HF- The Upper Snake River Valley Historical Society is pleased to transcribe onto this C-60 cassette an interview that was first done on reel to reel tape and the interview follows and this is being recorded and transcribed on the 21st of April 1984.

HF- Oral History of the Upper Snake River Valley. It’s my privilege this afternoon to be in the home of an old timer here at Rigby and I want to say that I appreciate the opportunity of coming into your home Mr. Smith this day which is the 2nd day of September 1970. First I would like to ask a few questions pertaining to you. For example, will you state to me your full name and the date and place you were born?

JS- My full name is Joseph Hyrum Smith. I was born on the 19th day of June 1880 in Ogden.

HF- That’s a very interesting name you have. Does it have any connections with Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet or his brother Hyrum?

JS- No, none whatever.

HF- None whatever.

JS- None, whatever is right.

HF- I see. You don’t know how you came by that name.

JS- It’s through my parents.

HF- Was your father, was his name Joseph?

JS- No, just William F. Smith.

HF- And when and where was he born?

JS- He was born in London and I can’t give you the date.

HF- I see, did he immigrate to America because of the gospel?

JS- Yes, he was convicted out of Logan by some missionaries or somebody.

HF- Converted, I see.

JS- Yeah, converted.

HF- And how about your mother, what was her maiden name?

JS- Her name was [inaudible] she was an orphan. There was just two of them, her and her brother and they were born in England and through the Mormon Church, there in North
Ogden they fetched them over here, or fetched her over here. But my uncle he had to leave with Cable Gram.

HF- Cable Gram?

JS- Cable Gram from London to Iceland and the first one that later crossed the ocean.

HF- Now what was his name?

JS- Frank …

HF- How do you spell that?

JS- T-H-U-G-T-O-A.

HF- I see. Did he come to America?

JS- Yeah, he come to America and when he come to America, Martin Lewis, he used to own a strip of ground 400 hundred miles long in California and when he was a young fellow he split red wood and fir. And then in later years he come to Ogden and worked for the railroad.

HF- I see. Well now your parents met and married in the Ogden area, did they?

JS- In Logan, Clarkston.

HF- In Logan. Do you recall the approximate date?

JS- No, I don’t know whether Nadine she looked up some history.

HF- I see.

JS- And I don’t know whether she has got there.

HF- What induced them to come up here into the Upper Snake River Valley here in the Idaho Territory?

JS- Well my father was like a lot of others. He wanted to get away from Ogden and he was interested in that there CWM [indecipherable] machine and wagon company and he wanted to get out and take up a homestead and he come up here and took up a homestead out here in Clark, that’s east of Rigby.

HF- I see. What year did they come up Mr. Smith?

JS- They come up here, I come up with him in 1888. I wasn’t quite nine years old.
HF- In 1888. Did he bring his entire family with him?

JS- No. He just brought me and an older brother. I had an older brother.

HF- And you filed at a homestead at that time out in Clark.

JS- Yeah.

HF- Later he brought his wife, your mother I guess, and the rest of the family.

JS- Yeah, and they lived on that homestead out there til they proved up on it, two or three years and then the CW&M wanted him to come to Idaho Falls, it had changed its name then from Eagle Rock to Idaho Falls, you know, and he moved his family down to Idaho Falls.

HF- Had he managed their business at Eagle Rock?

JS- He was the lumber end of it. He was a lumber man, a builder.

HF- When did he move to, the first time, when did he move to Eagle Rock?

JS- Well he went to working for them and driving backwards and forth right after the family come up here.

HF- I see but wasn’t he associated with them before he left Utah?

JS- Oh yes in a way.

HF- In what way?

JS- Well I couldn’t answer that exactly but O’Dell and the rights you know. They were the ones that … it here.

HF- I see. Now how long did he manage the consolidated wagon and machine company in Idaho Falls?

JS- Well he was the lumber end of building, he was the manager over the building end of it, the lumber, and he died in ’62 but he was there all his life while he was up here.

HF- Was he?

JS- Yes. That was his job.

HF- Well now as a young man in the community of Clark out here, and you say you were only there for about three years, two or three years is all.
JS- Well that’s all the family was there and later years me and a brother of mine bought the place from them.

HF- From your folks?

JS- From my folks. I was fifteen years old and we bought it and he went off to looking after sheep, herding sheep you know.

HF- Your brother?

JS- My brother and I stayed there and run that ranch and accumulated stuff. I was there for damn near fifteen years.

HF- Is that right? Well now Joe, is this what they usually call you is Joe?

JS- Yes.

HF- Joe Smith? Or J.H. or what?

JS- They pretty much, everybody knows me only in business is Joe, Joe Smith, and J.H. is business.

HF- I see. Well now Joe, going back to the time when you were just eight almost nine years old and when you first came and settled with your folks there at Clark, the community of Clark, who were some of the early neighbors that you recall?

JS- Up at Clark?

HF- Uh-huh.

JS- Why Jesse Clark and Hugh Edwards, old man Terry, Heber Perry, and there was old man Finn, there were two Finn families and a Roth family and that was about the size of it.

HF- Had each of them homesteaded land there?

JS- Yes they all of them had homesteaded.

HF- Now Jesse Clark became the man after whom Clark was named. Wasn’t that right, isn’t that correct?

JS- Yeah, when that ward up there was created into the church, Jesse Clark was the Bishop.

HF- He was the first Bishop of that ward then?
JS- Yes and Henry Perry was his first counselor and a fellow by the name of William Nathaum, I always called him Bill, William Nethaum was the second and father was the secretary of that ward.

HF- Your father?

JS- My father was.

HF- Well that’s very interesting. Well now when you father operated and managed the business of the lumber part of the CW&M, did they do a lot of freighting of equipment supplies and lumber on up the valley?

JS- Yes they shipped it every place with freight teams you know.

HF- Would you describe a freight team?

JS- When I was young there right after we took that place over I accumulated several freight outfits of my own and we built a flour mill out here in Rigby and I used to supply several of them stores in Idaho Falls with flour. I’d go to Idaho Falls with a four horse team with flour, you know, and then I’d load up with machinery at CW&M and take it to Rexburg the next day.

HF- Now what type of machinery would this be?

JS- Well it’d be plows and mowing machines, all kind of farm machinery that they handled.

HF- Now the horses would be two abreast, I guess…

JS- Yeah…

HF- And it would be a good heavy wagon.

JS- Yes it would be a good heavy wagon.

HF- What, four wheels?

JS- Yes four wheeled wagons.

HF- Yeah, four wheeled wagon, no cover to it just an open box.

JS- Only I had big canvas to keep my flour dry when I was hauling it down there. Then I’d roll them up and take care of them with being loaded with that machinery.

HF- Now was this flour bagged in…?
JS- Fifty pound bags.

HF- Fifty pound bags, and did it have writing material on it?

JS- Why yes.

HF- What brand?

JS- It was the Rigby Yellowstone special.

HF- Yellowstone special. Mothers used to make their kids underclothes out of that didn’t they? Out of the flour sacks?

JS- Oh yeah they were used for lots of things. A person don’t realize what the people put up with when they come here and why did they stick it out? It was faith and determination that the only thing that ever kept them here was to cultivate this valley.

HF- I’m sure what you say is correct. Now Joe, about what years were you freighting flour to Idaho Falls and machinery back up to Rexburg? How old were you about?

JS- Well I was about 16 years old or 18 years old. It was, let’s see, it was in 1905, 4, 3, and 2. I ran that [indistinguishable] for a long while and I didn’t work steady with the freight outfits there all the time and part of the time I’d work nights at the mill. I could run that flour mill.

HF- You had hired men to help you with these freighters?

JS- Oh yes, I had hired men.

HF- Did you carry; did you haul machinery beyond Rexburg, say up to St. Anthony?

JS- No, I never hauled any machinery; I did take one load up to Sugar City. I remember that, them Sidiways, maybe you know them?

HF- The Sidiways, yes.

JS- Well I took a big load of machinery, if I remember it right, it was a bunch of plows.

HF- James Sidiway?

JS- Clarence.

HF- Clarence Sidiway, that’s right. Now the roads in those days, had they put any gravel to improve the roads at all on them?
JS- Just once in awhile it was some of the counties that dumped this big coarse gravel along the roads to do away with mud holes because the roads was rough. Now I’ll tell you that them iron tired wagon, you know, it sure wore on them.

HF- In those days you didn’t have any coating for your tires, it was all iron wheel.

JS- All iron, no trucks or automobiles.

HF- Right. About how long would it take you to make that trip from Idaho Falls, say to Rexburg?

JS- Well I’d go down to Idaho Falls with a big load of flour in the morning, load up out here miles south here to the mill. That mill’s burnt down now, has been burnt for years and I’d go to Idaho Falls and I’d get unloaded and get loaded up with machinery and get back to here to where I lived out here in Clark, you know.

HF- In one day?

JS- In one day. Then the next morning I would take it on up to Rexburg.

HF- I see and complete that segment of the trip in one day.

JS- Yeah I’d go up and back to Rexburg.

HF- So you’d be back by that evening.

JS- Yeah, I’d be back.

HF- I see. Well now I think they mentioned that you used to haul mail out of Idaho Falls.

JS- Well, when I was 16 years old there was a fellow in Idaho Falls with the name of Olsen, old Chris Olsen and he had the first government contract for U.S. Mail out of Idaho Falls and he come and got me to run the mail for him and when he come after dad could get him to let me go, my older brother had to pack it a month before I’d become 16. I couldn’t pack it until I was 16. Well I picked that mail up in Idaho Falls in the morning with the team and had a little cabin in the barn there on the bank of the river just below where the LDS Hospital is and I’d get that mail and I’d take it to Iona. It’s a community; pretty good, well about one of the biggest communities around here was in Iona. Then I’d leave Iona and come out here on Willard Creek to Orenledish, you wouldn’t know where that is, and then I’d take it on that prospect that’s over to Shelton. Now they call it Shelton and then I’d go from there up here north of Ririe about where the railroad crosses the river and I’d stay there all night and then go back the next day and take the mail.

HF- What was this in, a buggy affair?

JS- Yes, it was in a buckboard.
HF- A buckboard and drawn by two horses?

JS- Once in awhile we would use a cart but not very often because we’d generally had, there was a grocery store or two along the line and they’d get us to fix things up in some of them stores you know.

HF- From Idaho Falls?

JS- Yeah.

HF- Well now up to Iona; was there a store out at Iona in those days?

JS- Yes there was a store started then there was the first president of this Bingham Stake. This was all Bingham County then you know.

HF- Yes.

JS- His name was Steel. James E. Steel. Oh he looked to me like he weighed 300 pounds. When him and two or three other fellows ran that store there.

HF- At Iona?

JS- Yes Iona.

HF- Did you know a fellow by the name of John Shelley there in Iona? Does that ring a bell, John Shelley?

JS- I can’t recall it.

HF- Did you know a fellow by the name of Sam Forbush?

JS- I say I did.

HF- Did you know Sam Forbush?

JS- Yes Sam Forbush lives, their homestead…

HF- At Iona.

JS- Was straight south of U Conn down there on the east side of the road. There’s where his homestead was.

HF- Now did you know his wife? Do you remember his wife at all?

JS- Not unless she was a Fenton. I don’t remember.
HF- Well the old gentlemen, Sam Forbush, homesteaded where the KID transmitter is located, the KID radio transmitter.

JS- Would that be north of Iona?

HF- I guess I would be out there, I’m not positive and they had a homestead there and then this Sanford Forbush, the old gentlemen, now I think he died, you knew his son Sam Forbush who married the Fenton girl. Her name was Amelia Fenton, Sarah Amelia Fenton.

JS- They lived out here in Clark.

HF- Well they lived near Wool Creek.

JS- Well they did, Forbush’s didn’t but that girl’s parents were out here in Clark.

HF- Well they could have been there for a little while.

JS- Yeah in the early days because I know where his homestead was.

HF- That man was my grandfather. That Sam Forbush was my grandfather.

JS- He was, really?

HF- Now my dad, my dad was born at Willow Creek or near Iona in 1895. 1895.

JS- Well you’re speaking, the four corners there was the old Horner corner and then the Richy corner, Horner’s there and Richy’s there, and then the Day had a place on the east side of the road and you went down across sand creek and it’s where their folks was.

HF- The Forbush homestead?

JS- On the south side of Sand Creek.

HF- I see. Well now how many years did you carry the mail for this Mister Olsen?

JS- Well I just carried it as near as I can figure it out for about two months. I didn’t carry it no years.

HF- Do you know who the post master was? Was this Mister Olsen the post master?

JS- No, he was a government contractor but I don’t remember who was the Post Master in Idaho Falls.
HF: I see. Now I understand that you became involved in doing survey work with a survey team. How did that happen about, come about Joe?

JS: Well the first that I got involved with that is when they put this railroad from around the loop when they got to Ririe, they was trying to secure them right-of-ways and that railroad appraiser they couldn’t agree with, them fellows over on Butler Island. That’s just where you get over here to Sunnydale, you know. And then came and got me and two other fellows one of them a Ririe, the old man and … to go over there and arbitrate that thing and we went over there and set a price on it and the old man Steely that owned the place, he consented to it. He wouldn’t settle it with the railroad but he…

HF: He did consent to go along with the price.

JS: Go along with the price and we signed up the right-of-way right there and then.

HF: I see, now that was on the east side of the river? Or the north side of the river?

JS: It’s on the south side of the river.

HF: It’s on the south side of the river?

JS: Yes. It’s in between the dry bed and the river. You see the river is separated there, it wasn’t in the early days, you know and the south channel of that river left and went north over into the north channel. That was the reason the great feeder was built.

HF: Well you help them procure those right-of-ways right in that area?

JS: Yes I did.

HF: And, oh let’s see, that was about 1915, you would have been a man about 35 years old.

JS: I was young.

HF: Well now getting back to your involvement with survey work, how did that come about and who was in the party, who led this survey party?

JS: Well do you mean on the railroad or this mapping, the U.S. Geological Survey?


JS: Well I’ll tell about how that came about. I had a lot of good construction teams and in the time that railroad started out of Idaho Falls, there were the livestock company is there’s nothing but sand loads, great big old sand loads. Well they were pulling them sand loads down through town there to that Crow Creek, you know where?
HF- Yes.

JS- There were pulling that down there and I had two or three outfits pulling wheel scrapers there and this man, there was a surveyor, the name is Stiles from Austin Texas, came to Idaho Falls, there was a part of the surveyors had gone to Jackson Hole. Well this Author Stiles come to the CW&M and G.G. White, the main man of the CW&M. This Stiles wanted him to get a good reliable, that’s what they told me, a good reliable stout young warrior to work for them, his assistant you know. Well they came over there on the railroad and called me off the grate and White got me to quit the railroad and that night I quit it and come home up here to Clark and got my horses ready. I took a bunch of saddle horses, and pack horses and went on through to Jackson’s Hole with him in a few days, you know and that’s how I got started up there.

HF- Now did Mr. Stiles have quite a number of aides in this?

JS- Well Mr. Stiles was, there was a fellow by the name of Mac Dannin from Oklahoma that had gone in there with the main party. There were about 35 of them and this Stiles come up later for a helper you know and this here Mac Dannin, he’d gone over there and had a camp located right where the Growvault River comes out of the mountain over there on the Shurden Hill you know. Then when we got up there they split up in about three outfits.

HF- So they would be around 10 men in each outfit?

JS- Yes they was about that many, yes as right at that you didn’t miss it and the outfit this Stiles from Texas, I had to, we had to take it from the center of Jackson’s Hole all the Teton Mountains over into the basin to the line, to the Wyoming and Idaho line.

HF- I see.

JS- And I helped map them mountains and them peaks and all of it.

HF- All of that area just immediately east of the line then.

***HF- To complete the interview, turn…***

HF- Side two, continuing the interview to be completed with Mr. Smith…

JS- Yeah clear over here to the mouth of the Growvault River in Jackson.

HF- Now the purpose was what, to survey, were they trying to establish their 640 acre, uh…?

JS- Nothing to that.

HF- Nothing to that?
JS- They, after Lewis and Clark, there was a party sent out at Sheridan, Wyoming to make maps of that country and this was the finishing up work of it.

HF- Now what would be included on those maps? Maybe the height of the mountains?

JS- Well the height, the elevation, whatever big canyons, rivers, streams, tributaries. That’s was just plain geography.

HF- Yes the geological survey of the area. I see. Now can you tell me what year you were involved in doing this?

JS- I was there two summers and it was 1898 and ’99.

HF- In other words you were 18 and 19 years old.

JS- Yes that’s what I was.

HF- About 18 and 19. And you took some saddle horses over there.

JS- This Stiles down here at Idaho Falls, he bought a new outfit, buckboard, and saddles. A whole damn new outfit.

HF- I see. Well now you fellows, course, camped right out doing this.

JS- Oh yes we had good tents and…

HF- Uh-huh.

JS- Yeah.

HF- Quite a lot of riding and a lot of walking I’d imagine.

JS- A lot of walking and rough walking and this Stiles, I was his helper, and him and I made a map of the Jackson Lake and I was the first white man or rode the first row boat around Jackson’s Lake that ever went around it.

HF- Now that was the Jackson Lake that became...

JS- A reservoir.

HF- A reservoir.

JS- Yeah.

HF- That’s somewhere around, oh what, 25 or 35 miles around it or is it bigger than that?
JS- It was 7 miles wide and 13 miles long when we surveyed it and it had had a lot of …

to it over next to the peak there.

HF- Now how about those other lakes further down towards Jackson, Jenny?

JS- Jenny’s Lake is right on down the Teton Peaks, right down along the mountain.

HF- Did you have to survey that?

JS- Yeah we mapped that.

HF- You mapped that out?

JS- And then there is another little lake, what uh...

HF- Leigh, Leigh Lake?

JS- Between Jenny’s Lake and Jackson.

HF- Would that be Leigh Lake? I don’t know which one. Incidentally, while I am

chatting with you here, you know Jenny’s Lake was named after Beaver Dick’s first wife.

Now this was Richard Leigh. Do you, Richard Leigh or Beaver Dick was a beaver

trapper and quite a noted guide in the area. Did you ever meet him?

JS- No I don’t think so.

HF- You don’t, see he lived up around Teton City.

JS- Well listen, at the time them trappers and them mining fellows out there on Leigh

Creek in Teton Basin there was a city there of 1,000 wasn’t there?

HF- Oh I’m not sure about that many.

JS- Well that’s what the history, some of the history calls were.

HF- Now there may have been quite a lot of mining done.

JS- There was a lot of trapping, you know, in them days.

HF- Yeah.

JS- They were all trappers.

HF- Probably what you refer to is the rendezvous, maybe one of the rendezvous where

the trappers would all get together and get their supplies from the fur companies like the
American and Rocky Mountain and Hudson Bay. Did you ever have an occasion to climb the Teton Peaks?

JS- Just a short way up them. I went up as high as I could easily get you know, not being prepared to climb and took a chisel about that big around and bored a hole down in a good substantial rock and then put a plug in it with a wedge in the bottom of it and drove that down there until you couldn’t get it out unless you dynamited it and then they’d stand the station and the elevation on the top of that.

HF- I see.

JS- It was [indistinguishable] climbing…

HF- Do you remember what elevation that was, that plug you put in?

JS- Well no not down there, but its 13…

HF- 13,700 and so on the top. Now how about the other peaks to the north?

JS- Well you take all them rough damn peaks between the main Teton and Mount Moran. That is just damn rough going now.

HF- I bet it was.

JS- In them days, no trails no nothing you just had to wander around. You were lucky if you get your horse around there; most of it was afoot, you’d have to get to the top to see what was in that big canyon there. Whether there was a stream of water or what kind of rock it was just like that Death Canyon that comes into Jackson’s Hole from the South side of the peaks there. In there where Jenny’s Lake you know, just below it.

HF- You recall that area real well.

JS- Oh yes.

HF- Do you recall some little lakes up in there like Marian Lake?

JS- No, you’d run onto a small lake every now and again.

HF- They were pretty much volcanic, I think, weren’t they? Craters?

JS- Yeah they would be.

HF- Now let’s see, you mentioned Death Canyon, now there was Cascade Canyon.

JS- Well that’s further on down.
HF- Do you remember going up that canyon up to the pass or the summit?

JS- Well, when we…the pass in Jackson’s Hole, where the pass is now, you go down on the north side of it on the state highway. Well in them days you come up from Victor and there’s, oh what is it a quarter of an acre, half an acre, camping ground there on the summit.

HF- Yeah, now that’s what they call Mike Harris Flat.

JS- Is that what they call it? Well right off that way, it would be right off that way, I put an elevation plug in there. Its back in them, just in the edge of the pines a ways but that state road goes down through here, down to Wilson. Well in them days it was on the south side of that canyon and corduroyed with logs and things. It was just a mud hole, from the top to the bottom.

HF- On the east side?

JS- On the south side?

HF- On the south east side of the mountain.

JS- Yeah on the south east, course that trail creek going from Victor up was all on the north side of the creek.

HF- Mm-hmm. Now, there was an old crater; they talk about the crater, on the east side of the Teton Pass. I guess it was an old crater and the snow slides and so forth go down there.

JS- Yeah that’s where the county road is now.

HF- See they’re building a new road clear around there now.

JS- They are?

HF- Uh huh, to take out all the switch backs of the Teton Pass…road.

JS- Well which side are they building it on?

HF- On the east side and going towards the north.

JS- Blowing that mountain down.

HF- Now you worked there two years, two summers you say with this Stiles? Did you work on the west side of the mountain very much?
JS- We spent quite a lot of time there; we were camped for pretty near a month up Leigh’s creek there out at Driggs. There’s Driggs Creek there.

HF- Well there’s Leigh Creek; there is north Leigh and south Leigh.

JS- Well we were over on the main Teton there.

HF- On Teton on the canyon?

JS- On the canyon.

HF- On Teton Creek and Teton Canyon. That became very noted for the scouts.

JS- Well there was nothing in them days there at all.

HF- But you helped map that canyon and the one to the south Darby?

JS- Yes.

HF- Do you remember Darby?

JS- Yeah I helped to braze that line clear through the time we left Victor up there till you just turn around up in there and about 10 miles into the park.

HF- That’s amazing.

JS- I’ve had quite a lot of experience.

HF- Over the years of your experience living in the Upper Snake River Valley, you’d known for many many years some of the early ranchers that have lived in this area, Rigby and Ririe and Swan Valley. Who were some of the more prominent noted ranchers that you personally knew?

JS- Well there was in Ririe here, Dave Barry and the Millers and the Smiths. They were the main ones. They come here, or their first winter to stay in that Ririe outfit up there, popular it is, a mile or two out...they stayed there in 1877 the first night.

HF- Man alive!

JS- Got there, there’s a piece of, there’s one of the boys that was born up there and he’s a year younger than I be.

HF- Is that right?

JS- I was going to show it to you, there.
HF- In Orofino.

JS- Yeah.

HF- Well now those were families in the Ririe area. Now how about Antelope coming south?

JS- Well there was an old pioneer settler on Antelope in them days and I don’t, I think his name could be right about it was Lambert, and that was all a wide open free country in them days.

HF- Now did you know anyone east of there on up into, what do they call Cedar?

JS- Where, no, Cunard Valley?

HF- Cunard Valley.

JS- Well Canard Valley, when it was first taken up there was Dick and Joe Hymes and a fellow they called Old Bally Hide that took possession of the whole Cunard Valley.

HF- Made a big private ranch out of the whole thing?

JS- Well no, they homesteaded each one of them.

HF- Oh I see.

JS- And then as you went over the hill into Fall Creek, Jack Jones, he was the early settler there but them homes are all gone now.

HF- Did they have cattle ranches?

JS- Cattle that was there main thing was cattle. They didn’t haul no grain out of that country then, and then when you got on the east side of the river there was Joe Bernard. He was one of the main ranchers and then where Pine Creek is there was a fellow of the name Dan Jacobs. They say he was a Butte gambler. Well he come down, and I don’t know what rights he put on that Pine Creek, but he took a lot of that land up and then went up the canyon where you go over to Victor you know and tried to run that water down the side hill there and irrigate part of that.

HF- I see. He didn’t succeed very well did he?

JS- No, he didn’t.

HF- How about ranchers on up Swan Valley and Erwin, on up that way, on up the river?
JS- Well this here Joe Bernard, he lives right there in Swan Valley and then there was Butlers up there.

HF- On up towards Erwin?

JS- On up towards the dam and the Weekses. Now you take them Weeks boys that’s up in there now, they own a lot of that country and their parents have been gone.

HF- But their folks had settled that area?

JS- They settled it. Old Sam Weeks and then there was a Jesse Week up there and I was trying to think who, there was a fellow from down that Utah Country by the name of Kaiser that built a big ox pit right about in the center where that reservoir is now. It would be in the center of the damn thing.

HF- Is that right?

JS- Yeah, and then on the south side…

HF- He built a what, what did you say he built?

JS- Oh he had a big fancy house there and they used it was kind of a dude headquarters.

HF- I see. Ran a lot of cattle too I suppose and so on. Well now over in the Bone area. Were you acquainted out in that part of the country?

JS- In the early day?

HF- Uh huh.

JS- Yes I was.

HF- That was principally used for ranching even then wasn’t it?

JS- No. There was only one or two ranchers in that Bone country and that was Old Man Sellers on, pretty near the head of Willard Creek. There was a saw mill or two up there, and in, uh…

HF- Did you know the Kiefer boys who used to…? (Laughter)

JS- Yes.

HF- What do you think about the Kiefer boys who operated ranches up in there?

JS- Well they didn’t have a hell of a lot.
HF- But you knew them?

JS- Well knew them; their dad was the main carpenter out of this lumber yard of dad’s.

HF- Is that right?

JS- Oh Bill Kiefer, yes I know him.

HF- Yes he worked for the railroad a lot too didn’t he? As a carpenter? He constructed a lot of the depots for the railroad.

JS- Yeah, I think so. I wouldn’t know for sure.

HF- But you know the twins real good, Frank and Fred?

JS- Yes.

HF- Any other old timers out in that Bone country? You mentioned Mr. Sellers.

JS- Well there was the Kiefers, had a headquarters there on Willard Creek you know, old Jake Kiefer.

HF- Is that a brother to Bill?

JS- Yes I think you’re right there and then in the early days up here at the head of this reservoir there’s a horsemen there, big cattle men and horse raiser by the name of Charley Martin that owned that and he had a homestead here in the valley and I’ll tell you where it is. It’s on Sand Creek right down there just a little south and east of Lincoln where all them trailer houses are.

HF- And that was the…?

JS- The Old Charley Martin homestead. They used to fetch horses in there by the spring of the year by the hundreds.

HF- What? To shoe them and brand them?

JS- No to sell them.

HF- Sell them, I see.

JS- There was several of them big outfits up in there that lived here in the edge of the valley that had a lot of horses and cattle. Well they got an old bill luxtin there in the falls. Well they got a crazy idea and they sold them horses and cattle and gathered up all their money that they could and went down to Panama and bought a sugar plantation.
HF- That’s quite an interesting account.

JS- And they had an awful crop of sugar down there, cane, and I think that they mortgaged that to get some money to harvest it, you know, and lost the whole thing to a California outfit.

HF- Joe, do you remember when some of the first dry farming was done in this area?

JS- Sure I do.

HF- Who, by your recollection, was some of the first dry farmers to start that form of, type of farming?

JS- Well Earn Harp was one of the first ones.

HF- Earn Harp?

JS- Yes Harps over here in LaBell, if you have ever heard that name. Well I’ll tell you, Frank Harp up in the basin.

HF- Harup?

JS- Yes.

HF- Oh, Harup.

JS- It was his uncle, was the first fellow that I knew or got any recollection of trying to raise grain on Antelope.

HF- Well now in the Ririe land, who was out in there that started dry farming?

JS- Well out in there, this side of Meadow Creek where that big Hayes place is, there was old Orrin Lee and a bunch of doctors from Idaho Falls that started that in the early days. Just like old Woodmansee and Webster started that Rexburg bench.

HF- That’s really mushroomed hasn’t it? Tremendous.

JS- I’ll say it has.

HF- Now are you familiar with some of the very earliest canals taken out of the feeder heading, what do they call it? The Feeder Head?

JS- The Great Feeder.

HF- Are you familiar with some of the very earliest canals being dredged out of there?
JS- You mean the strong water cleaner?

HF- Yes.

JS- Well I think I do.

HF- What were some of the early names of the canals and the parties involved with it?

JS- These here Lewisville fellows and the Rigby people and the Harrison and, let’s see, the Lewisville.

HF- Was that their names, Lewisville?

JS- Yeah, the Lewisville Canal and the Rigby Canal, the Clark and Edwards, and the Rudy Canal and the Harrison Canal. When that dry bed water turned the other way and flooded the river, then it left all them canals dry and they started to build that there feeder in 1890? Was it ’95? I believe it was the year the Indians, or the nigger regiment was sent here when they had the last trouble with the Indians in Jackson’s Hole.

HF- That was in 1895.

JS- Yeah, you’re right.

HF- Yeah, 1895. They did send up a lot of negro soldiers out of what?

JS- Fort Douglas.

HF- Fort Douglas, they came up, what, out to Market Lake?

JS- Yeah they unloaded them over to Market Lake and ferried them across the river and they camped two miles west of here and a mile north.

HF- Did you go out and see them?

JS- I was living with a fellow there just across the road from them.

HF- They were all infantry men weren’t they?

JS- Yeah, great big bright cusses and what did they do, where did they put the whites?

HF- I don’t know.

JS- They put them up there above Ririe just as you hit the foothills.

HF- Oh, there was two groups the whites and the negro’s infantry? Then did they bring a bunch of Calvary men in about the same time?
JS- I don’t think so. I just think that them two first ones because it was only just a short while after that, I won’t say how long, an Indian, a bunch of Indians who never cut across the desert, they’ll always follow a stream of water. Well them Indians come out of Jackson’s Hole, there were just hundreds of them, and this Burgess Canal out here a mile south of here, that was a channel of the river in the early days and I seen them Indians a trailing down that there canal there.

HF- Did they follow the south fork of the Snake down?

JS- Well this was a branch of the river in the early days, course, you can’t see it, you can have an idea of what it is.

HF- Well now as we close this tape you’ve lived in the Upper Snake River Valley then all of your life.

JS- Practically all of my life, but I have been a great livestock mover from western Wyoming, southern Montana and out clear down the Salmon River.

HF- You’ve been involved in livestock?

JS- A whole lot of it.

HF- What did you have, ranches or did you have buy stock?

JS- I bought and sold.

HF- Bought and sold.

JS- And shipped them.

HF- I see. Did you have feed lots in the Rigby area to feed them out?

JS- No I just sold them on the market most of them and then I run them on the forest. I have accumulate the Taylor Grazing Act in the forest. I was called over to Boise a lot of times, the time they were trying to get this Taylor Grazing Act through and that’s the public lands you know and the forest is when they took and made forest out of this here, all these rough mountains because people were just ruining it, just trailing it to death. Well I’ve done a lot of work on that.

HF- Do you fully feel in harmony with the conservation programs of the United States government to with reference to forest lands as well as some of the other public domain?

JS- Yes I think that they ought to have real restrictions on it and take care of it because I don’t like to see anymore parks because here you take this Sawtooth deal up here, you’ve heard a lot about. If that was put into a National Park was does it mean? In years to come
this young generation all they would have is a fire up there. That’s just what would happen to them. Just look what a mess it is where them there thick timber countries is right today but then that’s nothing compared in, on August 10th in 1920 when all hell broke loose up there in that big blow up come, you’ve heard about that awful fire or read about it that they had there. It’s the worse thing that ever happened.

HF- Now that’s in the Salmon country?

JS- That’s up in Northern Idaho and Western Montana…

HF- Western Montana.

JS- …and Eastern Oregon. That fire was so big up there (Tape cuts out for a few seconds) if I remember right they was 80 lives lost in it and it raised the temperature over in Denver eight or ten degrees.

HF- Is that fantastic? Well you have seen a tremendous change take place in the Upper Snake River Valley.

JS- Yes I have. I have seen practically all of it you might say.

HF- From a lot of sagebrush?

JS- When we first come here it was just a desert and a forest.

HF- A lot of sagebrush.

JS- Oh sagebrush only what they cleaned off and cedars. You go right out south here a mile across this Burgess Canal and it didn’t…the cedars there, they have them practically all gone now. It’s from there clear to the … Ririe you know. That you couldn’t hardly see a band of horses a hundred yards ahead of you. They was that thick. Now you wouldn’t hardly believe that would you?

HF- That’s the cedar?

JS- That’s these old native cedars.

HF- What have they used those for, firewood mainly?

JS- Firewood and posts. Solid.

HF- Good cedar posts.

JS- Big ones.

HF- Now the streams were pretty well lined with Aspen and, what, cottonwoods?
JS- It was mostly cottonwood. There was mighty little aspen.

***Tape ends***