after boot camp. When I got out of boot camp, they put me into the Second Marine Division, but I was picked to go into a school for six weeks out of boot camp, and so I went to school, and while I was in school, the Second Marine Division was put together and left, so when I got through school, we were supposed to hook up with it and they put us on a boat and we went to Espritu Santos. There was about two hundred of us. We went to Espritu Santos on an aircraft carrier. No boats to help us get over that ocean. For seventeen days I was sick! Oh I was sick! But we finally got off. We was chased by a sub, a couple or three days. They had us trying to learn how to abandon ship for the first couple days, and then after we got out two or three days, they says well we’ll discontinue this because if we’re hit, it’s just bye-bye baby, cause this is just a floating arsenal. The flight deck and the hanger deck was so loaded with airplanes that they couldn’t have got an airplane off, and the belly was loaded with torpedoes and high octane gas.

JH: Hmm. Maybe even some bombs.

VJ: Oh yeah, and bombs. They just says, “Well, if we’re hit, it’s just bye-bye baby.” But we made it and spent some time there at Espritu Santos, and they didn’t know where to put us. They didn’t have any orders for us to do anything, so we was just put on labor. We unloaded ships for about three months. Finally, they decided, well, we’d learned that trade pretty good. We was takin’ care of the post exchange, or the P.X.- supplies and everything, so they sent us up to Boganville.
Now Boganville was right in the heart of all the fightin'.

JH: We're talking about New Guinea and those islands over there.

VJ: Oh yeah, that's right around the middle of all of it. They'd taken Boganville. The Marines went in and took it over to the Army Americal Division, and they went in and took it over, and the Japs come back in and wiped them out, and so the Marines had to go in a second time. Well, when they went in the second time, they secured, and then they turned it back over to the Americal Division, and that Americal Division was made to stay on that island for the duration of the war. When I got there, those boys were mean boys. They didn't care whether school kept or not. They still had sixty or seventy thousand Japs on that island, and they held about a seven-mile perimeter. Of course, they had their people around to keep 'em secure, but after I'd been there for about two months, they turned it over to the Australians, and that's when the fun started. After the Australians took over, they never did really go in there and clean up the island—the Japs, but they brought these big Negroes, Fijis—big men. All of 'em were over six-foot tall. Some of 'em seven, and those guys'd go out in that jungle and raise havoc with those Japanese. They'd always bring back four or five every time they'd go in; bring their heads back, anyway. But anyway, I spent about a year there on Boganville, or a year and a half. All this time I was corresponding with my wife. It got time for us to come home, so we got transferred from Boganville up to Leatie, up in the Pacific, and I spent oh, four or five months there, I guess, and then it was time for me to be released, so we were a bunch of us put on board ship and sent home. And while we were coming home, the war ended. They bombed Tokyo with the atomic bomb and that ended it. We was about four days out of docking there at San Francisco when the war ended. Course, all the fun was over when we come in.
JH: (Laughing)

VJ: We had nobody there to greet us or anything, but, anyway, we landed in San Francisco and was sent from there back to Miramar, out north of San Diego, and then from Miramar, I was sent home for thirty days. I got back with my girlfriend and things got looking pretty good, and then I had to go back. When I went back, I had to go back to El Centro. When I got to El Centro, I got to looking in my records, and I didn’t have a furlough when I first went in, so I was entitled to another furlough, so I asked and got me another furlough and come back home for another thirty days. After the thirty days was up, I had to go back to Miramar. When I got back to Miramar, well, I was ready to get out. I mean, I had enough points and so they discharged me from Miramar, so I came home. I worked with my Dad, went back on the ranch and was farming and trying to help him. My younger brother had been called, and he had to go in, so Dad was short-handed. So I stayed and finally decided that it was time to get married, and so we decided on a date and got married. I didn’t have no place to live, so I lived with my folks for probably six months; maybe not quite, but, anyway, Dad bought a lot and give it to me, and then he bought an old shanty that was out on the Kaibab that they’d used for loggers. They had a mill out there, and they’d used that for their loggers to live in. He brought that in and set it up and started to keep house; two rooms. No bath. It had running water for the kitchen, and that’s the way we lived for, I don’t know, four or five years, I guess. Anyway, three of my children were born there. I started to build a new home out in front of it, and finally got that finished when my first daughter was born. She was born there in that house. When we were first married, I decided to go back to school. Our first boy was born, and we went to school over to Cedar City at the college. I went over there and they had a program going there that you could go in and learn a carpenter trade, and we built
a house. I can’t remember the professor’s name, anyway, he was a good man, and we built a house, and I took drafting, with a lot of other courses, but in my drafting course, I drew up the house that they built the next year. I went through ‘til spring, and they were starting a job here in town, a water system, and they needed some help, so I decided I ought to leave school and come over and go to work. So I came over and was working on that water system. Built a big three million gallon tank. We had it up and was putting the top on, and I’d been down inside working the jackhammer. It was June, and it was hot down in there. Hot, hot, hot! The foreman came down and he says, “I want you to go up on top and help this young man that was up there and lay out those pilasters so that we could pour the floor; pour the top.” And so I went up and, coming up out of that hot, humid place down there and got up there in the air, I remember laying the chalk line out, and it hung up on one of the pilasters, and so I walked over and reached down to pick up that chalk line, and that’s all I remember. I fell. I fell down through all those scaffolds onto a cement floor. Everybody thought it’d killed me, but I broke my back and mashed my head and my shoulder up pretty bad. I can remember my wife coming up the hospital and I was telling her I was sorry that I hurt myself, but I laid in that hospital about six months, I guess, trying to get well. Anyway, that kind of knocked things out of me. I got well enough that I could get around by fall the next year. And we decided to go back to school. We went over, it was a basement apartment that was available, and this lady that owned it—see, I guess I looked pretty peaked, anyway, she decided that she didn’t think I could make those stairs, so she decided she didn’t want to rent to us. So we came home and we never did go back, but I got better and started to jobbing around, and finally a fellow here in town decided that he could help me. I went to work for him. We went down to Kaibab and built the first planer shed they had down there, he and I, and their office and two or three other sheds. I worked for him for, oh, I guess a couple of years. He taught me a lot. Then I went to work for the
Park Service. I went out to Grand Canyon and remodeled all their cabins out there, and then from there we went up to Bryce and remodeled them, and then we went down to Zion and remodeled all them. That's when Union Pacific had the three parks.

JH: Yeah.

VJ: After that, I decided, well, I just as well get my own contractors license, so I got my own license and proceeded to go to work. The first home I built was in Panguitch. After that, I had all the work I could handle. The guys down here wasn’t doing anything, but I always had work. I never, ever was out of work. I came back to town and me and this fellow that helped me start out, why, we decided we’d contract some turkey catchments out on the Kaibab. We had fourteen of ‘em, so we contracted that. Actually, a man by the name of Button was the one that contracted ‘em, and we just contracted the work from him. We built all those turkey catchments up to the last one. All we had left was tarin’ it. And Button and I come in the night before and got up early the next morning, and I took the mixer in the back of my truck out, and we was going to get that done and then move. We had one more to do, then we was going to move out into what they call Orderville Canyon, and I got everything ready. I don’t remember what Button was doing, but I was building a fire- the way we prepared the tar was melt it in a fifty-gallon barrel, and I had a high-octane gas weed burner that I’d put under there, but I had to keep a little fire under there to keep it a burning. I had it a going real good, and I turned around, and I guess when I turned around I must have caught the hose on that fire burner. Anyway, I kicked it over and it fell right into the fire and it blew the top out of that can and, of course, I was in the middle of it, and there I was in the fire. I just threw my arms up around my face. I had my sleeves rolled up to my elbows and tried to keep some of the fire away from
my face, but when it finally quieted down, I broke and run. I run, and I was on this cement pad, so I knew I had to run across that pad to get to some dirt because I was on fire. As soon as I got across that pad, Button hollerin’ at me, “Hit the dirt! Hit the dirt!” Well, I knew where I was going, and I hit the dirt, and then I started slappin’ the fire out and putting dirt on my legs. It burnt the hat off my head. My shirt was in rags, and when I got through, my skin was hanging down from my arms and hands, and my face. I looked pretty rough I guess. Anyway, he put me in a truck and brought me up to Jacob Lake, and he decided it was pretty slow getting me to town in that truck, so he went into Jacob Lake there and Daniel Bowman, well, the Bowman’s run it, but Daniel was there, and he had an old terra plane, a two-seated terra plane, and he seen me, and said, “Well, I better get you to the hospital.” Well, if you’ve ever been off of LeFevre, that’s nothing but a switchback for ten miles, and it just took us thirty minutes. It’s what, forty-five miles from Jacob to Kanab? It was about thirty minutes from there to Kanab. When I go to the bottom, I turned to old Daniel and says, “Well we made it off of there and I ain’t dead, so there ain’t no question about me livin’ now.”

JH: (Laughs)

VJ: I never ever hope to come off of that mountain like that again. Ever!

JH: Did you straighten a few of them out?

VJ: Oh, man! I don’t know how he ever made it off of there. I really don’t. He was driving so fast! Well, anyway, I got in there and doctor, who was there? It was Fullstow. He had interned in Chicago when they’d had that Chicago fire back there, and he said we’ve treated burns every way there was there in that big fire, and he says the best experience that we’ve had was with Vaseline bandages, and
so he wrapped me up in Vaseline bandages, and I looked like a mummy. The fact is that they had to feed me for three or four weeks. My hands was all bandaged up. All I had was two eye slits and a nose and a mouth. I remember him taking those bandages off every day, and my hands looked just like a skinned chicken. You’ve seen chickens, how they’re skinned off, and skin just hanging everywhere and those big ol’ water blisters. He’d bust them water blisters and pull off that skin and then wrap me back up. I come out of there without any scars. I had one elbow that was, they thought maybe they’d have to graft, but they never did have to graft it. It looked pretty rough for a lot of years, but it’s finally cleaned up. My face, since I was burned, I never go brown, I just sunburn- just blister, so I have to be careful about the sun. Anyway, we went on like that, and I got over that, and just continued to go, and finally my dad died. When my dad died, why, he had given me part of the ranch, so we moved back out to the ranch. Before I took it over, we had drilled a couple of wells, or he drilled a well and he’d pump it so hard that it would cave in. It caved in on him two or three times. The last time it caved, he wasn’t going to open it up again, and I said, “Well dad, I will.” Anyway, he opened it up again and went ahead and farmed, and then he died. After he died, I took over what he’d given me. I was scared of that well, but I went ahead and used it for a year or two, and it done the same thing it done to him. It fell in on me again. I finally got a fellow to come and pump it out and clean it up again. When he got through, I decided I wasn’t going to go back in with that big pump. I was going to put in a smaller pump and drill me another well, so I put another pump in, a smaller one, that would pump three hundred gallons a minute, and moved a little over seven hundred feet. I had to get another permit. I could have moved seven hundred feet, but it was a little farther then that, so I got me another permit and drilled me another well and put that big pump in it. The man went down about three hundred feet, well he went down two hundred feet and he hit a hard pan. Had a lot of good water. He’d gone through gravel,
and he says, "We ought go through that hard pan." and I says, "Well, I don't know," but I let him. And when he got through that hard pan he just hit quicksand. It was about six or eight feet of hard pan. It took him three or four days to go through it. That was a mistake. I should have never ever let him go through that hard pan.

JH: That was the floor of your aquifer.

VJ: Yes it was. And so I just filled that six or eight feet up with gravel and put my pump in and went to work. I bought me a bunch of sprinklers and handlines and wheellines. I had a beautiful place! I had a couple hundred acres alfalfa, and we went ahead and, in the meantime, we got into heavy equipment, me and my boys. We had a crushing outfit, cats and loaders, and I had a little gravel pit right above my house so we built a road up to that and got the gravel out of there. Well, we'd borrowed a little money and things got pretty tough. I guess it was another Depression really. Interest went from three percent up to twenty-nine percent. That's what I was paying, was about twenty-nine percent. There's just no way I could make it, so I had to sell my ranch. I didn't want to but there was just no other way we could handle it, things were just going from bad to worse and banks started to foreclose and so I put it up for sale and made a sale. A man out of Texas come in here and bought it and I sold it for enough money to take care of my debts, and still could maintain having quite a bit of equipment and property around. My mistake was I signed as a co-owner with him. And he took the ranch over for a year and that year he was supposed to pay me a hundred thousand dollars at the end of October. Well he had the cattle on the ranch, and he had the cattle sold and he had a check, for about two hundred thousand dollars, and it was supposed to went to S.B.A. But he in the meantime bought a lot of property and got mixed up with some outfit out of California and that outfit out of California
Vaughn A. Judd

decided they wasn’t going to sell them cattle and they were going to give the money to S.B.A.

End of Tape One, Side Two

Begin Tape Two, Side One

JH: This is tape two of our interview with Vaughn A. Judd; the date is March the 6th, 1999. We’re just talking about his financial dealings here in Kanab.

VJ: Well anyway he’d taken out bankruptcy and so all the other properties that he had bought he give back to the owners, but mine he wouldn’t give back. And so the S.B.A., seeing that I was co-signer, came to me and said we want our money. Well they had the property and I had signed it to over to them and there wasn’t really nothing really I could do. Finally, I went to a realtor that made the deal and he said he finally located the man. And I had the man really in the position to where he had to pay all the costs if it went to court or anything, and that’s where I was going to put it, is in court. And he says well if I would release him, he’d turn the property back to me. That’s the only thing I could do was to take that property and then try to re-sell it. So I agreed which was a mistake, I should never have done it. But anyway, I got the property back and I went back on the ranch and put it back in shape and put it up for sale again and course in the meantime my bill with S.B.A. was just continuing on, the interest was absolutely killing me. And so I finally went to them and tried to get ‘em to give me a little time and they did, they gave me another year and I says I want you to stop the interest, no we can’t do that. But anyway, I finally sold it again. But I didn’t sell for enough to pay off the bill and so my home and my boys’ homes were both in hock, and they finally took my second son’s home. He’d sold it and they took the money, that equity that he got out of that, and put it on the bill. And then I went to a young man in
Panguitch and borrowed enough money and sold a piece of property out east of town to almost pay off the bill — I still owed $35,000. So, then I went to the bank and they agreed to loan the $35,000 and I paid off S.B.A. without any foreclosure. But Zion’s First National was the one that broke me. They were the ones that started the procedure of foreclosing, but they couldn’t go through with it because I was signed up with S.B.A. and S.B.A. had given me, other than on one piece of property, that’s the only thing that they could have done anything with, but they left it and I paid ‘em off. But that’s how we got out of it. And, I still worked, contracted, worked around for several years and then me and my oldest son decided we’d go back to into the business. So, we found a crusher and bought it and went back in, this went on for a year or two and me and my wife was called on a mission to Missouri. And, I at first didn’t want to go. I didn’t feel like I could leave right then. So we postponed it for a year, maybe it was two years. Anyway, we got our affairs back into order and they called us again and I went to my son and asked him what he’d do and he said that he’d go in a heartbeat. So we went on a mission. And, that was the topping of the cake. I’d already been on one mission with the temple; we’d spent about four years down there. Then I had a heart attack in between had to have heart surgery, and that slowed us down a little bit, but after heart surgery why we went on our mission. We’ve got up to this point and still would like to see, if I’d a been a little younger, the ranch sold again about a month ago I guess, the guy that bought it died and his wife put it up and sold it. They give $350,000 for it and he sold it for $850,000. So I guess he done all right, he never ever done anything with the ranch, he just run it into the ground. But maybe the outfit that’s got it now will put it back to where it was.

JH: You’re talking about property appreciation aren’t we?

VJ: Oh man, depreciation, yeah. But anyway, we came back over here after we lost
the ranch and built this home and we’ve been happy. We’ve got a good family. We enjoy our kids. I’ve left a lot of things out, but that’s about the story of my life.

JH: I wanted to ask about this table. You know woodworking is an art and especially inlay work like this. It’s more than just acquiring a skill over at Cedar. You picked up something, some skill, something in your personality to be able to make this kind of stuff. How do you account for that?

VJ: Well I love working with wood. And that’s what I’ve done all my life really, is worked with wood. I remember back when I was boy, Burt Leach was there at the ranch and he come down there one day and I was out tinkering, I always had a corral full of horses, they was bone horses- that’s all we had in them days was bone horses. And Mother had an old singer sewing machine, a treadle-type sewing machine that she’d thrown away and it still had the treadle and the mechanisms that made it go and, I’d taken an old spool and I got on old can and nailed that can lid on the spool and then I filed teeth in it all the way around it an made a saw. And then I put that saw and set it up so I could take this treadle and turn that spool and I sawed, I had a lot of fun. I sawed up quite a few little boards, not boards but limbs you know. I’d saw ‘em up and take my bone horses and wagons and pull it around.

JH: You’re talking about a lifetime habit aren’t you?

VJ: Oh yes, but when I was in school I loved to work with wood and I had a school teacher, John Burgoyne, good old man. Taught me the first things about woodworking and it stayed with me. When I was in the Service, when we were out on Bogenville, we had an opportunity to work with the Seabees, we’d trade
them beer and they'd trade us wood. We built us all tents. We had tents- we had better accommodations then the officers out there because I was able to put things together. We'd go get lumber and I'd put 'em together and we'd stretch a tent over the top of 'em, these sixteen by sixteen tents. Instead of having a post in the middle, we just put trusses up and stretched that tent over it. Had floors and everything, hey, we's in high cotton! (Laughter) And then, when I come home and got married, went to school, and that's when I learned. Went over to Cedar and learn the trade, and from there why it's just... But when I was on my mission, I built seven tables. Give 'em all away. But back there in Missouri, they had lots of black walnut and oak, and I built one big table for the Adam-ondi-Ahman. The office is about this size, fact it was exactly this size, but it was too big for the room. And back there the material wasn't thoroughly dry and it split on me. So I took it back to the house and told 'em I'd fix it and I made another one and made it a little narrower, it was long but a little narrower. They still have that one there. Then I took that one back and cut me a round that would just fit the table so it was square on two sides and put my clamps on it and took my router and took a piece out of it and laid a piece in it and clamped it back together. Made a nice table back out of it. And I give that to one of the couples that were out there up at Richfield- they still have it. It was built out of black walnut. And then I built four or five others; I give them away. I built one like that one right there. I have it downstairs. It split on me so I took it back down to the shop and fixed it and just never have brought it back up. I built that one and now she wants me to bring it back up here and I haven’t done it yet.

JH: When it splits like that, is that a characteristic of black walnut?

VJ: Well yeah, it wasn’t thoroughly dry, then you took it and put it in an environment where there was constant heat, not very much variation in temperature, and it just
dried it out too fast and so it split. That one right there's done the same thing. It wasn't thoroughly dry and so they start to crawling and there ain't nothing you can do about it, but just take it and put a new piece in. I love to work with wood and when I come home off my mission, I used to have a garden right where that building is. And I told my wife one day that I was going to build myself a shop. I went out there and measured it up and it was just right, 30 by 60. I started doing that and while I was in Missouri, there was a fellow back there from California that had been on that same mission and he'd bought one of these one-man saws. A Wood-Miser- so you can cut your own lumber. And I told him that when he got ready to sell that, that I wanted it. He was in his seventies; I believe he was about seventy-eight. He was getting so he couldn't see. That's when I got ready to leave from our mission- he'd bought a piece of property back there and then he'd go back in California in the winter time and then he'd come back here in the spring. And when it got hot he'd go back and then he'd come back in the fall. He told me that he wasn't going to come back anymore. He was getting too old, and it's too far. He said, "If you want that saw you can have it." So my oldest son and I went back after I got home and got that saw and it's out there now. I have a lot of fun with that. I've had more enjoyment out of that than anything I've ever owned, other than my horses. Life goes on. There's been a lot of changes and there's a lot I haven't appreciated. I didn't appreciate Clinton at all when he made this Grand Staircase. He took the livelihood of Southern Utah clear away from us, when he done that. The Governor says we got a lot of money out of that, but you know fifty million is not very much when you figure the money that the coal alone would have brought into this country. I mean it isn't even a drop in the bucket to what that coal would have brought... and then they got oil. They've not even found or even tried to find the oil that's in that country. Absolutely a waste! But its like they said in a meeting we were to here not long ago, they put that mine to sleep but this government that we've got now are trying to get control everything.
So that one day they’ll open that mine but it will be government owned.

JH: Do you think they’ll nationalize the coal? That’s a surprise to hear you say that.

VJ: That was said in that meeting. Just about two weeks ago. It was said that’s what will happen. That if this country keeps going like it is, nobody is going to own anything! There will be no private property anywhere; it’ll all be government owned. They got a lot of country back in the east. I mean they’ve got a lot of things to do to change that. When you get across the Rocky Mountains, when you get on the other side of the Rocky Mountains, that’s all private property from there all the way back through.

JH: Not to mention Texas.

VJ: Well, Texas, there’s a lot of BLM in Texas. All your western states, that’s where the property is, it’s in the western states, and that’s what the environmentalists are trying to control. And they’re going to do it. I mean they’ve about got Utah sewed up! But I’ve had a good life; it’s been fun.

JH: Sounds like it’s been good to you.

VJ: It’s been hard. We’ve had a lot of ups and downs. But we raised a good family, got a lot of good grandkids. Started out with five and now we’ve got twenty-seven or eight. Maybe it’s thirty! My great-grands. That’s a pretty good size family. We’ve had a lot of ups and downs.

JH: I don’t think you’ve been beaten by those incidents. I think you’ve just sort of taken them as they came and gone on.
VJ: Hey, you can’t take it with you!

JH: That’s true!

VJ: And if you don’t just turn around and pick up the ends and keep going, why, what you going to do, just sit and mope? Feel sorry for yourself? It hurts, every time I go up that canyon and see that place looking so bad, it hurts. Makes me feel real bad, but, it’s like I told my kids, you can’t take it with you, so we’ll just go on.

JH: But you told me that your father said that you just get back up on.

VJ: That’s right, you just get back up and ride again. You get bucked off; you get back on! You don’t let ‘em beat ya. That was the first lesson I learned is ya don’t let ‘em beat ya. And I’ve been bucked off a lot of times! A lot of times! Horses fall on me! I carry a bad shoulder, my right shoulder’s bad from horse falls. Lots of horses fall on ya, bad news. My Dad bought an old horse; he come from Tropic. Old LeFevre owned that horse and the movies were here in town and they was here pretty regular, every year you know, they’d film two or three films. And they always had to have lots of horses, so Dad bought quite a few horses. This old horse, he had one bad foot--a big old club foot. And I was taking care of the ranch and we’d lease the ranch above us which was what they called Oak, and my neighbor’s cattle on above that would always come in there in the spring, kind of clean us out. So, I was over there trying to get them out one day and I was on this old brown horse and this one cow didn’t want to go. And I was having quite a struggle with her, finally I took my rope down and I was going to rope her and drag her out. And the way the ground was situated there was a mile peg, a survey peg, right in the middle of that field. I didn’t know it was there. But I was a going
as hard as I could go and that old horse hit that peg, and turned me upside down. Oh! He just come right up over and threwed me out there and then his butt hit me right between the shoulders. Just shoved me with this elbow out just like that, down, I thought it’d killed me, first. But I shook it off and got up- I’ve carried a bad shoulder ever since.

JH: Sounds like you jammed it to me.

VJ: Well, it probably pulled all the rotor cuffs loose and I never have gone in to have it doctored or taken care of and it bothers me now, at night especially. I have a lot of trouble with it. But, I just take it as it comes and keep going.

JH: Well I’ve really...

VJ: Well, there’s a lot more I could say but I believe that’s pretty good for this time. I need to sit down and make a tape of my entire life and give it to my kids.

JH: Good! When this comes back maybe this will kind of give you some places where you could fill it in.

VJ: I could fill it in. I could fill it in a lot of places.

VJ: Well I’ll tell ya, I’m glad I was born when I was born. I feel sorry for my grandchildren because they’re not going to be able to have the opportunity that I had. Not and go like I did. When I was growin’ up, this friend of mine and me, Clifford Mace, he’s my cousin, we’d go, we’d saddle up and take a pack horse and go up on the Divide up on Cedar Mountain. We’d go up on what they call Deer Spring and then back up on, Cyler Point. We’d hunt and fish, and just camp
It was fun. We’s up there one year, the first year we went up we didn’t make it, we got up under Monument Point and instead of going on around and hitting Deer Springs, coming up on Monument Point like you should have, why we tried to climb the Point. We got up about two-thirds of the way, it was steep and it was shaley. My friend’s packhorse, it got so steep it just pulled him over backwards. Rolled down the hill. When he finally stopped, why he stopped with his feet up hill by a big old tree. The pack still on him and he couldn’t get up. No way he could get up, so we had to cut the pack off (Laughs)- couple of kids scared to death. And, cut the pack off, grabbed him by the tail and turned him around and finally got him up. We never did make it out on there to Cyler Bottoms- lots of grass, lots of water, lots of fish, lots of deer. Anyway, we finally got him up and come back and when we got down in the canyon, like I said, we’d leave town and they’d follow us cause they knew what we’d do. We got down to a bunch of cattle and we decided - there was two or three steers there we wanted to rope- so we caught one. I headed it and had him a going and then my friend come in and tried to catch him with the front and hind feet, he caught a front foot and when he flipped him, he broke his leg. That kind of scared us. Anyway, we turned him loose and never did say anything about it. Come home, my Dad had sent us down to get the cows one night, and I’ll never forget that. Had an old pear tree down the middle of the field and it had one blossom. It was in the spring of the year. And he picked that blossom and I proceeded to try and take it away from him. We run them horses until they was just about ready to fall. We never did get the cows home. They came home by themselves. And when we got home, I’ll tell you! We didn’t get a whippin’, but we should of! We got a heck of a scoldin’! He didn’t want to come out anymore after that. He figured my dad was pretty rough. But we’d brought it on ourselves. We did run them horses! Oh! I’m ashamed of myself now. Run them horses till they couldn’t hardly go. But that’s kids.
JH: Well, again my thanks. I appreciate how much time we've been able to spend with you.

VJ: Well that's all right, like I said, there's a lot a things I could say and tell but maybe I ought to tell about that: My Dad- that Montezuma Treasure is a history thing of this county, and Dad was in on that from the ground floor, after the first fellow that come in here that was, Crystal, Freddie Crystal. He lived on my mother and father's ranch. And then when he came back, he lived there again. Then Dad was married, the second time he come back, and he helped him and when they found the opening why he was there, along with most of Kanab I guess, when they first opened it. My Dad never ever gave it up. Fact of the matter is, he had men from California come in here that is supposed to have been able to find gold anywhere with a machine he had. We sit there one winter in Dad’s home and he took this machine and said there was gold in Grand Canyon—a lot of gold out there. Well, there is, there's a lot of gold out there, but it's so hard to get to it. The ledges are so high and inaccessible that it's still there. But, Dad knew that one was there, and then he found some over in Cedar City from there, some out here at Molly’s Nipple. Well, he found that one and then this person and I went out there, spent a couple of days lookin’ for it, located it. And then Dad and I went back years later, well not too many years, few years later, went out there and dug samples out of it. We didn’t find any gold but we found a lot of copper. But, that Molly’s Nipple is just pushed up out of the earth. When you find that, you know you’re going to find gold and oil. They found oil up here at what they call Red Knoll. That's just a pushed up knoll. But it had all turned to tar. Well, they can get that now. They've got method now they go in there and pump heat down in there and loosen it up and get it out. But anyway, we never did go in this mine out here at Nipple; it’s such a rugged country, that its just almost impossible, well it’s not impossible, not any more. But, it was not feasible at that time for us to even think
about going in and building a road to get it out, too much sand, too many creeks, just a rough country. But, then we come back in on what they call Buckskin Gulch. He had a Placer’s claim that we worked for several years and found gold there. Placer gold. Takes money to mine. We never did have, Dad never did have the finances to go into anything very big. He spent a lot of money that he shouldn’t of had, looking for things that he shouldn’t of. He spent a lot of years with the Montezuma—a full lifetime almost. This, Bill Johns, who came into the country, I can’t remember the year he came in, but he spent twenty-five years here looking for that Montezuma treasure. He took the claim out on it. He’d go out in the plains in the summertime and run combines cutting wheat, he’d go out in Kansas and up in that country where they grew lots wheat. He’d run a combine all summer and then he’d come back and spend all his money diggin’ up there in that Montezuma. He’d go in and go down in and dig a hole and then put dynamite in and then shoot it, then Dad would go up and help him clean it out. Dug lots of holes—lots of holes.

JH: What do you think made them believe that story? You can talk about gold in the hills and gold that can be dug out and mined but what evidence was there that there was such a thing as Spanish Cove?

VJ: Well that’s history! I mean you’ve got Montezuma, and you’ve got Cortez and that’s all documented history! The Cortez story tells of Montezuma when they killed him and then his son took the gold that was left after they’d killed most of the soldiers and moved. Well, the story goes that they couldn’t go south because of Cortez; they couldn’t go east because of the people they fought with that way. And so they came back to their own people and that was the Paiutes. They were their own people, their offspring, so where else would they go? And so they moved back to this country and supposedly they crossed the Colorado River at
JH: You say they crossed at the Lee’s Ferry. That would make sense for them to come back to a known community wouldn’t it?

VJ: Yeah. The only place they could go. That’s the logical history of the Montezuma people and over there on the ranch when we were diggin over there. There’s one cave over there that I’ve wanted to dig a lot of years. It was just too big of a job, when we moved our crusher over there and I had my cats and loaders, I just took my cat down there and wiped that country off, just cleaned it off. And we got back into where there was nothing but Indian made structures. Uncovered the ledge where the ledge had fallen down on it. We had all this Spanish writings, color, Spanish coloring. So, that tells ya that the Spaniards were here. The Spaniards were, a lot of ‘em were a cannibalistic. Of course I think all the people were cannibalistic at one time, because this is a hard country. They didn’t have anything to eat and they’d eat each other. But in this one cave we found where they’d been cannibalized. Fact is, those arrowheads and the turquoise in there is on those pictures and stuff that we found down there in that cave and they’d been cannibalized. Then on up a little bit further north, about a half a quarter mile or so, north is where they had a burial--tombs. They’d etch out in sand rock and you could put a little water in there and you could etch it out, just dig it easy as easy. They etch out a tomb big enough to take care of two people. They bury them in the semi-fetus position. Then they put sand and clay and sand and clay and cover them up and then they’d put a capstone. Then they’d put another one and do the same thing and another capstone. When we first started on that Montezuma thing
over there the boys were diggin' with a cat underneath this one cave and they opened up a hole, maybe there's a picture here I can show ya. Got lots of pictures. That's what ya ought to have is pictures. Ah, this is that cave over there. But it's got quite a history that. I've got all this stuff on tape, on a video. This is what I was tellin' you up there the other night. That's a picture of the house I built over on the ranch. That's the back side of it. This is the front side of it. Wish I could find that cave!

JH: Looks like you got three bedrooms or so in that.

VJ: Yea, there's four. Well three, I made one a storage room. Maybe she's got it in there. That's where the, when you first opened up that cave, it had a hole where it had a man stuck in it, head first. Yea, I looked in them it's not that one. Ah, that's her grandkids. She must have it in there. Looks like she's got this organized. Pictures when I was out there, I was the Orsnaist. There I am at Adam-ondi-Ahman. They had bought some new property and it had a bunch of old houses on it and we had to burn 'em up. She has started to getting' 'em situated. Have you ever been in an ice storm? There's an ice storm right there, it was in Missouri.

JH: I was in Baltimore one time when the rain turned to ice; you couldn't walk around at all.

VJ: Yeah, that's right, when this one happened in December, about the last part of December, but it been warm up till it came and the ground was still warm but it froze on the trees and on the brush. I mean it had put forty-fifty tons of ice on some of them trees and when the sun came out why it just stripped the trees. Just absolutely strip 'em.
JH: Boy it was sure scary trying to get around.

VJ: Oh you bet! It was absolutely beautiful, but oh it was treacherous! There was one little city over there that was out of power for pretty near two weeks, just took everything, power and water.

JH: When the ice is up on those lines it brings them down.

VJ: Oh just absolutely, well you can see how them were there. There’s others there. See how it’s just a garden. I mean it looked like a garden. But, see how the fences were. I mean just looked like you taken, I had sprayed water on it and as it fell it froze it. That’s the way it looked, every line some would be that big around and that’s the way their power lines were. It just absolutely devastated ‘em. This is all Missouri pictures here. Most of ‘em. She must have ‘em in there; I’ll have to go see.

JH: Well that’s okay, we can get together again sometime if you want. Many thanks for your time.

End of Interview
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