

SHIRLEY HAYCOCK

Oral History Interview

Statewide Oral History Project, Abandoned Mines Reclamation Program
Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining

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I'm Lee Bennett and I'm here with Shirley Haycock at the Price City Library to interview Shirley for the Utah mining history project. The interview is being recorded by Jim Mattingly.

LB: Shirley, if you would start out by saying your name and your date of birth, and where you are now living.

SH: Well, I'm Shirley Haycock; I used to be a Richardson when I was younger. I was born on the 17th of December 1932, and I live in the town of Spring Glen, Utah.

LB: Ok. Tell us a little bit about your background. Places you've lived and more particularly how you came to work in the coal mines in this area.

SH: I was raised here in Carbon County and I lived several places, like San Francisco and Denver, and places like that. Then I came back, I had two sons at that time, and I lived with my parents. I was out of a job and went to the state employment office and said, "I need something to do." They called me up one day and said, "Shirley, would you mind going into the mines? They've rescinded the law." The law had stood on the books since the 1800s, that women would not go underground. I had just visited a mine maybe six months before, and it's dark in there and noisy, and I said after I came out, "I don't think I ought to work in that noisy place." When they offered me a chance to try it I said, "Good, I'll go try it!" [laughter].

LB: You were about how old at that time?

SH: Oh, 42.¹

LB: And had mining been in your family? Did your dad mine?

SH: No, we're fourth generation railroad people.²

LB: So, you're the first miner in the family?

SH: I'm the first miner in the family.

¹ During the interview Shirley said she was 45, but upon reviewing the draft transcript she realized she was 42 years old when she started mining.

² The 1940 census found Shirley and her parents living at Martin in Carbon County, UT. Her father worked as a carpenter for a railroad.

LB: Which mine did you work in?

SH: I went to work out at Kaiser, which is over at Dragerton, and we took out coking coal. That's where the big coking ovens were and it was used in the manufacture of steel. One of their big contractors was Geneva Steel in Provo [UT], and then Fontana in California. As things changed with the steel industry the demand for that kind of coal went down. Now they don't use it at all, and as a result Kaiser's closed. Not that the coal is gone, there's still a lot of coal that way, but there's no demand for that type of coal.

LB: And is that town there anymore?

SH: Dragerton's still there, yes. It was built in the early '40s [1940s]. Galbreath [John W. Galbreath and Company] came in and built, I think it was 300 homes over there,³ so there would always be a crew to take care of the Kaiser coal, because during the war that coal was extremely important. Then people moved out and now a lot of retirees live over there because it's economical and they've got everything that they need, really, and they're not locked into a big city. And there's another community over there, Sunnyside, that was also part of the coal mining area. Their mine has since closed.

LB: What was the name of the mine at Dragerton? Was it one of the Sunnyside mines or did it have its own name?

SH: No, the one at Dragerton was the Kaiser Mine. It was actually owned by Kaiser.

LB: What was it like, being the first woman underground?

SH: Hilarious! [laughter] First off, the rumor got around in a hurry. Coal miners are as gabby as women are, and they realized that I was going to be there, you know. So when I showed up at the coal mine, they're all sitting on the bench and they're not going to go underground. When Johnny [a supervisor] came over and got me, he said, "I have to go down with you because you're a newbie." The mantrip at Kaiser was a little train and he took me up and put me on the first car and got in and sat down beside me. And I thought, "Well, are those guys all going to stay in the bathhouse?" So, the train went underground and when we got down to where I was supposed to start working, I noticed the guys were all on board the train [laughter]. And they were just determined that I wasn't going to succeed at this. Well, I'm kind of a quiet person, I don't make a lot of noise when I'm around and they put me on the belt line so I was out of sight, out of mind. I ran that belt line for, oh, six months.

LB: Tell me what a belt line is. What's it do?

³ In July 1973 the citizens of Dragerton and Columbia voted to incorporate as East Carbon. In November of that year John W. Galbreath and Company turned over to the new city \$615,000 in assets, including deeds for 120 acres, the water and sewer systems, water rights, equipment, vehicles, and a building for city offices and the fire station. Shortly thereafter US Steel donated 700 acres, including part of the city's water supply (Ronald G. Watt, A History of Carbon County, Utah Centennial County History Series, 1997, pgs 93-94).

SH: The section I was in was long-wall mining. And as the rotorheads cut the coal down it falls on a belt, unlike the old method of putting it into a coal cart, it falls on a belt and is carried by the belt out to the loader head. Now this belt line went clear out of the mine so they didn't have to have any of us shovel or anything else to get it [the coal] out. There's more coal at a time that comes across it. They called me a beltperson. He [a supervisor] said, "You can't be a beltperson because you're not a man," and he said, "It doesn't sound right to call you a beltperson." So they called me a beltperson. Anyhow, it was my job to make sure that the coal and the coal dust didn't pile up under it [the belt] and create the problem of a possible explosion, because coal dust is very volatile and will explode easily. So I told him, "I want a rake," and they laughed at me, "What would you do with a rake underground?" Well, I showed them, you just took the rake and went like this [gesturing] under the belt line. It turns the rock dust over and buries the coal dust. The mine inspector came in and said, "I've never seen it as clean as Shirley keeps it!" [laughter].

LB: How long did you run the belt?

SH: I was on the belt, I think, nine months. Almost a year I was on the belt, and then I got a bid on a buggy.

LB: And tell me about a buggy.

SH: A buggy is a unit that comes up behind a miner, a continuous miner. It's a different situation than what I just told you [long-wall]. Anyhow, it's a large machine that has a rotary head on the front and it cuts the coal down. It makes entryways so that the air can be diverted wherever you want it. But in order to move the coal out of the way and get it out of the mine, they'd load it into what's called a buggy. The buggy only goes one direction, it goes out and you have to go backwards to come back, you see, because you're hooked to an electric cable. And it was kind of fun because they challenged me to get it done faster. So one night I was going along, just doing my thing, and I forgot to go backwards. I turned around and went the other way and I ran over the cable and broke it. So they fixed it and then I minded my Ps and Qs and went the right direction from then on [laughter]. Well, I didn't realize it until several days later: They told me I'd set a new record for the mine and the other mining crews were busting their butts trying to match it, you know [laughter]. When you don't have long-wall, you're limited to how much coal you bring out of the mine. Long-wall produces millions of tons a year, whereas a continuous miner doesn't.

LB: You had mentioned that you bid on the buggy. What does that mean?

SH: Kaiser was a union mine and in order to transfer from one job to the other, you'd bid on it. You put in your slip of paper that said, "I'd like to do this job." I thought, "I don't want to be a beltperson all my time," so I bid on the buggy.

LB: What kind of training did they give you since you'd never mined before?

SH: Actually, they gave me no training prior to going underground. But they had classes and I made sure I went to every class that taught safety and all kinds of techniques. I'm a curious person, I love education, and so I felt like it would behoove me to take in everything they

offered. And it was fun, you know. The guys didn't expect me to do it that way, but I said, "If I'm here I'm going to learn about it." Nowadays, if a man wants to go into the mine he has to take a training course before he can ever go underground. But back in those days, why, they figured if you could handle a pick and shovel, you could go underground.

LB: What would have been a typical day when you ran the belt? What time did you have to go on shift? How'd you get from your home to the mine? You know, some of these mines were pretty deep; how long did it take the mantrip to get you down to where you needed to be?

SH: I lived in Helper and it's 30 miles over to Dragerton. I worked all three shifts, not just one. I worked two weeks on, two weeks off on each shift. Well, I can't tell you exactly what time, but I always tried to be there a half-hour early so I would be ready to go underground. You had to pick up your lamp and get your brass, all this to take with you so they didn't lose you under there. I'll have to tell you a story about that. When I first started working with them, the guys figured they'd get rid of me if my lamp wasn't charged. So I put the lamp on and I went underground. I was down there about 30 minutes when the light went out. I never said a word; I knew where I was standing and I knew how far I had to go to find something that was familiar. So I didn't say a word. Well, here comes one of the guys and said, "Where's your lamp?" and I said, "It doesn't work." What they'd done was taken it off the charger. So as a result he called the foreman and the foreman had to give me his lamp, then he had to make his way out in the dark [laughter]. I thought that was good retribution for somebody!

LB: When I've been to a coal mine, they had a room where the miners come in in their street clothes, and they've got buckets suspended from the ceiling. They lower them down and they put on their mining gear and get a number tag off the wall and attach it [the tag] to themselves. Was there something like that when you were mining?

SH: No, there wasn't for me. The men had a bathhouse and there were baskets on the ceiling. That's where they put their clean clothes, then ran them up to the ceiling. The miner clothes hung on the wall. But since I was a woman one of the things that I heard was, "I'm not taking a bath with a woman standing around!" Well, I'm not the kind to take a bath with a bunch of men standing around either. My understanding is that we had one woman who did exactly that because they wouldn't provide her a bathhouse. She went right in and took a bath with the guys. 'Course the guys got out of the way! [laughter] But that wasn't my style. I just said, "Well, I'm working and making good money; I'm not going to worry about it." I would go there in my work clothes, they were clean, I'd work a shift and they'd be dirty. But I had a quilt over my car seat and I got in my car and went home and bathed at home. So that's how I handled it. The next two women they hired at Kaiser, they put in a bathhouse for them.

LB: How long was a shift? How many hours?

SH: Eight hours.

LB: Was that eight underground hours?

SH: No, no. You got on the mantrip at 8 o'clock in the morning. You got on the mantrip and you went underground, and at Kaiser it was three miles underground. It took us about 15 minutes or so to get to the various areas because it stopped every so often to let men off, you know. You worked about seven hours and then they brought you back out.

LB: When you said you collected your brass, what does that mean?

SH: Oh, the brass was a little round piece of brass about the size of a dollar, a silver dollar. It had a number on it and I'd pick that up and stick it in my pocket. When I came back out of the mine I'd give it back to the man, just drop it in the hat there. That way they could tell if you were still underground or not. It was a safety factor, really.

LB: Did you have your own number or was it whatever was next up?

SH: Oh, I suppose somebody else had this number at one time or another. Boy, I can't even remember what my numbers were. Ninety-seven I think I had out at Kaiser.

LB: Are any of the fellows you worked with still in the area?

SH: Yes, a lot of them are. They're all retired like I am, you know. I see some of them every once in a while. Because of the fact that I was an early pioneer, why a lot of these people know me. They tell me I'm a legend in this town. In fact, I had a man see me the other day, he's a representative for the union; when I told him who I was, well, right now he knew who I was. I had worked with his dad out at Kaiser.

LB: Do you think any of these people that you worked with in the mine would want to be part of this program?

SH: Oh, they might. I can't tell you where to find them because I've lived so many places in this old country I haven't really kept track of the hometown people as much. A good source to find out about [them] is Norma, upstairs [Price librarian]. She knows most of the community.

LB: What is at the mine, on the ground surface? Obviously there's the equipment that brought the cars down into the mine and that kind of thing. What else was around there?

SH: Well, the big working site is the tipple. The coal comes out from underground and goes into the tipple, like the one up at Castle Gate. During the war [WWII] it was all women who worked as the coal came out of the mine [speaking of Castle Gate Mine]. They'd dump it on a conveyor belt to carry it up into the tipple and they had to pick the boney out of it. You know what boney is?

LB: I do. It's the rock.

SH: Yes, it's the rock. All mines have a shale roof, some of it is very hard and some of it's quite soft. In areas of the Castle Gate Mine it was quite soft so they had to pick the [boney] out of there. And then it went into the crusher inside the mine and broke it up into slack for some,

sorted out for lumps for others, and that's how they got various grades of coal. They shipped them accordingly. Nowadays, with the underground miner it all comes out pretty much chewed up. We don't see the large lumps we used to. In fact, you can't buy lump coal anymore unless you know somebody right at the mine. Also on the surface would be a stockpile, so to speak, and the mine buildings where they did the repairs for various underground equipment, and the bathhouse was always there. Let's see, what else was there? Oh, and then the offices, there're always offices.

LB: How long were you the only woman underground in that mine [Kaiser]?

SH: Over a year. Yes, I think all of the mines around us said, "We'll see how she works out." The first thing I know, they wanted to know how much hanky-panky's going on downstairs. Well, with me there's no hanky-panky. I just felt like it was out of place. I can work as hard as a man does but I don't have to act like a woman when I'm underground. And I don't tell dirty jokes. I figure that's a come-on and I didn't need come-ons while I was there. So I tried to keep everything above board so that if other women wanted to go underground, they didn't have a bad reputation to fight.

LB: So you were really aware of that spotlight effect?

SH: Ah, very much so. Very much so.

LB: What did your family think about it?

SH: Well, they were kind of against it in the beginning. But after I'd been there a couple of months they didn't pay any more attention. I've always done jobs like a man. I worked construction companies and things like that. I never was a secretary. I guess I didn't look like one, didn't act like one, and didn't dress like one [laughter].

LB: What did a miner in those days earn? Were you paid by hour or ton of coal that you moved? How did that work?

SH: By the time I got in there the unions were very strong. We were paid by the day. The various jobs made different amounts of money. As a beltperson I made about \$27 a day; I think that's what I was making. I know that doesn't sound like a lot, but put that in 20 days and it was a pretty good paycheck for me. Most of the jobs I'd been working prior to that were \$1.25 an hour, \$1.50 an hour [\$10-\$12/day]. So I was kind of happy to get a job I thought I could raise my family on.

LB: And when you got into the buggy, was that more or less money?

SH: Yes, that was more. That was about \$37 a day.

LB: And were both the belt line and buggy out at the Kaiser Mine?

SH: Yes.

LB: Have you worked in any other mines?

SH: I worked in the Braztah Mine up Hardscrabble Canyon.⁴ They kept me down to being a mason. They didn't want me on the mining crews, they didn't want me getting in the way of all these guys. I thought it was kind of interesting, myself, and I didn't mind being a mason.

LB: What's a mason do?

SH: You put in stoppings to make sure the air flows the way they want it to flow. They were cinderblock stoppings and then I had to go by and seal them off so air couldn't escape through them. When they started pulling pillars in various areas, they just pushed them over. That's what I did: Mix mud, sling it like a real good bricklayer! [laughter].

LB: When was this? When were you working at that mine [Braztah]?

SH: Well, Kaiser went on strike and I don't know why I decided that I didn't think I could endure a strike. They were only out two weeks; I should have stayed with them. But Braztah was a lot closer to home, it was only two miles from my house, so I went up there. That would be about 1976. I ought to look that up someday and see if I can remember what my dates were. I know I went to work in 1974. I only lasted four years in the coal mines. I was at Braztah and I had a buggy I was taking out to get rock dust or get mix for my blocks, and it dropped in a hole. One of the wheels did, and threw my head up against the roof and from that day forward I couldn't wear a hat worth a hoot. I finally lost the grip in my hands and you have to have a hat and hold tight to a hammer if you're going to swing it; sometimes it'd just fly right out of my hand. Come to find out I'd damaged a disc.

LB: Did they pay for that?

SH: Yes, the miners' union did.

LB: So up until that time, mining was your only source of income.

SH: Yes, yes. I had one job at a time. I'm not smart enough for two or three [laughter].

LB: So you learned to run a belt and you learned to run a buggy. What else did you learn to run?

SH: Oh, I even tried a [continuous] miner. I hadn't had any prior experience on it, but I got the bid. So I spent a day trying to mine coal, and when I got through they said, "Shirley, do you really want that job?" I said, "No, I don't want that job," [laughter] so they gave it to a fellow who had some experience. I thought it was kind of an interesting experience because I found out

⁴ On June 18, 1976 the *Deseret News* carried an article "Shirley Haycock--she's a member of the 'underground'," about her work at the No. 4 mine owned by Braztah Corporation. At the time she was one of three women miners working for Braztah, according to the article. In reviewing the draft transcript, Shirley commented that she worked for the corporation and was not assigned to a specific mine; they were all connected underground.

that it wasn't as easy as it looked. If you don't go into an area just right, it can push you back out, it can tip down this way [gestering]. Coal is not all the same hardness and maybe you hit a hard streak, and a soft streak, and you gouge out that soft streak a lot deeper than the hard streak. I thought, "Boy, there're too many things here I don't know."

LB: When you were underground, did you have any close calls?

SH: Well, other than rocks popping out of the sidewalls. I had a chuck about the size of this chair come out one night just as I came out of the lunchroom. Blink! I thought, "Oh, wow, that could be dangerous!" Other than that I can't remember any problems I really ran into. We were in the Kaiser Mine and we heard what appeared to be an earthquake or a shake; there was a section of the mine that was on fire and it evidently collapsed. It filled the air with dust, so the boss and I walked out to the main shaft to get them to send the mantrip down so they could take us out. They couldn't even see us. He [mantrip operator] said, "I can't send the mantrip down because I can't see anything down the slope." So we had to walk out, which was interesting because you had to go through a lot of doors.⁵ Kaiser was a big mine; Braztah was a little mine. It was four miles, almost four miles out [at the Kaiser Mine]. We went in No. 3 portal and came out No. 1. I thought, "Well, now I know how they get miners out of the mine."

LB: So you were three miles in, and how deep?

SH: We were down about 7,000 feet. Of course, that's from the surface. You go in there under the mountain and they'd tell you 7,000 feet from the surface down. So that means, probably, we're 2,000 to 3,000 feet deep in the coal.

LB: Didn't bother you, huh?

SH: Well, you know, you've got a light and it comes out this way [points forward], and maybe it covers 15-20 feet [points side to side], and it's out there 30 feet from you. After that you can't see anything, so you just don't pay attention. You don't worry about what's above you. My mother said, "Oh, I'd get claustrophobia," and I said, "You can't see to get claustrophobia!" [laughter].

LB: Did your kids ever want to go underground with you?

SH: They both worked in coal mines, but not very long. Yes, and when I drove truck they wanted to be truck drivers, so you know, be careful what kind of example you set for your kids! [laughter]

LB: Do you think that the reason some of the fellows were reluctant to accept you had to do with superstitions about women in the mines?

SH: Oh, you bet! Some of those folks came from old Greek and Italian families, and they'd heard mom and dad talking about the fact that it was bad luck for a woman to go underground.

⁵ After reading the draft transcript, Shirley explained that the way out was indicated by reflective markers on the doors. They watched for the reflectors to know which doors to go through.

It would cause all kinds of problems underground, and I understood where they were coming from. But I needed a job so I challenged them. It was interesting that they kind of laid aside their superstitions after they saw I wasn't going to fall for what they were proclaiming.

LB: Do you think you were ever accepted as a member of the mining crew?

SH: We were underground at Kaiser one night. There was a big redheaded fellow on our crew and there was a Mexican fellow--I'm just saying this because that was his nationality--came around the corner and he was swearing up a blue streak. Old Dave got darned near as red in the face as he was in his hair, and he reached over and grabbed that guy and said, "Don't you ever talk that way around Shirley again." I figured I'm accepted. And one of the reasons they did is because I didn't shirk on my job. I got in and I did my job, and I did it as close to what a man could do as I could. So they had to accept, oh I wouldn't say they had to, but they did accept me.

LB You had mentioned earlier that during the war women were working in the mines even though, I guess, the rules didn't allow it.

SH: We did a lot of things in war time that the rules didn't allow. Coal was a necessity and our men were at war; who do you replace them with? You can't send kids in because it was against the law to send those little kids down. If you've been to the mining museum⁶ you'll see how many children worked in the coal mines in the early days. They finally stopped that, too. Women and children were not allowed underground, but nobody enforced it during the war. They needed the coal and they just welcomed people who would come and do it.

LB: When you were off two weeks, did you recreate with your fellow miners?

SH: No. I had my family, I had my own likes and dislikes, you know. A lot of them drank; I never drank. I didn't cruise the dancehalls or anything like that. What I did was I'd pack up my ditty bag and take my kids and go for a long hike. So I didn't have much off-time with the guys.

LB: How old were your kids at this time?

SH: Fourteen, fifteen. High school age.

LB: Did you ever work in the Castle Gate area?

SH: No, I never worked at the Castle Gate Mine. I knew some families that did work up there. In fact, my grandfather took me up there one time. My grandfather hauled coal and he had had polio, he was in his 30s, so he didn't have real good balance. His legs were gimpy. So it was a good thing for all of us grandkids to get to go with Grandpa and help unload the coal. He'd always take the boys but not me. Well, one day he said, "Come on, Shirley, I'll take you." So we drove up to the Castle Gate Mine to load up. Grandpa knew he had a good one to spin on me, you know. This man came out of the mine and he [Grandpa] said, "Oh, that's one of Luke McCluke's brothers." The next guy came out, "Oh, there's another one of the Luke McClukes."

⁶ Western Mining and Railroad Museum in Helper, UT.

He kept that up. I said, "Grandpa, how did all those people get around their table?" [Grandpa said], "You got a big round table, just put it on there, then they turned the table as they want it" [laughter]. I bet he gave me 40 guys that went with Luke McCluke that day, and it finally dawned on me he's feeding me a line [laughter].

LB: You mentioned that you'd been a truck driver. Would that be before or after the mine?

SH: When I was 16 years old I hauled coal for my father. He had a 3/4-ton pickup and I could get a ton of coal on it. So if he got an order I'd go up and get it and bring it down and unload it. And he loved to time me to see if I was faster than he was; I never was. Then I went over on the farm and drove everything they had over there. In fact, my first episode of driving was a 1928 Buick that they'd cut down and put a flatbed on it for an orchard wagon. Grandma left and went to town, so us kids decided we'd start that old car. It had a spinning flywheel that you had to flop. Well, we got it started but nobody knew how to put it in reverse, so we'd drive it down to the bottom of the hill then they'd hook the tractor on it and it was up to me to steer it going back up the hill, backwards. And that's how I learned how to drive.

LB: Good training for that buggy.

SH: It sure was [laughter]. And then I drove tanker, oil tanker. And I drove 10-wheelers and I drove semis. Yah, I never was a secretary.

LB: What was it like living in this area at the time that you were mining? Did the people in town give you a hard time? Did they not pay any more attention to you than they did to anybody else?

SH: They never gave me a hard time. For one thing, I've been an adventurer all my life. Prior to going to work in the coal mine I took my kids and walked from here to Seattle, Washington with them, to catch a boat to Alaska.

LB: That's a pretty long walk.

SH: Oh, it was a wonderful summer! My youngest son was 11 and the other one was 13. We took our backpacks and away we went. I also took a canoe out on the ocean.⁷ Didn't make Lisbon, Portugal, but I found out why the coastline of Carolina is sculptured: because it [ocean] goes around in a big circle like a back eddy on a river.

LB: If you had to do it all over again, would you go underground?

SH: Yes! I'd go underground again. It's not that bad under there, really. We had a crew of about 170 men working in the Braztah Mine. While I was there the roof bolters got buried,

⁷ On February 15, 1973 the *Deseret News* carried a story, "Woman To Cross Atlantic In Small Canoe," in which it was said the trip was a publicity event for the Carbon County Senior Citizens Center where Shirley was director of activities. Her itinerary called for an April 2nd departure from the Potomac River and arrival at Munich, Germany on April 30th. People were invited to guess the total number of miles she traveled and make a donation to the Senior Center.

which is sad, very sad, because one of them was crushed but he wasn't killed so he's been miserable the rest of his life. Other than that, it was fairly safe for us. Of course, you can get some owners who push it a little too far, then it makes it tough. But the mines I worked in were good mines, and I wouldn't mind going back again.

LB: Are there still women in the mines?

SH: You know, I don't know. I have not heard in the last few years of any women working in the mines anymore. But one thing: our mines have gone from, I think there were 24 mines open when I first went in, and we're down to four. When you've got a community of coal miners they're going to take the men before they take the women. That's only right, most of them have families to support.

LB: What else should we know about Shirley and the mines?

SH: I gave them a hard time! [laughter]

LB: How so?

SH: Oh, I like to tease some of them. You know, people talked about me being in the mine and all that, and I didn't think I was doing anything so outstanding or out of line. It was just a job to me.

LB: Is that still true, now that you think about it? Was it just a job or has it taken on a different light?

SH: Well, it's taken on a little different light now because I can look back at it, in retrospect, and understand that people don't generally step out and do that sort of thing. In all my associates there is not a one of them that's done some of the things that I've done. Mining was one of those oddities. I don't think, really don't think, that a coal mine is good for a woman in that it's hard work, extremely hard work. Women should be a little more gentle [laughter]. What else can I say? Right now my mining is clay; I sculpt. It isn't as hard on my back and neck as coal mining is.

LB: You worked for four years underground?

SH: Yes, and I probably wouldn't have quit then except that I got hurt. I thought, "Oh well, they'll just operate on that and clear it up and I'll go back to work." Well, it wasn't that easy. The doctor made me wait eight months before they ever tried to operate on it because they wanted to see if it would heal itself up. They operated on it and in order to heal it up in a hurry, I took a walk into the Grand Canyon for ten days. If you keep all that blood circulating, girl, it heals faster! [laughter].

LB: Take your boys with you?

SH: Nope, I was alone on that one. And you as an old ranger would know how fun it is to do things like that.

LB: Yup, there's something special about being out there on your own.

SH: I just finished a stint with my son. He's got a contract to take cedar trees out of the Kanab area and one of the BLM men down there, he just couldn't believe that a woman my age would be down there with a chainsaw going after it whole hog [laughter]. But you don't quit living just because you're 80! You got to keep things going.

LB: This has been great fun. Thank you, Shirley.

SH: You're welcome. It's a good thing you don't have time for all my tales⁸ or we'd be here a week [laughter].

⁸ On May 12, 1989 Shirley joined a small group for the 60th annual climb to the top of Balanced Rock, a locally recognized landmark near Helper, UT. Her father, Gordon Richardson, had been with the May 12, 1929 climbers who first placed a flat on the rock's flat top. Ascending without technical climbing shoes, 55-year old Shirley became the first woman to attain the summit of Balanced Rock (story reported by Charlotte Hamaker at <http://www.carbon-utgenweb.com/white.html>). An interesting summary of Shirley's adventures was reported in "A Woman for All Seasons," in the October 17, 2002 *Sun Advocate* (Price, UT). The article listed competitive weight lifting, bronze casting, paper sculpture, time with the military, and teaching survival skills, among others.