The available facilities of the Upper Snake River Valley Historical Society, makes it possible to transfer from Reel to Reel tape, onto a C-60 Cassette the interview that follows. And this is being done by Harold Forbush, the technician of this process on this 5th day of April, 1984.

Oral History of the Upper Snake River Valley. The time is 8:00am, Saturday the 20th day of June, 1970. And I am in the home of Mr. Fred Keefer of 63312, Idaho Falls. With me is Mr. Jerry Glenn of the Ricks College Library and we are here for the purpose of chating with Mr. Keefer on the early days of Eagle Rock and his experiences with law enforcement in the early days of Bonneville County and other related experiences. Mr. Keefer we usually commence this interview with a question to you, would you kindly state your full name and the date and place where you were born?

Fred W. Keefer: Fred W. Keefer, born in Eagle Rock, Idaho, January the 29th 1891.

Harold Forbush: Now Mr. Keefer what is your present address, of course I’ve given it at 633 and over the years, how would you like to characterize your occupation? Well, just in a word of two, what is your occupation, what has been your occupation?

FK: Well, my main occupation was 21 years in Sherastone [?] in Bonneville County.

HF: Well, that is good enough that is fine. And of course as we go through the tape we realize that you’ve been engaged in a lot of extracurricular activities which you will share with us this morning, something about your father; his full name and something about his background, if you will share that with us?

FK: My father was William Walker Keefer, born in Franklin County near Salmon, Pennsylvania. He was born in 1852 and passed away in 1940 in Idaho Falls, and he left home in 1878, landed in Omaha, Nebraska, where he learned the carpentry trade where he worked for the Union Pacific Railroad. He was sent from there by the railway officials to turn to Eagle Rock to build the shops, depot and other buildings for the Utah northern railway road.

HF: Did the Keefer family have origin maybe in England or one of those European countries?

FK: We could have had.

HF: They probably as a family been in the United States for a number of years, do you have anything beyond your father’s?

FK: My older sister is back in Pennsylvania on a time she said she had an awful a lot a German books up in the arch. I think is what they call Pennsylvania arch.

HF: Well, now on your mother’s side, just briefly, you know her maiden name and where she came from, little about her background?
FK: My mother’s maiden name was Darla Junior Shoemaker; who was born in Cambria, Pennsylvania, in 1857 and passed away in 1938. She taught school for many years and was school superintendent in the seventh and eighth to age eighteen.

HF: Fred if one was to endeavor to mention a family trait on your father’s side, on the Keefer’s side what might be suggested? In the way of the musical talent or leadership talent or working with your hands or some family trait that seems to be carried through from father to son?

FK: I want to finish something about my mother. I was thinking of the gift my mother had. She left Pennsylvania in the very early age and all those landed him I believe Kansas on the way to meet my father in Eagle Rock. This was in 1884 just four years after that log run out… picked up as …

HF: That is interesting isn’t it? Anything else about your mother?

FK: Well, she was quite a writer, good management of the house. She had seven children.

HF: Did she teach school at all after coming up to Eagle Rock?

FK: No.

HF: Now with reference to the questions asked a moment ago relative to any family traits, can you suggest anything of this nature on your father’s side or your mother’s side?

FK: Well, I must admit it has been many years ago in the city of Idaho Falls whilst some of our lands off the city, from the foreign land up to one of the council man here. I forget what the council man said, should you keep the men and not speculate or gamblers and he said you are the back bone of this city. And we see you get every dime as fast as it worth. And by the way when it comes to… next night, the same council man got up and said, I don’t think the land is worth anymore than taxes being paid on it.

HF: (Laugh) I don’t suppose it will be essential that we get his name.

FK: That is the man who a minute ago was working for you.

HF: Well, now it was then the railroad affiliation and the duties on the railroads that brought your people here into Eagle Rock?

FK: That is right.

HF: Your father came here by assignment to build the yards and the facilities for the railroad. And what date did he arrive? Would you state that again I can’t recall?

FK: He arrived here in 1879.
HF: 1879. At that time the community was called Eagle Rock, was it not?

FK: That is right. Eagle Rock was not changed to Idaho Falls until August 26, 1891.

HF: 1891. That is an interesting fact that I wasn’t aware of it.

FK: My oldest brother Phil and Frank and I were born in Eagle Rock.

HF: Now were there other members of the family born and came with your parents?

FK: No.

HF: Your Dad arrived alone, didn’t he?

FK: That is right.

HF: And your mother followed subsequently.

FK: That is right.

HF: Is your understanding, Fred, that Eagle Rock was pretty much built by railroad people, railroad interest?

FK: That is right. Railroad started a few years after that and moved down 1880 to Pocatello. Population dropped at that time from 2000 to 400 people.

HF: Is it your understanding that the shops actually are designed by the new people to be located at Eagle Rock rather than at Pocatello?

FK: I think so.

HF: In the first instance...then by 1880 the railroad people had concluded that Rexburg was a better house or excuse me Pocatello was a better house for central location for the shop.

FK: That is right.

HF: Well, that is rather interesting.

FK: Jobs were provided in moving the shop.

HF: Did he assist also in relocation and construction at Pocatello?

FK: Oh no.
HF: I see. What facilities had been constructed here in Idaho Falls where they were moved to Pocatello as far as you know?

FK: Well, all I remember was the Depot in the south part of the town. Railroad round out where Miller and Parkins are now located on north end of …

HF: Well, now of course the narrow gate railroad from Ogden came up through here in about 1878, ’79. It was built by Utah people, as I understand it as narrow gate road.

FK: It is called Utah Northern Railroad; then from the Priori, Utah, to Montana. And by the way if I was setting to study on that railroad, there is only 60 miles long. And when they fixed the railroad it was 460 miles long and they had every depot, fast depot, on the road.

HF: Well, when you say 400 and some what miles long will that be the distance from Corin to Ute. That wouldn’t be that distance would it?

FK: No, that is what he has in one his letters. Father was … and I never talked to him, I found about fifty letters that he’s written in the early eighties from Montana and my mother, back in Pennsylvania and he had all these few sprays in there, things we never heard of, where he was interested in bunch of other things so I must leave and to go to American Falls, I am putting a bridge across the Snake River. Things we never heard of.

HF: Was the Union Pacific then involved with the interest in northern Utah line? I mean was it all combined together?

FK: Yes that we were able to, otherwise there wouldn’t be something Father and my uncle gave from Nebraska to outskirt of what is now Utah Artic.

HF: Father and his brother.

FK: Yes.

HF: I see. Now Fred could you give us [a] little information of your own personal experiences and your knowledge of early conditions and life here in the community here of Eagle Rock?

FK: Well, my twin brother and I were born in Eagle Rock Idaho in 1891. Same day President McKinley and also my oldest brother Phil. Frank, Phil and I all have the same birthday. Our folks lived on Log Avenue in the third house in the dead-end street of the railroad track. We were born and it snowed sixteen deep feet. Our father had built a six foot six fence around our yard and they said the snow had heaped on the top. The purpose of high fence was to keep the starving cow and elk from getting into the area. They used to tell me that hard winter; in the year 1888 was one of the worse winters on record. It was on the great …. I heard murmuring of Eagle Rock is what my mother said. She was asked what first interested her and said it was the hundred and ten… port holes
and lava Snake River. When I was five or six years old my father hired a lever and put us all up to where the .... It was not ... and it was eight-forty feet in height and it was sure an inspiring site. It had been used to dredge [?] the river from… to here. My father had been hired and he smelled it. To say that our travel was a noble one …We were born the day without a whole meal and the necessities of like. We bought our water from a man that name was Tom Nickson that delivered the price so that we can fix a sense... In the spring, ...were two feet deeper than. But...they were of native wood. We had no TV or telephone so it was interesting; things were a little rough in those days. The rail road was built in 1880. Telephone was invented in 1889. The rail road starts to Pocatello in 1887. The population is up then to 400. These were tough days in Eagle Rock. The boy had to do a lot of skiing to make a dollar and it was quite sad to see card board sliding up and down the street shooting six guns. The snow keeps on Eagle Rock Street which was the main private town, till... The law enforcement officers who were not only tough but sometimes cruel. I remember when I was in the mind something about a man from Montana who is wanted on the minor charge. The man was a partner and landed here in the winter and hidden in straw sticks some miles from here. The officer surprised him shooting one of them. Instead of bringing his body he here brought just the head and a gun and sack, which placed on a bar on Eagle Rock Street. My father was a...on a car parked...there was no car here then so my father made ...I can still see them on...of his shelf. They were sure nice to me. It was less...on the outside and inside...Very suddenly my father didn’t get anything for making it and there were very little money. One day Frank and I were in the shop and some men came and said, that man had been in and running over the plain on the Eagle Rock Street. We both along with the men founded...had been kicked off from…We both...legs were cut off and had bled to death. The men…well, each carried the leg. We laid him down in a shade and father got visit him…I have never forgotten the site I will always that he had red under his arm. I'd started to tell you how hard it was to make a dollar than these days. But I must tell you how he did make some money. We were in California packing company down here right across the Sporting Park was a large old thirsty gift mailer. The farmers brought their grain into the ground in Clara. These farmers nearly always have a crate of chickens in their wagon...some of these chickens got out of the crate and so in all...it got so...we went over one morning, Phil, Frank and my oldest brother went ahead on the little bridge but...he went along, Frank and I brought up the rear. My brother opened the door and sharply and invited them in and tough forty-five chickens. Now we have both chickens and eggs to sell. Chicken wasn’t as much too long...when new farm came to town and brought their best chicken with them. The chickens those days were the game bird and they like to fight. These boys brought their best fighters over one day and we had a chicken fight. My mother was very tender-hearted and she never liked to see anything hurt. When she started watching what was going on she made us quit the chicken race. And then we started raising pigs and equated the men for the young ones known as...A man approached me one day and said he would take all that we would raise. We would take them to the river bridge and that was at the Anna Forson’s Park. This park by the way was not named until 1939 when I got permission from Shane Clark [?] then Mayor of Idaho Falls. Well, we took these clubs to the end of the bridge and it was Saturday. We didn’t know then what we did with them. But we found out later that this at one time had...on it. I remember one morning my father saying, well there is another man in the
river as planned. South side of the river bridge was another ...the midst of the words; red light is as sophisticated people at least they so make you bleed. But nevertheless they were there, the guests were there...some of them were allowed on Eagle Rocks. Their main face was the Rock and Capital...not in far west... Just as I mentioned with the south of the... this was first city jail. My father and I were in the...chamber...in Eagle Rock Street about 9:30 p.m. I couldn’t have been very old. I don’t know why I was there. But we were both there and run in the sheriff for the jail. The small frame building was sure burning. I remember telling sheriff to hurry and open the doors and then...The sheriff said well he set it on fire. He got him out brought him on the ground about the fire. I don’t know what happened to the poor...the next day father told his boys to get some sacks carry...to our home...we carried several sacks they were burnt pretty bad and then they were later...I told father I didn’t think they were good for anything. He said yes, I know, I always have something for you boys to do.

HF: By way of comment at that time, Fred what did he have you to do with those nails?

FK: We threw them away.

HF: You didn’t construct anything or attempted to?

FK: He asked...

HF: I see.

FK: Before I go to the next city there I must say, I must tell you it was quite an experience life my brother and I had when we were five years old...playing with the railway in south of...Father took us to see it. When we got to the railway crossing which was the railroad bridge, I told him that we couldn’t step across the tires on the truck. There was no part there then that it is now. We were only five and small for our age. Father never looked so we crawled on our hands and knees all the way across. We got to the city jail and the small frame building was just located back to where it was Crest Nosy Store and my father did most of the city’s carpenter’s work. The first thief was locked on jail one night and he escaped. Never recaptured how he got out of was peculiar. There were two cells which are not locked to either one. On top of the cell was a large lava rock, why it was there no one could say. Anyway he took this rock and poked a hole through the ceiling and soon got out. I was sent to repair it. I cut a board of the size of the hole and laid it in that area. All I did was nail the ceiling. I thought if I was there we putting it there then I know how to get out. But it was never put in, though I should have been in many things. In the early days we always had a sand storm once a week. But usually it lasted for three days, you couldn’t see it across the street. But there were no trees or grass, grow a little bit cut a hole in the sand. Those days, my brother and I would go to the Indian camping ground, camping ground over on Crow Creek near the river and also the slaughter house. The Indians used to get the hearts, the livers and the unborn animals to eat. They often ask us to eat but we often didn’t. The earth was some of my happiest days. I learned how to tan a hide and make beads and other things. One morning when we got there, we saw a very large gathering of Indian teams. Their teams
were better quality than we had seen before. I learned later who and why these Indians were there. They were the Lamanites numbering four hundred and seventy-four. They were moved by the government in 1909 to Fort Hall Reservation.

HF: Fred by way of comment once more, where is Crow Creek from here and how far would you have to travel in order to reach that point you and your brother?

FK: Well, another half a mile and is over creek north of mount Fumier. It runs…

HF: What stream is it designates some other way now?

FK: No it’s in Crow Creek…comprised one time when the live section of the city. My father…into ten dollars, which he didn’t take it.

HF: How large was the city of Eagle Rock it was let’s see, would it be in the vicinity of Lava rock or Lava Street today was it in that section of town, wasn’t it?

FK: Yes.

HF: How many blocks square would it have been? Do you have any way of knowing? Comparing, it didn’t cover a very large area did it?

FK: No, let’s see four, five…

HF: Well, that is very interesting on your generally…are there some more there, can you share with us about the early days of Eagle Rock?

FK: Well, not use to…and the people were brave. Whether you know or not the first cemetery was southwest towards the now Castle Avenue by the river. Although it had been several…near town. That is when I remember and that is where…and…behind what is now known as Penny Store. I was on the verge of knowing how he came to be brave there. He still had on his bones and his legs and his small pair of cowboy boots. I read an article while back where he’s written about the lever table. They were always from the truth. They said the first lever table is on Carville Avenue which was a half a dozen before that. The first lever stage, if I remember, is on back to what the Johnson Bakery from the Sportsman Park was ran by Sam Taylor and Anderson.

HF: That might be interesting though; do you recall a man by the name of Jack Anderson? Was he responsible for the construction of the Anderson Bridge across the Snake River?

FK: Well, he was somewhat related to him, yes.

HF: What did they have in the early days? Didn’t they first have a ferry to get people across?
FK: It was private, located nine miles north of the city. Eagle Rock was named from a large eagle nest on a rock. The ferry was later moved down to Eagle Rock across the Sportsman Park where you still see these...the first bridge they put in there was...couple of years later, they rebuilt the bridge.

HF: At the same place?

FK: Same place.

HF: Now that is where the bridge is now as it crosses the west Broadway?

FK: No, it was the south of there.

HF: South of there.

FK: You could see old...on the Sportsman’s Park.

HF: Well, let’s see then, I’m not too familiar with this, maybe I should be, the farmer first bridge then was south of the present bridge at the west end of Broadway?

KF: That is right.

HF: Do you remember anything about its construction, the first one, a lot of logs went into it or just how it...

KF: It was still out of log, but the first was washed out in a few years later and they installed another one. And it is called toll bridge, and they tolled out this terrible height, after it was suppose to run for twenty years and after twenty-four years W. H. B. Cole one of the old pioneer we had them days went to force him, had the toll discontinued because it was open to the public then.

HF: Who constructed that, the County or the state--

FK: The first bridge?

HF: I mean the toll bridge.

FK: The County, as far as I know.

HF: Was that the County or what type of Government or what authority constructed that and determined what the rate of the toll would be and so on?

FK: I don’t know how to answer that, know that they put in the bridge and charged the toll across it and it cost—thousands of horses and cattle were there all the time.

Jerry Glen: Apparently then it was a private enterprise.
FK: Yes it was.

HF: You have any idea Fred, what the rates were, I mean just give us an idea?

FK: No, I do not.

HF: Now on this rock, eagle rock nest of the eagle rock or whatever it was. Where is that located with reference to this present bridge at the end of Broadway, is that on further north or further south?

FK: Yes, supposed to be nine miles north of the present bridge.

HF: Can you describe the rock, is it—or something about the physical features of it? This may sound kind of silly to you; I mean I’m just interested in knowing about its appearance and what it looked like.

FK: No, I know it was up the hill. I would like to tell you an experience my brother and I had in our early days. In the lava days west of town, my twin brother and I rolled up there one day and found the perfect cone or the lava that come out of the ground. I went down to this cone one day and seriously surprised to see how life really was and looking round I found skeletons of several animals that had fallen in and couldn’t get out. I gathered several of them and put them in my shirt. But as I started to crawl out I couldn’t make. My brother had to go back to town and get several more…rope and pulled me out, and I will say it this way and it took me time he never come back till the next day.

HF: [laugh]

FK: I’ve done alright though as I found a perfect plan not too far gone, roasted the high leg with some twig that I found. We after all these years, about six of them have some of these skulls; I will show you one in the back room. I pledged many a times to find this cone and never been able to. We learned to ride horses at a very early age. We spent many a summer on Fort Hall Reservation by…in here in the southern end. One bunch was brought here had a horse among them and had six feet. We took him to the fairs around here and exhibited him. We charged a dime as fee and about this time we got restless and decided to see Yellow Stone Park. This was 1910.

Tape 2

HF: I learned you were about 19 years old.

FK: That is right.

HF: Okay go ahead and tell us this story about going to the park.
FK: We saddled up a couple of horses and with... started out. That we left St. Anthony and there was very little habitation. I remember the Sheriff was replaced and also the ... known as the Railway Ranch. We slept one night at the Sherwood farm and one night at the Railway Ranch. Through the park we slept out in the open. We lived on big...of sardines. This is before the day of...was taken by buses known as the Wirily State Company. Park was controlled by Park Rangers. Camp one night at the Madison River and I remember asking my brother if he didn’t think this will be a good place to own we still had our gun. But he persuaded me from this would be plotting...we were coming out of the south entrance I will never forget how mad the guard at the gate was. He said how in hell did you kids go through there with two golden guns. I said there was no one here so we went right on in. When we got to where West Silver stone we were down to our last can of sardines so we rolled a few brunch there and got enough money to come home till we were gone ten days. There was one incidence while in the park I forgot to mention. We were sitting under a pine tree during...when a young lady came over and said wouldn’t you boys like to come inside our building and listen to some singing. Well, there wasn’t anything else to do so we said we’d go. When we got inside we found our way inside their church at different standing which we had forgotten. I think this was an LDS Church. What made it unusual as we both were wearing large woolly shirt...and we didn’t back up and enjoyed the service.

HF: Fred at that point, can you recall in response to my questions, some of the attractions at that time that seemed to be well remembered of the park? For example what comments might you have about the guys are Old Faithful and some of the other things you remember specifically?

FK: Well, I do remember too many…but I do remember one thing my brother said about Old Faithful ... a man who walked up and said that’s all I’ve got to see here, I’ve lost my money. Another man walked up from New York and said boy, wonderful, wonderful.

HF: About how many days does it take you to go through the park?

KF: Ten days.

HF: Ten days. And you followed what I guess they call a look. Going through Yellow Stone and coming back out of west of Yellow Stone?

KF: Yes. That year I went to the mountains and took up a homestead run cabin for twenty-five years. And so it happened, I came to town and worked two years for the Bountiful County Sportsman Association raising fees. This stage of my life I won’t dwell on, except to tell one of my experiences. One of the city councilmen came to correct and said a group of men from Los Angeles were coming here. They were Chambers of Commerce men in Los Angeles. They wanted me to get a horse ride south of town with the bus. They said the bus will be in five o’clock in the morning, for me to hold him up. I didn’t like the idea but finally agreed to. I met the bus and stopped that a couple of rounds...they came up with their hands up and started up and moved into my head. I was joined pretty good ‘til the Mayor and the chief of police and others came on
the scene. These men were a fine bunch of...they said it was not only most unique meeting but the most welcoming they hadn’t had. I got several letters from them. They want me to write but I’m sorry I never did. That fall I went to work in the Bountiful County Sheriff’s office.

HF: Now see, this would have been the fall of 19…

KF: You mean when I held up…?

HF: When you started working for the sheriff’s office.

KF: About 1939.

HF: Fall of 1939. And you worked for the sheriff’s office pretty much off and on or it was pretty continuous?

KF: Steady.

HF: Steady.

KF: Same ship that I knew where it got all the troubles.

HF: This took you up to 1960, 21 years. As a member of the sheriff’s office undoubtedly Fred you learned a little about the background of the Sheriff’s Office. That is who some of the noted sheriff’s who preceded and some of those who personnel the office over the years. Would you make some comments about the early history of the sheriff’s office, of Bountiful County?

KF: The first sheriff I remember was Charlie Cradle. I went to work for him once. He called me in one day and told me to take a paper over to the judge who had his office in the BML…Broadway. I took the man over and judge says, “Fred what’s he charged with?” And I said “Drunkenness.” The judge studied and he says, "Prisoner released." As the man left I ask the judge what was the reason he said, “I was drunk last night and didn’t feel like filing him.”

HF: Okay Fred any other comments?

KF: I only worked for Mr. Cradle just once. Then I started to work for, I was working for the sportsman at the time and Sheriff Nathan was the sheriff and he kept coming down and using me all the time on cases so I finally quit my territory. He was a right good sheriff after he was resigned Sheriff Dean Warden took over and between elections lots of guys took over. I think Bob only lasted for three or four months. And then last year…

HF: Those earlier sheriff’s were they inclined to be pretty rocked, did they wear a gun or rather ran a train in the sophistry of sheriff’s law enforcement work or just how would you comment about?
FK: Well they were really smart on their own but they never did carry a gun. I was the one that always carried the gun. And I was always the one that took...it was quite a ways from the city or from the county jail upstairs. I took some very dangerous men up there to be tried before the judge. I remember one particularly it was the case in out of Florida and I knew how dangerous he was, he cut a man up in the jail in his bed pretty bad one night. As usual, sheriff has taken him up to court, taken him out of jail and I asked him to stay three feet ahead of me no more and no less. I got him up and the judge gave him five years in penitentiary. He started out at the door and as the same rule goes and I got him back and locked him up. But he almost killed the man over in state pen I found that out actually. And I had a lot of things in...I figured out one time that that man confined in that jail from every penitentiary in the United States and even in ... 

HF: Actually you are talking about a transient coming through, individuals coming through while escape; did you have any experience with the local men that turned out to be pretty desperate?

FK: Yes we had several of those.

HF: Now can you tell us something about the courthouses now and when it was constructed and...

FK: I think it was about 1912, the trouble in that jail down there Sheriff Wilkin was a great man in the county. He always held down expenses. But when we had one of the course setup there for a jail that I ever saw. I cooked there for years when there was a case inside the door like these other states have. He finally put one in, he didn’t put anything over the top, so as I opened the second door I had to look up above and see who is standing up there with something hidden anywhere. Finally got that done anywhere, I wasn’t budged around down when there was a week. One night I rather pulled one of these budged roots where it is well, he’s Mexican he slipped through the bars and hit me over the head with a tube of ore before the table. And he and other folk got out. So we court them the same day when I got back from the office on hotline the FBI had the tube in their office. Of course I've done something probably that wasn’t right by touring the Mexican giving them a cute gooding [?] on their job. One of the police said, the sheriff rather said, get over Fred, get over Fred one of the preachers said let him go he hit him from behind. So we send those two over to the pen. I’ve been hit several times over the head with iron bars and so forth one of the state patrols said, you always hit have a hard head.

HF: You’ve been sent as a law enforcement officer after men to bring them back from some other state extradition proceedings—have you ever had?

FK: Nearly all of these were western counties. I think there were probably some other eastern. I went with the sheriff back to Sand Stone Minnesota. He got a man who escaped out of the jail by cutting a hole and it’s hard. The hole was only twelve or fourteen inches, we had measured it several times. Anyway you got through it and have
him back in Minnesota. I didn’t want the fire to tip someday that I have him brought out in San Francisco after a touch old search on the district of San Francisco. I hope all, the sheriff said, you got a gun and he said I never cut anyone, but he said my…has carried one. Let’s see it. So I took it off, well up big stick that is. [laugh] Well I didn’t tell them that the district owned this big ‘ole forty-five carried at a time and did kill the colored man on eagle rock tree.

HF: You had to do that?

FK: One of the police did.

HF: One of the police.

FK: I’ve gun gut ahead [?] even I couldn’t carry them all and give to my brother; he got them all in his apartment.

HF: Have you ever had any experience investigating any local murders or anything of this nature?

FK: Oh yes, several. I had a funny experience up in Jackson, Wyoming, one time with Sheriff Merfis and I went up there to get the phone. The man weighed two-hundred and thirty pounds and he was half drunk. Only twenty-five years old. They got him in a bar take him over and lock him up in the Jackson jail. I don’t there have been fire in that jail for twenty years. In the winter they got half way out of town and turned, sheriff Merfis said, what do you have running when they shook down? We said we didn’t shake him down. What! No, we didn’t shake him down, let’s go back. So we went back and after the night fall…find a whisky. But it was good thing we went back and he said I will sign your extradition papers I won’t spend the night in this jail I will freeze to death. The funny thing about this fellow was two sheriffs and I went up town and got our dinner and when we came back, I said we all wash up for a start out. While I go up stairs you go down these steps here and turn to your right and you will find the wash room. I thought it was funny that time Sheriff Ball said; well this man said I think I will wash up too. I thought it was funny if they let him go down. Those steps were fourteen steps. Went down more steps, I got him back up to the top, but he moved around jumped the fourteen steps of the basement. It was half of that room in that basement, I went through two or three of them, and finally caught him crawling through a two foot hole where they put the coal in the basement. I yelled at him come back to me and make no moves. I put the forty-five right at the middle of his back. He came back up with his hand up. So I handcuffed him, took him back upstairs, Merfis always liked a good joke. He said, hey I’ve got a pretty good death here.

HF: I will tell you, you’ve had a wealth of experience. And stuff of thing.

FK: Yes, and I have filed up some Harold. I always said anyone run from the sheriff’s office has spent eight or ten years as a deputy first. When I quit I was still learning something.
HF: Of course that is true, twenty-one years...now you mentioned is not the night watchmen or the night work. When in the period of the twenty-four hours of our twenty four hour day, most of the troubles did take place? Can you comment on any highlight experience?

FK: Well, I took the night shift because I had a lot of property here and I thought I could take of my property in the day time. But after putting in twelve hours down there, I didn’t have anything left to work with, there was just too much gone...worse work versus physical work.

HF: Over the years Fred, this collecting of artifacts of the area has been real well, more than a hobby I suppose it has been a real part of your life. Extracurricular part of your life, what got you interested, you and your brother? I suppose we should bring your brother on this because I mean you fellows were together so much of the time in your early years I presume?

FK: That is right.

HF: What got you interested in making collection of artifacts?

FK: Well in those days, we brought...so he spent most of his time in Texas with himself, so I went to work for my father on these bridges and dams. On the way with Dad, Dad built the first dam on the Snake River way across from the court house. When I had lot of this stuff I’d saved over the years, in fact I never did throw them away, I still gotten...

HF: An old friend of mine Carl Carrington up in the basin when he passed away he had literally everything that had been brought into the house including the groceries weekly advertisement, you know, can of beans and a few of these things. He'd saved everything. But you got occasion to collect a lot of pictures, old pictures of early events, people, and personalities. Why don’t you tell us and describe some of these for us.

FK: Well, what I think is no pictures and here they are right in this house. I think this spring I took all the pictures off the wall. Washed the wall, washed the pictures and put them back in the nineteen thirty-three pictures. Every time I went to the sheriff’s office he would always say, what do you do to put in the time? I don’t have enough of time, I better eat rumors here and do my own cooking and washing and cleaning. I am always making something.

HF: Now these pictures of individuals you have known over the years, pictures of places and things?

FK: Nearly all scenes of Eagle Rock days. Picture of the old flour mill sit down in the railway, and one of the first city jail old bricks house and it is one of the first city jails on this Fortson Park and second is water powered plant we have in here.
HF: Now where is this power plant you speak of, where is it located?

FK: North of the…, it is a city park now.

HF: Eagle Rock or Idaho Falls at least had it own developed its own power plant initially didn’t it?

FK: Well, just as I said the first power plant down south of the railroad bridge was for Smith Park and the next serves us on Crow Creek.

HF: I see.

FK: We went on south of the Sportsman’s park course it was up in 1912 and…the mayor.

JG: Fred I see you have a letter here from President Johnson. You won’t read it or make some comment on it I think that is pretty nice?

FK: Well, I kept cheering about L.B.J.’s brand all the time. So one day I decided to a new brand made some little brand in the irons of heavy wire. Took a cow head and branded “L.B.J”. on it. Put it into a nice frame with a glass over and sent it to him. He sent me a personal letter thanking me for it, and said this is the kind of gift that I like.

HF: That is interesting.

JG: Oh, Fred you said, something that I already said that you had worked for Bonneville Sportsman Association for a couple of years, now were you instrumental in getting the small zoo and fish hatchery down there, everything starting in that island?

FK: That is true my brother is the one that put the Museum in there. I’ve done most of the work on the cabin there; that I had a lot of fish in there. When I do say the place went to pieces and so I quit it.

JG: Hold it, the reason I asked you the question Fred, is that I remember as a boy, the first time I visited that park they must have had, I think they had a trout in there. According to the man I talked to, thirty-three pounds. You verify that, was there one the boys there?

FK: No, I don’t remember that trout being there at all. The largest trout ever caught in this part of the country weighed thirty-seven pounds caught on Pedro Nil.

JG: What was the largest trout they ever had in Bonneville?

FK: Oh about six pounds.

JG: About six pounds.

FK: I will tell you something about them, the trout I had…
JG: Well, I think, the trout they told me was what it was probably sturgeon. They never had sturgeon there at anytime.

FK: Not that I ever heard of. We did have them in the river. I had a bunch of big trout there weighing sixty-seven pounds. Had in there for tourist to look at. And I had them pretty tamed and a lot of people going there didn’t believe it, there Peterson’s taught piece there he could verify but I had a grinder there in that little house where I ground the meat for these small fish. And I always found this little hole in the grinders and the only way you could clean them is cut them on the rock in the meat house. So I cut on them on a rock and I noticed these big trout has always been waiting for me. For three days I didn’t feed them I didn’t clean it there. I cleaned it somewhere else. So I got some meat and put in my hands. These sharks swim by and take it out of my hand. A lot of people don’t but this is the truth. I had one trout there about, that was about seven pounds had crooked nose I call him Eli. He got some tame and I stroked him on his stomach, he rolls over. One day some tourist came down there and said they’ve heard about my tame trout, they want to see it. So I told them to stand up above and watch. So Eli came up and ate the meat and I stroked him a little bit and he jumped out of the water on the lurch. I know there is a fish story but this one is true.

FH: Well, that is remarkable.

FK: Wind up Eli’s story I went down one morning and there wasn’t a trout on this place. The hobos had a big feast on the railroad place. Come in and caught them, and cooked him up.

HF: Now you mentioned Fred that you had one time owned the little island up from the temple in John Hold Bridge in the Snake River. And on that you had constructed a home, is it right?

FK: That is right.

HF: Did you live in this home?

FK: Yes. Over twenty years.

HF: How large an Island is it? In footage or…

FK: About three and a half acres.

HF: About three and a half acres.

FK: I kept those logs of the south post of the Snake River. I took one at a time behind the rope over there. But…put a lot of money in that place, but couldn’t sleep because of thieves.
HF: They come in and take things and break things and ruin it then you just donate it for one dollar to the city of Idaho Falls.

FK: That is right.

HF: When was this done, about what year was this?

FK: ’58.

HF: What has the city done with the property?

FK: Absolutely nothing.

JG: Now is the old homestead still on there or what remains out there, are they completely complained our offer?

FK: You mean the cabin?

JG: Yeah.

FK: It’s still there; I want to go…nope, we couldn’t take you over, you couldn’t stand it. He said I just toured out all the places.

JG: Yeah, it’s all about you could see there.

FK: Yeah.

JG: That’s interesting. I never realized that anyone had lived down there.

FK: I had Mallards over there one year. I owned three hundred and big white clement yards and Petersons had given me three or four dozens to take over and see if we couldn’t get them started over there. I cut one wing off of them so they couldn’t fly off, just the feathers. And every morning I could see where there is one of them killed. I couldn’t figure out what it was. One morning after the rain, I saw a big round track of…cat track. Well over there parallel on the west side of the road was an old time table they had an ice cream park in the early days, the seeds come out from under, I think it was quite rare, on this other table here, I bought from a fellow that had it hand-carved in old Mexico. It was a beautiful cocky table. On this other corner was a table I made out of two pair of horse hands. I also had an organ, hand organ that we carried above from my oldest brother before he passed away. It’s about sixty years old. Of course they got a lot of horns in the air.

HF: This is …or maybe elk horns.

FK: Deer horns and …horn. I got a nice tin cushion here also made of …
JG: I noticed Fred you have a gold pan here. Did you ever do any prospecting on your own?

FK: Yes, I’m not alone; there is skill to go…

JG: Did you have…skills there?

HF: I was out on some of the tributaries from into the Snake in the Upper Snake River Valley.

FK: There is gold all along this river right now.

HF: Is this the forty-five?

FK: That is an old forty-five we used in the early days, it was used to kill cattle and slaughter them.

HF: Now in the back rooms you mentioned that you had some other types of artifacts that you want to show us, can you describe the detail of some of those items?

FK: Well, I guess…left for older man, who gave me in 1909.

HF: Found in this area?

FK: Yes, W. H. B. gave to me doctoring horses; and as I was there when he came out of this cone over in the lava’s and also a badge came out of there. I had the newer one the other days, man sculpted from the New Mexico was thought to be around 2000 years old.

HF: From New Mexico?

FK: Yeah, came out of creek lavas.

HF: In the state of New Mexico.

FK: And another got churned in there and all kinds of…irons, I have a two gifts, a set of old times carpenter tool with me out of wood.

HF: Now you collected and put together albums haven’t you of pictures that you’ve collected over the years?

FK: Yeah, I’ve got two, three years of two foot square. I got over sixty, a hundred fifty pictures in every hour of every Indian chief. Charlie Russell in there, Brigham Young is in there and John Brown is in there. You can’t anybody ever lived in the southwest that isn’t in that album. I don’t know what to do with these big albums. Lately a friend of mine wants me to give to the historical society in Boise. I might do that.
HF: Fred it’s been a real pleasure for me to be here along with Mr. Jerry Glenn this morning visiting with you on the early days of Eagle rock and you have shared with us your experiences in law enforcement, your experiences as an early dweller and inhabitant here of this area with your twin brother, it is your twin brother isn’t it? His name is Frank.

FK: And Harold, watch him he is pretty windy.

HF: Is he? He can really spin them pretty long. Well, this rather, it’s been really interesting and I appreciate very sincerely the privilege of coming to your home. And again thanks to you Fred.

FK: Okay Harold.