

CLAUDIO ITURRIAGA

Highway 20 West
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Interviewed by:
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979 1 14 A

Should we start by having you talk about your grandparents?

My grandparents? I didn't know hardly any of them. I knew one grandfather when I was real small but the mothers died before I was able to recognize them.

Where did he live, your grandfather that you remember?

One of them lived in Navarni. It's a town right close to _____ where I am from and the other guys

Is that your mother's father?

My mother's father and my father's father and mother I never knew them.

What do you remember of your grandfather?

Not very much. He was real religious type of guy. He was a nice guy. That's all I can remember.

What did he do? What kind of work?

Just like everybody else there, he had to learn farm and three or four cows and he worked there but my mother's mother died when my mother was--I think she was nine and then my grandfather, he got married again and that's the time when my mother quit school and she worked after that all the time. Her dad taught her how to write and read and she still writes to me a little bit you know.

This is your mother?

Right.

Where is she? In what city?

She's in _____, but they bought an apartment in Grenika and they live during the week in Grenika and in the weekend they go to _____ and stay there. But the house--I burned my father's _____, it wasn't ours so there's nothing to do over there because my father died couple years ago and my mother's about 74. My sister who worked in Grenika, she can't take care of the farm so they're giving up.

Where did your father and mother meet each other and how did they meet?

My father was in this country for about 6 years away I was told and then when he went back I don't know how _____ --my mother was working _____ and that's how I think they got to know each other.

He came to the United States for two years?

My father, yeah and after they were married and my sister, the oldest sister was born, he come back and he stayed in this country another six years.

Tell me about that. Why did he come for six years?

Well he didn't come for six years--to stay here six years. I mean he came to work. We came for money just like everybody else.

What did he do?

He herded sheep and he work in/by Winnekmucca, McDirmith, ^{the ranch} and there was another place where he worked. I don't know where it was.

Why did he happen to go to McDirmith and Winnekmucca? Did he have friends or relatives there?

His older brother, my uncle, was here before my father come and I don't know how he happend to come to that certain area.

Do you remember the name of the company he worked for?

I know the name of the company he worked for in McDirmith. He worked in _____ ranch for _____. He worked for Daniel Gabika until Daniel went broke and he lost 3 year wages.

Your father lost 3 years of wages?

Yeah

3 years, gosh--that must have been a blow. How could he have lost 3 years of wages?

Isn't he paid monthly?

Well the boss was Basque--we didn't get paid monthly either, we were paid once a year--when a year was up the boss told him that he can pay him more interest than banks can so he trust the boss and they never made any papers or anything, you know they said well so much money I owe you--I'll pay you when you decide to leave or when you decide to go back to Spain and then this guy went broke and this guy and his brother were partners and his brother didn't know either that they was broke.

One of the brothers was working with the sheep up in the sheep camp and the other brother was going to the city quite a bit and he spent all the money and went to broke and my father lost everything.

What year was that, do you know?

I don't

The thirties, fourties?

Thirties, yeah, because I _____ then. My second sister is 5 years older than I am and after he went back my sister was born and then later 5 years later I was borned.

So he came over about 1935 or so and left your mother

He come to this country earlier than that because he--I never asked what the year was or anything and I don't remember but my sister is five year or five and a half year older than I am so he had to go back in '33 or so then he never come back and my uncle lived here--I can remember when I was a little boy about 14, 15 when he was in Winnekmucca and one time he sent me some money to buy a bicycle and then I was gonna come to see him and he died when I was quite young.

So when did you decide to come over here?

Well I decided to come to this country when I was pretty young guy. My uncle still livec in Winnekmucca and then he died and they didn't know what to do but they wanted to _____. What happens is you see some neighbors from some other guys come to this country and they spend rough time--they say I hear about United States and being in the sheep camp and living and all that but everybody wants to try and they say for 3 or 4 years I can do it--then I would have the money and buy what I want to buy. If he wants to buy a house or automobile or whatever.

They all think of going back to Spain with the money?

Yes, I still think of going back.

Is that right? And that's the dream most of them have--to come here and work and make money and go back?

Right.

Did many of them actually do that?

Yes, _____ but maybe half or maybe less now.

So what city were you born in did you say?

Ere Enyo

And that's in _____?

That's in _____.

What do you remember about your early life in Spain?

You mean where we worked? I helped my father and mother on the ranch we were living. We _____ cows and then another thing that people in this country think that we know about sheep and that's why we come to this country to work with sheep. I didn't hardly see a sheep before I come to this country.

Is that right?

I knew two or three ewes at some of the houses but that's all. We came to do what we had to do to make a few dollars and then go back and live on our own.

Why would just Basques do that? Why not other Spaniards?

Well

Why a tradition among the Basques to do that?

Lots of people, lots of Spanish guys go to Basque country and make money and go back--sometimes they go back to their place, some other times they don't.

Were there a lot of Spanish people that came over here to herd sheep that were not Basques?

No, well a few of them but not very many.

Mostly Basques.

Mostly Basques, right. Lot's of Castellians go to Basque country and they make money.

What do they do there?

They used to do the jobs that nobody wants to do like go out in the mountains and cut the brush and plant timber--pine and stuff--or any job.

What do you remember about your childhood? Did you go to school?

Yeah, I went to school until I was 16 or so just like most of the people. After that you have to pay--like in this country if you go over 18 then you start paying

to college or whatever and over there when you finish your school when you're 15 then you go to work. I went to work. I fall some timber and contract and helped my brother and different jobs.

Had you heard a lot of stories about America that _____ your mind that you might come here?

Yeah, I hear from my father everything. Lots of guys say well I been think it was gonna be in a sheep camp alone or it was gonna be so rough for them but I knew what was gonna happen.

Weren't you reluctant to leave all your friends and family?

Well I left them for three years--see I had three years contract with

Now how did that work out? How did you get this contract?

Well you cannot come--you can come in a quarter but you got to wait a long time.

Sometime you never be able to come here.

As an immigrant, you mean?

Yeah

You can come on a quota as an immigrant?

Yes, when we came on a contract, somehow the Spanish government had something to deal with letting the Basque coming or let anybody come in contact with the that ranch association contract. We sign the contract for three years to come into this country and go back in three years.

Was that, that was an agent in Spain or who did you have a contract with?

With American ranchers. They called it Ranch Association.

Ranch Association?

Uh huh and the ranchers got to be associated with Ranch Association to be able to bring anybody from over there.

What did you mother and father think of you doing this?

Why?

What did they think?

What--well they think it was alright if I was gonna go back in three years because I was supposed to take over the place where they were living.

Take over the family ranch?

Uh huh.

Are you the oldest?

I'm the only boy

The only boy. So you naturally would be the one that would get all the property?

Well it wasn't ours--just to live there to manage the property.

So you have one sister, is that correct?

I got two sisters. My oldest sister lives in Susanville, California. Her husband come to this country and he herd sheep for _____ right over here and then he worked Hines _____ a couple years and then he quit here and went to Susanville and later my sister come.

So what year was this that you came that you contracted with the

1960

1960 and you were 20 years old?

I was 19 to be 20.

And did you do it with some friends?

Yes. One of my neighbors, Domingo Sabala was there and I was working for--that one day I was working for his nephew, Domingo's nephew, helping _____ and he saw me there and this Domingo was my father's friend, his neighbor, and he told my father that I should come to this country _____. Of course I already had that idea to come to this country. Then he told me well I got nephew in Oregon and he can take you over there because you've got to know somebody over here so they can sign the paper--they can make a contract.

That's what I was trying to get at a while ago.

So his nephew, Vicente, was working for Warren McClain.

Vicente Sabala?

Vicente Bira _____.

And he was working for McClain sheep company down in _____

What kind of stories had you heard? What kind of amounts of money had you heard that

you could make?

I don't know the amount but I know that some of the guys went back and they bought ranches, they bought automobiles and that looked good and it was hard for us to make that much money--to save that much money because when we were there what we made we just spent like we do it over here.

It was hard for you to save money in Spain?

Yes.

Why was this--because you spent it on what

Well if it was some deal we would go somewhere and of course the inflation over there was higher than this country and it was a lot easier to spend the money--a lot more places to go because everything is so close.

What was your dream? What would you have done with all this money if you had gone back?

Well I didn't have any goals.

Didn't want to be a rancher or?

I didn't know yet. I was only 19 when I came to this country and I just didn't know.

So your friend, Domingo Sabala, came over to the United States.

Well he was in this country years before and he had quite a bit of money. He was my father's friend and he went over there to visit his nephew and the family and that's how I know him and then he told his nephew, Vicente, to talk to his boss and that's how Domingo put some money and I think they put half and half.

Were you pretty unusual in your town because you wanted to go to America?

Everybody was coming to this country.

Oh, every young man.

Every young man that didn't have anything else to do just came to this country.

It was that kind of situation. This going around that everybody had that idea.

What kind of places were they saying they were going?

Well a lot of Basques came to Idaho and California, of course I think there's some up in the moon too. They didn't find anybody there but.

Up on the moon, oh (laugh). I didn't hear what he said. Basques all over the world, really.

That's what I meant.

O.K. now I understand. What year did you leave Spain?

1960 and then after three years my boss got extension. They asked for an extension, if I can stay another 6 months and he got that extension and I stayed 3 and half years and then he asked for 6 months more and he couldn't get and they told me you gotta go so I went back to Spain and 4 months later I come back with another contract for 3 years.

You liked over here or you liked the money?

Well I didn't have enough money to do anything over there.

Even after 6 years of working over here?

After 3 and a half years.

How much money could an average save in 3 and a half years?

About 4 thousand dollars.

You didn't have anywhere to spend it did you?

You didn't have no place to spend it. You didn't make that much money to save it either--\$225 a month.

And room and board.

Yeah and lots of room.

I wanted to ask you before we continued on, did many women from your town want to come over here--I mean single women?

They don't have anyway to come to this country if they didn't have their father or brother in this country and that way they can come but another way they can't come cause we came in contract to herd sheep and I don't think any women want to come to do that. Of course, nobody that they could move in with.

I want to hear about what it's like to be in a sheep camp and herd sheep.

It's pretty lonesome for a couple months then after that you don't care. You know looking _____ you start thinking pretty soon another month or so I'll be able to go to a show in Corvallis and I'll be with a lot of people and then

that day comes and you've had a good time talking to everybody and drinking some beer and then you go back along again.

What kind of things do you think about? Do you think about the next gathering?

Yeah, next gathering or next time you go back to old country what are you going to do.

Did you have anything to occupy your time?

Well you're busy most of the time because you gotta herd the sheep or you gotta stay there watch the coyotes from killing lambs and then you gotta go to camp and you gotta do your own cooking. A lot of places like in Idaho they got two guys working together and that's easier because one guy goes to the sheep and the other guy stays in the camp and cooks and takes care of the camp.

Who taught you how to herd sheep?

Well they can teach you--the sheep can.

That's how you learned?

Yeah, that's the only way you gonna learn too. Of course, you can get tips with somebody says you gotta do this or you gotta do that and you will start doing those things but what that guy said might be wrong because that day the sheep maybe they want to do some other way you know. Because you gotta work with the sheep and you gotta let them go they scatter around a couple miles when you get used to it you just let them go until you say well you went 40 _____ and then you go over there and just round them up with a dog or a horse or a whip.

Can you describe a typical day that you spent?

I don't know

It probably depended on the season--say in the spring or the summer.

What did I do?

What kind of things--you got up in the morning very early or?

A lot of times we got up before 3 o'clock and you had to be with the sheep by daylight because the day starts breaking before it's light the sheep will start moving and if you by the sheep when they start moving most of the work is already

done you can give directions to the sheep where you want them to go and then you don't have anything else to do--just watch for coyotes and

After two months, you weren't lonely at all then?

Well you learn to live with it. You're lonely all the time I think but you learn to live with being out there so long.

Do you write or play an instrument or sing or read or anything like that or you didn't have time?

We had a little bit of time--listen to radio and Basque program that was coming from Boise and some Mexicans early in the morning and that's about it. You couldn't understand anything else.

What did you think when you first came here--this country. What did you do fly over?

Yeah

And arrived in Boise?

I arrived all the way to Burns, but yeah New York, maybe Denver or Chicago and Boise and then to Burns.

And then someone meets you there?

Yes, well actually nobody meet me. Mailman at Maraposa were there and I ride with him to Burns and I came to _____.

This is Marcelino _____ the son of Margarita.

Uh huh, right.

Did you know him before?

No

What did you think of _____ County when you first saw it?

Everything was so far from like at the ranch I went to fields and I didn't think I was ever going to get there you know just ride and ride to estates.

They took you directly from the airport.

No I came to _____ and I stayed in _____ and then

Vicente came to _____ and bought some clothes.

Plaza Hotel

Yeah. ~~and other Basques there.~~

Did you meet other Basques there?

Yeah, several Basques.

Who ran the hotel then?

Lucy _____

_____ What were your feelings? Were you happy, sad?

I was happy when I came to this country.

Was it what you expected?

Yes, what I heard about it. Maybe it wasn't what I expected. I didn't think anything could be so far away and so dry like that.

Very different land

Different, yeah.

How many days did you stay in town then before you went to fields?

About three maybe. I think I don't remember--maybe about three days.

Do you remember what you liked the most about this new environment?

That time or now?

That time.

No I had a job and that's about all I had that I liked. I had the job and it wasn't that good but better than nothing.

You were anxious to get to the job then, probably.

Yes because if I wasn't with the Basque and everybody else speaks English I didn't know what they were saying because I didn't know any words in English and it was pretty boring to listen to everybody and not be able to say anything back.

Who took you down to fields

And the stage was a what--a bus?

Just a _____

What, oh a _____?

Yeah

And did someone meet you at fields.

Oh he took me all the way to the ranch. That was Jimmy McBade. Jimmy McBade was

driving the stage then and I rode with him.

So how long did you stay in fields--oh you went directly to the ranch.

Yeah

And how long were you there before they took you out?

One night

And then they just took you out and said here are your sheep?

And it was February and they were on the ranch then--the sheep were and they took me to the ranch and I fed the sheep. At that time the sheep were inside. We called it inside because we _____ hay and grain. In April we went up on hills--that's when I started herding sheep.

Did you go alone or did you have someone to work with?

I had someone to work with.

In all the six years you always had another man including the sheep with you.

Yes, only no when I was herding sheep I had _____ coming to a camp every four days and he brought me stuff and groceries and then he will go back and come back in four days again.

Did you look forward to the camp tender coming?

Yes

Someone to talk to?

Someone to talk to, someone to be with.

Were they usually Basques?

No, my boss' son, John McClain, was then in camp and he knew quite a bit of Basque. He learned with the Basque there and him and I would understand each other.

What did you live in?

Tent

TAPE 1 (side two)

When I first went to camp her dad, my wife's dad, was working for the same company and I worked with him 3 months until oh until he quit and leave.

So one of you would herd the sheep and the other would tend the camp.

Yeah, in the winter time but not in the summer time. Summertime, we stayed alone.
When the camp tender came did he stay a night or a day?

He stayed one night.

One night

Because it was too far for him to make all the trip
What would he come, with donkeys or mules loaded or

Horses

Horses, loaded with supplies?

Yes

What kind of supplies would he bring you?

Anything you want

You mean each time you'd tell him next time bring me a pair of shoes or

Yes, clothes too but mostly food, kinds of milk or string beans or potatoes. We
had meat in our sheep camp all the time--sometimes we butchered a lamb or a mutton
and so next time if we didn't have time to butcher, he would bring pieces of beef
from the ranch.

You ate well.

Yes. Anything--eggs and bacon--anything you wanted to eat.

Where did you learn how to cook?

Well when I first went there and I stayed with my father-in-law he already knew
how to cook a little bit so I learned from him.

This was your future father-in-law.

Yes. He wasn't father-in-law then.

When did you first come to town after you had been taken out there the first time?

Well that was the bad part. I got sick that May about. I started working in
February and that May I was sick. I had tick fever.

Tick fever?

Uh huh, I was sick pretty bad and then I was in the hospital for 23 days.

Did they pay for that for you?

I had insurance. The insurance paid for the hospital bill and I had wages too but

after I was in the hospital I was still pretty weak to go back to work so I stayed in _____ I don't remember how many days. I didn't have any money and Lucy gave me some money and I didn't pay her until a year later when my boss paid my wages and I paid all the fare when I came over to this country. It was \$700 and some. I bought a bunch of clothes and a bed and a bunch of stuff so I paid everything and I paid Lucy and I didn't have much left.

First time you came back to town then was when you got sick, is that right?

Yes.

What town did you come into when you'd periodically come in--to _____ or to Burns?

Well we went to _____ quite a few times of course I didn't _____

_____.

What was at Fields then?

Just a store there

About what's there now?

Less than now because that restaurant was built later and one of the motels was built later when I was there and it was less than now.

So then you'd come to Burns for the big time, huh?

Right

What did you do? What kinds of things for fun?

Just be with the friends is most fun. You can talk with them. Some of them you know them before and that was the big deal.

Did you play games?

Eat and drink good or play cards.

What kind of cards did you play?

We played moose. We called it--a Spanish game. I didn't know any poker or anything. I still don't know. I'm a slow learner.

How long did you stay in town when you came?

About a week and we had income tax then and.

Was the Star Hotel operating then as a Basque Hotel?

Yes.

Why did you go to the Plaza Hotel instead of the Star Hotel?

I think because uh first of all Marse was a relation to Lucy. Marse sister was married to Lucy's son.

Marse _____ sister was married to Lucy _____ son. O.K.

And then Vicente he stayed in Plaza all the time too when he came into Burns and he had his suitcase in Plaza and I left my suitcase at Plaza when I went I went to sheep camp because all the clothes that I brought weren't anygood in sheep camp.

Was there another group of Basques that went to the Star Hotel regularly, that regularly went there?

You could say that. The _____

Did these two groups get together very much? Were friendly?

Some of them are friendly and some of them are not.

But I mean at that time during the sixties.

Maybe they were at that time because things happened afterwards.

When did you first go back to Spain then?

In '63 I went back, first time.

How did it look to you?

Everything looked small because after being over here three and a half years and you lived in one--like we lived in a sheep camp or ranch--you can't see anything from the ranch at all. All you see is the next ranch way out there. You can hardly walk from one place to the other because it's so far. When I went to Spain and I got there at night pretty late to my place and I went straight to bed. Of course I talked to my father and mother for a little while and then we all went to bed. Next morning it was raining. I still remember it. It was raining and kind of foggy. I slept late and I looked through the window and gee the next neighbor's house like from here to that _____ over there. Before I thought it was farther than that and when I got back it was so close compared to this country where everything is so far and it seemed different. After a few days it was like before you know. You got used to it.

Did it feel good to be back home?

Yeah, it felt good, yeah of course your friends were all changed. Some of them were married, some of of them had moved. They had different jobs and some of them --they had their what should I say--some were like carpenters

They had their professions.

Yeah that's what I meant. They had their professions.

How did that make you feel?

It make you feel low because you didn't know the type of work they were doing and that's one of the things that make you come back again.

Go back to the United States you mean.

Uh huh.

Did you have girlfriends at this time?

No, I had friends but not any girl that I was going with.

Did you prefer Basque women to American women?

Well I think any--if a Basque should marry with the Basque and the American should marry with Americans and I don't mean--just because when you speak at home it's a lot easier to speak your language than it is to have to speak a language you don't hardly know.

You didn't know English after 3 and a half year of being here?

A few words like bread or wine or things like that.

How much money had you saved after 3 and a half years?

Oh about \$4000

And that wasn't enough to really get started?

No, the inflation changing so rapidly that period of time that 3 and a half years made a lot of difference. If I had that \$4000 three years before I could've done something with it but 3 and a half years later it wasn't enough to start any business or buy anything. I could've bought a house maybe or an apartment.

What were your parents doing those three years. Your sister was still at home--your two sisters were still at home, is that correct?

No, one of my sisters was murdered before I came to this country. She got murdered. She was living in another house and my other sister she was at home.

So your father was still farming?

Yeah

Did you compare what the sheep camps were like when he was in the United States? Do you remember that?

Yeah but I think the times changed since he was in this country when the cars hardly didn't come to the sheep camp. They had to travel by horses only. So far, ever since I came to this country any camp that we were in _____ you can go and drive a pick up, four wheel drive and when my dad was in this country I don't think they could.

That would make a difference. So how long did you stay in Spain the first time?

Four months.

Four months and did you relax or

Oh I went lots of places with the friends, went to some dances and worked with my father again.

Had you already decided to go back to the United States?

Yeah, before I went my boss already said that he was gonna take me back. I wanted to come back to make more money.

It wasn't too sad and lonely for you, huh?

It was sad but you can get used to it just like anything else.

Something you get over

Uh huh. I think it's a lot nicer to be working at the ranch. You were making less money in the ranch than you were making in the sheep tending. I was only making \$225 when I first started.

A month?

Yeah

And you had to pay taxes out of that?

Yes

When you said work on the ranch do you mean be a buckaroo?

Well they had some ranch hands that would fix fences and work out in the fields in haying times.

Were any Basques doing that?

Yup, yes

So the second time you came over you worked for the same company and doing the same thing.

Same thing. I was still in camp and I was going from one camp to another camp and life was a lot better because like one summer I was tending camp in Diablo and another camp in Steens Mtn and another camp in trout creek and or _____ and I was going one place to the other, make bread for the sheep herders.

That was more enjoyable than just having your own _____? Saw more people.

A lot more work because you had to go from one place to the other and you were going all the time and doing something but it was a lot better--a lot more enjoyable --you get to see people. Even some Americans, you talk with the hands and you say some words that you know and people in this country is good for that.

I didn't think there were very many bands of sheep left as late as the 1960's. The Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 brought all that to an end I thought.

Well they still field them around like _____ had some 3,000 maybe more. 3,000 sheep?

Yeah, McClain had close to 3,000--sometimes more, sometimes less.

Did they graze those on public land or private land?

Public land most of the time

Like _____?

Like summertime yeah. Don Miller had over 2,000.

And did they get a permit to graze them on that area?

See they got, most of these rancers they had some right up in the forest and some of them on the fields they got ties up in Diablo and the Steens Mountains for so many _____ a cow and they can take it up there and graze them in certain areas. They can't go all over, only in certain areas--so many heads for so much time you know in the summertime when like the first part of September we had to go back towards Diablo from Steens Mtn. We couldn't have sheep later than that.

By the limit set by your _____ you had to be out of there.

Right.

How many sheep herders does it take to herd 3,000 sheep?

In the summer time it takes 3

3 sheep herders for 3,000 sheep?

Yes

Wow

And in the winter time it takes two because in summer time 3,000 with their lambs, that makes 6,000. Each will have a thousand ewes with their lambs and when they _____ their lambs and that would be in the fall, in the winter time they usually put young ones or the oldest ones together, like you put the 2,000 good ewes in one band and put the other thousand in the other band. This is to uh maybe the oldest one might need better feed for grazing during the winter earlier than other sheep so they keep them separate. One guy and the herd of 2,000 the other guy might be herding 1,000 during the winter. Then in the summer time they got 4 guys. One guy has a thousand ewe and has _____ for 3 _____--there'll be four guys working there. And then in the winter time there'll be two guys in each camp--two guys working together.

Were coyotes the largest threat for the sheep?

Yeah, they're bad. I caught lots of them _____--not lots of them but I remember five lambs being killed in one night or two or three or one.

Do you have a gun or rifle to shoot coyotes?

Yeah

What kind?

I had 30 30.

30 30?

Uh huh

Did you shoot a lot of coyotes?

Not very many. They usually go early in the morning and sometimes late in the evening too.

So it's hard to see them, huh?

It's hard to see them. They watch you just like you watch them or not. They can see you from quite a ways.

How many coyotes would you say you've killed over the period that you herded sheep?
Just guessing.

Oh maybe I, I trapped quite a few coyotes

You trapped them, huh?

Yeah.

How did you trap them? Wasn't there a danger that your sheep would fall into the trap too?

Well these traps were tied to safe rock or a stake so anytime a sheep falls in, sometimes they look over there, well you just go over there and spring the trap. It doesn't break their leg or anything?

No I never had that broke their leg.

But you trapped a lot of coyotes?

Yeah, I trapped several and I trapped several after I killed them to Burns.

For what purpose?

For the skins

You tanned the skins?

I didn't tan them--just take the skin off and dry them and sell them.

How much could you get for a skin?

Today you can get around \$100.

\$100 for one skin?

Uh huh. I will know better Monday. Two Basque went to Winnekmucca today with a bunch of coyotes and they got an auction in Winnekmucca for coyotes. I hear some guys got up as much as \$100 in the last couple weeks.

And so you sent some of your skins with them?

No I didn't have any this year.

What do they use coyote skins for?

To make a coat.

So it was better to be a camp tender than a sheep herder? More diversity.

Yes, uh huh.

What did you travel in when you went from camp to camp?

In a pick up. I got a 4-wheel drive company pick up and I had _____ in two of these camps because I couldn't get all the way to the camp in one place. In Diablo, some of the camp places in Diablo you can't get all the way to the camping places with a pick up so you have to leave the pick up and put the groceries on the horses and take it up there.

Did you pull a trailer with the horses in it?

No I had horses over there.

Oh that you kept there?

Yeah, I put a big fence there and _____.
And I had another _____ in Steens Mtn. that I used to go to _____ because down in the _____ you can't drive a pick up either and so you have to take packs in there too.

When did you stop being a sheep herder or a camp tender? When did you get out of the sheep business?

In '68 when my boss, the old McClain died. He died before that. He fixed the papers for me so I can be a legal resident and I was thinking of leaving the sheep camp for good.

Why is that?

Well I think 8 years was enough. I had two contracts and my first contract was 3 and a half years and I came back and I had a second for another 4 years or so.

Did you make enough money to go back and start something in Spain then? Was that your feeling?

Well at that time I didn't want to go back that bad. I think this country is better country to live in.

In what ways?

First of all it's too populated. Too many people in Spain and it's pretty hard to get a job if you don't have any

Influence, contacts?

Yeah, any influence or any job there like being some kind of--if you were a carpenter for example you can go over there and work for any company and make good money.

You have a profession then--a skill.

Yeah, if you've got some kind of skill to be able to do something but if you didn't learn in school and you can't have some kind of profession that it's pretty hard to do things cause you gotta start with a low job and there wasn't any union there like in over here after a few months there you can learn different jobs and you can bid on the job and get maybe the highest job that's in the mill and over there you gotta start from the bottom.

What did you do in '68 after you quit the sheep camp? Did you have something in mind?

Well I had a girlfriend, that was one of the things.

Tell us about that. Did you meet her in a hospital?

Yes, I met her in the hospital but that was five years before.

You met her in '63 huh?

Yeah, I met her before I went to Spain the first time. I was in the hospital, first I had tick fever what they called _____ but I guess came from a tick anyway. The second year I had the same thing, I had a tick fever the second time.

What's that--what happens to you?

This tick supposed to be _____ to a rabbit that was sick and then he bit me so I got rabbit fever from a fever and then I had a high temperature--104⁰ out there in the sheep camp and a long ways to come so they brought me to the hospital. It used to be a pretty bad sickness for a lot of people--lots of Basque have died with that sickness but in '60 they have some kind of medicine that prevented from killing.

Did you ever eat any of the wildlife while you were up in the sheep camps like rabbit?

No, I don't think that we did. We had all the meat we wanted to eat with us. If we wanted to eat lamb or mutton or beef so what more can you ask.

Were you in the hospital with tick fever when you met your wife?

No I don't think so. That was later when I broke my arm. I broke this in the sheep camp too.

How did you do that?

I was chopping ice and one of the crates for sheep you know they need their water in the winter time and I was chopping this ice and I started to cross this creek and I slipped and fall down and _____. I went backwards like this and just broke it.

What did you do?

Well I was tending camp. I was with another guy. He was with the sheep when I was chopping this ice and that evening when he come to camp and I was with a broken arm in the sheep camp and I stayed that night in the sheep camp because it was quite a ways--maybe about 3 miles from the _____ ranch so I stayed in the camp and the next morning I walked down to that ranch and I told the woman there if she could take me to McClain's place and she did.

And then they brought you to the hospital in Burns?

Yeah, Mrs. McClain brought me to the hospital.

That's where you met _____

That's where she came to see me. From then on we were friends for a long time. Isn't it '68 when you were out of work in sheep camp you decided you would come to Burns to be near your girlfriend and find a job? Did you have a job in mind?

Uh huh, the mill yeah.

You already knew you could get a job there?

Well I didn't know I could get it but most of them, if you wait a week, two, a month, you know, they can get a job over here because they got quite a few guys working for them. I think 700-800 guys and there's always somebody quitting or retiring.

So what kind of job did you get at Hines Mill?

First I was clean up and I pushed the broom for

That's where a lot of people start?

Yeah, that's the bottom job so that's where you start.

You started there in 1968?

Right.

How long did you work at clean up?

Couple months

And then what job did you get?

Edge glue _____

A what?

_____. This veneer, there are strips of veneer that this machine puts glue on both sides then you put it through this machine and it comes big sheet on the other side--all the strips glued

Like plywood you mean?

Well before you make plywood, it's veneer

Just the veneer?

Yeah, and then on the other side one guy feeds from this side of the machine and the machine sticks the other and then the other side the clipper clips the edges and then you put em in the stack. _____

Uh huh.

That's what I was doing.

Is that what you do now?

No, I do a lot of jobs for _____.

What do you do now?

A barker operator.

A barker. What is that?

A machine that takes bark off of the log.

Is that a higher paying job than the other ones you had.

Yeah, it's higher. Well I had higher pay. I was a spare man for a couple years.

Spare man?

Uh huh

Is that the highest paid?

Not the highest, lathe operator is the highest paid but I don't really want that.

Maybe I'm not able to do it.

Do you like working at Hines Mill?

Yes

It doesn't get boring doing the same thing all day?

Well we trade, another friend and I, we trade jobs. He is a _____
 _____ and after two hours I want to take a break he comes
 and doesn't

TAPE 2 (side one)

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I started working over here September 12 and we got married the next July.

It was a big bash wedding I understand.

Yeah

Do you have any regrets about not going back to Spain to live and raise a family?

Sometimes I think that I should have gone back because that's where my kind of
 people is

What's your kind of people? What do you mean by that?

Basque

What does that mean?

Well it's hard when you go for example I've been shop steward for the union and
 they wanted me to be _____ too but I don't really want to go so when uh--
 my English is really not that good to speak in public when you bunch get together
 and you start to say one thing and then you think for a minute or two to put the
 words straight.

Is that what a shop steward does? He speaks for the group?

Yeah, yeah you present the group in one form and gives bad time to one of these
 guys will you go see if he was right or the guy was right and you stick to the
 foreman about that guy. So that's why I think I forget a lot of the Spanish and
 a lot of the Basque because when we talk for example at home we use a lot of words

in English because sometimes it's easier to just say one or two words like I say O.K. or yeah we don't speak clean Spanish either.

So it bothers you that you're not speaking good Spanish or good English.

Right. It bothers me not to be able to speak any language even I try to speak three languages, Basque, Spanish and English.

Are you passing on some of these cultural Basque values to your son? Are you teaching him like you know how to dance or how to speak the language?

Well Basque, we don't talk any Basque at all. If we go somewhere and Basques get together and my wife doesn't speak Basque, she gets mad if I start to speak Basque.

So you don't have a chance to speak very much at all then.

Well just like today we were two or three Basques working together and we spoke Basque all day long.

How do the other Americans you work with feel about that? Does that bother them?

Yeah maybe

Well that's what you call non Basques isn't it? Anglos, of course you're an American too. I was using the word that I thought you use.

You mean how the Americans feel about the Basque.

Yeah, talking you know if you're all working together and you and another Basque are talking in Basque and some worker doesn't understand, does that bother him?

Sometimes somebody will say well that ain't true or something. You know they wouldn't understand what we said or they say B.S.

B.S. huh? Have you ever felt any prejudice from the Anglos towards you because you're Basque?

I don't think towards me directly, no. But sometimes they will say that Basques are dumb or something like that and lots of Basques we are dumb at first because maybe it's not because we're dumb, it's because you can't speak like they can. You say well I want this or that or just jump into the English language you got to keep it for yourself sometimes because you're not able to say it.

But aren't the Basques considered to be very good workers?

Yeah, I think so.

Well I've heard that from other people. The ones that work at Hines, for example, are all considered to be hard workers. That's the trait of the Basques in general from what I understand.

Basques, they don't want to be called lazy.

Do you prefer associating with Basques more than you do Anglos?

No, I got American friends and I get along good with them. I work with Americans just like I do with the Basques. I go take breaks with Americans and they don't bother me and I don't bother them.

But you nevertheless have a feeling that you maybe should go back to Spain where your kind of people are, is that right?

Well I don't say you can forget that or say I don't want to go back or feel any other way. I think most of the Basques that have been in this country for many years they still think about Spain, even when somebody comes from Spain they'd be asking oh what is it like over. I know many guys like my wife's uncles they haven't been to the old country for 50 years and they still think about Spain quite a bit. They want to know what it's like but they can't go back because they are not Americans and they can't go back if they go back.

They're still just residents?

They're still residents and they can't become Americans because during the war when they could have gone to the army and be soldiers they didn't go and now when they try to get American papers they wouldn't give it to them.

This is the Rementerias?

The Rementerias brothers, uh huh. One of them, Tony is American but Mike isn't and Alex isn't either.

I forgot to ask when you were a sheep herder, did they carve on aspen trees?

Yes

They did on the sixties even?

Yes I have quite a few names on aspen trees--some in the Steens and _____ and quite a few up in there _____.

That you carved yourself?

Right

Disaster Peak, is that what you said?

Uh huh. That's up by White Horse Ranch just across the line from Nevada.

Is that just to pass the time?

Yeah it passed the time and then sometimes if because maybe a year later or a month later somebody go by there and he would see your name and he would put his name up there. I haven't seen my father's name but one guy from my town seen my in there--oh so and so was here.

What do you think will happen to the Basque culture in Burns in the future? What do you think should happen as a group as an identity?

I don't know what will happen but I don't think anymore Basques will be coming from Spain--might come Basques from other places to get a job or something.

Do you encourage your relatives and friends to come here to find a job?

Not from Spain. Maybe if they were around here I would tell them well you can get a job at Hines.

Why do you think no more will be coming from Spain?

Because there's no more sheep and I don't think that that Ranch Association is contacting anymore guys and another thing is that the people in Spain, they don't want to come.

May economic conditions are better there now than they used to be.

Conditions are better and the young guys are going to school and get schooling and become professionals.

What do you want for your son?

All he can be. If he wants to go to school, he can go to school like a college.

If he don't want to go I can't force him.

Would you like it if he worked at Hines?

Yeah, I guess so. It's better than being a bum.

If that's what he wants.

If that's what he wants.

Do you want him to marry a Basque?

Oh that don't matter. He shouldn't have any problem speaking English or any other language--maybe not any other language I shouldn't say. He'll probably have a problem speaking Spanish.

I'd sure like to go back to the question of what you think is going to happen to the Basques in this community. Do you think they'll continue with the way they are of a separate cultural from the Anglos?

We don't have , well we do have a separate culture like maybe make a Basque picnic but any other way, like I belong to Elks, I go with American people. We go to restaurants.

You don't think it's important to keep that separate culture then?

Well, it's hard to say. It's important to have that culture but I don't think after a few years maybe they won't have it.

Is that important to you?

It's important to me, yes because there's a lot of tradition, Basque tradition, that our people will never know what it was like or what kind of dances they did, or what kind of sports they had so I think it's good to know. I would like to know more about the Basques myself too. I would like to know more about the American people. So I think it's good to know, the kids to know where their parents come from and what it's like over there.

I understand that at these picnics they have contests.

Yes

Can you tell me about those?

Yes I can tell you but we don't have it in Burns because all the Basques were not getting along good because we kind of divided in two and if all the Basques in Burns were at the gathering they can still have the contests because there would be more people to pay for it. We used to pay. Some guys would lift weights or carry the weights or pull the robes and chopping wood and stuff like that. They paid just _____ not for money just to _____ but now that many Basques will go to the picnic so you can pay all these guys for

doing different stuff.

Who do you consider a leader of the Basque community in Burns? Is there one do you think?

Well I don't think there's a leader. I consider friends like Dias like he knows about the Basques and he knows American traditions and he is good leader that way because he knows how go right.

Abel Dias?

Abel Dias.

I see in some of these pictures that Maria is showing me that they're contests of strength--those are the contests. Those are like in Spain too?

That's years back but now I think it changed. They still do it like they still chop wood with an axe and who can chop the fastest and they can lift the weights like 400 lbs. and they do stuff like that. There used to be an old small city would have some good man that can either carry the weight or lift weights and then they would bet a lot of money from one guy from one town against the other guy from the other town--just to make it interesting I guess.

Are you interested in the politics in Spain at all?

No not in Spain because--at that time we had one leader and that's the only leaders that we knew and that was Franco and I don't think we were interested. Maybe some guys are, I'm wasn't.

You weren't interested even when you were younger then and living there?

No

Is there anything else you'd like to say about the Basques or about your life? What are your goals for the future?

Well I'd like to make another trip to Spain in the near future--maybe this year and if we can't do it this year, it'll have to be a year or two later.

There is still a chance that you might return to Spain, though, to live.

To live, I don't think so. But to make a trip, I'd like to.

How about living in Idaho or some other place where there's a large concentration of Basque? Does that appeal to you?

I like it in Burns. It's peaceful here and not crowded. In summertime you could sleep good because it's not and even if it is hot during the day time it get cold at night.

You like the climate here, huh?

I like the climate.

What kinds of things do you do for pleasure--you and your family?

We like to go camping, fishing. I hunt a little bit.

Do you still like to eat sheep--mutton?

We buy lamb

I thought maybe you got so tired of that you won't eat it.

I don't want to eat it all the time but I do want it now and then for a change you know.

Do you prefer Basque food or Anglo food?

Oh I like them both. I like American food. I got used to it. When I first went to the hospital, I couldn't eat anything there because it didn't taste right but I got used to it. I like anything now.

What's a typical Basque meal?

If you go to a restaurant in Spain, you will eat some fish first or soup or fish, then meat, then you will have dessert like a flan or fruit. Of course I don't even know any typical--they like to eat fish quite a bit.

Anything else?