

INTERVIEW WITH: Janet Ott Pollock, Rella Ott Alvey and Helma Richards
Haas- Yellow Creek Ranch
INTERVIEWER: Marsha Holland
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Tape one, Side A

A video accompanies the taped interview

Rella, Janet, Marsha and John Holland are driving out to the Yellow Creek Ranch site, south of Cannonville, Utah where much of the interview is conducted and the entire video is filmed. Helma Haas met the group at the ranch.

MH: It is September 21st, 2002, and I am with Rella Ott Alvey and we are headed up to Georgetown to see where your parents used to live, right?

RA: No. It was where my grandparents, Grandmother and Grandfather Ott lived.

MH: We are just making the turn past the Georgetown Cemetery headed down a wash-boardy road. Janet, what is your married name? You are Janet Ott?

JP: Pollock.

MH: OK. Now you lived out on the Yellow Creek Ranch until you were about eight? You said you were a little lonely when you lived out there.

JP: Oh, yes we always looked forward to our Aunt, Louie Shakespear. They lived down below us. They had children our age and we would get up on the chicken coop to see if we could see anybody coming up the road. We were so elated if we could see somebody coming, that was the way they did, just walked up the road.

MH: What is the age difference between you and Rella?

JP: Ten years.

MH: So, she was older.

RA: She just had her seventieth birthday, so you know how old I am.

MH: OK. So, she was eighteen when you were eight?

JP: She had graduated from high school and I was in the third grade.

MH: And so you're the only family members?

JP: No, we had four brothers.

RA: I lived through the hard times out here. Now where that old dead tree is, that was the house right in there. And that's where our grandparents lived.

MH: So that's the original Ott homestead? Now what happened to that tree?

RA: I don't know it just died, looks like. An old cottonwood tree.

MH: Where was the orchard?

JP: That's way up the road.

RA: We go up to Yellow Creek for that.

MH: OK, off we go. Who else was out here then, besides your grandparents?

RA: Now the Mangums lived in this house. That was their neighbors.

MH: They're pretty close neighbors.

RA: Yes.

MH: And this was their homestead?

RA: This is their homestead, the Mangums and then the Duttons, of course they were relatives. They were all relatives. But anyway when we get up here I'll show you where we got stuck in the creek and the [where] flood was...(laughs). And my dad walked down here and got this man, Oscar Dutton, that lived here, and he harnessed his team and they come up there and just got the truck out before the flood came.

MH: Could you hear it rumbling on down?

RA: Well you could hear it roar up in the canyon. We got over this one fine.

JH: It must have been raining real hard.

RA: It rained every afternoon. Every afternoon we would get a good shower in the summer.

MH: Now this is Yellow Creek.

RA: There's a sign up here.

MH: No but what's the creek we just crossed.

JP: That's Yellow Creek. They had to come out after floods come.

MH: The County?

JP: Yes, to grade it you know so we could get on through.

3 Yellow Creek Ranch, Ott sisters and Helma Haas

MH: So this was a county maintained road? Do you think it still is?

JP: It still is. Farm lands have to be maintained if they are connected to county roads.

RA: And here is our good old "Oos Root", we called it oos.

MH: Oh there it is, the Yucca.

RA: Yucca or whatever. We used to dig that up and pound the root and you'd be surprised what good shampoo it was for your hair. Why it would just lather beautiful. And that's the plant right there.

JP: We didn't have a lot of shampoos and things in those days.

MH: Yep, had to use what's around.

JP: Crack and egg and put it all over your hair and just lather up and it would be so soft. Of course I had braids. Great big braids.

MH: So it was like a conditioner?

RA: Yes. Looks like we got a gate.

JP: At least they've got a nice gate across here. We used to have to get out and unhook it and pull it back, one of those old wire ones. Maybe you was afraid it might flick you right in the face.

MH: It's true they just put this gate in.

JP: This is great. Well maybe it's locked.

JH: No I don't think so.

JP: If it is I've got my key.

MH: Janet's prepared; she's got her key!

RA: I've got a key too.

MH: Rella's got her key too. We are in good shape.

RA: Where's Florence and the others?

MH: They're just right behind us following along. Helma's game to come out for a little road trip!

JP: Helma's father is the one that built the little cabin up in Yellow Creek. He had the first house.

MH: I knew she had some tie out here.

RA: I don't know whether Bob's got his cows up here now.

MH: Yeah, I don't know. We'll have to get out and shut it too.

JP: See I wouldn't worry about it, see there's no fence there. See there was the old gate thing and they've just barely got this one. I don't think there's anything up here right now. This is BLM property up in here anyhow. Used to be they'd put their old bulls up in here. This is where he has his stack yard; I think he brings his hay in from Sheep Creek.

MH: Now whose place is this over here? There was a little place over there.

JP: I don't know, I think it's just...

MH: Oh, just some old equipment in there. This road looks good for bicycle riding; I should come back out here.

JP: This road's not too bad. I think you have to kind of keep, well Bob has a grader and stuff but if it gets too bad the county has to come out to the property line. But anything up through here I think has to be maintained, well of course this in BLM property so they still have to come out here.

MH: So is Bob younger?

JP: Bob's probably about a year and a half older than myself.

RA: He's one of the younger ones.

JP: It's been a long time since they've had a lot of floods through here though.

MH: It's true. The first year we moved here there was a good flood down the Paria. But that was the last one so it's been several years.

RA: See all these creeks meet down there and that's quite a stream of water when they all come together. Now you see the hill up at that cove.

MH: Right, up in that cove, the white cove?

RA: Yes.

MH: And then it cliffs out so that the cows can't really get out up in there, right?

RA: They can't get up there, but we had to sit and herd them so they wouldn't get up into the alfalfa patches and the corn patches. While herding cows, to pass the time away, I made my little paste board paper doll houses out of the old Sears and Robuck catalog.

MH: Now in the fall after you were done ranching out here or farming, then you would all go up into Tropic for school?

RA: To school. And then still on the weekends we would come out 'til the harvest, 'til all of it was harvested.

MH: Right. Because sometimes it would be in to October, right?

RA: Yes. We never used to start school until the first of September. We had some wonderful pine nut years out here. We'd go pine nut pickin'. When I was a kid I loved to go on picnics. One day I come out and said, "Oh, Mom when can we go on another "pigs neck?" (Laughing)

This is where we'd get stuck in the creek. And like I said my dad hurried and walked back to get that man to come and get us out.

MH: Yeah, this is pretty far up the Yellow Creek.

JP: There's quite a lot of rock now too, you know.

RA: I think where it got it's name of Yellow Creek, was when the floods come out of those pink hills they'd be just yellow.

MH: Oh, we've got another gate.

RA: This is the one you open.

Break

RA: Our Uncle Layton had a little shanty he had. When he come out here, he would trap.

MH: Oh when he'd trap the coyotes.

RA: He's the one that would trap the coyotes. His little shanty was right down in here, just by those oak trees, out in that flat. One day our mother saw Cousin Jay coming up the road and she wondered what was the matter. She went to meet him and he began to cry and he said, "A rattlesnake's got in our house and we can't find it". So down we all went with sticks and we beat, beat, beat and we found it in a box of rags. Oh!

MH: There was a rattlesnake?

RA: Yes, it was in the house. They didn't build foundations under those early homes. One of our early pastimes, while herding cows was sitting under these trees and reading and playing and teasing the bees. And brother McCune was terrified of them. And we'd tease them and they would sting him.

JP: This also was quite a little clearing there. They'd pitch tents and things there and have a little overnight camp. I think the deer hunters come up here too, you know, in Yellow Creek. There's lots of big deer.

MH: It's a good spot.

RA: Yes, got some nice big bucks.

JP: They came to feed in the alfalfa fields.

MH: The water is just diverted off of Yellow Creek right?

JP: There's a couple of holding ponds that come out of the spring up there that holds the water.

MH: Now was this land cultivated too?

RA: Yes. We had a big pond just across the pond on the north side near the alfalfa field. When we go on up to the house I'll show you the ditch run right past the house. That filled the pond.

JH: That's sure pretty, the cliffs in there isn't it, like a castle.

JP: Yes that is pretty.

RA: Yes. But that's where we'd take our cows to keep 'em out of the fields. We'd go and stay all day. Mother would fix us a little lunch.

MH: Do you remember doing that Janet?

JP: I never did go with them to herd cows; I was always there at the house with Mother.

MH: You were little then.

JP: Looking south from here our brother Stanley called it the grotto. And it is pretty over in there, but there's no water that way. The water's all up this way.

MH: But there's quite a few trees up in there, pinyon.

RA: That's where our pond was. And we would cross the road, when we'd take the cows out the corral up there. We'd cross over the road and go down that way. So we'd miss the field, go down on the other side of the ponds.

MH: Oh up against the cliffs?

RA: Uh, huh, over that way.

MH: Like a short cut.

RA: And take 'em that way.

JP: It took a team of horses, cutting, raking and hauling and hopefully you didn't come on to a snake in the hay. Because you know they'd get the pitchforks and just throw it up on top of the wagons, the piles you know. I got in on a little bit of that.

RA: Dad could never kill an animal. If we had beef or anything he had to hire it killed because he couldn't. And to hunt deer that was a no-no. He couldn't. He said, "When you see those big brown eyes look at you, I could never shoot it". One of the things we like to do with Dad was go fishing.

MH: He's OK with the fish?

RA: He'd fish. Over here was a cornfield.

MH: This was all corn?

RA: Yeah, that was just in to corn. And that's where he'd come out and sleep to keep the porcupines from eating the corn.

MH: Eating up the crop.

RA: And even a porcupine was hard for him to harm. There was a little one down in one of the shade trees, the oaks, and he picked up a stick and was going to hit it, and that little thing put it's paws up over it's eyes...

JP: To hide his eyes.

RA: And he couldn't, he couldn't hurt it!

JP: They eat the bark off of the trees.

RA: You know it's something how human they can act.

If you could see it through my eyes like it was in it's heyday. The sagebrush wasn't there, they've grow out and taken over. This was all in to garden, fruit trees and all kinds of berries.

JP: Farming land with wheat, alfalfa, rye and...

RA: Corn.

MH: Now there's a little green cabin up there. Whose is that?

JP: Oh that's our brother's, Joe.

MH: Is that Joe's place?

RA: That's our brother Joe's. He owns that little bit of land up in there.

MH: That used to be an old Bryce cabin?

JP: Yes, and it used to be right down here under those trees. When he got that property he moved it up there. So they would have a little place to come to in the winter or summer.

RA: We used to go down these old rough roads in an old buckboard wagon. We had horses. Their names were Old Floss and Old Flax and Old Bess... (laughs)

JP: They were like these big... what are the big horses that they always have in shows.

MH: Like Clydesdales?

JP: Clydesdales, that's just what they were, they had great big old hooves.

MH: And that's what kind of horses you had, big workhorses?

JP: Yes, real heavy shouldered horses.

MH: We'll you would have to if they were doing the plowing.

RA: We used to have a big watermelon patch right in here.

MH: Really.

RA: Yes! A big watermelon patch! Oh they were good and big! The kids used to come out here and swipe melons. So Dad planted citron down the side. And they came and get these citrons instead of the melons!

MH: What's citron?

JP: It's like a watermelon.

RA: They're great big, round, yellow stripe. You can use them for preserving jam or jelly out of 'em. But they weren't good eating.

JP: The Bulberry trees were all along the ditch bank here because they got water.

RA: And then right up through there they had a big dry land, wheat patch.

MH: Right.

RA: And it was beautiful! Because the rains kept it going. You never had to water it.

MH: And the wheat was used for your own use as well as some to sell?

JP: Yes, we took it to the grist mill to be ground in to flour. It was called "Bryce's Pride".

MH: Which way do you want to go Rella? Right or left?

RA: You want to go right here first and see this?

MH: Sure.

Stop

Interview continues outside the truck at the site of the old cabin where Janet and Rella lived as children.

RA: There were peach trees, cherry trees.

MH: We'll go around and talk about all this, OK?

RA: And right there where them stumps are, we had a big pine tree which was good for shade in the hot summer time.

Interview continues after a quick inspection inside the cabin.

RA: (Remembering her father being nearly struck by lightening as he walked out of the cabin)
We came so near loosing him.

MH: Yes, he was just walking out of the cabin and was nearly struck by lightening?

RA: He was just coming out of the cabin door when lightening knocked the pail out of his hand.

JP: It sure looks different around here Rella without the fruit trees.

EH: (Elaine Haws) Rella, how did you guys come down? Was it from over in this area when you rode your horse down?

RA: No, over this way, down from Merrill's Bench.

EH: Over Merrill's Bench and then just on down?

RA: Yes.

MH: This is where the greenhouse was, right here?

RA: Right under that little tree here.

MH: So what would he grow in the greenhouse?

RA: He'd just plant early things like tomato plants, peppers, cabbage and other early plants.

MH: And what did he make the greenhouse out of?

RA: Just a screen and some netting and he just built it out of boards.

MH: Right. Build it partway up and then screen it and some netting to keep the sun off and the bugs out. How big were these trees?

RA: And right here behind the house was another big berry patch, raspberries right behind the house. And then across the little wash was where our big fruit orchard was.

MH: So the fruit orchard was out in here? And there's really no evidence of the trees left. Which is too bad. There are some old orchards around that are still going but there's just not enough water out here.

JP: The reservoir wasn't it right down in there.

RA: No it's down there, I showed them. It's that, did you see that white strip as you come up the road

JP: I have lots of fond memories of that old reservoir.

MH: What did you do?

RA: We used to go swimming in it.

JP: Rella and I went swimming once and Stan and McCune...

RA: We did have on clothes, we didn't go skinny dippin'!

MH: You didn't?

JP: Stan and McCune got a lot of pollywogs and they kept us in there until we were just shriveled. Every time we'd go to get out they'd throw a pollywog at us. (Laughing)

MH: One thing I heard the other day is that the boys used to skinny dipping a lot, swimming and the girls wouldn't do that, and not very many of the girls ever learned to swim, does that sound right?

JP: We used to go up to the old canal and mud crawl.

MH: Mud crawl, I know about that.

JP: If we got in water up over our knees it took our breath away, didn't it?

MH: It was cold! Did you ever learn how to swim?

HH: (Helma) I didn't.

MH: How about you Rella?

RA: I could go down and come up and gasp.

MH: How about you Janet, did you learn how to swim?

JP: I did. You know, not proficient but...

MH: You could save your life?

JP: I could if I had to.

MH: It was Thayne Smith who told me that. He said the girls hardly ever learned how to swim because they just wouldn't go in the water. And the boys would tromp off into the bushes and go in.

RA: They used to go up to that old town pond there, above town.

MH: Up by where Dean's (Wintch) pond is right?

JP: We use to lay on a board and float through the flume.

MH: Oh my gosh!

JP: Can you imagine that?

MH: Boogie Boarding!

RA: I'll tell you what we did do, we went up on East Fork, you know where the East Fork (Sevier River) water comes down, get inner tubes and go through, slide down through, ride the inner tubes through.

MH: Right. That's neat. And you'd just take an old board, Janet and you'd jump on the board.

JP: Just an old fence board, we were small enough we'd lay on it. It was swift that canal and it's a wonder somebody didn't get drowned. But anyway the flume was all open. So you could see above so I guess if you needed to grab on to something you could grab on to one of the, boards. But we'd float through the flume.

HH: You know I think maybe we had more fun than the kids do nowadays.

RA: Oh I think so!

MH: It sounds like a lot of fun!

JP: You know the kids now have to get in cars and take off and we had to make our own fun.

RA: We had the bon fires.

JP: When I tell the kids what we did they say, "Oh mother that sounds so neat, you did that?" And I say yes because we had to make our own fun.

RA: Now you're sitting down on at that computer going like this (gestures as typing).

JP: And we say to them, "You can't teach old dogs new tricks!"

RA: Not running it down because it's a wonderful thing.

MH: But technology really changed!

JP: Rella did you tell Marsha about McCune and Uncle Elmer and their hayin'?

RA: I think I told her didn't I?

JP: That is a good story.

RA: When they'd haul hay down here, my brothers teased my poor old Uncle Elmer. And he'd be driving the horses and say, "Get up!" and McCune slip down underneath and say, "Whoa, whoa". (Laughing)

MH: Because the uncle couldn't hear very well.

JP: He couldn't hear what McCune was saying and he got so frustrated, he'd get the horses going again.

RA: And he'd start 'em up again. McCune, "Whoa, whoa".

JP: When we lived out here, this was like a Garden of Eden.

RA: It was.

JP: Dad grew everything.

RA: That's right.

JP: And everything grew out here. From any kind of berries to grapes, to you name it, fruits of all kinds.

RA: Along the fence over there, there was currants; green and yellow currants.

MH: And so you had raspberries, currants, and melons, grapes, strawberries and that was just the fruit patch.

JP: Yes, that was just down here in this area.

RA: I said that was in the days of the Depression. We had everything we could eat. Milk, cream, we all was the same, we didn't have that much money but we did get a quarter once in a while.

HH: You know I found one of the old light bills.

MH: The first electrical bill?

HH: Yes, it was ten cents.

MH: Ten cents, for a month?

HH: Uh huh.

MH: Your dad did a lot of electrical work in town.

HH: Yes, he did.

MH: He got the town hooked up for electricity. Was there electricity out here Rella?

RA: No. Mother had her an old gasoline washer.

MH: A gasoline washer.

RA: We just put a little, it had a little tank on it, and put gas in it, pull the little (laughs)

JP: Rope to start the motor.

RA: To start it and off it'd go. Wash the clothes. Oh, that was great.

JP: You know Afton and Mae (Chynoweth)?

MH: Right.

JP: Their mother had one of those old washers that, you'd get it started and it went this direction and...

MH: Oh back and forth like this.

JP: Yeah, and it was human run. And after school she'd yell at each kid that went up and you'd go and take your turn. You couldn't get it started but once it started why, you could keep it going.

MH: She would have all the passing kids run the machine?

JP: Oh yeah.

RA: There was another, you know we had them old washers that you would have to pull it back and forth and I know grandmother Ott would make her boys take turns pulling that washer. And I remember, I'll tell you about Layton. He loved to read and he tied a rope on his foot and got him a chair. He'd lay back and pull this way and that way and read.

JP: And he's the only person I ever saw that could eat a watermelon and the seeds...

RA: The seeds would come out one side and the melon go in the other.

JP: The seeds would just come out.

RA: It did! (Laughing)

JP: I don't know how he done it! (Laughing)

MH: So he could eat on this side and spew the seeds out this side.

JP: It was fun to watch.

MH: And that was Layton?

JP: Yeah.

RA: That was our Uncle Layton.

MH: Uncle Layton, he was an Ott, huh?

RA: Yes, he was.

JP: He was our father's brother.

JP: But it was really fun to watch him eat melon. And the watermelons were wonderful, sweet!

MH: A lot of people talked about the watermelon around here. Now your folks grew watermelon down on the Paria?

RA: One summer, they were just ready to eat and we were in town. I think it was the twenty-fourth of July. And while we were in town this hailstorm come. And it just smashed those melons, just split 'em. So when dad come out it made him sick to see it but he went back and he said, "Anybody that wants a watermelon bust come on out". So there was a lot of people come out and had watermelon.

JP: Yeah and that was a fun time in our lives. The threshers when they'd come out to thresh the grain, you know, they said we always remember those wonderful tasty peaches. They were just ripe at about that time and we'd go and pick 'em and eat those peaches off the tree. And they said, "Oh that's why we like to go to Yellow Creek because the fruit was just wonderful out there".

MH: So a group of people would come through, had a thresher.

JP: Yes, that was Shakespeare's in Tropic, I think who had that big thresher, you know Vern Shakspeare, and they'd go from ranch to ranch.

MH: Now the thresher cuts the wheat and takes the grain off?

RA: I'll tell you who was the thresher. It was the Syrett's that come from Ruby's. Ruby Syrett come down and threshed.

JP: Then later they must have come because that was who Marion Shakespear told me that used to come.

RA: I know mother would cook for them, cook for the threshers.

JP: Well, then the Shakespear...

RA: Well, he helped.

MH: And so Ruby Syrett would come down with a crew and...

RA: And they would do the threshing around the valley.

MH: So, you were saying Janet that the wheat's already cut and they would pick it up.

JP: And they would run it through the thresher and that's when the wheat would come out one way and the straw would go the other.

MH: And then you would store the grain here?

RA: Let me say Mother was a wonderful cook. Oh, them cream cake she made. Whipped cream on the top. Mashed potatoes and gravy.

JP: Let's step in the shade, you're burning.

MH: Yeah, let's go over to the shade. Do you want to go up further Rella?

RA: We can go up and see that.

MH: OK, let's go up a little further.

Continue back inside the truck

RA: Well it was a big ranch. It goes clear up to the park fence up here.

MH: The ranch did?

RA: Uh, huh. Every time it would rain my dad would have to go up and put the water in. The flood would take it out up at the head.

MH: Put the water in to the ditch.

RA: Yeah, get it back in the ditch.

JP: There's one of the old apple trees that's dead right there.

RA: Oh yes this was. From where those pine trees are down to here that was all into gardens, fruit trees.

MH: Wow, very productive area.

RA: It was. It was very.

JP: There was no soil like out here because it was sandy and yet it was nice to work with. Not a lot of clay. But through the years with storms bringing stuff down off the hill it's turned into clay.

MH: This part of the road hasn't been worked; I guess Florence will poke along in here.

JP: We'd come here at Easter time and had our Easter picnic up in here. This is where the water comes in to the risers.

MH: So you could actually cultivate this land again?

JP: We could cultivate it, they have enough water but Bob told us their water stream was only half this year because of the drought. And so where we haven't got anything in yet, and

- they do have that alfalfa you know they water. Of course he has more shares of water than we do anyway just on our little area.
- MH: Now did anyone else live up here further.
- RA: No, we was the last one "on the line".
- JP: But you can see where the old ditch bank come along there where it's kind of up a little higher.
- JH: You know the spring we hiked into a couple of weeks ago, that's where all this water comes from.
- MH: We went up into the headwaters two weeks ago.
- JP: Where the reservoir is?
- JH: The farm up on top of Merrill's Bench, that spring up in there.
- RA: I think our pond is on the BLM.
- JP: Well yeah, it's on BLM property but they let 'em build up there to hold the water. Otherwise they had to always have it coming through the ditch. And they really needed something further up , a holding place for water, you know where it comes out from the spring.
- MH: Yeah, that was the trick, was how to stop the water so you didn't lose it because you needed it later.
- JP: That's right. And their used to be little bit going down the creek down there you know. But after it gets down in the gravel bed...
- MH: Yes, it goes down under.
- JP: So, would you come up here much?
- RA: We don't come up here.
- MH: Did you used to come up here much.
- RA: Oh yes. We used to come up here.
- MH: What would you do up here?
- RA: Oh, we'd just look for pretty rocks in the creek and we'd look...
- MH: You'd just explore?

RA: The ditch used to go around there, around this.

MH: On the other side of that, oh I see where it would go.

RA: We're out of our territory aren't we?

JP: Yes, uh huh we've gone through the BLM.

MH: We should probably turn around.

JP: If you can find a place.

RA: ...that side of the creek.

MH: On the , would that be the south side?

RA: The south side.

MH: There's more trees over there.

RA: Well, we'd go over there, I remember and just get pieces of wood and drag over, bring over to burn.

MH: What would you do for your wood?

RA: There was plenty of dry cedar trees.

MH: You'd just use what you could find around here? You wouldn't have to go too far.

RA: We didn't have to go very far to get it.

JP: Of course in the summer time with the wood burning stove why actually your cedar was fast you know to heat and yet it wasn't real smokey. It wouldn't smoke that much.

MH: Now when your mom, when you were canning, did you have an outdoor kitchen that you used?

RA: Oh no, we just done it over the old cook stove in the house, the cabin. Had the door and the window open.

MH: So on Sundays you would go in by wagon to church or by car.

JP: Well he had that old truck when I was younger but I don't know, Rella, how was it when you went in to church. Was it in the old truck Dad had?

RA: Yeah, it was that old truck and I always, I had a boy friend or two in there and I didn't want 'em to see me coming... (Laughs)

MH: In the truck?

RA: So I'd hide down in the truck and cover over with a blanket so they wouldn't know I was in there.

MH: You were in your Sunday clothes too, weren't you?

RA: Well we'd go in to the house in town and put our Sunday clothes on. But we'd put the old number three tub on the stove and heat the water and then each one take turns getting in the old number three tub. (Laughs)

MH: The youngest would have the water after the first few.

RA: Well we'd change the water.

JP: Mother had kind of a reservoir that she'd heat water on the side of the old cook stove so the water could be heating.

MH: Well you would have to empty it out by bucket or did you have a drain?

JP: Well the boys would just pick up the handles of the old number three tub and take it out.

MH: I see, and dump it.

RA: There's my son's old trailer right there. He comes out and (camps).

JP: We used to get up in here, this little inlet here you know and it was kind of shady and the kids loved to play there and have our little picnic. Of course a lot of these old trees have been railed off because when they fixed these roads.

Here's a corn sheller. You know when you'd take the ears of corn it would get all the kernels off. You'd run it through this machine. He had that out there so that took care of the corn but through the years, people come and walked off with stuff. Then across the way we had a wild honey beehive, right across the wash there.

MH: So you had bees out here too.

JP: Yeah they had honey but you see wild honey.

JP: Well I had some candy kisses there in the truck. You could have a candy kiss. You heard that song? "Candy kisses mean more to you than any of mine". (Laughing)

MH: So they were wild bees?

JP: Yes, the wild honeybees. You didn't get near the hive over across the creek. They would chase you.

MH: Now what do you guys know about the sugar cane. Did anyone grow sugarcane around here?

JP: No, the didn't grow sugarcane. They never had the sugar beets or stuff like that.

JH: Where was that?

RA: They used to grow sugarcane and things in Richfield, down that way.

JH: Oh it was down in Old Pareah.

MH: Old Pareah.

JP: Oh yeah, down in the Old Pareah.

JH: Because they made molasses. That's where it was.

MH: They made molasses and brought it up.

RA: Well should we go pick a watermelon? (Laughs)

MH: I've got mine.

JP: Yellow Creek was know for it's watermelons. Just like Green River is known for it's good watermelons.

End of Side 1

Start Side 2

JP: You know in September when they harvest those watermelons we would always go and come back with a load of melons from Green River.

MH: But Yellow Creek was known for their good melons.

JP: Yes, they were so sweet.

RA: Bob's got his sprinklers going.

MH: Yeah, he just got them on didn't he? Were they on when we came up?

RA: No, they weren't.

Tape stops then starts again.

MH: (Did your father ever have sprinklers?)

JP: He flooded.

MH: So, he did all flood irrigation off that reservoir, to water his land?

JP: He would have just ditches across the top, you know, of his land. And would just turn it out and it'd kind of flood.

MH: But it worked OK?

JP: Yes, we had a pretty good stream of water. But you don't have a lot of waste.

MH: Right the sprinklers are a lot more efficient. When you flood irrigate you have to spend a lot of time out tending it.

JP: Yes, he was out tending it all the time. He'd have his rubber boots on, shovel over his shoulder.

RA: But you know they can turn these things on and just let 'em go.

MH: Do you think he really enjoyed being out here and liked what he did?

JP: Dad, he loved it. They lived one year up in Sandy. Rella tell them about when you went up and lived with grandmother and grandfather.

RA: Well, that's when mother's folks were still up there and we had to go up and take care of them because they wasn't well.

MH: Did your dad go with you?

RA: Yes. He went up and worked in the Bingham Copper Mine. And then when we come home...

MH: Did he make pretty good money? Did he hate it?

RA: As it was then. But when he come home he got the bus driving job to drive the kids, and we lived in Henrieville. He drove the kids from there to Tropic to the school and then his dad was called to be a bishop down there in Henrieville, he had to give up. He talked my father in to taking it over.

JP: Taking the ranch over. See they were living up here.

MH: Now who was your dad's dad?

RA: James Robert Ott.

JP: Our brother Bob is named after him.

MH: So, James Robert Ott he went down because he was called to be the bishop.

RA: Yes, of Henrieville.

JP: They were living in Tropic.

RA: So that was quite a full time job down there so my dad came and took over the ranch. Then he thought he'd kill two birds with one stone. Us children were quite big to help take over and so he'd haul cream and milk to Panguitch. And then the mail carrier retired so he talked my father in to taking that, to pick up the mail and take it along with the mail and the cream and so that's what he did. And we would have to stay and take care of the ranch. My mother, bless her old heart, she just worked right along with us. So it was just a job here, a job there, a job anywhere.

MH: Boy, it sure hasn't changed much has it?

RA: No

JP: And then mother she came down here to teach school. She lived up in Sandy.

MH: Was that in Henrieville?

RA: No just in Tropic.

JP: But Dad, that's where he met her. And when she came down here her sister and all of them that lived up there, they says, "Oh you're just going to the end of the earth down there in southern Utah".

RA: Called it "down in the sticks".

JP: Down in the sticks, yeah. Well, we didn't have any oiled roads. The old mountain, you know, was just a graveled road coming down over the hill. They used to call it "the dump". But we didn't like "the dump", we didn't want to be under a dump so they just said on top of the hill you know. And when they did get that oiled. How wonderful it was! You didn't have all that dust flying up.

MH: So her family wasn't that happy that she moved down here.

JP: No, she came down just to teach school and ended up meeting Dad and they got married.

MH: But you told me, Rella that your mom really loved it here.

RA: She did. My grandparents thought that when my father passed away that she would leave and go back up there. But no, she says I've been here too many years. All my old friends are gone up there so she says, "I like it here". So this is where she stayed.

JP: (Everything looks bigger when you are young.) When you get older they're so small looking. It's like the sliding hill there above Tropic. We used to go up on that as kids. We'd get our work done and then we'd go hiking up there. And then that looked small, as we got older. We used to go up there all the time when we were kids. That big canal there and we'd put boards across it to cross it. Because we couldn't jump it. It was too wide. So we had water. In fact we had a rope swing that we tied up in an old cottonwood that was near the canal. So we'd get a hold of the rope and then we'd run and swing across and jump. That was the way we got across.

MH: Now is that up above where Dean's corral (Wintch) is?

JP: No. Well there's a little knoll kind of over there. There's an orchard there, Kelly Shakespeare's orchard.

MH: I know which knoll you mean.

RA: That little knoll just as you go up you road there.

JP: And going up there we used to call it Shady Lane Avenue because there were plum trees on both sides. It was just a lane you could walk up in the summer time and it was so shady.

RA: And where the school is, the high school, a little old maid lady lived there. And she had a little old cow she called "Reedy".

MH: Reedy the Cow?

RA: Yes. And she'd get out and yell, "Come Reedy, come Reedy, come and get your applesauce". (Laughing) She would feed it applesauce. Oh we used to love to go there.

MH: What was that gal's name? You told me her name once.

RA: Ruth

JP: Ruth Marshall

MH: Ruth Marshall, she was a widow, right, no old maid?

JP: She never did marry.

MH: And she slept on the porch?

RA: She slept on her porch. When she was a child she nearly got burned up in their home. And she was just afraid of (a fire).

JP: She moved her bed out on the front porch. She had a nice bedroom and fireplace and stuff inside the house.

MH: Do you remember, Janet, when the Navajo would come up?

JP: Oh yeah the Navajos, uh huh. And if they wanted to scare us so we wouldn't stay out late at night, they'd say, "You might run into that Navajo at night".

MH: Which one, was there one in particular?

JP: There was different ones that would come. As young kids like twelve and thirteen, you know, we would all congregate down there on the corner. The "Hatch Home" we called it. But it's right across from the park there. It's vacated, all boarded up, the windows you know. Mrs. Hatch, who lived there you know. When the kids from the other towns didn't have a place to go, they'd come up to a dance to Tropic and they didn't have a way back home, she'd take 'em over to her place. There was just beds all over her front room floor. The kids knew where they could go and have a meal or something to eat and sleep if they needed a place to stay. And sometimes, you know those lower towns, they wanted to come up to dances and maybe they wouldn't get back. Of course their folks knew Grandma Hatch.

MH: That she would take care of them.

JP: Well they'd usually send word some way.

MH: Tell me more about the Navajo.

RA: Oh, old Chitty?

JP: I don't know so much about that. But I remember being there at the LaFevre's place and this Navajo come that time. He had this big old black Navajo hat. Real wrinkled, he looked; you know how their skin gets.

RA: They would come up, the Indians would come up through the Pareah. And they'd always use the old Escalante Mountain as their guide. There was one we called "Old Chitty" and there was a little lady called "Mary Ann", a little squaw. They used to come up to get stuff to eat, you know, fruit and...

JP: Well, they would trade their Navajo blankets you know. Because grandmother had a couple of Navajo blankets there that were really old. They would come and get corn or, anything you know food.

MH: Because they didn't travel with any food?

JP: No not really. A lot of times they were, were they on horses or were they walking?

RA: There were horses, they had horses.

Tape stops and is restarted. Conversation in progress is regarding photographs.

JP: People should always put names and dates on pictures that hey give to you. Our brother Joe brought some pictures from an old trunk that belonged to our Charter grandparents. We thought we'd found a gold mine because we didn't have pictures of grandmother and grandfather Charter. We didn't have pictures of them.

RA: Oh, the minute he opened the box there stood a picture of my grandmother Charter. I couldn't believe it. How things work out.

MH: Now did you know them very well?

RA: Oh yes.

MH: Oh you went and stayed with them.

RA: We stayed there. I went to my first grade in Sandy.

MH: Sandy, Utah. It's a lot different place now.

RA: Oh, isn't it. And I'll remember, you know, no wonder I get myself in trouble. I talk too much. (Laughing) My teacher, Ms.Hall tied a dust rag around my mouth.

MH: So you would stop talking?

JH: She gagged you?

JP: It would child abuse.

JH: That's right, these days you get in trouble for that.

RA: I was talking to my neighbor.

JH: So you've always had a lot to say then.

MH: Well were glad that you do.

JP: And her mind is still so good. She remembers. If I want to know something then she'll tell me.

RA: I got a few cracks with the yard stick too.

JP: The rulers on your fingers, you know.

RA: And it didn't hurt me that bad. We needed correcting.

JP: But it wasn't really bodily harm.

MH: Just a little wake up call.

JH: When you would go dances in Tropic, where did the music come from? Did you have phonographs.

JP: We had bands.

RA: We had orchestras, good orchestras. I'll tell you we had Bolly Rose's band.

MH: What was the name of the band?

RA: Bally Roses. He played them drums until you could just swing and sway like Danny Kaye. You know Kent Wintch don't you.

MH: Right.

RA: He played the trombone.

JP: We had an orchestra in school. The kids had instruments and played.

RA: And I'll tell you, the best dance tune was "The Little Four-Holer on the Hill".

MH: Can you hum part of it?

RA: (singing) "Now papa had a bigger hole.

Mama had a smaller hole.

There's baby's hole and

The Old Man's Hole in that
Little Four-Holer on the Hill."

MH: And was it like a square dance or a reel? How would you dance to that?

RA: Oh we'd do the Jitter Bugs and the Tropic Stomp and the...

JP: They did the Shotish

MH: Helma told me about doing the Jitter Bug.

RA: My cousin and his wife took first place for the Jitter Bug in Salt Lake.

MH: Wow, they must have been something.

RA: They could really make it fly.

JP: But everybody danced. Nobody sat on the sidelines.

RA: This television has ruined everything.

JP: And our husbands you know. That's where I met mine was at a dance festival. We were learning these dances. And then after you get married they just kind of don't want to dance no more. I don't know why, that's how they got you.

Marie and Gayle, my Marie and my son Gayle, you know, same way. She says I think they need to have a dance director here. Teach kids how to waltz, teach kids how to do these different dances so that they'd know how.

RA: You know in those days, the dance tunes that were popular was Alexander's Rag Time Band and the Beer Barrel Polka. I'll tell you they would really put you in the mood to dance.

(singing) You're the only rose in my blue heaven... These are some songs to be remembered in the good old days.

JP: Shine on harvest moon. Did you see that Harvest Moon last night, how beautiful that was? My daughter Jackie that lives in Page, she says mother I have never seen that sky the way that was. She was here the night before last and it was a baby blue underneath and there was this pink hue that went above it and then above that here this big moon was coming up. She said have you ever seen those colors like that together and I said, "Yes I've seen it before."

RA: Those were the days when you'd waltz, you'd do a fox trot and have fun.

JP: Every night we'd go all over town and somebody would have a bon fire and we'd play those night games.

MH: They still try and do night games here but there's no bon fires.

JP: No they don't have open bon fires.

MH: Well I'm going to thank you both on tape. Janet, thank you and thank you again Rella.

End of tape.