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Oral History Number: 365-015

Interviewee: Grant Canoy and Herb Sherburne

Interviewers: Kelly Keim, Sarah Jaffe, and Cathy Luiken

Date of Interview: September 19, 1997

Project: Lewis and Clark National Forest Passport in Time Oral History Project

Kelly Keim: This is Kelly Keim, Sarah Jaffe and Cathy Luiken interviewing Grant Canoy and Herb Sherburne for the Passport in Time Oral History Project with the Lewis and Clark Forest. We are in Great Falls, and it is September 19, 1997.

Grant, why don't you start by telling us where you are from and how you started mining in the Little Belts.

Grant Canoy: Well, I am from Great Falls and we had property up Wolf Creek. We had some mineral on that and we became interested in minerals at that time. About 1954, an old prospector had claims up at Yogo Peak area, he wanted a road put in, and we had the equipment, we were building contractors, and he said, "If you put the road in, I'll give you 95 percent of our claim and you can stake out another claim next to us." So, we looked the country over and spent four years looking it over before we decided we would file the claims. We filed our claims and we've been up there for 43 years working.

KK: Up by Lake Elva?

GC: Yes, that's the Yogo Peak mining district.

KK: Who was the miner that had the claims before you that proposed the deal?

GC: The old man's name Paul Vdovic. We put in the road from the Forest Service road to get down to the claims. At that time you didn't need permits, we just put the road in. Then we made about 100 foot cut by 16 feet to expose the minerals. All of these years, we now have 10 claims and we've worked different spots all over these claims. We sold it once to Amex in 1991 and they dropped us on account of the environmental laws, it was going to be too expensive for them. Before that, in the '60s, if you remember the fire over in the Sunshine Mine in Idaho, the silver mine, we were dealing with them at the time, and they had the fire before we could sign anything. They had the fire in the Sunshine Mine in Idaho and they dropped us and put all of their money in the mine in Idaho. Then the price of silver went down and they closed it, so we still have the claim, now for 43 years.

KK: Are they patented?

GC: No, we do the assessment work every year. Over the years we've had several different partners, but they've all, except my two brothers and I are still in it, the others they dropped off along the way, too expensive, too much work, two died. Just my two brothers and I are in it.

KK: Did your father mine and prospect?

GC: No, not at all.

KK: Did your family go to the mountains when you were young for picnics or camping or hunting?

GC: Oh yes. Like I said we have the property up at Wolf Creek, up in the mountains, so we spent a lot of time up there.

KK: Wolf Creek in the Little Belts?

GC: No, out of Wolf Creek, Montana, between Helena and Great Falls.

Cathy Luiken: What got you started or interested in mining?

GC: Well, like I said we had the minerals showing up on our place at Wolf Creek and we got interested in that. Then the old timer talked us into putting the road in and staking out a claim at Yogo Peak. That's how I got interested in it.

KK: Do you know much about him, or did you hear old stories from him? What were some of your favorites?

GC: Oh, certainly, there have been a lot of them. Herb will elaborate on this I think also, but between Yogo Peak and Neihart, I think three or four people have found real rich ore and this old man was up there one day when it was real foggy and cold, and he picked up this piece of ore and took it into Neihart and had it assayed. It was real rich. Well, before that, two other people had found it and lost it, and he could never find it again. One day when I had him up there, he had me pull out on an overlook into the Belts side of the mountain, and told me "I've worn out many pairs of shoes trying to find that mineral again, I don't have the slightest idea where it came from." None of them ever found it. Then he showed me a spot over the side of the cliff, with a lot of slide rock and he took poles and built out over this thing and then he went in under that to keep stuff from falling in on him, and in one day at \$15 an ounce he took out \$375 worth of gold. That's just a pocket. He took that out and that was all he got out of that one hole.

Then we had another fellow up there they called him Crazy Heintz because he run around naked in the summertime. Several people seen it including Paul Vdovic, he had a quart jar with this many nuggets in it, I'm told. Anyway, we don't know what happened to the nuggets but he got cancer so he just held dynamite in his stomach and blew himself up so he was scattered all over.

We had another old friend that had a claim up there, his name was Oswald Strong, and every year he'd go up and he would tunnel in and only get so far because of the short season and it would cave in. Next year he would go up and do the same thing, tear it out and go in. One year we had took a bulldozer down and did some work for him, cleared out some stuff for him, when we did we uncovered a pipestone about as big as this table, real rich gossan. The geologist they had up there said "Why isn't the old man sinking on this, some of the best gossan I've ever seen."

KK: What's that word "gossan"?

GC: Oh, that's gold ore.

KK: How do you spell it?

Herb Sherburne: G-o-s-s-a-n.

GC: I went down and asked the old man why he didn't sink on it and he says "Because I can see gold in the tunnel I drive, every summer." The old man died, so we have the claims now and hopefully we'll sell them, probably not this year but hopefully next year.

CL: Is that up Sawmill Gulch?

GC: Oh no. That's Lead Gulch and that's next to Yogo Peak, next to where we had our original claim and we now have his claim.

CL: Who do you sell things to now?

GC: Oh, we don't sell. I've got some fines and a few nuggets I picked up up there but haven't sold anything. Whether he sold any of his gold I don't know, he just never told me, but he must because that is about all he ever did.

CL: Mr. Strong?

GC: Yeah, Oswald Strong, he lived in Stanford.

KK: Okay, I recognize the name.

CL: Herb, where are you from?

HS: Browning originally is where I grew up. My father was a prospector and a miner in his spare time. He always said that you had to regard it as a hobby, it was certainly no way to make money. He was involved in mining projects around the state for most of his life, which was a long one. When you are exposed to this as a kid, you get interested, so eventually I graduated

from Montana Tech as a mining engineer and have been in and out of the business ever since, not so much in recent years. I've involved myself a little bit in the politics of mining, I was president of Montana Mining Association for a couple terms.

Grant asked me to come down because of this business of the lost gold deposit in the Belt Creek drainage, the one Grant just discussed.

GC: Herb is more versed on this than I am.

HS: I spent a lot of time talking to old prospectors, old miners, it's sort of a fraternity you get into only if you are part of the business. You find that most of the people are very closed mouth unless they are selling the property and then they become garrulous indeed. [laughs] Otherwise they are quite closed mouth and you don't begin to, in fact I think it is almost impossible, to interview them and get the truth out of them, unless you have credentials along that line yourself. I had friends at Monarch and Neihart, and one in particular was a fellow by the name of Henry Croft. He and his brother had been involved in the mining and prospecting up there all their lives and in turn, his two sons, Marvin and George, were also deeply interested in the mining. Marvin, or Joe as he is known, still lives there at Monarch and it would probably pay you to talk to him if you haven't already. The information that I have on this thing comes from George Croft who was a particular friend of mine, now deceased, and his sons, a very fascinating man in his own right. I could elaborate on him but...

The story goes like this: On the mountain that contains Yogo Peak, there is a property called the Finlander Mine. Now in the early days a fellow by the name of Gus Smedberg was working the Finlander property on a share basis. Those people didn't keep horses, they moved around the country on foot. The reason for this, feed was scarce especially in the wintertime. While the horse might be able to find something to eat in the summer, it was impossible keep them in the winter, so generally speaking those miners did not keep horses. When it became necessary for Gus to go to Neihart, why he walked.

And the story goes something like this: Gus left Finlander property on his way to Neihart to get drunk and to visit the girls. He took lunch with him, I can't remember just how far it is from Yogo Peak into Neihart by that route but it is a pretty fair hike. He stopped to eat lunch and sat on a tree that had blown down. Being a prospector, he looked at the rocks that were in the roots of the tree and it looked like really good ore to him, so he filled his pockets with it and went on to Neihart and proceeded to get drunk. Well, the ore samples ended up in a bar at Neihart and later they were assayed. According to George Croft they ran about \$35,000 per ton of material and that was when gold was \$20 an ounce. When Gus sobered up, he couldn't remember where he found the material, he went back and looked and never did find it.

This could be a very exaggerated story except for what comes next. The Barker brothers were operating lead and silver mines at Neihart. They always kept a prospector or two on the payroll, and had them out in the mountains during prospecting season, for years. One of them that was

prospecting for Barker brothers in the Belt Creek drainage, somewhere in that general vicinity. There has been an argument over the years whether this was the Belt Creek drainage or the Dry Wolf drainage, and there are proponents for each argument. But nevertheless, this fellow came in with a sack full of extraordinary rich ore, which he turned over to Barkers. They had an assay office and they assayed it. It was alarmingly rich, but they did not want to tell him.

KK: The assayer didn't want to tell the prospector?

HS: No, Barker brothers did not want to tell him. The Barker brothers also employed the assayer. They did not want to tell their prospector because they thought then he would not tell them if they indicated the extreme riches of the material. So they thought they would wait until he sobered up, this was the practice, and then they would see if they could get him to tell them where he had been, without indicating the value of the material. He found some friends and left Neihart and went to Lewistown (the prospector) and they never saw him again. They traced him to Lewistown and lost him. This was not an uncommon thing. Those people moved around from one mining district to another as they pleased, they did not require a lot of money, they lived off the country and mines were active all over the state in those days. A good miner could get employment just about anywhere. Anyway, they never saw the fellow again.

KK: About when was this?

HS: Oh, this would have been, probably around World War I time, my recollection is the Finlander mine was being worked circa 1916-1918, somewhere in there, that would give you some sort of idea of time.

The next player in the act was a Basque sheepherder who was herding sheep up in that country. He came in with similar material, whether or not the samples came from the same place or separate places, whether it was in the Belt Creek drainage or the Dry Wolf drainage, is not known.

But it has been searched for by a number of people. One of the most persistent was Paul Vdovic. He claims that he had found it during a very foggy, half rainy, half snowy afternoon and he couldn't find his way back. That's not so unusual. You think you wouldn't get lost up there and you are not lost, you wander around up there all day, like people that go hunting, and only rarely do they have to go out and find someone. But, specifically, which little patch of ground you were on, is a different matter. It's big country and all those little coulees sort of look alike. The other thing you have to keep in mind is that those people would not mark those spots. The reason, they were afraid somebody would see their markings and go take a look at it before they had an opportunity to do anything else.

There is something to the lost mine stories, although I generally regard them as fairy tales. In my life in Montana, this is the only one that I put really any credence in and I have listened to a zillion of them in the old prospector's cabins, particularly as a kid with my dad. Now we are

going back into the '30s and those people of the previous generation were still alive. Much of this lore died with them. When they were gone, that was the end of it. You have to keep in mind that in the hay day of prospecting in Montana, which we will say was from 1865, or the early 1860s, until 1893, there were maybe 30,000 to 40,000 prospectors in the hills of Montana each season. That's been the estimate or one estimate. There isn't a creek, a gully, a mountainside in the state, as far as I am concerned, that hasn't been prospected by someone. You get up here someplace and look and say well I am the first guy ever got here and turn away and trip over a tomato can and fall down, because somebody was there ahead of you. The Little Belts have been really thoroughly prospected, there are test pits all over that country.

That's the only thing that bothers me about this rich gold lost mine story that we just related here, there are virtually no rich gold deposits in the Little Belts. The Little Belt mining has been almost entirely lead and silver. The gold mine at Yogo never amounted to anything. There's a gold mine just north of Neihart, which operated for a little while but not successfully. There is no placer gold in the Little Belts to amount to anything, a little bit of placer gold on one of the tributaries of Tenderfoot Creek and a little bit of placer gold over on Yogo Creek. In fact, that is what drew the miners to that Yogo country, was the placer gold. In fact they dug the ditches and built the flumes that provided water for the sapphire operation later on, but the gold is what drew them over there and it was totally unsuccessful. The town of Yogo lasted one season and then went broke. In the presence of no major finds, or even minor finds of any particular interest in the whole Little Belt range as far as gold is concerned, then it bothers me somewhat that all of a sudden there is this fantastically rich find up there. I guess that for that reason, I tend to take the whole thing with a grain of salt, except that I found George and his father Henry Croft to be very accurate, they did not exaggerate, and they were perfectly truthful and they didn't editorialize on the stories they had.

Get over into the Big Belts and that's a whole different story. But the igneous rock that provided the gold in the Big Belts is a different rock and a different age, a different set up. The Little Belts went in place a good many millions of years after, that is to say the source rocks for the Little Belts was put in place probably 20 million years after the source rock for the Big Belts. It's a whole different rock is the story and a different gold deposit, rich gold deposit in the Big Belts. The other thing is that, as far as the gold mine stories they are just like fish stories, the fish never quite growing and the gold mines never quite improving in value.

CL: You mentioned that you were the head of a mining association?

HS: I was the president of the Montana Mining Association for a while.

CL: You said you dealt with a lot of political things. What kind of political things would you deal with in the mining industry?

HS: Well in this day and age you find the miners on the opposite side of the fence from the environmentalists. I am sorry to have to tell you that is exactly where I am today, I have not

changed my mind on my position of supporting the mining industry, but I don't think you are interested in my views on that.

KK: Well, we can include controversial things that are part of the historical record.

HS: No, you really don't want me to get started on that [laughs], I can kill the next three or four hours on that. Maybe, we should just describe some of the other characters that we knew of.

KK: Sure, we would like to hear about more old characters.

HS: Well old Strawberry, Frank Monseca.

KK: How do you spell that?

HS: Oh, I don't know, we called him Strawberry. Strawberry lived up Carpenter Creek. It is just north of Neihart. It is about the last stream you cross before you get into Neihart, it runs into Belt Creek as you approach Neihart. Strawberry was a prospector, he had property on the molybdenum deposit, the molybdenum deposit which is up Carpenter Creek. I don't know if he made the original discovery but he might very well have. He had claims up there for many years and how he got in the business I don't have any idea. When I knew him, he was a very old man, he was over 100 when he died. He lived in a shack up there and how he got groceries I have no idea but when he could rustle up the money he would tunnel into the mountain some more. He had adits in several places there, which exposed the molybdenum deposits. He had great faith, this is what drives the prospector. The whole thing operates on hope and expectations, and that sort of thing. I think that in many cases the search is more important to them than actually finding something. It's the looking maybe that counts as much as anything.

You have the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow syndrome if you would. He was like most of those people, he was a complete gentleman and they all were. My father's observation was that if you lived in a cabin back up there in the hills through several winters, you either became a gentleman and a philosopher, or you went crazy. These people, surprisingly, were in many cases quite well read. I don't mean well educated. Their educational background was generally quite meager, but as far as being well read they generally were. I found old timers that could quote Shakespeare and were well versed in the Bible and quoted scripture and this and that.

It's off the subject of the Little Belts because it didn't take place there, but I was with my father back, oh, it must have been 1947 or 48 along in that period and we were visiting a couple old prospectors. My father and the two prospectors got into a rather extensive discussion on Gibbins *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Of course as a product of the modern educational system I couldn't participate in the conversation, I knew nothing of Gibbin. I have read him since but hadn't at that time, just to give you an idea of the level of the conversation that went on. I'll also mention that my father did not graduate from High School, but I would

put him up against anybody in discussing history, literature, politics or you name it. Most of those people were self-educated as much as anything.

My grandfather was an enormously successfully businessman and he wrote beautifully, I have some articles he wrote and that sort of thing, he did that is based on a third grade education. Just a side comment, but these people were not well educated in the context of today, but I think they were surprisingly literate. I found many of them to be well read, as I say they sat around those places in the wintertime, and they read. They didn't have television to watch, so what do you do? As my father put it, you become a philosopher and a gentleman or become a nut case and they haul you off to the funny farm. I think that is a pretty good observation.

Sanitary conditions were very poor at best. When my dad was mining in the Big Belts, this would be in the early '30s, there was a prospector, a miner, who lived a few miles down the gulch from us. His name was Ernest Robison. I never met a finer man, but mother said he was the only person that she'd ever met that caused her to doubt germ theory [laughs]. The unbelievable conditions he lived in were the conditions of squalor and dirt that you just couldn't believe. But Ernest lived to be 88. His mining partner, Charlie Root wouldn't live in the same cabin as Ernie. Charlie's cabin was neat and tidy with flag stone steps out front that he swept off and mopped every morning, and he arranged pipe tobacco cans on the shelf that he used as canisters, a place for everything and everything in its place all, neat and tidy. It was even rumored up and down gulch that Charlie bathed on a regular bases which is unusual. But, Charlie died young, Ernest out lived him by a good 30 years or so [laughs].

Just a casual observation, but getting back to Strawberry, he reminded me very much of Ernest Robison in that the cabin was not sanitary and you wanted to keep that in mind that you didn't want to indulge in their hospitality. When they wanted to serve you coffee or something, and they were always extremely hospitable, you had a whole series of stories by this time, excuses you came up with why you did not wish to partake of their hospitality. It just took a lot of courage to do that. I have been served coffee in a situation where I was just compelled to drink it. This was in the Little Belts again, a prospector up there said "We have to have some coffee". So he had a tin can there and he brewed up some coffee in it. And gosh we had to have something to drink it out of so he went over to where the garbage had been thrown and found a couple tin cans that were rusty and so forth, and rinsed them out a little and poured the coffee in, and that's how we drank the coffee. I seemed to have survived but at the time the future looked bleak.

KK: You take your chances!

HS: A lot of danger in mining, dangerous business! You have to keep in mind that those people provided us with civilization. There is no more important occupation than production of minerals. That comes first, in this day and age that comes ahead of food.

KK: We need them for a lot of things.

HS: We need them for everything. You can't name an activity that isn't totally dependent upon the mineral industry.

KK: I didn't realize that.

HS: Well, you think about it when you have nothing else to do and see if you come up with any kind of an activity that you or anybody else pursues that isn't totally dependent upon production of metals, mineral or coal. Just run that around a bit. Your clothing, from fillings in your teeth on down, you are totally dependent upon the mineral industry. The miner has provided civilization. You shut off the flow of metals and minerals and you get back to a sub-stone age existences, because even stone age man was a miner.

KK: Yes, quarrying.

HS: We have places in Montana where they mined to considerable depths in the earth to get flint that they needed to make arrowheads. Totally dependent upon it. Modern agriculture would cease. They are not plowing their fields with a 2 x 4 pulled by an ox, and they don't thresh that stuff with a willow switch. There's a job chain just like there's a food chain, and most of us are so far up the job chain that we forget who is holding the whole thing up. Our main problem for the future is to keep finding more metals and oil and so forth, that's the danger. If you are interested in pursuing that reasoning, *Affluence in Jeopardy* by Charles Park, an economic geologist.

CL: What's his last name?

HS: Park, P A R K, Stanford University, but now I am veering over onto my other subject.
[laughs]

KK: Well I can bring us back. Grant I bet you know about that big old barn up Lead Gulch? I've only heard of it, I haven't seen it. There is supposed to be a large log horse barn up Lead Gulch.

GC: No, not that I know of.

HS: Now are you referring to the one that is off in the Yogo country up there.

KK: Maybe my source is confused then.

GC: Would it be a barn, or just some mining buildings?

KK: This guy thought it was a horse barn. Log, maybe hewn logs. He told me Lead Gulch but maybe its possible he saw it in the '30s.

GC: Oh, there was never a barn up there. Larson and his partners have a claim close to Elva Lake from us and the only horses that I know of ever been up there, except when they were packing in 1885 or '95, they were packing out of a tunnel that we had, but that was mules and they were taking it down to Fort Benton and on to Wales was it, to be refined.

HS: Yes, Swansea, Wales. [Editor's note: Some of the ore was rich enough that it could be shipped downriver to the Gulf of Mexico, put onboard ocean-going ships and taken to Swansea, Wales, which was a large smelting and refining center at that time. After all this expense, the miners could still show a profit. This was particularly true of the better Neihart ores.]

GC: Yes, to be refined but the only other horses I know of up there was when Larson and his partners hauled some pipe up to the top of Yogo Peak, dammed up the place, run the pipe over to their diggings and got enough water for two hours and they got seven ounces of gold out of it. That is the only horses that I think has ever been up there. Well the gold is still in the bank down in Stanford, at least it was several years ago.

KK: I heard that story. Was it nuggets or something, like you would clean out of a sluice box?

GC: Well, I wouldn't say it was nuggets.

HS: It was a residual placer.

KK: Okay, way up there.

HS: Well, that is exactly where you would find residual placer.

GC: No, there hasn't been any horses up there.

KK: Okay, it must have been a different draw.

GC: He was probably thinking about somewhere down lower, around Skunk Gulch or somewhere in that area.

HS: Possibly in there or perhaps even further out of the mountains than that, because they homesteaded, you know, fairly well back into the mountains in rather early times.

GC: Up Lone Tree, up in that area, there was a barn up there.

KK: In the trees?

GC: One of them was in the trees at that time. In fact there is an old house still standing, it is falling down.

KK: The Anderson homestead?

GC: Right, maybe that is the area he is thinking about.

KK: Yes, or maybe off the Middle Fork, they farmed the valley in the Middle Fork.

HS: I should amend this horse thing to say that they used horses of course for transportation, and mules, that's how they freighted in and out. They freighted ore out and they freighted materials and so forth in. I merely meant to say that the miners themselves did not keep saddle horses around for their own use, which is why they walked. Certainly they used horses for transportation and to move the machinery that was extremely heavy and that sort of thing.

Some of those homesteads were quite early, there was farming done on the Logging Creek road before 1890, they were farming up there. The surveying notes, when they surveyed the Belt Mountain Guide Meridian, indicates homesteads already in there and fields of wheat. That would be right in the area, perhaps less than a mile east of where you drop over the hill and start down into Logging Creek itself. They filed desert home- steads up there. I could for instance show you where they dug ditches through solid limestone. It's amazing.

KK: Would it hold water?

HS: Well, no it wouldn't hold water but there wasn't any water to run through it anyhow because that whole limestone plateau in there is dry. But there is a reason they did this. In order to prove up on the homestead they had to dig some ditches and the practice was they would get the ditch dug, and then they would get some buckets of water and call in the neighbors and they would pour the water in the head end of the ditch and it would start dribbling down the ditch and the neighbors would all sign affidavits that they had seen water running through the ditch and that enabled them to prove up on the homestead. Outside of a cloudburst that is the last time probably any water ran through the ditch. This was one of the practices.

KK: Did it have a slang name?

HS: No, not that I am aware of. But I can show you the ditches. Have you read Walter Harvey Weed on the Little Belt Mountains? [Editor's note: *The Geology of the Little Belt Mountains in the 20th Annual Report of the USGS, 1898-1899, Part III*; also see the *18th Annual Report of the USGS, 1896-1897, Part III*, which gives historical notes on the Judith Mountain area.]

KK: Just segments.

HS: There are some historical notes in there, he picked up a little bit of history in passing, that might be a source for you. Then he also mentions some of the old towns, you know, where

there were post offices and that sort of thing and they are gone now, there is no trace of them, Woolsey, for example.

KK: Do you know the story of the Woolsey Bar?

HS: Well, I have heard it but I don't believe it.

KK: There was a murder at the bar and I don't remember too much, I guess I read a clipping from the White Sulphur paper.

HS: Probably the least reliable source for history, as far as I'm concerned, are the old newspaper accounts, exaggerated beyond belief.

KK: They are sensational.

HS: The early newspaper editors took it upon themselves to beat the drums, to advertise the country and the wealth of the mines, the productivity of the soil, the climate, and anything else you can think of, was so greatly exaggerated that you just can't base anything really as factual on it, you have to get hold of it beyond that. You have read Donna Wahlberg book on Hughsville?

KK: Not all of it.

HS: Very nice lady and she did a good job in writing the book. My only fault with it, it was based almost entirely on newspaper accounts. Any place where I have been able to check the newspapers against people who were on the ground, I've found the newspaper to be sadly wanting in most instances. So, to determine what really did happen is something we'll never know really, just in a general sort of way.

My grandfather and his partners brought in the first oil well in Montana and produced the first oil in Montana.

KK: Where was that?

HS: Inside the boundary of Glacier National Park, now Sherburne Lake Dam. Even the accounts in the Bureau of Mines, the old Federal and State reports on those wells and what they produced and what happened, are totally erroneous. I know that because I knew the people that did it, and what actually happened. It's just been warped, the depth of the wells and amount of oil produced and all that sort of thing, it's just not accurate. I don't know where all this stuff comes from.

KK: Do you want to correct it now? We'll be transcribing this tape.

HS: Well, it really doesn't have anything to do with this Lewis and Clark National Forest. But there was a mining rush up there in the Swift Current Valley at the town of Alton.

KK: A-L-T-O-N?

HS: Yes, at the head of what is now Sherburne Reservoir, not very far from Many Glacier Hotel. They staked hundreds if not thousands of claims up there. They thought they had another Butte, that's how it was advertised...

KK: There must have been something up there?

HS: There was practically nothing. One of the problems with copper is that it takes very little copper mineral to make all kinds of copper stain. As a consequence, they looked at the formation and they're all stained with copper and there really wasn't anything, they never found anything that was practical, but they spent a lot of money. They hauled in a lot of equipment, a tremendous amount of equipment really, got this town going and everything. Well the boom didn't last very long.

KK: When was this?

HS: Well, the discovery was about 1892, but the ground was part of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation at that time, so they had to get Congress to appropriate money so they could buy what is now the east side of Glacier National Park, from the Continental Divide out to the east extent of the Park. They had to buy that from the Blackfeet tribe which they did for a million and a half dollars, a tremendous sum of money at the time. Then they threw it open to prospecting, I think that would be in 1898, I could be off a year or so. The town up there boomed for the next couple three years and that was the end of it. They found nothing and spent an awful lot of money, everybody went broke and went else where to lick their wounds.

In the mean time a fellow by the name of Mike Cassidy, who had a cabin roughly on the spot where the wells were driven, and he discovered or somebody visiting him discovered that there was gas seeping up out of this little creek. In fact if you would throw match in the creek it would set it on fire from the natural gas seeping up there. This led to the formation of an oil company and about 1904 they drilled two wells on the site. One of them got down about 800 feet and the bottom of the hole caved in so they had about a 550 foot well. The other well was much shallower. They got natural gas in one well, and oil in the other.

Mike Cassidy used the natural gas to heat his cabin for the next 15 years or so. They produced oil and hauled it around to the State Fairs and that sort of thing, but never in any quantity. The paper reported that they produced 50 or 60 barrels of oil a day there. If they produced 50 or 60 barrels of oil the entire time they were in operation, I think that would be an exaggeration. Then they went up what is known as Boulder Creek, which is closer to Babb and started another

well up there. That proved unsuccessful so most partners dropped out and those who remained went to Lubeck, which is a station on the Great Northern Railroad just west of East Glacier.

KK: What was the name again?

HS: Lubeck. They started a well there which was unsuccessful. That was not the first wells drilled in Montanan. The first wells were drilled at Kintla Lake, the northwestern part of Glacier Park, then there was another project on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation prior to that which I described [just outside the present town of East Glacier].

KK: Two Medicine, did the Indians name that because of oil exposed?

HS: No, the Indians named Two Medicine because of the Falls, which for many years was called Trick Falls and now I think it is called Running Eagle Falls, they keep fooling around with the names.

KK: There is a Trick Falls.

HS: Well not any more, that's Running Eagle Falls today, but it was Trick Falls for years. That was Two Medicine Falls in the early days. The Indians named it because of the double falls there. Water came out from the middle of the falls and then over the top. So that's how they named it, the lake, the falls, the valley, the river all stem from that. Or at least that is my understanding when I was growing up, up there. The Indians did not frequent the mountain very much in spite of what they might tell you today. When my grandfather arrived there in 1894 he went to the superintendent of the Indian Reservation to get a couple of guides to show him around, he knew the superintendent and an ex-army officer by the name of Steele. Steele furnished him with a couple of Indian guides and he got to the present site of Babb and wanted to go up the Swift Current Valley and that is right where these guys quit him. You couldn't bribe those people into those mountains.

KK: Did they say why?

HS: Oh, yeah, there was a moose back there that wiggled his ears and that's what makes the wind blow. Just to collaborate that for a moment, when the Great Northern Railroad was being built, a fellow by the name of Stephens was Jim Hills chief engineer, he arrived at what was then the Blackfeet Agency which was not at Browning, Browning was not established until after the railroad was finished, the Indian agency was on Badger Creek south of Browning a ways. He went there to see if he could get a couple of guides to take him into the Marias Pass area looking for away across the mountains, you're probably familiar with the story. He couldn't get a Blackfeet Indian to go with him into that country. There was a Flathead Indian who was hanging around the agency and he agreed to guide Stephens, so the two of them went up into the pass, the rediscovery, if you will, of the Marias Pass into the Flathead region.

But you couldn't get those plains Indians into those mountains at all. And that was true even when I was up there. I don't say that they didn't go at all. One of my father's particular friends was J. Willard Shultz, the writer and he would visit us in the summer- time there, and one of the things they thought was the Indians would go back into those mountain valleys as a test of manhood, that sort of thing but they didn't venture much past the lower end of the lakes, Two Medicine Lake and St. Mary's Lake and so forth. They camped at the lower end of Waterton Lake for example, but they wouldn't go into the upper Waterton area. I've digressed a long way from the Lewis and Clark Forest!

KK: Well, the Lewis and Clark National Forest isn't very far from Glacier, just on this side of the highway, and I didn't figure I would hear the story anywhere else.

Grant, do you know how Yogo Creek got its name?

GC: Well I'm not sure, but the prospectors went in I understand about 1865 and the Indians chased them out. Then they went in again and the story is, I don't know if you can confirm it or not, but Yogo in Indian language meant rape. Some of the old miners raped an Indian woman, that gave it the name Yogo. Is that the same story you heard?

HS: That's the same story I have heard.

KK: Is that in Blackfeet?

HS: I don't think Blackfeet, I think maybe one of the other tribes but I'm a little shaky on that because there were more than one tribe. Crows would get in there and perhaps the Gros Ventre. I've never heard the word, I'm not fluent in Blackfeet but I have never heard the word. I have a friend who is extremely fluent, I'll have to ask him about that.

KK: I know there are some other places in the Little Belts named for Blackfeet.

GC: Have you heard the same story?

KK: Very similar, that the prospectors were Confederate escapes from a Confederate prison camp.

HS: I have a correction on that at some point, but go ahead with your story

KK: That they went up Yogo Creek and found placer gold. Indians drove them out, that they had Indian women living with them around 1865 and that Indian scouts discovered them and drove the prospectors out. And I heard that Yogo meant squaw, I don't know what tribe.

GC: Well, from the old timers clear back that is the story I have heard, but I don't know how you would confirm it.

KK: How did Lake Elva get its name?

HS: I don't know.

GC: It was named after somebody's girlfriend or wife or something.

HS: The miners would hang those names on the various physical features in many instances like they were named for some loved ones. Obviously these people were all out here from someplace else, a good number of our names originated that way. They weren't terribly original either, you know, if you count the Willow Creeks and the Cottonwood Creeks and that sort of thing.

KK: Fish Creeks, Spring Creeks and on.

HS: We could have had a little more variety if they had just paid more attention!

KK: Grant, do you know stories about the Blue Dick operation?

GC: Herb's had a lot of experience in the Blue Dick mine. Going back to people that really started it and operated it and all, I didn't know them. Herb could elaborate more.

HS: Well, not terribly much, I'm not familiar with the history. My father and his partners had a lease on it at one time, but that was later, that would have been in the '40s when they went in there and they did some bulk sampling and gathered up their machinery and left. They did not consider it a worthy property. It was worked back in World War I time, but as far as the history of it, I don't know that.

Around 1948, '49, '50, along in there, the U.S. Bureau of Mines had a project, where they had their own engineers out looking at the mineral resources of the Upper Missouri drainage. You may be familiar with those publications. They never completed the project. There is a publication for Cascade County, Judith Basin County, Fergus County and so forth, and there is a little bit of that history in those publications. Roby and Robertson wrote those studies and they gathered up a little bit of that history at that time, and again it was done when some of those older people were still alive. Of course that lore, what ever they had, is now gone.

I am not sure that there were any Confederate escapees in Montana. I think that story has been twisted around a little bit. I grew up in part in Confederate Gulch and there was an old guy down creek from us, who it was said, was there just shortly after the discovery, which was in 1864. He was very, very elderly by the time I knew him. It seems that maybe a little more factual approach goes like this. The Union Army did not imprison all of the prisoners that it captured during the Civil War. In fact I think that you will find that they paroled something on the order of 240-250,000 of them, not just a few, a lot. I looked it up one time and I recollect

about 240-250,000 of them they paroled. All they had to do was swear allegiance to the Federal Government and swear never to bear arms against it and they would turn them loose. They did this for a couple of reasons. One, they they did not want to look after the prisoners, the other thing was that if they made them prisoners of war, they felt that it would give recognition to the Confederate states as a nation. They preferred to look upon it as the War of the Rebellion.

As a side note, I noticed back in a little town in New York one time while visiting, they had a huge memorial in the park with the names of the people from that area who had died in the Civil War and they referred to them, as hero's in the war of Rebellion. They didn't want to get full sovereignty status to the Southern States, apparently a compelling reason for not making them prisoners of war of many of these people. Anyway, you recall that the steamboats were coming up the Missouri at that time and bound for the gold fields. When you paid \$200 or \$300 passage to come from St. Louis to Montana, you certainly didn't want to get off and cut wood every 10 miles to stoke the boilers. So these "galvanized" Yankees as they called them would work their passage to the gold fields, or some of them did, and in particular some of them were captured in the battle with General Sterling Prices forces in Missouri. This was very early in 1864, and some of those men took the oath and made it to St. Louis and worked their way to the gold fields. I don't think there is any indication that any of them were in this country before that season but there might be an exception or two.

The thing you have to keep in mind is that the first gold rushes in the United States was not to the west, the first gold rushers were to North and South Carolina and Georgia. They had a rather active placer gold mining business going back there, starting about 1800. I think the first discovery was in 1799, so the Southerners had the expertise, the people who worked down there were the only people in the country who knew how to placer mine. You will find that they made their way to California. Besides the Mexicans who had some experience, those were the only people that knew how to operate a gold mine, because they had already had a half century of experience in the southeastern part of the country. The people who rushed to Montana, for a large part came from the west not the east.

The Californians first went to the Frazier River in British Columbia and eventually into Idaho and then eventually into Montana. In fact our famous Henry Plummer came from Idaho, well from California then Idaho and then into Montana. So there were Southerners here and maybe that made the Confederate soldiers, ex-Confederate soldiers, a little more comfortable. But Confederate Gulch, that flows into Canyon Ferry Reservoir, was discovered by two ex-Confederate soldiers. They were not escapees, they had sworn allegiance and had worked their way up the river. "Wash" Barker and Pomp Dennis, matter of fact, but that's beside the point here. I question whether those people got into Yogo that early but perhaps they did, they sure got around.

KK: I never heard any names mentioned for these early Yogo prospectors.

HS: There is some argument even over when gold was first discovered in Montana. It is generally credited to a fellow by the name of Francois "Benetsee" Finlay in 1852. And then the "Stuart" brothers did some of the first mining near Deer Lodge, maybe on Gold Creek or in that vicinity. You'll find if you read R.W. Stone, who was a USGS geologist, who investigated the Elk Horns about 1910 or so, he indicates that there were extensive placer gold operations on one of the tributaries of Crow Creek as early as 1858. Now, he did some of the basic geology work in the Elk Horns and I think it was published in about 1910 or '11, so his work was probably done three or four years before that. I don't remember his initials, but the guy's name was Stone. That was certainly a couple years before Stuarts, if the date is right. That would make that one of the very earliest gold mining operations. I think it was on Wilson Creek, in the Elk Horns, a tributary of Crow Creek. I've never really been comfortable with that but Stone is very reliable in everything else he wrote so I have trust in his writing.

KK: Grant, what was it like working your claims as far back as you can remember? Was the Forest Service very involved?

GC: Oh, not at all. We did, each year, go down and register our work up there at the Court House, not at the Forest Service. We actually had nothing to do with the Forest Service, just register your assessment work every fall, which we did. Like I say, when we put in the road, we just put it in, made the cut, nobody questioned it. So actually we just weren't involved with the Forest Service at all, until they started the environmental laws that they have in effect today.

KK: About when was that?

GC: Well I think it was in the '70s before we had to do all that.

KK: How long did it take you to do the assessment work?

Grant; Oh, our assessment that depends, you only have to do \$100 per claim. Well we usually get in there towards the last of June on account of the snow and we work off and on, not steady, until the snow runs us out in the fall. So maybe we would go up and camp and work for two or three days, and wouldn't go up for several days, and go up again. Like I say we had bulldozers up there, we would make a cut, we had wagon drills up there and dynamite.

KK: Wagon what?

GC: Wagon drills, that's power drills. You drill the hole, to put the dynamite in the rock. But the most of it we did with pick and shovel, same as the old timers did.

Now getting back to where you can't find a spot after you let it go, try to walk back to it. Have you been up to Yogo Peak where all the slide rock is so on and so forth, at Yogo Peak, right at Yogo Peak?

KK: I've been on the main road there and down along Larson's pipe line for a ways.

GC: Now have you been at the overlook, where you look down at Lake Elva?

KK: No.

GC: Oh, you should go there. Anyway, there is all of that slide rock and every year the snow cornices out over it and in the spring it goes down and you can see some trees about 30 feet tall laying right at the edge of Lake Elva. Snow came all the way off there and laid those trees over. Well, my brothers and I during the pick and shovel time, in this slide rock, we had an opening and it looked like a good float there, lead material for gold.

KK: You call it float?

GC: In other words, stuff that is on the ground that floats from here to there. Anyway, we dug a hole about four feet deep, three feet or something like that, found real good gold ore and we crushed some of it up and took it up to the spring and we got a string about like that [gestures] of gold out of it. My brother said "Well, we want to cover that up in case somebody comes around here noising around." I said "We better leave it so we can find it again." But two to one and I was overruled, so we covered it up and that has been over 20 years, ago and the last 10 years we have been trying to find that spot to uncover it and we cannot find it!

Back in the '30s, the Snider's, wasn't his name Snider's, the old man and his son crossed Lead Gulch northeast of us. They went in and hit a pocket, it was quite a large size pocket of gold, they took out \$70,000. Instead of buying an apartment house and living off the proceeds or something, they took the whole \$70,000 and put it back in there and never found a bit of gold since.

KK: Where was that?

GC: Just northeast of Lead Gulch, I could take you right to it. It's just about northeast of Lead Gulch, up at the head of the gulch. Like I say, it's faulted, the country is really faulted. So anyway they put all that money, most of the \$70,000, back in it and never found a damn thing after that.

HS: That is kind of the history of mining. Unfortunately for us, nature isn't quite as lavish as we would like her to be, particularly with precious metals. Particularly gold and silver are not evenly distributed in the rock. Gobs of real rich ore will be in odd places and then it will be barren for a ways and then some ore, but it is not consistent. I would much prefer to have a mine that was low grade and consistent rather than one that was high grade and spotty, from a business standpoint.

GC: This is what I pointed out to Robin Strathy in our trip. Right down in the bottom we got one real rich assay out of it and the vein where it must have sloughed out, the best we have got out of there was a quarter of an ounce in all of the assays we have had. So at best it is hot and cold. Very seldom, like Herb has said, are you going to get a rich gold vein or anything else, that you are going to follow for any great distance.

HS: It just doesn't work like that. There are some exceptions in the mother lode country in California they had some really fine gold mining that was consistent for quite a ways until they finally played out. But that is certainly not the case around here. I was involved with a silver property years ago in the Judith Mountains, a very well-defined vein. I cut two samples very carefully, channel samples, spent hours cutting those samples out, there is a way you do this so that you are sure it will be a representative sample. One of them assayed 35 ounces of silver to the ton. The other one assayed less than one ounce and they were only, maybe, 18 inches apart, just to give you some feel for how this works. So when the mining companies actually get seriously involved in a project, it isn't dozens of samples, it isn't hundreds of samples, it is thousands of samples that they take. Then all this is averaged and weighted and today this is run on a computer, this used to be done very laboriously by hand, in order to determine what they think the whole ore body would run.

One of the most consistent mining operations, from the standpoint of the value of the ore, was the Keatings Mine at Radersburg. Beautiful vein of pyrite containing gold that paid dividends for years, it was a highly profitable operation for the people who owned the mine. The whole ore body averaged about a half ounce of gold, which at that time would have been about \$10 a ton, but it was consistent. They set themselves up and they knew what to expect. They went 12,000 feet deep and couple thousand feet horizontally and that whole thing was just as consistent as could be. Now that's my idea and most miners' idea, of a true bonanza, not something that runs a thousand ounces to the ton.

If you are going to look at mining property, you have to get a grasp of the sampling and assaying process. Regardless of how much rock you take into the assayer, and usually miners are loath to take any more than they have to cause they don't like to transport it around, they have a terrible tendency to take the best looking. And for the professional, there is an awful tendency to take the worst because you don't want to come out with a higher grade than the representative picture. So the amateur has too rich a sample and the professional often times will have too lean a sample, but remember that out of this sack full of rocks all that is actually processed is less than a teaspoon, that is in the assay process, and all the rest is thrown away.

KK: So the assayer is sampling a sample?

HS: Well, the assayer runs through a careful process, as careful as they can be, and out of this 30 or 40 pounds of rock that you have carried in to him, he wants to come up with a teaspoonful that he hopes is representative of the sack full. The miner hopes that the sack full is representative of the vein. It's not so bad on base metal but particularly with gold and silver

you can imagine that they are assaying to very rigid standards and your actual sample is a very minute sort of thing. The scales that those things are weighed on will weigh a pencil mark with considerable accuracy, a pencil mark on a piece of paper. Just imagine then what happens if you get a little chunk of gold in that spoonful that actually goes into the furnace to be assayed. This is all multiplied back and you find out that you have 10 ounces of gold to the ton, and you go crazy because you think that the whole mountain has 10 ounces of gold to the ton, when in reality only the teaspoonful has the 10 ounces of gold. If you have a ton of material like the teaspoonful then you have a true 10 ounces to the ton. These are some of the risks that are involved, so the sampling is extremely important and lots of samples, I mean lots of averages are taken to attempt to construct a true picture of what is there.

KK: Have you heard of “gold witching”?

GC: [laughs] I wish you’d been along, I have a story. I’ve got a nugget ring, and this melted piece of gold about so big. I’ve got this friend, I’ve known her for several years, one time we were talking about Yogo, as I had to go up there, and she told me she “witched” for gold. She said “I don’t tell anybody because they’ll think I’m crazy.” I told her “How would you like to go up to Yogo and try that?” She said “Sure” so I took her up there and I had this chunk of gold and my gold ring on. As we started into the cut, she kept walking a little bit back and forth and she said “Have you got that gold on?” I said “Yes” and she said “You got to get rid of it.” So I took it over and put it under a rock and the pendulum started going down the cut, she got to where our vein is and it went round and round. When we got to each vein where we got assays, it went round and round. In fact sometimes it would go so fast it would throw it right out of her hand, and she finally had to tie it on her wrist.

KK: She is holding a string with a gold ring?

GC: A cotton string with a gold ring, her gold wedding ring. So when she got done in the cut, her husband was with us, and he said, “What did you do with that gold you had?” I said “Oh, man, I put it somewhere, I can’t remember.” So her old string started going like this, she walked over about 30, 40, 50 feet, where I’d laid it and it started going round and round, and she found my gold ring.

KK: No kidding. Did you try it?

GC: I have tried it and several people have tried it. They can’t do it. So we went down to where the old guy used to tunnel in, and it worked great down there. And other places where we got assays, it worked fine. Two other times I hid my gold, I hid it in a tree one time, she came back and she found it for me. That is the only experience I’ve had with it. Whether it is real accurate or not I can’t verify. But she did find mine and she did find the vein we had assayed out of and she did find my gold nugget and my gold nugget ring.

KK: But you didn’t sign her on as a partner? [laughs]

GC: I flagged out all the veins that she found.

KK: You are mapping what she is finding?

GC: If we sell it, she will get money out of it. Now this is why I want to get Herb, he mentioned Marvin Croft that used to be a geologist for the Hunt brothers. He got a \$35,000 gold detecting machine he carries on his back, and he can set it for different minerals like gold, silver or what not. I'm trying to get him up there to confirm this, where we had our assays and where she witched it for us. So far I haven't been able to get him up there, hopefully before the snow flies I will get him up to see if he can confirm this.

KK: What are the theories on gold witching?

GC: There isn't any. Some people can witch for water and some can't, but this gal is kind of psychic. For instance I had her with me once, we were going down to, what's the little town the other of Stanford on the highway?

HS: Windham.

GC: Yes, Windham. We got by there and she said "Stop, I want to go in that bar, there is a poker machine there that is going to hit." I said, "Okay..." so I gave her five bucks, she put up five bucks and she went over to the machine and about three minutes later she hit the jackpot. [laughs] So I don't know if there is such a thing as being psychic or whatever. Like I say, all the veins we've got assay on and my gold nugget ring and gold that I had, I can hide it and she can find it. She is the only person I've seen that can do that. One time there was eight of us up there when she was demonstrating, and she was the only out of the eight that could do it. So that is the only experience I have ever had with it.

KK: Do you have stories on claim jumping?

GC: Oh, you bet. Years ago someone went up there, we'd been up there working, evidently they knew we weren't going to be up there for several days, so they staked right over all of our claims. Well, they tried to get us on a technicality, but we had already discovered that we were missing writing the Range in the legal, Range 14. We didn't have it, but in the meantime we discovered that and put it on. So I wrote them a certified letter stating they were over our claim. My brother didn't do that, he called him on the phone and said "Get your damn stuff off there or I will scatter your guts all over the mountain".

Then one other time, somebody came up there and started to lay out claims over our claims and we caught them, and their reason was "Hey you didn't do you assessment work". Well we did do our assessments. We were the only one's up there actually with a bunch of claims and we did our work faithfully every year. Well they got their claims dropped.

KK: They got their claims put in?

GC: Oh, no they got dropped. But that is the two experiences I've had of others trying to jump our claims.

KK: There is ruins of a cabin, at the mouth of Lead Gulch. It has square nails in it. Do you know anything about that side?

GC: That's down close to Yogo Creek?

KK: Yep, that terrace of Yogo Creek, right south of where Lead Gulch runs into it. It's right by the trail.

GC: I have been down there a lot in the '60s but I don't remember it. There is a story that I have never confirmed, that two old guys, back toward the turn of the century, not far up Lead Gulch off of Yogo Creek, they sunk a shaft on lead. The story is that they had been down to Stanford and got drunk and came back on Monday all hung over. Instead of taking a candle down when they went down in the shaft, they didn't take anything and the first guy down in the shaft, gas got him and killed him and the other guy he got out. Story goes that he just left his buddy down there. Have you ever heard that story?

KK: No.

GC: I have never been able to confirm it. Have you ever heard this, Herb?

HS: No.

KK: That is near Lead Gulch?

GC: It was on Lead Gulch, not far off Yogo Creek as you go up. I have heard it from two different people, from the old timers, but I've never been able to confirm it. It's probably just hear say.

KK: Did that mine have a name?

GC: Not that I know of. Another thing, we don't have much lead up on our claim, this is supposed to be lead, so I kind of doubt that story.

KK: Does lead emit a gas?

GC: Not necessarily.

HS: No miners often times have been killed from what they call bad air and it is generally gas, which comes from the decomposition of carbonaceous material. For instance, coal mines are extremely dangerous in this regard. Any place they mine coal underground, you will find rigid state laws, the mine inspector comes out and makes sure they have ventilated the mine, for fresh air. Out in hard rock country around here, the place you have to worry about bad air is going into an old shaft or an old tunnel, drift, or adit or whatever you want to call it, where the old timbers have decomposed and rotted. That can create pockets of gas back there. Which all this having to do with why the old timers would carry a canary or bird back in their mine in their days. Of course now they have modern detectors to do this.

Coal mines are dreadfully dangerous to fool around. Of course, you have coal mines at least on the periphery of the Little Belts. Also there is a whole history to the mining of gypsum, the wallboard plants to produce sheet rock, and this sort of thing. So it isn't just precious metals. Of course, iron ore also was in the Little Belts. A fairly active mining project south of Stanford back in the '50s, Young Montana Corporation came in to mine for a time. There was a reason for that, which I might explain.

That iron ore there in the Little Belts is very, very high grade material, around 65,66, 67 percent iron. A blast furnace feed is 51 and a half percent. Young was an operator in Minnesota and he had large quantities of ore that wouldn't quite qualify for blast furnace. Let's say for example that it was a 50-percent iron, a blast furnace feed is 51 and a half percent. You can't sell that; you can't take that down to the docks at Duluth and send it down the lakes. So what he did, he came to the area south of Stanford and combined that extremely high grade hematite that is up there, went to Wiseman's here in Great Falls and made arrangements with him to ship on their permit. He shipped that to Minnesota and blended it with the low-grade material that he had there, upgrading that iron ore to where it would sell. When he had upgraded the ore that he had there, he then ceased mining up here.

KK: That's interesting. He didn't move his operation to here?

HS: Oh, no. Well, there's no quantity of that ore up there, it is high grade but there is not a whole lot of it. He needed that high grade material, there was none available on the iron range in Minnesota. By this time, Minnesota's high-grade ore had all been depleted. They used up the last of that when we were fighting World War II. So there is very little high grade left in northern Minnesota after that time. He needed that material, it was economically possible for him to do this only because he had large quantities of material there that almost made grade but not quite, so he could afford to ship the material back there. The people had high hopes for an iron industry here in Montana, well there isn't enough material in the Little Belts to run a blast furnace for very long. But if you were going to run a blast furnace you would have to lower your grade on that material. For years the U.S. Steel Corporation mined ore in Venezuela and shipped it to the United States for processing and they mixed gravel with Venezuelan iron ore to reduce the average iron content down to where they could make the blast furnace weed out.

So you have all these that enter into the equation. The mining end is the simple end, the process of the milling, the smelting, the processing of the material after that is where a great deal of effort is put forth. Just having the raw material doesn't do you much good. Raw iron is worthless, you can't do anything with it. You have to make it into steel. In order to make it into steel you have to have molybdenum, chrome, tungsten, manganese, and that's what the United States is short of. The only steel alloying material, which we are self sufficient in is molybdenum. Otherwise we have to import all the other. Just as an example, of the 100 metals in minerals that are in common industrial use, the United States is self sufficient in only 10 of them! We have to import in order to live.

KK: Do you know about the cabin at the head of Appraisal Gulch, the old log cabin? It defines the west edge of Prospect Ridge, and the cabin is just over the ridge from the Finlanders claim. It's facing south and I wondered if the cabin was associated with the Finlander claim?

GC: Herb and I worked that one time.

HS: I think that is more recent isn't it?

KK: There's an old log cabin there, that's falling apart. It's probably dates to the turn of the century and it is southwest of Tepee Butte and Yogo Peak.

GC: I don't know anything about it.

HS: You should tell her about the cabin up Lone Creek.

GC: Oh, yes. I had a silver claim up there, way up at the head of Lone Tree and this old cabin, when I went up there in the '60s, hunters were using it off and on. It was built on a dump as I recall.

HS: That cabin was on the dump when Grant and I were up there, built on the dump of a previous operation. Then we scrounged around in the brush there and found what we took to be the remains of the first log cabin with the bottom first two or three logs all the way around. Now this we took to be the original and then later, the next people on that claim erected their cabin on the dump that was created by the first work. We thought this was interesting.

GC: Now that cabin is still standing.

KK: Where is it relative to the Doc Williams place, or the Anderson house?

HS: It would be north of it and down stream a little bit and then west, and up high, on Mixes Baldy.

GC: Yes, up high on Mixes Baldy. You know where Mixes Baldy is?

KK: Yes, and there is an old cabin in there?

GC: Down lower, the one you are talking about is down lower.

KK: Meeks, the Joe Meeks cabin, below Mixes Baldy, and he was a miner. Could it be that place? I should have brought a map.

GC: No, it is above that. If you have been up there, have you seen the water tanks?

KK: No.

GC: You have to have four-wheel drive to get up there.

KK: A water tank? Okay, there are some claims on a saddle south of Mixes Baldy and the map showed a cabin up there.

HS: This would not be there. Unfortunately, the Forest Service has burned up some of your cabins. There used to be several cabins up Running Wolf Creek, up above the forks of Running Wolf Creek. The first time I visited them, I thought they were in pretty good shape and some of them still had the clothing hanging in them and miscellaneous dishes and old mattresses. I wouldn't say that you would want to live there, but it was obviously just the way the old timers had left it. They didn't carry a lot off with them when they finally got mad and pulled out. They had an expression "It's deep enough," and when they say, "It's deep enough," they pack up and go. That is the traditional expression of the prospector, or miner, "She's deep enough," and they are out of there.

The first time I visited the town of Castle, a ghost town over in the Castle Mountains, the slates with the kid's writing on them were still in the school room. The high button shoes and the dresses were still in the closets in those houses. The whole thing was just the way those people walked off and left it. Later, when it became popular for folks to visit ghost towns and that sort of thing, why they just literally...the visitors just carried it all off, until there is nothing at all left. Then of course the hopeful farmers and ranchers went up there and tore many of the buildings down to get the lumber and there isn't that much left now.

It was an interesting place the first time I visited, which would have been just after World War II. The furniture, the drapes and curtains on the windows, the whole thing was left like when they left and it was probably 50 years since it was abandoned. It was abandoned I think in 1893 or there about. Perhaps some of those buildings were occupied later but the exodus was in 1893. Sort of a shame I didn't have a camera with me at the time, I wish that I had. I also wish I had one of these things [cassette recorder] when I was visiting so many of the old timers.

My understanding has always been that the square nails went out of fashion about 1894, around that period. Now, obviously some of them would have remained in inventory in hardware stores and that sort of thing after that, but the round nails that we know of, that we are accustomed to today, were introduced about that time, so that if you find a building with square nails in it, then you have some reason to think that it could be dated prior to that period. If it has round nails then clearly it is newer than say the mid-1890s. Now that has always been my understanding and a yard stick to measure the age of a building by.

KK: Do you know of any other old cabins near you claims?

GC: There was two, right down on Lake Elva, two small ones. They are pretty well gone now. The old dugout that old Crazy Heintz used to live in, that's all deteriorated and gone now.

KK: Did he have a roof around that, and some wall of logs?

GC: It wasn't a very big spot, he just dug out a little place in the gravel and put a little roof over it, and that is all it was, a dug out. Some place he could crawl in when it rained.

KK: Was that a prospect hole to begin with?

GC: Oh no. He just run around all over that country up there. I don't know if he paid any attention to whose claim he was on or not!

KK: Oh I see. I thought he mainly worked for Bjork and Larson with Bob McGuire, but that he stayed all winter.

GC: No, not Crazy Heintz. Oh, no. He had no facilities up there to stay in the winter. But he could have worked for them. Would he have been during the period when they had it, seems to me he was there before then, Herb?

HS: I don't think so, he would have been there before that. Who had Bjork and Rudy Larson's place before then? There was somebody else in there, maybe he worked for those people.

KK: Bob McGuire worked for Bjork and Larson up there and he said that Dan Heintz was there all year round and did most of the work.

HS: I don't think he was there the year around.

KK: It is hard to imagine someone living year around up there that high.

GC: Well, the Findlanders did, but they just went from their cabins to their hole for seven months or whatever it was that they were snowed in up there.

KK: And they had a sauna?

GC: Oh, they could have.

KK: Bob Larson told me they had a sauna and a blacksmith shop.

HS: Well a blacksmith shop is essential. It was very important, because you had to sharpen the drill steel. They had to lay in a supply of blacksmith coal for the winter.

GC: When we first went up on the hill in 1954, Snider's up there, they had a humongous anvil that they got in there somehow or other, and that's on the side of the hill. Somebody packed that out of there by hand. They wanted it awful bad to carry that heavy thing out of there. But yeah, they had to have a blacksmith shop.

HS: The old forges that they used, besides the forge which you are familiar with, you've seen a blacksmith forge, and then they would have sort of a table up there, built on the side of it, with grooves in it. There might be eight or ten of those grooves which were, oh say, three quarters of an inch deep and maybe an inch and a half or couple inches across, and that's where they would lay the drill steels. You go through a number of drill steels in the course of just drilling one hole.

They drilled by hand and I have tried it and I did not find any pleasure in it at all. It's a dreadful, dreadful, way to work. They would start with a short drill steel and pound that in a ways and then they would keep going to a longer one and a longer one. As the wedge shaped end on the drill steel got rounded off, then they would have to remove that and go to another one, and if it was really hard ground why you can't get over three or four inches out of the same drill steel. They became extremely proficient at it and those people were absolutely made out of iron. You cannot believe how tough they were, how strong they were. We have nothing, there is nothing like it around. I would venture to say that the finest Olympic athlete that we have wouldn't last a half an hour drilling in one of those mines.

KK: Crouching?

HS: Well not so much that, but just the physical effort that went into this. It was something that you sort of trained for the work for years. They used to hold drilling contests, hand steels, and some of the records they set, now they were very, very careful...this wasn't done so much in Montana, it was more down in Colorado...but they always used the same kind of rock, the same granite so you could compare the drilling one year with the drilling the next year. If you had a different kind of rock then you don't have a fair comparison. But they made some amazing times drilling those holes.

A fellow by the name of Altha Albert Richey who held the world championship for single jacking, that would be to hold the steel in one hand and pound with one hand, as opposed to

double jacking where your partner holds the drill steel and you use the two handed hammer. The sledgehammer is still referred to in the contractor business as the double jack and that stems from those times. As soon as they came up with those air drills, they were very grateful to get a hold of them!

KK: Are you familiar with the Weather Wax mine up Skunk Gulch? We've got an air compressor from there and we would like to know when it was brought in and used.

HS: Prior to World War I, don't you think, Grant? Had to be.

GC: I'm sure it had to be.

HS: We looked at it two or three times and that was my estimate on it when I looked at it. I think it dates back to about that time a give or take. There was a miner, ex-miner, in Lewistown by the name of Carl Nordburg, Carl Nordburg had leased on that property and worked it off and on for a number of years. It also seems to me another fellow that had it Carl Trimmer.

KK: Yes, and maybe together, that's the information in the mural!

HS: I think perhaps they were in it together. I knew Nordburg very well and he had an apartment house of sorts in Lewistown, a series of flats in kind of a ramshackle building there. Out in front, the front yard was decorated with the pyrite from that mine. There were chunks in there, oh the largest one was probably 18 inches across and various other sizes, but he had the front sort of decorated with the boles of pyrite that he had taken out of the mine. He quit the mine, it had some fairly decent ore in it but he became afraid for his life in there.

That mine is in the miners terminology, is bad ground, it will cave very easily and they couldn't haul enough timber in there to prop it up. They would leave for some period of time, whatever it might be, and they would come back and it would be all caved in. Eventually they drifted around this bad area, they ran a rather crooked tunnel thru there and circled it around this and tried to get back to the ore. It didn't make any difference, when they actually got into where the ore was, it appeared to them to be terribly dangerous and Carl quit at that time. I think Trimmer might have stayed with it a little bit longer. That is the history of that mine, you'd have to be insane to go back in there.

KK: You know there are guys in it now, they relocated it. There is a bunch of them.

GC: Are they drifting in? I just found out that they are up there about a week ago.

KK: I don't know. I don't know how to describe what they are doing.

HS: I saw Nordburg's assays on the mine and he was a fairly careful and intelligent man, and he had spent a lifetime in and out of the business. I guess from that I had concluded that perhaps

the sampling might have been more accurate than most. He had quite attractive assays on some of that material, but it was the sort of stuff you would have to send to a smelter. There was no way to treat it on the ground. For example, you could not run it through a cyanide process or anything like that. You cannot cyanide that ore at all. There is oxidized material a little higher on that vein and that turns into what they call hematite, these are oxides of iron. Pyrite is a sulfide iron. When sulfide is exposed to water and air for eons of time, it oxidizes. The sulfur goes off in the form of a mild sulfuric acid.

KK: Into the air in the mine?

HS: Well not into the air, it goes on further down into the vein or out on the ground. There is a natural production of acid water from these kinds of deposits. Of course if you had an addit going into a vein like that, then if the ground is wet, it's going to produce acid water which is the drainage which you have coming out of some of the property. But it is a natural process, which is of course is made worse by the mining. When you open the thing up so it is exposed to the air, you have made room for the water to run and that sort of thing. At any rate the sulfides do not work in the cyanide process, the sulfide material eats the cyanide and the process doesn't work very well.

KK: They are talking about that.

HS: This is known in the trade as cyanaside, which are things that chew up cyanide, as cyanide likes sulfur better than it does the gold, so it seizes on the cyanide instead of the gold, the gold being inert and sulfur being fairly chemically active. The oxidized material can be cyanided and I would assume that these people know enough about what they are doing so that they will not try to cyanide the oxide.

If they attempt to cyanide the sulfide why they are in trouble. Nordburg did not feel that there was enough oxidized material in there left, because some of it had been moved by his previous mining operations, so he thought the future of the mine lay in the sulfide, and his intention was to ship that to the smelter. But as I said, he became afraid for his life and exercised good judgment and lived to a ripe old age, got out of there.

GC: Are these people that are up there now, are they drilling, or just drifting?

KK: I don't know, I am not familiar with the technical aspect at all.

GC: I know that they took some drilling rigs up that way and I know that they went up to the Sapphire Mines.

KK: This is a low budget project.

GC: Well, they probably are not drilling then are they?

KK: But they did talk about a cyanide leaching pond, I think, and a mill site. That's all I remember about what they plan to do.

GC: Before I forget it, you ever talked to Delight Leslie?

KK: No, not about the forest. We talked about other things.

HS: She would be about as knowledgeable on that part of the Belts as anyone.

GC: And some of the cabins I am sure.

HS: Yes, and on the cabins. She worked in the courthouse in Stanford for years and years. She and her husband would buy those patented claims that would come up on tax sales and she and her husband would acquire them. So they acquired a number, I don't know how many, but a number of patented claims up there, which I assume she still has.

KK: Interesting, okay I know where she is.

GC: Is she still living over at the Country Club?

KK: Yes.

HS: I think she would be an excellent source of information, a good suggestion on Grant's part.

KK: Shall we wind this down? Are you talked out?

HS: I would be happy to field your questions if you have any.

KK: I do have a couple more.

[Break in audio]

HS: They were a prominent, early day mining family. Gies mined in the Judith Mountains and the family had property in the Neihart area as well. I don't know how that whole family fits together. I know very little about their mine other than fact that it exists up there.

KK: The locals called it a ruby mine but somebody else told me that it probably would be garnets.

HS: Well, there are no rubies in the Little Belts, of course you do have the sapphires, which is a ruby, it's all corundum.

KK: A blue one.

HS: But generally speaking, it is the red garnet that old timers referred to as rubies. The other thing is that there is a ruby silver. One of the silver sulfides is known as ruby silver. If I were going to take a guess at it, at Neihart, I would guess that if the mine has the name ruby, it stems from having some ruby silver rather than...not that you couldn't have garnets...ruby silver was one of the very, very desirable minerals that they found in the Neihart hills and they did find it occasionally. I think that might be the origin. Of course, it also could be an old girlfriend.
[laughs]

They tell the story of one mine operator who's wife became very unhappy with him because he was always naming the new claim after some ladies name, which she took to perhaps be an old girl friend. She finally said, "Now the next time you stake a claim I want you to put my name on it, I want it to be named after me!" So he did, the name of the claim was "The Holy Terror."
[laughs]

GC: These two claims that we just staked out last year, I have twin daughters, Sharon and Karen, and that is the name of the claims, Sharon and Karen.

KK: Neat. Did you ever end up fighting any fires while you were up working on your claims?

GC: Oh, we have been lucky, we have never had a fire up there at all.

KK: I suppose that other old miners would abandon their work and join up with a fire fighting crew, if it was in their neighborhood.

HS: Oh, I think they would when that sort of thing happened. I don't think they were particularly effective at fighting fires in the old days. For one thing they didn't have the transportation, they didn't have the equipment, or borate bombers, they didn't have anything else. They would just go up there by hand and if the fire got to raging, the only thing they could do was get out.

GC: There was a lookout tower right up on top of Yogo. I was up in that thing, of course the wind blows an awful lot of the time, and when I was up there the wind was just blowing terrific. You got quite a movement on that thing, just a little bit scary. Of course they tore that down a long time ago.

KK: Did you meet shepherders up there?

GC: Yes. In fact about '66 or '67, they was running sheep up there and an old bear was killing their sheep. Just as you go into our claim there is a big tree there that had fallen over and it is still there, it never rotted away all these years, and they brought this government trapper up and he said "I'll probably have that bear the next morning." I thought "Boy what a conceited

guy he is, going to set a trap tonight and have the bear in the morning.” Well I was the first one up there in the morning and he had that old bear in the trap, the next morning! He got a sheep carcass that was really spoiled and the bear came in after it and he got it. Yeah, I was up there one year, just about this time of year, they were still running sheep and they got snow, about six, eight, ten inches deep and they panicked. They had taken the sheep out and the next day all of the snow was gone and they had a lot of nice weather. They run sheep on the other side too, on the Neihart side also. In fact I think they still run them over there but I’m not sure.

KK: Yes, west of the highway, up high.

GC: Yes, I thought they probably did it’s pretty good grazing over thee.

HS: They complain today that it is difficult to find herders that will go up there and live there, and you know it is lonely business. It was not uncommon to find Basque sheep herders in this country.

KK: Also from South America, today.

HS: They knew the business and they liked the sheep. Of course, the sheep business, with the advent of the synthetic fibers why, sheep raising at least here has declined a great deal. People who ran tens of thousands of sheep, quit entirely. The prices of wool went down, and their cost did not go down and it was not a profitable business. Many of the sheep ranchers went back to raising cattle.

KK: Have you ever heard stories about old miners ever helping themselves to a sheep for meat?

GC: I don’t know about the sheep but, just to give you an example, it is still the law, I am sure it’s still on the books, if you are prospecting up in the hills and if you want to kill a grouse or a deer for food, it is not against the law. Paul Vdovic shot a grouse, hit it with a stick or something one day and was cooking it when the Game Warden came up. He tried to tell the Game Warden that it was legal. The Game Warden took him all the way to Stanford and got down there and they told him “You got to take the old man back up, it’s legal.” I think it is still on the books.

CL: Oh, I see, how interesting.

HS: It may very well be. I think that they (old miners) liked venison too! [laughs] They were a different breed. There aren’t people like that any more.

KK: I suppose not. Can you think of more terms particular to prospecting terms or mining terms like “It’s deep enough”?

HS: Surprising enough, many of them spoke better English than a lot of college graduates.

GC: When they would run into the end of shifts they had some term they used about getting out of there. Do you remember what that was, Herb?

HS: I don't remember what that was. Different words have different connotations depending upon which part of the country that you're in. In Montana we had "snipers". The prospector who was a "sniper" wasn't shooting anybody, he was simply working a claim that wasn't his.

KK: Is that different than a claim jumper?

HS: Well, in a sense except a claim jumper stakes the claim for his and locates another claim on top of it, generally speaking. The sniper never makes any claim of ownership, he simply goes in and does a little mining. When he gets run off, he simply goes down the creek and does a little mining on somebody else's property but he does not own ground of his own.

GC: That also pertains, in a sense, to that slide rock up at Yogo. I go up especially in the spring after the run off and scratch around in the little crevices and cracks and take tweezers and snipe pieces of gold out of there.

HS: I was going to mention, especially in California, a sniper is one who works those cracks and crevices, but here the thing changed just a little bit.

KK: On a bigger scale?

HS: Well, a sniper here, he sort of expanded things, he was perhaps not careful about who's property he was working. It was quite common during the Depression, a lot of placer mining went on here. Placer mining has been in the doldrums for years, because of the inflation of World War One time through the 1920s, prices had gone up, but prices of gold hadn't and then when the price of gold went up, when they devalued the dollar in 1933, that put the price of gold up to \$35 an ounce then again for a period of time it became profitable to mine. As soon as ensuing inflation caught up then it again became unprofitable.

When I was a small boy we lived in the gulches, my dad and his partner mined and there were people there who were an awful lot worse off than we were. Several miles down the gulch I remember distinctly a man by the name of Granger, he had a couple of kids, no wife, I don't remember any wife. Mother concluded that they were awfully hungry, so when we went to town for groceries why she had the fellow at the store put up a box of groceries for them. I remember she got into a shouting match with the grocer because the custom in those days was to throw a sack of candy in for the kids. Well, there was a sack of candy for my sister and me already in our box and she insisted he throw another sack of candy in the Granger's box. He finally did because she was rather abrupt. So, when we went back up the gulch we stopped at their place and she took them the box of groceries. I had always been a little afraid of Granger, as a child will, because he was kind of big and kind of gruff and I wasn't too sure of him. That was the first time I ever saw a grown man cry. He sat in the cabin doorway and wept.

A couple days later, and its got to be six miles from their place to where we were, had to be that far, maybe further, Granger showed up at our claim with a shovel on his shoulder. He had come up to work off the groceries, he wouldn't accept them as a gift, so he had come up to work it out. Now, my father had a rule, he refused to work a man just for groceries, so they arrived at some arrangement on wages and Granger worked for my dad off and on that season. That was the way that was done.

KK: Where was this?

HS: This was Confederate Gulch. I still have this recollection of Granger sitting on that doorstep, weeping.

KK: And where was the store?

HS: Townsend. We either went to White Sulphur Springs or Townsend. If you wanted mail, you went to White Sulphur Springs and stopped at Watson's, Watson Post Office. These gulches were full of people and everywhere you went, there were a lot of people, trying to eke out an existence. These were awful tough times. I would not care to see those times again.

KK: Well thanks for your time this morning. This has been real interesting.

GC and HS: You are welcome.

[End of Interview]