

Sheral Hollingsworth
Oral History Interview

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

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This is Lee Bennett and I'm here today at the Monticello, Utah home of Sheral Hollingsworth to conduct an interview about his experience with mining in southeastern Utah. Also present is Jim Mattingly who is recording the interview. Annotations were added later by Bennett.

LB: To get things started, would you give me your full name and date of birth, please?

SH: Sheral Dow Hollingsworth, born September 28, 1937.

LB: Ok. And how do you spell your first name?

SH: S-H-E-R-A-L

LB: Ok. We are here at your home in Monticello, Utah. Were you born in Monticello?

SH: No, I was born in Loa, Utah.

LB: Where else have you lived?

SH: This is long. My father was a truck driver and changed jobs a lot.¹ But he was a truck driver virtually all of his life. I went to school in Bicknell, Utah, then we went to Duchesne, then to Salt Lake; two different schools in Salt Lake. Then moved to Brigham City and I went to school there. Went to school in American Fork, and for about half a year in Ely, Nevada.

LB: Do you remember what year it was that you got started in mining?

SH: It was 1958.²

LB: Why did you get started in mining?

¹ By 1940 the family resided at Price, Utah where Mr. Hollingsworth's father was employed as a coal miner (US Census Enumeration District 4-21, pg 14A, Price City, Carbon County, Utah 1940).

² This year was also when the White Canyon Mining District produced its largest volume of uranium ore (William L. Chenoweth, The Geology and Production History of the Uranium Deposits in the White Canyon Mining District, San Juan County, Utah, Utah Geological Survey Misc Publication 93-3, 1993).

SH: I needed a job! My father moved to Monticello as a mechanic for P.I.E. when they were hauling oil out of the Aneth oil field.³ I had separated from the family quite some time before that, but I came to Monticello. I looked for a job and couldn't find one. My dad worked out at the Radium King mine. He said, "They're getting ready to hire some people at Radium King. You can come out and apply if you like." So I did, I went out there and talked to them. They gave me a job. Do you want me to talk about the details?

LB: Sure. Tell me where Radium King was.⁴

SH: We went to Fry Canyon Store, up Fry Canyon and around up over Hershey Canyon. It was on that road that goes on around Red Canyon Draw.⁵ The mine was on one side of the road and the camp was on the other.

LB: Who had that mine?

SH: You know, I don't remember. A fellow from Grand Junction, I think, owned it.⁶

LB: He hired you to do what?

SH: The Radium King had apparently hit a pretty good size body of good ore, high grade. The Allen mine was adjacent to it. It had virtually been mined out, but their tibble and everything was still there, and the track was still in the mine. Radium King decided to drift over and break through to the Allen and use their facilities to help get the ore out. They wanted to get a lot of it out. They hired three of us. One fellow had some experience at the controls of the tibble, doing that kind of thing. The other two of us pushed a car on the track, just labor to get behind it and push it. They had a spur and chute so they could take the ore out of the Radium King mine and dump it in the car and into the Allen. We did that for a month or so, maybe. When that petered out we went back into the Radium King. I was just a laborer to start with and worked my way up. Then I was a motorman, running the motor from the back to the front. I did some mining. I was a helper as we drilled, shot, and those kind of things. But eventually I worked up to the motorman; the motorman job paid more. The laborer was getting \$2 an hour, the miner was getting, maybe, \$2.20 or something, and the motorman was \$2.40. So I jumped at the chance to be the motorman and made a little more money than everybody else.

³ Pacific Intermountain Express was the largest petroleum hauling company in the world in 1956 ("Pacific Intermountain Express Co PIE," on facebook.com).

⁴ The mine is situated the Red Canyon drainage, White Canyon Mining District, in the crescent-shaped Uravan uranium belt that includes, roughly, Red Canyon, Fry Canyon, Deer Flat, Elk Ridge, and upper Indian Creek, all in San Juan County, Utah. In 1958, there were about 50 producing mines in the district. The first ore from the Radium King was shipped in 1955 (William L. Chenoweth, The Geology and Production History of the Uranium Deposits in the White Canyon Mining District, San Juan County, Utah, Utah Geological Survey Misc Publication 93-3, 1993).

⁵ San Juan County's Radium King Road (No. 258 on the county system).

⁶ In 1958 the English Oil Company and Atlas Corporation partnered to operate the Radium King. One man from Dolores and another from Cortez, Colorado were involved. In 1959 Radium King Mines Company joined four other uranium companies to form Hidden Splendor Mining Company, a subsidiary of Atlas Corporation ("Atlas Joins Radium King Effort," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 1 February 1958; "Merger will Unite Five U-Ore Firms Under Hidden Splendor," 22 October 1959, *Times Independent*, Moab, Utah; William L. Chenoweth, The Geology and Production History of the Uranium Deposits in the White Canyon Mining District, San Juan County, Utah, Utah Geological Survey Misc Publication 93-3, 1993).

LB: What kind of motor was it?

SH: It was electric. Everything in the Radium King was electric. The loader down at the face was electric. They had a big generator outside and one of my earlier jobs was pulling cable. Had a cable over an inch in diameter, I think. The loader would go into the face get a load and back up. As it backed up there were two of us on the cable, we'd just pull the cable out of the drift, coil it up. He'd dump his load and go back and we just kept that up all day.

LB: You were coiling the cable so he didn't drive over it?

SH: Yes. Radium King was a real clean mine. There was no smoke like they have where there is diesel equipment. They didn't have that. It was nice and clean. We appreciated the environment for that mine.

LB: How far in was the drift?

SH: I'd say, probably, about an eighth of a mile. Yes, that would be my guess; I don't know what it was.

LB: It was a pretty small crew.

SH: They had two sets of drillers, they'd try to get two rounds a day. That's another thing. When I worked at Wilson Shaft they wanted two rounds a day out of each set of miners. But at the Radium King a miner was asked to get one round a day. A round would be about 40-50 tons.

LB: On the motor, you'd take a string of cars out? How many cars?

SH: Actually it was only one car to start with. The motorcar was electric. We'd have to change batteries. The batteries were almost as big as that coffee table [about 3x5 feet]. There were two batteries on it. When the day shift got off they would plug in the batteries, but often times they would not get enough charge. Therefore, we would have to change batteries midway through the swing shift. We just pulled one car. Later on they had a chute made. The trailers [cars] were belly dumps and we'd pull over the structure [chute] and flip the switch and they'd belly dump into it. Later they got two trailers; it was manual release for the trailers. It worked really well. Kind of difficult to turn it around when you have the trailers back in the heading! But it was a good job.

LB: What size were the adits?

SH: They were about seven feet high and eight or nine feet wide. The Allen was kind of scary when we worked over there. Their back was probably 25 feet high with no cribbing or anything. Every once in a while you could hear a rock or something drop. You'd think, "Well, missed that one!"

LB: Were these mines in sandstone?

SH: It was the Shinarump formation. It was pretty hard. It was not like hard rock mining but it was pretty solid. There was sand[stone] in back, but it was solid enough that we didn't have to timber.⁷

LB: You worked eight or ten hour shifts?

SH: Eight

LB: They ran three shifts a day?

SH: No, just two shifts.

LB: When you were working at the Radium King were you living in the mine camp?

SH: Yes. They had little cabins that they had built on site. The one I was in had four men. We each had our separate beds. It was spacious, we weren't crowded up or anything, but you didn't have a lot of privacy. I guess we didn't require any; it didn't bother me at all.

LB: There was a cookhouse then?

SH: Yes. Really good food. Of course, we had to pay for that. The night shift, when they got off, they got all the leftovers.

LB: The cost of the meal was deducted from your pay?

SH: Yes.

LB: Was the room also deducted?

SH: No, they didn't charge us for staying up there.

LB: Did the generator that provided the electricity to the mine, was that the same machine that provided electricity to the camp?

SH: I don't know the answer to that. I'm guessing it probably was.

LB: You were single at this time?

SH: Yes.

⁷ Shinarump is a conglomerate member of the Chinle Formation, and represents the filled channels of ancient rivers. It dates to the Triassic Period, roughly 245 to 208 million years ago (William L. Stokes, Geology of Utah, Utah Museum of Natural History, Occasional Paper No. 6, 1986).

LB: How long did you stay there?

SH: I started about the second week in January. My father worked out there and he came home for Christmas. It was after the New Years that I took him back out there and I interviewed, then I went to work soon after that. Probably the second or third week in January and I stayed there. I took time off to elope to California to get married, then came back.⁸ I stayed there until about November or December.

LB: What did you do with your wife while you were working out the rest of your time at the mine?

SH: After we got back from California I bought a trailer house. I went to Moab and bought a 10 ft wide mobile home. We had to have a special outfit to move it but it was only 35 ft long so it handled pretty easy. We moved that to Bluff, then I worked in the trucking part of the uranium business after that.

LB: So from the Radium King you went down to Bluff and drove truck. Who were you driving for?

SH: McFarland and Hullinger out of Mexican Hat.

LB: You were hauling for Texas Zinc? Who did McFarland and Hullinger work for?

SH: Most of it was Texas Zinc, from the Happy Jack mine.⁹

LB: You went to the Happy Jack mine and loaded up, then where did you haul the ore?

SH: Back to Mexican Hat.

LB: To the mill down there?

SH: Yes, on the reservation.¹⁰ We hauled from the Hideout mine.¹¹ They were putting out about ten loads per week.

⁸ During August 1958.

⁹ The Happy Jack mine was initially developed by Grant Bronson and Joe Cooper, both from Monticello, UT. They knew the mine had considerable uranium but lacked the funds to develop its full potential. They signed a sale deal with Texas Zinc in August 1957, with the price based on business considerations rather than ore volume. With Texas Zinc's investments, the mine was among the top three producers in the White Canyon Mining District (Fay Muhlestein, *Monticello Journal II*, self-published 2009, pg 236; William L. Chenoweth, *The Geology and Production History of the Uranium Deposits in the White Canyon Mining District, San Juan County, Utah*, Utah Geological Survey Misc Publication 93-3, 1993).

¹⁰ Texas-Zinc Minerals Corporation opened their mill at Hachita, Utah during the summer of 1956 on land leased from the Navajo Nation. It ran until February 1965 (*Summary History of Domestic Uranium Procurement Under U.S. Atomic Energy Commission Contracts* by Holger Albrethsen and Frank E. McGinley, 1982). It was typically called the Mexican Hat mill.

¹¹ White Canyon Mining Company owned and operated the Hideout mine. It was one of the consistent producers in the White Canyon Mining District (William L. Chenoweth, *The Geology and Production History of the Uranium*

LB: What kind of truck was it that you drove?

SH: Kenworth 200 horsepower, an 18-wheeler.

LB: Single axle or double?

SH: Oh, no, it was a double.

LB: End dump?

SH: Yes. We'd overload it. We'd haul probably 60,000 to 65,000 pounds gross. The heaviest load that I hauled from the Happy Jack was 103,000 pounds gross.¹²

LB: Who decided what mine you would go to to pick up the ore?

SH: I guess it was just understood that we'd go to the Happy Jack. They'd point you out if they wanted you to go someplace else. So we just went to the Happy Jack.

LB: When you got to the Happy Jack was there someone on a loader to load your truck, or did you have to do that?

SH: Most of the time McFarland and Hullinger had their employee who stayed out there in a camp trailer and he did all the loading. He'd take time off, so if he was gone we'd load ourselves. But usually he loaded it all.

LB: Where did you learn to drive a truck?

SH: Well, my dad. He was a driver all his life.¹³ The first 18-wheeler I drove solo was for Norton Fruit Company out of Provo. They had a couple of trucks and they'd go to California and up and down the coast and bring produce back. They had a warehouse in Idaho Falls so they'd split the load and send a truck to Idaho Falls. It wasn't a scheduled thing, so whenever it was convenient they'd have me go up. I'd take the truck to Idaho and swap trailers and bring the other one back loaded with wheat. I was only 18, had a driver's license and that's about all. I don't recall having a chauffer's license.

LB: Did you have to have any special credentials to drive an ore truck?

Deposits in the White Canyon Mining District, San Juan County, Utah, Utah Geological Survey Misc Publication 93-3, 1993).

¹² When he reviewed the draft transcript, Mr. Hollingsworth recalled this detail regarding the heaviest load and asked that it be included in his story. He commented that it was an unusually large load.

¹³ As a neophyte driver, Mr. Hollingsworth and his father would take turns behind the wheel, thus giving Mr. Hollingsworth an opportunity to drive, often on trips to and from California, while his dad was nearby in case of trouble or questions.

SH: No, just a driver's license.¹⁴

LB: What were the surfaces of the roads like? Were they dirt?

SH: Yes, they were all dirt. When I started in 1959, it was all dirt. McFarland and Hullinger had a road grader and had a guy running it all the time, mostly to the Hideout mine. The county kind of looked after the one going out to the Happy Jack. They had that road grader out there if anybody needed assistance. That part was pretty good. It was a dirt road, steep and crooked, and all that kind of stuff.¹⁵

LB: How long would a trip from the mine to the mill take?

SH: McFarland and Hullinger set a company speed limit of 30 mph, so it would take close to ten hours, I guess, if we had real good luck and didn't have to wait in line to load. Sometimes there would be three or four trucks in line. They tried to space them out but it was kind of hard if somebody drives faster than some one else. If the front guy is kind of a slowpoke, everyone else gets backed up behind him. We'd have to wait. Same way at the mill, we'd have to wait our turn to dump.

LB: Describe the working layout at the mine where you picked up the ore. Did you drive in and kind of make a circle, load up, and drive out? Did you have to back up?

SH: No, just drive in. When we started out at the Happy Jack, they had taken the ore off the hill, Happy Jack Hill, and taken it down onto the surface where the main road is.¹⁶ There was a huge stockpile, they'd been stockpiling there for a long time. Someone told me it was a grading station or something, and that the government was involved somehow assaying it or something.¹⁷ Anyway they had a lot of the ore already stockpiled. It was just a matter of driving up to it; they'd have you loaded in ten minutes almost. Later, we'd have to go up on the hill and be loaded up there. That was a bottleneck up at the mine.

LB: Did you haul ore no matter the weather?

SH: Yes. Day and night, they ran two shifts. Didn't matter what it was, just go. Always carried chains and in the wintertime, we had to chain up. It was rough. I remember one time I was coming across Grand Flats and the road was so rough that it pulled the tongue out from under the

¹⁴ Although Mr. Hollingsworth eventually had a chauffer's license, he does not recall exactly when he first obtained it.

¹⁵ Most of the roads Mr. Hollingsworth used were built, improved, and maintained through the Access Roads Program of the Atomic Energy Commission. By 1957, for example, 321 miles of road in San Juan County were in this program, as were several miles of Colorado roads over which he subsequently traveled.

¹⁶ Texas Zinc stripped the overburden off the ore body, a task completed by mid-1958 (William L. Chenoweth, The Geology and Production History of the Uranium Deposits in the White Canyon Mining District, San Juan County, Utah, Utah Geological Survey Misc Publication 93-3, 1993).

¹⁷ The Atomic Energy Commission constructed an ore buying station at this location in 1954 and before the station closed in 1957, they had purchased 179,635 tons of uranium ore from mines in the general area. The remaining stockpile was sold to Texas-Zinc Minerals Corporation (Douglas C. Peters, The Daneros Mine Project, San Juan County, Utah, U.S.A., National Instrument Technical Report 43-101, 2012).

trailer. The tongue broke right at the trailer. I was just dragging the tongue down the road! It was because of the jerking and lurching due to the road.

LB: Did you ever get pulled over because your load was too heavy?

SH: No, they didn't have anybody out there. No inspections that way, at all. Never saw any law or anything. I think the game warden was probably the busiest guy out there!

LB: Miners engaged in a little population reduction, did they?

SH: Oh yes! Ate a lot of deer meat. But we didn't waste any; we just got what we could use.

LB: So while you were driving truck you were living at home, and your home was a trailer in Bluff?

SH: Yes. We thought one time that we'd like to move to Mexican Hat, so we moved our trailer down there. There was nothing to do, really, for the wife. She was pretty ringy, so we moved back to Bluff. She had some friends there.

LB: Was she teaching then?

SH: No. Just staying home. I don't think she even had a television. Those were good days, we had a good time.

LB: When you were staying at the Radium King, was there any time for recreation activity?

SH: Yes, weekends. We had virtually every weekend off. We worked just 40 hours a week. Of course we went deer hunting a lot. That's about all we did, we didn't play sports or anything. Down at the cook shack, it was pretty big, they had tables. There was always a card game, if a guy wanted to get into playing cards. It was pretty popular. They never got too carried away. And there was alcohol, it was brought in you know. That's the bad thing about going down there to the rec hall [cook shack] at night, they would have some guys pulling out their drinks. Drinking and getting loud. It didn't happen too much, but you wouldn't want to take your wife down there.

LB: How long did you live in Bluff and drive truck?

SH: I drove truck a long time. I lived in Bluff, then Mexican Hat, then Monticello. Probably a year down there at Mexican Hat and Bluff combined.

LB: Where did you go after that?

SH: Where did I go? We stayed around here [Monticello] and I drove for Bud Rasmussen.¹⁸ I drove a belly dump when he was building that road from the Goosenecks up to the bottom of the Moki Dugway.¹⁹ When they were paving that I drove belly dump for the contractor that built that road. I drove truck a lot.

LB: How many more mines did you haul from?

SH: For Bud Rasmussen we went to the New Verde up by Mormon Pasture.²⁰ There were a couple off of Deer Flat, the Cedar and the WN, that we hauled from. McFarland and Hullinger would haul from White Canyon #1, about five miles east of Fry Canyon Store. That was kind of difficult. When I went to work for McFarland-Hullinger, like I say, it was January, wintertime. They put me out there. They had two small dump trucks, I think they were gasoline, and a camp trailer. There were two of us that stayed out there. We'd fiddle around all day and wait until it froze, then we could chain up and go up that hill and get as many loads of ore as we could get. We'd dumped it down there by the side of the road on the flat. There was a loader there. The trucks would come from Mexican Hat and we'd load them out. We'd just pull off there at night on the frost. We did that for maybe a month. After it thawed and got where a truck could get up there, their big trucks would go on up. It was pretty narrow and crooked, not really bad. I hauled from off of Deer Flat and North Long Point but I don't remember the name of the mines. There was another mine not too far from The Notch, north and over the rim. We'd turn and go east over to the rim of the canyon and pick up their ore and take it to Mexican Hat. With Bud Rasmussen I hauled off from the Moonlight mine, probably on the reservation south of Mexican Hat. Go out there through the sand, the road just crossed the sand dunes. There was another place near Mexican Hat on a mesa. We'd have to leave the pup down below and go up on the hill, get a load and bring it down and dump it. Then go for another load, then come back and load our pup with what we'd left, took it to Mexican Hat. The ore off Deer Flat all went to Moab.²¹ Some ore we hauled over to Uravan, Colorado to the mill.²²

LB: How was it determined where you would take the ore?

SH: I don't recall. Maybe they told us that this mine goes to Moab, or this one goes to Uravan. The ore that we pulled out of [South] Cottonwood Canyon or Creek all went to Uravan.

¹⁸ Lowell Hugh "Bud" Rasmussen (1924-1989).

¹⁹ Texas Zinc built the dugway in 1956, shortening the haul route between mine and mill by 44 miles (William L. Chenoweth, The Geology and Production History of the Uranium Deposits in the White Canyon Mining District, San Juan County, Utah, Utah Geological Survey Misc Publication 93-3, 1993). The approaches at top and bottom were later paved. Today it is Utah highway 261.

²⁰ The New Verde Mining Company operated the Glade and Abe 11 mines, an area known today as the Glade Pit (William L. Chenoweth, The Geology and Production History of the Uranium Deposits in the White Canyon Mining District, San Juan County, Utah, Utah Geological Survey Misc Publication 93-3, 1993).

²¹ During the period Mr. Hollingsworth discusses, the Moab mill was operated by the Uranium Reduction Company. About 60% of their ore came from independent miners in southeastern Utah (Summary History of Domestic Uranium Procurement Under U.S. Atomic Energy Commission Contracts by Holger Albrethsen and Frank E. McGinley, 1982).

²² United States Vanadium Corporation operated the Uravan mill between 1949-1961, with about 74% of the ore arriving from company-controlled mines and 26% from independent miners; all ore came from southwestern Colorado and southeastern Utah (Summary History of Domestic Uranium Procurement Under U.S. Atomic Energy Commission Contracts by Holger Albrethsen and Frank E. McGinley, 1982).

LB: How long a haul was that?

SH: Oh, just a day over and back.

LB: Go down the switchbacks on the other side of La Sal?

SH: Yes, or we'd go to just this side of Dove Creek, Colorado, and take that road.

LB: That road would have taken you down to Slick Rock, Colorado. There was a mill down there.

SH: I don't know which road was better. You'd make two trips on one road and you'd think, "I'm tired of this road, I think I'll go the other way." We'd go both ways.²³

LB: Do you remember any of the mines that you hauled from in Cottonwood?

SH: No, I don't remember the names of the mines. They didn't haul a whole lot from there. We'd go to one mine a week, say. Bud Rasmussen was running three trucks, so maybe I wouldn't go back for a while. Sometimes I'd make two loads in a row. I don't know how much ore they put out; it was kind of sporadic for what I did. It was good, it was a change.

LB: When you hauled ore from the mines by Mormon Pasture, there were several of them in that area, what was your haul route? Was there a road through The Notch, or did you go back down Cottonwood or what?

SH: No, we went through The Notch, all the time we went through The Notch.

LB: So you were driving short trucks then!²⁴

SH: Yes! It was good to get out there.

LB: When you arrived at a mine and they weren't ready yet to load you, what did you do? Did you take a book with you? Did you go for a hike?

SH: We'd load ourselves if we could. Just go get on their loader. Most of the time we'd load ourselves. It was kind of a treat to have somebody step in and load. The Hideout, they'd load you pretty much all the time. But on night shift you'd have to load yourself.

LB: Did you ever run supplies in for them?

²³ The La Sal route followed Utah highway 46, which changed to Colorado highway 90. The Dove Creek reference is to Colorado highway 141. The Slick Rock mill, operated by Union Carbide, did not accept ore at the time Mr. Hollingsworth passed it on his way to Uravan.

²⁴ This is a reference to the tight switchback at The Notch, through which a bobtail with pup could not pass.

SH: Hauled some dynamite into the Hideout. The [dynamite] truck would come into Mexican Hat and we'd shuffle off the dynamite into the beds of two trucks. We'd haul that in for them. That's all that I ever did.

LB: You mentioned that you worked at the Wilson Shaft. When was that?

SH: Well that was about the tail end of my mining. That was after Mexican Hat. I wanted a change from driving, I guess. That's the way my dad was all the time. My wife's parents lived out there at Ucolo, and she got kind of homesick and wanted to be around her mother some. I can't remember where we lived, probably here in Monticello. I went out there but it didn't last very long. The hoist man was in charge of the crib, where the repair parts were. You'd want some repair parts or something and you'd go there. He didn't have anything else to do and he'd come and help you find something. I wanted a water needle for the Thor jackhammer. When the water needle breaks water just goes everywhere, it doesn't go down the shaft to the drill steel. I went out there and told him I wanted a new water needle and he gave me an off-breed water needle. I told him, "This is not the one," and he says, "Oh, it is too, it is too." I said, "Well, I'll go down and try it but I know that its not." I went down and it didn't fit, so I brought it back. He says, "You dumb kid, take this...." I went and got my lunch bucket and went home. Never did go back.

LB: Who was operating that mine?²⁵

SH: Gee, I don't remember that either. You don't worry about those things when you go there. You just work and get your check, and don't even look at that.

LB: So how much did a truck driver make compared to, say, the motorman job?

SH: Well, McFarland and Hullinger paid us by the hour. They tried to hold us at 40 hours a week. I think we were making about \$3.00-\$3.20 an hour, something like that. Bud Rasmussen paid by the load. A mine might pay \$50 dollars to go out and get it, kind of piecework. We didn't have to keep track of our hours. Sometimes we'd breakdown and spend half the night. Don't know if you want to hear my story?

LB: Sure.

SH: It was December and that one mine there off to the east [side of Elk Ridge], I don't remember the name of the mine, so Bud Rasmussen sent us out there. The mine had two loads of ore that they wanted to get out of there before the snow came. So he sent two trucks and we went out there. We left Blanding about midnight so we'd stay on the frost. We loaded one truck and the other was only about half full. We waited too long. They told us if we'd wait a few more minutes they'd have the loader going. That went into about half an hour, and then another half hour. We said, "We're not waiting any longer. We gotta get out of here." It started thawing

²⁵ The ore deposit was discovered in 1957, probably by the W.R. Bronson Mining Company. They sold it to Climax Uranium Company in 1963 ("Wilson Shaft" viewed at westernmininghistory.com; Faye Muhlestein, *Monticello Journal II*, self-published 2009, pg 334).

and we couldn't get through The Notch. Got down there and it was so slick, the water was coming down, that ice was melting. So we spent the night. It froze [overnight]. The next day we went down in the dark and we worked all day, tearing up chains and such. Finally we got one truck up out of there, and then it started snowing. We thought maybe we should get out of here, we had at least one truck. So we started going but it was drifting so bad we couldn't go. So we went back to see if we could get that other truck up out of there. We broke an axle on that truck. We walked back up and there was a cabin right there at the top of The Notch where the road takes off there on the south side of The Notch. We didn't know where the road went but it had been used some, so we went in there and there was a cabin. We went in, there was propane and a stove. We got warm and spent the night. Early next morning we went out to the truck and here comes the cat pushing the snow. We used the cat to get that truck unstuck, the one with the broken axle, and got it out of there. I think on that trip I got \$20!

LB: Was the cat [bulldozer] a county cat or was it the trucking company's?

SH: I don't know if they hauled it in there or if they'd been out there working someplace. I don't really know where the cat came from; I'm sure I knew before but I don't recall. It was not the county, it was a private cat. They might have hauled it out there. That was quite an experience, two of us sleeping in the cab of the truck.

LB: Having been through The Notch a few times myself, it would be an experience to take a loaded truck down that when it was wet.

SH: Yes. You can't pull a pup through there, so you just go bobtail. It was pretty hair rising. I'd go over it in my pickup and my old heart rate races just going down there in a pickup!

LB: Was that your most hair-raising story?

SH: Yes, I think so.

LB: What did you like about being involved with the mining industry?

SH: The people that I worked with. McFarland and Hullinger had, probably, 30 employees and 15 trucks or so. Maybe twelve. All the truck drivers had a good time. We'd get together and go down to the cafe, sit around and drink coffee and talk, brag about how good our truck was and how fast it is. Just lie to each other! A lot of camaraderie among the drivers. I enjoyed that. When we were at Mexican Hat I bought a horse in Blanding and took it down there. Jim Hunt was running that store at the Hat, and allowed me to keep my horse back of the store. I'd get it and go out riding. It was kind of a pain to have to feed it every day. You'd never know if it was going to be stuck in the snow or something, horse could have starved to death. I got rid of it, I took it back to the guy I bought it from.

LB: Did you get very many flat tires?

SH: Oh, not a lot. Hardly ever have to stop and change one. I guess a lot of time we'd leave it and let it run flat until we got home. Occasionally we'd have to fix one.

LB: When did you leave the mining business?

SH: Oh, I wasn't in it too long. Are you including truck driving?

LB: Yes.

SH: Oh wow, let's see. Bud Rasmussen was here [Monticello] then he went to Salt Lake. I'd quit all of this down here and wanted to go up north. I couldn't find the job I was looking for, so I got ahold of Bud and went back to work for him. We were hauling brick clay out of Evanston, Wyoming to the brickyards in Salt Lake. I did that for quite a while and that was about the end of it. That was probably 1960 or 1961.

LB: Did your family like it that you were a truck driver?

SH: I don't know. I never heard anything one way or the other.

LB: That truck company that you worked for, as well as Bud, they were in this country for quite some time during the uranium boom. Did they ever interact or encourage you to interact with the local communities and be part of the area where you were living?

SH: No. The only community we had with McFarland and Hullinger was just the drivers. Our next door neighbor was a driver or a mechanic or whatever for that company. They were about the only people we ever associated with.

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

SH: Oh yes! I would. It was a great experience. The mining, working underground, that was a great experience. It was fun and the work was not overly hard. A couple of years after all this happened my brother-in-law, Jim Butt, wanted to re-timber the Bullseye mine,²⁶ so Pete Steele and I took him up on it. We went down there, there was a big decline going down, it had caved in in some places and the old timber was rotted. Pete Steele²⁷ and I went down there and cleaned it out and kept our fingers crossed! Took out all the old timber and left what we thought was reusable, and had a truckload of timber come in. We unloaded that. So we re-timbered that whole decline for that mine. Even that was a good time. I always like to work that way, so that was fun.

LB: Did Jim talk you into opening up the mine for him?

SH: No. He was always talking positive; he wanted to get it open so he could do whatever. I just let that stuff go in and out of my ear. I didn't care what he did with it after I got done! He

²⁶ White Canyon Mining District accessed from the Radium King Road (County Road 258).

²⁷ Albert E. "Pete" Steele (1938-2015)

had a lot of big plans. He finally sold it to Utah Power & Light; I think he got a big chunk of change out of them for it. I guess that was when the boom was pretty big. Pete Steele was the cook, he did good. I've been on some pack trips with Pete; he's always the cook. I've been deer hunting with him and we'd camp out there. He'd make those sourdough biscuits and stuff. It was good.

LB: Anything else you want to tell us about your mining days? I notice that you made some notes; do you want to take a minute and look at those?

SH: I just put down here some stuff on Radium King. We went over that. I wrote some names down but they're not necessarily interesting. Then the places I'd hauled from and we've already discussed all of that. Where we hauled it. That's about it; I think we've covered about everything on my notes.

LB: Ok. I have one more question and I've been curious about this for quite some time, but I've never found a truck driver to ask the question of so you're the one. When you went to the mill with a load of ore from one of these mines, how did that mill know or keep track of where that load came from so they could ultimately get the money back to the mine operator?

SH: That's a good question. Like going to Uravan, we had a ticket we'd give to them. But when I worked for McFarland and Hullinger I don't remember. Maybe it got so redundant that I just spaced it out, but I don't remember too much paperwork at all. I drove for Merrill Young. He hauled ore from over by Kanab. We had our paperwork, had to go across the scales so we had to pay attention there. Stand up and pay attention! I've had to get the shovel out because on the pup it might be heavier on one axle than the other. You'd think that would be alright, but not to those guys. I had to get up and shovel to level the load out. I thought they were always picking on truck drivers, but it was good.

LB: Did you have to cross the scale when you went to Uravan?

SH: No. You know, the whole country was pretty much free rein. Wasn't harassed, didn't have to show any identification or anything. Out at the Happy Jack we wouldn't even get out of the truck; the loader operator would have you loaded in 15 minutes. He'd have his own tickets and write the truck number down. One time Bill Smith and his wife, Rodney Zufelt and his wife, my wife and I went deer hunting and we thought we'd stay overnight. Bill Smith had spent some time in prison and he wasn't much older than me; he was a good worker and jolly guy. We really liked him. He went up to the bunkhouse and got a mattress and put in his outfit, pickup or whatever he had, so they wouldn't have to sleep on the ground. My wife and I just had a sleeping bag. We were down at the Comb hunting, just going up and down hunting. We got stuck in the sand. We tried and tried, but old Bill Smith said, "I've got the idea." He jacked [the truck] up and put that mattress down to get out of the sand. It worked fairly good, but it sure tore up that mattress. Feathers and mattress filling flying everywhere! That was kind of a memorable situation. I felt kind of sheepish coming back. I guess they didn't know we had taken it anyway, but we sure ruined one of their mattresses. Bill Smith was a character. We had good camaraderie among all the miners.