

Mecham, S. 1+2  
TROPIC 1998

## Southern Utah Oral History Project

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



INTERVIEW WITH: Stanley L. Mecham  
PLACE OF INTERVIEW: Stan's Home in Tropic, Utah  
INTERVIEWER: Jay Haymond  
INTERVIEW NUMBER: One of Two  
DATE: January 11, 1999  
TRANSCRIBER: Pat Haymond

JH: This is an interview with Stanley L. Mecham. We are in his home in Tropic, Utah. The date is January 11, 1999. We are going to talk to Stan about his growing up in Tropic and his cougar hunts and other things. My name is Jay Haymond. Talk a little bit about growing up in Tropic in the Malen Mecham family, Stan.

SM: I was fortunate enough to have a real super neat dad. My dad was a guy who was probably the bravest guy that I ever knew, and my mom was one of the most religious ladies that I never knew, and dad was also. To tell you a little bit about growing up, times were pretty hard when I grew up. I remember a lot of times with shoes that had holes in the bottoms of my soles and we would take and put cardboard in there to do us for maybe a week or a month until we had money enough to get shoes. At the time my dad was the city Marshall and he got all of I think twelve dollars a month for being the city marshal. A lot of times I remember of him coming home beat up pretty bad. One night I remember a girl come running into the house and she was screaming, and dad went outside with a blackjack. I knew what a blackjack was real young. When he come back, why my dad's face was cut up awfully bad. And if you would look a him, you would look at him today, you would see a lot of scars over his forehead where this guy had cut him real bad. Sheriff Haycock over to Panguitch told dad that he should have really given the guy a working over with the blackjack. My dad, I remember, said I didn't hit him with a blackjack; I hit him with my fist. And after the sheriff looked at him, he said, you didn't need a blackjack, Malen. Anyway, that was some of the experiences that I remember of my dad.

My mom was a school teacher and I remember she was always on to us on proper English. I was the worst child that she had, because I still have poor English and I didn't get an education. But both of my brothers are highly educated. My older brother, why

he's been a school teacher and he was a principal for a long time. My younger brother is an engineer for the State, and now he's retired and he's working for some private firm. He makes lots of money and what not. But I didn't go that route myself.

But growing up here in Tropic was kind of special. They were nice people, the same people. Things didn't move very fast and it was kind of a slow thing. I remember when there was no tractors in town and they done all the farming with horses. I remember there was one old iron-tired wagon. I remember when they brought the first rubber-tired tractor in that was a little Ford. And I remember the guys used to loaf down at the store and when they brought the tractor in, they'd unload it, they got to quarreling if it would out pull a team of horses. There was a team of Belgiums there hooked to a wagon. So it ended up in a pulling match. And the little Ford tractor went down the street real fast, just spinning its tires, but it was going backwards. (Laughter) The horses out pulled it, but of course the tractor didn't quit and it could do a lot of work. So I remember things that way.

I remember on the school ground there was always lots of fist fights. I'm glad it's not that way any more, but it was that way when I grew up. Coming through school, why it seemed like our school usually had a pretty strong baseball team, poor basketball team that I could remember. I remember as time went on, my older brother, they got to doing better, and our group come along, we even done better. Jay, at one time I remember that as a senior, our basketball team beat St. George and played real strong, had a good coach. But I think one of the things that really motivated the young people here was the principal, who was Walt Talbot. I think you are familiar with him, aren't you, Jay. He went on to be the state superintendent. In fact I had to talk in a funeral here a while back and he was always a motivation in my life, as you have been, Jay. At one time I was having trouble in English, like I told you, and I started to skip it. He come over home and asked my mom if I was in the house and she says, yes. He took me back and he never said a word to me and he took me in the principal's office, and he said, Stan you can't win

a fight by running. You have to face things in this life. And it was a motivation for me. And here not very far back, not many months ago, I was talking in a funeral and I looked down and he was sitting there. After the services he came up and he talked to me a little bit. And he said something to me, he said, Stan, the sad thing about this life is that we all make mistakes. And you know, I wondered what he was trying to tell me. Every day since he's been gone, I know what he was trying to tell me. That we do make mistakes and we have to be on guard all the time and be thinking ahead of what decisions are and what they mean to us. If they are good, we benefit from them. If they're not, we have to pay for them. Anyway, that's kind of some of my growing up years here. It seems like the Second World War was just ending and there was a lot of them guys coming home, I remember. They were drinking a lot, and I'm sad to say I got involved with alcohol and with tobacco, but it was kind of in the summer months and I liked athletics so well that I quit doing it. This bothered my dad and my mom a lot, I know. My dad is a very, very wise person, you know that, Jay. He really understands people and all the time that I was growing up in that home he never went to bed until I was in bed. I could figured that he'd be sitting in a chair. And sometimes if I come in and I'd been doing things that I shouldn't, he'd get up and he'd shake his head. He wouldn't never say nothing. He'd just go back to the bedroom. Jay, I don't know where to go from here. Should I go into my married life?

JH: Let's start with that. That is the natural next step. You know you've been talking about your street education and your growing-up years. Was your wife your sweetheart?

SM: Coy?

JH: Yes.

SM: You know when I was in high school, I was three years older than her, but I always thought she was a cute little gal, you know. And I watched her as she grew up. She was

where I met Harold, your uncle, and I really got to love him a whole lot. He was a neat man, wasn't he? I remember once he said Stan, you build that gate there and fix this gate to come into this barrow pit and I know you can do it because you've been around a farm. Boy, I took pride in that gate. I did. I done my best. And it looked good. It had a good handle on it and we done it. Then I stayed there. Then he unloaded something else onto me that scared me really bad. If you remember, Jay, I'm sure you will, they got a little Michigan scraper and they brought it from Salt Lake to bring down there and put in with them 20s and 25s for a little while. Then one day Harold said, Stan, I want you to take that back to Salt Lake. Jay, I'd hardly even been to Salt Lake, and I was scared. And I said, I don't want to, Harold. I don't want to take it because I'm just a farm boy. He said, that's why I'm sending you. He let me worry about it all week long, and here he sent me. I went back and he sent me to Salt Lake, and I didn't know really how I was going to find the place I was going and I was nervous and I was scared. And I got up pretty close to Lehi there and looked and it was losing a little bit of oil, dripping a little bit. And that concerned me. I remember there was a gauge where I could see the oil level on the side and pretty soon I got into Salt Lake City and before long I knew I was getting into traffic and I was really getting stirred up. And that address was on the side of that scraper and I was trying to figure, now how do I figure from this street to this street to this street, State Street or Center Street? Where do I start counting off? Finally, I got really nervous. I was in a lot of traffic and I see a place where I could pull over. I asked this kid, there, how close am I to this address? He said, just two blocks away. That was good news. And I got there and got back. But what I really found about Harold was he made a person, grow, didn't he?

JH: You bet. That was one of his hallmarks.

SM: Yes, he did. He could really make them grow. And I want to keep on this subject for just a little while longer, because then I wanted to buy me a trailer house. I wanted to go on construction. So I went over to Panguitch and Coy wanted to go with me and there was a guy there, and I can't remember his name. I'll bet you would, but he had a black trailer and he was an older guy. It was about a 27 footer, and I went over to Panguitch to get the money and they told me that the people over here in this valley had a poor credit rating and he wouldn't give me one bit of money. I was really disappointed. So Coy, she did go with me over to Delta and we rented a house there. She stayed there for a little while and she didn't like it there. Do you remember how the mosquitoes were there, Jay? They were terrible. So we worked there for a little while and that Warwood guy I'm telling you about, he just really hated me. And one day they got a new eight and it had a ripper, you remember that? And Harold put me on it after I'd run a shift for a little bit. This guy said, if he puts that kid on that CAT again and not me, he said, I'm quitting. Old Harold let him quit. And it was funny cause that week I worked nine hours and then Harold would send me out there at night after that. And I would run that, and I wasn't getting hardly any sleep at all. I wondered, he was probably trying to see what I was made of. Anyway, I went there, and I remember he says, keep track of your time, Stan. So I did. And when they paid me, they shorted me just a little money and I probably should have just let gone, but I said, Harold, you shorted me a little bit. Pretty soon when that next check come, they'd over paid me \$150. You remember old Lawrence Chynoweth, you do. He told me, don't tell them. Just keep it. And I thought, I'm not going to keep it. And you know Harold always drove that little Plymouth. He come tooling down through there and I stopped him and I says, Harold, now you've overpaid me. And I've always wondered, and I'll always wonder if he was testing me there. He says, Thanks, Stan. I knew you was going to do that. He said, do you want a winter's job? And they hadn't ever given me that before. They'd just keep their older men on. I said, Boy, I'd really like one. He had Leland Griffin and my father-in-law. They didn't get down to Mt. Carmel Junction. Leland did for a little while, but he didn't last there. But he didn't take Bush down there. That really meant a lot to me, cause see that's when I started getting ahead.

And I wanted to build this home and I needed somebody to back me. So I went to them and I went to Harold and told him what my problem was and he said that's no problem. He must have talked to Woody, cause he told me to talk to him. I went there and he wrote me the nicest letter and he says we stand behind this man a hundred percent. I might get a little teary here too, cause it meant a lot to me. And I took that and within a week, Jay, I had my money for this house that you're looking at. Anyway, it meant a lot to me. But probably what meant more to me with Harold than anything. Do you remember, Jay, how we used to have them little priesthood sessions there and we studied the priesthood lesson? And I was doing really good. I had been off alcohol for a long time. In Green River, old Lawrence Chynoweth, he talked me into drinking a beer, and it started me to drinking again. I got really bad. I remember the first night I done it, I got on the phone to call Coy and tell her what I'd done cause I felt so bad about it. When I got on the phone and started talking to her, she said you sound different. And it was raining and thundering and I remember I was in that phone booth and I didn't have the guts to tell her that I'd broke down. I got really bad in Green River and I got to drinking really bad with them guys. Lots of times Harold asked me if I'd go out on the grade and do something after work. I come out of the motel room one day and he honked at me and I stepped out and he said, come here, Stan. Will you do something for me? I says I'll do anything in this world for you, and you know it. He said, look me in the eyes. I want you to tell me that you're not going to drink any more booze. That's what he said. I looked at him and he says, I'm looking at you, but you're not answering me. I didn't want I promise him, cause I didn't know whether I could keep that promise, Jay. That was in 1964. He just kept looking at me and I finally said, Harold, I'll do her. He says, you're not that kind of guy, Stan. He said these guys are laughing at you, and you're not that kind. I think Harold really did know people really well.

JH: He did. He was a good student.

SM: Wasn't he. And when I got over to Hanksville I thought Harold won't know if I have one



more beer. I'm going to stop here. And I stopped that little Volkswagen. It was brand new. I stopped right there and I thought about it, and I thought no, you could probably fool Harold and you can probably fool Coy, but there's two people you're never going to fool, and one of them's yourself and the other one is God. Now what do you want to do? You know, Jay, I turned around and I left, and that's been a lot of years now, hasn't it? '64. I have never even touched alcohol in cough medicine to this day, and I have been tempted so many times. I've got a ranch out here. I was really thirsty, and here come this motor home over rough roads where it shouldn't show. There was a bunch of Germans lost. I told them what to do. They go over and get some beer and bring back and hand it to me, and I wanted to be polite, and so I just took it. But you know, Jay, it tempted me. But that promise I made with him come ringing through and I just wasn't going to break it. And I'm alone a lot now. I'm alone a lot, but I wrote a letter to Harold and I wanted to send it and he passed away. And it was about that thick ( he motions how thick the letter was) That letter's gone but I would like to write another one and somehow get it to his family, because maybe some of his family down the road, it might give them the boost that he give me when I had it. Anyway, that takes me up through that period of time. I want you to know, Jay, I sure do have a lot of respect for you and your family, your dad and them, because that's where I did get started. Jay, you'll probably never remember this, but once you told me a long time ago for me to leave here. You says, Stan, all that's here is your roots. I don't know whether you'll remember that, but you told me, you need to move on and get into doing different things. And when I left, I could see that I was gaining, and although I was homesick a lot, I felt that I was productive, Jay. That winter I was here and I couldn't work, I wasn't doing nothing. I wasn't productive. But if I was building a road that would benefit someone else, then I felt that I was doing something. But then you know, Capitol Reef was where I had a chance to come over here and I put in for a custodian job. I remember Woody says, Stan, don't even go over there. You won't like that kind of work. And he says, has the school board got any relation over there putting in for that job? And I says, yeah. He says, you won't get it anyway. But I did. I come over here and it was hard for me to adjust to sweeping floors. I never will forget

the first time I was running that D-9 push CAT over there around Green River, somewhere, I remember I had a really good time with your dad that day. I was on that CAT and it was heating up a little bit. It had been heating up and I was the one that happened to be on it, and your dad wasn't far away when it blowed. And it just went poof--a big puff of smoke, and I felt so bad. I was telling your dad, I feel bad. I don't know what I've done. I don't know what I've done, Mel. And he said, you didn't do nothing. He said, Stan, it just blowed up. Then he says, sit down here. Get in the car here with me for a minute. And he had his Oldsmobile there then, and you know, I really had a good talk with him. He said, I really appreciate what you've done for us Stan. Right then, I was actually working at the school, but I was working summers for your dad and Harold. He says, you're doing good and you're making some big strides, and just keep making them. That was motivating to me, too. But I come back and it was hard for me to go back to sweeping floors, cause I liked equipment really well.

JH: I know the feeling.

SM: Yeah, you know the feeling, Jay. You was a top operator. In fact you taught me how to shift that 20 without putting the clutch down, remember? Did you tell your dad you were doing that? (Laughter)

JH: No.

SM: I remember I could hit it and never grind a gear either, and wide open all the time.

JH: That's what they wanted.

SM: They wanted them to roll. Make them roll. Keep 'em wide open. As many loads as you can get, get them.

JH: I'll tell you one story on the St. George job and on the Dugway job, they wanted me to take that roller- that confounded roller up that grade. There was no brakes on it. So our mitigating measure was to have Earl McKenzie follow behind me with a 20. But you know how boring it was to go up that long grade, so his attention wandered. Sure enough, that confounded roller conked out and so I started rolling back and he was sort of lolling around there and all at once he looked up and I was heading for him. Bang. Tank. The roller was where they kept the water for the wheels. It bent the heck out of it. But he was awake then. So was I. (Laughter) Anyway, I well remember that grade.

SM: That dugway.

JH: Yes, that dugway.

SM: And it was narrow, wasn't it?

JH: Oh, boy.

SM: You remember the sides of them scrapers they rubbed a little bit.

JH: Yeah. We widened it with those scrapers.

SM: Yeah, that was a good experience.

JH: Let's go on and talk. You know when we were at Delta, we went out one day and you were interested in a horse.

SM: I really was.

JH: Tell me about that.

SM: I was really interested in racehorses. Boy that was really something with me. And if you remember, Jay, we went and looked at a bay mare there. She was in foal to a horse by the name of Ray Defrancias. He was a stakes winner from five furlongs to two miles. I bought that mare from Doyle Pace. That was the place we went and looked at her. In fact, she foaled while we were there. I was homesick over there a lot because I'd never been away from home. But when I would get around them horse people, I'd really spark up. Anyway, I bought her and she had a filly, and I named her Speedy Dee. And when Speedy--and this is a strange thing, too, this happened. When we were over in Mt. Carmel doing that job there one night I dreamed that something killed that horse's colt. I'd named him Distant Wind and I told Coy, I said, I dreamed that that colt got killed. She said, well, that's just a dream. I says I know it is. And as we come home and got into the pasture where we started looking for the horses, and I couldn't see that colt. I went up and the lightening had hit it and killed it. Yeah, it had. It killed it. So I bred that mare again to a horse that was called Two To Go in Escalante. It was a horse of Dee Haws'. I started Speedy and I run her mother both, and I got a first and a second. I'm trying to think of that little short guy that worked for you guys from up to Spanish Fork and he was a little cowboy. Can you remember him? And he brought his horse when we were over to Capitol Reef. Jimmy Diamond. Do you remember him?

JH: I do.

SM: He was a real cowboy.

JH: Yeah, he was.

SM: When I went back he said, how did you do at the racetracks? I said I got a first and a second. He said you're ruined for the rest of your life. But I want to tell you this story. It's kind of a Cinderella story. Then I got this other filly born the next spring and I named

her Distant Wind, too, the one that got killed, so I could name this other colt, and I named her Distant Wind. I trained her myself. You know we didn't have no racetracks here. When I took over to Kanab to start her as a two-year-old, old Blake Robson over here at Escalante, he was a big authority on thoroughbreds and racehorses, here this kid is. I lead this mare in here. And I'm going to tell you this story too, Jay. It's not a good story either, but I wrote a hot check out to get her entered. (Laughter) I did. And I knew I shouldn't do it and I knew that I was spending money that I didn't have, but I put her in that race. And when I got there, I said, Blake, how do you think I'll do. And he says, you haven't got a prayer, that's what I think. He said, see that stallion right there, that two-year-old stallion? He's my Moola Blux. I never forgot that name. And the stud fee is \$2500. No, you ain't got no business here, he said. But that little mare didn't know that and they snapped the gate and she went out on front and she won the race. I'll never forget Coy. She says, I guess you've got a racehorse. And we covered the bad check and everything was good from then on.

JH: Was there prize money?

SM: Yeah, we got the...

JH: Did the prize money cover the entry?

SM: And more. Yeah, we had some to even spend. And she says, you've got you a race horse. And how true that was. Dee Haws over here, that had all them race horses, liked her and he said, Stan, I'll make you a deal. I'm going to go into Arizona and I'd like to take that mare and he says I'll take her on a percentage. It was a good deal for me. So he took her over to Prescott and so we drove over to watch her race the first race. I had never gambled, Jay, but the odds kept going up on her. It got thirty to one and I told Coy, I said, I can't take it no more. I'm going to bet on her. And this racehorse guy that really knew horses there said, do you really think your mare's got a chance today. And I said I know

she's got a chance.

End of Side One, Tape One

Begin Side Two, Tape One

JH: We're racing in Prescott.

SM: We're racing there, and he said, do you think you've got a chance? And I says, yeah. He said don't bet on her alone. He says kuehniella it. I said what's that? He said you pick three horses. They can come in in any order and you will really clean up and make a lot of money. I took all the money I had and I went and put it on the Kue thing and I got broke of gambling there that day. They popped the gates and she broke out and she held them off up the straight of way. They go five and a half furlongs. She held them off. She goes into the first turn. I know she can outrun them. Cause I know that that's where she's going to do good, is along the back side. That's where she always did. And she started to pull away from them there. She finished ten lengths ahead of everybody, and them other two horses wasn't there and I lost all my money. Course we had the purse, but if I would have gambled the money on her, I would have made a lot of money that day. But maybe it was a lesson that I needed to be taught about bettin'. Anyway, I brought her home and they had the best race in Utah at the time. It was at the Iron County Fair and the derby for three-year-olds. And it was seven furlongs going out, you know almost a mile. They popped the gates and she had the inside and she held it, and I knew she was going to win that day, and she won that raceway big. It's kind of funny when you look at the pictures of the first race she won, there was three of us standing there by her. There was people lined up for a country mile with her then, you know she was getting good. Anyway, she won that one and I took her back, was taking her over to Kanab and then was going to Prescott with her the next year and she broke a bone in her--no I'm getting wrong there. When she did so good there, why the top trainer over here at Prescott, he come and offered me a really good deal on her, and he took her down to Phoenix to the

big track. I went down there to watch her run, and he bet a lot of money, that guy did. I didn't bet on her that day, but she come out and she was going the seven furlongs and she started to make her move, and something happened. He said she swallowed her tongue. That old bee's doing something different. She just quit. But she broke a splint bone in her leg. I had her operated on and then I took her back to Kanab the next spring and she won a race and the guy was standing behind me and he said, do you want to sell that mare? I said, what do you want to give me for her? He made me a good offer and I didn't take it right there, but I was talking to Coy and there was a mare I wanted really bad in Denver. She said, let's sell her. So we did. We sold her right there. And I hated to part with her. In fact I tried for years to find her, even clean up into the country. I never did ever find her again, but I bought a mare called Pad of Silver that was a stakes mare, a high class mare, but she was eleven years old and she was bleeding and they was using a lot of lasix on her and couldn't run her because she'd bleed. And I bought her for a thousand dollars and I took her over to St. George. They'd just barely made a new racetrack and she was going a mile and a sixteenth, and she could run anywhere from five to that. She was a great granddaughter of Man of War, and I think even better. Her grandsire was First Fiddle. He was the top horse in Kentucky when the Second World War broke out. I used to know them pedigrees, Jay. I could tell you miles and miles on them. But anyway, she broke a leg, her hind leg. And this is a fairy tale story too; I mean a Cinderella fairy tale. She broke her leg and she still finished third. I was asked to talk in graduation over here, our high school graduation, and I told them that champions, peoples, animals or athletes, won when they were hurting. And I told them about that, how she still finished third and she'd shattered a bone. And she did. She still finished third in that race. After the race, I thought she'd just run out of wind or something. I wasn't familiar with her. And somebody said something's wrong with your mare. She was going like this, and I looked and her foot was just shattered. They went down and they was trying to get her in a trailer and then they was going to give her a shot to kill her. I said, No, you're not. They said, yes we are. I said no you're not. I'm going to have a vet look at her. I'd really fell in love with the mare. She was a pretty thing. Anyway, we

got her in a stall and the vet come. He says, I think I might can save her life. This old Blake was telling me I didn't have no business with horses. They'd just bought an expensive stud out of Argentina and his name was Nylo Boy. He says, you can't save that horse. And his partner said I tried to save Baby Bev. I'll never forget that either. I don't know who Baby Bev was, but you can't save a horse's life when their leg's broke. So if you save her, I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll give you a free breed to Nylo Boy. They didn't know it, but they had to give me the free breed. But anyway, it was touch and go and they put a plaster cast on her. And she had a lot of trouble with that cast, and it got to stinking, and she got real poor. She was in a lot of pain. That stall was really new then and nice, and I could hear her start to grit her teeth on the wall. She started hurting. Then I'd go out and give her Butazolamin to kill the pain, but she was getting poorer and poorer and going down, and she was getting sores on her from laying. You know she'd get down. I had a lot of straw, but she was still getting sores on her. I told Coy, we'd better have the vet check her. I had to go to a church meeting in Escalante and when I come back, she told me that the vet said to put her down, but that her foot was dead. The circulation had been cut off. So that next morning was Sunday, and I sent all the kids to church and I thought I'm not going to put her down till I make sure it's dead. And I took my knife and I kept working on that cast until I cut it until I could bust it. And when I broke it, it looked like a big worm came right out of her ankle. She had no hair on there, and I went like that and I touched her, and she moved. And I knew she had feeling. And I just jumped in my old two-ton truck and I went to Escalante and got some wet sawdust, cause I thought if I got that, it would be softer for her. It had turpentine in it and it would help heal the sores. So I put it about sixteen inches deep in that. And she'd eat Indian corn. I had a lot of Indian corn, you know that colored corn. I'd shell that, and it must have had a lot of strength in it, because she would eat that. And it probably was good that she got thinner, cause she was lighter on her feet. One day I come by from the auction and I looked in and she was walking. But what was amazing, she growed a whole new hoof. Her hoof started to shrivel up, and I looked and I could see something coming out and there was a ridge there, and she growed a whole new hoof. Anyway, when she got



pretty good, I asked them guys if I could breed her to their horse, and they says, yeah, you can even come and get him. I brought him here and I got my friends here, and I said when that horse mounts that mare, grab his front feet so he doesn't put too much weight. I bred her one time, and what was funny, when I had her in St. George, these race horse guys, they said, that mare is barren, cause you can't buy a stakes-winning mare for a thousand dollars. She won't have a colt and we've heard that she had one colt and she was dead and she was never able to get in foal again. They were telling me all this stuff, you know. I bred her one time, and in the spring she had the most beautiful horse colt you ever seen. And I named it after old Blake Robinson and his partner, old Billie. I named it Billie Blake. And, oh, he growed into a beautiful horse. When he was two years old, they come and they offered me \$1500, and that was quite a lot of money then, so I took it. And he went on to really be a sprinter. He won money. I mean he was winning all over. And back in Detroit he chipped both front knees and put him out, but he was a real race horse. But the next one she had, I called him Pad's Courage, and he was a beautiful sorrel stripped faced horse with stocking legs, you know, and he was a beautiful horse. I had him entered in a two-year futurity, and he was snottin'. He had a cold and they says you hadn't ought to run that colt, Stan. He's snottin'. He's got a fever. I says I think he can run with them horses with a fever. And I run him and he run a real close. He run second, but he almost won it. There was a guy standing there, and he said I'll give you \$2500 for that colt. See this house you're standing in, Jay. That \$2500 started this right here. You know, I needed that, so I let him go. But they took him and he went to New York to the big tracks and he won. The Fingerland Race Track, he won four, boom, boom, boom, boom--big races. And the next time out he broke a leg and they did put him down. Then she had two more colts and that same guy, he bought both of them. He named one Kaiparowits Queen after this Kaiparowits Plateau. I've seen her win. I don't know what the other one done. I had another one. I called him Some Day Maybe. He could not run. So that's kind of my horse racing.

JH: That's a pretty good dissertation. When I talked to Mac, he in effect put you up on a

pedestal as his best partner. And what he was talking about, of course, was cougar hunting, because he loves to hunt cougars, at least he did. He still does, but he isn't comfortable with his present critical situation. But tell me how you got into that cougar hunting game.

SM: My grandfather, Jay, he come into this valley with his mom and his dad and they come in in a wagon, of course, a covered wagon. They come from Morgan County. Shortly after they got here, he had a big family I think of twelve; there might have been thirteen children even. But when my grandfather was about nine years old, my great grandfather had a heart attack I would say in the orchard there. And when they found him, he said, now don't touch me. He says, I'm going. But he says, I want to talk to you before I die, but if any of you touch me, I know I'll die. And this is the final words I want to leave you. I want you to be kind to your mother and stay true to the Church. And my grandfather, who was just a little boy, he went to step over him and he touched him and his dad died. But granddad went to herding sheep at nine years old, and he had a burro, you know. He would go with his older brothers and he would pack into there. I think what motivated me to want to hunt lions was he told me he had a dog and he'd tell me about catching these wild animals around the sheep. I really got interested and then when I started to see these government trappers with these long-eared dogs, you know, I don't know what it was. It just fascinated me and I wanted one really bad. I never got one until I was out of high school, and I got a female finally and her name was Beth. I thought now I can catch bobcats and lions and bears, and I took out through the hills and I caught everything but them. I chased deer, I chased elk. I didn't realize the training and the process that went into that. At that time I started dating Coy, and my father-in-law you know, he'd been a government trapper and he was going to teach me how to be a lion hunter. But we took that dog out for a winter and we never caught a lion. We hunted almost every day but Sundays, and she got broke off from deer and off from fast game, coyotes and different things, and then she would track a little bit, but she wouldn't stay with it. But there was an old lion hunter, and his name was Jack Butler. I'll tell you a

little bit about Jack Butler real quick. He was a little short man of about five foot six inches. When I met him, he had white whiskers. I'd heard a lot about him, but he was real elderly when I met him. I picked up a dog on the highway and I stopped in and I visited there. He says, boy why don't you stop when you come back and have some supper with me. Jack, he liked to drink a little bit after hunting, and I got in there and I got to drinking a little with him. Anyway, he told me a lot about his life. He says, Stan, I come to this country when I was real young, on the run from the law. He says, I was working on a ranch in Texas and we lost some horses to some Mexicans and he says my boss handed me a 30:30 Winchester and two boxes of bullets and put me on a good stout fast horse, and he said, go get them horses, Jack, and more if you can. He says, I was good. I got more. And he says they got to pushing me and he says one thing led to another and I was getting in more trouble, and I just left. He says I left there on the run from the law. He come up here and then it's really amazing, cause I read all these magazines. I take this Hound magazine and they talk about Jack Butler a lot, about his bloodhounds, and how he caught lion with them. He says, Stan, I started with twelve bloodhounds, and they were so lazy and so big and slow, they couldn't catch cold. He said I never started catching lions until I got a blue tick from Sears Willis. Later on I learned that Jack's dogs did have bloodhound in them. He said, boy, I'll give you a puppy. So I went over there and he had a pup for me and I called him Echo, and he was a real pretty black dog. He didn't look back like that bitch was looking back. He was bred to catch lions for years and years, and I caught two lion with them dogs before I went to work for you guys. Then I sold them dogs and I couldn't get it out of my blood. You know, I wanted to get back to doing that. Then when I come back, I bought a black and tan bitch up in Kamas, and she was no good. See this painting right here on the wall? This old Brown Keeling that I've told you about--I don't know whether I've told you about it. Have I told you about Brown Keeling?

JH: I can't place him.

SM: We'll get him into this picture right now. He bought my dogs from me when I went to work for you, and he give \$100, and that was nothing. I didn't realize then what them dogs were worth. They were actually catching lions, and they had caught quite a few bobcats. And when I come home, I called him to come down cause I was having trouble with that female. She wouldn't do nothing. He come down and hunted and I tried to buy my dog back, and he wouldn't let me have it. I offered him \$250 and he wouldn't do it, and he'd got him for \$50. Tell what I'll do, boy, he says, I'll let you have this little walker dog, and he's a pretty little dog and his feet's like walnuts. He's going to be tough. And Brown was right from the South. He was named after a missionary named Brown who converted his people back in the Smokey Hills. That's where he lived. He was just right out in the mountains. And he had apostatized from the Church when I met him. He would always try to tell me--now, boy, he said, nothing to that Church. Old Brigham Young was just a woman's man, and I can prove it by the twenty-seventh wife. He said, did you ever read that book? I says no. But anyway he wouldn't let me have that dog, and Jay, I wanted him so bad I actually got sick to my stomach. I did. I got sick. In fact, he gave me a pill to settle my stomach. But the pill he really give me that settled my stomach was this dog. He said, I'll trade you straight across and I'll sell you a dog for a hundred,. I didn't have a hundred dollars, but I had fifty dollars and a 30:30. So when I went up there, his wife, she was from the South too, his second wife. Really both of them were, but his wife had died with cancer like Coy did, you know. Anyway, this got to be real interesting because that was a nice meal. When I went to leave, I says, Brown, I can't come up with the other fifty dollars, but this gun, I paid \$75 for it and it's a good gun. If you'll take that. He said, nope, I'm not taking that gun, but you're taking that dog. When you have \$50, give it to me. I had an old beat up '53 truck with an old homemade rack, and this was before I'd met Mac. I was poor. A lot of times I walked because I couldn't even afford gas, you know. But I did get to catching a lion, and when I thought he was right to his peak and I had met Mac and Mac had given me this Charley tan dog. Boy they were a tough pair of cookies. I told old Brown, I said, Brown, why don't you come down and go hunting with us. There was no snow and I knew it would be tough. You

bet, boy, he says, I'll be right down. He comes down and he pulls this Red Bone out of there. There's not a better dog on earth than Dixie. He says she can catch anything with four legs. Then he pulled this dog out and he says, "See this dog, old Bing. He says, Stan, he's as tough as they come." And this little Maggie dog, I can even remember their names. The little plot bitch, what did he call her? Nig. He called her Nig. And she was really good. So we go out way early in the morning over here on the Canaan Mountain, and my dogs made a strike and his dogs just sat in there with him, you know just like vacuum cleaners a smelling. Boy them dogs looked pretty good. But I'll tell you, in about an hour they didn't look very good. Mine was starting to look good. Then he started to offer me money for that dog, and it got more and it got more and it got more. Well I think I mentioned in here I did let him have that one dog and I ended up with enough money to buy seven Hereford heifers. But I didn't let him have Jack back. I had this dog here, Jay, for fourteen years, and I caught a lot of game with him. In fact when I buried him, I cried. I had him for fourteen years and then I lost him. What I started to tell you, he would stay a tree, Jay, for three nights. Now that's a long time to stay the tree. And he'd wait for me there until I'd get there. He knew I was coming, and I did. I risked my neck a time or two to get to him, but he knew I was coming. All of the dogs I've got now comes from him. I interbred my dogs really heavy. I call it line breeding. A lot of people call it inbreeding. That's been almost forty years now. I have crossed in a little bit of walker dogs into them. And then about three years ago I crossed a red bone bloodhound and I've probably got the toughest dogs I've ever had. My dogs were getting littler by inbreeding. But I kept the looks and the stuff and some of them will come out long-eared and pretty like him, and some of them come out short-eared after all these years. That's when I met Mac and he invited me to come over to his ranch and stay and go hunting with him. Yeah, Mac is my hero, Jay. I've hunted with Arnold Buttons, who is really a good lion hunter, and my father-in-law, Elmo Bushnell is a good lion hunter. But in my opinion, they didn't measure up to him any way, shape or form. I'll just put it that way. I don't care if that's printed, either.

But anyway, Mac was really sharp with tracks and stuff and the best horseman I've ever been around. And I really picked him and learned a lot from him in a hurry. And we hunted a lot together over them years. The last hunt I had with him was two years ago. Have you ever watched the Waltons? You have, haven't you? Okay, this fellow that we took, it was his dad and brother that that story was wrote about. He's a real neat guy from New York. He's a banker, and when I seen him, I thought oh no, he's real frail. He's a little guy, and I just got through with a trophy hunter. He wanted something really big, and he come three times and he didn't get something real big. And then he got real mean and hard to get along with. In fact, the last time out he says, Mecham, is this what you call lion hunting? I think you and McClain are a day late and a dollar short all the time. And he was real angry, and I started to lose my temper too. And McClain was telling me to have you know that PR stuff, which I didn't know what it really is. But he says it was public relation. So I would go over the hill and let him deal with that guy.

Then Clint had this other guy come in, Paul. He said, Dad, you take Paul this morning and I'll take this other guy from Georgia. So we set out, me and Paul was driving down the road, and I says, Paul, let's get something straight before we get out of town. Are you a nice guy or are you a mean guy? He says, what do you mean? I says, "I've just got through taking a mean guy out and I don't want no more. I can't take no more." He says, "Stan, if I just look at this beautiful country, and I don't care about nothing else." And we just got down the road a ways and there's three coyotes trying to kill a newborn calf. I says, "Paul, do you want to get out and shoot that coyote?" "No", he says, "it looks like you've got blood in your eyes." I jumped out and I went to work on them coyotes. I hit a couple of them. Anyway, coming back, he says, we didn't get nothing, but I had two guns and he says, Stan, get ready down here cause I want to get out and shoot them coyotes. He said I didn't know they would do that to a calf.

But anyway, we didn't catch nothing that day, but the next day we went over to Mac's. Like I stated earlier in the conversation, Mac went with us. I didn't think he'd go. Now

he was almost blind. I said Mac, you won't want to be going this morning, would you? Well sure I want to be going, he said, you know that. He says, my horse has got a shoe off. Clint says, well Mac, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to go out and put a shoe on that horse, and you just get ready. So he got ready, and old Dell LeFevre, his boy, was there too. He went with us and we rode up the road here a ways and we hit a track. Clint had hit a track earlier but we couldn't find where it went. I says Clint, that lion would go up that draw, I believe. He had a dog called Smoke and there was snow there and he called that dog and he hit in the brush and stuff and he started that track. We took that lion up over some real rough country over toward Sand Creek and they caught it. Boy, them boys were really up high and that lion was treed there and you know what Paul said, he said, you go ahead and take this lion. That was the kind of guy he was. The guy had a bow and arrow and he got some nice pictures of it. The next day we was going up the road and we met the bishop over there. He said there's a lion up here, but I don't think you can catch it. It's been running these guys' dogs into the dirt. I didn't know we was going to hook that lion, but we hooked that lion. Old Mac went again that day. And what I'd have to do, I had to ride in front of him. I'd tell him which way to duck. But he could hear the dogs and it really tickled him, you know. And all day long Dell would say, "We're going to catch that lion." It's kind of like a lion prints on today. It's smart and it was really backtracking and throwing snags into the dogs. We were on that lion all day long, and Paul's lost his had. He's scratched up, and we get over to this canyon just before night and the dogs have treed it in a great big old dead tree. I says, Clint, have him shoot it right here. He says, no, that might hurt my dogs if he comes out wounded. I says, there's enough dogs they'll handle it. Let him shoot it here. He wouldn't do it. He went down, and that lion bailed out of that tree and he didn't get to shoot it. And it was so tired, it couldn't run very good. And them dogs was a hitting it, you know. It'd turn and slap them and fight them off. They went right off, and that Sand Creek is treacherous. We get down in there and I don't know how this barky dog of mine. He hit that bottom. He must have hit where he could slide on the snow, or it'd killed him. He was in the bottom. I said, Clint, that lion's not in the bottom or that dog would have that

track. He said, well let's tie them dog leashes together and let me off this. I said, I'm not letting you off this bank ledge. He says yes, you are. Tie them on there. Finally he took seven dogs leashes and I'm worrying about whether the snaps are going to hold or not because it's way off. But I can let him down onto this little shelf, and I dropped him down on that shelf and he just went like that and looked around here and he said, Here it is Dad, get old Paul. I said, Paul, hurry down here. He says, Stan, just tell Clint I'm not coming down. I'm scared. Just tell him I want to pay him and he's done all he needs to do, but I'm really scared of heights. Clint says get him down here. And I said, Paul come on down, he got down there. And Clint says, "Paul, you can do 'er." He says, do you think I can do it, Clint? He says, yeah, have Dad let you down. So I did. I let him down and then I set him the gun and Clint told him where to shoot that lion. He shot and then I see the lion coming right at him. It was coming running fast and he went like that, and boom, he missed it. And the next shot, he did hit it and it rolled off there and it was fighting the dogs and he got it again. But Clint says, Dad, go up there and get the lariats and I'm going to go off on these ledges. I said, no you're not. I said, let's get out of here. There's a storm a coming. Look behind you. Have you got any matches? No. I said, get out of there. Come up out of there, both of you. He says, no you go up. I had to climb that steep mountain and go up and get the lasso ropes and Dell had took Mac back because of his eyes. So we went back. What did he do? He tied them dog leashes and them lasso ropes together and there's a little tree in the crevice, and I says, Paul, you get your feet and hold that rope and I'm going down. I says, Clint, you can't reach the bottom, and it was a drop about from this roof. I could see it from where I was at. He went down and he drops down off there and he skinned that lion. He said, I believe I can work my way around that little crevice there and get hold of that rope. So he tied the lion hide onto his back and he come around there and I was really getting scared. He clumb that rope hand over hand up to a certain point, and then he tried to get his hands out on there, you know, to try to get a hand to get a hold, and he couldn't. I could see his little stubby fingers and for some reason it reminded me of when he was just a little teeny kid. I thought we're in bad trouble. I could see Paul was a shaking. He was a trembling. And



Clint says, I can't make her, Dad. I'm going to go out. I says, well you haven't got no matches. What are you going to do? He said, I'm going to go climb. I said, you can't climb out there, Clint. If you slip there, you'll be dead. He took that dog and he said, I believe I can get in that crusted snow and get out of there. I couldn't stop him. He took that way and I watched him till the storm had hit us and he was just blurry to me, seeing him. Then here come Paul down there and he had to come over a little shelf and he had to get a hold of dead tree. He got there and he froze. He was just a shaking, and I said, Paul, you've got to come out of there. He went like that and he ducked his head, and I thought what am I going to do with him? I can't reach him. I can't get to him. He raised his head up and I says are you okay, Paul. He says, yeah, Stan. I was praying. I said I'm going to tell you something, Paul. I'm three prayers ahead of you, and I was, Jay. Anyway, he come up over it. That little boy had a lot of grit and he crawled up over it and I had a lasso rope there, you know, and he throws her up to me and I said now just tie that on to a square knot and throw it to me and I'll pull you up over that ledge. He said, I don't know how to tie a square knot. I said, I don't care what you tie, just tie a knot. You get you a knot. And the adrenaline was running in me so heavy, I'm not a kidding you. I pulled him up out of there like he was a feather. He lit there and he says, gee, you're stout. I said I'm scared. I said, I'm worried about Clint, Paul. I said, really worried about him. And I was hustling trying to get on that rim to see if he could of got out of there. And he got out of there. He said as long as he kept moving, that snow wouldn't slide. I don't know how he got out. It was risky. It was a situation

End of Side Two, Tape One

Begin Side One, Tape Two

JH: This is tape two. We are still talking with Stanley L. Mecham, January 11, 1999. We're still talking about cougar hunting. Let's keep up with this story, Stan.

SM: Okay, Jay. We got together and then we had to come out of there in the dark down to

Mac's ranch. Clint's real good in that country because he's been on the study for the State there and he knew the country real well. We got back down there and it was a good hunt. Paul, he went on to write a really nice article. That's what he wanted to do. He wanted to write. He'd been on a hunt in Montana up in the Bitterroot country, and they walked. He said it was just too hard. He couldn't walk to a lion. Clint, I'll never forget, he says, Paul, you've got a real story now. And he wrote that. But what was really interesting, when he got back home, he told us he'd been running around his yard, you know, to build his self up for the hunt, cause he'd been on that one in Montana and it was quite strenuous. But he'd slipped and he'd hurt his arm. He complained a little bit about his arm, but when he got back home, he went in and he had it X-rayed and he had a fractured arm. He'd done all that stuff with that arm, and you know that really taught me a lesson there. You know you can't really tell what a person has got in them till they're really put to the test. And he was really put to the test. I'll tell you, he fired one hundred percent. Now I don't know where you want me to go, Jay.

JH: I was thinking that the idea of lion hunting is a sport to some people. It's a livelihood to some people. It's a way to protect livestock for some people. How do you feel about it from your own perspective? Where are you coming from with this activity?

SM: I'm glad, Jay, that you answered me that question and I can see that you're really knowledgeable. I like to see somebody that's well balanced in life, and the way you presented that question, I'd say that you are well balanced. I'll tell you how I would like to see it run in the state of Utah now, is on a limited entry, where they allow so many tags in a unit and where they can keep studying and monitoring these units and keep a healthy population of lions, and also where the deer and the elk have a chance also. Because a lot of people feel that it's wrong to hunt lion. There's a great move in our state right now, Jay, to stop hounding completely. They say that it's cruel and they say that we're murderers. To me, I think I'm a friend to a lion. There's nothing that I think is more beautiful than to see a lion in a tree. And I don't want to take his life. When you talk about livelihood, that helped raise my family, my dogs did. You know it was part of our living; it has been all along. So I'm familiar with that part. I'm also real familiar with the

depredation part. Before you leave, I'll show you a lion that I took that just killed a whole bunch of sheep in July, a great big old mountain lion that's healthy and strong. But he was a killer. And it don't bother me to take one of them. But I'll have to admit, as I've got older I really hate to see them killed. But this winter, why we donated a hunt for this Proposition 5 because I think that our Fish and Game have done a good management in my short life. When I first started to hunt, I didn't see no antelope. That's when they introduced the elk into our country. Now, Jay, in our country, why I've counted and known that I've seen herds of at least five to seven hundred head of elk in the winter. In fact they got where they were over-running our country and now they've upped the cows permits. In the area I was in today, I told you I see where a lion had killed a big cow. The elk have survived the lion really well, but it seems where the elk are so heavy, the deer have a tendency to pull away from the elk. And where the deer hunting was real good in that area, it's been a little bit poor. And now I think what I'm probably trying to say is I think they're doing a good job. At one time I questioned it, but as my boys have worked with them doing this lion study, I think this has been helpful. But I've been to several meetings where anti-hunting people say that them studies are not right and they're not doing them right, and this and that. And you ought to hear some of the ideas they have. It really bothers me, because they really don't know what's even going on. And yet they're saying that you shouldn't do this, you shouldn't do that. In fact there was one lady that said you're nothing but murderers. And my second grade class, she says--oh it really got funny there. She stood up and called us murderers and then she said, they even walked by my door and cut a tree down right in front of the kids. (laughter)

JH: Do you think George Washington was there?

SM: And that's what this guy up from northern Utah got up and said, George Washington had hounds, too. You know he was a great man. He was a great leader. But see that's where I'm coming from. And what I would like to see now that this has been made a national monument, it's going to put a lot of restrictions to the habitat. What I would like to see, there's thousands of acres that could be made into habitat. I would like to see that happen, and I would like to see the people who have cow permits stay at that number.

But think how great the wildlife could be increased here. There's thousands of acres that probably will never be developed. That bothers me that there will be no development there. But I feel in managing the lions that they should go to a limited entry. Right now, Jay, this area that we're on right here as you sit here in this house, is a quota. What I was hunting today is a limited entry. If they'll draw so many tags there and they'll get to hunt there. But the reason they put these on quotas is because they felt they weren't all killed off and they felt that they needed to remove this X amount of lion. I think right now they're hitting this a little heavy. I really do. And the Boulder is quota, and I think there was one left on it last night. I feel like a lot of times that guides will kill lion on a unit that's limited entry and then they will tag it, or buy a tag here. You see what I'm saying. Do you follow me? Which is dishonest. I've been through that.

Now do you want to ask me about taking lion alive and all that stuff?

JH: I would if you want to tell that part of it. Let's do, because what I'm hoping for is that when you tell a story, you tell me who you are? I want this transcript to reflect Stan Mecham. I think taking a cat alive is a good way to describe. That seems like an extreme situation to me. Is it?

SM: It's an extreme. I won't really go a long ways on this, Jay, but I will tell you about the first lion that I ever seen took alive. My father-in-law was there and a friend of mine, Monte Willis was there. They quarreled a lot that day and I was real nervous, and they had a conduit pipe with a cable through it and they argued a lot. And they had sodium pentothal that veterinarian told them they could put it to sleep with sodium pentothal. So they had this all rigged up to where they could set it. Finally they did get the noose, Monte got the noose around it after they'd argued, cussed each other for a while. I stood and shook and watched them cause I thought it was crazy. They got the lion down and they give it a shot of sodium pentothal and it went right to sleep. About the next one that we went to take, why me and my father-in-law was after Tom Lion, and he told me to go up the tree and get it by the tail and shoot it and he'd hold it with that old conduit pipe. I got up in the tree and it started to fighting, and as it come down, it come past me and it

caught my coat and ripped my coat. And it scared me bad, you know. If I hadn't of had a coat, I wouldn't have had a stomach. If you ever watch them with their claws, I've seen them where they've hit a dog in one swipe, and it's just terrible what they can do. Like that elk where I see today, the blood and stuff where he'd been working it over. Anyway, it scared me a little bit and he choked that lion to death. Anyway, it died. And he told his daughter, who is my wife, that I was a coward, that I didn't move quick enough.

JH: Good Bush?

SM: Yeah, you know Bush. He said I was nothing but a coward. There was some lion crossed right here by town and I was after them alone, and I had this old dog here with me. And all my dogs took chasing deer but him, and he stayed with it and the dogs finally come back and they treed it. And a great big old Douglas fir. I got rocks and I threw up in the tree and it jumped out and run in the bottom of a thing and went up a big oak with no limbs on it. So I thought, I'm going to get him. So I put some sodium pentothal in one of these little hypodermic syringes, 10cc. I put it in my mouth and I thought, I'm going to get that cougar. I had learned quite a bit about fighting cougars by then. I'd been around a few of them, and I'd learned how to handle them. I'll tell you how to catch a cougar and never hurt it or kill it. What you do, when you start up a tree, it's going to watch you really close, and it's scary. It's scary until I threw that conduit pipe away cause I didn't like it. I'd just get a stick with a fork on a lariat, nylon, and I think this might be interesting for you to know. You know, a nylon lasso rope's real hard, and if you shove it up there and that lion gets a chance, he can actually grab that in his teeth right back here in the side of his mouth, and he can cut it in two with one bite. I mean just scissor it off, just like you'd hit it with an axe on a stump. So you have to jerk it and keep a stick a working him. So his eyes is on the stick, and keep a working here till that loop is up a little bit above his head and he's not watching, and all of a sudden he'll reach out and he'll grab that loop there and then you jerk it so it goes in his mouth. I call it bridling. Then if he twists in the tree, he can't choke. No matter what he does, he's not going to choke his self to death. Well I couldn't get that lion out of that tree and I remember I had a new suede coat on. I kept pushing that stick up there and that lion was biting it and his mouth

got to bleeding. I don't know whether from the stick or what. But it was dripping on my coat, which I didn't notice. But I got down and I thought, I'm going to shake him out of that thing. He's tired too. And I was shaking on that tree and all of a sudden he fell out and he lit right in the middle of a dog. He hit a dog. He went up a hill and he got in a pinion pine. So I got in there and I caught him. I got him in there, but I was scared of him. He was big. You know this coward--I was scared. I thought, I'll pull him up hill and then he'll go down hill. So I was jerking him and I couldn't pull him out of there. He was too strong. So I got down hill and I had all the dogs tied up, and I jerked him out. And he come running past me lickety heck and he went around a tree. I thought, I'm just going to go right around now and grab him by the tail because he won't know I'm a coming. And if you want to see a battle--I grabbed him by the tail and he just kept a spinning with all of his claws out, you know, and on his back a growling. And I could hear a dog a choking, and I thought, now what am I going to do. I thought, stand on his tail. So I got his tail down and I put my foot on there and I took that syringe and I gave him 10ccs and I let loose, and he just took a sailing through the country. I went up and this dog right here was almost choked to death, my best dog. I unleashed him and I knew that lion was doped. I knew I got him good. I got up through there and I could see that lion going up out of the wash and he was just staggering. So I caught up to him there. He knew I was there, but he couldn't do nothing. He was really screwed up. All of a sudden he just flops over, so I put a dog collar on him and I put two chains so he can't get wrapped around a tree and I just side tied him. Then I come back and I told Coy, call your old man and tell him this coward's caught him a cougar alone, took him alive. Anyway we went out there and she went with me. It had snowed a little bit before we got out there and there was just a little skiff of snow on him. When you shoot them with sodium pentothal, the breathing becomes real light and they can get pneumonia, so you have to keep twisting and moving them. Anyway, you can hardly see them breathing. We got him drug over to a wash bank and over on the horse and I brought him home. And I don't know whether you ever met old Arnold Adair. He liked me to show him every lion I ever got, and he was walking up the street. I just turned the dome light on and I had that lion laying on the floor of the pickup there. I said, do you want to see a nice lion? I think to the day he died, he thought that lion was dead. But it was alive.

Anyway I had that lion in a pen down to the farm for quite a while. He finally got loose and got away from me. But I caught a lot of them, Jay, that way. And I turned some loose in front of hunters. That's what's called a "canned hunt." That's something that's dishonest. You know I told you I owned up to all the things I'd ever done bad. If you ever go through this Paunch Museum, ask that guy. He's right from Holland. I cut a lion loose from him that got away from me and I cut another one loose and caught it. Then he found out that I'd done it and he asked me if I hadn't. I told him I had, but I'd take him on a real hunt. And I did take him on a real hunt and it got dark, and he said well what are we going to do? I said, you're on a lion hunt. We're going to stay all night and go in the morning. We did, too. I made him rough it, and it was cold. We got down in an old cabin and it was terrible cold. Left the horses saddled, and that lion's in that museum, by the way. All of them that I could make restitution to, I did. One of them was named Frank Church and he'd been hunting and he had a real bad heart and I was chasing a bear. And I didn't know he had a bad heart, and he told me stop, that he was having chest pains. Then he told me he'd had a lot of heart attacks and he'd lost his camera. I said I'll go back and get it, and he said no, no, no. Get me out of here. He wanted a lion so bad. He said, get one in a box. So I got one in a box and it was summer time. And I said, now let's make it fair. Let's give it a fair start. Nope, he says. You'll charge me. I want to shoot it in a box. And I wouldn't let him. He said, if it gets away, are you going to charge me. And I said no. Anyway, it didn't get away from him. But I made restitution to all of them.

But when I really got in trouble real bad, I had a tag and they started the study on the Boulder. This will be interesting to you, Jay, and then I won't ramble any more. But I caught this lion, and it was collared and my license had expired and it was dragging a trap. I knew it was. I was one day over. And this lion was legal, you know on a unit. It got off the study, and I thought, I'm just going to take that trap off and turn it loose. So I bridled it, you know like I told you, and tied the dogs up and I was working it in a tree, and I pretty near had it. And it got down and it went under some roots. You know how sometimes roots are above the ground. It went under two or three times, and I don't know what happened, but that lion died. And then I panicked. I could hear planes and I knew

they'd have tracking devices tracking them lions, and I just panicked. And I just took my knife and I slit that collar off and I went into this ravine and I got a big rock and I smashed it. I don't know what's in them, but I know they'll blow up. And smoke come up out of it and I thought don't breathe that. That might be poisonous. I think what I done was held my breath, cause when I got up on top, I just about passed out. I fell down. I thought I'm poisoned, I'm poisoned. I wasn't poisoned. But anyway I took and I hid that collar. I skinned that lion and I was in the High Council, Jay, and it was bugging me. When I killed that lion, I could just have gone to Cedar and got a tag and I'd been legal. That's all I'd had to do, you know. But that was dishonest too. So I put it in a hole and I skinned that lion and I hid that hide. And I didn't say nothing for about four or five days. I knew I was going to have an interview with Tom L. Perry, you know. Finally I told Millie what I'd done. She's really an honest person, Jay, she is. She says what you've done is wrong. You need to call the Fish and Game and tell them what you've done. I said, Okay. So I called them. Here come the game warden, Norman Key. He come over and I told him what I'd done, and everything else I'd done, till he told me to shut up. I said, I want to clear. I want all of this cleared up right now. He said, okay, let's get it cleared up. But then we had to have a guide license and it really hurt me too, because boy, they really socked it to me. They charged me \$250 and got me from hunting for two or three years. The judge I went to, he called over there and tried to get them to loosen up on me. They wouldn't. They hit me pretty hard. Anyway, I was telling you about taking lion alive. I don't want to go into this other deal, but I got into court on a deal. I was called into a case there and you put your hand on a Bible and you swear to God to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and their lawyer, he looks at me and he says, Mr. Mecham, you know that it's impossible for a person to put a rope around a lion's head and lead it down the hill, taking long steps. I said, if I led one down hill by my back, I'd probably be taking long steps. But he was pushing me, and he told me that he tried to get me mad. I said, I'm going to tell you something right now. I don't like the way lawyers do things, anyway. They just want to guide you. I said, if you want to open a can of worms that you can't eat, just keep going on taking lions alive. I says, yes, I can take a lion alive. Because if he had of done, I had a video sitting right out there on the car they could put in their TV, because I didn't want to be pressed. Anyway, that made me a lot of



enemies. But anyway I cleared it, I didn't lie, Jay. I told the truth. And since then, I've sent people home without a lion, but I have never broke the law since then. I haven't. And I don't want my boys to, either. I want them to grow up honest.

Okay, now, whatever you want from here on out.

JH: I was going to get to that idea of law enforcement and how to relate to law enforcement. Before, you were talking, you said you were complimenting them on how they had managed the resource. But law enforcement is a little bit different angle. I remember when we were down here working and there were people that wouldn't dare go hunting during the season, but they'd go hunt deer for table meat.

SM: They would. That's true, Jay.

JH: And they didn't really think of it as breaking the law. But with lion, you are in a little different category. It's interesting to hear you say that you feel like you, should I use that word "repented?"

SM: Yeah, use it.

JH: And you feel good, like you're straight with the law. And I think it sounds to me like they feel like you're straight with them, too.

SM: They do. They know it, Jay. They know it.

JH: That's a good place to be.

SM: It's a comfortable place to be.

JH: I was trying to remember how good of a memory you have to have if you are all the time looking over your shoulder. And it's a lot better position to be in to have that comfort.

You've mentioned your boys following in your line of work. Let's talk about them a little bit. It's a compliment to a person to have people imitate what they do, to like things that they like, and to enjoy the pleasures that they enjoy. But, you know, family is a little bit different. You can still enjoy family, even if they don't espouse your values right down the line. Talk about that if you would.

SM: Okay. I have really spent a lot of time with my boys, Jay, which I think is quality time. From the time they've been really, really small I've spent a lot of hours with them, and I'm grateful for this because we've had a lot of good experiences together. I heard Clint give a talk once, and I felt really good that after he'd give the talk, and I don't know whether he knew that I was even listening to him. But they'd asked him to talk and I slipped in and listened to him. He says, I learned a lot from my dad. He says, I learned that you never quit, and he says that's kind of the way with life. We can get bumped a little bit, but you don't quit. And you know, I was pretty hard to get stopped on a lion track. I wanted to finish it when I started it. And then I had that opportunity with all of my boys, to hunt a lot with them.

I think it probably would be good to go into the time when Coy got cancer, Jay. I'd like to go into that just a little bit. This was a very devastating time in my life, to think that she had a little lump in the breast and it turns out to be cancer. And you go to the hospital to bring her home, and the doctor wants to talk to you, and you know something's going to come. She's real happy and I got her a box of chocolates and she's laughing and talking and then the nurse says you've got to wait a minute. To go on with the story, I was in the hospital there, and that was one of the most devastating and trying times of my life, to see the doctor tell her, you've got cancer. That was hard for me. I remember I felt like I was almost going to pass out. Then he asked what could happen there. Then we go into a period there of going to see doctors and hoping for miracles, and the miracles doesn't happen. When we come home that night, I would just like to relate that to you, how that was to come home with a little family and go pick them up from their grandparents' place. As we come home and Debbie, who wasn't really very old at that time, either, and Clint. And we had Harvey. They were getting up pretty good size. And then we had this three-

year-old boy who was eight years behind them all. He gets out of the car, and you know how little kids are, they stumble a little on the steps, and she just started crying and sobbing, and she said, I'll never live to see him grow up. I says, yeah, you will, honey. I says, a lot of people have breast cancer. Anyway, we went into this deal, Jay, and this was a five-year deal. And this was hard for me and even harder for her. These check-ups were every three months and we'd go Salt Lake for them, and then they'd get six months. They said, if you make five years, everything's going to be fine. Okay. It gets five years, and I just get back from Salt Lake and they give her a clean bill of health. They give her a complete checkup, these doctors had, and said she's fine. I had a cancer specialist from South Dakota come to hunt lion with me. Me and her had saved for twenty years for a truck. For twenty years we'd saved. And I got this most beautiful Ford Ranger with everything, and we're so happy and we come back from that check-up and feel so good and everything's okay. I went out hunting that next day and that doctor says, Stan, I'm concerned about your wife. I said, Oh, no. She's okay. She's been five years and she's just been checked by all them specialists up in Salt Lake City. He says, well, I think she should have a liver scan. You know, Jay, I'd even noticed that she had a yellow tint to her. I thought it was just from all the cobalt and all that stuff or something I didn't understand. Anyway, I told her I thought she should have a check. And I remember that night, I was touching her on the back and I felt a little bump. She went over to Panguitch, and would you believe that they found a shadow on her lung there. So I took her on over to Cedar and I told them I wanted a liver scan. And they took a nomogram and a picture of her lungs, and that was just maybe ten days. And you couldn't believe how that tumor had growed in her lungs. And then they didn't give her course a liver scan. I asked if they had and they said no, they wasn't going to. They wanted the doctor to talk to me. So, see, I know we're going to get it again, and she does too. And we go there, and he says, well you've got cancer in your lungs. You can go to Las Vegas or you can go back up north. And, boy, I'll tell you, Jay, that pretty near killed me. I'll never forget driving that car how I felt. I just felt like I couldn't take it. She looked at me and told me to toughen up. Now she says, this is the way it is. Don't be getting bitter about it or anything about it. My body's weak and I've got this disease, and that boy's big enough to go with you now. It pretty near killed me. I come home and here's my old buddy, Mac LeFevre we've been talking about. She told me to go to work and I went to work and he come over to where I was working and visited with me. And he was all good. And she come home, and you

know her and her dad hadn't had the best relationship. And he was here, just wringing, how nervous he was, and he was a crying and saying, forgive me, honey, forgive me for the times that I haven't been right with you or this or that. And anyway, she looked at me where he couldn't see me and she winked at me. And her dad was really going on. And anyway we got ready to go and as we left the house, Clint, my oldest boy went in, and I didn't see him, but she told me he went in and told her that he loved her and kissed her. And then we left. We got in the car and as we was up by the Paiute Reservoir, she looked me, and she said, if I can't get better, I want to end this trip here. I would really like to see my grandparents and everything. And she said, if I can't be made well, I just want it to end here, and I want you to get married again. I says I'm not going to get married again. And she started laughing, and she says, I know you're going to get married again, but you be careful who you get married to. That's what I'm telling you. You be careful. We went up there, Jay, and she was in a lot of pain that night. Her hip was hurting her and I thought she had cancer there. She said don't say that I've got cancer in my bones. It's just my hips are hurting a little bit. I said, I didn't say that, honey. But anyway we went in there and they operated on her and they were going to take her ovaries out to try to arrest the cancer. And Dr. Smart, I really liked him. That's one doctor I did like up there really well. He told me, your wife ain't going to last six weeks. He says her liver's three-fourths tumor. This really bothered me that I'd went to all them specialists all that time and they'd missed that. Anyway, she was in and she was operated on, and I didn't think she was coming out of it like she normally did, cause I'd seen her put out several different times. This was a neat experience that happened there. They told me to go home and I went to the room and give them the phone number. And the phone rang in the night. And you know when you're wanting a miracle and I'm reading the Book of Mormon and I'm hoping for a miracle. And you know, it rang and I answered it and they said your wife's

End of Side One, Tape Two

End of Interview