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Rio Mimbres Acequia Systems: An Oral History

Neal W. Ackerly

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transcript of these interview

RIO MIMBRES ACEQUIA SYSTEMS:

AN ORAL HISTORY

Compiled by
Neal W. Ackerly

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Introduction

This volume contains transcripts of interviews with various residents collected during the 1993 field phase of the survey of acequia systems in the Mimbres Valley. As noted in Volume 1, additional interviews were conducted with other residents, but were not recorded. Accordingly, no transcript of these interview sessions cannot be included here.

The individuals interviewed, as well as the abbreviated names appearing in these transcripts, included John VonTress (JVT, age 57), Regis McSherry (RM, age 67), Sam Grijalva (age 73), Charles Disert (age 84), and Horace Bounds (HB, age 90). Vesta McSherry, appearing as VM in transcripts, provided additional information in the Regis McSherry interview. The narrative that results from compiling these quotations provides information about acequia systems extending back in time to approximately 1925.

The actual transcripts are prefaced with excerpts from conversations with different individuals. These excerpts are organized according to specific topics pertaining to the construction, operation, and maintenance of floodwater irrigation systems in the Mimbres Valley. Topics include (1) water duty, (2) irrigation methods, (3) changes in crop production strategies, (4) the role of fatiga, ditch maintenance and the office of mayordomos, (5) derechos and rotation cycles, (6) characteristics and problems with ditches, and (7) sharecropping. Out of these quotations emerges a clearer picture of the problems associated with floodwater irrigation systems, as well as a detailed indication of the variety of solutions developed by local irrigators.

The transcripts themselves deserve one further comment. Portions of the interview with Horace Bounds were adversely affected by what might be termed a major malfunction in the recording equipment. Words and phrases appearing in brackets are my reconstruction of the gist of the conversation and should not be considered direct quotations. Similar brackets appear in other interviews where I have inserted words or phrases to clarify what was being discussed.

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Narrative

Water Duty

HB But I do know this, that ah...we were, we were enjoying, well not particular enjoying because that want anymore than we needed, was three-acre-feet, you see, this, this land is high, it is, it's high duty land...for, for irrigation. You don't have, make it simple for you, you don't have anything but a layer of silt, a layer, a layer of soil, a layer of silt, a layer of gravel, some more soil and now that's that's the history of it, if you dig down here, cross cut it, we've done that...and that's what you find. And it takes lots of water, you don't have anything under you, ok. They've ah...the..the ah...who ever this was determined by, if I under, if I understood the history right, well they took ah..they...they...they took some of their calculations from, that was on the data. I'm not sure as to the usage and demand of water. And it was determined, I think primarily by your altitude. And here, we, we needed...the three-acre-feet wasn't ample even. Well, alfalfa that that where alfalfa production is a where it's practiced you know on the proper basis that that they use, can use, or should have or expect to use five acre feet per season. Well, you can see where you are and if you're a...if you only have an allowance of 2.7 and it would take, you you can see what it has done to that crop. Well that it's it, that's it, if you have, you'd have to reduce, you could use, you could use your water allowance, but you would have to farm less acreage, and of course, the a, a secret if there is such a thing, in your farming efforts in a place like this, is to a a do what you can with the water you have and then be lucky enough to get some rainfall and that's, that's, that's what puts you over the hump; that free water, you know that water from above. That's the, that's the water that puts, that's that's what does your crop, course, your crops grow better, make better profit, better, everything is better.

RM: Are you asking acre feet? I...we have not exceeding the three acre feet, and a, course, your question with vary in my answer in some like this year there's no ditch water right now, it's a hundred percent pump, and a... Very seldom it's been this way, we have had supplementary. The pump supplementary to the ditch instead of the ditch supplementary to the pump. With the a, three ditches place has rights out of the just one little trickling water coming down, there was one ditch that has not been restored at all and the ditch that, there's one ditch Eby-baca was restoring, it's dry, the Greenwald is the only one that has a maybe, two hundred gallons a minute coming down, course, it starts up the road about three miles and I'm sure up there it would be x amount more, but it's all dirt ditch. There's a lot evaporation in the same ditch, water loss that way, by the time it gets here. Well ,it's probably judging by our pumps, maybe it's three hundred gallons per minute which is a...we're broadcast irrigation panel, irrigation it won't do it by itself. Now, Monday night we had the pumps plus the Greenwald, and a, we were able to do something with it, supplementing the pumps to the ditch, this maybe often that little bit, but we used to do aerial spraying of the orchards, and you could irrigate and spray at the same time.

Irrigation Methods

RM: Now some thirty years ago, I did away with bordering and went in there and made a trough see, so I'd have a flat on spreader, and cross spread, and I don't have to throw any cross shreds in the balance, I don't have to throw borders again. I used to have to everytime I spayed which is at least four times a year, you'd have to knock these because I would irrigate this way you know, and then I would pray this way and I would go with my borders and then just slap heck out of my equipment so I would have to knock them down equipment so I would have to knock them down. Right, and then

go back in a rebuild them. That's right, and then you rebuild them, your chemicals fell on the soil you know and you have to disc it and all that would come up so that's why I have all this equipment. Anyway, I defied all, nature didn't even wave a handkerchief around my face at all. Anyhow, but I am real proud that I did away with the borders because and that flood area. It has a gradual fall, but yes it doesn't erode, and a we started some fescue grass there which helps a lot too. Some of my neighbors and my co-grower up here believe in clean cultivation, I don't. I think it looks nice to see it like a well, but you see more orchards where the grass might contain some things that you retain the moisture longer, but there open; only dislike about it is early Spring, during frost control time, your ground is colder, we read a whole lot colder than he does because it doesn't irradiate any of the soil and to irradiate any heat and that. That's right, there is a three four days difference, adding even three or four degrees difference at night, or in early morning. No, [my orchards stay] colder because we don't absorb any heat to be irradiated. It should be and I just won't think that convince me to clean cultivate and I mean by means of disking cause you sensed away the water being absorbed in the soil and a, soil and so you might say we have a thin, hard pan on top of it because it is disced and another reason I got away disking it, you loosen the soil and tree roots go where they want to go it's where it's softer right and then come up to the surface and demand water often. I remember from the Mexican bracero that a plant has to make a sacrifice, we were raising NUMEX at that time, at the tail end you could see there was a kind of yellowish where the water held up kind of a light green and don't baby it, make those roots go down, not only for water, but elements in the soil, so it's it's your will take potash, your magnesium, the deeper you go to a degree the better it is, because it goes down to your irrigation so I found in making my doing away with clean cultivation, disking, throwing borders, making my permanent panels, putting in this fescue, that I can, my first irrigation, you might say is a little a to get the soil wet, takes a little more water than the Fall, but once you get started a cycle of irrigation say it takes two and a half hours, maybe the second irrigation will take about an hour and forty-five minutes on these runs I have designed, but the first irrigation are your gopher holes, your wedge in the capillary system, and everything, once you start your following irrigation it takes less time and I find that I have to irrigate few times without having, doing clean cultivation. It helps that you take your native grasses, volunteer grasses, if you can read them and they talk to you and they're a little thirsty, you know your trees, and I repeat again, I have this cover problem, weeds, Johnson Grass, mostly fescue orchard grass, then I don't have to irrigate as often as some of my neighbors.

HB If you do, well, ah.. it's hard to control, your borders, your borders are, they can't be wide enough to ah..accommodate it because of the fall of the land. Your borders have to be ah...not so wide. So we've found that you take, your...have ah...you have a main ditch, then you'll, you'll take out your water here, then you'll put that into another ditch. It's a two ditch system...You see..put the water in this other ditch, ok. Now you can take this water out and put it in this ditch in as many places as you want. Then the control of this one [subsidiary ditch] will give you a certain amount, a desired amount for these borders here, you see? From...from this little ditch. And of course why, according to your fall well sometimes you can, sometimes you can use three or four borders; and a good irrigator can sometimes use more than that. And that is...that is the secret of, there's a lot of difference in irrigating and just running water..you know? You run water over the land that's one thing and if you irrigate that's another. That's something you can't teach, it's hard to, you know? You can't tell a person if they don't, oh you can too, you can tell them if you can get them to do it...but if ah.. ah..that..that of course, that, that doesn't come, that doesn't come under scientific. If it was scientific you measure your penetration at the head of your...of your...your flow, your run and at the lower end and all such as that. I think this valley, if I understand it right, it's

ah...it's ah... four percent. I think that's what it is. One foot to the hundred. That's the reason, that's the reason the flow's so fast. See, that's the reason that river runs so fast. Well, if you have a...ok, you have ah... you have a ditch and...and you have ah...you have this land. All right, the general slope of this land, maybe, this is extreme, you see...you're running like that [off at an angle from the acequia madre]. The...the slope of this land like that, ok? That's come out of that, then, then, then you, then you would set up your...your borders in that manner, you see? The...to, ah, slow down the flow. That's how...that's how you get that. Oh yea, sure, yea, you....your....if your ah.. if you had enough flow. You see, one reason you see the variation in...in the amount of water, has a lot to do. If you said, say you have ah...have a piece of flat land, you have a full ditch, you're just...you're in business you see? You have a big wide border, beautiful, no trouble, beautiful for everything. You have plenty of water, you turn that out, flood it, put plenty of water on it, get a good piece of, a good piece of farming done. Ok then, in the spring of the year, when, or that is, if...if you water is short, what can you do? It just runs out there a little ways, and the rest of this is...is dead, you see? Can't...you can't grow. You have to...you have to confine this water to where it'll run...and that's...that's what I was telling you the other day. That, that if you level this kinda land and this, and this....ah...variable water flow...you might get along for awhile, but you built yourself some trouble. You're going to, there will be a time when you, you say well, I can't do anything. The land's too, the land's too level to flow, you need, you need some fall, for a little bit of water, you see?

JVT: Well, we have a concrete dam that was built in 1962 that diverts water out of the river on the (unintelligible), a corridor place, and then it we have the ditch divides there and it goes into the east side and the west side and on the west side I think there's 80 some odd acres on the west side and on the east side there are maybe over around 300 acres but I'm not sure if figures are accurate as they get. The west side is 15 inch plastic pipes and the east side is a mixture of everything it's got a little dirt ditch, a cement(?) ditch, pipeline, and some new pipeline. Where it splits so it comes into a common head the east and west have a common head, where it splits how do you get the water across to the other side. Have a cycling under the river and it goes under the river and when we first moved here and had the dirt ditches there was two different dams there and they were about 200 feet apart but all the water went into the first dam and then we had to turn the ditch (unintelligible) to let the water down to go to the second dam and so we were taking turns on this system of aiming the water, but we had the one dam cycling. And when we came here [ca. 1945], it was a 55-gallon barrel welded together on legs that went across there and these short pieces of 20 inch pipe that somebody had found somewhere and put it all this together. In fact, [Horace] Bounds is the one that did it, guy named McCallan weld all those barrels together, when we first moved here was when he welded it. We're thinking about, see that pipeline we're putting in the second portion of it would go under there and go over some, go up on under there. Probably start some problems...

Crops

HB: Corn was grown before our time [ca. 1925]...that and this. The people before us well they grew a substantial amount of corn. That was corn, beans, chili. And a the the corn, of course, it...it be a cash crop. Well, we ah..we ah...ah..just ah...four years ago...we attempted ta plant alfalfa down here on this farm that we newly acquired. And ah...the alfalfa was ah...I don't know if it was the strain or whether it we had an insect or I don't know what the trouble was but, but the alfalfa only lasted two years. There's an occasional plant left but, but our good stand we, we enjoyed it for two years...you mean with our New Mexico Commons? Well, if it was, if it was renovated and respected and taken care of as an alfalfa field should be, more or less, well, we have, we have stands

of alfalfa that, that would run for ten or twelve years. And, and of course, well, you have to, you have to renovate them, you have to see that they don't suffer, you know, and, say dry winter, why you have to put some water on them, and take care of them, that's all, just like anything. You mean with our New Mexico common? Well, it was if it was renovated and respected and taken care of then an alfalfa field should be more or less well we had we had stands of alfalfa that that would run for ten or twelve years. And and of course, you have to you have to renovate them and see that they don't suffer you know and say dry winter why you have to put some water on them and take care of them, that's all just like anything.

RM And then my folks moved down here 192... early Twenties. And my mother's from Pennsylvania, she was a, schoolteacher, she came out here because her sister had come here for her health. And she a...her sister was, well, I guess lonely, and anyway my mother came and landed a job here teaching school. And she taught for almost thirty years. And a...she a, was the one that initiated...that the a...place... converted from grow crops- corn, beans, alfalfa. [Apples] wasn't grown yet. But a...[she] put it into orchards, her grandfather had course, they didn't have in Pennsylvania, and so it's been a good business, a business that a, a lot of us have made a living at.

JVT: In those days [1945]...we moved here we had two teams of horses, we had sharecroppers, we had hogs, we had corn, we raised beans up on the flat, didn't do any more with that whole flat, there was lambs and this whole thing around the house here was orchards deep with (unintelligible), apples, find pigs around here. And then after the second world war everybody got in the instant mood, started buying their apples at Safeway and we could no longer run that, what you'd call it, type of an operation.

Fatiga, Ditch Maintenance, and the Role of Mayordomos

HB That was the work on the ditch, at any time they needed ah.. repair or whatever, you know, to replace the dam or any thing else was ah...any of that work was known as the fatiga. The secretary would keep ah...keep count of [it]. Mayordomo and [knew the] fatiga and it says, it says in here why how a man and his team they got, they were allowed just a man with a shovel, you see? Well now, they [contributed fatiga]. When I first came here [that was the case] and we also, we also had a mayordomo and 'course they ah..ah..they ah...this was handled on a mayordomo basis. And [I was responsible] for discontinuing the mayordomo on this ditch. It's this..., it's been discontinued, we don't have a [mayordomo anymore]. Well, the reason, the reason was discontinued was because of the ah..of the...really like I said before...that, that everyone, everyone who was capable of working went ah [to ditch meetings]. Well we get back to early days of the mayordomo, get back to say when we first came here, or before. When we first came here the ah, ah, ditch meeting the act was ah...the land owners they put on their best clothes went to that just like going to church. [They would] go to the ditch meeting. And it was ah..it was ah...held informally and in the evening and the secretary would ah..[review] procedures and ah...In future anticipation [of ditch work]. And ah...and ah...the commissioners, ah the commissioners were elected yearly, for, for a one year term. And at that time, now not, not in my, my time but this was before my time, the mayordomo had to give bond. He had to give bond. [And was paid wages.] Then that I was, he's the judge [it was] his decision, of course. Why he would ah...he'd notify a person in advance of their [water] when it was, when they would get it. And of course when the [mayordomo] would get a trip up the ditch every day to throw the weeds out and see the trash that would come down the river, [see] that no water [was] taken, take a shovel and ah..and [fix leaks] filled in a little dirt [if] there's a gopher hole or something like that. But [if it flooded] out in the night and washed all the ditch out, all the ditch bank well then (problem with tape)...the fatiga that he'd have to call out so

many, so many men and if they worked on that then some of em would be ahead on the fatigas some would be in arrears on the fatigas. Well, there was ah...ah...the first of the season. There was always a general ditch cleaning, you see? Now everyone was called on that to you know contribute or, that was a big, a big fatiga, you know to get the ditch in shape, clean it out...and (something #037)...put water in the ditch, that would, that would be in the spring, or late winter whichever they, whichever they determined was the time to get it, you see? And then the rest of, from then on during the season, they ah...the ditch, like if you'd get a flash flood, coming off the hillside, well it would fill up the ditch, or wash it out...which ever it might be. And then the mayordomo, well he would, he would summon the ranchers, in particular if the water was behind, why he would try to get them to try to ah..ah..bring their, their fatiga time up to date. And he'd summon them to get help, whether it was team or men or how many men or whatever the case might be...you see...whatever, whatever the owner wanted to put in or was able to put in at that time, or however it might be. Well, there probably was, but I, I never, ah...the bylaws, the bylaws of this ditch, mostly contained in that old, that old ditch book.

RM But, anyway, I remember the gathering down here...was a kind of a store which is our post office now. And a...middle of January, two Sundays before the Monday you started working, rehashing who all had to have so many men, how many teams, and where they would start, at one time, and you started to work, ready to go to work at 7:00 you didn't leave the house at the seven, and they would take it by tareas each section and take a cigarette break. No, there would be, for example, it might have been down here a, say the post office up to Larry Davis's now that would be here at noon break, but a, each ditch according to the part of us to clean the ditch boss determined tarea, your section to be cleaned between rests or cigarette breaks, you didn't stop to team to roll a cigarette if you could roll it, it'd be fine, and if you had any repairs you did it during the cigarette break. Yeah, harness, or a handle out of the scraper, bust a hamstring, or something like that you know. They were, we used fresnos lot in the sandy area, but our main ditch was scrapers, about two and a half feet wide, with handles on it, and anyway, if you broke down between tareas, the ditch boss would take not of it by minutes or, and then it would it be handwork that you had to do while you were broke down. And, and if all the work was other than your cigarette break, then that person that broke down took time to fix his harnesses up or, scraper or the single tree or whatever it was, got on the shovel and the axe or grubbing hole and went to the...plow and shop, it would be shop work. So, we had these skunk willow, pussy-willow thickets you know, you had to grub out with the grubbing hoe or an axe and some of the banks are pretty steep, that would be done by hand. Now we used fresnos, but that was more on your, were your sandy draws would come in. To get it out little. Well uh, there were two horse and then there were four horse fresnos. And a...I remember there was a four horse either has four single trees on it, but anyway, a...the a... users knew what they had to do, I mean it was a, the repetition of the, the year before, thaw, and this is what it was, and if a, you didn't show up well then you didn't had to do, if you didn't, then you had to, show up at the team, then you had to do the handwork. There was one old gentleman that I remember he was too old to run the team or do the handwork he always came with this little wagon and brought hay for the horses to eat in lunch break. But it, the thing need scrape our ditches you understand, but over a period of years we have in some places, and like in this opened it up for dozer and, and there was still some places that a, were a, thank you, and not very long tarea, are hand cleaned. Two weeks, they give you two weeks notice by the first of February, you...you start digging ditches. Macedonio took maybe about a week, the other side about ten days. Yeah, normally it's a longer, normal the...The Eby-baca ditch above this one is longer on the end isn't it? Yeah, and it has some a, well a lot of it to over there, it follows the, there to over the hill, and yes, you can come in here, but you'd have to carry your scraper of dirt quite

always to dump it...to avoid hand work. And hand work, it took maybe three weeks to do it you know what I mean.

Derechos and Rotation Cycles

HB Well, the water hours are related to acreage that you have. Well ah...in ah..percentage proportionately. Well, when the water allocation was started, ah...I've forgotten but I think that, I think that it was calculated on the basis of ah...of three and a half hours per acre. I think that's what it was, we could ah...really hunt up some of this data and ah...and figure it out for sure, if you want to know. About three and a half hours per acre? (NWA) Well, I think that's about what it was, something of that nature. And that, that gave so many acres times three and a half hours, gave a total acreage. Divided back into the acreage, that, that each person has, you see. That because of his, because of the hours that he had, ah...ah...the fatiga was in ah...ah..direct relation to the amount of irrigated hours that he had you see? Could be, could be, could be ah...ah.., it could be so many days, a large, large acreage, plus so many hours. Smaller acreage less, it was, it was in proportion...to their, to their usage, was what it was.

VM: On the Macedonio ditch, it's a hundred and sixty-eight hours a week, on the Eby-baca ditch, there's three hundred and thirty-six hours a week. Now, I can't tell why, but this is how it works out, it's how many hours each user has depending on his acreage, so you add up the totals, how many hours they get for then, and that's what it comes out. Well, I'll tell you why. Because, these, those are two ditches the Greenwald and the Eby-baca are both figured on a three hundred and thirty-six hour week, that's because it's every two weeks; we're on a two week schedule. Yeah, and the other two are on a one week schedule.

JVT: Yeah, when we do it some people try to cut but they would like for us to have it so many hours over here, so many over there. We grip about it, but everybody else does. (Unintelligible) going to mention it (unintelligible) and in the old days the old timers were real bad about keeping the hours on the ditch. And the first hours on the ditch were worth a lot more than State Engineers saying we have 3 feet of water to use because if you don't have the hours on the ditch to deliver it and so some of the land out here has 25 minutes an acre and a some of them have an hour an acre and so that's is a big concern so a lot of people especially the ones that drop 30 minutes. Well, that's what I was saying, when the old people most of them Spanish background would trade land out here they if they sold half their land they would retain over half of their hours on their ditch. And that's something that I don't understand, maybe that's in the records and the old books but down at boundaries maybe these hours are kept in these books. Whereas the records are that these hours on the ditch I don't know because they're not in the courthouse they're not in the State Engineer so they have they have to be in those, I understand that in some parts of the state where that was taken right there on the ditch and people went to court and made the ditches give everybody hours.

Characteristics and Problems with Ditches

HB Well, we have that, that's a gopher holes, a gopher can ah..you can work on your ditch today and a gopher, ah..gopher hole come in it the next night the next day you have a washout you see? Well that, yea, gophers and gophers and then ah.. and then ah...ah...ah...streams drift you know, drift ah.. the drift wood and trash, it comes down. Well, ah..you could take a little, little small limb and that, it could get crossways in the ditch, then it would just accumulate and accumulate you know, grass and other trash and the next thing you have, as the Mexican calls it defalco, its, its, it'll overflow and there, there washes your ditch out, you see? All of those things, all of those things were,

were, ah...were before, before our ditch was, before we had it concreted. And ah...ah...it ah...when we used to have the just the earth and trash and soak weeds and [earthen] dams, you see? Well, ah...all of those things were ah...ah...they were so...it was so adverse to ah...to any ah...any manner of ah...production, you, the dams, it would washout, it leaked. And the, the ditch, well of course it would wash out, and an earthen ditch, ours was, I don't know if ours was keep well, but ours would lose, well percentagewise it would be from, it could be from 30 to 50 percent of the water. That it would loose from one end to the other. And, and ah...shortage of water, well, there would only be stream flow, oh, maybe half the distance of the ditch...there wouldn't be enough to, because the ditch would lose so much...it'd lose so much in the ditch, that it would ah..., your seepage, lossage in different ways, that, they, the people ah...the farms and usage below would, wouldn't be able to get any water. So, that was, all of that was, the ah...the great advantage is, it would, you might say doubled our amount of water...

JVT: Your gophers are your biggest problem with a dirt ditch because you just get started irrigating and the water splits and you run up there and your side of your, whole side of the mountain is gone because them gophers dug a hole in it and that would be the problem and of course then in those days your brush and grass and everything growing up, clogging it up, that was another problem. The, ah, like I said when we moved here you had so much water you didn't have any of these problems. I'll tell you gophers were your biggest problem that now if you had to use a dirt ditch you wouldn't never get any water through because it just wouldn't run back. You don't have that much water. Yes, on that side over there is, my mother had the fields levelled and they didn't remove the top soil. Level the field, and put the top soil back. They just went to levelling and so we wound up with a complete sand and we raised grass and wheats and stuff and plowed them under and plowed them under until we got two fields over there that you can run water across because the soil is been built back up in it and we have two fields that are still we actually have natural grass and weeds and everything else we plow them under once in a while and then they built up to start farming in (unintelligible)

Sharecroppers

HB This place was, when I got it, I didn't know anything about [farming]...I know nothing about farming. The land it was ah....(problem with tape)...it was ah...small, small tracts. And this, these small fields had one irrigation, won't irrigating but about four, five or six acres. And that was one way because it wouldn't irrigate any other way, you see...you'd run into a lot of these little tracts so land. So they were ah...ah...in the past well they ah...they had been ah...let out to sharecroppers, you see. Sharecropping was very extensive before well in there before I came, when when before, well during the Depression, before the Depression, and well really all down the line, a some of these, some of these natives who now, of course, it's their second, third, fourth generation of those natives, but they raised their family here as sharecroppers you see and that was that was the way these farms were a there would be a set of certain acres, three acres or five acres that would, that would irrigate with a certain flow of water you see, well they let this man have that one you see, or you might have two or three of them, however, it might be. But the boundary of one was where the where the water would irrigate best from that point you see, it might be three acres it might be ten and that that was the way, that that was determined. Oh I, I can't go into that because I just heard them say some of it was debtor seals, and some of it was a was a, well, of course, ten shares. I would be...I'd be forty, sixty. There, you see, some of them were forty sixty, some of them were fifty fifty. Depended I guess on...on what they grew, I don't know just, I didn't have any experience with that.

Weights and Measures

HB: A hundred shell, a hundred pounds shelling, that it would be a hundred pounds of shelled corn. I might sell a hundred and five, I might sell hundred and ten, might sell ninety-eight, or ninety-five, but I had that was used as a measurement. And a this a this tub, this wagon would hold ten tubs you see, so that was how like sharecroppers or someone who had storage in all they keep the number of wagon totals put in their bin or wherever they put it. And, of course, if it was on a sharecrop basis well it would be so many per unit, so many per million, that's the way they divided it. On calculating in ten sacks of corn, and a...and this this tub full of corn, when you came to buy the tub full of corn or they deliver it, whichever case you might be, well it was always termed in a *costal*.

Drought of the 1950's

JVT: In 1950 well all we had here were a few head of cattle and I remember the government giving us corn, old corn, in the sacks for 10 cents a hundred and we'd pick it up at the Farmer's Market there just to keep your cows alive. We were hauling water in the trunk of our car in a barrel out here to drink cause the wells went dry, it was a different world then like I said, it never got to where you could raise pigs and corn and apples and stuff and sell them out here. It never recovered from that and so we didn't raise any cows and just planting pasture for those cows since they were being a non-profit organization they was in just a good place to live. No, they couldn't [make a living] unless you owned the whole thing you made it might, don't even know what you could do. No, the drought killed the orchards, this went on this side and then the other [I] leveled the fields took the trees out and then that was the end of that orchard.

Interviewee: Horace Bounds (HB)
Interviewer: Neal Ackerly (NA)
Tape Number 1 of 5
Labeled Horace Bounds Part 1A

- HB That ah...that don't mean anything except..(laughing).....and then they'll say, well I don't know nothing about it.
- NA Ummm....hummm
- HB (problem with tape #004) That would be good for the dates...
- NA There we go, we're on, it's on.
- HB The name Mimbres...
- NA Ummm hummm (problem with tape)...uhhh, no I'm going to see Mr. McSherry tomorrow.
- HB Tomorrow?
- NA Yes sir.
- HB You haven't seen them?
- NA (problem with tape),....sure when he was going to be back or what he was going to have to do when he came back, so it's ah...ah...I'm going to try to see him.....
- HB see the (sounds like: quote, growth #012) was known as the (something) willow...
- NA Ummm humm.
- HB And....ah...there's....there's a lot of work, Neal is this, did you want to suggest ah...(problem with tape) This has ah...you have down here flood (problem with tape)
- NA I was just trying....some folks keep records of when they got flooded out real bad and other folks don't, which is why I, you know, need to try to talk to a number of different people if I can.
- HB (problem with tape)...why.....that'd leave two floods.
- NA Uhhh huuu.
- HB And they (problem with tape)...in less than a hundred years.
- NA Uhhh Huuuu. Right.
- HB We've had two of them in the last ten.
- NA Right, right.
- HB ...so there's not that....that explains, that explains a lot of what's happening today.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB You said that you, that you would like to ah...well how do you want to work this? You want...

NA Oh, I was sort of curious, well I'd like to know when you were born, because I don't have a clue.

HB I was born in ah..I was born November the 6th, 1903 (problem with tape)

NA Here in New Mexico?

HB I was born in Van Horn, Texas.

NA Oh, you were?

HB Van Horn, Texas. My folks came to New Mexico in 1899...get my mail in Santa Rita. Well, it used to be Santa Rita. (problem with tape #028). ...'bout 1923.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB Of 'course, my dad was a rancher and the progress was westerly...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...and he came, he came to, he came to Deming (problem with tape)...about 1899...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...or ah..1914 and ah...it was a matter of just changing country and ah...getting where he ah...getting where he ah...well [couldn't make it].

NA Did he come with cattle?

HB He brought his cattle.

NA He did?

HB He brought it out of his own herd, and he brought his own herds. Shipped his ah....shipped his ah...[cattle] shipped well a small train load of cattle...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB A box car load of...of ah...

NA Do you recall how many head of cattle?

HB Well, he had ah... as I understand it (problem with tape)..about 400 ah..head of cows, it was a good place then too.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB It was a good place, but ah..

NA Ummm hummm...

HB ...but ah...they brought, the cattle came to ah...to what was known and that was known as [Separ] and that was ah...(problem with tape) and that was a ship..that free range that had just about come to an end and it was used..

NA Ummm hummm

HB (More problems with tape)...more and more people were doing the same thing, but that was before (problem with tape)...had ordered to have a ranch had really taken place.

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm.

HB [The style of] ranching well that's ah.. that's what happened they, ah...would buy a ranch and he ah...He started in and had ah....established a ranch and a home for both.

NA I've heard both...I've stories or read interviews with, in particular an interview with Ron Bell.

HB And ah the ranchers would have kind of a boundary line a fence or a perimeter...

NA Ummmm hummmm.

HBranch....(problem with tape)...that was about the same age as he was....

NA Ummmm hummmm.

HB ...and (problem with tape)....he was already established in this country...

NA Ummmm hummm.

HB ...that was down in [Deming]. This this nephew he ah...he ran the cattle, the cattle is ah.....the cattle was turned loose, ranching rights or facilities....

NA Ummmm hummm.

HB (problem with tape) you know, that's just...

NA Ummm hummm.

HBlike it still holds good....

NA Ummmm hummm.

HBlike this subdivision over here....

NA Ummmm hummmm. Right.

HB It still holds good.

NA Ummmm hummmm. Here when you were, well, see you were born in '03 and came here in, you came here in....you came here when you were about 12 or 13 then?

HB Yep.

NA What was the country like, when you came? What was what was the valley like?

HB I wasn't that, well that wasn't a valley when we came,..(problem with tape)

NA You went to Deming first?

HB Deming is where....

NA Oh.

HB When we came from Texas, we...we landed in Deming.

NA Oh.

HB We established this little ranch half way between Deming and Lordsburg...and ah..(problem with tape) Deming.

NA Ummm hummmm. Ummm hummm. At that point that was a pretty, there was a lot of activity going on, between Deming and Lordsburg.

HB Well, no, there was very little. The ranches were kinda few and far, far between. And he settled his ranch it was ah empty.

NA Oh really, Ummmm, cause there was a lot of mining going on down south toward Hachita and a little town called Eureka, down that way...

HB Well [not for] quite a ways...

NA Ummm hummm

HBsouth of [Deming]....

NA Ummm hummm

HB My dad was ah...he was north of..

NA Ummm hummm

HB North of the Southern Pacific, see, and Hachita is way off down there...

NA Right.

HB It was on down (problem with tape)...(#80 sounds like: truck was in) ...when that railroad was in.

NA When did, when did your, did you, your family or you, move up into Mimbres?

HB Ah, of course about in the 1920's.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB About 19, 1921, that was a real, that was a real bad time for ranchers.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB The price of cattle was low...ranchers were having trouble.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB And I was the oldest child, and I...and ah...let's see I must have been about 17 or 18 and I went to work at Hurley.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB The cowpunchers, all the cowpunchers down in that country they..Hurley was starting up then...the mill at Hurley and all those that came, the men came to Hurley, and I was just a big old kid and I followed them.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...I worked there oh, I guess a year, maybe not so [long]..

NA You were working in the mines then?

HB No. no, Hurley is the mill, that's a concentrator.

NA Oh..oh a concentrator.

HB Not a mine, for the Santa Rita mine.

NA Ummmm hummm.

HB And ah, then I went back home and we had ah...ah...another pretty hard spell. And I up, then I came to Santa Rita.....

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...in 1923. And ah..worked there, oh I don't know I guess over a year.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB (problem with tape)

NA Oh. Ummm hummm.

HB Lay us off on the wayside they said.....

NA That's...

HB Not too many people get that, you see.

NA Yep. (problem with tape) So it's as each year goes by and my wife and I look at each other and we're still surprised. (laughs) So you got married in '24. What did you, when did you, first get farm land over here?

HB Oh well we got, as I say after '24 or '25, why we started, that was when we bought our first land.

NA Ummm.

HB This side of Santa Rita.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB And then we ah about 15 years and then when we bought this farm and moved here.

NA Ummm hummm. Sometime in ah....the late '30s, late '30s or there about?

HB Oh, I'd say we got it in '35, '39 or '40 somewhere in there.

NA Ummm hummm. How, how big, did you buy the whole farm at once or did you buy....

HB No, we bought it one piece at a time. We bought this farm and then the adjoining farms.

NA Ummm hummm. You were joking yesterday about it wasn't a successful farm. How big was your first piece?

HB I guess that's something we should clarify before we start this farming, you know. That's, that's what's confusing to a lot of people. The technology of the professionals who try to ah...

NA Ummmm hummm.

HB You know, [tell us how] the valley, the land that can be irrigated.

NA Right. Right. I don't think there's

HB As far as farming, you can't call it farming, you can't really call it farming because, all it would produce is ah, ah [small crops]. At the time, at the time this ah...this valley conceived farming area, well it played a vital part, because..

NA Right.

HByou see, that was when, that was when Pinos Altos and ah [Santa Rita mines were going.] And they were here, well then there was, then these people came in here, but as far as [farming], it's just, it's just a Hindu operation, is what it is.

NA Ummm hummm exactly.

HB Well, living is just, just a piece-by-piece and hand-by-hand.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB You know the nature of the fields....

NA Ummm hummm.

HB That we call a field that are (problem with tape), the run is too shortto ah...to ah...farm [compared to Mesilla] or any place, you know, where there, where there is real farming, that's what I mean.

NA Right, right.

HB You can't do it. So, that being the case...[good grass is the] significance of value in the, in the farming land, you know. And then this is because this grama grass, this native grass, this good grazing land goes right up to the edge of the farm.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB Now that's ah...now that's there's...there's nothing as good as, you know running water to have.

NA To know that running water's perfect.

HB You have running water, plenty of running water and cotton wood trees, they was just no, they was no better ah...no better ah..grazing land hardly [anywhere], so, so that's....that's...that's where...that's where the value of land is. Raising crops are...you can, you can harvest some [crops] most anything that will grow.

NA Right. Right.

HB The soil's good but you can't establish a, a [a big farm.] As one of those people who did not have cattle, were not in the cattle business, well they [didn't have many acres].

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm.

HB In fact, the, these places that, that we have owned, and do own and the like, ah...there was, well, I'd say not less than ah...10 or 15 acres....

NA So there was orchards when you first acquired the place?

HB There's about 10 or 15 acres, that's ah...that's a pretty substantial number. There was a remainder of orchards, then productive orchards just like this man that you met here the other day. Well, we owned the place once (problem with tape)..

NA Ummmm hummm.

HB And that was, that (problem with tape)

NA Right. Well they still are, aren't they?

HB Yeah, took less, took less and less land than it would be for livestock...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB [I don't] know anything about the orchards...I do, we had plenty for those cow to eat...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...with some soft ground and ah....they, they could have better.

NA What did you give for a piece of land?

HB This was an estate.

NA It was an estate?

HB It was an estate. It was ah..the man deceased was ah..Pablo Bryant, the best nature, the best personality, that you could ever imagine. But yea, it was an estate..that's when we bought it.

NA Ummm humm...As I, you, we were talking a little bit about leveling and the fact that land leveling didn't work so well, ah..here.

HB This place was, when I got it, I didn't know anything about [farming]...I know nothing about farming. The land it was ah....(problem with tape)...it was ah...small, small tracts. And this, these small fields had one irrigation, won't irrigating but about four, five or six acres.

NA Right.

HB (Problem with tape) And that was one way because it wouldn't irrigate any other way, you see...you'd run into a lot of these little tracts so land. So they were ah...ah...in the past well they ah...they had been ah..let out to sharecroppers, you see.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB They [sharecropped it].

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm.

HB And ah...that was when we got a little, a little better equipment and then just..just...(problem with tape)...let's see what did they call this...

NA Laser leveling?

HB Laser leveling?

NA Yes sir.

HB No, no they never attempted any of that.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB And ah...you see this ah when we first ah...when we first got it [the farm], and of course

then the plow was ah...about an eight or ten inch plow...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB (problem with tape) An eight or ten inch plow don't turn much dirt.

NA Right.

HB And it don't go very deep. And ah...we started using an eighteen inch two way plow...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB That made...it...turned over quite a bit...

NA With the term "two-way plow", could...could you explain that a little bit.

HB Was..that was a...ah...turned a lot of dirt...

NA (more problems with tape)...oh ok..alright, ok.

HB Then we had ah...an eighteen inch [plow] and ah... over these ah...fields was there was white [colored dirt] that ah...just ah, plowing just straight sand.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB That was the flow of the river at one time, you see.

NA Right, where an old channel was in other words.

HB Well, if it, it was a portion of it. The way I have this thing [laid out] over the three foot end here...

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm.

HB ...of the wall here...can tell today [it was as] wide as it was when we came here.

NA Ummm, my goodness.

HB The head of these, the lack of these [borders] anytime before and now. No doubt this was before the...back to before the Indian time.

NA Right.

HB Well, the water and the floods, if they had any at all, took care of itself. Where possibly most of the water was...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB [Concentrated, the river] started overflowing it [the bank]

NA Right.

HB ...you see...

NA Ummm humm. Ummm hummm.

HB So, the the natural, the natural way these floods [run, they overflow] and that is the only way. I don't think, course now man could put in ah...he could put in ah..(problem with tape)...he could put in ah...concrete ah...ah...culvert.

NA Pipe.

HB He could do that.

NA Yea, Ummm hummm.

HB But as long as he use, as long as he use [dirt ditches]...those in contact and I don't care what you do with it...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB [You] realize you just might as well kiss your work good-bye.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB Cause that's the old way of doin it, doin it. Well, you figure it anyway you want to, it, this thing was a natural when it was operated by nature, only it had [to] spill a little over here and a little over there.

NA Right.

HB ...so irrigating was another, was a whole lot of water, a whole lot of water [for] you get your land irrigated.

NA Right.

HB [You would] take it all and put it in one, in one quarter or one area, where there's just [a small border].

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm. When you, when ah... were these all like cheek to jowl or were the parcels scattered around, up and down the valley?

HB What ah, what we've had is ah...is ah...just all in one piece.

NA Oh...ok.

HB What we acquired would all be adjoining.

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm. Makes the whole process of farming and irrigating a lot easier, I imagine.

HB Well it ah, well it ah..

NA (problem with tape) Did you, when you first started (problem with tape)...the animals

were still in use a lot, or were folks pretty mechanized?

HB Well, this ah, when we started here why ah [they farmed with rigs].

NA Oh you did?

HB They farmed with rigs.

NA Umm humm.

HB They farmed with rigs and then ah...that's the hardest.

NA Ummm, these were, were these teams of horses or mules?

HB Horses for a number of years and ah...we used them in a feeble attempt to try to spray the orchards.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB and...

NA Did, did anybody, when you were here, did anybody use oxen?

HB No.

NA No?

HB I have found oxen shoes, here on the place.

NA Oh, you have? So, maybe at some point somebody did. In the eighteen, back in the eighteen hundreds

HB There's one right there, there's an oxen shoe some where, oh, it's in there in the kitchen.

NA Ummm humm. What ah...what kind of tractor did you use? I'm just always curious.

HB Only one we had was one of em little Popping Johnnies.

NA Oh really? I've seen pictures of em, but I've never seen one of em.

HB A little Popping Johnny, I don't know whether's a...ah...I believe they call that an N-12 or something...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB They call it a Popping Johnny. Ever, ever time it turns over it pops, no, that was just the exhaust.

NA Oh, that was just the exhaust coming out, ok. No I never...

HB Pop, Popping Johnny they called it.

- NA What about, when you started the farm, was it just you and your wife and your kids or did you have [hired help]?
- HB We started to farm this place, when we first came down here...when we first came here, it was [hired help].
- NA Ummm hummm.
- HB And the best, the best workmen at that time. I didn't ah...we bought the place, we lived up there where we had our home up there [Santa Rita] for a couple of three years...
- NA Ummm hummm.
- HB When we started to farm this place....
- Mrs.B. Good morning
- HB Good morning....the ah....the best farmers that worked, you know, [were] middle aged [and] knew how to farm...
- NA Ummm hummm.
- HB Knew how to do everything.
- NA Ummm hummm.
- HB [They] worked on this place. I didn't but they did.
- NA Ummm hummm.
- HB And they'd be here, or ah and then they'd [work for] two dollars a day.
- NA Two dollars a day in wages!
- HB Two dollars a day and ah [did a good job].
- NA So did, then you had a manager, in other words, before you came down?
- HB No, not really, I come down here and ah...and more or less told them do go ahead and do what they knew to do.
- NA Ummm hummm.
- HB and that...I didn't start in to try to change something, I didn't know anything about it, you see?
- NA Ummm, Ummm hummm. Did these same group of guys stay with you for a long time 'er....
- HB No they were, well they [worked in the mines] those people, that generation who were not too old, it was [mine poor people]. You see, they hadn't had all these up and downs. (problem with tape)...I had ah..ah..[never] been someone to keep a diary on this. Why we

could tape these ups and downs, but [I don't know] too much about those ups and downs.

NA Uhhhh huuu.

HB But that's been life you see, which is alright. If that's all I complain about..(problem with tape)...but these generations, that generation (problem with tape)

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...so...so..the...the help and the people they knew they were children, of course, their children were educated, they were...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...educated some (problem with tape)...they all ah..well then...(problem with tape)..you know they (something #313.5) (problem with tape) by then

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ..and ah [get] a little bit more acquainted with the machinery and the like (problem with tape)...that's been the history of this valley and all you the old people, all of them have gone to the mines. This is a picture today, see?

NA Ummm hummm.

HB You have so many acres out here and you don't have on it [enough people]. That's worked on a ranch that knows how to run a baler hook up ah, they, they've all left here.

NA They're doin wage work.

HB [For] five dollars an hour or...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB That's the, that's the reason that the farms...the farms are not persevering down here. Fifty years ago, came in and started farming, [much] younger than they are now.

NA Ummmm hummm.

HB You, you just tell it's miserable down where you can see the farms...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...and [no] water and, and no production.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB [In those days] you, you don't drive, you don't drive up and down this valley unless they's an orchard, or a real good productive farm.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB Some of them that have permanent pasture, well it appears good and it is good.
NA Ummm hummm.
HB Like ah..you know...like ah harvest crops, such as small [grains] or hay...
NA Ummm hummm.
HB ...well, you don't, you don't see that.
NA Hummm. Ah, that there is also some places that look to be [abandoned] and they've been abandoned for some time.
HB Well, that's it. They've, they've been left out so long that they appear to be...they are abandoned.
NA Right, there's, there's mesquites coming up in them...
HB That's it the weeds...
NA ...and the weeds are [real bad].
HB That's it, there's no..it's a sad situation, that's a sad situation.
NA Yea. Ummm.

END OF TAPE #347

Tape 2 of 5
Labeled Horace Bounds Part 1B (labeled on blank side)

NA That's strange (003)
?? I have some (something)...John..
NA I'm have a little trouble with this machine, so you're hearing me click the button. I'm not cutting you off, I'm trying...
HB Cut it off..
NA I'm trying to keep the machine going.
HB Well, ah...maybe it shouldn't have too much of this on it.
NA ...those if you could. Ahhhhh, on the San Lorenzo Ditch, the, the fatigas were ah...
HB That was the work on the ditch, at any time they needed ah.. repair or whatever, you know, to replace the dam or any thing else was ah...any of that work was known as the fatiga. The secretary would keep ah...keep count of [it]. Mayordomo and [knew the] fatiga and it says, it says in here why how a man and his team they got, they were allowed just a man with a shovel, you see,...

- NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm.
- HB Well now, they [contributed fatiga].
- NA Was this, was this still true when you first came to the valley?
- HB When I first came here [that was the case] and we also, we also had a mayordomo and 'course they ah..ah..they ah...this was handled on a mayordomo basis.
- NA Ummm hummm.
- HB And [I was responsible] for discontinuing the mayordomo on this ditch. It's this..., it's been discontinued, we don't have a [mayordomo anymore].
- NA Why?
- HB Well, the reason, the reason was discontinued was because of the ah..of the...really like I said before...that, that everyone, everyone who was capable of working went ah [to ditch meetings]. Well we get back to early days of the mayordomo, get back to say when we first came here, or before. When we first came here the ah, ah, ditch meeting the act was ah...the land owners they put on their best clothes went to that just like going to church..
- NA Ummm hummm.
- HB [They would] go to the ditch meeting. And it was ah..it was ah...held informally and in the evening and the secretary would ah..[review] procedures and ah...
- NA Ummm hummm.
- HB In future anticipation [of ditch work]. And ah...and ah...the commissioners, ah the commissioners were elected yearly, for, for a one year term. And at that time, now not, not in my, my time but this was before my time, the mayordomo had to give bond. He had to give bond.
- NA Hummm.
- HB [And was paid wages.] Then that I was, he's the judge [it was] his decision, of course. Why he would ah...he'd notify a person in advance of their [water] when it was, when they would get it.
- NA Ummm hummm.
- HB And of course when the [mayordomo] would get a trip up the ditch every day to throw the weeds out and see the trash that would come down the river, [see] that no water [was] taken, take a shovel and ah..and [fix leaks] filled in a little dirt [if] there's a gopher hole or....
- NA Ummm hummm.
- HB ...something like that. But [if it flooded] out in the night and washed all the ditch out, all the ditch bank well then (problem with tape)...the fatiga that he'd have to call out

so many, so many men and if they worked on that then some of em would be ahead on the fatigas some would be in arrears on the fatigas...

NA Ummm hummm, ummm hummm.

HB But to me that's been, it's been sadly overlooked in a way. And, of course, it was a passing thing. [Where] we came here at first, now I don't know whether, whether you've ah...., whether you have, but there was a certain day of the year that the people had a [fiesta].

NA Right.

HB And ah, I don't know whether that was in respect to the [cleaning of acequias].

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...I, I don't understand it.

NA [It is] real common in the northern part of the state.

HB It's still...it's still [practiced?]

NA It's still very common up north.

HB It's still in existence?

NA Yes sir. Ummm hummm.

HB Well, it was here when we [first arrived]. Women and children and some of the men, well they would, they would go up the ditch (problem with tape)...being Saturday or ah...er...er...ah what..or singing or whatever it was.

NA Ummm hummm..ummm hummm. Do, do you recall, what time of the year this was?

HB No that's what I was going to say. I don't remember. Just, it only happened a few times after I came, until it was discontinued.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB And ah...it could have been [late spring] but I know it was, ah that was, it was new to me and I kinda wondered. And, ah, in a way it was, it was easy to ex..., except...see the pioneers came, came in and the pioneers had their vehicles and their teams and all of that but, that, those groceries you know the food,...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...ah...it...if you have food and water for existence then you can go a long ways with what bad clothes you have, and how, and what little money you have, if you happen to have that, you see.

NA What is..(problem with tape)

HB ...there's kinda of ah...ah...a rule ah...cowboy...(problem with tape) what this amounted to..

NA Ummm hummm.

HB Well that's that's kinda what I put it together at [the time].

NA Ummm hummm.

HB And, and for me, it, what was so, so picturesque was the fact that this church down here, this old Catholic [Church, there was] a super professional at toning that bell. You, you, you understand.

NA [I heard it ringing] back a couple of times. I would say, you got two or three bells.

HB One bell.

NA No.

HB Yea, one bell only.

NA Well working that clapper is hard, I mean to, to make...

HB There's one, one, one bell only.

NA Ummm humm.

HB At that time why [there was a fellow who rang that bell]. Course he's passed away, long except (hard to understand he is mumbling #085). (problem with tape)...bell...

NA Ummm humm.

HB And that bell has such a beautiful tone that, well, my father, at the end of our property here, built there to hear that bell, you know, being toned. And that's, that just has ah.... it just carries those ah..those ah...waves. That's been lost, that, there's nobody. The bell rings once in a while, just dodododo. Ah they just rang that in memory of, of different [events], a death, a birthday, I never know what it was about..

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ..but (problem with tape)...don't know..

NA I lived in a small town in Florida, and they would tone the bell, with very intricate sounds...

HB Yea, yea.

NA ...every day at noon, that's how you knew it was noon to go take a lunch break.

HB But I could (problem with tape)...been lost, discarded...

NA Hummm, hummm. So that was the, the celebration of, of the ditch or the water or the

harvest...

HB Celebration of the respect to the deity, I never did know what it is but it was in, it was in the, the graciados, you know [thanks that] they had water,...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...or wanted more or...

NA Right.

HB ...they were blessed to have it...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB [I wish I] knew more about it than I did.

NA Well only...

HB What do you think about it, who, who, who did you talk to that's ever brought this up?

NA I have not talked anybody in the southern [part of the state] ah...

HB [In the] northern part they do?

NA In the northern part I have not talked to anybody, but I read it in some books. Have you, have you ever seen a book by a guy named Crawford called [mayordomo]? He was the mayordomo of a ditch, but up in the northern Rio Grande.

HB No.

NA It's a wonderful book, you'll, you'll probably find lots of things in it that, that you'd recognize.

HB Yep.

NA Ummmm...but I....

HB Well now that mayordomo like I say is, is, that, that position had quite a significance at the time in its day, you know.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB Whether they, whether they employ a mayordomo for I guess it's still the same...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...same nature, we just [discontinued] it here. And I was instrumental in doing that, for the fact that no one wanted the job.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB And it was an expense that in ah...in ah...in maintaining and getting ah...and getting anybody we could [rely on. The] allowance was so small that...

NA Right.

HB ...and the duties were so much more varied than what they had been in the past, you know, we had several new people in here and in the later years, why we ah...ah...we took and calculated from the book of derechas (derechos) the water rights and such as that. We calculated and, and that's even, even as today [how] water is made [available].

NA Ummm hummm. Ahhh...

HB I don't know whether they do that in other parts or not.

NA They do, but it has different meanings. Ah...usually a derecho, in El Paso refers to a certain amount of time that's somehow related to the acres of land.

HB Yea.

NA Oh yea, there's still mayordomo's in El Paso.

HB Yea, yea.

NA Once the water's, the the Bureau of Reclamation delivers the water to [the head]. [But] water through the community ditch, it's still the responsibility of a mayordomo.

HB Yea....thinking about and just putting it on a, on a list basis, then a certain day a certain part [of the ditch]. And ah, that ah, of course there's some, some objection to it, always is.

NA Right, right.

HB Then um...objections [were] more prevalent than there has been with this, with this list problem.

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm. How, you said the derecho was equivalent to eight hours of irrigation time?

HB Ummm. That was, that was the allocation in this, in this particular ditch. At least I think that's what it is. I think that's what it is. [You'll] find someplace now where they, that was instigated.

NA And, and the number of hours, the, in other words the, the half a derecho or a three quarters of a derecho, how would [that be related] to the acres that you were, to be cultivated? In other words, did they, did you...

HB The acreage would determine your, would determine your hours.

NA Ok.

HB And the, and the derecho was just, that was just a coined, that was a water right would be so many [hours]. A derecho represented, say you had a hundred and twenty hours

for...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB [All farmers] divided into so many derechos and so plus so many hours, you see.

NA Right. I know we had complaints, or we heard, when we talked to folks in El Paso, [that mayordomos] would slip their buddies a little extra time.

HB Well, that's it, you see. Now that's it. and then of course when they get the [water] they ah...that they ah...(problem with tape)...was still alright to have somebody do it..but this [list works] and then there's nobody to blame.

NA Right.

HB No one to blame. Any, any time because [you are] responsible. Yyou go get the water, and if they have it carted down why you go get it.

NA Right.

HB An...and then when your time returns why that's...

NA Ummm hummm. What's the usual interval, how many days go by from, from one irrigation cycle, one irrigation period to another? Do you [recall?]

HB Well now, [do you mean on the San Lorenzo?]

NA Yea, on the San Lorenzo.

HB You're still talking about the San Lorenzo Ditch, well we had ah...well we did, ah...I'd like to take you [to the dam] would you like to do that?

NA You betcha.

HB Do you have your camera?

NA I certainly do.

HB We're at ah..I say we, there's ah, there's a ditch that is ah...we're in the process now (problem with tape)...laws, wife, she has a little over 43 acres of farming land down [there]. This is the...ah...do, ah, water for subsistence is being, that ah...that we're using.

NA This is the SCS ditch money or the State Acequia?

HB No this is ah [SCS] and I don't know whether the state has ah...come in or not.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB That there is just about it

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...on the, of the land (problem with tape)..

NA Oh yea, I see.

HB ..that same page, whether it has the water allocation or not...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB It does?

NA It doesn't. It has the percentage and the total number of hours. Yea, it's got the total hours.

HB There you go, see. I suppose that this ah, I suppose this other [is] worded the same?

NA Ummm hummm.

HB But ah, but it ours and it's [operated] in the same manner. And ah...we do have the statutes. We do have to designate that we do have [mayordomo, and it's] his responsibility.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB Has to be. And then...

NA But in fact you all have sort of a group agreement, that [you operate by], right?

HB Whether it was, as well as that was my neighbor and farmer, who has, who has taken the designation.

NA Right. On San Lorenzo, if ah, you [wait] for a number of days before you water again. Is that correct?

HB They done that when, we have ah, I think, I have more water on that than any [other place]. I think I get about half of the, I have a little less than 50 percent.

NA Something.

HB Ok. 44 plus 6...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB So if I use water, whenever time I use the water it would be about ah...12, 15 days before the water [is mine again].

NA I get it...ok.

HB (problem with tape)

NA Right.

HB We have, we have..ah...what is know as [garden water]. I guess you're familiar with that.

NA I'm familiar with that term, yes. That's, that's like to pull off your little domestic gardens right near the houses here.

HB Yea, that's that's ah....that's garden water ever Sunday.

NA Right, right. It's ah....it's really quite similar, yea the ah...do you want to go chat with your wife and see what's she wants to do about lunch, sir?

HB Yea, let's just close this off.

END OF TAPE #214

Tape 3 of 5
Labeled Bounds 2A

NA Talking last time we were talking last time about ah...the way the ditches were maintained an....if it's ok, I'd like to sort of pick up and run with that for a little bit. Ah...was the amount of fatiga, that a person or an outfit had to perform, was that related to the acres that they had, or was that related to the water hours that they had?

HB Well, the water hours are related to acreage that you have.

NA How so?

HB Well ah...in ah..percentage proportionately...

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm.

HB ..well when the water allocation was started, ah...I've forgotten but I think that, I think that it was calculated on the basis of ah...of three and a half hours...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...per acre.

NA Oh..ok.

HB I think that's what it was, we could ah...really hunt up some of this data and ah...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ..and figure it out for sure, if you want to know...

NA Ummm hummm.

HBthat particular.

NA About three and a half hours per acre?

HB Well, I think that's about what it was, something of that nature.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB And that, that gave so many acres times three and a half hours, gave a total acreage.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB Divided back into the acreage, that, that each person has, you see.

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm humm. Well, how, how did the, how did the fatiga work, I mean, in other words, how did you know that this guy has to do ten hours fatiga?

HB That because of his, because of the hours that he had, ah...ah...the fatiga was in ah...ah..direct relation...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...to the amount of irrigated hours that he had you see?

NA Oh, ok. Alright. Was it so many days for so many hours or...

HB Could be, could be, could be ah...ah..., it could be so many days, a large, large acreage, plus so many hours...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...smaller acreage less, it was, it was in proportion...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...to their, to their usage, was what it was.

NA Ummm hummm. Ok. And ah...was the, when, was the cleaning, when was the cleaning done, I should say? Ah...I mean, aside from like when your diversion dam broke and it was emergency, what was the normal time of year, when you all did cleaning? Or was there?

HB Well, there was ah...ah...the first of the season. There was always a general ditch cleaning, you see...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB Now everyone was called on that to you know contribute or, that was a big, a big fatiga, you know to get the ditch in shape, clean it out...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...and (something #037)...put water in the ditch, that would, that would be in the spring, or late winter whichever they, whichever they determined was the time to get it, you see..

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm.

HB And then the rest of, from then on during the season, they ah...the ditch, like if you'd get a flash flood, coming off the hillside, well it would fill up the ditch, or wash it out...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...which ever it might be...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...and then the mayordomo, well he would, he would summon the ranchers, in particular if the water was behind, why he would try to get them to try to ah..ah..bring their, their fatiga time up to date...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...and he'd summon them to get help, whether it was team or men or how many men or whatever the case might be...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...you see...whatever, whatever the owner wanted to put in or was able to put in at that time, or however it might be.

NA Ummm hummm. What happened if, I wanna come back to the issue of, of breaks in the, in the ditches, what would happen if somebody real far behind in their fatiga...ummm was there any...ah....lever that could be put on them to...to get back into shape, or...?

HB Well there probably was, but I, I never, ah...the bylaws, the bylaws of this ditch, mostly contained in that old, that old ditch book....

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...I don't know of any record or recorded bylaws....

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...that's on this ditch...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...and ah...ah...there never was, of course a person got too far behind and just, just, ah...failed or refused to do his ditch work...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...ah...he'd be frowned on by his neighbors...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...but so far as, as..a matter of lawful prosecution...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...denial of the water...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...or anything of that kind....not to my knowledge, during my time here they never was any, any action like, taken like that respect.

NA Ba..basically what that suggests is that most folks pretty much stayed up, I mean they, they pitched in when it needed to get pitched in...

HB Well, it was just ah....ah...this ditch. Now of course, ah...some of the others might not have been operated in that, that manner.

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm.

HB ...an I think they was perfectly lawful in trying to instigate something as a penalty or, or legally ah..do their part of the work...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...but...but during my time there never was anything of that nature, never was brought about, there would be some that get behind, maybe some that never do it from one year to another, be behind at the end of the year...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...an all such as that but it was, it was ah...trivial in the, in the manner of ah...of neighborliness, I'd say (something #078).

NA Ummm hummm. I understand, yea, it's, it's better to ah go maybe pitch in and do their share rather than...

HB Now we have ah....our a ditch down here where, the next ditch below this one, that'd be the one that we irrigate our farm out of, down here...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ..we just ah...in the process of getting some ah...some of the ah...federal funds...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...Federal state funds...to restore, our flood damage...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...an they required that we had ah...an accepted set of bylaws governing our ditch. Which that ditch is better than a hundred years old, had no, had bylaws but they were ah...wasn't available, they've...they've been lost..

NA Ummm hummm. Does that ditch have a name, I mean is...

HB Ancheta-Galaz Ditch is what it goes by.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB That...that is two of the old farmers and ranchers of the early days..

NA Ummm hummm. Yea, yea I've seen, I've seen both of their names.

HB ...an ah...and we ah..we formulated a set of bylaws, and if you want to glance through them they are right here.

NA That was in the ditch book that you showed me last time?

HB No, that was another one, that, this, this old, this old book...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...(#094 cannot understand they are both talking at the same time)..book it's it's of the San Lorenzo Ditch...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB This I'm speaking of is the Ancheta-Galaz Ditch...

NA Right.

HB ...course that's the one, that's a different one...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ..the one down there...

NA Ummm hummm. Uhmhhh

HB Ah...and we ah...there is ah.. ah..clause and paragraph in there, of, of nonpayment and and of ah...of how it would be treated in, in case of that, that they didn't make their, their fatiga, you know, if they didn't do their, their share of the ditch work...

NA Ummm hummm....Iiiii...

HB And of course I've never, as long as I'm on the ditch it's never going to, it's never going to that legal process...

NA Right...

HB While I'm here..

NA Right, I understand. Ummm, you mentioned before that there was times when the ditches would get washed out....in...in my wanderings around the valley I've noticed a lot of the ditches, some of the ditches are concrete lined..like San Lorenzo up here is concrete lined....

HB Right.

NA ...but many of them are earthen, still earthen ditches...ah what kinds of problems did you have with the ditches did you have, in other words, if you could go back and think

over your 50 years of, of living here, what kinds of, what, everything that's ever happened to the ditch, that you can, can recall? In terms of, of it being knocked out of commission. Do you have gopher problems, for example or, things like that?

HB Ah.. what kinda problems?

NA Gophers, digging.

HB Well, we have that, that's a gopher holes, a gopher can ah..you can work on your ditch today and a gopher, ah..gopher hole come in it the next night the next day you have a washout you see?...

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm. That's pretty common, I mean that's pretty...

HB Well that, yea, gophers and gophers and then ah.. and then ah...ah...ah...streams drift you know, drift ah.. the drift wood and trash, it comes down...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ..well, ah..you could take a little, little small limb and that, it could get crossways in the ditch, then it would just accumulate and accumulate you know, grass and other trash and the next thing you have, as the Mexican calls it defalco, its, its, it'll overflow and there, there washes your ditch out, you see?

NA Ummm hummm.

HB All of those things, all of those things were, were, ah...were before, before our ditch was, before we had it concreted. And ah...ah..it ah...when we used to have the just the earth and trash and soak weeds and (something #132) dams, you see?

NA Ummm hummm.

HB Well, ah...all of those things were ah...ah...they were so...it was so adverse to ah...to any ah...any manner of ah...production, you, the dams, it would washout, it leaked...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...and the, the ditch, well of course it would wash out, and an earthen ditch, ours was, I don't know if ours was keep well, but ours would lose, well percentagewise it would be from, it could be from 30 to 50 percent of the water. That it would loose from one end to the other. And, and ah..shortage of water, well, there would only be stream flow, oh, maybe half the distance of the ditch...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...there wouldn't be enough to, because the ditch would lose so much...

NA Ummm hummm.

HBit'd lose so much in the ditch, that it would ah.., your seepage, lossage in different ways, that, they, the people ah..the farms and usage below would, wouldn't be able to get any water.

NA Hummm.

HB So, that was, all of that was, the ah...the great advantage is, it would, you might say doubled our amount of water...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...for irrigation.

NA When you concrete lined it?

HB When we concrete...

NA Ummm hummm.

HBlined it.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB We concrete lined the first stage and then we put ah..we have ah...a concrete pipe in ah..in the rest of it.

NA Ummm hummm. Ah...the piping also, I understand, cuts surface evaporation significantly.

HB Well, the pipe is, is the best in some respects if you, if you don't, if you get the right installation and don't get stoppage and don't get problems of that nature, you know.

NA Ummm hummm. Ah..what causes stoppage in the piping systems?

HB Well...ah....we had a, we had a rather unique ah...ah...arrangement in ours....because about a third of the way..of the ditch, a third of the way..we had a concrete ditch...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...then we had an overnight storage, the tank, we had ah...ah...reservoir...

NA Yes sir.

HB ...we called it overnight storage, that's what it was known as...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...and ah...all the water that entered the pipe, first it went into this overnight storage, that's, that's where, so that's where, so all of the, all of the trash and debris that came down the ditch would go in the tank, well then it would settle or float off to one side, and our outlet for the, for the reservoir was, of course in the bottom...

NA Right.

HBand consequently our, our ah...our problem of the pipeline stopping up was nil.

NA Hummmm. I've heard stories, again this is from the work we did in Mesilla about bubble getting in the pipe, and causing it to, to back up.

HB We never had anything like that.

NA Really?

HB No. We never had anything like that...

NA Hummm.

HB Our pipe, it was submerged you see?

NA Ummm hummm.

HB We, we had ah...we had a control valve, where, where we would open it, but if there was in the reservoir, well of course there was no, no air that ah..no air would get into it, at ah. at the head you see?

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm. I noticed around the valley there's lots of side canyons that feed down into the flood plain, like Noonday is a big one...

HB Yea, yea...

NA Did side drainage flooding cause you problems?

HB Well of course it always causes problems, but that's, we had one in our, in our ditch, the San Lorenzo Ditch, the largest one we had to contend with, we have ah...ah...a...over, we had a pipe that was put in over, over the canyon...

NA Ummm hummm.

HByea, A-frames and ah...pipe that was sufficient to carry the amount of water, it was ah...ah...it's metal, yea, it's metal pipe...

NA Ummm hummm.

HBlight metal.

NA Ummm hummm. Like a culvert kind of pipe?

HB Yep, that, well it wasn't culvert it, it was not corrugated, it was a culvert type but it wasn't corrugated.

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm..so you would just bridge the canyons then with like a, with a flume?

HB No you don't bridge it.

NA Oh.

HB You put in an A-frame.

NA I, I don't understand what that is.

HB You don't know what an A-frame is?

NA I, I don't know, I'm ignorant about that.

HB Well it's ah.. you take an ah...take a pipe or ah...ah...whatever your ah...whatever your structure might be, ah....and you put, you put this in ah...these are, here is you're ground level...

NA Ummm hummm.

HBground level like that..

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...and you, you bury these in the ground, these are buried in the ground, we took ah, ah...a barrel and concrete, you put this up like that...

NA Ummm hummm.

HBthen, then, then you're ah...you're pipe is up here on top, you see?

NA Oh, ok.

HB And these of course, are set with the stream flow...

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm.

HB An...an those are, they are, they're very satisfactory because all, all, the only thing that you have and in that respect, is, is, is just one object, setting up there, course, if, if two big logs, or a big log came down that could hit it and, that, that would cause you trouble...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB But this has been, ah..this is ah...ah...a big drainage....

NA Ummm.

HB A big drainage, that serves.

NA Is that Stitzel Canyon?

HB Stitzel Canyon. And ah....and then another one down here, on ah...Noonday Canyon, that another big canyon, it's a big canyon...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...and we have ah..we have an underground, we have a siphon...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...a siphon arrangement there. You know?

NA Yes sir.

HB Under the....under the canyon.

NA Yea you should see some the siphons up at, that Elephant Butte has. They do the same thing on big side canyons like that, but they...

HB So on this, this ditch, we have, we have both, we using this, we're using this A-frame, elevated...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...elevated ah...structure and down there we have the underground siphon.

NA And that's pretty much, that's pretty much solved the problem with the ditches being blownout...

HB Well no, no your side drainage, when you get ah...see this... ah...now the...the concrete ditch been there for I believe some said 18 years, 18 or 20 something like that, and the ah...the ah...floods, that come on the side canyons, unless, unless it's controlled or arranged and I don't know how you'd go about it...well then, of course one thing, one thing that, that was ah...ah...one thing that was ah...against the ah..efficiency of the ditch in the first place...

NA Ummm hummm.

HBwas because of, of the designs of the ditch to just meander on, on a...you know finding it's own fall...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...due to the, the original terrain.

NA Right.

HB Alright, when you start to put in this ditch, then the engineer, they run it straight, you see?

NA Ummm hummm.

HB Well, the construction of the ditch, they, you've seen them, you've seen them lay these concrete ditches?

NA Yes sir I have, with the machines that.

HB With the machines.

NA That sort of pave it as they go?

HB Yea.

NA Yes.

HB Alright the, the ah...the contractor...

NA Ummm hummm.

HBah...I'm not, I'm not criticizing the contractor, nor criticize anything cause that was better than anything we ever had before...

NA Right.

HB But, improper installation is what causes some of the trouble.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB Now this, ah...ah...the ah.. the area where the pipe, where the concrete would go it was just worked up with ah..loose dirt.....

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...not compacted...not sprinkled, not in any way....ah...made a solid...you see?

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ..so what happens when you get a little flow, a little side flow off the ah...hillside, you see?

NA Ummm hummm.

HB Well, the water comes down there and hit that and then it'll back up a little and then it just goes under that pipe....

NA Right.

HB ...and it's just, it just sugars out..it's all gone you see?

NA Ummm hummm.

HB You have your pipe sitting up there with, with nothing under it...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...to support it.

NA Yea. I've, we've heard stories, in the, again in the Mesilla Valley, where some contractors don't put expansion joints, in the canal...

HB Well...

NA ...and then when it, when it heats up much, the the concrete just lifts up...

HB Yea, yea that's it.

NA And then backs the water back up to the ditch.

HB Well, well this was made in sections that ever so far, well, well there was, it was cut across expansion...

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm.

HB And that little bit, it would hit it, hit it all way, by nature, it would, it would, it did it's work as an expansion joint..

NA Ummm hummm.

HBit also a little moss, a little bit ah...of water grass and the like would grow up in there, you see?

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm.

HB Which, that wasn't a problem that it, it ah....it would make a little accumulation, and hold back, hold back a little dirt, but that, but that was never a problem.

NA So, so the concrete lining is, is really simplified, taking care of the ditches?

HB Well, that's ah..yea that's the concrete, the concrete was, except in that respect because it didn't, it, it wasn't durable in the area. Now of course, you're area would have a lot to do with it. You see?

NA Ummm hummm. Ummmm hummmm.

HB Now like ah, like ah...of course we're talking about this is not, not a farming country, you see? Nobody would stop here to farm.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB You're talking about ditches.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB Well, concrete ditch in ah...in a farming area, course you don't have these side canyons...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB You know, you don't have this runoff that's right here next to the ditch, you know, that...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB Ah....10 or 15 percent fall coming right down there and you get ah...get a good...ah..a little ah...rain well then it'll come right down, fill the ditch and jump over it...

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm.

HB ...and that's your problem.

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm.

HB There's where your, your buried pipe, your pipe underground, is more satisfactory than, than the ah...than the ah...concrete lined ditch.

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm. I noticed, I remember when you, we were having lunch the other day an...and your wife was talking, apparently right down here, in front of your place used to be where part of the San Lorenzo Ditch, I guess....

HB That was the San Lorenzo Ditch. Yea.

NA And it's, that's no longer....

HB No, it's not operationing anymore.

NA What, how, what were the circumstances that led to it being abandoned?

HB Design.

NA It was the, it was a design change?

HB Yea, it was a design...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB yep. Yea, it was designed, you see this ah...this...this...ah...farm in this area course this, this area, and the reason that ah...that ditch was ah...abandoned was because to ah..ah...for the benefit you can't....you can't make all of these...ah....well...ah...you can't make ah....you can't run them, you can't take that machine and run with a bunch of crooks....

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...an run even, (something #336)...so ah...here, the engineers designed the ditch to come on, on ah....on a high point, you see...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...and then you come off of that and have your headgates, outlets, and your laterals and they come in, to ah, to serve the other areas, you see..from both sides.

NA Ummm hummm. But see, does, let's see now San Lorenzo, the one up here, the one up north, it terminates up, up north of, of you all doesn't? Doesn't it terminate north of your ranch? Where the concrete lining stops north of, of your place?

HB Well this, ah.. the concrete lining extends to the dam...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...to the diversion.

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm. And then, but it only as far south, how far south does

it go?

HB Well, it goes south the other side of Noonday Canyon.

NA Oh, it does? Ok, alright. So...

HB I've forgotten the length of the ditch...

NA Ummm hummm. I think I've got some, some numbers on it.

HB You, your maps will...your...your ah....State Engineer maps..your filing map...your 1919 filing map, do you have a copy of that, and I know you do...

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm. Yea.

HB That was the last and most extensive map that it's had.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB With the exception of this ah...adjudication...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...which Salopek and all, all that, all that complaint, that big adjudication of the water in the, in the Mimbres Valley...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB Which included us here.

NA Ummm hummm. Yea they... they sort of drug you guys into that, in order to, I mean it was originally, the suit was between Rio Mimbres and Salopek, and then they, it sparked the whole thing about water rights out, throughout the valley and all the rest of you all...

HB Yea, well...

NA ...brought in.

HB ...that was ah...that was, that was it..they ah...the Salopek lawsuit, they got, ah..his...his...his...as I understand it originated down this side of Deming with some...

NA Yea.

HB ...with some dry farm...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...ah..problems that he was having with one of his neighbors down there.

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm. Yea, he was accused of putting up ah, a pushup dam...

HB I don't know just what, I don't know the ah.. I don't know what the problem was...

NA Yea..

HB ...with those people.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB But I do know this, that ah...we were, we were enjoying, well not particular enjoying because that want anymore than we needed, was three-acre-feet, you see, this, this land is high, it is, it's high duty land...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...for, for irrigation.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB You don't have, make it simple for you, you don't have anything but a layer of silt, a layer, a layer of soil, a layer of silt, a layer of gravel, some more soil and now that's that's the history of it, if you dig down here, cross cut it, we've done that...

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm.

HB ..and that's what you find.

NA Ummm hummm. And it takes lots of water.

HB And it takes lots of water, you don't have anything under you, ok. They've ah...the..the ah...who ever this was determined by, if I under, if I understood the history right, well they took ah..they...they...they took some of their calculations from, that was on the data...I'm not sure.

NA I don't know.

HB ...as to the usage and demand of water.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB And it was determined, I think primarily by your altitude...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB And here, we, we needed...the three-acre-feet wasn't ample even...

NA Ummmm hummm.

HB But they, they, from somewhere, somewhere down the valley, I've forgotten where it changes, but those people down there, ah...this side of there...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...we're (maybe were, sounds like:put #416) 2.7...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB And that, that was a, that was ah..ah..ah lick below the belt...

NA Right.

HB ...for us up here.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB It was just a low blow below the belt.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB That's all.

NA The, the one thing when you ammm, touch on that in just a second, ammmm, I noticed some folks were pulling water out of the canal. I noticed some siphon hoses, down on one of the ditches. What in, again in your experience, in going back in time, how did you get water out of the ditches? Did you knock a whole in the berm, or did you have gates, or did you use siphon hoses, what, what, how did you get water out of your ditches....

HB Well, ah..

NA ...on to your fields?

HB We had ah...we had a gate...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ..in some instances, and ah...and we would, we would, ah..lower that gate, close, close off the flow...

NA Ummmm hummm.

HB ...and we'd divert it to our lateral ditches, you see?

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...and ah...let's see I've forgotten the name of those gates. You've seen them...you know...

NA Are they lift or screw types?

HB Well, no...they were ah...ah ratchet type, a ratchet type..

NA Ok, I've seen those.

HB And of course, I'm not familiar with what the people have down stream, I just, I just don't get about that much, never did.

NA Ummm hummm. Yea, the ah.. one of the...the fellows that we talked to in Mesilla talked about knocking a whole in the berm and just letting the water, essentially run out, check it up, and then knock a whole in the berm, once you checked your water. And he said sometimes it'd get away from you and start to pull out your whole berm...

HB You're talking about the concrete ditch?

NA No, no, no, no, this was on the earth ditches, this was...

HB Oh, on the earth ditches...

NA ..on the earth ditches.

HB Well, on the earth ditches, we would have ah..like you'd have your ditch, an, we would have ah...like you have your ditch here and ah....

NA I'm going to loan you my pen here.

HB I'm dry I think, I've got more pencils here but this one looks like it's gone dry. Ah...we'd build, we'd build a box...

NA Mmmmm. Ummm hummm.

HB ...you know, we would box the, we'd, we'd have the flow of the ditch here, and we'd, we'd, we'd build a box here...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ..then we'd ah...make ah...we'd have a, this ditch would be open over here, you see

NA Right.

HB And here on the lower side, this would be flow lip, here on the lower side...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...why we'd ah..put in flash boards, you see, there...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...to determine...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ... you know...two-by-six, two-by-four, would determine the capacity of the water, what you wanted out here...

NA Right.

HB ...you see...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB And then we didn't know, you, you disturb the ditch why you'd made a big mistake, if you knocked a whole in the ditch...

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm.

HB ... that that's just ah...that's just ah...ditch, anybody that's ever had any experience with a...with a..ah..a earthen ditch, you know...

NA Ummm hummm.

HBwell, they, they have to be maintained, they have be respected, and if they, if they are, why you'll get along a lot better, but the irrigators that do that...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...are just few and far between.

NA Ummm hummm. I think primarily what they were referring to was, to, to knock a whole in a little field lateral not a big ditch, but a field lateral.

HB Well, if it was a field lateral course that's ah..that's a different thing. You see these, with irrigation, ah...even after, even after our improvement, after we had concrete lined and ah...irrigate...the irrigation, I'm talking as though I know...

END OF TAPE.

Tape 4 of 5
This side has no label

NA You said you were talking as if you knew, and I again I'm assuming you knew so....

HB Well they're getting too much on there anyway. But ah...we're still talking about ditches.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB And ah...we have found that the most satisfactory way, you have ah..you have your ditch flow and to not use, not try to use the water from the ditch flow to, to put it on you land, you see?

NA Ummm hummm.

HB I'm talking about your main ditch.

NA Right.

HB You're main flow of water.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB If you do, well, ah.. it's hard to control, your borders, your borders are, they can't be

wide enough to ah..accommodate it because of the fall of the land..

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...your borders have to be ah...not so wide...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...so we've found that you take, your...have ah...you have a main ditch, then you'll, you'll take out your water here...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...then you'll put that into ah...another ditch..it's a two ditch system...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB You see..put the water in this other ditch, ok. Now you can take this water out and put it in this ditch in as many places as you want...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...then the control of this one will give you a certain amount, a desired amount for these borders here you see..

NA Right.

HB ...from, from this little ditch.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB And of course why, according to your fall well sometimes you can, sometimes you can use three or four border, and a good irrigator can sometimes use more than that.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB And that is...that is the secret of, there's a lot of difference in irrigating and just running water..you know?

NA Ummm hummm.

HB You run water over the land that's one thing...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...and if you irrigate that's another.

NA Ummm hummm. I've known...

HB That's something you can't teach, it's hard ta you know...you can't tell a person if they don't, oh you can too, you can tell them if you can get them to do it...but if ah.. ah..that..that of course, that, that doesn't come, that doesn't come under scientific. If

it was scientific you measure your penetration at the head of your, of your, your flow, your run and at the lower end...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...and all such as that.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...then you measure the water that comes out as so much for so much, and so much for that. That's the scientific (#031) which that, ah...it's hard to get anything to work scientifically in a place that's not a farm.

NA Right. Right.

HB That's what you're asking about, you want to know how this is (sounds like: I know #034.5)

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm. I want to know how you do it here? Every, everybody's everybody's different so...

HB Everybody's different, yea.

NA I noticed that, that the drop of the land here seems to be pretty steep, so I imagine that...

HB I think this valley, if I understand it right, it's ah...it's ah... four percent.

NA Is it?

HB I think that's what it is. One foot to the hundred.

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm. Yea, so you get a pretty good drop over...

HB That's the reason....

NA about a mile...

HB That's the reason...the flow's so fast...

NA Ummm hummm.

HBsee that's the reason that river runs so fast.

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm. What's, how the borders that you were discussing, ummm how do the borders work on land that's very flatten level and land that's more broke up, if you were, if you were going to be setting up your borders, ah...how would you do it on land that was flattened versus land that was real, real choppy or, or uneven?

HB Well, if you have a, ok, you have ah... you have a ditch...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...an...an you have ah...you have this land...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...alright, the general slope of this land, maybe, this is extreme, you see?

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...your running like that...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...the, the slope of this land like that...ok..

NA So, you're running it at an off angle to the ditch.

HB ...that's come out of that, then, then, then you, then you would set up your, your borders...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...an...in that manner, you see...the

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...to ah.. slow down the flow...

NA Right.

HB ...that's how, that's how you get that.

NA If it was real flat would the distance between your border be great, be larger...

HB Oh yea, sure, yea, you....your....if your ah.. if you had enough flow...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...you see, one reason, you see the variation in, in the amount of water, has a lot to do. If you said, say you have ah...have a piece of flat land, you have a full ditch, you're just, you're, you're, you're in business you see...

NA Ummm hummm.

HByou have a big wide border, beautiful (sounds like:trumbull #063), beautiful for everything, you have plenty of water, you turn that out, flood it, put plenty of water on it, get a good piece of, a good piece of farming done...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...ok...then, in the spring of the year, when, 'er that is if, if you water is shortage, what can you do...it just runs out there a little ways, and the rest of this is, is dead, you see? Can't, you can't grow...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...you have to, you have to confine this water to where it'll run..and that's...that's what I was telling you the other day that, that if you level this kinda land...

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...and this, and this....ah...variable water flow..

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ..you, you might get along for awhile, but you built yourself some trouble, you going to, there will be a time when you, you say well, I can't do anything. The land's too, the land's too level to flow, you need, you need some fall, for a little bit of water, you see...(#075)

NA Ummm hummm.

HB ...that's, you know that.

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm.

HB If it level, why, in particular here, you can't fill in there you know you can't pond it..

NA Right.

HB ... like down in Cruces, you, they can pond that down there, irrigate by rows, water in the row from one end to the other.

NA Yes sir. Sure can.

HB You can't do that here.

NA It'll just seep in too quick.

HB It'll just go, you, you in rows, why before you can get it changed it all be out of the other, it'll be dried up, you know?

NA Ummm hummm, ummm hummm.

HB And if you have to depend on penetration well the water hasn't been there long enough to ever to your plants, you see?

NA Ummm hummm. Ummm hummm. Yea...that the, that's just the lack of clay that causing you those kind of headaches.

HB Well, it's the, it's the type of soil..

NA Ummm hummm.

HBlack of clay or what ever you want to call it.

NA Ummm hummm. The them, you were mentioning, again, when we were having lunch the other day that you used to grow a kind of alfalfa called, "New Mexico Common."

HB Right.

NA Ummmm...what ah...is...what kind of crops, or what kind of alfalfa or feed do you, do you grow today?

HB Well, we ah..we ah...ah...just ah...four years ago...we attempted ta plant alfalfa down here on this farm that we newly acquired. And ah...the alfalfa was ah...I don't know if it was the strain or whether it we had an insect or I don't know what the trouble was but, but the alfalfa only lasted two years.

NA Ummm hummm.

HB There's an occasional plant left but, but our good stand we, we enjoyed it for two years.

NA What, what was the, what was the normal, or the usual length of time, the, the stand of alfalfa, once you got it established, would, would, last?

HB ...you mean with our New Mexico Commons?

NA Yes, sir. Yes sir.

HB Well, if it was, if it was renovated and respected and taken care of as an alfalfa field should be, more or less, well, we have, we have stands of alfalfa that, that would run for ten or twelve years.

NA Wow...Hmmm.

HB And, and of course, well, you have to, you have to renovate them, you have to see that they don't suffer, you know, and, say dry winter, why you have to put some water on them, and take care of them, that's all, just like anything.

NA Umm Hmm. The renovation that you refer to, that's not a term I've heard. #111

BOUNDS2:

NA: What was , what was the normal or the usual length of time that a that strand of alfalfa once you got it established, would, would.

HB: Remain with our New Mexico common.

NA: Yes sir yes sir.

HB: Well it was if it was renovated and respected and taken care of then an alfalfa field should be more or less well we had we had stands of alfalfa that that would run for ten or twelve years. And and of course, you have to you have to renovate them and see that they don't suffer you know and say dry winter why you have to put some water on them and take care of them, that's all just like anything.

NA: The the renovation that you refer to that's not a term I've heard, what, what exactly

does that mean?

HB: Well it was a chisel process, you understand chiselling?

NA: I understand chiselling yes sir.

HB: Well we found that chiselling was best thing to do you know, just a break the crust maybe a six inch a six inch penetration you know, just so you broke the crust and and the nature of the New Mexico common was that if if you broke a plant well then if you just if you just a a they just take hold and make another plant, it wouldn't die out see, the, the, root was strong, and deep I guess. And the the later, the more perfected seed, the the, here why every time you mentioned, you mentioned New Mexico common they would say well there's New Mexico common plus something else. That's that's far as you get they say New Mexico common, they can't get into any.

NA: Did you all ever grow much corn up there?

HB: Corn was grown before our time, that and this window. The people before us well they grew a substantial amount of corn. That was corn, beans, chili. And a the the corn, of course, it it be cash crop. And a a I don't know what it is in the Northern part of the state, are you familiar how corn was measured and how it was a calculated in this area?

NA: No sir, no sir I am not. I don't think anyone else is either.

HB: And uh, of course, I was familiar with this this valley and years did, and and a commerce and the like of that, for fifteen years before I ever moved out here you see before I ever came involved with farming in this valley.

NA: That would be about 1925 then?

HB: Well from 25 on you know yeah, 25 on. And a the a the natives were farmers here, they all had , they had little wagons, and a the wagon bed was measured and designed, I don't know a little short wagon, then would they would a they would take a crew, they go into the field, and then a then a, would the would the corn was almost ready, they would a they would shuck it right there and being impoverished, you see by hand, all now were talking about hands, that's the way they did it. Now before they, now before that, before they did that, they would go into the field and they would get the top out of the corn stalk, you know what that was called?

NA: The tassel.

HB: Well, it was the tassel plus about it would be maybe six feet or seven feet or four feet down the stalk, but then it on the stand.

NA: No I've never knew, what was it called?

HB: That was a that they would call that , that, that was their corn fodder.

NA: Oh, okay, okay.

HB: Or ojo they would call it, or it was ojo...oha...but they called that; now they would then chop that off and pull that out one side you see now that, tender part a was the best

part of the stalk, see it doesn't get down to where it was heavy and coarse that would just be that slight stalk, that would be big, the biggest, course, it would come on up to your fingers, up here at the tassel, and then they would tie that with a string, generally a you loosened the end, of the string, and a and then they would put that end in bundles you see, you know, well that would be a darn pull like that, you know what I mean; and then they would sell that and they were called manojo.

NA: I've never heard that.

HB: And that was ten cents up here, five miles they would deliver that from there, put in my barn for ten cents a bundle. And a well just as a a that that corn fodder was a the best feed that you would have for a horse or or a cow to give him strength; now a cow wouldn't give any milk on it, but she would build strength. And I would say that that the three of those bundles, a and and a and the supplementary time for your cows if they were four, three of them would equal a bail of hay.

NA: Even if, even if, even if the corn stalks were dry?

HB: Well they had to be dry, yeah they had to be dry, they were cured, they they were totally dry when they they cut them out, they were totally dry. But, but they still was a was a cream of the stalk, you know, for livestock. Well, the first they did that, they get those, then they would take them out and stack them you know, you've seen these shocks they're called well they would stack those outside, and a then they go back in there and they would a then to get the corn off a off a of the stalk you see by hand shell it as it is, and then throw it over here in the pile. Then they had this little wagon, course the wagon and they go get, go out there and haul that corn. Now each wagon, each wagon could haul ten sacks. Now ten sacks a, they weren't a from measurement of ear corn now see this is all ear corn, but they they had a measurement of number two tub, you now what a number two tub is?

NA: Uh, I know one side.

HB: They come in one, two, three.

NA: I know they come in different sizes, but I don't know.

HB: All right, a number two tub, not heat full, but rounded on top, that was the accepted as shelling a hundred pounds of corn.

NA: A hundred ear pounds or a hundred shell pounds?

HB: A hundred shell, a hundred pounds shelling, that it would be a hundred pounds of shelled corn. I might sell a hundred and five, I might sell hundred and ten, might sell ninety-eight, or ninety-five, but I had that was used as a measurement. And a this a this tub, this wagon would hold ten tubs you see, so that was how like sharecroppers or someone who had storage in all they keep the number of wagon totals put in their bin or wherever they put it. And, of course, if it was on a sharecrop basis well it would be so many per unit, so many per million, that's the way they divided it. On calculating in ten sacks of corn, and a and this this tub full of corn, when you came to buy the tub full of corn or they deliver it, whichever case you might be, well it was always termed in a *costal*.

NA: In a costal?

HB: Costal...a...

NA: Oh a costal...

HB: A coal sack, in Spanish, Mexican a costal is a sack, costal y dos, that would be a number two, number two tub.

NA: You mention sharecropping, was that prevalent here in the valley?

HB: Sharecropping was very extensive before well in there before I came, when when before, well during the Depression, before the Depression, and well really all down the line, a some of these, some of these natives who now, of course, it's their second, third, fourth generation of those natives, but they raised their family here as sharecroppers you see and that was that was the way these farms were a there would be a set of certain acres, three acres or five acres that would, that would irrigate with a certain flow of water you see, well they let this man have that one you see, or you might have two or three of them, however, it might be. But the boundary of one was where the where the water would irrigate best from that point you see, it might be three acres it might be ten and that that was the way, that that was determined. When I first, when I first came to this place, it would was all in a series of those, of those little places that that irrigated in that matter you see, well I, of course, didn't know anything about irrigation and I, I just thought well these men as I told you how they were lined up here knew what they were doing, and familiar with the place, I just told them to go ahead I didn't know what to do. And then, of course, later when I got tractors and got land levelers you know, not leveler, but an Eversman drag, you know what they are or do you?

NA: I do.

HB: Well when Eversman had, we had Eversman or two and a tractor big enough to pull it in a matter and over and over and over why you keep it in the hole, cutting down the high places, and finally get to where you arrive and such is that.

NA: What was the, was there a normal split for sharecroppers or was it varied for farmers?

HB: Oh I, I can't go into that because I just heard them say some of it was debtor seals, and some of it was a was a was a, well, of course, ten shares, I would be I'd be forty, sixty there you see, some of them were forty sixty, some of them were fifty fifty, depended I guess on on what they grew, I don't know just, I didn't have any experience with that. Well it's just hearsay.

NA: Right, right, sharecropping no longer, is no longer common in the valley?

HB: Well...

NA: Or does it still go on here and there?

HB: I don't know enough about it to answer.

NA: I could I get you some water sir?

HB: A drink of water?

NA: Yes sir.

HB: If you'll go in there in Neal.

NA: Back on, uhm, let's see, uhm, it's pretty much growing is fodder for cattle at this point, is that correct, you're pretty much growing alfalfa as feed for cattle?

HB: Well, we have a a this a that was a of course, cattle that was our our first thing, the only thing, and this farm it was a a for supplemental cow feed, for cow feed in connection with a little cow ranch. Well that was, that was the answer to this farm, we didn't have a cash crop. And a and a we found that a we that timber is conditioned, seasoned, everything where favorable well alfalfa was our best and of course, we have a a just year before last, yeah year before last, well my son planted a a I don't know the name of it, but it was one these sorghum crosses, and it was the heaviest tonnage producer, and I didn't think we ever had. It just you can't imagine, can't imagine the bales of hay we've taken out of here. Good beef, good beef, it would grow of course, some other than, than it could have been operated would make the second grow, but is some we had to let grow until it was it was really too high, some of it grew six seven feet high, I guess the, it would have been done properly, it would cut it you know at about three feet or four and then let it come again then second cut, but that was good and cattle love it, they get on it, they get on it, that's that's a high producer, it's also I think it's a it's a a soil depleting crop you know, cane, but it it would followed, it had followed the alfalfa and such as that to where it hadn't, there was a good, a good base for that type of plant, the way and and small grain for grazing, such as wheat, rye, and barley, we we used quite a lot of that and oats, there was a time and of course, the seed, season, and soil had a lot to do with that you know as the old crop and you get it ripe well it's it's ripe sometimes we maybe good good tonnage on old hay. And at one time why a, seeds were ripe and everything and we'd we harvested a little grain, barley, and such as that, we had had a little combine and we harvested some of the grain.

NA: And that was again used for feed was it?

HB: Yeah, we used it all for feed.

NA: Everything?

HB: Yeah, yeah.

NA: All right, it's a, what about the a, since you've worked so much with the alfalfa, and you also did this sorghum variety, which uses less water, which is more thrifty in terms of water use?

HB: Well a, I don't know, I would say that of course, a I think as I understand that that data wise, that that alfalfa takes a lot of water, what do you have in your records?

NA: Are records are that alfalfa is real water intensive, requires a lot of water.

HB: Well, alfalfa that that where alfalfa production is a where it's practiced you know on the proper basis that that they use, can use, or should have or expect to use five acre

feet per season.

NA: I've seen numbers uh, that run in the three to five acre feet per acre range. They're pretty high.

HB: Well, you can see where you are and if you're a, if you only have an allowance of 2.7 and it would take, you you can see what it has done to that crop.

NA: Yeah, so that the really in part even if you wanted to grow different crops the amount of water it would take would limit your ability to do that is that correct?

HB: Well that it's it, that's it, if you have, you'd have to reduce, you could use, you could use your water allowance, but you would have to farm less acreage, and of course, the a, a secret if there is such a thing, in your farming efforts in a place like this, is to a do what you can with the water you have and then be lucky enough to get some rainfall and that's, that's, that's what puts you over the hump; that free water, you know that water from above. That's the, that's the water that puts, that's that's what does your crop, course, your crops grow better, make better profit, better, everything is better.

NA: Yeah, there's a lot of farmers who have shifted to cotton over again over in Mesilla because I guess it doesn't require near the water that alfalfa and some of the other grain crops require, and they call it, it's such a good producer on so little water they call it a sure crop.

HB: Yeah, that's it, that's it, cash too.

NA: Yeah, cash it out real fast, what's the normal or again based on your experience, how many cuttings of alfalfa would you routinely get each season, on average?

HB: Well the best would be four, and a and a we would get a a course, another thing, if you get three, you take three crops take all three crops of hay, then then that's that's in the vault, say you get your last cut just before time for crops in in October, and a and a then if your alfalfa won't grow, you know here in this area maybe others the same way, but you can have, we can go up into Thanksgiving before we ever have a killing frost or we can also have one in a in a the first part of October. And a is say if you get your last cut and you get rainfall and your alfalfa grows just like it was June, and you get say six, eight, ten inches and alfalfa grow too short to cut so that then then if you get a get a a killing freeze you know, and that alfalfa will turn dry and suitable for grazing that is some of the best grazing you can get and you know and it get to where you can get enough freeze on it then it then it safe for bloat and sometimes the diversity, it just varies you see, it's all variable and the whole thing's variable there's nothing is you know taxes you only have to pay, just about the only thing that's sure and the mortgage.

NA: Right, so that that last alfalfa crop that you might, the fourth, potentially the fourth cutting, but it would really be too short to cut and if you got that killing frost would you turn your cattle loose into the fields, just let them..?

HB: Yep, yes, good frost, burn it down get the bloat out of it of it, well then then put your cattle into and they, and just, it's just it's it's the finest grazing and it has a good capacity, it's the best grazing you can get.

NA: Plus you get some free fertilizer I suspect.

- HB: Well, well, of course, you get that, and and a stock to good on it and you take that same thing and you can have a you can be you can put cattle in on it to graze and you have this you have this freeze, killing freeze, to freeze it down, you have two weeks of warm weather just like Spring or Summer.
- HB: Anything that that has to be settled by the law with reference to water use, irrigation, you never, there's no winner you know, anytime you have to go to court or jerk somebody around, people don't want liked being jerked around.
- NA: I mean if there is a dispute over water, not land cause I'm sure that's a little bit more touchy, but there's a dispute for example, over water, how does it get resolved? Who resolves it or how does it get resolved or does you know do, lots of different parties have to get together.
- HB: Like most things and just leave it alone it will work out itself, the more you mess with it the worse you get, in particular, in particular, there there is and should be a good open air, neighborly understanding.
- NA: You've mentioned that.
- HB: All this, long the water, the distribution and such as that.
- NA: As a bit, I mean if you got, found yourselves in situation where you were pulling water off and somebody down the ditch needed to get some water down on on their field you let them go ahead and take it on down.
- HB: By law, that's not the best way, a ditch operation just as frown on that that you can't you can't, in other words, you can't serve two masters, you can't allocate water and then and then half way down the stream why give it away to somebody else. It's been mentioned time and again by this state agent here, but water belongs to the land regardless of who owns its, who operates it, or anything else, water belongs with the land. Of course, if you have, you have multiple ownership under one ditch why then of course, the usage of your water can be to your preference.
- NA: So that if you've got, for example, on on San Lorenzo or Ancheta-Galaz where you've got number of different landowners on the ditch, you all can shift the water around depending on who needs it when?
- HB: Say that again.
- NA: On where there is multiple owners from following you, like San Lorenzo there's multiple owners, I think on Ancheta-Galaz there's multiple owners that when the water is in your ditch somebody can take it out of turn.
- HB: No, they can't take it out of turn, the only way, the only way, that say if I have, say if I have a water right, then if I decide on how's supposed to get the water for ten days, and if I if I don't, if I use it all in three days and all I've got down there then by the determination of water in sequence then that water is released, the next man below me gets it, and he does likewise and likewise all up and down the river. But I, I can release the water if I want somebody else down below, but I can't a take five dollars, somebody buy me a chicken dinner, or an amount of water you see.

NA: No we're talking the same thing, I understand what you're saying.

HB: Yeah, it's not, not by law and distribution process, you couldn't do that, you see, you'll be a serving too much if you'd get in, you'd get in trouble.

NA: When, when, when the water is being distributed within, you know among the people along the ditch, does it go from the intake to the tail, I mean is that the order?

HB: That's right, it starts and makes a complete circle, it goes everybody's right in sequence and a, if a, there's certain times of the year, when, when a the ditch is full, and the person that has the volume of land, the most of the land are large areas if the owner wanted to use the ditch, he used the water you see; you know you take a full ditch of water, you know, six or eight thousand gallons a minute or something like that, three, four, five seven feet, and that's of course, in most places, that's no water, but here that's quite a bit, and if you only have two, three acres, why of course, you can't use all that water; wash it away.

NA: The one thing I noticed, I was looking through some old records and I noticed that on San Lorenzo, for example, this is back in the 'teens and the twenties, the, the water, the derecho, the water hours, a they were totting up to something on the order of, it was an awful lot of hours, it was like five or six hundred hours of water rights, well that's, that's almost a month even if you assume that folks are irrigating twenty-four hours a day. San Lorenzo in 1936, yeah the 1928 rotation of the San Lorenzo was forty days, forty days worth of twenty-four hour days water rights.

HB: To make a circle?

NA: Yeah.

HB: Now where did that information come from?

NA: It came from some files up in the state engineer's office that we got. It was a tremendous amount of time and I thought, I thought to myself my God, forty days.

HB: Now what year was that?

NA: 1928.

HB: Twenty-eight.

NA: Yes sir, a and I'm wondering, I mean that to make a complete circle around so that everybody gets it, the guy on the fortieth day at the tail end of the ditch, he's not going to make it and I'm wondering did you, was it ever your experience that the circle took any more than I think you mentioned it was like fifteen days, sixteen days to make a circle on the, the irrigation rotation. Was it ever your experience or did you ever hear of about a circle running for that length of time?

HB: No, nothing like that has happened since I've been here.

NA: Really, because I'm wondering if there's a typo in the numbers, I mean I'm wondering if somebody made a typographic error.

HB: Well, it's either typographic error or it's misinformation I don't know which it is.

NA: Yeah, because it really stunned me to see that it would take forty days to do a circle.

HB: No, no, I would say. I mentioned when we discontinued our a this this is what we instigated and it's being used even up to now. I don't know whether it has been your experience to encounter any of distribution of water that is the same as that on this ditches.

NA: No sir, we have not.

HB: That was at the time, we weren't a, a the a, a.

NA: I'll bet you know what, I'll bet you it's a typographic error that some how crept in there.

HB: That's, that's a, that's a impossible to be like that, that can't be.

NA: It's got to be a typo.

HB: Uh, I don't know whether you have this or not, but you should have if you exploring the different.

NA: Just a note for tape, this is a 1948 memo, dated the 27th of August, District Conservationists regarding some wells on Mr. Bounds, Mr. Herrington, Mr. Roth, and Mr. McSherry, end of note. I haven't seen those.

HB: You don't have that.

NA: No.

HB: Now here's something that's very pertinent, something, I don't know.

NA: I've got, actually I have rainfall records from stations around here.

HB: Do you have, have the a irrigation, the drainage area or the records for it?

NA: I've got it in all kinds of different forms. I think I have it in square miles, which ought to convert out. You know why I was in town this last week, I work pretty closely with our archives people at the University library and I spoke with Austin Hoover who you've not met, about the particularly about the ditch book that you showed me when I was visited with you last time and Austin has offered to microfilm your records as well as give you a second copy so that there is some copies of these things around and it wouldn't cost a dime, it wouldn't cost the District Association members anything to get it done and I thought I would broach the topic and see if there might be something you want to talk about with other ditch members, but you know these are all the only copies of these records, especially that ditch book that you have; it would be a shame if something happened to it and our library would be tickled pink to microfilm plus get you a second set of xeroxes so that there's some duplicates of these records around.

HB: Well, I don't, there's no, there's no secret and I don't know if it was done in that matter, well I think so.

NA: There's two books on here Mrs. Bounds, there's two books inside your husband's head.

Interviewee: Regis McSherry

Interviewer: Neal Ackerly

RM: Had a little excess energy and so we dabbled in cattle business, Fifty-Two to Sixty was a, I mean dry year, dry years, we bring those cattle in here and taunt the cottonwood trees to feed them, and I try to what we have, there used to be alfalfa grass mixture for baling hay, but it was so dry we couldn't really raise any, couldn't irrigate it and all so I plowed the roots out and let the cows eat the roots and that lasted until, well from Fifty-Two to end of Fifty-Nine included.

NA: But in plowing up the roots to feed the cattle, I mean you couldn't do that every year, could you?

RM: We did it and we'd haul them up from my brother's farm in cotton hulls and mix it with hiegeria in the cotton seed meal, it was back when start off on sixty-one near old sixty-one you know old sixty-one about thirteen miles outside of Deming was the closest way this way it's seven miles further, but then it was all dirt road and I remember a place down here about four miles after you cross what is called the Colson Crossing, pretty steep hill, and we'd go down there like say doing work here and go down there maybe wind up loading, filling that trailer seven bale cotton trailer and hulls, hiegeria, cotton seed meal, and would be coming up here about midnight, one o'clock in the morning, you know and one night, I couldn't make that come long time, three times and if you ever try to back up a four wheel tractor in back time.

NA: It's a pretty miserable experience, I've only tried it a few times.

RM: You have that nog on you. We happened at that time to own the farmland adjacent to the river, so I cut the fence and just came out the easy way, but as I look back I enjoyed all those, doing all those things, kind of maybe that's why you have your artificial hips now, I think a guy should have some cause for his aches and pains maybe falling off a bar stool.

NA: There you go. Were you, did you have your orchards in during that Fifties drought, what, how did you take care of the trees?

RM: Well, there's where our folks, back in 1942 or '43, the electric line came through, they drilled eleven different wells, four of them paid off not when say wells you're going to laugh at me, there three hundred, three hundred and fifty gallon wells, but not knowing at that time, but it was well thought that their building a line here so after my dad's death and my mother and I thought about an underground pipe system to join these wells and also to bring this water and you could pump it up six feet uphill. Our orchard there was about sixty acres then at that time, depending upon ditch water, but we can starting from scratch, we could take care of the sixty acres with our winters we're having, now they pump down sometimes a surge, but if you stay with it stay ahead, then during the winter it was an idea to kind of.

NA: I brought scratch paper, this was with Mr. Bounds yesterday.

RM: The idea basically was conceived by my brother a, he had at that time, had an underground pipeline, with cement pipe, then plastic pipe came into existence and

became more available so we live here with shares of Mimbres River, these are not the way they're listed on the State Engineering map, they had different numbers written down. So, we have a historic town here, one thing to that is the stand pipe, anyway, that year, the underground pipeline starts; guess I could draw this a little straighter.

NA: Ah that's okay.

RM: Then, that's far as the cement is at.

NA: So you've got, you've got plastic or concrete pipe that connects all your wells, plastic and then connects all your wells into a reservoir, down here.

RM: So we put these three and pump into the tank, plug it and have the water come around into these outlets here see, in here we have a bonnet, one, two, three, this is how goes. Surface pipe you know what that is?

NA: Yes sir.

RM Then the same way, but they don't have this, this is a little further over, anyway then this goes over four rows, then this has to be over here and goes over four rows.

NA: Now when you your irrigation water, either out of your ditches or out of this pump system, how, are these trees flood irrigated or do they furrow irrigate it, or, there flood irrigated.

RM: Now some thirty years ago, I did away with bordering and went in there and made a trough see, so I'd have a flat on spreader, and cross shred, and I don't have to throw any cross shreds in the balance, I don't have to throw borders again. I used to have to everytime I spayed which is at least four times a year, you'd have to knock these because I would irrigate this way you know, and then I would pray this way and I would go with my borders and then just slap heck out of my equipment so I would have to knock them down equipment so I would have to knock them down.

NA: Right, and then go back in a rebuild them.

RM: That's right, and then you rebuild them, your chemicals fell on the soil you know and you have to disc it and all that would come up so that's why I have all this equipment. Anyway, I defied all, nature didn't even wave a handkerchief around my face at all. Anyhow, but I am real proud that I did away with the borders because and that flood area.

NA: For you, the flood irrigation and your trees to all get the water that they need, your land must be pretty level, is that the case?

RM: It has a gradual fall, but yes it doesn't erode, and a we started some fescue grass there which helps a lot too, some of my neighbors and my co-grower up here believe in clean cultivation, I don't.

NA: There's pecan farmers that are like that over in Mesilla.

RM: I think it looks nice to see it like a well, but you see more orchards where the grass might contain some things that you retain the moisture longer, but there open; only

dislike about it is early Spring, during frost control time, your ground is colder, we read a whole lot colder than he does because it doesn't irradiate any of the soil and to irradiate any heat and that.

NA: So, so because of that, you're orchard might lag behind in terms of flowering relative to say Mr. Davis's.

RM: That's right, there is a three four days difference, adding even three or four degrees difference at night, or in early morning.

NA: Does yours stay warmer at night?

RM: No, colder because we don't absorb any heat to be irradiated.

NA: In your, I know when I was talking with, speaking with Mr. Bounds, he mentioned that the soils up where they're situated up the valley, are so permeable that it's hard to run water into the fields and irrigate it because it's just goes straight on down and the trouble that we got here is don't much clays under there to kind of hold the water, is your soil real permeable?

RM: It should be and I just won't think that convince me to clean cultivate and I mean by means of disking cause you sensed away the water bin absorbed in the soil and a, soil and so you might say we have a thin, hard pan on top of it because it is disced and another reason I got away disking it, you loosen the soil and tree roots go where they want to go it's where it's softer right and then come up to the surface and demand water often. I remember from the Mexican lacero that a plant has to make a sacrifice, we were raising NUMEX at that time, at the tail end you could see there was a kind of yellowish where the water held up kind of a light green and don't baby it, make those roots go down, not only for water, but elements in the soil, so it's it's your will take potash, your magnesium, the deeper you go to a degree the better it is, because it goes down to your irrigation so I found in making my doing away with clean cultivation, disking, throwing borders, making my permanent panels, putting in this fescue, that I can, my first irrigation, you might say is a little a to get the soil wet, takes a little more water than the Fall, but once you get started a cycle of irrigation say it takes two and a half hours, maybe the second irrigation will take about an hour and forty-five minutes on these runs I have designed, but the first irrigation are your gopher holes, your wedge in the capillary system, and everything, once you start your following irrigation it takes less time and I find that I have to irrigate few times without having, doing clean cultivation. It helps that you take your native grasses, volunteer grasses, if you can read them and they talk to you and they're a little thirsty, you know your trees, and I repeat again, I have this cover problem, weeds, Johnson Grass, mostly fescue orchard grass, then I don't have to irrigate as often as some of my neighbors.

NA: For you personally, what's your normal, what's your normal irrigation rotation, how does it work on your farm, I know that there, or understand that the ditches have got different parts get watered at different times, how long is it between your irrigation or how does it work on your ditch?

RM: Well, I'd like to be able to say every once a month you know depending on how dry it is and the crop you have there you know, we, we had a vicious July here, it was pretty hot, this all has been pretty warm not only the sun, but the wind blowing causes aridation you know, and drying out your leaves and stuff, but on our place here, if I

can get around and irrigate once a month, in a normal year, and even if this year it has been once a month, one of our ditches, the Greenwald I had to water a two days every two weeks, on the Macedonio I have twelve hours during the day on Monday and the following Monday, twelve hours at night, and the Eby-Baca, I have five days every fifteen days so I have to ration when my (unintelligible) start and we do have some, a couple spots that are a little more sandy, we irrigate every three weeks because of the soil; but, roughly once a month because you can, especially with an apple, if you over irrigate it you get what they call water core, inside gets watery and then hold up under cold stores, it's like cutting a watermelon and you can just see the water in there, and that is what you have to watch now if rainy season starts. If we over irrigate and be to kind to it, post harvest, I mean pre-harvest irrigation say well I better irrigate it why I am picking see, then you can sure water core out.

NA: And that can happen quickly?

RM: Yes.

NA: So in other words, if you were to pre, if you were to irrigate before your harvest, and then have all of a sudden a bunch of rains come in, you could, you could lose your crop or not lose it, but you could certainly harm the quality.

RM: You sure can, make it undesirable for your produce barns and the cold stores; and then about that musty core, I have you seen an apple that has a musty core?

NA: Yes, I never knew what it was though, I didn't know what...

RM: It comes from that and it can come too from not getting a full kilt and bloom time, some of the different little sets of laurel time I guess.

NA: I think it's pistils.

RM: Well there's the pistil.

NA: Stamen, stamen there we go.

RM: Just a little degree of damage can cause different reactions, you can get a lopsided apple, or you can get a musty center, just if it's not noticeable it will go ahead and impregnate, but they won't, later on later on you'll see where they have this musty center.

NA: What kind of, what kind of water down, water on your on your trees, how much acre foot per acre do you generally use or what's your ballpark, I mean in a normal year or hopefully normal year?

RM: Right at the thirty two inches, and which does pull us under what we're allocated I think in this area, pretty sure it's in half, up the river it's less.

NA: 2.7 I think, at least.

RM: Right here, it's 3. something and ours is just a fraction below that, and I have last years figures, I am just starting to pump here the 23rd of June this year, but it cost me last year five cents a tree to irrigate electricity wise, how far anywhere in town.

NA: Right, I mean that's over the course of the growing season?

RM: No, per irrigation.

NA: Per irrigation.

RM: Five cents a tree which I think is pretty cheap.

NA: That's not bad.

RM: You take, say if you have, course, it all depends on how many trees you have per acre, but you take over fifty-two trees let's call it fifty, that's about two and a half dollars, and there are irrigation which I don't think is bad, and cost about ten dollars a year to irrigate because the fifth irrigation generally speaking is with dish water which it cost some money cleaning your dishes, you know your pro rated share, so we are real pleased with our utility rate and I'm most pleased with my folks risking or venturing into the well because I don't want to say that it 's fool proof, but if you manage it and anticipate the water going out about normally the middle of June, course, it's been out longer than that all summer ever since last year, but if you can stay ahead, don't get behind.

NA: Do you, I would imagine that in the Spring, the river runs a lot more than during the summer, do you pre-irrigate your fields in the Spring when there's a lot more water available?

RM: I try to put on like I say mid-February, early March, not for the sake of frost control, but for the sake of utilizing the flow of water, then that allows me have a dry, arid work in to get gas to my wind machines, for me to go down and check my thermometers, and I get stuck on like have been.

NA: When you stick a tractor you're pretty stuck.

RM: I can get off on a little tangent on our young son about seven years ago, seven years ago the 7th, 9th of July, it was a day like this and Jimmy's cousin and we had at that time eight one thousand gallon propane tanks distributed out we used heaters so he was showing catch a lizard, and turmoil there, propane freezing you know, and it had rained the night before and it was a humid day, and it was actually about 3:00, said it was about firecracker time, they had saw some firecrackers so they throw some lizards and stuff and said I wondered what would happen if I flicked this cigarette lighter and dad gum thing the tank then exploded, but all that vapor settled and he got three degree burns from here on down, anyway, that's the young ones that was over here that candy found. But anyway, he had the presence of mind, running almost a quarter mile, and getting himself under water and the pump where we fill our spray tank. His cousin came and told us and there here he was the poor little fellow, but you know he doesn't have a tree bark marks about his face.

NA: Really, my God third degree burns. Didn't he know that a lighter would set off the propane, how old was he?

RM: Thirteen years old.

NA: Yeah, he knew, but he didn't know how bad it would get.

RM: Yeah, he was wanting to show off. But you know, He works His miracles in a lot of ways, we used to have a propane tank out here near the trailer, and in the mornings the fumes you know, and the spill, you'd smell and you'd have nightmares so we got rid of our propane, we do have propane that's at my sisters, we had lectured on the hot water tank and he got over those nightmares, but a again, then we had a freak fire up here on our hillside there's some glass bottles and stuff that the trade rats had carried and put in their den the sun showing on it just right and the whole thing combusted because no one had been up in that area, anyway he was one of the first to go up there and fought with that, so we're glad that it didn't have a, he respects fire.

NA: Well, I'll bet.

RM: Because he had a played to him and then course, in the Navy you have a few little fire drills and stuff, said it didn't bother him.

NA: My, my little boy, I've got a five year old, and he there was a restaurant in Cruces that burned down that one day,

RM: That Chinese.

NA: Yes sir, uh, but a, I got to a, it was burning when I picked him up and when we were headed home so we stopped by and watched for awhile and I'll tell you what ever since then he's got lots of respect for fire. I think I'm going to, if I'm going to refilling I'm going to have to unload so on your, so you irrigate off a Greenwald, Eby-baca, Macedonia, Macedonia or "o"?

RM: "O".

NA: Oh Macedonio because I've seen it both ways, and also off of a ditch from Mann?

RM: Well that's a Greenwald.

NA: That's a Greenwald, is there a fourth one. I remember when we talked.

RM: The, the, it is below Mabe Way, some of the users on the Eby-baca, Macedonio have water rights on this U.S. government ditch, so we're all one association, four ditches and one association. We are four different entities, but still it's one group of people, but I am not on the fourth ditch. The Nanns are, the Eby-baca are, and Paulines; but that is below us. On this irrigation system, I, it a, I enlarged on it the idea of here and a, anyway we have cement ditches and we have little outlets here that of course, bound to the tree root, I don't...

NA: Are they lift gates or..?

RM: No, I, they're my own hand made ones, I got this gated surface back from my brother; cut out, placed in the ditch, anyway, it so happens that the lid on our heaters, the flap, anyway, I cut a little bit our of it, and I put some heavy gauge wiring and made a handle and just a little piece of plastic and I, of course, you got to get your mud pit, didn't cost me anything you might say, I know up here at Bill Graham's he has an ideal thing he just pulled his the drain, rubber sleeves and stuff, real clear of the name, I think they cost around thirty dollars a piece. But anyway, I'd like to enlarge on this idea that in, improving and conserving our water in 1975, I won the state award the

good year for water conservation. I got a, a wife now, got a week's vacation in Phoenix.

NA: Oh really. And, and you won this primarily for...

RM: Water conservation.

NA: But how did you, how did you conserve all your water?

RM: Well, instead of just running it I put in these lateral pipelines and there's off of this, this is the mainline, and I come in here, then I ran...

End of McSherry- Tape 1A

McSherry: 1 B

NA: Does your association, are they lined or are they on line?

RM: No, our community ditches aren't, they aren't.

NA: What kinds of problem do you have with them, I mean if you could think back over your years of working with these ditches, what's like every horror situation that you've run into in working with a, an unlined ditch. I mean I know you have got to have blow out problems periodically.

RM: We have that, and just say like right now. The Greenwald was the only ditch on this West side of the river that we could get in, the Manns, Davis, McSherry, Eby-Baca, Chavezes, and Montoya, and Wilbur Wolcart; so what the code reads a the Greenwald, is part of the Macedonio, when there's Greenwald water you understand. So last year and this year, that has been the Macedonio supply is the Greenwald, but now the Greenwald is dry and right now you can look at the Macedonio ditch where the Greenwald has fallen off into it on us which is the, which it should do. The ditch is all full of grass if we get a flood you know, it's going to be a bearcat, so in other words, the ditch is in our particular case, is all covered over because we do not run cattle in the orchard and it runs down through the middle two tree rows. We don't believe in running cattle in the orchard, some people do and look at the orchard; that's being sarcastic, but it, yes, we have, in this case here, it's going to be a booger fit if a flood comes even off the hillside, falls into it, then that's going to silt up and then get it cleaned out, but it's going to be a booger.

NA: So you get, you get situations, might guess would be that you have more trouble with grass growing in like in the middle, at the beginning of the summer, the canals have all been cleaned cause you had a cleaning sometime at the beginning of the season and then when the water goes down and you're not running water, that's when you grasses really take off, is that correct?

RM: We have a lot of trouble to with moss, you know, it gets so slow running, moss builds up you get algae growing, and this kind of, it holds up your water.

NA: What, what would happen now if all of sudden, what would you have to do if, if right now, given that it's been so dry, you were all of sudden start getting good stream flow

through the Mimbres and be able to pull water out of the ditches, what kind of shenanigans would you have to go through to get the ditches.

RM: I'm working on that right now, and to our, it's about one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, about four hundred feet, I don't know the technical, biological name for the grass, but I call water grass, it's a an old shark grass that's growing there, I'm going to, we're going to cut it out and throw it up on the bank, getting ready for these monsoon rains because what will happen a big headwater will come off the hillside and that started from the diversion water, but off of, which is about six little arroyos that fall into the Greenwald between here and where the dam starts, if you get a two inch, I've seen it, that ditch will carry it.

NA: So, so you'll be getting side, sheet water off the sides, that will come down in, the ditch will capture it and the next thing you know, you got a head of water and the river may be dry.

RM: That's right, that's right, one year, it kind of caught me, I was preparing for, when we cut, cutting the grass, but we didn't, we were slow in coming later on and throw it out, but now I cut it and throw it out as a, because then it lodged there at a certain bridge across the ditch and it happened that our oldest son was home at that time and he enjoyed trying, going in trying to get it out, the water grass and stuff, boy he was cut up, scratched up, made welts on him, water stunned you know, no, I didn't interview it here I'm sorry to say, and ashamed in a way that we are can be headache, but I'm trying to and that's what that man is going to be doing here.

NA: That, that, he was out with that weed whacker awhile back.

RM: I thought to try and, but my wife asked to start around her yard doing that, but then this afternoon he'll being going up that ditch and if he gets from here to the stove, throw it out.

NA: So the, the, the grass will cause a water back up, then it overflows the banks and blows your berms out.

RM: Yeah, that's right, that's right and of course, we would be the ones who would be hurt so silt we can't stand silt around and a, nor can it be dug down to the roots, but if you say have this is your normal, heighth of your famine and if you get any silt then that's why I don't like to irrigate with flood water, I just let it go on by because the head in you can, you have to go in there and get that sand and silt out because it just smothers the ground.

NA: Well if it's bringing in real small clays too, it will, it'll, you can parch your orchards if you throw it onto your fields can't you?

RM: And that's exactly right, since I don't disk anymore, so then it's hand labors so I say hey, let's just let it go on by I rather pump it then and.

NA: So do you use any ditch water on your fields?

RM: Oh yeah.

NA: You do, but only when it has not got a lot of silt in it.

RM: That's right, when it gets say milky or too clear, but I don't when it's that old red stuff or that old brown let it go down.

NA: How do you pull the, how do you pull the water out of your ditches. I saw somebody up, I think maybe it was off of Ancheta-Galaz, that was using siphon hoses, how do you, do you have gate boxes in your, in the ditch?

RM: I have a cement in with the steel gate yes, and it just obstructs and then in the main ditch and to a single piece of plastic.

NA: Like a little piece of concrete pipe that runs under the berm?

RM: No, just a it's your cement ditch and then, I mean not cement, you dirt ditch and then there's just cement walls, cement walls, steel gate.

NA: Yeah, I know what you're talking about, I've seen those before.

RM: Then it goes off into a, off a ways into a dirt ditch then it falls into a cement ditch and there, that was one of my first jobs, cement, that with put this tank in here in 1941, and it's standing today. Anyway, it's sixty feet in diameter, six feet tall, and from here on to the river is an eight inch pipeline that comes and has a valve here and falls into cement ditch and irrigates these two; anyway that was one of my first jobs was to bale three thousand three hundred and thirty three bales of old hay down there and I was big and fat and stuffing and stacking you know ten barns, I lost weight pretty quick.

NA: I'll bet.

RM: I came home it's the 16th of June, he was cutting those hay, beautiful, beautiful cutting hay, and he had one of these a mores on the back of his tractor you know he had about the next morning I got up, said dad I'll finish it tomorrow and I went and finished mowing and then the first I was ready to rake and bale, but I remember it three thousand three hundred and thirty three bales. Then the next job was putting in the cement ditch, we laid forms every thirty feet, one inch walls, and you had to, at that time.

NA: You had to hand compact it.

RM: Yeah, we straightened the whole and used it as, and made our outlets every thirty feet apart that was all that, design the trees for thirty feet apart, parallel to one another there twenty-six feet apart on the diagonal, anyway, foolish saying, but a, I'm was nineteen years old, a twenty years old, twenty years old, another kid my age we were mixing the cement even with the sand and gravel, four and five gallon buckets and instead of filling the buckets half full, you know, we filled up full and lift up over that barbed wire fence, yeah it was a sport and as I look back I can sport instead of maybe playing chicken or something like that you know what I mean, and I'm going to get off on a tangent, relate this story real, true experience, when we grew up we grew up with two good neighbor boys, the Amy boys, we went out together, their folks spoke the same language are folks did, you be home at a certain time, yes, there was temptation, way

back then, but we didn't get into this stuff that like when we raised our kids well, Greg has a car has a car why can't I have a car, you know what I mean; you know the minute I stopped, we used the family car, and the later we got home, the earlier we got up.

NA: There you go, that's a good rule.

RM: No, and a I'm glide into my first, our first four older children then the I saw the nest getting thinned out and I got a little lax, then well, had the car once a week, then, they just had it every day, and as I have traced back, it didn't really do anything bad, but they didn't do anything good either, and the youngest boy especially talking about he'd say Rob, he's about the third man came home, where were you, I remember him just sitting there and just look at and say where were you son, where were you, and I think he learned from his grandfather whom he didn't know, to as my dad would say son, no defense is the best defense.

NA: Can't say anything to dig yourself out of this one.

RM: Anyway, but a, oh he may have been in Cruces there with Greg down there, down there Greg's pool, mavridge, overhauling the mavridge, and he was supposed to be in school in Deming you know what I mean, and not really doing anything bad, but he wasn't going to school. And then, like I say he got into the service and he went to these five different advance schools, electronics, and stuff, communications actually, and a, he bothered him when he came in one time, second place, the rest of time he was first in his class, no biggie, but here he was miserable and he's got this one, no biggie, but then he went in there and this and that and a, we all you got to do is plug it in to the main line, we can talk it's not like the modern phone, but due to the mechanism now, but the, I would like to go back to him because a, I lost a few pounds and I have a few gray hairs and I gritted my teeth a few times and he didn't really do anything bad, he just didn't apply himself; and that's about all a I can ask anybody, anybody, but you know, if you can pick eighty boxes of apples and pay you for it, pay forty or I pay forty you know, try and pick or try to apply yourself is about all I'm saying. But anyway, that a, often time look back, I am glad I, my brother and I both, that we had the associates we did, were good for you, and oh maybe we tried to see which horse could jump the cattle cart, without backing off the least distance you know, make him run and jump the cattle cart which is a foolhardy thing to do, but we weren't involving some innocent person we just we ourselves on that horse, and a, nowadays seeing the you know where they try and run a guy off the road eighty miles an hour, no, we, like I say we wanted to stand someone up before say hey enough let's go home.

NA: Well, somebody, somebody, everybody, knew they were get in trouble, but one kid was the one who made a case about getting trouble and the rest of you pack up.

RM: Yeah, and like I say raising ours, the last three, the last two for sure, were so and so there dad doesn't care well I don't care, I care you know, but now, of course, I've got seven ladders in there that thank me for, having one of us a little bit out spoken, and didn't say.

NA: Are you a mayordomo?

RM: I was until this year, but I've been doing the mayordomo work, of course, the mayordomo is a cattle inspector and well I've been having to do the work for I guess

personal reasons this flood damage and everything, and apparently his name isn't in the computer up there.

NA: It's not yours is.

RM: And that keeps sending them to me, but he was voted in as mayordomo, however, we worked together, but he has the title.

NA: No, your name is in the Santa Fe computer because that's how I got your name to call you in the first place, because when I, I, I got a publication that has all that ditches in the state all the ditch associations, and all the mayordomos, quote on quote, but one I am offering, offering to do is, you ought to think about stashing a second set of these records someplace just on the off chance that God forbid the house should burn down or something like that and our library is interested in trying to put together as many of the ditch records for the numbers as I can find, and we can do it one or two ways- we can either have one of our people come out and microfilm them all, if you could give us a little place we can set up a camera and microfilm them which will be a permanent record for ever, ever, and ever; the second alternative would be to get a list of what the documents are and then we could take them in and make xeroxes of them and make a couple of sets of xeroxes.

RM: You were right and we have made this comment to have duplicates made.

NA: I'm not putting any heat on you, but we're willing, we I mean the University, is willing to do this at no cost to you all, and we can do it either bring our guy out and film them or if you all want to release them we can run them into Cruces, make the copies and bring them back like the next week. And it does two things, these are significant historical records for starters, they're also significant legal documents for you guys and to have a back up set would be worthing thinking about and we're trying you know as we find these, we're trying to make an offer that we'll do it and it won't cost you a penny for the ditch association, think about it.

RM: Yeah, I trying to word this here we did give some information to one of the, the thing of is, I'd let you take it, but I know I'm not the only person you're involved with, could get misplaced, you know what I'm saying, we did pay piece of a paper that a guy we think was reputable, but still to this day it hasn't sent it back.

NA: I hope he's not with the University.

RM: No, he's with FEMA, and of course, he's in Oklahoma, and I know he's got ten million other, but those records come back and it's concerning the ditch, and it was the only copy we had, and you know, didn't give it back to us and this was two months ago. And I repeat if it were just you, and the only one you were doing with, well here it is, I was just wondering here, our local fire department, volunteer members, has a machine, I don't if it's still working or not, I know it didn't use it then it went out kaput for or they have working it now or not.

NA: Well, here's an alternative idea, here's an alternative idea, why don't we think about getting together, I'll come down next week, I don't like my University truck is the proverbial Chevy up on blocks in Silver City, blew a fuel pump on me last week, but next week I am going to have my big Suburban, and why don't we think about maybe we could together, run into Silver, grab a bite of dinner, find a xerox shop while we're

there or I can find one in the mean time and get copies while we're, get a bite of dinner, have a chance to talk a bit.

RM: Let's wait until sweet thing comes in and I'm not against the, that sounds like real good and I don't haul well, don't like to just run around, you know what I mean.

NA: Oh no I understand, I understand.

RM: And we have to, we could use the fire department or our bank down here in desert.

NA: Oh okay.

RM: You know.

NA: I was just thinking if the fire department's was broken, that would be.

RM: Yeah, I don't know if it's fixed or not I could find out rather quick here to just call them.

NA: Okay, okay; yeah, because the, the you know, as I say these are legal documents and I would be willing to bet money that I have seen every shred of paper that there is on the ditches and I've not seen these pieces of paper, neither your stuff nor the stuff that Mr. Bounds had and you know, you guys are apparently sitting on the only copies in existence.

RM: Yeah, I don't know where it is here, it's a, well this is not the highway that I was on, this highway, this season, I'm kind of surprised to the date on this. It was to our about three county agents ago, where Stewart Sternum, did, of course, it doesn't mention anything about our account.

NA: No, he mentioned someone named Putnam I believe.

RM: Yeah, that was the State Engineer.

NA: Yeah, yeah, that's the only other person that he named.

RM: Anyway, this kind of goes back into a little history here about, he wrote to McClure who was the State Engineer at that time, Tom M. McClure.

NA: Forget where I've seen his name.

RM: And uh, it's not too old, but it's about fifty years old and there's something here that I'm not quite straight on and I didn't want to bring it up until I, I got straight on it, I it is a, and I don't know who to go to and make reference to a Trujillo back in the middle Twenties, up to the Thirties, Macedonio, Torrez and his brother course, anyway they owned vast acreages is what I want, of land in this area along with the of course, down below us, the Trujillos and Eby-baca, it was Torrez, Trujillos, and Eby-baca that came in here from Old Mesilla and a, farmed and a, so I am guessing that's why they named it the Macedonio after the Trujillo cause the Trujillos were below that's why there was one Trujillo, but on here, there's that a, there's one Trujillo on this ditch, and yes a little scandal here, that's the green one, there's one desk here, anyways, it names different users and a, a copy of their own Eby-baca, Trujillo.

NA: I can't read the last name.

RM: Everybody, well Trujillo was staying here, but a, in here, I'm trying to figure between Ebees and here, was this Macedonio; so, but here they have I know as we see through Trujillo.

NA: Uh, no I can't make out that last, Lucero?

RM: I don't know.

NA: I can't make out that name; and those are the water hours.

RM: Yep.

NA: No, there's a Trujillo estate, I think, what I've been able to, to, to sort of figure out, it that it used to be called Macedonio, then it went to Trujillo during the early the part of the century, and then it went back to Macedonio, but por que, I don't know why.

RM: Now see this here gives this term, section twenty-two of Grant County, and that, that's just got to be the one and the same, but maybe you're right that it was Macedonio then Trujillo then back.

NA: Well, it's known as Macedonio now, correct, yeah.

RM: Anyway he was back from a mining camp seventy five years ago here, and he was school director.

NA: Macedonio Torrez?

RM: And uh, he had lost his leg in a one of these hay bailers you know, horse powered and he stalked the head down into the plunger, anyway, sometimes, there's a story there that uh, she needed a janitor there for school, well he didn't know what a janitor was and he said next time he goes to Mahoney's, that was a big hardware store in Deming, he'd get her one. So, anyway, did you ever hear of the Dude Riddles?

NA: No, can't say that I have.

RM: Okay, he was another school director and there is actually when my mother stayed for awhile then this morning, building across from the post office, this girl, this stayed, at the Trujillo as we say the Trujillos, and a, I imagine there was some little wood going around the shack down under they moved under the trees where there...

End of McSherry- Tape 1B

McSherry: 1 C

NA: I'm talking with Regis McSherry. Uhm, Why don't you tell me a little about when you were born, and I know your family's been here for a long time so if you could just give me a little bit of a summary about you know, your life here in the Mimbres.

RM: Well I was born April 11, 1926 youngest of six children, I have an older brother and four older sisters, I a, got my grade school education just down the road about a quarter

of a mile, went on to high school and graduated in '43, and joined the Navy and got out in '46, and I've been back here on the Mimbres River ever since, but there was an incentive back then to come back to the old farm and ranch which nowadays we have I'm married and we have three sons, I would not ask them to come back under present day conditions, but a, it's not the same as it was forty-seven years ago and maybe it's for the best some ways, maybe...

NA: When you say that there was incentives, excuse me after the war, for farmers to go back, what are you, what kind of incentives are you talking about?

RM: Well, back then say your apples which were primarily, our primary income, were five dollars a box, your chemicals cost you thirty-five cents a pound, okay today, if you get ten dollars a box, but your chemicals are seven dollars a pound, and your labor was say, oh maybe, a hundred dollars a month back then, now it's two thousand a month for you know, what kind of help. And your a boxes used to get them in the ten thousand lots for thirty-five cents a piece, now they're a dollar and a quarter, so percentage your costs of operation has gone up against your price of your apple and don't have cold shoulder about the business that we're in, I'm proud of the apple business, but a our thinking has been to sell fresh fruit instead of cold storage fruit, and again the costs has been too great for the, once you get out in your and well just everything has gone up, your electricity going up, your spray equipment, your ladder which used to maybe cost you a twenty dollars is a hundred and fifty dollar ladder now, picking bags used to be a couple of dollars or twenty four a piece if you buy them by the dozen, so it's out of proportion and I guess some of things that I'm being too sarcastic with childrens' way of living, but there used to be every two weeks they're used to getting that paycheck and if you have to maybe, maybe get it once a year then you got to stretch it around and on that have and not saying anything against their spouses or anything, but they're used to the every two weeks and some of them even at that too many credit cards, but it's a different world and maybe it's for the best, I don't know, but then sometimes I wonder what these small, little small places what's going to happen to them. I am the third generation of McSherrys on the Mimbres and where there should be the fourth generation coming I don't know, that's to be the thing or not. In the little trivia there it, this oldest son who is very interested, he has a son that were here during apple season so it can be said that the fifth generation did sell box of apples.

NA: Which is to say the grandson.

RM: Yes, so uh, oh you know how it has been a thought that son follow in father's footsteps, but I, I hesitate so does my wife to encourage until he retires then he'd have his monthly income then give me the bill and some from there, no he loves it and he is like I am, you have to have two qualifications and both of us have them, you have to be dumb as a bull and love what your doing, and no as in anything you got to like what you're doing. And he's a natural at it, but like I say, things I guess are different.

NA: That's a pretty substantial increase over your production costs over what you're getting for your apple boxes.

RM: That's that's right.

NA: That really cuts into your profits on there.

RM: It does the only way we have been to able stay is to volume, our volume has become

greater and greater you know, an example, in our trees instead of maybe having five bushels now they maybe have twenty bushels.

NA: Of per tree?

RM: Yes, and the same amount, you might say you spray five hundred gallons of spray per acre and you say if you were getting two hundred and fifty boxes, now maybe you're getting six or eight hundred boxes with the same average you understand, irrigating, spraying, fertilizing, and a, I know, I know you couldn't only start from scratch, make a living off it pay for it and buy, make payments.

NA: In other words, you inherited your farm from your parents correct?

RM: Well, I inherited the opportunity to buy.

NA: Well, that's what I mean okay. Uhm, so when you first started out, when you and your wife first started, started the going, you were having to pay off a mortgage, plus all the costs associated with your production?

RM: Yeah, this is true and of course, we, they, my mother and my dad passed away, and then my mother, we bought it from my mother, and that's just she didn't charge us the outside price and being in the business long enough she made allowances when we couldn't make payments and which has made it, made it helpful for us to make it and, but again, with your labor situation it's all hand labor, the a picking, and a, don't want to sound better than thou attitude, but at harvest time, the only people you have to depend on to pick is just for that six pack of beer or that bottle of wine, percentage wise, there's some good people don't misunderstand me, but they a, they just don't show up the next day then that makes it hard, say you have a, you a obligated yourself to a produce buyer in San Antonio every third day the load is twelve hundred boxes, but like last year, the truck sat here six days and he can't make money sitting still you can't; on an average, we just say up to about five years ago, and it's piecemeal, but six men can pick and load twelve hundred boxes of apples in three days, last year it took seventeen men six days. So anyway, that, the thing I don't like about it people no how to use our system, say if I come to you and and say pick up and and I'll pay you eighty cents a box, so if I pick ten boxes, I should get eight dollars right, no, because I'll reach whichever greater the minimum wage, so they know it, I didn't know it so until I did learn it last year, see, so here it is thirty-four dollars for ten dollars a box, ten boxes this is three dollars and forty cents, see, and it's cost you two and a half to get them up to harvest, you sell them for four dollars, you know bulk price, and you know without grading, you know I say ten up here, that's after you've graded them and sorted, so you don't make any money, and it's costing you about seven dollars and you're getting four back.

NA: When, I didn't realize that you sold as far away as San Antonio. How far is the region that you sell your apples in?

RM: Well we go into San Antonio is the farthest we've gone. One time back in, oh my father was operating it, our county agent, they had a county agent convince him in Chicago and through the county agent they shipped a ton of apples to Chicago, through the county agent, and but mostly it's a, then I'm getting on another tangent here, that the free trade pact, I have mixed feelings about it. We had eleven buyers out of Mexico, come and pick themselves, fifty boxes, a hundred, two hundred, three hundred boxes,

but they brought their own labor force, I didn't have to deal with any social security, any public liability on them, any housing, and when you get into that, you get a lot of intervention, things that even this day wouldn't qualify for, the bathroom has to be twenty feet from the kitchen, this one's nineteen feet three inches, you know, the little things like that, and I believe in sanitation, I believe in, but a it made it real nice until they had this little incident, I don't know if you remember it, it was in September, that a, a deputy or law officer in El Paso chased a suspect across the bridge.

NA: Yes, I remember that.

RM: And confiscated his illegal weapon.

NA: Took his car.

RM: Anyway, it shut down my, so it had a, backlash everything, and like I say it a, it can be and I think it's a could be a nice thing you know, international free trade, but a, it comes back again to this labor system.

NA: Did, did you make money on your Mexican contracts, relative if you were to be doing here in, in a America?

RM: Oh, oh yeah, yeah, yes, yeah, see they come in like I say you'd sell them for four dollars a box on the tree, then that, then you might say that two and a half to four that was a dollar and a half came without having to run you tractor, trade with their boxes, and wear and tear on your equipment, now we did loan, they used our picking bags and ladders, but they used their own boxes and stuff like that, and there wasn't any or do with the housing, which can be a mess, come in over night and leave the sinks crawl.

NA: So that, so that, the free trade could actually be a real benefit to you now in the apple business?

RM: Yes, uh, if a, Mexico has a nice thing going, it's especially here on the front, Frontera here that all these Casa Grandes- Asuncion, Chihuahua- all those apples go down to the interior, and then these, our border apples go into Mexico, see, which I had a deal going there for about seven, eight years like that with the people. Like I say for oh, fifty box, twenty boxes, up to two, three hundred you know, nothing manly, but then consistent you know, had eleven, the only thing there was if you wanted to pick out a headache, sometimes they would all show up at the same time, didn't have equipment you know, for, but a, then you try tell them, look, well they weren't competing against another, but just have them done, let's see why don't you decide to come Monday, and Tuesday and then that allows me for my crew to, for, my other sales you know, but I didn't, the last ten years I have ventured, tried to sell, other than last year, we did try to sell to the San Antonio, and his trucks out here six days.

NA: Was that, and that was because of labor problems on your end?

RM: And he, like I say, he was out there in the field with them there was no, wasn't they, I was telling them to pick some that he didn't want, he, he ran the crew; and a, anyway it just a, kind of had the last lonely Presidential campaign put America back to work, the new America is going to have want work, in all respects whether it's agriculture or in the factories, put out the quality you know, I don't believe in slave labor, I personally am glad that I can use the term I went to school upon too hard working wages, and I

worked for a man that knew how to make, get a dime out of a nickel, and I'm proud that I had that school, and a, in some cases, I don't want to be quite that mercenary, you know what I mean, but no, if you go out there in the, do it, you know.

NA: Don't, don't make the system work to where you going to get minimum wage.

RM: Yeah, and I think that and I don't know there's some element of people that, that they know how to work the system.

NA: Well, I suspect that over time, whatever the system was somebody figured out a way to work it.

RM: But you know, getting like the food stamps, I know cases it is a beautiful thing and then you see some of these cases you know, (unintelligible), guys you know, maybe it's jealousy I don't know, but anyway I came back from the service in '46, and a, went to work for my folks.

NA: Now had they, have your, have your, have your folks always been in the orchard business?

RM: Well my dad came here when he was six months old from the other side of (unintelligible), a little town called, a mining town called Hadley and he a, his dad moved he ended up one mile here; had a farm, raised horses, oh there were some fruit trees there, but my grandfather didn't have, had not taught, he did not taught, but he did take care apples to town and a little thing there, he was coming back from town and a, there's mixed stories on how he died, whether somebody robbed him right down here, but anyway he was found with bashed in head, coming back from Deming down here on the, coming through Martin place where the sixty-one used to come in east of the river, and a, he, back in those days, naturally they took the rifles to town, and a horse and wagon, and then my folks moved down here 192... early Twenties, and my mother's from Pennsylvania, she was a, schoolteacher, she came out here because her sister had come here for her health and she a, her sister was well I guess lonely, and anyway my mother came and landed a job here teaching school and she taught for almost thirty years and a, she a, was the one that initiated that the a place convert from grow crops-corn, beans, alfalfa wasn't grown yet, but a, put it into orchards, her grandfather had course, they didn't have in Pennsylvania, and so it's been a good business, a business that a, a lot of us have made a living at and a, we don't try to get real fancy like these you know, these trade pact, and it's what they call bulk pact, junket pact, and we a, have our shed up on the hill there where we sell locally to the local professionals. We had a contract back in the middle Fifties with Safeway store, that was back really in the good old days when you dealt man to man, produce buyer and that lasted for about ten years, where the buyers would come out and look at your crop, but now you know, with your computers and everything, if you have a load of apples you go say to the course, they're Furrs now most of them are, but if you go say to Furrs or Safeway, if you need apples, they punch a button, Kansas City tells them how many bushels of what or boxes, what size apples to buy at what price, if you're willing to let them go why it's not like it used to be, they never did make a commitment and stick with it you know, and then come out and say okay. Well then by this block here which was the whole block at that time, so much of time after being said.

NA: Now, the Safeway like the produce buyers at this Safeway was this, again this was locally, this would be like Deming and a...

RM: We sold to the produce buyer at that time, the main man came out of El Paso then he bought for all of the stores, see, then the Safeway truck would come up and then they made their distributions accordingly. Now how far, well actually it would come up El Paso way up to Silver City, and make Lordsburg, I don't how far they went round about East and North, but a yes. I was talking to an old boy here the other day, a man again Fourth of July, the neighbors picnic and he drove, he said I remember the names of the, I used to drive a Safeway truck and we loaded apples, but that was well forty years ago.

NA: How many, how many acres do you have in an orchard at this point?

RM: Sixty.

NA: Sixty acres in an orchard.

RM: Which constitutes about, some there are, there's different plantings, we have some on the, well there's fifty-two trees to acres, then there's some on the (unintelligible) where we get eighty-five trees to an acres, roughly we have around four thousand trees, and most of them are Red and Gold Delicious, we have a few Jonathans, and some limes after it, but the commercial apple seems to be the Delicious.

NA: I'm partial to Golden Delicious.

RM: I imagine it's my favorite brand.

NA: It's without a doubt, you could, you can have the red ones, I'll take those Golden Delicious.

RM: No, but a.

NA: In, in the a, do you grow any, any kind of row crops on any of your property or not any at all?

RM: No, we've gotten rid of them, yeah, we have a few cattle here, pasture land, but a, no we done away with row crops.

NA: One of the things I was asking Horace Bounds about, was, where I come from every farm got a couple hogs on it, and I've noticed that I've been driving up and down the valley, I'd be darned if I've seen a hog any where in the Mimbres, is, is that, is that a misimpression on my part or is that the case?

RM: I, yes, I'm understanding what you're saying and I hadn't stopped to think about it, but a, a, there are a few of our younger parents with their 4-H children that have, but that's about all you would see now.

NA: Well I'll be darned.

RM: Now only until my wife started working at the post office twelve years ago, we used to have pigs, we used to have milk cows, we had little a garden, but we don't garden any more, we don't chickens, and the kids are gone and a, so no, it's the kind of, one of my sisters came and said she the one who lives in Denver, she said, there's something strange here, oh, I don't here any roosters crowing, right any chickens, you know, but that's chore in its own you know, and a, maybe we're getting lazy and I don't know it's

just a, but no my wife had a green thumb and a, and sometimes she said she started a headache here, she has some fifty-four different kinds of irises.

NA: I love irises.

RM: But now, the buying weed and stuff I mean well she's fussy, she's postmaster here, it's a, it takes the heart out of her day, she goes eight to two and she got into that civic minded, our little community you know a, I think should have a church, a school, we lost our school, didn't want to lose our post office, and a, so she applied for the job just to keep the post office, at that time, it was a two hour job, and low and behold it's a, she has applied herself and like I said, I would like for you to meet her, she's brought the revenue up from there almost oh say three thousand dollars to about thirty thousand a year.

NA: Wow, that's pretty good.

RM: Yeah, no it's just, a different show what an employee can do or hired hand and the same you can take her out there cooking or in there orchards you know, you can depend upon her, and then I guess that's what make you discuss it with some people. You don't expect to reach that level, but then if somebody can do this, why can't somebody do this, same as picking apples, some of those guys can pick the good apples and get eighty dollars a day, and then, and that old boy picks the same time, the same time, the same qualified area, pick ten bushels.

NA: Relative laziness I guess.

RM: You want get on a religious job, but it makes you know that there's going to be a hereafter.

NA: If they don't do penance now, they'll do penance later. What, what the, the ditch that takes care of your orchards which ditch is that?

RM: Well we have three ditches. We have the one that's called the Greenwald and starts up the road here about three miles and that ranch has usage of the water in the Davis orchard, and while I'm speaking of Davis, he was the first person in a long time who I consider a co-grower, so many of the orchard business they refer to one another as my competitor, and this is not necessary, the, in the cow business, everybody decides to get say eighty-five cents a pound for there animals, cahs you know what I mean; and you can take some of the same cow growers that have an orchard, they're undersell you or some kind of deceit, but this gentleman here like I say he a, I enjoy working with him and up above the road there was this man Johnny Chicon, we worked together for five years, we used the same contract papers, the same buyer from San Antonio, and it worked real fine, it kept our pickers busy, it kept our buyer satisfied from going somewhere else making a commitment, and a, and it didn't completely relax you, but it was a satisfaction in saying hey, we got a big buyer, we can get rid all of our apples plus, you know what I mean, and keep our pickers...

End of McSherry- Tape 1 C

McSherry: 2 A

RM: Snap off your stand pipe and it finally proved to him that we had six foot, six feet

clearance of you know head of the pipe that, but shut her down you know what I mean, and a especially when you're a got you right in the middle of the irrigation and kind of makes you grit your teeth you know, and they've got the say so.

NA: It's their money they claim, but they ought to be seeking somebody, you always argue for your fifteen or twenty or forty percent.

RM: But many of our, our S.C.S., S.C.S. dealings have been very smooth, there was, there was two, one minor incident, this other one could have been a major cause setting down our entire water system you see.

NA: When you, when you concrete your ditches, when you, when you go in I assume you contract that out, is that correct; I mean Mesilla is loaded with ditches.

RM: Well that's the guy who put in our ditches from Las Cruces, I forget his name.

NA: When you, when you do these I know, I've seen some maps, in fact, I've seen some of the original maps for the ditches and they boy, they corkscrew all over the countryside, some of those ditches do. When you concrete line them, do you straighten out and abandon the and abandon your old ditches or do they pretty much...

RM: Well are talking about main ditches out at the river or are you talking about our individual ditches in our orchards?

NA: I'm primarily talking about main ditches out of the river.

RM: We don't have any of those cement ditches.

NA: Oh you do not.

RM: There are not many either besides these four.

NA: Ah okay, so you just have your field ditches?

RM: Yeah the field ditches, we just, we stood in the old ditch bed more or less, it had to be, oh we designed here and there, but, but yes, basically because they were always at the head end of the orchard you know, parallel to.

VM: No, but our main ditches run in (unintelligible).

RM: No, no.

NA: Oh, okay, I, I'm glad I asked.

VM: They install anywhere.

RM: I think the only cement, some of us have cement outlets. Some are just still...

NA: Those are lift gate outlets, pretty much.

RM: Yes, uh huh, yes.

NA: To to your knowledge, the alignments of main ditches are pretty much like they have been since you were a kid, they haven't...

RM: The same conglomerate, the same old soil, they just, they just have been widened a little more to fit the a doors around, but no, there's been no.

NA: Yeah we, I noticed that when a, when I was talking with a, with a Horace, the San Lorenzo I guess when they concreted it, they re-designed the whole thing and abandoned long chunks of it, I guess they had come up with a better, more efficient to move the water around and he, because he pointed out his front window and he says right there at the base of the slope just where the tunnel starts getting...

RM: Yeah, I understand right around the foot of the hill almost.

NA: Yeah, he says that, he says that's where the ditch used to be, and I said I don't see any ditch come in here and he said that's right.

RM: Well, that's what we have down on the other side, it runs at the base of the hill, and it maybe six feet deep until you get up a little further where it can come out two and a half, three feet at the tree.

NA: How did you all, when you, when you were cleaning your ditches or, or what did you do when hit rock, I mean what kind how did, how did you handle working in, in solid, or you know pretty solid bedrock?

RM: I, I can tell you in this Macedonio when they put in the highway in 1960, they had to move the ditch over a little bit and I guess there's a thirty to forty feet of this solid bedrock, with a crow bar I dug it out.

NA: Oh, Lord, love a duck.

RM: And we didn't dare blast it because afraid we might open a big crevice you know, so this.

NA: Uh huh, and then all your water goes straight down.

RM: I, I did...

NA: I did like (Unintelligible), whew, you crow barred it all out. How, how long down the ditch did you have to this.

RM: Oh maybe about forty feet and maybe at eighteen inches deep, oh and about three feet wide.

NA: Oh my goodness.

RM: There was just an outcrop of, of a bedrock and a, oh kind of learned there too the get the (unintelligible) get the grain you know, and make a little chip about that big instead of this big, boy that will sure make your wrists sore the more the thing vibrate and those full axle crow bar you know, the heavier it was the less it vibrated it you know.

NA: So you were using a great big long breaker bar type thing?

RM: Well the drive line off of a Model-T Ford about that big around, still got one of those down here, may weigh about ten, twelve pounds.

NA: Boy, you take some sweat to your...

RM: No, I, I can say, I a, wasn't continuous, but I had a little taste of, of manual labor.

NA: Why your machine wore out.

RM: And uh, there was a chain saw, and like I told you from the start I had a good teacher in my dad, and a, many times he could squeeze a dime out of a nickel. I don't have any hate about it, at that time I hadn't discussed you know, but a, it, it taught me a lot, but no, I, not at the top of the ladder, but I've been sure at the bottom.

VM: Regis and I have done things that four men shouldn't try, we could load the cow steels in the back of the pick-up by ourselves.

NA: Oh man.

RM: Have you one of these steel...

NA: Uh huh, I've seen, the ones that you pull the cows when there...

RM: No, how in the world, and he's doesn't call me a liar, but Larry David has a front end loader, we have what they call the sum pump where you bring the water across from the other side, run it to this first cement ditch hand forward, and then it falls into a side, well, we were having trouble with the impalers and stuff so we had to, we took the motor off, took that weight much off, but she, Lucero, and I pulled that thing out and loaded it into a pick-up. I didn't attempt to do it with three men, and Larry Davis finds his front end loader on that Ford barely lifted it with the motor off and we took it out and put back in.

NA: My Lord.

RM: And we have I guess a, well about this high.

NA: About five foot high?

RM: This a, it's a five horse motor, it got burned out with lightning one time, took it in, see and I got in over there and took it off over the shaft, and put it back over the shaft without stripping those bolts. I, I don't say this with any remorse, but then I know what was done and what isn't being done you know, I don't say you have to be dumb and strong as a mule, but lot of times it has to be done and you do it with what you've got, the tools that you have. But, see in my case, I always been this size and I've had to you know, I don't know if you've met my brother, but he's a regular sized man.

NA: I have not.

RM: And I had to match his ability and uh, that was a sport there, you try just as much...

NA: Sure.

RM: As the other guy and I, I think I can say truthfully, that I held my own, I could run up the haystack with a seventy bale of hay, ten tiers high, and you did it because it was a sport, just like trying to slam dunk or something like that, and if you didn't have the bales pushed well together, you might step in between bales and that sure put the old steer in you.

NA: I remember doing that one summer on uncle's farm.

RM: No, uh, he, said to you before, we did have our peers, their parents spoke the same language ours do, and our sport was just dangerous as some today, but we didn't involve some innocent person playing chicken or something like that, don't have know how we ever lucked out jumping cattle carts you know after dark.

NA: Yeah, you could get hurt pretty serious about that.

RM: Pick up a fine...

NA: I, I mentioned to Ruth this morning that you were complimenting her on what a great horsewoman she was, and she broke into a huge grin, she said in my day, she said, and then she was explaining, I guess she rode burros when she, she had burros when she was a real young girl.

RM: Well, she goes to school a hundred miles a day. No, and the thing of it was too, and they know business, but they shouldn't, but they were treated as ladies you know, and...

VM: They were telling about putting about hay and they couldn't hay, but they offered to roll it.

RM: But you know, there were times actually when you know what I mean, they're intelligent, they're not these old Okie Hoosiers these you know, and a, no I don't remember my dad could to do just what any cowboy could do, well there were just the three daughters who weren't any coherent, didn't have any sons, it's what they're supposed to do.

NA: Yeah, you run cattle, you run, learn to ride a horse, no anyways.

RM: That's right, did post holes, stretch a fence, and again, they were, you see them out in society, well behaved, well dressed, well mannered, you got the fully express themselves.

NA: Anyway, she was very taken with your compliment.

RM: Well, I meant it, I meant it, to bring out anymore or are you going home.

NA: No, I'm just go for some water actually, I'm a, I'm a, get a lot of caffeine Jay, I'm not asleep. At some point, I would very much like to get in the truck with you and go look at the system and take some photographs if you wouldn't mind or if that.

RM: The reason why my mother right there, the water was low, but no crop loss and stuff, but I do remember another button that I just knew that we have, but not the end a, we used to raise alfalfa and Johnson grass mixture, at the same time I liked to bring out

there used to a lot of pheasants in this area.

NA: Oh really, huh.

RM: Lots of them, lots of them, you'd be cutting there with mower, gas powered mower, and hit pheasants' nest. My guess would be a couple hundred, I noticed for forty years, but no uh, but we had dishwasher, but we didn't have the pump water, I'm talking about the late Thirties, we started have ditch, pump waters about one pump and that was a dug well, that hundred and fifty gallons, at that time that's what the, had that Stover, ten horse stover, that's another thing, I don't say this, I say it with the gusto now, I can go and push a button and back when my brother and I were little fellows we have to go take that stover motor going, and you know they don't just start off those diesel.

NA: No.

RM: And they would backfire on us, you'd advance the spark so if you did get it past center it would and here we'd get on that flywheel and you know.

NA: Oh yeah.

RM: And I guess it was at least a three foot in diameter the flywheel, I've got the flywheel.

NA: I have seen, I have seen generators, all cast iron with flywheels that are three to four foot in diameter.

RM: And we have that silly thing, it was a diesel run, which you powered with gas, advance the spark and at the same time see backfire on you, you better have your foot out of there.

NA: You better, yeah, yeah.

RM: And that it had a water cooled hopper, and I remember later on in the years that we used to roast, roast in there, put in that hopper, and of course, the cooler it ran the better, my dad finally designed a little pipeline that would, and then drill the hole through this cast iron vat that held the water and the water would run in and out and keep it cool, well we boys had pulled that line out so it would boil so we'd roast a roast in there, dad would come running.

NA: Get into your hide.

RM: He didn't like that too well.

NA: I'll bet.

VM: It's kind of like putting gourd in the booster.

RM: We have, I'll show you the booster pole one day, a, I can take you out if I just show you fast like while I'm irrigating, but our storage tank is where the.

NA: I'll help you irrigate, I'm not beyond doing any work.

RM: Well, I've, I've got to be leave, be out of town pretty quick.

NA: Oh okay, all right.

RM: And uh, anyway, uh, (unintelligible). And uh, they had a car up there you know, and we didn't want to irrigate with that open cockpit and can't get air and it was just fine. We, you know, we didn't do it very often, it was memorable on a few occasions we did it, well we know it, that's a darn lie and...

NA: I grew up on a water well oh out back and the pump would pretty regularly lose its prime and we would have to go out and try to re-prime it. I don't know, it's been so long, I don't know if I can do it any more, but I there was a time when I was twelve, thirteen, fourteen, I was pretty good at priming that pump, but it was a long time.

RM: Well, you would have, no, as long as there was a dug well did have a casing in it, I don't mean one of these twenty-four inch ones, you know, mortar, not mortar... sheet metal, sheet metal, you've seen it?

NA: Uh huh, I've seen it yeah.

RM: I don't know what gauge, but about three or five feet in diameter, and then you put it in and you knocked holes in it with a pick so you get perforation, and a, anyway, across it was this a, viga, and you reached down and get water and pull it up. I don't think I would pay for it, this booster I was telling you about a, I've got a, we took it out the last time when Larry Davis pulled it out last year, wasn't it, but had taken it to Deming to put, to make a trash pump out of it you know, to pick up the reception of the station, well they didn't put it, they left it like it is, and so we still have to watch this trash coming in, so all along the kids used to be there job as they grew up, there was a screen at the entrance and bit having nothing there, well there's gourds that grow around that, throw the gourds into this pit you know, and plug up my...

NA: Then, of course, course, complete, complete ignorance how about how that gourd got in there.

VM: Oh they not admit it.

NA: That's a pretty good stopper I'll bet.

RM: Yeah, you take two or three of them and by the time they get in there they, you just don't have any thrill at all, then your ditch is running over and your down here uh, that was back when I was so impresses with checks you know, in other words, I would like for you to see it, maybe, maybe he's irrigating right now then at least you can see the I was telling you I don't have any borders thrown, no cross checks.

NA: Uh huh, uh, huh, right, right.

RM: And hopefully he may have it the water flowing where a, see part of it, won't take too long, I'll be back in a little.

NA: If it's not, if it's not convenient, I mean (unintelligible- sound disruption).

RM: In this, you cut off the...

End of McSherry- Tape 2 A

McSherry: 2 B

NA: ...With Regis McSherry. Uhm, When we talking last time, the a, you were talking about using a mix of pump water, explain your pumping system and also you used surface water out of the ditches, uhm, if you had to just sort of guess it in all your years of, of farming, how much pump water and how much ditch water do you use on your orchards?

RM: Are you asking acre feet?

NA: Uh, just any, well any kind of way you want to give it.

RM: I, we have not exceeding the three acre feet, and a, course, your question with vary in my answer in some like this year there's no ditch water right now, it's a hundred percent pump, and a...

NA: Right.

RM: Very seldom it's been this way, we have had supplementary. The pump supplementary to the ditch instead of the ditch supplementary to the pump.

NA: Right.

RM: With the a, three ditches place has rights out of the just one little trickling water coming down, there was one ditch that has not been restored at all and the ditch that, there's one ditch Eby-baca was restoring, it's dry, the Greenwald is the only one that has a maybe, two hundred gallons a minute coming down, course, it starts up the road about three miles and I'm sure up there it would be x amount more, but it's all dirt ditch.

NA: Right.

RM: There's a lot evaporation in the same ditch, water loss that way, by the time it gets here, well it's probably judging by our pumps, maybe it's three hundred gallons per minute which is a, we're broadcast irrigation panel, irrigation it won't do it by itself, now Monday night we had the pumps plus the Greenwald, and a, we were able to do something with it, supplementing the pumps to the ditch, this maybe often that little bit, but we used to do aerial spraying of the orchards, and you could irrigate and spray at the same time, but now with the ground unit cause we have a uh, what they call the Late Hopper, leaf minor is attached to the bottom of the lake so you have to spray upward and airplane won't do it, so the last couple years it's taken a little a, well I have to get back to the old manual method, irrigating and spraying. I got spoiled after about eight or ten years spraying by air so that's what we're confronted with right now trying to irrigate ahead so it'll dry so I can meet the tolerance when apple picking time comes and there are varieties that I will pick later on say like the Wine Sap, I can put, irrigate that later and spray it later, but right now this a, having our neighbor spray for us, he has one of these air blast, course, he has his operation, but we're working out real fine, he's very cooperative. Well actually he's been the most cooperative apple grower that I've had.

NA: This is the fellow you mentioned, I think when we were...

NA: Larry Davis.

NA: Right.

RM: And since Johnny Chacom passed away, he's the, that's some years ago, and really I enjoy working with the cooperative, cooperative way you know, because we get bought into a big buyer, he doesn't go someplace else if we shut the other person out from selling, you know what I mean, it's, it's kind of a game of war there you know, but if he doesn't get enough apples here, he's got to get someplace else right.

NA: Right, yeah.

RM: But if he can satisfy with this kind of apple, then he won't have to go someplace else.

NA: Right, right.

RM: And a, but it's a pleasure to be co-growers versus cutthroat, you have to know a, I told you the fact that won't mention any names, but ranching be more truthful about their range problems or there worms, that's back when they had screw worms and pink eye, but ask about an apple, and you problems.

NA: Right, right.

RM: But it makes it so much easier like I say, when you do the way it should be work together.

NA: Well, it's probably also, a little bit cheaper because you don't, every, every orchard doesn't have to buy the some gear, I mean you guys can pitch in and share the equipment and that kind of thing cause that...

RM: Well, you know if you buy say your boxes together, you get x thousand more and it's a few cents cheaper you know, you get your spray material kind of calculate how many a, pounds of spray material you're going to use during the season, get wholesale, of course, there's buying it retail you know, it's even wholesale it's pretty good price, so again it a, it pays to work together, at least, I found it better, so a...

NA: Right. Of the, of the Eby-baca and the, the Greenwald Macedonio, how many people are on that, on those ditches?

RM: Well, the Greenwald and Macedonio you can call them one, there, a seven of us on the Greenwald and the Macedonio, but with travel the same side of the river, the West side, on the East side there's two, three, four, five different.

NA: Right, and the same, some of the same people on the East side that there is on the West?

RM: That's right, that's true.

NA: Uh, how does the, I know this when I was look at the Ditch Incorporation, that there was a schedule of who got water when, this was back in 1928, uh, without naming names, cause I don't really need to know that, what's, what's the schedule like for who gets water a, when right now?

RM: The, the first, the first to head into the ditch you start the first Monday, first, after the

first of the year, and then if they have a twelve hour ride or a twenty-four, then the second guy gets it.

NA: So, it goes from the top of the ditch to the end of the ditch and then back to the top again?

RM: That's right, you go on this side here, of the three ditches, there, there not identical, this place here, for example, on the Greenwald, roughly it's three days every two weeks, on the Macedonio, it's every other Monday, I get it in the day time, I'm the second user, so the first user gets it in the day time, the first time, I get it that night, the following Monday, I get it Monday in the day time and it causes a bunch of funny little squares on the calendar there, but...

VM: Cause it's our day when it's his day.

NA: Right.

RM: Eby-Baca, for example, I'm the first guy there, I get it five days, one week, week goes by, I get it the following week five days.

NA: What's, again, I don't need to know names or anything, but what's the total number of, oh, I guess the total number of water hours would be five days times twenty-four hours, is that about right?

RM: You add that five times that figure, uh, see now last, last Monday night, it was mine in the night time you see.

NA: So you were up all night, cutting water?

RM: Yeah, yes, yeah, and a...

VM: On the Macedonio ditch, it's a hundred and sixty-eight hours a week, on the Eby-baca ditch, there's three hundred and thirty-six hours a week. Now, I can't tell why, but this is how it works out, it's how many hours each user has depending on his acreage, so you add up the totals, how many hours they get for then, and that's what it comes out.

NA: I'm just trying to figure it out, is there three hundred and thirty-six hours in a week?

VM: Well...

NA: I have a calculator cause I can't, I run out of fingers and toes pretty quick.

VM: Well, these receipts I use to figure the ditch bill.

NA: Uh huh, so, I'm just, I'm curious that at this point...

RM: I don't think you can believe that can you?

NA: Well, now, no there's only one hundred and sixty-eight hours in a seven, seven day, twenty-four hour.

VM: Well, I'll tell you why.

NA: Okay.

VM: Because, these, those are two ditches the Greenwald and the Eby-baca are both figured on a three hundred and thirty-six hour week, that's because it's every two weeks; we're on a two week schedule.

NA: Okay, so the it, the Eby-baca and the Greenwald, on a two week rotation.

VM: Yeah, and the other two are on a one week schedule.

NA: On a one week rotation. Okay, that makes sense.

RM: She was, she was that, I knew, but I couldn't relate it to you, yeah, okay.

NA: Okay, that's fine.

RM: Two weeks versus a one week schedule.

NA: And a, and a, I was, when I was talking with a, with a Horace up off a, up North, he was saying that, that the a, the ratio, the water right a, there was some correlation or some correspondence between the derecho and the amount of time that you could divert water and the acreage, that there was some how all...?

VM: I think there's some kind their own acreages, they reach seven or eight, how many hours of water you've done, but since it's been abused so (unintelligible), then they have so many acre feet per ground and then so you haven't any, and they get to go back and re-figure these hours.

NA: Okay, so that it's possible, it's possible...

VM: You probably will, but they haven't all.

NA: Well, it's just been adjudicated, so we haven't had a chance to file any lawsuits.

VM: Yeah, so we don't have ditch master either.

NA: Right.

RM: And I'm sure that we, it get down to the nitty-gritty that there will be meters there that, like they have on the river and I'm sure that, that's it and the law goes on.

NA: Yep, yeah, that's what, what they do over there, uh, although, actually they haven't metered, they meter the main ditches, that Elephant Butte controls, but they don't actually meter the farm ditches.

RM: Oh, I thought they don't, I thought they did.

NA: They don't, no they do not, uh, that's coming apparently.

RM: Then what is, they, they get so many hours.

NA: That's right, they're given so many hours per ditch.

VM: Tell them, and call him and tell him that he's going to have so many hours of water that...

RM: You, you call them and ask for it or say that you want it...

VM: Yeah, or they request water and then they tell you how much you get.

RM: They don't ask them do they? To get the full, full flow of water or just x amount of...?

NA: No, they get the full flow, they, they rotate head to tail like you all do, but and they get the full flow, but they haven't metered it yet, uhm, in general, how many hours per acre, or, or do you get of water, and that's full flow I would assume?

RM: I can tell you pretty close where comes, and I can cover about oh, a, you going to run out of tape while I'm doing this?

NA: Oh, I got, I got fifteen tapes.

VM: I figured this would be how many, how many acres a year do irrigate per twelve hours of water hours (unintelligible).

NA: There you go, there you go.

RM: Well, of course, with that it varies, with the pump it doesn't you know what I'm saying.

VM: Well, but he's asking out of the ditch.

NA: Yeah, I'm asking primarily out of the ditch. I know that pumps are critical to you all, but I'm, I'm asking out of the ditch.

VM: Out of the ditch, how are these hours set up, how many, how many hours are you going to be irrigated with twelve hours of water a week.

RM: Oh, I guess, I can get about five acres of, of allotted a week.

NA: Five acres a week, so you're irrigating about a half an acre, yeah, about half an acre per hour?

RM: About that.

NA: That's, that's sounds about right, just a little under, just a touch under, uh about half an acre per hour.

RM: Yeah, that's, that's good flow now.

NA: That's assuming that you got water in the ditches.

VM: That's high tide.

NA: Yeah, that's high tide.

RM: That isn't to say that the, normally in the Spring, the first water says you can, you can

get that, course, right now you couldn't, it wouldn't get half ways down the...

NA: Right.

RM: Three hundred foot run you know what I mean.

NA: Yeah, that's why your, that's why you're pumping so much now.

RM: Yeah, so my answer to you was, is what is normal for this water.

NA: Right, right.

RM: That's the way I could answer it. Five acres in twelve hours to any acres at all.

NA: Right, if there's no water coming down, right. It's a...

VM: Yeah, as you get down on the four feet and at the Wall...

RM: The old timers is what impresses your kid about that size when little here, that the water running backwards, you know, it's the heat of the day, and say oh, about three 'o clock, maybe eleven or twelve 'o clock the water would have been here you know, and then you go about three 'o clock and it's, it's, well it's dying down you know, running backwards, and here it lately, I've been kind of trying to tell our son about the water running backwards, he's, here, led you to them, turn a little more authority over to him, if reasons and a, I should have done it long time ago because he's just getting a whole lot better I mean, he's up, well he's getting little older too, and he's a, I think he could have handled the authority four, five years ago, but a, he's been a lot of help to me and a, in serving water, managing where we're going to spray, I've said, again I just tell and what, where I planned to do, didn't tell him, you know what I mean, but in time he kind of helps me, I just noticed the, he did a little job down there that I had told him to do and I had forgotten all about and you know, and a, he made...

VM: Well, the thing that amazes me so is, when I came here, there were no cement ditches, there was no underground pipeline, they didn't have the steel things in the pumps, but a, now we've got the place all set up with head gates, pipes out of the cement ditch that you can flip a five gallon can or lid over and close it off, so forth, used to we just filled dirt dams and the main ditch in the orchards. Now we have trouble passing a dam built and a ditch full of water.

NA: Yeah.

RM: There was sandy area, that first.

VM: Now, we just see old Regis shoveling this (unintelligible).

RM: yeah, and you know, you had to a, clean the ditch, it didn't, so it wouldn't hold up the water...

VM: We didn't use plastic parts, you dug holes.

RM: I guess, the first, the first four hundred and fifty feet from the tank down, was real sandy.

NA: Right.

RM: Well I, I do have...

VM: Well I when remember so clearly is getting one of us across the big little orchard, that long ditch that wouldn't get it off the pipeline, and he...

RM: But I, I know we saved, but when we put in our first cement ditch, we saved about, irrigating right here, close to the tank, down to here, about seventy percent of our water, no it just, it, no, we used to have to irrigate a panel, shut it down because the tank back up it's a hundred and twenty thousand gallon tank, you opened the valve flow then irrigate panel, shut down, take a couple hours to fill it back up, now I set it at fifteen rounds and I can, can irrigate almost continuously right now it's started surge a little bit, you know, but I can darn sure irrigate continuously for ten hours.

NA: Uh huh, uh huh, before your tank runs dry. I was, I've been noticing the, the tank that, that you all use here is very unique, I've not bumped into it before, where you pipe your water into a reservoir and then irrigate off the reservoir, it's completely unique that I've seen to the valley, I'm waiting to see if it's like this over in Penasco, if they're doing the same deal.

VM: Well this is McSherry his father's an engineer.

NA: Is that right, your, your daddy, did, did design that?

RM: My dad built the original storage tank and the underground pipeline and as a second job I told I did as a hand for this cement ditch that we're irrigating out of now and uh, uh, then after his death, we did put in some cement ditches and all the underground plastic pipe.

NA: Right, right.

RM: But he, I remember in 1941, and he went, in, in to the ground four feet with rocks and cement, rocks and cement, brought up to the level of the ground, and little sarcasm, the engineers from Kennecott over here says it's going to walk out of...

VM: But see he's been paid, just walk out.

RM: No, that was encouraging if you got from the engineers you know, but the water lines coming from our storage tank to the house and and to the yard, there two feet deep, so erosion, so they won't freeze, and I know there, John dug a lot of them.

VM: And a rocky hillside.

RM: And that blue granite.

NA: That'll make your wrists ache for days. Well, you know, that's when, that's when you go over to your dad and say, remember that case of dynamite we've been talking about.

VM: Well, I did, when our boys were home, I'd say go change the water and it was a terrible big chore, you know, all they had to do was pull the ten gates and this (unintelligible). You ought see your daddy make dams shoveling dirt.

NA: Right.

RM: I can remember several days when, when there was an old army guy, troublemaker, and a it was apple picking time, causing trouble and this and that, this guy, so right out there he had, real nicely, measured off six by six by six, dig a hole, pretty hard digging, had a ladder there, had water sitting there in the shade, I think it took that guy about a week to dig that pit, then had him cover back it up, dad didn't say a word, and you know that turned out to be a nice gentleman.

NA: That'll do it. My father used to be a big believer in splitting wood, but...

RM: That little guy, had his wrist with the you know, the handkerchief tied around it, dad didn't push him, let him offer nice, an hour, had plenty of water.

VM: Let him smoke a cigarette.

RM: Didn't say a word.

NA: Yeah, the old timers in Mesilla, probably this would ring bells with you, they talk about the fellows that we talk to are kids when they were doing this their dad was actually running the water, but the kids would have to go up, I may have told you this, but they would have to stand in the ditch with a piece of tent, to check it up so that dad could divert it out into the field, and he talked, this one fellow talked about him and his brother just legs and shoulders up against that piece of tent, trying to check that water up, to get the you know, so they could divert it out and it's coming in and just being like chest, chest deep in mud and uh.

VM: Regis did that swimming in logs trying to cut off the river to get it down the ditch. Well I can tell you about getting tumbleweeds, saturated.

NA: Yeah, the uh, you, you mentioned that you got all these different folks up and down a ditch and you've been irrigating here for quite some time, there's got to have been a disputes crop up now and again over water.

VM: Pretty much in this area not really, not in awhile they steal a little water, but we kind of think that worked out agreeably in a reasonable matter.

RM: Do you have that on you?

NA: Yes sir, I do.

RM: Oh good.

NA: Uh, I'm, I'm interested in this because of dispute resolve, you know how folks resolve disputes.

RM: You hear about them up the river, and not mention any names they're carrying guns, I think you maybe you might have heard about that.

NA: Well, I've seen newspapers that, where folks have been killed and when you read the newspaper things, it, it, there's a strong connotation yeah, that there is water involved in it and that's...

VM: Well, we've got a lot of storage where we feel water I assume those are my neighbors.

RM: There are two, there are two gentlemen on the East side of the Eby-baca and that's before our Ditch Commission was organized and I was taught since in the conception to write down the allotments you know what I mean?

NA: Right.

RM: The old people like my dad, they're dead, their daddies didn't pass since this information on, and they would come up and yes, I have a Wednesday every two weeks, Monday, Wednesday, Tuesday, Thursday.

NA: Right.

RM: And a neighbor down here has it Wednesday, well these neighbors convinced the neighbor woman, that, that Wednesday was hers, and she was highly intelligent woman, in fact, she's our secretary treasurer of our Ditch Commission now, and she came up here and wanted her water and I talked to her, I get that board from here, yeah.

VM: Son, please don't play with that, Grandpa needs it, put it flat down on the floor and don't play with it, put it over there against the wall.

RM: He uh anyway, she came up and I, Vesta put your hand there on that purse, I have all the, that's where I have written down Eby-baca, Macedonio, you know what I mean.

NA: Right.

RM: So, I...

VM: Put the board over there by the wall and don't play with it.

RM: Twice, you see, and she's very intelligent, she was a terrific school teacher, she wouldn't she's very and there aren't the last she cuss me out and said where's my water, so after we formed a Ditch Commission, everything was explained to her again, she apologized to me, but then she used to be, but it is they don't...

VM: There was one other dissension over there on that side of the ditch and they did go to court over it.

NA: Did they?

VM: And they got it settled over a...

NA: But, but by, by and large if there's a dispute over water it's worked out without going to court, without doing legal deals I mean.

VM: Yeah, yeah, we haven't any of this.

RM: And uh, this...

VM: And especially, once in awhile there would be a little dispute or little argument about some, but like I would like to say it's always settled without getting in court.

RM: Well, for an example, that a, I can't get the water through or they can't the dozer through a certain area, then we improved our by-laws, that if you don't want dozer going through, you open it up by hand, but, it, it, it, the question or the a, disagreement may come up with, they don't know how to ask the question, when you do this and that, no, we're not trying to hurt you, this is the way we clean the ditch, and you don't want the dozer through your place then open it up, the legal width by hand.

NA: Right.

RM: So then in all, to an extent, we don't have the help to go head, but when it first initiated the complaint, it's in a belligerent manner you know, but then again, once you talk to them, and I, I have.

VM: In, in the vicinity of thirty years ago, we had a person living up here at this place, uh, was working on the tail end of the ditch, its water right on Saturday, this one decided to put a little sump pump in the ditch and help channel some water into his garden, uh, there were a few words exchanged about that, we can convinced him it was illegal to put a sump pump in the, in the end of the ditch and...

RM: Basically, it wasn't the pioneers, somebody...

VM: Probably laying firs on the other side.

NA: There you go, somebody from the East, you can say it, the tape's rolling.

VM: Not necessary, it's not where the ditch.

RM: Caretaking for the owner that was speculating you know what I mean.

NA: Right.

RM: But anyway, uh, I'm glad that, a little trivia, that I was the first mayordomo of the Commission, and yes, we got teeth into our old laws that were verbal.

NA: Right.

RM: And it's written down now, and the younger generation knew enough about it, but they didn't know from experience you know what I mean.

NA: Right, right.

RM: I happen to hit in between generations you know, but who are the majority operators, owners now, they are maybe in their middle forties.

VM: We tell them we have a ditch in it.

RM: Well, I don't know when did it start.

VM: Well this is in '86 so it must have in '85 that we sent it...

NA: I think your papers got filed with the S.C.O. in '87.

VM: No, this is in '86 when we started using this.

RM: So, there's a generation, say the people would be hundred and some years old.

NA: Right.

RM: And there's the middle sixties, that retains from those people passing it down to the forty year old or the thirty-eight year old guys.

VM: But you written in this Greenwald agreement here, about how they would put on a team or a man or maybe both depending on what their water right was and so forth. Regis remembers as a young boy going to the annual ditch meetings and the ditch master would say so and so was to bring a team of horses and a scraper or...

NA: Oh bless you, I'm going to ask you about that too. Yeah, well it's a, well it's a interesting because you do hear stories about you know folks getting, getting real cross wise with each other over it.

RM: No, back, I would say again back then there was less, there was an element of time, that things became very lax, as far as, well uh.

VM: Well it was in time of change when we went through using teams and scrapers and having two people have bulldozers, and, and, and in that time things kind of went to pot, the guys with the dozers clean the ditch, put in the dams, and nobody else did anything, and they didn't want to pay their share and, but they wanted their water rights.

RM: And, and anyway uh, back in...

End of McSherry- Tape 2 B

McSherry: 2 C

RM: Thursdays in the early Forties, and not to mention the name, he told me he was the ditch boss and he owned property on both sides of the, the Eby-baca and the Macedonio, the Greenwald even though it's part of the Macedonio, the ditch boss was the foreman of NAN Ranch, but anyway I remember the gathering down here was a kind of a store which is our post office now, and a, middle of January, two Sundays before the Monday you started working, rehashing who all had to have so many men, how many teams, and where they would start, at one time, and you started to work, ready to go to work at 7:00 you didn't leave the house at the seven, and they would take it by tareas each section and take a cigarette break.

NA: How much, the tareas, was their a fixed length along the ditch?

RM: No, there would be, for example, it might have been down here a, say the post office up to Larry Davis's now that would be here at noon break, but a, each ditch according to the part of us to clean the ditch boss determined tarea, your section to be cleaned between rests or cigarette breaks, you didn't stop to team to roll a cigarette if you could roll it, it'd be fine, and if you had any repairs you did it during the cigarette break.

NA: You mean repairs to your team, to your, your harness?

- RM: Yeah harness, or a handle out of the scraper, bust a hamstring, or something like that you know.
- NA: Did they call it the scratches down here, is that what they were called?
- RM: They were, we used fresnos lot in the sandy area, but our main ditch was scrapers, about two and a half feet wide, with handles on it, and anyway, if you broke down between tareas, the ditch boss would take not of it by minutes or, and then it would it be handwork that you had to do while you were broke down.
- NA: Right.
- RM: And, and if all the work was other than your cigarette break, then that person that broke down took time to fix his harnesses up or, scraper or the single tree or whatever it was, got on the shovel and the axe or grubbing hole and went to the...
- NA: What was that word you just used, grubbing, what's that?
- RM: Plow and sop, it would be sop work.
- NA: Oh okay.
- RM: So uh, we had these uh, skunk well, pussy-willow thickets you know, you had to grub out with the grubbing hoe or an axe and some of the banks are pretty steep, that would be done by hand, now we used fresnos, but that was more on your, were your sandy draws would come in.
- NA: Right.
- RM: To get it out little, and uh, something I...
- NA: Were, were these two horse fresnos, I'm sorry I didn't mean to distract you.
- RM: Well uh, there were two horse and then there were four horse fresnos, and a, I remember there was a four horse either has four single trees on it, but anyway, a, the a, users knew what they had to do, I mean it was a, the repetition of the, the year before, thaw, and this is what it was, and if a, you didn't show up well then you didn't had to do, if you didn't, then you had to, show up at the team, then you had to do the handwork.
- VM: There was one old gentleman that I remember he was too old to run the team or do the handwork he always came with this little wagon and brought hay for the horses to eat in lunch break.
- NA: Well, you, you know considering his age that was accepted.
- VM: He was doing his part, course this is not (unintelligible).
- RM: Just above us I remember the last year I worked a team, I uh, there was about a four foot drop off into the ditch, three and a half, and there was art in doing it you flip this, this scraper you know, I did that and I, and I went off after it, and I felt a crick in my back and I couldn't move, but there was this guy that she was telling you about, the old man, he was behind me and what's the matter why don't you get after it you know, and

I couldn't...

VM: Then he ran over him with his team.

RM: Then, the two men tried to move me, and I, you know I'm hurting.

NA: Right.

RM: Well they, the neighbor, just right across from the neighbor's house, the people at that time, was, I guess he's about close to 5"9', 5"10', wouldn't say?

VM: Oh yeah, easy.

RM: She went off in that ditch and picked me up and brought me out, and she wanted to give me an adjustment and I don't want to, they brought me home in the pick-up, carried me into the house like a baby, but uh, really you know in any work flanking a calf or a flipping a scraper you know, there was a knack to it that you didn't knock your teeth out, you know what I mean?

NA: Right.

RM: Catch it just right and man it, it would land just right.

NA: And away you go.

RM: Grab it, and your horses knew how to pull on it and you know.

VM: What were the horses' names, Dave and Keith?

RM: Yeah, yeah, and I barely remember they would die, we had different over the period of years.

NA: When was the last year that you used, that you used teams in your cleaning, do you recall?

RM: Oh, about Fifty-Five wasn't it?

VM: No, more than that because Regina was going to school when Regina was maybe about ready to go to school when Reg slipped up here and had to carry you out of the ditch, Regina was born in Fifty-Three, so pretty close to 1960.

NA: Wow, huh.

RM: Now uh, we did have a dozer, this place did.

NA: Right.

RM: But it, the thing need scrape our ditches you understand, but over a period of years we have in some places, and like in this opened it up for dozer and, and there was still some places that a, were a, thank you, and not very long terea, are hand cleaned.

NA: Even to this day, there's still hand cleaning?

RM: Yeah.

NA: When, when does the, you said in January the first Sunday or two you got together and got this organized, uh, did, did the cleaning, was like immediately after that, I mean sometime in January or February?

RM: Two weeks, they give you two weeks notice by the first of February, you...

VM: You start digging ditches for...

RM: You start digging ditches.

NA: How long did it take to clean, say, the, the...

RM: Macedonio took maybe about a week, the other side about ten days.

NA: Longer ditches.

RM: Yeah, normally it's a longer, normal the...

VM: The Eby-baca ditch above this one is longer on the end isn't it?

RM: Yeah, and it has some a, well a lot of it to over there, it follows the, there to over the hill, and yes, you can come in here, but you'd have to carry your scraper of dirt quite always to dump it.

NA: Right.

RM: To avoid hand work, and hand work, it maybe three weeks to do it you know what I mean.

NA: Uh huh.

RM: But see all through Mays is right at the toe of the...

VM: I built the middle of that.

RM: And it's pretty, you know you can't just come out every so often you know you have to further up the line.

NA: Well you got to be careful to, I mean you've got to get it up and out of the ditch, you change the grading and, and so, so...

RM: Yeah, that's right. And to there's a knack in, in a, dumping you know.

NA: I'll bet.

RM: And uh...

VM: I understand how important your watch is, anything that like this is fascinating.

RM: She was telling me about this gentleman putting up the hay to different users you know,

remind me of this old boy, with the flood victims, he came in his old pick-up with a hundred gallons of water, that he was too old to handle sand bags, but he delivered water.

VM: Well, it's hard before he (unintelligible).

NA: Right.

RM: At eight dollars a gallon.

NA: Uh huh, yeah.

RM: No, by and large uh, I can say with the exception two different owners just above us, a the present owner he's a Jew, he's a good co-grower, co-worker, good citizen in the community, but the a one, was a transplant from Connecticut via Alaska and Los Angeles, came in here.

NA: This is not high praise.

RM: He did not only the ditch users, but the mail carriers, the bus driver, the meter reader, they, he and this a, he drove down in history, they would have to read the meter with binoculars.

NA: He's just an abusive type?

RM: That's right.

VM: There's not a person, not just us, he didn't get along with, I doubt he didn't get along with anybody.

RM: The, the uh, the gas delivery, that was delivered to us was a, pouring water on his gas you know, and just nothing was right with the gentleman.

NA: I take it he's gone, the farm, the farming business didn't agree with him?

RM: Yeah, Lord rest his soul, he's gone to that way, but a, I know I'm human and I'm not perfect, but I did try to get along with him like I say and it was most hard for seven years.

VM: Now we had a little ditch trouble there, he had no water, never cleaned, backed up the whole ditch.

RM: But a, but I swallowed crow and time took care of everything.

NA: Right.

RM: Uh, in fact, this girl's husband who befriended the, highway engineer's in a time of sorrow, and I went to him not knowing anything about this, and he said in memory of what your son Wilbur did, and he moved the highway fence over so we could clean the Greenwald ditch down, and clean with the dozer. The gentleman I said that came via Connecticut, Alaska, Los Angeles, one foot length of a step of a foot, he planted a row of trees from the center of the ditch.

NA: Oh man.

RM: And I would go clean like we were used to cleaning, but he said if you touch one of my trees I'll get your place, I said you don't need to sue me just buy it you know, but that went on for seven years, then, like I say this gentleman from the engineering state highway, saw that he would not be choking off the right of way and we straightened the ditch out which was beneficial to the, the, that set orchard plus making it where we could work it with; so, we, we had to swallow our machoism there for about seven years and everything has worked out fine, and I know I did think about, but was interpreted to me that I had to initially finance the court cost, if he lost then he would pay for it.

NA: Right, but you had to front the money?

RM: Yeah, that's right.

NA: Right.

RM: But the, that I had forgotten that, because to me that wouldn't be a pleasant memories, so...

NA: Well that you would mess you all up to because if there's a section of the ditch that doesn't cleaned, it's going to affect everybody else down the ditch right?

RM: Just like...

VM: Well, you get all your water, you just don't get the flow.

RM: You have weak link you know and, in a chain, but that's right I had forgotten about it and I, but you know others again, getting back to the end, you talk to them, hasn't been prolonged misery that was of this, this...

NA: Horace was, Horace was mentioning something to me about a, an opening of the ditch fiesta or celebration or something that he thought he remembered from back in the Thirties and Forties, uh, I guess the Church some how got involved, he said you might know something about it, he said they were...

VM: Only, only thing I can think of, would think, think of would be the San Ysidro celebration, San Ysidro is the patron saint of the farmer, and they usually had on San Ysidro day, they would have church mass and procession with the statue and go out and bless the fields, and maybe they coincided that with, with the water down the irrigation ditches, but that's in May, they would already have water in the ditches.

RM: But still, that I go along with what she bringing up there that would be about that only way that I know the Church would be involved just a...

NA: Yeah, he didn't, he wasn't sure, he seemed to think or seemed to recall that, that it coincided with something, whether it was water coming down the ditch or the beginning of the season or what it was.

RM: Well we did...

VM: This is San Ysidro and he's the patron saint of the farmer, and we have apples on it.

NA: I see.

RM: But you see about then is when you shouldn't owe you know your planting your corn here, you know, but more or less you got an apple set, the freeze, I'm talking about this area here, and it, the upper Mimbres it would, San Ysidro wouldn't have to much up, they freeze up even in June, you know.

NA: Right, right.

RM: So a...

VM: Yeah, but this, this entire area, I all can I think of is the Church could involved with is San Ysidro day and they wouldn't take the statues out of the Church unless procession and bless the fields.

RM: You bet.

NA: And that, that is still celebrated today?

VM: Yes.

RM: It is.

VM: Oh yes, there's been a celebration this year.

RM: Yeah, we a, the Bishop came up and got water out of the river, and uh, no, it a, it, he, it, this is true, you know, you got to believe it, and a, I know that we need all the help we can get here.

NA: Oh yeah.

RM: And a, I know that it might be thinking that, that if talked to in many different ways.

VM: Just, just a little side thing here, a couple of the ladies up the road who are not Catholic, uh, found the San Ysidro statue, there hard to find, San Ysidro statues are, they found a small one and they decided that he should be some place in the valley, and so, in a niche along side of the road up here, at the side of Bill Graham's, up there in the rocks, you have know where to look to find him, there is a San Ysidro statue.

RM: It's almost where the hot springs canyon dumps into the Mimbres, is right on the curve, but it's in a, like she says a little cave there, really once you know it's there, its', it's...

VM: Very comforting.

NA: It's comforting, there you go.

VM: San Ysidro there, my, our daughter finally found a, the San Ysidro over in the Ruidoso, and had the chilis on it, but we put this little basket of apples I bought down in South Carolina.

RM: Put it on there.

NA: But that usually, San Ysidro day usually occurs...

VM: May the 15th.

NA: May the 15th, that is the day.

VM: San Ysidro day.

RM: Yeah, our little parish here is Saint Joseph's, and that's the 19th of March, so we have say two, we splurge twice.

VM: Long years ago, there was a San Ysidro Church up here four miles, maybe you saw the sign?

NA: I, I have, it's...

RM: It's, it's...

VM: Right on there, well that, there was a Church there and that was San Ysidro, the little village.

NA: Oh.

RM: It, it's a nice little place, there's that mansion up on the hill you know, and our, there, there's, it's up about three miles from here, there's a nice little orchard, and there's this little sign standing there, it's San Ysidro, now that was known as San Ysidro.

NA: I think I've seen that on some old maps actually, but I've never, I was never quite sure what it corresponded with.

VM: The little sign out there, the people that live there, you know, on the Mimbres.

RM: Then you get confused to the Swartz, then you go through San Ysidro, then you take, then there's San Juan and then San Jose, and San Lorenzo.

VM: Fort Stuhouse was in the, with the San Jose, where the San Jose, the San Ysidro Church is.

NA: So, the Bishop comes up from Las Cruces.

VM: He was up yesterday to Saint Ysidro.

NA: That's what I understand, and that's what your husband.

RM: No, I was telling him too, that a, without getting into too deeply, that the, well it's a different generation of people that, it's not stiff arm like they used to be, be like you see, before, you acted almost like, kind of like...

VM: The Pope.

RM: Yeah, kind of like you had with the Pope, you had to get in, you have an audience with him, but no, it makes it nice the, he come out to, to the plow, instead of the plow coming

to you know.

VM: Have more cake. Course, entiende, we had a hundred here for celebration in May.

NA: Oh, in this past May?

VM: Uh huh.

NA: I've got pictures of this Church all over that I've taken, I have taken, I have taken a load of pictures of this Church.

VM: Isn't it interesting?

NA: It is, it is.

RM: You know, at Church it impressed us and we went to it and evening, oh it was one heck of a, it's cold up there.

VM: It was the end of August.

RM: Huh?

VM: It was the end of August.

RM: In Mescalero.

VM; You ever been to that one?

NA: I have not been to that one, no.

RM: That's rock, it's high and it's cold in there in August you know.

VM: We did it, we came to my sister's wedding anniversary in Roswell on the 29th of August and the next morning, we came back here and went to Church and we had close to any.

NA: I'll bet. I've frozen to death up there on that mountain in June and July; I mean depending on when you come down.

RM: The thing that I liked about it there in that communion area, they had the image of Christ looking like an Indian which...

VM: And they had the Last Supper painting there with all the Indians finishing...

RM: Yeah, I thought that was terrific really that...

VM: And they all flew off and everything, gorgeous, absolutely gorgeous; and it was fascinating, that Church has fascinated me since I...

RM: How they get those beams you know, that high and strung across, vegas.

VM: And you have to go in sometime, it's worth stopping for.

NA: I'm going to be up that way next year.

VM: Well, go see that Church.

NA: I will, I will do that; that's a... So you were, you now, now pretty much when you're working with your ditches, I mean you clean by and large with heavy equipment, is that pretty much true?

RM: Yeah, the dozer you know.

NA: Uh huh, and what about your diversions, are they, are they concrete or I'm going to have to bug you to see if we can take a tour of the, tour of the, the ditch system here, are they concrete or, or...?

RM: No, they're just what's in the bottom of the river, that...

NA: Push up dams or sand bag dams, I've seen all kinds of different terms?

RM: We have, we may have to get to the sand bag thing, that's what I've got here, written down that, are '93 flood damage cut the river channel down in the Macedonio diversion area four feet.

NA: Hmm, so that the bed of the river has dropped four feet.

RM: So, if you go to get the material for push up you're going to make it ten feet, then the next flood will keep eating back up stream and make it keep getting deeper further up stream so we, uh, this is new to us, we know about riser, but how to put into, what to put them in, if we got the right kind of flood as a, what we have hopefully we can throw in some old fallen trees and cable, but then you a gulleywasher, I don't what you put in, but no, we've got, it, to be exact it's three feet and it's just deeper there.

NA: Uh huh, uh huh, the, the, the damage from this past flood as I say, I was, I was wandering around with, with Charlie Disart, and he was showing me all the land that he'd lost and all the stuff that had been washed out, in addition to this cut right at the head of the Macedonio, what other kinds of damage did you all have from the flood?

RM: I think it was the flood of '84, wasn't it?

VM: Yeah, but he, he, this last one?

NA: This last one is what I was referring to, I know '84 you...

VM: We had a lot of water damage except down in the ditch.

RM: Just our a, our a diversion areas oh down a ways, silted and, but personal damage no.

NA: But the '84 flood was far worse?

RM: Yeah, for this reason, when it came down and finally quit, it did dig some, you know what I mean, and then this flood ran so long...

NA: The '84 flood?

RM: I was, I would say there was the same volume of water in the '93 flood as the '84, but the channel wasn't as deep.

NA: Uh huh, uh huh.

RM: We had some erosion in the '84 flood up at the Macedonio, but this one here, I don't [know] if this lasted longer and on us right through here where we got the damage in '84, it was because the river channel wasn't as deep as it now.

NA: And it overflowed the banks in '84?

RM: That's right, it came in two ways, it jumped the neighbors up here, came to them, and then we have a, well the heads down here, it backed in, so anyway, we a, well except for that wind machine, was about three feet deep.

NA: Yeah, that's what you were referring to the other day.

RM: So that's pretty high, being that far from the river.

NA: Right, right.

RM: But mainly it was because it backed in.

NA: Well I know this is a river channel, I've, I've been up and down the valley and opens and closes a lot, and there's places where you know it's kind of rocky and skinny, and it seems like it would back up like the dickens, above that and a, do you have a, do you have a, a narrow, a narrows down here South of you all that causes it to back up or was it just choked with vegetation?

RM: No, it just...

VM: Not until you get down about Jean Simon's, that's the first place it really narrows.

RM: Well up at the Macedonio I guess it is a narrow thing.

VM: Yeah, yeah, it gets up and then gets to be down about Jean's doesn't it?

RM: Yeah.

NA: So you get, you get flooding at the Macedonio which is why your diversion...

VM: Well, down here it's not because, it's your cutting into the NAN field, it's cut into the Saliz orchards, it's cut into the NAN field, it's cut into, it's cutting over generally where Pauline is, it's cutting back into there ROYBAL's, Albert Argulerrez, it's just, just cutting...

RM: It's been cutting zig zag since the '84 flood.

NA: It must have been, the '84 flood must have really changed that river bed.

RM: The thing about that flood, it had a lot of debris in it, a lot of, see we hadn't had a good husky flood in quite awhile, and there's some, oh I guess trees, four feet in diameter,

sixty-feet long, no, there's three of them in our river channel, luck had it, it just left them up on the bank, their ideal flood control now.

NA: Yeah, as long as they don't re-direct the flow where don't want it.

VM: Well that, you know, that flood started so high up the (unintelligible), course, they lost so much stuff, lot of old tires that any of them never been found, it was a, people lived up here in this Olson orchard, name was Meredith, and he was sick gentleman and he had a lot of prescriptions, they dumped their trash down there, his brother found a prescription bottle out in one his fields that had him and Meredith's name on it.

NA: Oh my gosh.

RM: Southeast of Deming, seven miles.

NA: Oh my Lord.

VM: It's a...

RM: No, now that flood took out the electric line a tree did, that crossed the river, they had to re-string with it a helicopter.

NA: Oh my.

RM: But that's how, how high the limbs were, no we, like I say some big old tree...

NA: I've seen some pretty big trees, looks like they been washed down the river just from this past one.

VM: Right here, right here just between nothing, but (unintelligible) house, this place was right burning.

RM: This little gal that, she showed us, she sent us a statue, that, when she was learning to drive she established the road and they called it the Jinga Road, and she was here about two weeks ago, said daddy my road's gone.

VM: River bank eaten through the road.

RM: Which isn't hurting us, it's going in through our bosky land, and it's below on that side, it's below our orchard land, and, it opens up the channel, but a....

VM: We don't get a straight chop unless your on the mountain, if you're in over here irrigating (unintelligible).

RM: Yes, if it will keep that up it will help, and this is what I would like the corps of engineers, I understand that, in the Northern part of the state, there's starting to listen to the ditch owners of the property owners, out to construct these dams, instead of putting in the men like they were, putting them in to do it right, instead of putting them in...

NA: Right.

VM: It's so they can't do anything for them either, hog wash as far as I'm concerned, they can go back in and replace what was torn out, but they can't do anything preventative.

RM: Well, why just pour good money out to match.

NA: Or put dollar bills and next to each other and light them off.

VM: Yeah.

RM: Well there, this is a round finish, they put in, they came in and built this ninety-three thousand dollar dike down here, we had proposed to give them an easement to come up on us and take out three cotton wood trees, straighten it up, no, they, in fact, when they channeled to make the dike, they headed the river right towards the dike, it's out again ninety-three thousand dollars.

VM: Right here.

NA: Yeah.

RM: And how many of those, can you tell me the dike can be too high?

NA: Can a dike be too high?

RM: Yeah.

NA: Well.

RM: And, and broad?

NA: I wouldn't say so, right off the top.

RM: Well, there's this down here, at the where it's called the Colson Crossing they built, the corps of engineers, and it had contracted, the guy had it eighteen inches too high, but the berm had the proper slope to it, how could you get anything too high.

VM: They cut it back down

RM: They had to cut it back down.

VM: Back down and all that excess...

NA: No, the only reason, the only thing I could figure out was if, for example, if it was too high above the surrounding flood plain to where the water starts back up it would overflow on to the flood plain, but that was not the case?

RM: No, no, no.

NA: No.

RM: No, if anything, it was absurd request as far as, just that it didn't come up to the initial specs., we had a you know, a FEMA man come in here, at this Macedonio diversion, and he saw as well as anybody the four feet deep push up a hundred feet, push up dam, it's

already four feet deep, maybe eighty feet wide at the most, the widest.

NA: Uh huh.

End of McSherry- Tape 2 C

Interviewee: John VonTress, Mayordomo
San Lorenzo Acequia (West)
Interviewer: Neal Ackerly

NA: It's the 12th of August 1993 and I'm chatting with John VonTress, um, sir, to establish your credentials to talk about ditches, why don't you give me a little information about your background and how you came to end up in Mimbres.

JVT: Well, we moved to Mimbres, starting leaving Mexico in June of 1945, my family's been here farming ever since. When we first moved to Mimbres it was dirt and ditches and there was water everywhere. Cows used to get stuck in bogs down in the river, have to pull them out, plenty of water for farming, lots of clumps of grass that was good, big things go with dumps and grass because we had water everywhere, you know, and then in the 50s everything dried up, we didn't have anymore (unintelligible, then phone rings).

NA: So that when you, how old were you when your folks came over?

JVT: I was nine years I guess when we moved to the Mimbres.

NA: Uh hum, so were you running primarily a cattle operation?

JVT: In those days we moved here we had two teams of horses, we had sharecroppers, we had hogs, we had corn, we raised beans up on the flat, didn't do any more with that whole flat, there was lambs and this whole thing around the house here was orchards deep with (unintelligible), apples, find pigs around here. And then after the second world war everybody got in the instant mood, started buying their apples at Safeway and we could no longer run that, what you'd call it, type of an operation.

NA: Did you sell um, did you sell out of the, I mean, out of the house, folks would just pull up and buy

JVT: They would just come, we had zinnias too and some grapes

NA: Uh-hum

JVT: You could make a good living, always Dad did the same, and (unintelligible) did the same, it's the way everybody made a living. It was considered a better living in those days than working at the mine after the second world war and everybody got their instant ways and then working at the mine was a better way to make a living than farming

NA: So you produced not only for sale but also for yourself?

JVT: Yeah, the family lived up here there's always (unintelligible) coffee and salt (unintelligible)

NA: At the time that, ah, you say that there was plentiful water here, right?

JVT: Yeah

NA: In the 40s up until the 50s. Can you describe what happened in the 50s and how that affected your farm?

JVT: In 1950 well all we had here were a few head of cattle and I remember the government giving us corn, old corn, in the sacks for 10 cents a hundred and we'd pick it up at the Farmer's Market there just to keep your cows alive

NA: Uh-hum

JVT: We were hauling water in the trunk of our car in a barrel out here to drink cause the wells went dry, it was a different world then like I said, it never got to where you could raise pigs and corn and apples and stuff and sell them out here. It never recovered from that and so we didn't raise any cows and just planting pasture for those cows since they were being a non-profit organization they was in just a good place to live.

NA: Your impression that most of the farmers are, couldn't, ah, make a living at farming here in the Mimbres?

JVT: No, they couldn't unless you owned the whole thing you made it might, don't even know what you could do

NA: So all the, did the, did the drought, now did the drought kill the orchards or did you guys just decide to pull them down?

JVT: No, the drought killed the orchards, this went on this side and then the other [I] leveled the fields took the trees out and then that was the end of that orchard

NA: Up until that time did you all been relying primarily on surface water?

JVT: We've always relied on surface water

NA: Uh-hum. Have you ever used ponds

JVT: Never had a well

NA: You've never had ponds?

JVT: A native one (unintelligible)

NA: We noticed, I noticed talking with McSherry down in the south valley that there are (?) running against the surface water, that it doesn't get down that far. Um

JVT: Well, there's not that much water because when we first moved out here everybody farmed beans on the flat

NA: Dry farm?

JVT: Yeah. (unintelligible) Flat (unintelligible) here to Ortiz and what I can't understand about it you go into the soil conservation service and they have their average water rainfall and its always, almost always the same, yet in the last twenty-five years you couldn't have raised beans and if the water rainfall was the same well then uh, it had to come at a different time for those beans to grow and the rainfall was the same

NA: Is it, is it your impression that maybe the rains are maybe coming later in the summer?

JVT: I don't know if they're coming earlier, later or what if we're getting the same amount of rainfall it's not the same and I can't believe that we're getting the same amount because I've seen the Johnson grass so bad here my Daddy would try to cut it with a mowing machine, that one up there, and it would just go up over the top of the grass and the wheels would get off the ground and we couldn't cut it because the wheels couldn't, used a sickle to do that. We would plot in winter, and try to get the hogs to eat the roots and do everything in the world trying to get rid of Johnson grass and after that drought in the 50s we've never had Johnson grass again

NA: They never came back after the drought?

JVT: No, course nowadays, chemicals get rid of it. We'd love to have some Johnson grass

NA: Get a few more head of cow or something

JVT: Yeah, we'd like to have some Johnson grass

NA: Now, you mentioned in the beginning that it was boggy areas in and around the river. Could you describe what those boggy areas

JVT: Cows just get in the bogs and she couldn't get out

NA: Was it quicksand or just a marshy area?

JVT: I don't know, just bogs (unintelligible) and up there at the wigwam (unintelligible) used to have to keep them bulldozers in to pull them log trucks back and forth and then after that drought well they drove across it ever since. Problem was used to have bogs all up and down the river and they weren't quicksand they were bogs

NA: Did you ever have standing swampy areas and the reason I ask is that one of the early explorers who came through here in 1870s is talking about Old Town and they described it as having huge swamps south of Old Town and it was so bad that people were dying from malaria and boy that really caught my eye because you couldn't find a swamp nowadays for anything. Was there swamps here in those days or have they dried up?

JVT: Well, those would be miniature swamps in we just call them bogs and the cow happened to step off into one and down she went

NA: But nothing real large

JVT: No

NA: Cause this was described as being a large swamp. So I guess maybe it dried out

JVT: You know another thing (unintelligible), a lot of the people plant (unintelligible), the pumpkins are down at Jimmy's...(unintelligible) water drops and that's why we don't have the water that we had in the 40s here and maybe that's the reason we have the same rain fall and less water

NA: Surface water, surface water

JVT: Right after the second world war then the pumpkins started to die, got real

NA: It actually got going pretty hot during the war I guess they were producing beans and stuff cause I say a report

JVT: Yeah but it was after the second world war that I know people that moved, all the old-timers down there talked about 50s

NA: So it really took off after the war was over

JVT: A-ha

NA: The dams that you've got now, ah what's your diversion like now and how it's set up or how does it work?

JVT: Well, we have a concrete dam that was built in 1962 that diverts water out of the river on the (unintelligible), a corridor place, and then it we have the ditch divides there and it goes into the east side and the west side and on the west side I think there's 80 some odd acres on the west side and on the east side there are maybe over around 300 acres but I'm not sure if figures are accurate as they get. The west side is 15 inch plastic pipes and the east side is a mixture of everything it's got a little dirt ditch, a cement(?) ditch, pipeline, and some new pipeline.

NA: Where it splits so it comes into a common head the east and west have a common head, where it splits how do you get the water across to the other side

JVT: Have a cycling under the river and it goes under the river and when we first moved here and had the dirt ditches there was two different dams there and they were about 200 feet apart but all the water went into the first dam and then we had to turn the ditch (unintelligible) to let the water down to go to the second dam and so we were taking turns on this system of aiming the water, but we had the one dam cycling

NA: When the concrete diversion dam was put there in '72 ah was

JVT: '62

NA: Sorry, '62, did you get, did the two ditches pitch in on the cost on that construction?

JVT: Yeah, yeah

NA: And ah, the ditch, the piece of ditch I looked at is concrete

JVT: Uh-hum

NA: Was the concrete, did it get concrete along at the same time the diversion was built or did that come later?

JVT: A year or two later (unintelligible) time lapse

NA: That's the same ditch that's carrying over the dam?

JVT: Yeah

- NA: (unintelligible) I noticed when your wife and I were walking she gave me the tour of the farm we were up across over to the (unintelligible) and she showed me the big pipe form, did, has that pipe form been there and working for a long time or has is it fairly recent?
- JVT: It's probably about 1965, '70 maybe even later than that, but when we first came here the old timers said they were going to rig a flume under that
- NA: Oh really
- JVT: And when we came here it was a 55-gallon barrel welded together on legs that went across there and these short pieces of 20 inch pipe that somebody had found somewhere and put it all this together. In fact Bounds is the one that did it, guy named McCallan weld all those barrels together, when we first moved here was when he welded it
- NA: Uh-hum. Was it always fully enclosed or was it half open or
- JVT: It was always closed since we've been here and then that was '45
- NA: I noticed that last blurb you stopped to think, are you all thinking about trying to replace it?
- JVT: We're thinking about, see that pipeline we're putting in the second portion of it would go under there and go over some, go up on under there
- NA: That should take care a lot of your problems
- JVT: Probable start some problems
- NA: When you were, when you were here with you folks and you were still young and they were still pulling water out before you had the concrete diversion what kind of dams did they use?
- JVT: They used truck dams, they usually put them in with (unintelligible) and horses, down with a tractor or used it sometimes. Everybody pitched in, there was a good ten or 20 people up there to put the dam in
- NA: When did the, I understand from talking to other folks that there was a sort of sequence whereby everybody got together and got the ditches fixed up in preparation for water. Could you describe that from what you remember when you were young?
- JVT: Yes, any weekend here after the second world war people had different attitudes and (?) jobs at mines and didn't do (unintelligible) then jobs, it was kinda foolish to work out here for 5 dollars a day when you could work at 10 dollars a day. Same thing is workers now working for 50 dollars a day or 100 dollars a day and help start getting short that's when we started using illegal aliens from Mexico to take up the slack and you started getting machinery about that time, you'd start getting bulldozers so they went from the groups of people who were out there out the dam engine, one guy going up there with his farm tractor and a bulldozer and put it in by himself
- NA: And the community ditch group, did they pay him to go out and do that all by himself?

JVT: Not necessarily, if you wanted the water you put the dam in and got the water

NA: Uh-huh

JVT: Course you'd do it before your turns and use your turn and then the next guy he would let you what you wanted to use

NA: When, when, even today you still have to do ditch maintenance because you said parts of your ditch are (unintelligible) and some aren't. When does that cycle usually get going and how does that work?

JVT: Again, if somebody needs the water they go clean the ditch and the guy that is on the list next, next he cleans it up. Course some of them some of us have it real more muddy than others more machinery and more time to just work cleaning (unintelligible). But after we put the dam in the cement ditch we don't have to do nothing much. But maintenance and cleaning. These 100 years floods started happening every year and washing the ditch full of sand and I think Bounds and (unintelligible), cleaner in the ditch set back full and stuff. It's (unintelligible) is the biggest land user and water user

NA: It sorta all works out

JVT: Yeah

NA: Poor (unintelligible) going to have a cow now, it shows her a lot. The floods, you was out here for a long time, what kind of impacts did the floods, do the floods have on your, on your (unintelligible)?

JVT: When we first moved out here we'd have these floods and they'd usually come in the summer and they would clear out all the 100 feet of fence on (unintelligible) and then later on in 19 ah '68, it was probably the first big flood we had that started tearing up irrigation ditches and everything else. Ah, I put a syphon in up there '78, 1978 was a big flood. I put a syphon in to the river up there and it was 18 years and then the last ten years we put that syphon back in about five parts

NA: What's the cost of something, replacing something?

JVT: Well, I put the first syphon in it cost \$3,000 and the last oh maybe it cost maybe \$42,000.

NA: Uh-hum, Hm. Wow. But this had, I mean does damages this

JVT: And Jimmy Carter declared this a disaster one and it cost \$42,000

NA: I mean you don't get this kind of damage so often that it becomes a pain to irrigate do you?

JVT: No, no the last ten years this west side has been out most of the time.

NA: Um, so even lot smaller floods still

JVT: We hadn't had any small ones we had all those 100 year floods had (unintelligible)

NA: (unintelligible) last ten years

JVT: It's it not only tore up our irrigation systems it's washed our land away too. We've probably lost, I don;t know, maybe 5 or 6 acres of land along the river too

NA: I know, I know this last one did it hurt you at all

JVT: It was the worst one of the bunch and it didn't seem to be as big but Dike and Stencil came in tore up a piece of dike out there been there 50 years and of course it damaged that pipe across the ditch too Seen it work in the dirt ditch

NA: I wished I saw some, you want to show some pictures, you and your concrete ditches were filled with sediment all the way, almost up to the top of the concrete. How hard down (JVT cuts in)

JVT: (unintelligible, something about ditches)

NA: Did you have a gate shut when this hit?

JVT: Yeah

NA: Oh, OK. (unintelligible)

JVT: But then through another problem we were having in our open ditches is that all the people that are moving in here and trash and kids floating down the cement ditches and that's why we want to build a pipeline to keep more trash out and keep the kids from getting killed. There was a kid that was floating down in that cement ditch over there, and went through that syphon over there, he go out by that gun barrel and getting in that cement riding along the wall so that's the reason why we want to make the ditch a little more safer. Keep the trash out, keep the kids from floating down it

NA: Correct me if I'm wrong but the San Lorenzo west side at this point is height. Are there any parts of the ditch that are open again?

JVT: Oh, it's all pipeline and we got valves to take it to any (unintelligible), it's worked real well. Sit the syphon under the river, it's gotten washed out and washed out and washed out and this last time we put it in real deep and tied it with cement anchors and it was still to last

NA: When you piped the San Lorenzo west, um did you, and you'll obviously dam them the whole earth (unintelligible), were they still working at the time you piped it?

JVT: Yeah

NA: Yeah, they were. And you abandoned the old, the old San Lorenzo earthen ditches. Um, did the pipeline basically follow the same distance or

JVT: The first half of it stayed in the ditch and then it got to get (unintelligible) and then they couldn't dig and then they went into the fields up there about on the short farm is where they started in the fields and then they got to the sleek place and they went back up the hill and put it back in there through the ditch and followed the dirt ditch on up

NA: So nobody, all the farms that were served by the earthen ditch are being served by the

pipeline, nobody lost anything.

JVT Yeah, yeah, no.

NA: I could see some squabbles over that. And how much, how long was that pipeline, just ballpark, how many recollections

JVT: I believe it's over a mile (unintelligible)

NA: And this all went in at one time?

JVT: Yeah, it did. The cost of it was \$186,000 and if you did it today it would probably be double that

NA: And when was it put in?

JVT: Bout 1980. '81

NA: I noticed there was a piece of it that your wife pointed out, out in the field, there was a piece of the old ditch that was still out there. Get a picture of that. (unintelligible) And the pipelines worked better for you all, I mean, given the fact that you have a water shortages

JVT: Well,

NA: Has it affected anything?

JVT: The, the if we had the dirt ditch you wouldn't get any water at all, as dry as it is now. And if you got a cup full of water you could pour it in the dam and then and then it will come out flat water. If you did it with a dirt ditch it would go down (?). Our syphon into the river is working then (unintelligible). We hadn't had any problems with it stopping up we may start having problems with people sabotaging it. And put sticks in the syphon and because the syphon got hooks in it for being put in so many times people could put a lot of sticks in there and stop it up. We were hoping we don't have to sabotage all those

NA: As you look back on, on the ditches, the earth ditches, that you've worked with before the pipeline went in, if you had to sort of think back over it, wouldn't we get horror stories about trying to irrigate off of a dirt ditch. What would that litany sound like, your

JVT: Your gophers are your biggest problem with a dirt ditch because you just get started irrigating and the water splits and you run up there and your side of your, whole side of the mountain is gone because them gophers dug a hole in it and that would be the problem and of course then in those days your brush and grass and everything growing up, clogging it up, that was another problem. The, ah, like I said when we moved here you had so much water you didn't have any of these problems. I'll tell you gophers were your biggest problem that now if you had to use a dirt ditch you wouldn't never get any water through because it just wouldn't run back. You don't have that much water

NA: Yeah, the ah the one thing that a number of mentioned and in fact your wife pointed it out on the field on the other side of the river is that the your fields are underlain by

gravels that just sucked up the water.

JVT: Yeah, yeah

NA: Is that, I mean is that right?

JVT: Yes, on that side over there is, my mother had the fields levelled and they didn't remove the top soil. Level the field, and put the top soil back, They just went to levelling and so we wound up with a complete sand and we raised grass and wheats and stuff and plowed them under and plowed them under until we got two fields over there that you can run water across because the soil is been built back up in it and we have two fields that are still we actually have natural grass and weeds and everything else we plow them under once in a while and then they built up to start farming in (unintelligible)

NA: Do you, in cases like that, with the fields can't be what plowing and cultivating as you would normally think about it, is that, are those the kinds of fields where you would let them go more or less wild and plant grasses and cattle weeds on them?

JVT: Yeah, that's what we do and there was never any good grass to last you

END OF SIDE 1A

NA: Do you do any crop rotation or do you rotate the fields in any particular fashion?

JVT: No, we have always been trying the farm, I think we're going to try to start that goes we're hopeful that the water irrigation is somewhere in the ditch supposed to have a priority water, we're hoping that we get our water and we're hoping that we make good and well in what we're (unintelligible) farm and crops and in the '30s they talked about raising hay here you know alfalfa hay, and I guess they did and a lot of it and I would like to do that, get enough water and get in there, something I'd like to do. In this pasture the cattle (unintelligible), even though there's some deals coming in with some people here wanting to buy a farm here on the Mimbres and they were talking about raising herds and greenhousing and stuff like that and we told them \$500,000 would greenhouses and stuff you know and if you had \$500,000 don't know anybody that would loan it to you and don't anything about raising herds either

NA: But you foresee staying with basically a cattle operation and doing some feed

JVT: Yeah, unless we're forced out with Indian money ah, subdivisions, you know subdivisions can grow around you and your property taxes go up and then you have to leave. That's all there is to it. Staring that in the face.

NA: Ah, I didn't realize that. I saw some subdivisions lying down south

JVT: Well, we've got subdivisions all around us and we're in court now over subdivisions. Right-of-ways, road right-of-ways, then they want to build a road across your part take care of their subdivision

NA: Has ah obviously the valleys came to consider to look across to the other side, over on the east side you see a lot of houses. And even more under construction. Who are the people that are coming into this place? They're not buying farms are they?

JVT: No, That farm across the river there with trying 40 acres there and when we moved to it it was a real nice little farm the guy made a living with it and they subdivided into 5, 10 and 20 acres and it was one 40 acre (unintelligible) subdivision used it and those people, the first round of them and what we always considered the hippies from California and they were in their microbuses, Volkswagens, stone pipes off the top and no nuke bumper stickers and they were going to live in solar homes and they were going to go to the bathroom in a box and raise tomatoes in it. And they had all these deals where they wouldn't have to use energy so you wouldn't have to have nuclear power plants. And that wave of people kinda faded out

NA: How long did they last?

JVT: Well, they're probably still over there. They've changed their ways. One of them is writing books and their daughter told me the other day that cows produced something in the air

NA: Methane

JVT: And wanted to get rid of it. All cattle. And I told the daughter that her momma's book writing was endangering spotted owls and had to chop the trees down to make paper to write her books on. Little Maria (unintelligible) her momma trained her to go to a bunch of school kids from Silver City to the state capitol to law be done. The governor up there in the state of New Mexico, to get the cattle off of the forests and she was telling me. That was what she had learned from that

NA: It's all together. When you

JVT: She didn't get up but she went up there

NA: When you all were, when you all were raising cattle most folks, most folks in this part of the valley from what I gather are pretty much raising cattle. They're not doing orchards like further south. Where did you all sell the cattle? When you said you sold some of it from roadside stands but is that beginning to go away?

JVT: No, no no no. Ah, the guy that we bought this place from he was selling black market beef, you know didn't during the war, he couldn't buy beef without a stamp, you know and so he was black marketing his beef in these (unintelligible) who had all kinds of money because they didn't have any place to spend it except on beef you know and that guy was really well off selling beef. And ah then when we moved here that it got to where you couldn't sell beef or pork you know and I mean just cuts of beef of course you could sell. In those days a cow she had to be a Hereford you know and she had to have perfect markings or these cow barbers didn't take them and later on started bringing in the black Angus and the ah Brahmas started showing up and then people started mixing these breeds and then the whole spectrum changed, the whole cattle market and along comes McDonald's hamburgers and they started buying the dairy calves to raise them up and make hamburgers out of them and then they started getting cow sales all over the country and having plenty of vending where you could sell anything at that cow sale. And they, you know, you could take a cow down there that's almost dead and as long as you can get a heartbeat when she goes through there well somebody will buy her for dog food or hold them for carcasses. So you could get rid of your cows

NA: But that would be primarily where you would sell when you got a (unintelligible)

JVT: Yeah

NA: And when you do sell nowadays, what do you sell them as as feeder calves primarily?

JVT: Everything.

NA: Everything.

JVT: Sell your calves, just bring you in money, and sell them to your old saddle horses you been riding for 20 years, you take them down there too they'll take them. Make glue out them, dog food or whatever. Say you have a (unintelligible), even pigs, goats, everything

NA: You're one of the few farmers I've noticed, or few people in the valley I've noticed, with pigs out back. We were looking through the barn and admiring the old farm wall that you got in the barn and I heard this squeal and it took a second to identify it and I knew it was a pig. That's uncommon, where I come from folks do a lot of hog raising and that's something that's just fallen away or gone away over the years?

JVT: Yeah, you can always make money with pigs, not very much, but you can make money with it. And pigs, and I guess it's true out there when they're about to die from old age, you can, you can't make any money. When we raise them we eat them ourselves and we know what they are and we know they're not shot full of hormones and whatever. We know what they are. Kinda like buying a new car and folks buying a used car you know whatcha you've got. You know what wrecks it's been in and that's the way we got them, we let these two get away from us and then we got hot weather and couldn't butcher them so we finally had to wait till it gets cool enough to spoil them. We're going to have enough pork to share some

NA: Yeah, they look pretty good sized

JVT: You can set up for awhile, usually butcher them right there in (unintelligible) and most weigh probably weigh 400 even 400 a piece look like even more

NA: When you, how many users are on your ditch? How many folks use your water, I say ditch even though it's a pipeline. But bare with me

JVT: On this side?

NA: Just on the west side

JVT: On the west side we've got let's see, six, maybe six

NA: I assume that your water rotation works like everyone else's

JVT: It's on the same list as ever

NA: It is

JVT: Yeah, but there's water over here and we take out turns and make the water back over

NA: What's the rotation? How long does it take to get through the rotation on your ditch?

JVT: Nine days I think, I'm not sure exactly, but's around 9 days.

NA: And then the water's cut off and then it goes to the east side. Is that

JVT: No, not on this side, it's about 3 days

NA: It's a 3 day rotation?

JVT: No, it's it not even that long. Not sure of the exact. You have one water list for both ditches

NA: For both ditches

JVT: And then they divide, we have that on both sides on both ditches. They turn the water back on our times and leave the ditches (unintelligible)

NA: So you would use, since you've got fields on both sides, you would water, for example, the west side fields off the during the period of the west side got water in it then the water off the east side, when the east sides got water.

JVT: Well, they change it all the time when we can water and we can change it and put all the water over there

NA: Oh, okay. So you've got a total, you've got a total water right that applies to fields on both sides of the river and you can use that water whenever it's convenient?

JVT: Well,

NA: Not when it's convenient but when it's your turn?

JVT: Yeah, when we do it some people try to cut but they would like for us to have it so many hours over here, so many over there. We grip about it, but everybody else does. (Unintelligible) going to mention it (unintelligible) and in the old days the old timers were real bad about keeping the hours on the ditch. And the first hours on the ditch were worth a lot more than State Engineers saying we have 3 feet of water to use because if you don't have the hours on the ditch to deliver it and so some of the land out here has 25 minutes an acre and a some of them have an hour an acre and so that's is a big concern so a lot of people especially the ones that drop 30 minutes

NA: How did that come into being where

JVT: Well, that's what I was saying, when the old people most of them Spanish background would trade land out here they if they sold half their land they would retain over half of their hours on their ditch

NA: More than half their hours on their ditch

JVT: And that's something that I don't understand, maybe that's in the records and the old books but down at boundaries maybe these hours are kept in these books. Whereas the records are that these hours on the ditch I don't know because they're not in the

courthouse they're not in the State Engineer so they have they have to be in those, I understand that in some parts of the state where that was taken right there on the ditch and people went to court and made the ditches give everybody hours

NA: Well, it's generally tended, where I've seen it, it goes one of two ways, which is that the hours are somehow proportioned to the acreage, ah, I haven't heard of a case where you would sell parts of a land and keep more hours, the water rights

JVT: Yep

NA: The second parts (unintelligible) That explains when you can't get

JVT: And you know it's kinda funny because your land is real estate and your water is the State Engineers a lot you in real estate and the hours on the ditch are just limbo you know and where are the records

NA: I've noticed that everybody keeps saying that there's a linkage between

JVT: Where actually have a record because you're dealing on a modern list, you have your hours on that list and you have your acres with the State Engineer so you have your

NA: But it's not constant, that's what you're saying though and that's what I'm saying

JVT: No, it is, but what I'm saying is where are the records being kept that said that old post here up here, gave or kept so many hours is (unintelligible) where are those old records, you know you could go to the court house and find how many acres and who it's deeded to like that abstractor when you land you can go to the State Engineer's office and the court house now and find your what water rights you own but who has the right to hours in the ditch? Where's the records? And when they made the list out here in the 60s what records did they use to make the list to say that I have 30 minutes and that duke-down or horse-bound has an hour on each of his acres and we have 30 minutes on ours. See? Where are the backs that saved it? Who has how much time on these acres?

NA: What I notice is that there is per acre gets the wildest hours (unintelligible) I've seen, I've seen, I've been told that they've got everything from average to 3 1/2 hours per acre ah 3 1/2 hours per acre up to only about 2 hours per acre and the point by then you've described is the smallest number I've seen yet, ah, I don't know how that's wildly different

JVT: Some of those books that I've read document water dated between half and half hour suits and you know the ditch, (unintelligible), in your half so I could (unintelligible). there could be something of interest you could find out. Could find difference in hours at the best

NA: What little I've seen, I can't find a rhyme or a reason, I haven't seen one

JVT: It's a red hot handed reason, I mean it is what it amounts to, if you've got time on the ditch you've got 6 feet of water on your ground and the guy down below you got two feet on him.

NA: I think most of the numbers that I've seen from state engineering is that everybody in the valley has anywhere from about 2.7 to about 3.3 acres per acre per year

- JVT: Yeah and the ah, when they do it on your length of your (unintelligible) and if you don't have a long (unintelligible), down below there is maybe (unintelligible), long (unintelligible) say you need more water but then that's the reason that if your hours don't jive with that what they say you know and that's what I can't understand where the record is that says who has how many hours and then another that kinda bothers me is that the ditch system should be responsible for anything any more 2.7 feet of water, Indians go ahead and do it or whatever it gets and if they can't then the water is at the dam and then we can change it
- NA: My understanding is that ah oh what I'm starting to get a sense of is that there is not a system for allocating water between ditches from one ditch to another
- JVT: No, there's not on the drainage ditch
- NA: Yeah, not anywhere on the members, despite the fact that you've got a water master who would probably be after you all about that so there's no way to guarantee that the ditch at one point along the river is going to get it's water allocated, the water as it goes you have the right to
- JVT: Well, eventually and in fact of the rumors that we'll all get it like San Lorenzo ditch, especially we'll be water maintenanced where you've got pipelines that are real easy to do things and so you you're going to get your water
- NA: So the next step would be to put water meters on the farm ditches and meters make sure that each farm is getting what he
- JVT: Well, if you know the flow per hour then each farm has his own hours, makes one meter will do the trick and that's when the (unintelligible) got the hours, you know that's ridiculous because I'm going to have it out of a ditch association of the farm association for water dispersement and his allocated amount you know, everybody's allocated by the State Engineers and they turn to the ditch
- NA: Compared to the normal one in San Lorenzo west do you want that job?
- JVT: No, ah, you know you, I would like to see it set up in one ditch (unintelligible), legal reasons, legal reason because you have an Indian monument besides come down here to take our water and we have to go to court and we got 50 people paying to go, the law suit is a lot easier to pay for with 6 people on the west side and we would like to keep the ditch and because we have a calling or warned of erosion I mean
- NA: Well, it is probably insisting on sharing of water too
- JVT: Yeah, like I said I'd like to form that, I think they're doing me some good, changes, hours were everybody gets an equal amount and I like our list, using our list, giving water out but I think we do need a ditch boss to account for our excess water, water that somebody doesn't want, you know these little problems that arise with lists and some person could do, ditch commissioners, most of them are real busy people and they don't have time to come out here, whatever to settle some little dispute or patch a whole in the ditch developed you know and then somebody to settle disputes and some other things (Unintelligible) Like I said there was water and junk and grass everywhere so we never got in any arguments

- NA: Right, so has it gotten worse? I mean I notice the summer seems to be a pretty dry summer, the rivers, the rivers about empty and
- JVT: Yeah, but this is the first year that we've had water all year long in the ditch
- NA: oh really
- JVT: Yeah and I think that maybe the adjudications hoop between the ridge made it keep up the river and decided it don't need to just make rice paddies, if they turn the water down the river they give us a little bit of the water we won't dry and I think that what caused it because in the summer up there their fields look like rice paddies all year long see and this year I don't think we've had as much rain but we've had water in the ditch constantly and that's the first year in many years that we've water all year long
- NA: That may also prove
- JVT: See Jupe has the key to the spare key to the dam and when it was his water turn he would go up and turn the water on full blast and wash everybody's dam out down and when his six days were up he'd go back up and shut it off during the
- NA: Didn't they have a culvert anywhere or something or was it just run it down the channel into the river?
- JVT; Yes, it cam right into the river and then it would wash everybody's dam out down the river had a lot of water
- NA: Bet that made friends real quick
- JVT: And a of course every body gripes because you know he had the key to the dam and that's a good question I'll even ask him myself. of course you're going to run into (?) who put that dam that they let him build it there and when the agreement that they would be able to irrigate their farm out of it too and ah they were trying to file a law suit against to stay that way but apparently it didn't fly because the adjudications didn't buy it
- NA: In theory the adjudication that's just gotten resolved are put more water as you say in the river and in everybody else's canals all the way down, if that should take place whether its staying pretty much as it is do you think that the factitiousness of the folks getting after each other's going to stop? Do you think that would solve a lot of the folks getting after each other?
- JVT: No, your, they call it adjudication or judgment that all this supposed to be settled and it's going to be an ongoing mess from no on amongst people and amongst Indian monuments and amongst industry, the Army could build a base in Deming and we've got to have this water and it's already adjudicated. Just a way for lawyers to make a living, judges to make a living. People like us here we use this water to raise cows and make \$100 a year doing it and make us take the same amount of water never using it, city people could have \$40 or \$50,000 a year jobs using the same water to produce (unintelligible)
- NA: Do you really think that there's a possibility that some industry is coming in here and try to take Mimbres' water?

JVT: Well, Jupe Bounds tried to sell the water and did sell the water to the city of Bear and it cost so much trouble out here that the city of Bear) asks of Jupe I think \$17,000 on lawsuits and everybody in the valley here has chipped in and gave money to stop them throwing the water out the valley. The water pumped over here and it was such a big, mass upheaval against it or whatever you want to call it that the cities told them they didn't want the water if it was going to cause that much trouble

NA: Was this something that transpired a long time ago?

JVT: It's ah 1980 (unintelligible)

NA: Just out of curiosity, and I know you're feeling a little resentful whatever possessed him to think he could sell all to Bear?

JVT: Not all the water, his water

NA: His water, ah, and he had

JVT: Right, they missed him, they went to court and that's what proved that the San Lorenzo ditch had deprived rights because

END OF TAPE 1B

NA: You've been the president of the San Lorenzo Ditch, "the west ditch", for how long?

JVT: I've never have been cause it's such a monster

NA: Such an office, how come your names on the paper work? That's how I got your name, that's how I got your name from the SEO in Santa Fe

JVT: Yeah, but that's a good question, ah, I was a ditch commissioner and at one time, I guess, Jupe was all mad at us and wouldn't do anything you know and I guess that was when I was the president and (unintelligible) was one of the member and had Ray was a member over here. Then we had a ditch meeting and they voted Jupe back in there because he wasn't doing any work on the ditch see they couldn't afford it so they wanted him back and that's where that came about. But as far as we have a three officers for the whole ditch see and we had an election and Jupe is president and Ludwell was treasurer and Louis was secretary.

NA: And we alluded to different kinds of disputes that have arisen over how to the ditch is operated. Could you describe, how those, what kinds of disputes arose and how have they been resolved and in particular is it most of the time has the stuff ended up in litigation or has it been worked out?

JVT: Uh, there's just one litigation with Challis(?) down here. He was using tail water off of this West side ditch and he had two acres down here plowed up and he would just water whenever the water came down and so then the State Engineers come down through here doing a survey and they mapped his two acres down here and so he came to the ditch association and said where's my time on this west ditch? You never did have any time on this west ditch and so it went to litigation and water master says that there was no sign of him having a ditch right over here and he left the water right there but he don't

have the ditch. That was the only litigation in the way that the other things have been solved was things like the mad party just goes about his way and doesn't help out or nothing until he gets happy again and jumps back in and starts to work and like Jupe didn't want nothing to do with it for awhile there so we had to do some work on my dam up here and he wouldn't sign the bills that he gave us, he wouldn't come to any meetings or nothing so we just went ahead and did it, paid for it and went on. And when he was president he gets the (unintelligible) up and everybody wants to sign it and pay for it and go on

NA: So by and large they resolve themselves.

JVT: Yeah, time, time heals the wounds I guess. They don't ever really go away but people get to talking at least

NA: Disputes don't get so bad that the systems get shut down, not in your experience?

JVT: That would be cutting your own throat, nobody is dumb enough to do that

NA: I'm thinking for example about, you know, some guy up at the head of the duke gets really pissed off and just shuts the water off

JVT: Well, you've got, that's what you'd call sabotage and in the state that law is against it and you would have it starts happening and then you'd have either set up there and watch him or catch him and file charges against him and not only is there laws against them doing it but in the sad thing about those laws are the fact that they were done the 1900s when 50 cents was a day's wages and now \$100 is a day's wages and so you've got that difference and your fines are geared to the 50 cent, so it doesn't amount to much and of course you've got the 30 day jail term to go with it which might make a guy think about checking your water off. But the real thing is that you have going like in the majority of all the cases up here is the fact that they're saying that they shut the water off, damage the crops and now they're going sue to damage to the crops and Jupe Bounds down here said that his crops were damaged \$25,000, well then whoever shut the water off would have serious problems and so these ditches, I think, is one of your strongest law points we have in the state equals real estate

NA: And it's handled legally as real estate

JVT: Yep

NA: So, regardless of difference in opinion between folks on the ditch there are limits to what they can do to sorta get after the whoever they are crosswise with, is that the case? So they can't cut water off?

JVT: No, can't cut water off. You can damage the ditch system or whatever it is just like arson you know whoever did it get in trouble, you know the irrigation laws were set up when water was the life line, you know, it wasn't a compromise or computer chip factory or something like that. Water and beans was your livelihood until the laws was set up and so therefore it's one of your strongest laws in the state. It's like I said a while ago, these laws are ongoing for change, if they build a computer chip factory down here that takes the bean water up there well they're going to take it.

- NA: Is it your opinion, and that's all I can really ask you for, is it your opinion that the water that is being used up here is being used as efficiently as you can use it? That's sort of a loaded question and you're free to tell me to take a flying leap, um, in other words is there wastage in water? do you folks waste water?
- JVT: Oh hell, that's what I said a while ago before this adjudication suit and even though they haven't enforced it you've got people who've quit dumping water up here on the field and making them look like rice paddies, you know, and we've had water all year. And so that was a waste and you know I enjoy my little farm here and my life and everything else but if it comes to defense a lot of other things, medical or, El Paso needing water well that they're going to take the water and
- NA: You don't think, you don't think that your water priorities would protect in that case?
- JVT: No, it's like real estate if they need a piece of land to build a highway on they're going to take it and pay you for it, the water is the same they're going to take it and pay you for it
- NA: So, in theory they can in effect they can condemn your water right?
- JVT: They can, when we were living in Endless(?), this farmer had a field there by the high school and they condemned his water and took the water for the football field, took his field there, his farm, and built a gym on it. They can condemn your water just the same as your real estate
- NA: I didn't realize that. I always thought that the, I always thought that the
- JVT: The only thing that water rights does is it says the water is used and underground and your surface water is two different waters but you could own both of them and if anybody, if its, you know, if a city or an army or whatever it is that wants it, and the judge feels that it's a, you know, it's more important for the Army to have your water than you to raise beans then they're going to take it and you will be paid for it and take your ranch to make an army base and I don't know if they will or not pay you or not pay you but the same guys that have in Las Cruces down there claim they've never been paid and their ranches were taken in the 1940s, '42 and then the war started.
- NA: Well, apparently they have settled. Up until '84 that was quite a (unintelligible), because they never got compensated
- JVT: I don't even think they were ever (unintelligible)
- NA: I don't think so, I think it's been solved
- JVT: Time flies you know and I was reading something or seen it on TV or something, just like it was yesterday and it was five years ago
- NA: I noticed your wife was commenting that this was a great place to raise all your kids, that she wouldn't have done it any different
- JVT: Have you talked to (unintelligible)?
- NA: I have not, no sir. No, I'm trying but I, if I sit down with two people in one day, I'm so

pooped the next day

JVT: No, but I was wondering, you know, he knows a lot about (unintelligible), uh this, what is that, a committee of ten(unintelligible), and he was one of them and they were trying to stop the water and they collected up all this money and all these signed papers and they claimed that little map you're talking about is the one that is...

NA: Yeah, there's a couple of those around now, started in 1967 and went on to about '88 (unintelligible chit chat)

END OF TAPE 1C