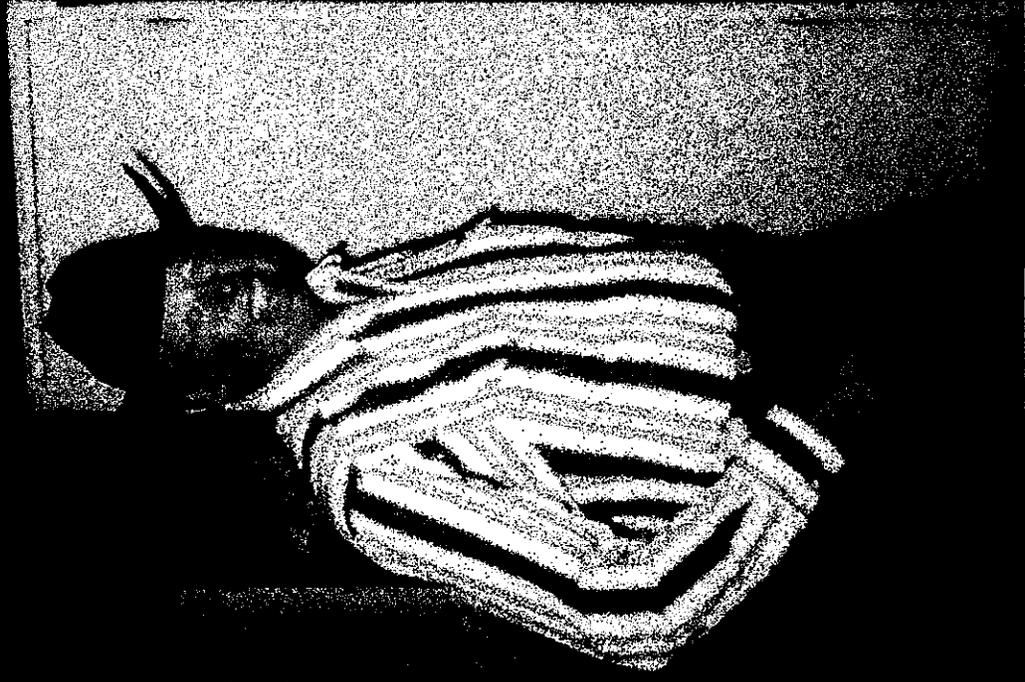


Letevre, mac 1002
SG./Boulder

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, Suzi Montgomery, Marsha Holland and other volunteers.. 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.





1 Mac LeFevre

INTERVIEW WITH:	Mac LeFevre and Stan Mecham
INTERVIEWER:	Marsha Holland
INTERVIEW NUMBER:	two
DATE OF INTERVIEW:	May 23, 2002
PLACE OF INTERVIEW:	Salt Gulch, Boulder area, Utah
SUBJECT OF INTERVIEW:	Ranching and early life in Boulder/Tropic
TRANSCRIBER:	Marsha Holland
DATE:	July 19, 2002

Tape 1, Side A

MH: It is May 23, 2002 and I am here with Mac LeFevre and Stan Mecham. We are up on your property in Salt Gulch. Would you introduce yourself and give me your birth date?

ML: Well, just Mac LeFevre, born in Panguitch on July 17, 1914.

MH: Your dad's name was...?

ML: Bill R. LeFevre.

MH: And your mom?

ML: Stella McGregor LeFevre.

MH: Why did your dad come into this country, into Panguitch?

ML: He was born in Panguitch. My grandmother was the first white child born in the Panguitch Valley.

MH: What was her name?

ML: Rachel Camelia, first white child born in Panguitch Valley.

MH: Were they ranchers, most of your family?

ML: Yes, most of them.

MH: Where did they haul their cattle in from to get their ranches started?

2 Mac LeFevre

ML: I really don't know. They were over in the Parowan Valley, the other side of the mountain when they came to Panguitch. Some of them came from Beaver: some of the LeFevres came from Beaver.

MH: Right, so basically they would come into an area and then feel they had to spread out and look for more ranch land?

ML: Great Grandfather LeFevre was a polygamist, so there are lots of LeFevres in Panguitch.

MH: Did your family move over to the Tropic area when you were younger?

ML: Well my dad had cattle on the Last Chance down in the Wahweap Country and he said it was too far from Panguitch to come back and forth so we moved to Tropic. It was the worst mistake he ever made in his life.

MH: Why do you think that?

ML: Well he left a grass country and went over to a desert country to live. He was a rancher who lived north of Panguitch along the river then moved over to Tropic. He always said it was the worst mistake he ever made in his life.

MH: He ran his cattle out on the Wahweap?

ML: Yes, he was down there for years and years.

SM: He would winter them there?

ML: Yes winter them there and in the summer on the East Fork and then Dry Valley and Butler Valley and Round Valley in that country where they would summer.

MH: Was it leased then?

ML: No, it was just free then.

MH: Do you remember when they made that transition and the BLM took it over. Did your dad talk about that?

ML: By the time the BLM took it over there were so many people in the business it was pretty hard to make a living any how by then.

MH: How many head of cattle did he have then?

ML: He had about 250.

MH: Did your dad also go through that time when they had sheep ranching our there.

ML: Yes, my dad had sheep as well as cattle.

MH: They were ok side by side?

ML: Well, not exactly. They wintered pretty much in the same country, the sheep was on the East Fork in the summer time, but they was down north of the Pink Cliffs down in that area in the summer.

MH: So, you followed in your dads' footsteps as far ranching goes.

ML: I guess I did.

MH: Did you spend a lot of time with him out on the range?

ML: I stayed with my dad until I was twenty one years old.

MH: Tell me what the fall was like when you did round-up? What was it like?

ML: Round up those cattle? Well, that was one of the happiest times of the year. Go down and round them cattle up and wean the calves. And back then they never sold in the fall of the year, they sold the spring of the year. They would go down in the spring and round the cattle up and bring out what you were gong to sell.

MH: Did they save the sell for the spring of the year because the cattle were fatter?

ML: Well, it seem to be. They didn't ever contract cattle then and they sold them by the head, they never sold by the pound.

MH: You would drive them out somewhere and someone would take a look at them?

ML: You would bring them up to the Upper Wahweap, up in that country, then a buyer would come and pass over them. Then he would give you some advance money and we usually drove them to Panguitch or Antimony to deliver them. In the fall around the first of Ocotber we would change ranges and drive thenout of the Est Fork down to Last Chance.

MH: The drives are what you remember?

ML: There would be five or six guys and a mixed bunch of cattle. There would be five or six men that would all drive together.

MH: So there were different herds that would drive together.

ML: Well, they always run in common.

MH: They way you tell the difference was the brand?

ML: Yes, the brand marks.

MH: What about your camp? You spent some time down there.

ML: Oh, it would take a month or six weeks for a roundup. You would just take your packs and there were no roads or nothing. You would just took all you things with you, carried it on a pack.

MH: What about food?

ML: You just take you food along with. Then you would kill some meat of some kind.

MH: When you were collecting them, how would you keep them corralled up while you were still collecting?

ML: You would fence a canyon off.

MH: Which canyons do you remember doing that in?

ML: We used to fence Tommy Canyon off, and the head of Last Chance.

MH: Who was Tommy Canyon named after?

ML: I don't remember.

MH: There was a Smith Run down there, did you ever find out about Smith Run?

ML: No.

MH: What about Sit Down?

ML: Set Down? Well, that is down on Last Chance right next to the river.

MH: Do you know why they named it that?

ML: Well, I have heard that they drove the cattle down there in the fall of the year.

Some of the first settlers got out on West Set Down and the grass was so good that they said, "Let's just set down and watch them eat." Whether that is the real story or not, I don't know.

MH: That is one I have heard and one where the cowboys would get so tired when they were in that area, they would just sit down and rest. I have never been there.

ML: You ought to go there.

MH: I have been down to The Box. Then how did you end up here in Salt Gulch?

ML: Well, my wife came over to Tropic to school. This (the Salt Gulch Ranch) was her dad's place.

MH: What was your wife's name?

ML: Lenora Hall.

MH: She was just finishing up school over in Tropic?

ML: Yes, she came over to go to school, is how I met here. She went to elementary school in Boulder, but you see there was no high school. There wasn't any bus service then.

MH: Whom did she board with?

ML: Her aunt.

MH: Who was her aunt?

ML: Cleo Riding.

MH: Was that Dee Riding's sister? [Possibly her sister-in-law]

ML: Who was Dee Riding?

SM: That would be George Wilson's mama. No, that would be...

ML: There were two families of Ridings down there.

SM: You can tell me better, Mac.

ML: Cleo was Grandpa Hall's sister... and she married Julius Riding.

SM: That's how that went.

MH: She was actually from around here, Salt Gulch, Boulder originally?

ML: She didn't live over here. She lived in Escalante.

MH: Oh, over in Escalante. Lenore went over to board and that was how you met her, at school?

ML: Yes, to go to school.

MH: And then you two fell in love, I guess?

ML: We did

MH: What year did you get married?

ML: I as twenty-one. I'll be eighty-eight in another month.

MH: Was it in the Depression?

ML: Yes, it was in the '30s.

MH: So, you got married during the Depression?

ML: I got married in '35.

MH: That was tough time.

ML: It was a mighty tough time. Wages was \$1.00 a day if you could find a job.

ML: What do you think it was like for most people in the Bryce Valley? They just made do, huh?

ML: Bryce Valley people had a mighty hard time to live. There were a lot of poor people.

MH: My dad was in San Francisco then in the city. The people in the city had a hard time surviving because they couldn't grow their own food.

ML: Most of the people in the country had plenty to eat but no money, because they raised their own garden and had their own meat and things like that. They had something to eat whether they had money or now.

MH: Do you remember what it was like, what were they thinking and feeling? Was it frightening and were people thinking when will this end or did people just plow ahead and not worry about it too much?

ML: Well, I don't think they worried about it too much. There wasn't too much they could do about it, except take it a day at a time.

MH: After you and Lenore were married did you move right over to Salt Gulch?

ML: The next year.

MH: Did you help him ranch?

ML: He stayed here on the ranch for a little while then he wanted to Boulder and set up a little store.

MH: Oh, he had a little mercantile there?

ML: Just had a little store there. Then he sold us the ranch.

MH: Lenore, she was then a rancher's wife. Was she happy doing that?

ML: She didn't know anything else. She was born and raised here.

MH: It is interesting that he left and went to live in the town.

ML: He hadn't been there. But back then it was a mighty rough time. The only money, surplus money we ever had, we milked cows and shipped cream. Sold cream and went over to that old Cyrus over in Black Canyon. You remember that Stan?

SM: Yes, I do.

MH: Where is that Stan?

SM: Going into Antimony.

MH: You would milk cows and then your surplus you would ship over...

ML: That was what we lived on was the cream and everything we made off of cows and sheep we paid on the ranch.

MH: And you paid it off?

ML: We did.

MH: Sheep ranching was still going on then?

ML: Lots of sheep then.

MH: You were using leased land by then?

ML: Oh, yes.

MH: Did you run the sheep up on the Boulder?

ML: We never had that many. The sheep we had we just we just around the ranch. We only had about a hundred and fifty head is all?

MH: That is quite a few though.

SM: I think a good question to ask, how many sheep could he shear in his heyday?

MH: (laughter) Ah, so you used to shear sheep?

ML: Yes, but I wasn't a sheep shearer. I could do my chores, tend the water and shear fifty in a day. That was the best I could ever do. The good sheep shearer would shear fifty an hour. (Laughter)

SM: I tried it Marsha and I struggled with three head. (Laughter) They looked bad.

ML: Grandpa Hall was a good sheep shearer and he taught me how. He could really shear sheep.

MH: He had more sheep on this land than you ended up with?

ML: Grandpa Hall had sheep on the ranch before we got it.

MH: That was Lenore's Grandpa?

ML: Lenore's dad.

Interview interrupted by visitor, and then resumed.

MH: So we were talking about shearing sheep and Grandpa LeFevre?

ML: No, Grandpa Hall.

MH: That's right Grandpa Hall. He was good at shearing.

ML: Yes, he was a good sheep shearer. You have seen him right Stan?

SM: Yes, I was trying to think what he called that one swipe, the bloody blow...?

ML: The bloody stoke. (Laughter)

SM: You could really get a long run on their backs.

ML: Full length. That was the bloody stroke.

MH: They would pack up the wool and where would it go?

ML: Oh, you take it out to Richfield to the Medlix. (Boris Medlix) They used to buy wool, fur and hides. Pretty near everybody took their wool to him. He ran a junkyard and he bought anything and everything.

MH: Including wool. Tell me what it was like getting your ranch going.

ML: Well, it was pretty well on its way, but we did improve it after we got a road and got some heavy machinery. We put in some sprinklers and filled in some washes and we improved it quite a bit.

SM: Let me ask you a question Mac, if you don't mind Marsha. When you first started you were farming with teams of horses?

ML: Yes, never knew anything else.

SM: It was pretty hard?

ML: It sure was.

SM: Then you was irrigating with a shovel.

ML: Yes, flood irrigating.

SM: How did you do it alone?

ML: Just everyday you were right out there.

SM: I remember when I first met Mac: he had great big long stacks of hay.

MH: You stacked it by hand.

ML: No we had what you called hay pulls. You would take a half load of hay off a wagon at a time. They had ropes that ran the length of your wagon and then you

hooked them on to your pulleys that went on up to you hay pulls and then you pulled it off with a team. It would just roll the end sup together and then you would swing it out on your haystack. It had a trip on it and you would trip that and then it would flatten back out like it was on your wagon.

SM: But you had to cut and rack it and tie and pitch it.

MH: You cut it with?

ML: A mowing machine and a team. The mowing machine was only four and a half foot wide.

MH: So, it would take a long time.

ML: So you made a lot of rounds.

MH: Then raking was there a machine then that you used with a team?

ML: Just a team on a hay rake.

MH: Oh, I see.

SM: They just dragged it and pulled it into a pile. When they got to where they wanted it they would just go like that and dump it.

MH: Then you would drag up another pile and then would get the pile onto the hay wagon?

SM: Then after they got it raked in these rows, then they would take a fork, wouldn't you Mac, and put it in piles, pile it.

ML: Yes, in piles. The way we used to rake it, you didn't make a long windrow, you dumped each dump separate and that made a pile of hay. Then you would mismatch then, so you would had a road. So, you would pull one over this way and one over this way then you had your road right down the middle.

SM: Now, see, I have learned something.

MH: It is hard to visualize all the steps.

SM: I could remember a little bit but not how they did it.

ML: Well that is how we did it.

MH: How about when you got your first piece of motorized machinery. Do you remember that?

ML: I sure do. First tractor I got was a little International. A little 'A' International. It had a seven-foot cut on it for your mowing machine. That was something over a four and a half. Before that though we advanced a little bit more. I got wide wheeled mowing machine and it had a seven-foot cut on it.

SM: With your horses, huh?

ML: Yes, that was pulled with horses.

SM: Was that hard for your horses to pull?

ML: Yes, it was. It was really hard on them, especially because you had all that weight on their neck. The mowing machine had so much weight on the horse's neck.

SM: What about the noise.

ML: They never paid no more attention to the noise than riding a car along the road and a car coming along. They got used to it.

MH: How many times would you cut, in general?

ML: Three, but your third crop was quite light, not like your first and second crop. But that was the best hay.

MH: The third cut, was it?

ML: That was what we lambed our sheep on. That old third crop hay was really good feed. Now the season's not long enough to draw a third crop.

MH: The weather had really changed in the last fifty years?

ML: It sure has.

MH: Do you think it will change back. I mean it is hard to say the weather has changed because it could just be a blip in time.

ML: Well, by this time of year the hay was about ten inches to a foot high. We always figured if you didn't get you hay up by the Fourth of July it would rain. It seemed like every year it was that way. We would start to cut the first crop of hay along about the middle of June.

SM: What about the snow, the winters here?

ML: Well, we usually had snow by Thanksgiving and still had snow in March.

SM: Wouldn't it be hard to get around in?

ML: Oh, I had seen four feet of snow right here.

SM: Then you would have to get your pack animals and buck that snow and go down to the lower range and tend you calves. Oomph.

ML: Yep, there were no roads. I've seen it going out Long Canyon, going out the head of Long Canyon where your pack bags are in the snow. The old horses would be just wallowing along.

MH: What is the low range around here?

ML: Well, the low range is out there in the Flats Country . The Moody's, the Flats, along the Burr Trail, King Bench, Bounds Bench, Silver Falls.

MH: I've been there a bit, mostly just to camp, not to ranch. (Laughter) There are still cows down in there. Right?

ML: There are only the Flats, and some of Moody. That is all that is left out there. The environmentalists have just taken it away from us. No, they discontinued all this grazing. We lost all this country down here and lost Kings and Bounds Bench.

MH: What do you think environmentalists see in that land that should be protected from cows?

ML: They came out here to save the country. That is what they tell us, that they are saving the country. Don't get me started on environmentalists. (Laughter)

MH: Some of the land is so wild, like out on the Wahweap, who will ever go out there but a rancher?

ML: Well, they took all the canyon lands and they took the river. We have lost this country down here. We have lost Bounds Bench, lost the river.

MH: One of the problems now is we are having a drought, you can't bring your cattle in to graze and there is the worry they will let you back on when there is good feed.

ML: Well, there nothing out there anyhow. It is just a burnt up country. There is a little bit of green started out on [Collets]. Maybe it got an inch high and then burned off.

MH: Yes, there was nothing down on Moody. I couldn't believe how dry it was down there. OK, let's talk about hunting. Do you like to hunt?

ML: I did. I sure did.

MH: This is wild country out here. There was the Hall Ranch here and who were the other people who settled up on here?

ML: There was the Osborne place down across the road, the King place over the hill and the Coleman place and then another Hall place. There were five places.

MH: And there is plenty of hunting available. You must see lions come through and what else comes through here?

ML: There is elk and deer and bats. Occasionally a bear. There is one on the wall right there. (Laughter)

MH: Wow, that was from around here?

ML: Just above the ranch here.

MH: Is this the one you roped?

ML: That's him.

MH: What is that story? I've never heard of anyone roping a bear. (Laughter)

ML: Anybody who had any sense wouldn't. (More laughter)

MH: Were you on a horse, yes?

ML: You think I would catch him on foot? (More laughter)

MH: I don't know. How did it happen? That is a big bear?

ML: Weighed four hundred and eighty pounds.

MH: How did you run across him?

ML: He was feeding on a dead horse.

MH: Did he kill the horse or was it already dead?

ML: Well, I had been up there putting up some salt, in the spring of the year for the cows and I had a horse that was half broken. I had a pack on him, but any how, I

had two packs and I tied him up and took the other horse out with more salt and when I came back he got tangled up and killed himself. A couple of weeks later we went fishing and this bear was feeding on this dead horse.

MH: Isn't that unusual for a bear?

ML: No, a bear will eat anything.

MH: I thought they just ate berries and stuff. (Laughter)

SM: No, they like it bad. We got a bear here awhile back, didn't we Mac and I couldn't eat that bear because I had seen what that bear had been eating. This was just a few years ago. It was eating a dead steer. With maggots. It was funny. We couldn't get it home on our horse because Gary Haws and his wife were there and Mac and who else?. We were trying to lift it on there and my horse was so crazy we couldn't do anything with him. Finally had McClain run him up the hill and wind him and bring him back and tie him to a tree and he just sunk the rope right in the tree he was so scared. Mac said put the bear on this horse, he is dumb. We had a thoroughbred horse there. We couldn't lift it, but Madeline, that was the gal, when she gave us a boost it went on. (laughter) I couldn't open up the bottle in the cabin either and she just took and went swipe. He needs to tell you about the bear.

MH: So, this bear is feeding on a dead horse?

ML: Well, then we followed it. We saw his tracks when we went in the morning and when we came back in the evening he was there. We just came down and got the dogs and went back up and started the dogs on him. It was in the spring of the year and the dogs hadn't been off the chain for a month or more. Dell and me

outrun the dogs. (Laughter) We chased him a mile in a half through the trees and couldn't go too fast. It was oak and trees. Then he went out into a little opening and I was close enough I caught him.

SM: Mac, were you on that old brown horse when you got him?

ML: No, I was on that bay horse, that old Mugs horse.

MH: What did the horse think about roping bear?

ML: Just like chasing a cow. You put me up to him and I'll catch him.

MH: Did he pull back?

ML: No, it wasn't ...

MH: Once you roped him how did he behave?

ML: Oh, it choked him to death. (Laughter)

SM: He put the pressure on him. You know a bear can run fast too, Marsha. If you followed Mac, like I did, when I was a boy out here, all I could see was him going through the trees ninety miles an hour, just twisting in the saddle. I don't know if Mac remembers that or not, but I got tore up pretty bad. (Laughter)

MH: Do you remember that story?

ML: Were we following a cat?

SM: We were chasing cougar. Remember when I had that bald faced horse and I thought I was really mounted, you showed me what these Boulder horses were made of.

MH: Well, why are the Boulder horses different than those from Bryce Valley?

ML: Well, they were raised in the sagebrush and these here were raised in the rocks.

SM: You'd be surprised, they handle it so much better. Mac told me once, "Once you have a horse that will handle these rocks then you have a saddle horse." Think about walking here.

ML: Then you go through the rocks rolling under then or stepping between the rocks.

End Tape 1, Side A

Tape 1, side B

SM: Were we in Death Hollow when we crossed or were we in Sand Creek? You know, where we climbed that steep, steep hill.

ML: We were in Sand Creek.

SM: You know it was so steep, I said don't you think we ought to lead them. Do you remember that day?

ML: Yes.

SM: And you said, "No, we are not going to lead them because they got strong legs and good lungs and they will be making it after we are both dead." It was just like that Marsha. The horses handled that weight.

ML: They learn to handle it, they really do.

SM: They don't stand and rest, see they are not in a good position to rest.

ML: Then when you ride a horse quite a lot, you learn to go with him not against him. When the horse leans one way, instead of you leading the other way, you go with him. Sure helps out.

MH: It seems like it is a question of having them out there in this country so they get used to it. They are raised here. You ride them here.

ML: Well, it just comes naturally. There are two things I sure would have liked to do before I die, but it is clear out of the question. I would like to cut one more wild cow and one more wild pony. (Laughter) (He means to cut across their path and catch them)

MH: It must have been fun if you want to do it again.

ML: Fun...it is best sport in the world. (More laughter) I have never done anything in my life on a horse that I'd rather do than rope a wild cow.

MH: What is it like? Tell me what it is like?

ML: We'd be tracking them along. You'd think this is pretty rough country: I dare not run a horse here. You see them and you are gone. (Laughter)

MH: How many of those have you brought in your time?

ML: Well, I believe we were out on the Water Pocket and believe Circa and Ivan and me, I believe we had seventeen wild cattle tied up one day.

MH: Wow, yee haw! (Lots of Laughter) That was your sport. What about the horses? Now where were those horses from?

ML: Well, if you have got a good horse, they like it as well as you.

MH: OK, what about the wild horse?

ML: Well, once you catch a wild horse it chokes down right quick.

MH: How did those wild horses get into this country?

ML: People would turn the horses loose. They would turn the horses loose and they just got wild. Then they just kept raising young and two or three crosses and they are really wild.

MH: Is that what you call the Mustang?

ML: That is what you call a Mustang. The most ponies I ever caught in one season is nine. I caught nine one winter down here in the Moodys. The best time to catch them though is in August. It is dry then and it is easy to trail them to the water.

SM: You caught two mares when I was here and they both aborted colts. Why?

ML: Don't you think it is running them and catching them and choking them? The trauma.

MH: Are they an OK breed of horses once you break them though?

ML: We had some good horses. I don't think there is ever a more sure-footed horse in the world than the wild pony. They are born and raised in the country.

SM: Another thing down here is, they hop that blood up too. They turn two or three real good studs into them.

ML: We would go down there and catch the wild stallions and then turn a thoroughbred out with those pony mares. We bred them up then we couldn't catch them. (Laughter)

MH: Got your self a problem, huh?

ML: When the BLM took over and started to kill those horses, there was a good bunch of horses down there. They weren't just Mustangs, they were halves and three-quarters thoroughbreds.

MH: You have some great fencing out here. Did you build that entire rip-gut fence?

ML: I have built quite a bit of that.

MH: It has really stood up.

ML: Yes, they hold up, they really do.

MH: Is it the kind of fencing you have to use because you don't have any big trees?

ML: There was plenty of timber then, but it is a real big job to build a fence like that. It takes thirty-two stakes and sixteen riders for a rod. Your stakes that go in the ground that you put your riders in, a crooked one works better than a straight one.

MH: So, you have the post that goes in...and then a piece that goes across then each piece you lean into that crux?

ML: Then you put your stakes over your rider, then lay another one in it.

SM: I don't follow you Mac.

ML: First of all... this rider is a long piece and the stakes is something that you lay on the rider and then you start laying to it.

SM: I got it.

MH: So, what do you do for fun these days?

ML: Well, I don't do anything any more. I can't see and I can't hear so I don't do anything.

SM: Well, you went hunting here two or three years ago on an about all-nighter with me, didn't you Mac?

MH: Did it end up being an all-nighter Stan?

SM: We were about late and Dan and Mike got out of there but we were pretty late getting in weren't we?

ML: Yes, it was after night. I could see a little bit then too.

SM: Yes, and you could hear a bit then. You could still hear the dogs.

ML: Yes.

SM: I have seen you ride a lot. He knows that mountain better than I do even if he can't see.

ML: Yes, there isn't much country around here I don't know. I rode all over this country.

MH: Was there a time of...I know you had a lot of things every day just so you could make it through the winter. But was there a time during the year when you had a bit of free time?

ML: Well, I was always glad when winter came so I didn't have to work as hard.

MH: But if you have your cows down in the low country you have to go down and see about them?

ML: I would go down and see about my cows once a week in the wintertime.

MH: Getting off this mountain would sometimes be a trick?

ML: Yes.

MH: How long would it take you to get down there?

ML: It takes about a day, or not a full day, but that is about all you would do in a day is go down there. You would stay two or three nights. It was big country to ride

SM: Mac makes really good sourdough bread too.

MH: Is that true?

ML: I learned to that when I used to be a shepherd.

SM: I have seen his name up above on my ranch in Willis Creek. (The inscription) He says, "Mac LeFevre, Shepherding is a dogs life." He spent some time herding sheep up in there.

MH: And where is that?

SM: That is out by my ranch in Willis Creek, south of Cannonville. So he spent so time herding sheep up in there.

MH: They ran thirty or forty thousand head of sheep down the Paria, right?

ML: There were a lot of herds of sheep at one time. And the same down in the desert, it was herds of sheep the full length of the desert.

SM: I wonder if during the Second World War if that wool wasn't a great asset?

ML: It really was. Wool got a \$1.50 a pound.

SM: That was money then.

ML: It sure was money. I tell you, we sure lifted the old mortgage on the ranch though.

MH: That helped huh?

ML: It sure did.

SM: I took and showed her the cellar out there. We had a party here for Mac a year or so ago. Dixie Shakespear was telling about, she would be a sister to Mac's wife, she was telling they had some watermelon. She said grab a watermelon. That watermelon was as cool as... That was where you put your milk.

ML: Yes, that was where you put your milk and everything like that. Dampen the floor and it would stay cool all the time. It is just not really cold, just cool. Before we had electricity we used to put our drinking water down there and it would stay cool all day.

MH: When did they get electricity out here, do you remember?

ML: No, I don't.

MH: Was it before or after World War II?

ML: It was during, no before the war.

SM: Was it about the same time we got it over at home?

ML: Just a little bit after.

SM: I can remember as a small kid, I can always remember power, but I remember it going off all the time. We kept the coal oil lamps. We kept them.

ML: We used to have a lot of trouble here too. Days at a time we wouldn't have any power. Then they just kept improving things. Then we had to dig the holes, to get power over here. There was old Morice Hall and Parley Coleman and me, cleared the right of way and dug the holes, by hand.

SM: I bet some of them holes were tough digging too.

ML: Oh, I'll say they were rough digging. We shot a lot of them. With dynamite.

MH: That would make a good hole.

ML: Sometimes it made it too big. (Laughter) We couldn't find enough dirt to fill it up again.

SM: What is the elevation here Mac?

ML: It is around seven thousand.

SM: And yet your fruit is better than it is over home. Maybe it blossomed later.

ML: The apricots froze this year.

MH: Yes, but they bloomed first.

SM: But you got apples.

ML: And there are cherries.

MH: Cannonville, our trees have apples on them.

ML: Well, you are quite a bit lower there.

SM: Cannonville is better than Tropic.

MH: But we lost our apricots.

ML: Well, do you ride a horse or just drive around?

MH: I try.

SM: She does. That little mare of Dad's that you rode?

ML: Yes.

SM: Mac just loves her too. So, does Marsha. She has been on some pretty fast trail rides. She has been all over the country.

MH: I can hang on pretty well. I can ride all day. We went on a couple rides with Stan. The Johnson Hole ride was a long. We had to peel little Nathan off though. It was about an eight nine-hour ride and he was frozen on the horse. Stan had to hold him for a while until he could stand up again.

SM: Yes, we went in the Blacks and Panguitch Lake.

ML: One time when Eli LeFevre and me was up the Wahweap and I was (inaudible) so I went after some pony horses. I wasn't having too good a luck so I took my saddle off.

MH: Why did you do that?

ML: To get rid of a little more weight. I went on again and just kept a going and a going and it got dark and came back and I couldn't find my saddle. (Laughter) I finally got to camp at ten o'clock at night. Old Eli was sure mad at me. I wasn't very welcome.

MH: Did you find your saddle?

ML: Oh, yeah. I could have found it that night, but it got too dark.

SM: You wanted that pony bad.

ML: My dad gave me a new saddle for Christmas. During the Christmas holiday we took the bucks [from the sheep herd] down to the herd and they were out on the

Swag. Eli and I were taking them down. Anyway we were on the North Swag [out by Molly's Nipple]. There used to be wild horses up there. We ran onto a bunch of wild horses and I started after them and I caught one. I caught it and when it hit the end of the rope the tongue and the lattigo just ripped the lattigo right off and my saddle went with the pony. And I just got that saddle for Christmas. (Laughter) That tongue and buckle just slit just like you slit it with a knife. It ran on a little ways farther and went over a ridge. There some big old thimbleberry bushes, anyhow, it went around the thimbleberry bush and it must have got caught.

SM: It stopped it.

ML: It sure was skinned up. My dad wasn't very happy about that.

SM: The saddle was real valuable then wasn't it?

ML: A saddle then cost sixty dollars.

SM: It was hand made.

MH: Was there someone in Tropic or where would you get then from?

ML: Oh, this saddle was made in Vernal, J.D. Reed.

SM: That is most of them came from.

ML: I remember that real well. The tag on that saddle said, \$67.50.

SM: You have got a good memory...sixty-seven fifty.

ML: I was so proud of that saddle, going down through the rocks and the brush bouncing. (Lots of laughter) All I could do was get back on my horse and go after it.

MH: I just am trying to figure out how you hang on with no saddle.

ML: You just hang on. I have a saddle pulled off a time or two with me. (Laughter)

SM: Did you rodeo much Mac?

ML: Quite a little bit. Little local rodeos.

SM: Which did you like the best?

ML: Saddle bronc riding.

SM: What did you weigh when you was in your early prime?

ML: About 125.

SM: That is hard to believe isn't it? 'Cause I have always known Mac as big.

MH: Yes, he is tall.

ML: When Lenore and I were married I weighed 132 pounds and she weighed 130. And she never did get over it, but I sure did. (Laughter)

MH: When you came over here, the ranch was already going. Did you build a house?

ML: We built this house. We lived in an old log house for years. The log house in the wintertime, the wind would blow through the cracks.

SM: You went through a lot of wood then?

ML: You sure did but it was plentiful.

MH: How many kids did you have? I know Dell.

ML: Three and we adopted one of them.

SM: They adopted their first one, Mike.

ML: He will be here this weekend.

SM: I like old Mike. He always stops and sees me.

ML: He will be here this weekend. He is a grandpa. He is sure proud. They are all coming up. Michelle, Matt and Wendy.

SM: Good. Has Sharon been here lately?

ML: She was here at Thanksgiving. Oh, no, she was here at Easter. She will be back in July.

MH: Is that one of your daughters?

ML: That is my daughter. She lives in Colorado.

MH: I'm watching the robins on your lawn pull worms out. They are pulling out big worms out of the ground.

ML: Doesn't seem like we have very many birds though.

MH: Maybe they are still coming back. The hummingbirds seem like they are starving. There are no flowers.

ML: There can't be as dry as it is. Out on thethe brush locks dead. They are out there today trying to put a pump in a well.

SM: Dell said it was a good thing that Marsha was talking to you because he was fixing to take you back down there.

MH: That is what he said, "I was coming to get him."

ML: I was going to go with him today, but I much rather that you came.

MH: I am glad I got you guys together. So you have well water out here?

ML: No, there is a spring up here in the creek.

MH: That is how you get water for the ranch. What is the well water for?

ML: That is out on the desert.

MH: How did the wells get out there?

ML: Those wells were drilled before Dell got that country. I think, Langston, when he had that he drilled those wells.

MH: Langston?

ML: Old Bob Langston.

SM: There were brothers that bought that piece. One of them was an Ag teacher in Escalante.

ML: That was Verl.

SM: Your memory is better than mine Mac.

ML: Then he sold that outfit to his brother and then he went out on the Arizona Strip.

SM: Normally that is a good range isn't it?

ML: Yes, there is so much reseed up there. But it is pitiful now.

MH: For a time didn't they do a lot of reseed. Did they do some of that out here as well?

ML: Oh, yeah. We did a lot of reseed over in the Cedar Washes. We did that on our own.

MH: And did it work?

ML: It did. We reseeded all of those School Sections.

MH: The school sections are the school trusts lands?

ML: Yes the lease off the school sections, that goes to the schools. It sure has improved the ranges to reseed.

MH: Do they let you do it now if you wanted to?

ML: I don't believe they would let you reseed. I don't think they would.

SM: Marsha, this bothers me more than any one thing, looking at this that can be rehabilitated and made better for deer and cattle, for everything, but no.

MH: It is one of the reasons they started doing this project, the Southern Utah Oral History Project, because of the unique culture that existed here. It was strong and it worked. People made a living here. Now, there is a change and there is a whole part of the culture that will go away. They want to preserve it somehow. It is sad for me to watch and listen to. I mean there have been droughts before.

ML: Yes, but not one like this one. Mike said, since they have kept records in the California area, this is the driest it has been in one hundred and thirty two years.

MH: In California?

ML: Well, in California, Nevada, Arizona and Southern Utah and New Mexico and some of Southern Colorado.

MH: Now, have you ever seen the Boulder Mountain without snow this time of year?

ML: Never did. And I have been around here for quite a few years. We never had any snow all winter, but a skiff along the mountain. There was a little bit of snow, maybe three or four inches along the east end this past winter.

MH: Most times this time of year there is still snow up there.

SM: Banks of it.

ML: We used to go up here on the Fourth of July and get snow to make ice cream. When the snow drifted over that Back Creek Hill up there, we used to take a pack and get a pack load of snow for the Fourth of July.

MH: The Fourth and the Twenty-fourth July were big times around here.

ML: We always had a good time. We always had a rodeo in Boulder on the Fourth and in Escalante on the Twenty-fourth. We used to go over on the flat and round up a bunch of pony horses for bucking stock.

SM: Wild horses... it was fun.

MH: Get some brave souls and...

ML: I had a saddle on a wild horse on the Big Flats for three or four days one time. We never had any fence around the rodeo grounds. There was no fence. We brought those horses off of Big Flat and brought them around to Cedar Washes then one horse went back that way with my saddle on it.

SM: It bucked you off and went?

ML: It bucked me off and went. (Laughter)

SM: Went back out on the range, huh?

MH: Did you catch up to him in a few days?

ML: Ivan Lyman and I went over. We went over the next day and couldn't find him. A day or two we went over again. It broke the rope on the halter, still had the saddle on him.

MH: He must have looked kind of funny out there, huh?

ML: Those horses were wild. You couldn't drive them into a corral. Bunch of guys, eight or ten could corral them, but two of us couldn't corral them.

SM: You had to rope him.

ML: You had to rope him, yeah.

SM: Old Ivan was a good cowboy, wasn't he?

ML: He was a good guy, a good cowboy. He was a wild guy after a wild horse.

SM: He could ride huh?

MH: Now, Lyman was from Boulder, right?

ML: Yes, he was from Boulder. He is Dell's daddy-in-law. The one thing I had over Ivan, was I could beat him with a rope. I saw him, you know he would get up to a point and throw it two or three times and miss him. We sure used to tease him.

MH: You didn't rope calves in the rodeo?

ML: No. I did a little bit but I was too slow. Sixteen was the best I could ever do.

MH: Some of those get eight or so.

ML: Well, nobody was that good back then! (Laughter)

MH: It is technology now? What makes them so good?

ML: Practice all the time I guess.

SM: How did your horses compare back then?

ML: We had good horses. We always had good horses.

SM: What was the brown horse, it's bloodlines? The one they brought over to Tropic to race when I was a boy.

ML: Oh, he was from that Morris Henry stock that was from he was from.

SM: He was a good horse.

ML: He was a good horse.

MH: Morris Henry was a

SM: A stallion. A thoroughbred?

ML: Yes, an old Mexican brought him into the country, ole' Joe Perdance. (Perdanzo)

SM: Was he the one who built that cabin up in Alvey Wash, Joe Perdance.

ML: Yes. The Haws over here, there in Boulder bought that Red Wing stock and that cross was good horses.

MH: That is where the Red Wing name came from over at the Haws? It was a horse?

ML: Red Wing was a stallion. The Red Wing Ranch was the old Frank Haws Ranch

MH: How often would you come out and visit? You are still a ways from Boulder.

ML: Back then it was a long ways from Boulder, it not very far now, but quite a long ways then.

MH: Would you go in on Sundays?

ML: I was never much on going to church, but Lenore went every Sunday.

MH: Would she take the buckboard in?

ML: She rode a horse quite a lot. Then we finally go a car and she could go drive in.
But I never went to church much.

SM: Mac didn't need to. He was perfect anyway. (Laughter)

ML: She would very seldom miss a Sunday.

MH: It was a social time for most folks.

ML: We used to have dances and ball games and a few little things like that.

MH: Do you remember the ball games?

ML: They used to play baseball and basketball and rodeo. That was the big thing.
They had quite a few dances. We very seldom missed the dances. She liked to dance and so did I so we went to lots of dances. That was where I met her was at a dance. (In Tropic)

MH: Do you remember when the CCC camps were around?

ML: I sure do.

MH: What do you remember about them?

ML: Had lots of boxing when they were around. (Laughter)

End Tape 1, Side B

Tape 2, Side A

MH: As I do these interviews and talk to ranchers, one of the things that is a mystery to me is that the government supported a lot of the work that made it better for people in this country. They put in roads, corrals, and...

SM: Water

ML: Before the CC's the road from Escalante to Boulder was a dangerous cow trail. They built the road.

MH: Stan showed me the old road on the way over, above Calf Creek?

ML: It was some road.

SM: Jeez, I don't know how you get up over that thing.

ML: Well, think about taking a car over that old road. After you got it on the other side of the Escalante River, our in that sand...

SM: ...and leave it.

ML: Some of those turns on the old Bowington Road, wow, I don't know how people ever survived, but they seemed to.

SM: Did the cars get through that sand Mac?

ML: Well, there wasn't a tree within 200 yards of the road that wasn't pruned, (Laughter) with putting the branches in the sand.

SM: Mac, I was trying t tell Marsha about that look out where that one cowboy shot his partner, is that Phillips Look-Out?

ML: That is Bowington Look-Out.

SM: They were two guys raising horses?

ML: Well they lived on the river. They had cattle and horses. Their dispute, why they got shot, was over who got one part of the river. Who got the upper and who got the lower. They wanted to divide it at Calf Creek. Old Phipps shot Bowington. There was quite a story about that. You have seen the plaque at the lookout?

MH: Right.

ML: Well, that isn't right. That is not what happened. They said it was a dispute over a woman, but there was no woman involved in it at all. They took him into Escalante and tried him after. They gave him ten dollars and sent him to Parowan to try him over there. This plaque said they never saw him again. That isn't right. He went over there and turned himself in. How I know that is that when Lenore wrote this book we went over there to the courthouse and found that out.

MH: The record of him showing up?

ML: That is how I know this is false down there.

MH: Lenore wrote the history of this area, The Boulder Story, right? I would like to buy one.

ML: I'll let you have one.

MH: Super. Lenore probably had a pretty tough time with no electricity.

ML: Yep, she was true pioneer.

MH: Women did all the cooking, canning...

ML: Raise a garden. And do every thing like that. Laundry all done by hand. First washing machine we had was a gas motor one. When things were really rough she would always say, "Better times ahead." We always seemed to manage.

SM: One thing about it Mac, you own this place and everything on it.

ML: It wasn't me that done it, it was "we". So many people say, I done this, I done that, well it wasn't that way with me: it was "we" done it.

MH: And the kids helped out?

ML: Mike, Dell, and Sharon, you bet they did a lot.

SM: Sharon can ride as good as me, or better.

ML: I've seen Sharon on a horse that did a pretty good job of bucking with her. She stayed on.

MH: You still have horses?

ML: She still likes to ride. I don't think she ever comes up here, where she and Dell don't go somewhere.

MH: You can just take off right here and get up into the Boulders from here right?

ML: Any direction.

MH: If you take this road all the way through do you end up in Widstoe?

ML: You can go back into Escalante or into Wayne County.

MH: Do you have many visitors that come through?

ML: Yes. Quite a few. It is surprising that people that come and take a picture of that old wagon.

MH: Let's go outside. We can take a few photos outside. You ready to go outside?

SM: You bet.

UTAH STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEW AGREEMENT AND DEED OF GIFT

I hereby give to the Utah State Historical Society the tapes and transcriptions of the interview/interviews recorded on May 23 2002 and grant the Utah State Historical Society the right to make the tapes and transcriptions available to the public for such educational and research purposes that are in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Society's Utah History Information Center.

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