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Hess, Archie D.
April 1967
Interviewed by Arlie Riggs

UI: This tape is property of Custer County library. It is part of the historical taping series taped at the community building in Westcliffe in April of 1967. Present are Mrs. Arlie Riggs interviewing Mr. A.D. Hess of Westcliffe. [Mr. Hess' wife, Josie, is also present]

[Several pieces of taped interviews with Mr. Hess appear to have spliced together, because the tape stops and starts occasionally with a totally new subject. The final section of the tape is an interview with Mr. Hess from December 1966. It was only partially transcribed because the quality of the tape is very poor.]

AH: Ready to go?

AR: We're ready to go.

AH: Well, that's quite an assignment. Name first?

AR: Right.

AH: Well, I was christened Archie D. Hess but I've had a bunch of names and I'm known as Grandpa, Dad, Pappy and Hey You and my Indian name – I spent several years with the Sioux in the Dakota – is Wytotallyshonkakaw which in Sioux means wild horse from the fact that well, I became the blood brother of Spotted Tail and of course, I'm legally a Sioux and we were always on wild horses [so we were born twisters?] you know so they gave me that name of Wytotallyshonkakaw which means wild horse.

AR: How old are you, Mr. Hess?

AH: Well, I have seen 80 birthdays, counting my first one. Of course, I'm not quite 80 years old because I'll have 81 birthdays before I'm 80.

AR: Oh, you confuse me. My dad used to do that to me.

JH: I say, answer yes or no.

AH: Do you hear Ma raving?

AR: Oh, sure, we're going to leave that on there too. Just let her keep talking, right?

AH: Soon hightail it, getting out of the way. What else was it?

AR: How long have you been here in Custer County?

AH: About 51 years.

AR: Ok, now I wanted Mr. Hess especially-

AH: Pappy.

AR: Pappy, ok. A.D., I call him lots of things too, but usually A.D. But I wanted him to tell us especially about the Rainbow Trail because I have found from trying to do a little research on forestry that no one really knows much about the laying out and the planning of the trail and so forth, so A.D. has some notes here and he's going to tell us all he knows, right?

AH: Well, some of it I don't anybody, of course. But I started on trail work on the San Isabel National Forest in 1925. Steve Doin was the district ranger at the time and Fist Colt was the forest supervisor. The first work I ever did on the trail is near the Alvarado ranger station on August 8, 1925. Now, we're sure about these dates because I have a diary now which is about 56 years old without a day missing, so all these dates that I happen to mention will be authentic. And my first work was done with William Bill Falkenburg who was an uncle of our present Bill Falkenburg and one of the most wonderful lovers of natures and natured gentleman that I ever knew. He was good at his work in the forest and he made friends with any animal that he would find from a porcupine to a packrat and was a good man around the camp and a good buddy to be with. Of course, Bill has been gone now for several years and the sad part of it is that he got to be pretty old. He's still a pretty good man but I went on the trail without him and that year, Bill passed away, died and just couldn't take it. He could have made it alright but the service figured he was too old to work and it really killed Bill.

Notes here – why, says that Bill took the horses, a whole Lide and Queen, out to the range's estates in the morning and I drove out about 1 pm and came up to Venable Rake's cabin. Bill caught four trout and I one from the lakes. The next day we spent reframing the cabins, on Monday. We take the horses up there and pick it clean out and old Lides, he wouldn't leave camp at all. He was a camp horse. Then we went to work on repairing the trail down the top of the range, above the lakes. We saw a bunch of ptarmigan and some mountain seeks and in evening, we drove down to the ranger station and came home.

AR: Go ahead.

AH: On Monday, August, Josie and I came up to Venable Lakes, camped and finished out the day on the trail. We 17were pretty honest in them days. If we went to camp and didn't get to work, why we just kept of the hours we worked and that was it. Wisely studies for a predator large pack horse so we packed mostly on Queen and hiked up the trail. Bill had saved us a nice amount of trout which he caught on Sunday. On Tuesday, Josie caught seven trout and it was the first trout she ever caught, and has been catching them regularly ever since. Bill went down the trail at the place we usually going home in the afternoon, and Josie caught some more trouts from the lakes. Friday, August 21, she caught some more trout and Bill headed back to camp. Then, Josie and I hiked on down the trail and came home.

Archie, on Sunday, 23 and 25, came up to camp in the afternoon he planted a job with us.

AR: Archie is your son? [unintelligible]

AH: Yeah, my oldest boy. Came to town after grub, tools and so forth on Wednesday the 26th and he got four trouts, 11-15", from the creek in the evening. On Saturday, Bill and I came to town in the morning. Archie stayed in camp and Bill and I went back to camp on Sunday and Archie came home in the evening on Saturday cause he was getting ready to go back to school. Archie and I packed up the camp [unintelligible] on the trail in the pm. We worked on the trail and, till September 9th, we had a pretty good snow and it was cool. Bill went down the trail to go to the circus. He laid off to go to the circus. [unintelligible] the bighorn sheep in the morning.
Saturday, 9-12-25, Archie's last day at school, that's Monday, he was about, let's see, 14, 16, 16 years old.

AR: And he was going back to high school, right?

AH: Yeah, high school. We packed up the camp before noon, Bill and I. No, I came alone. Bill was still in Salida at the circus. He got back at noon on Tuesday. We went after powder, pack horses Friday and it finished with the upper part of the trail, that's the trail at the top of the mountain, pretty near 14,000 ft and packed the outfit down to below the Bark canyon, passed the same and came to town. We went duck hunting on Sunday and got eight ducks I guess, and on Monday-

AR: What was the limit on ducks then?

AH: I don't know. I got eight anyhow. Bill and I packed up the balance of our camp outfit and fixed up camp. We packed some in from horses to home. Laid around camp on Wednesday without [unintelligible] rabbit and it snowed 8" so we came to town on Thursday and went duck hunting on the afternoon. Bill got two tail and I got a jackrabbit. Josie and I drove out to the ranch in the afternoon. Wednesday, Bill and I came up to camp [unintelligible], took the horses back to the range estates. We had a little pasture for the horses. Decided to come home and on Sunday, we was going to do the bills. On Monday, I worked on the trail till well, stumps, cleaning out dead trees and so forth, the Diamondback, and I met Bill coming to his camp as I was coming out and stayed all night at [unintelligible]. On Saturday, I went home and started to build a trailer for the forest and finished the trailer on Sunday. On Monday, Josie and I went to Canon and got a load of fruit. On Saturday, Archie come up and worked on the trail and he also worked on Sunday and came home in the evening.

We worked on the trail also October 27th to the 1st of November. It snowed 10" on the 2nd of November. We finished the trail down to the rock slide on Tuesday the 11th and came down to Falkenburg's cabin in the evening, the cabins that the Falkenbergs had built and we spent the night there. On the 11th of November, we packed the camp and equipment out [unintelligible] called me, spent the rest of the winter, carpenting done, a little riding and so forth.

I continued to work on the forest trail during the summers of 1926 and '27. We started out in the spring of '27-

AR: 1927.

AH: 1927, uh 1926.

AR: Ok.

AH: To build the Rainbow Trail, which is a trail that runs from near Salida to Music Pass and just parallels the lane just on forest land and its horse and foot path, of course. We worked the crew on that of, oh, from 4 to as much as 8 men at times and we hired them and worked them in pairs, two men that could get along together and like the same grub and no such a thing as a sleeping bag. They haven't been heard of, so the two, the pair would work together and eat together and sleep together and it, well, it made things more harmonious around the camp to work them in that way.

So, we'd move our camp, oh maybe, two miles beyond the end of the trail where it had been completed and then work back to where we connect up with the trail and work ahead, oh, a couple of miles and then move our camp. That way, we completed the Rainbow Trail during the years of 1926 and 1927.

In the spring before time to go to work, why, Roy Truman at the time was our ranger, and he would say, well, get things ready, Arch, your men and your tools and everything and generally, before you could get into the mountains really, because it took some time to get everything together. Anyhow, I'd find I'd get my crew from two to sometimes as much as eight men. Well, we'd go up and camp on some creek, a good camping place where, a little water and generally some trout if we could find that kind of a stream of course. Well, then I'd take hold of one man, a guy I liked pretty well, a buddy of mine, and we'd start out ahead and survey our routes. Well, I was given on the map the limits of the deeded land and the boundaries of the forest and we stuck to this from the ranger who really was supposed to do the laying out but for me to do the wo15%rk in laying out. Well, we'd go ahead and we'd survey ahead a route and was allowed a maximum of 15% grade going across a draw or over a hump.

Well, me and my buddy, we'd survey ahead and the men that come behind us and tools needed were an axe, saw [unintelligible] dynamite for blowing up stumps and rocks and a thick bar, and the most universal tool, the main tool you couldn't get along without was a grubbing hole, we called them a hoe daddy. It was just really a one bladed grubbing hoe. With them, we did most of the work, just hoeing it out and level the trail about oh, 16-20" wide and level and keeping it within our 15% grade, softening up the timber so that when you stand in the middle of the trail, you couldn't reach the tree on each side, something like six feet clear, you see.

AR: Yeah. What is a grubbing hoe?

AH: Well, it's, azada I think is the correct name for them. It's just a rough hoe with a short handle, but handle like the length of the pick, you know, and you just grub out and pull the dirt out and make your trial with that.

AR: Now a question occurs to me. How long after you had done the essential work on the, first work on the trail, how many years would it take of use for that trail to lose being in good shape?

AH: Well, it was in perfect shape when we got through with it.

AR: Oh.

AH: We not only levelled it out and smoothed it and our travelling back and forth to work would pack it down enough and we put in water bars to keep the water from running down the trail and washing and it ruining, with oh, maybe a bunch of rocks and many times, just a little log laid across the trail and buried diagonally to run the water out of the trail so it wouldn't wash. The trail that way would last for many years without being washed or [unintelligible] at all. Of course, eventually, you'd have to go back and swamp out the [unintelligible] that didn't go up and to keep the clearance on the trail, you know, but it was laid out, why, they'd last for many years without any attention at all, although every spring, there was a crew went out just to go over the trail [unintelligible] rock, one thing and another.

Another thing we did while we built this trail, it's the Rainbow Trail, parallel to- was work on the trails running up to all of the lakes. We'd run trails up to there. We'd have a camp and then go on to the main trail and then make the trail up to the lakes at the same time. And we worked, well, I worked two years on the Rainbow Trail after we did the lake trails to start out with.

AR: Oh. You made the trails up to the lakes before you made-

AH: Yeah, oh yeah. There was a trail to the lakes before the Rainbow Trail was thought of.

AR: Oh, well, I thought it was the other way around. That's how confused I am.

AH: No, every trail or lake, there's a good trail in there but you probably, from one lake to another, you'd have to come clear down to the valley for miles and then go up to get to another trail that probably wasn't over a mile or so apart.

AR: I see.

AH: But after the Rainbow Trail was made, why, you could just follow along it and go up to every lake when you come to the trail leading up to it.

AR: Well, you're describing how carefully you laid out and made the Rainbow Trail, I think evidence is the fact that it has existed for a number of years without much repair work. Now, I understand the Forest Service in the last two years has decided to pay a little attention to the Rainbow Trail again and do some work. However, if the man that takes the big trail ride on the Salida, they start at Salida, and go clear across the Rainbow Trail each August. He said that the beginning from Hayden Pass, is that where it starts?

AH: Well, no, it went beyond there?

AR: Oh.

AH: Really, but this trail that runs clear to Salida.

AR: Well, anyway, the beginning of the trail is the worst part up until about Lake Creek and then it becomes like a boulevard I guess, or at least better.

AH: Well, it's not hard to keep in repair if they just do a little swamping every year to cut out the aspens. The aspens will grow up three or four feet in a couple of years, why, they really bother so they keep the brush swamped out and maybe do a little hoe dad work once in a while, put in a water bar, and it'll, well, they're not very hard to maintain. But the trails running to the lakes, owing to the fact that it's quite a grade and they need considerable work every year to keep them safe. Because something will happen in a year the water comes down the trail and just [unintelligible] in the trail you know, and they take considerable work every year. But the Rainbow Trail isn't or shouldn't be hard to keep up.

AR: Here about two, two and a half years ago, we heard all sorts of good rumors that the Forest Service was thinking of making the Rainbow Trail into a road clear across. What would be your attitude towards that?

AH: It would be quite a project, I'll tell you, but it'd be possible alright and if they save some of the money we're spending in Vietnam, another useless project of getting to the moon and you know, a lot of silly things, why they could have a trail along there just fine, wouldn't cost us a cent.

AR: But you wouldn't be opposed to motor vehicles being up there then?

AH: Oh, no, no. They've got to restrict travelling up and down the hills where there isn't a maintained trail or road on account of erosion. You've got to do that, but it'd be a wonderful thing to have a road paralleling the ranges about where the Rainbow Trail is now. There'd be campsites along there for, why, thousands of people to camp and have a good time, enjoy the forest.

AR: Thank you. I think it's refreshing to hear someone as young as you make the statement that means there's plenty of room in the world for all of us because so many people are kind of have the attitude that everybody else should stay home and we should enjoy all this nature all by ourselves.

AH: Well, it's alright and everything, but I tell you, there's a lot of people that don't deserve to-lots of nice campgrounds, built the tables and everything all along that range, El Dorado is one example of it. People go in there, they'll just desecrate it and they'll leave the place dirty, trash scattered around. They don't deserve to get out of town at all. But I think that if we put some of our money and effort into educating our children to know and love nature and treat it right, I think there'd be a way whole lot of that. It would-

AR: I think you're absolutely right. Education is our only answer on things like this because you can't have enough police power ever to police everybody that's off the city streets.

AH: No, you can't do it. No, you've got to educate them to it and it's the easiest thing in the world, I think, for the average children to make that love of nature out of them. When you've done that, why, you've got it solved, absolutely.

AR: Thank you. I think that's a real good-

[pause in the tape]

OK, A.D. now I'd like for you to tell me just a little bit about the animals that you became acquainted with while you were working on the trail.

AH: Well, of course, we got to see quite a few, didn't really get to be acquainted with, like the deer and elk now and then, the big horn sheep, occasionally a [unintelligible], a bobcat, but this one animal, it's surprising, how soon you can tame them, and they'll get to where they don't fear you, is the beaver. I've had them at beaver dams where I faced, well, season after season. They'd come out and sit on the bank within a few feet of me while I was fishing. They didn't fear me at all, and another thing I found. You can take a beaver, even a mature beaver, and within a week, he'll just become a perfect pet. Never think of biting you at all, and they just tame awful quick.

AR: They don't even hit you with their tails.

AH: No, they're just real nice pets. Other animals, of course, we got to see was the mountain ground hog, we call them whistling pigs, that lived at timber line. There's an animal that'd weigh probably, oh, 20, 25 pounds. Well, yeah, the real name was marmot of course, but they would harvest their hay, make hay and store it away for the winter feed. But they depended a whole lot on robbing another little animal they call the coney, or little chief hare, the Indians called him, and they would lay up, oh, just a big stack of hay, and the marmots, well, they depended on them a whole lot by robbing them in the winter to get their feed.

AR: Where'd they store this hay?

AH: Well, they'd just store it under a ledge of rock or overhanging rock and they'd just pile it up, you see, where when the snow fell, why, it wouldn't perish in the snow. It would be under this rock you see. And these little chief hares, they were, well, they were tame. You could sit down. They'd come up and sit up and look you right in the face. They just, well, you might say they're so wild, they were tame. They didn't know fear at all. They're really interesting little animals. Then, of course, we had packrats and chipmunks. The chipmunks would get to be a menace. I used to tame when I first went up there, three or four of them would come and sit on my shoulder and eat out of my hand. But they got to be such a nuisance that I just, eventually just tame one, and that was enough to bother us because if he got hungry, he'd come in the house. He'd take something off your plate or if I was working out on the bench or something, why, he'd get up on my shoulder and bite me if I didn't get something to feed to him. He'd actually just scratching and bite me just like a pup would some, train him like that.

Then another was, well, the Canada jays, I guess, is what the right name is. We called them camp birds and most people call them camp robbers. Well, they get to be so darn tame that they're a nuisance. They'll generally just two of them in camp. They raise one young and generally in February, they're hatched so that the spring comes, why, they don't have nothing to bother them at all, and this young one will come in often to camp and try to tame him quick. But they're chasing him away. They won't let him stay at all,

just chase him away. But they'll light on your head or shoulder or come in the house to get something to eat and just get to be a perfect nuisance, see? Camp birds, we call them, or Canada jays as we called them, peat and repeat, or you couldn't tell the males from the females at all. So, one of them was peat and the other'd be repeat.

AR: Yeah.

AH: You see, I mentioned the chipmunks, didn't you? Well, that's, of course, some other little animals, porcupines and packrats of course. We tried to get rid of them when we could because they just made such a mess, you know, tearing everything up. But that just about is the limit of the animals you'd see up there in the summertime.

AR: Now you mentioned bighorn sheep, I think, at one time. You didn't see them too often though.

AH: Oh, no, we just happen to be glancing, they was always up about timberline. Well, it was just an occasion when you get to see them. You know, once in a while, you get to see some. Not very often.

AR: And elk really were rather rare in that time, weren't they?

AH: Yes, yes, they were. They were just in certain areas, over in the Sand Creek country, we'd see some occasionally, but deer were quite common, you know. You'd see them pretty regularly.

AR: Ok, now, another question that occurred to me is how long did you usually work on the trails? How many months during the year?

AH: Well, we'd drop out the first of June, middle of May to the first of June, when the snow and such would get out of the hills, and we'd stay up there occasionally until first of October, till the snow had gone south. July, August, maybe four months.

AR: Four months.

AH: Four months.

AR: I think you mentioned that you usually did carpentry work or something during the winter months, right?

AH: Oh, yes, yes. I's, my life was spent as a builder of course. I built several ranger stations. I built the El Dorado station which is now here at the, it's a high school and a grade school.

AR: It was between them. It's the band room for-

AH: Well, I built that and I built at LaVeta and several places, I built ranger stations.

AR: You mentioned something way back in the interview about building a trailer for the Forest Service.

What type trailer?

AH: Oh, that was one for my own use.
AR: Oh!

AH: I just used as my cart to transport stuff around, you know.

AR: You mentioned that you had pack animals that uh, part, anytime that your speaking of motor vehicles, you truck things in, right?

AH: Well, in moving camp, we often hired some rancher, particularly somebody who had a two-wheel cart or horses to move camp for us. A lot of the packing we'd end with my own horses, I'm missing old Lides and Queen, packing stuff into camp and like that. But when we'd move camp to building the Rainbow Trail, why, we'd move every four miles, and we'd hire somebody to move our equipment that far.

AR: Approximately how many miles of trail did you, well, could you do in a day?

AH: On May 26, 1927, the five men, we completed 225 yards of trail and used seven shots 15/6 of dynamite blowing out rocks. On the 27th, we built 240 yards of trail. Of course, it all depended on the going, how much rocks there was and everything. It was also you could use your hoe dads while you do right along, like, well, on May 29th, we finished 465 yards of trail with four men, working eight hours, and they caught 13 trout and eat them after work too. On Monday, May 30th, we completed 150 yards, 159 yards of trail. On 31, 210, so it varied of course according to the going. 365, 294 and different amounts we made according to how, what we had to do to get the trail through, whether they had to swamp it or use dynamite or could do it all with hoe dads. Now what else you thinking about?

AR: I'd like to know just how you used dynamite and if you had to have any special precautions.

AH: Yes, we had to have some special precautions. I remember one incident. I was a powder man always. I wouldn't trust it to the other men. But I'd put what they call a paster on a rock, that is, I'd want to split a big rock and I'd drill a hole in. So, we just lay the powder on the rock, cover it with mud and then put a cap and a fuse in there and light it and it would split the rock, just split it. Well, I did that once and I was walking away. I had about a five-minute fuse and many a time we get to it what I had in mind and I'd start the cigarette in the base and lit it and start to smoking. I was not over 40 feet when that shot went off. It was what we call a runner. You find them occasionally in the fuse. Instead of burning at its normal rate of speed, it would just shoot right through. Some imperfection in the fuse and this thing went off and I would have swore that rocks hit both of my ears and the time I got to my tree, I got there, but the rocks was all down by the time I got there.

AR: Now, what did you call that, a paster?

AH: Yeah, a paster. You just put your, you'd take a stick out of the powder out of the stick and paste it on the rock and then covered it in mud and then shoot it. And that would bust the rock, break it so you could

move it, see. All we wanted to get them down small enough so we could drill them out of the trail. But this time, I got a runner fuse which is very rare. I never knew but one other in my life, it might have been right at the feet of it, but something wrong in the fuse and it just goes so quick instead of burning slow.

AR: Now usually, you use your dynamite to get rid of stumps, right?

AH: Well, we would. We blew out a tree if it was right in the survey line but we'd try to avoid them as much as possible cause it made a lot of extra work when you blow a tree out with dynamite, see? But occasionally, you couldn't get away from it, why, we'd just drill in the tree. We'd cut the tree down, just drill in and get the powder down, oh, maybe a little below ground though, just a little, and that would blow the stump out and the tree too. But we didn't use much of it blowing out trees or stumps, go around them. But draws, we had to do a lot of rock shooting. Of course, going to certain [unintelligible] grade, why ever so often, you hit a rock. It would be just a big rock you couldn't move and you'd run into solid formation too where it's maybe for quite a distance, you'd have to just burn your, called burn it out with powder to get a trail around it, a place where you'd have to go through solid formation. So, we'd use lots of powder, use lots of it.

AR: Now, when you refer to powder, are you talking about I know is a stick of dynamite or loose powder?

AH: Yeah, 40% dynamite, yeah.

AR: 40%.

AH: 40%, there's 40% nitroglycerine, their base is sawdust, you know. Stick of dynamite.

AR: And you would, some of these you would split and take the powder out, right?

AH: You have to put a paster on, why, we'd just take it out of the paper and cover it with mud and that would break the rock. If you didn't cover it with mud, it wouldn't do much good, but if you just put a little something there for resistance, then really break the rock.

AR: Oh, good. I'm glad you explained that. Now, A.D.'s going to tell us about one of the most colorful characters he's ever known.

AH: Well, I believe that, of course I mentioned Bill Falkenburg was, well, he was the wonder. I don't know, I loved him. He's a good man. We were friends and I just liked everything about him. But another guy that was quite a character and interesting and a good guy, we called him Cap Purdy. I never did, I don't remember his name, but he was a bachelor and he had a cabin over in Edget Hills. He worked with me for several years. He's a good worker, a good camp man and a good buddy to be around. But every year, I, he would quit, would lay off. We'd draw pretty good wages but he'd lay off a week to pick huckleberries. He just, he was a bachelor of course, so he spent a week picking huckleberries, just-he just had to have them, his huckleberries. He was quite a character too. Cap, one thing I remember about him, he was deadly afraid of lightning, just, oh just crazy. Lightning he wouldn't get under a tree, of course. He was smart there, but if was camp, he'd go and get in my tent. I carried a featherbed along with me, feather

tick, and thunderstorm come up and I'd find Cap right in the middle of my bed. He'd lay some newspapers on so it wouldn't get dirty and set right there. One of the funniest things happened once. You know, a thunderstorm and all that lightning was just a popping around and I never feared it. I always figured, why, if you got hit, you're hit. That's it, you're gone. Never worried me, never, I'd be so glad to get in a [unintelligible] place and just watch the lightning strike right close to me. But this time, the storm was a raging, lightning right close and the thunder, you could just hear it hiss before you heard the sound of it. I looked for Cap, so I went and pulled back the flap of my tent and there he was in my featherbed and just about then, it hit a big pine, just about 100 feet from us, and blowed stuff all over Cap, just splinted that tree, poured wood all over Cap. I didn't laugh so much at Cap then.

AR: You thought maybe you'd join him in the middle of that featherbed.

[pause in tape]

AR: Let's start this adventuresome life, Mr. Hess.

AH: Is this recording?

AR: Sure.

AH: Well, when I was 13 years old, I had a stepmother of course and a bunch of half brothers and sisters. My mother died when I was about four and I had a sister about two years younger than I. My stepmother was a good woman. She treated me all right but I was kind of, you know, the ugly duckling. I was really, wanted to bust because I had four half brothers and sisters. So, finally I made up my mind to get out of there. I was grown. Dad went to Chicago on business and I took out that evening on Halloween. I was 13 in July and it was Halloween I took out. Well, I got on the road to trains, behind baggage, box cars, rode the watch and any other way, and finally got back where we had lived before at Marmoth, Iowa. A farmer there that I knew, I went out and saw him, went out to shuck corn with him. Well, he give me a job. I knew him quite well when I was a kid just a year or two before I left there.

Well, eventually, I wrote Dad where I was at and eventually, he sent Sam money to buy me a ticket and take me to Mount Auburn and put me on the train and send me home. So, alright, eventually he's going to Mount Auburn after some lumber and I got on the wagon with him, riding on the run [unintelligible] past the house and I said, wait, I got to get my clothes. I'd put what few clothes I had in a bundle, so he stopped and I went back. I went in the front door of the house and I got my clothes. I come out the back door and I hit the timber. I figured later that I went 30 miles that day, just keep to the timber like a coyote, come to a road, see nobody there and I'd get across it and, in the woods, again.

That evening, I come up to the place, I forget the name of the people now, it's a long time ago, along about supper time, and asked for a job a shucking corn and I got it. Then I stayed oh, a year or so more before I have to go home, working here and there.

AR: You worked on the farm.

AH: Yeah, I worked on the farm, one thing and another, yeah.
AR: And at 13, did other people consider you grown up or just you?

AH: Just me, just me. I thought I was grown up. (laughing) Well, I was. I must have weighed, oh, I believe I weighed 150 pounds then, fairly size kid. I got along alright; I made it alright.

AR: How much schooling had you had? I presume you didn't have any after 13.

AH: Well, our education's graded by the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th by the readers, see?

AR: Oh.

AH: I was in the 4th reader.

AR: The 4th reader.

AH: 4th reader, yeah.

AR: Ok.

AH: And that was it.

AR: Were you a good student?

AH: I was pretty good at arithmetic and spelling; I was a while at spelling. Oh, I guess pretty near average in most things but I didn't try to not let my education stop there. I loved to read, study, anything your hobby ever got studied to find out something about it.
[unintelligible] And another thing, my kids started to college, they discarded their books and I sort of went through them, you know, and got a little out of it, so that, so I think that I learned a little every year I've lived, learned something, and I believe that when a man stops trying to improve himself or learn a little, maybe every day, and from pretty anybody unique, you can learn something. When you stop that, why you just will die.

AR: I'm glad you brought all this up because I think you're one of the best educated people I've ever known. Now, we're going to go back in a minute here. How about after you were 15? You went home you said briefly. Then, what did you do?

AH: Well, at 16, I went to Black Hills, South Dakota.

AR: Mmm, that sounds good.

AH: I worked for a cattleman, squaw man, Henry Leg, his name was, pretty good size cattleman, as a rider and wrangler in the summertime for three years and then I was in the timber and the woods, all working the sawmill and trapping, oh, just anything I worried about was the winters. But they say, yes,

summers I worked for a [unintelligible] I said was a squaw man. He had this, his half-blood Indian mama. Her name was Anna Aroy. She had a sister, Emma, she's the one I sort of got stuck on. He was a man, full grown man, I didn't get Emma. But that's where I got my Indian experience doing those years. Well, then in '19 I went to Oklahoma and Jo saw me and that was it.

AR: That was it. You decided that's the one for me. And it took you how many years to talk her into it?

AH: About three years.

AR: What were you doing? Were you farming at that time?

AH: I done a little farming and a little carpentry building-

AR: Mostly you were girling.

AH: Well, not much. I, first I got stuck on her cousin. There was her and her father and his twin brother.

JH: Now stick to the truth here!

AH: They lived right across the road from one another, see? Her folks had nine children-

AR: Who's this? Josie's folks?

AH: Her folks. Nine and his, her father's twin brother just across the road, sort of one house or the other. He had 11. So, there was 20 kids just across the road. Well, I got stuck on Ann. She was, oh, about my age, I guess. Nice little gal, a little taller, tall gal. Well, I'd rented some land from her dad and planted some cotton and one thing and another, and was living in a tent down in the holler in the canyon. But I had to go down to Garrett's, oh, darn near every evening. Oh, me and Ann and another girl named Minnie. But see, I loved her a lot too. Her dad told me, she's too young, she's two years younger than me. Anyhow, I go down to see Ann and we'd be playing cards, razzle dazzle summon, here'd come Josie down-

JH: Oh, I'm going to add something to this!

AH: She'd get in the game, you know. Well, when I'd go home, why, I had my horse and buggy out in the road you know, tied up and Josie, she'd go home the same time and of course I'd see her [unintelligible] and finally I went clear across the road with her one evening and got on her porch and I stayed there quite a while and finally, I don't know, something happened and I started to go to her house and that was it.

AR: The horse probably became trained and stopped at the wrong house or something.

AH: See, that reminds me of one time after Jo had me hooked pretty well. We went to a dance, oh God, way up, about six miles to this darn dance, you know. We was coming home and the top buggy, you know, we had a lantern and a lap robe, and I went, God this is snuggle nice enough. I don't know what

was happening. Anyhow-

JH: Now listen, don't believe a thing like that!

AH: The first thing I know, the horse stops, see? Well, he went over to a hitch rack and fell for a couple other girls. Well, we scrapped all the way home [unintelligible] that horse and then he stopped [unintelligible].

AR: Ah hah! That's one way to get hot.

AH: Well, I had been there a time or two but the darn horse was just tired, that's all.

AR: That's all.

AH: He wanted to be tied up.

AR: Then, you did get married in Oklahoma.

AH: Yeah, finally, after about three years, why she-

AR: Said yes.

AH: She popped the question.

AR: Uh huh.

AH: I waited for her to ask me.

AR: And then what prompted you to come to Colorado?

AH: Homestead land.

AR: How'd you homestead? What was the procedure?

AH: Well, I filed on 160 and then I put in an application for an enlarged homestead and got another 160. Well, then the section law was passed and I got another half a section. Had to prove up on that, and Ma, she ran it for about, I guess 30 years, I guess.

AR: You were the rancher of the land.

AH: Yeah, I got out and building and the kids were going to school, you know, and here on the ranch-

JH: I liked to farm, that's me.

AR: Uh huh.

AH: She'd keep some girl. We raised a couple of cows, don't need a Mexican and they live on the country but they was our girls [unintelligible] families you know. And seeing a girl and a hired man on the ranch, well, I built and kept by a little land so when we sold out, we had 4000 acres.

AR: What school did your boys go to? What country school?

AH: They went to the Froze Creek school.

AR: Froze Creek.
sch
AH: Froze Creek.

JH: Well, wasn't that [unintelligible] school?

AH: High school

JH: Right down here in high school.

AH: High school. Did he go to grade school?

JH: Yes. [unintelligible]

AH: Yeah, they went to the grade school here too, but their first school was the Froze school.

AR: Froze Creek.

AH: And then they went to-

JH: One year Silver Cliff.

AH: to Colorado College and they both got their master's, Colorado College. Well, then Archie went to Cornell University and got his PhD. The kids, they got their education, about all we done for them was their washing. Oh, a dollar or two now and then. They made their way.

JH: Worked their way their school.

AH: Archie was teaching and Bud in Athletics. He was, they called him the Iron Man in college, you know. He'd go from event into another and they'd go to meets and he'd make over half the points for the whole darn-

[overlapping voices]

JH: We have pictures of him.

AH: And Archie was, after he got his bachelor's degree, why he taught and he made a little extra and helped Bud some too, you know. He went on to get his other degrees, you see.

JH: He didn't help Bud pay his way in school.

AH: Oh, he did some, didn't he?

JH: No, he didn't. Bud worked on his own.

AR: Would you like to come over, Mrs. Hess, and tell us now about the things that were on the ranch?

JH: No.

AR: Ok, then we'll let Mr. Hess talk. [overlapping voices] Diversified farming or just ranching?

AH: To start with, why-

AR: What year are we talking about when you came out?

AH: I don't know. It was about, better than 50 years ago. I'd have to look-

JH: 1917.

AH: No, it wasn't that late, Ma, was it? We was married in '10.

JH: Well, now, wait a minute, let me see. Archie was five when we came out. It was 1916, 1915.

AR: This is side two of the A.D. Hess story.

AH: And some years, we done very well and other years [unintelligible]. But of course, I got out, done building, made a little money, kept buying a little land all the time and finally, we got into cattle. We'd run about 50 cows and then we'd never sell a calf but keep the mature ones, you see.

JH: He had 150 when we sold out.

AH: Yeah, we had about 150.

AR: What kind of cattle?

AH: Well, we got into the shorthorn.

AR: Shorthorn?

AH: Shorthorn.

JH: Papa! Herefords!
AH: Well, shorthorn, Herefords. Herefords are shorthorns.

JH: A Hereford is not a shorthorn!

AH: Goddam it, they were! (laughing) Mother, was that a shorthorn bull?

AR: A cross between Hereford and shorthorn.

AH: No, a shorthorn Hereford!

AR: Oh, ok.

AH: There's shorthorns, God Dang it.

JH: Call them Herefords!

AH: Well, it's no horn, shorthorn, he ain't got no horn!

JH: Shorthorn Hereford! There ain't no such a thing!

AH: Well-

[overlapping voices]

JH: He's not a farmer! [overlapping voices] He come running from San Isabel where he's working one weekend and come in and tried to change our cattle all out for days!

AH: Well, come over here and tell it.

JH: There were all these strange cows on our place and I said, they're our-

AH: Come on and tell it! Did you get that?

AR: Yes, loud and clear. It was way over there.

AH: Did she get-

AR: Why, sure, it'll be on there!

AH: The rest of the tooth, I went after the cows and I tried to run them God Dang heifers off the place. I

didn't know they was ours, you know, and they just run and switch their tails and bawl, you know, me just running them, trying to get rid of the sons of gun. And they was our cows!

AR: So, what they really had was agnus, no, shorthorns, I believe it-

AH: Well, Herefords-
AR: Go right ahead and tell me something besides cattle.

JH: When you talk about cattle and say, looks like you don't know a thing about cattle.

AH: I didn't know our cattle but then, I know what cattle are.

AR: But you know other cattle, sure. Now you said potatoes you raised at first. How long did this big potato boom last here in the valley? I've heard people refer to it, but-

AH: No, it was up and down, up and down. We've sold them for 50 cents a hundred and then it got as high as 2.5 and 3 cents for them. It was all just sort of a [unintelligible] that's all, and lots of work, lots of work. We raised from 75 to 100 tons every year and some years, we'd make some money, I'd buy a little land. Next year, why, we'd just barely paid our expenses.

AR: And you stored the potatoes in potato cellars?

AH: Oh, I had a big cellar that'd hold at least 100 ton and we'd get in there and sort them and sack them and a lot of them I'd haul off to sell and others, trucks would come and I sold to trucks, you know. We made a living, but was nothing certain about what you get-

AR: And when there were real cheap, did you sometimes feed them to your animals?

AH: Well, we fed a lot of it to the pigs.

JH: Tons of them away, were shipped down to the people in the deep South where they were starving down there and living on [unintelligible] you know. We donated tons of potatoes to the people in the South, you know?

AR: That's good to know. I knew-

JH: Somebody hauled them free but we give them potatoes, they hauled them free and shipped them to the poor people in the South-

AR: Did you ever grow lettuce or anything over in that-

AH: Yes-

AR: Tell us about the lettuce.

AH: Well, we made a little money at it. [overlapping voices] Yeah, they grew that up at beaver lots-

AR: Oh!

AH: Oh, and just wonderful lettuce but well, sometimes, we'd make a little money at it and sometimes, well, I'd just about pay for hauling, that's all, you know. So, we quit that.

AR: Do you have quite a few bugs to fight when you're raising things like lettuce?

AH: No.

AR: No?

AH: No. Deer mostly, porcupine, they eat the lettuce.

AR: The deer really enjoyed it, didn't they?

JH: They'd eat it right out of the top of the head.

AH: Yeah, they'd bite out of this head and bite out of that head, ruin a lot of it, but we had lots of it, so didn't mind that too much. But a porcupine would eat out in the pasture and do more damage than the deer! He'd just go and eat a whole of this and a whole, just all night, and just ruin the whole thing.

JH: We raised peas too.

AH: Yeah, peas.

JH: Down on the lower ranch.

AH: Yeah, and on beaver lots too.

JH: Yes, but on the lower ranch, we raised lots of peas down along-

AH: That was the green peas, pick the green peas. Oh, we done pretty good but prices wasn't much, but everything else was cheap so we got by pretty good with her running the ranch and me working, right, we made it pretty good.

AR: Well, that sounds like the necessity of today. You can't expect a ranch to support you especially a small ranch. But as you pointed out, you had a large one by the time you sold out.

AH: Yeah, pretty good size ranch. It's worth, it sold I think, last spring for around $100,000. [unintelligible] In fact, there's an air strip on the ranch that cost them more than they got for the whole

ranch when they sold it. They got about $20,000 when they sold it.

AR: Alright. Tell me about Beaver Lodge, when you decided to build it and so forth.

AH: Well, I bought it from a Mexican, Alfonso Sias was his name that homesteaded. Me and a friend of mine who had quite a family of children, name was Lester, and we got a big idea about having a resort, you know, for tourists and one thing and another. So, we bought it, paid $800 for it.

AR: How much land?

AH: 160, and then we got about 10 acres more from the forest to put a ditch into the lake. That don't cost us anything, just fence it in because it was a private project, water rights, you know. Anyhow, Lester wanted to go ahead and all build cabins and this and that, big stuff, you know, and get the resort a going. I couldn't see it. I'd been around and talked to all the other owners here, kind of got the lowdown on what money's they's making and this and that, and I decided I didn't want to go into it that heavy. So, I sold out to him and so they started in and went across the creek, a bunch of pines there, oh beautiful pines about oh, 10 or 12 inches, nice house, log, tall and they cut down a flock of them, enough to build a couple of cabins and they never even got them out of the timber, didn't do a dang thing with it.

So eventually, the old folks, Lester died just a few years after that and then one of these boys come. They wanted to borrow some money. We had a little money in the bank. So, I told them no, I didn't want to loan money. I wasn't in the business of loaning money. Well, they kind of got sore. You're a friend of us, ain't we friends? I said, yeah, but we want to be friends. We want to keep being friends and I don't want money. I said, I'll buy a bigger lot in back of you. Alright, sell it to me. So, I said, well, what do you want? Well, I said, I want $5000. They said, you're just crazy as you know what. I'll give you just what you paid me for it, $800. Oh no, they couldn't do that. You make up your mind, I says, I'll make out a deed to the place and go to the bank and George Bidley on the bank that time. I says, anytime that you want to sell it for that, why, you paid me for it, why, go down there and give George the money and he'll give you the deed. So, that's the way they got Beaver Lodge back, for the same money-

AR: You just waited them out.

AH: Yeah, I just waited them out. They had to have the money you see. Of course, now I've been offered $25,000 for the land.

AR: Right.

AH: I wouldn't think of selling it. Of course, it ain't mine anymore. We ain't got winder or nothing else, you know, we got it all for kid, all that property. It's worth quite a bit of money now.

AR: Right.

AH: But it ain't worth a darn to the kids on account of they going to get some gas, on account of the fact that it'll never make them any money, see? You take a piece of property like that that's, well, it's part of

the family, and all you can do is enjoy it and pay taxes on it. They'll never make a cent out of it of course, far as that's concerned and yet, they wouldn't think of selling it.

AR: Right. Well, the type work they're both in though, they do sort of need a retreat.

AH: Well, yeah, I know, but then it ain't no money to make profits-

AR: Well, I realize that. You told me something about the cabins at Beaver Lodge. You told me, let's see, it started, what'd you do? Build one room first?

AH: Well, first we built the old cabin.

AR: Ok.

AH: It's just oh, rough log and one thing and another, it's a pretty good little cabin. But Lindly built a new cabin next to it and left a space between so that, in case you want to tear the old one down, it won't interfere with the new one, and they left what they call a dogtrot in between them where we hang our coats and one thing and another, you know. The new cabin has got, well, it's got a bedroom off it. You've slept in it, haven't you?

AR: Why, it's my bedroom and I don't believe I've been there-

AH: Say you helped put in one wall, didn't you?

AR: Certainly! I let it happen.

AH: Well, that's pretty nice. You got that fireplace there that, well, has a month of building in it. And mineral specimens, fossils and is precast blocks and then laid up, you know. You know it.

AR: Yes, I know it-

AH: You never take the ashes out. They drop down and once a year; you would take the ashes out behind it. Fireplace here, you got to take them out every day in a bucket and dump them, see.

AR: That's really a disadvantage.

AH: Yeah, but it's a nice place up there.

AR: Did you do all the work on the fireplace yourself?

AH: Well, no. Ma helped me though.

JH: Oh, thank you.

AH: I was about a month building it, that fireplace, that's a pretty fireplace. See, I precast it, you see, and blocks and the minerals in them and by making in forms, and [unintelligible] and then pour my concrete all that [unintelligible] face. Do you see where that-you know how it is.

AR: Yes.

AH: And that's the-pretty nice job.

AR: It certainly is and it's real unusual.

AH: Yeah, it is.

AR: And individual.

AH: Yeah, it's pretty well made. And it's all lined with fire brick and-

[break in tape]

AR: When I see people where Beaver Lodge is.
so
AH: Well, I think it's about nothing knows.

AR: Nothing? You don't want to tell us.

AH: Well, I do other people that I wouldn't mind going up there, nice people. Although we've had, oh, very little vandalism. I think about two bags was all ever got stole up there. And it's open year-round so anybody go up there. We go up sometimes there [unintelligible] there something you know. And in fact, I get a lot of much pleasure out of our friends or any other nice people enjoying it as much as they do. It's never locked and people that know us know that they're welcome and they use it, well, many more times than we do, you see, always somebody up there, somebody [unintelligible] and most of them are just, they're very nice about it. They wash the dishes and leave some wood in the cabin. They take care of it, clean it up, you know.

But last summer, I went up there [unintelligible] deer season and there was a lady. I guess it was a lady, he had his daughter about, I think, 15 or 16, and their men folks were hunting deer and they were sitting in the living rows, we call it, mainly where the fireplace is, and that place was a shambles, dirt, trash and stuff, litter scattered all over and then just sitting there with long faces, made about something, I guess. The dishes dirty in the kitchen. Well, that just made me mad. I just come out and went home, left them. The people that go into a place like that, as nice a place as that is, and then just not clean it up or keep it clean, take care of it, or appreciate it, ain't my kind of people. Most of the people who go up there, they appreciate it. You take a, Ed Jones. He, they always went up there, him and his mother, they'd cook, you know, and of course, anybody could use the cabin, but eventually, why they got taking their trailer up there, and now, Eddie, I'll give him permission. He got a big, long trailer and he'd park it up there, just where he could see the lake and he's living about year-round and he's kind of the boss of the place, you

see. Well, Marie and Mary Cook, that's his mother, why, they wanted to move their trailer over by him, see? They'd been camping just south of us on the Buddy Ridge, just outside of our fence? And he says nothing, says you get right out there, and he says, don't go that way across that [unintelligible]. You follow the road going across there too. So, Eddie's kind of our watchman up there. He got his trailer parked on there, but he wouldn't let his mother and his stepdad come over. He said this is a darn trailer camp. He says this is all that's going to be on here. So, he's a darn good guy to have on the place.

AR: Right.

AH: A lot of them don't like him but well, I've always considered him as kind of one of my boys and he knows it. I've always liked him ever since he was a little kid, you know. And he's a darn good guy to have on the place. He likes me and I like him.

AR: Now that we haven't told them where it is except somewhere near the Muddy. Uh, the fact that you have to go through some of the national forest before you get there, right?

AH: It's a mile within the boundary of the national forest.

AR: How does this happen? Do you know how this happens? Why do we have it cut up like that and we have parcels within the national forest?

AH: Well, after the national forest was first established, I was in the Black Hills as a kid at the time it was established under Roosevelt, wasn't it? Anyhow, they had a rule or law that any land within the laid-out boundaries of the forest that was more valuable for agriculture than for timber, could be homesteaded, see? Well, now, they've taken that out of the law. Now, you can't do it anymore but that time, you could homestead within the boundaries of the forest and that's the way this was. Alfonso [unintelligible] farmed on it, for farms, see. So since then, the most, the vast majority of these tracts the government has got a hold of them by giving the place an equal or better value outside of the boundaries of the forest, see? Well, they've tried it on me for years, this ranch and that ranch, but I wouldn't-

AR: You're not coming out.

AH: Oh hell, no. Eventually I went to personnel meeting of the Forest Service in Pueblo and Polk was the supervisor. He brought up the-

JH: Why should that be down in that particular-

AR: Cause we want to-

AH: He brought up the questions of buy or trade for Beaver Lodge again. Well, a secretary, I forget his name now, but he got up and he says, listen, he said, we been dwelling on this for years about getting this piece of land he's got up there and he says, Hess, at the present time, he's a forest guard and he's watching the interests of the forest up there and he's a conservationist. His place is a wildlife sanctuary and he's a, well, he's a naturalist, he likes it and I think that the government is better off for him to own it than for us

to own it. I think we ought to leave him alone. Well, they've never bothered me since.

AR: Well, good.

AH: So, that's why I got the Beaver Lodge and the reason I kept it.

AR: But our forest boundary, like along the Sangre de Cristo, is real cut up and real jagged, isn't it?

AH: Why, sure, it was laid out and land that was supposedly valuable, more valuable, even if it was public land, why they left that out, see? And now, of course, it's all be homesteaded and proved up on. Anything that they thought was more valuable, why, they left that outside of the boundary of the forest.

AR: What do you know about the, over by San Isabel, have you worked over there? Mrs. Hess mentioned something about you coming home from San Isabel.

AH: Yeah, I worked over there at Lake Isabel when it was being built, you know. I was the foreman on the construction when Lake Isabel was being built.

AR: You mean the lake?

AH: The lake, yeah.

AR: Campgrounds and so forth? That ought to come in regular and take the forest-know anything else about the forest you'd like to tell us?

AH: Well, I know a lot about the forest, quite a bit that don't need to be told, everybody knows but the trees, the animals and everything, and the summer climate. That's a wonderful thing. You know, in the summer, when it's hot and sweaty down below and you can cool off and enjoy yourself. And there's no such a thing up there as air pollution at all. You got clean air to breathe and good spring waters too. So, it's a pretty nice place in the summertime.

AR: What about diseases that trees get sometimes. We have never had too much problem, have we?

AH: No, there's not much disease here. We have mistletoe infestation in some of our pines, which is not serious. It don't hurt the pines much and then we have the pine beetle which is controllable. You've got to cut down lots of timber, but they, I think they controlled it pretty well. That's the-I forget the name, but it's the pine beetle and there's a certain beetle of the same species but a different variety for the different [unintelligible] this one works on the [unintelligible] pine, I remember him, he's [unintelligible] talked to this ponderosa, just happened to remember that. But then there's a different beetle, a different variety works on the pinyon and on the spruce, see. Well, those are the most serious enemies of the forest, is the beetle. Your mistletoe, it'll stunt a tree, but it don't really hurt it. There's no other serious disease that I know of in the forest here. But there has been whole areas been killed off by the beetle. You just have to go in, they cut them down and burn them. They don't have to burn them altogether but they burn enough that, to kill the beetles, which are just under the bark, see? Time they girdle the tree, just cut the cambium

through, around the tree, why it kills the tree. They don't go any deeper than just under the bark.

AR: You mean, when they circle the tree?

AH: Amongst them, that the circle, encircled, that cuts off the cambium which is the growing part of the tree. That kills the trees. But they're quite easy to control. It takes work but they just cut them down and pile the brush up over the logs and just burn them enough it kills the beetles it's just under the bark, you see. In a couple years, why, they could get ahead of it and stop an infestation. Otherwise, there's not much disease in the trees I know of.

UI: This is the conclusion of this taping. Added on to this tape is another oral history taping series of A.D. Hess.

UI: -Westcliffe, Colorado, December 1966. The subject of the interview is Mr. A.D. Hess of Westcliffe. Present were his wife Mrs. Hess, Mrs. [unintelligible] of Westcliffe, Russ [unintelligible] and Dr. Richard Radberg of Florence.

AH: -she come running. I thought it was some kind of a figurine, a different, just a big bowl, you know, and it would have been if the road hadn't been graded out. It'd have been 2' under the surface and it was upside down [unintelligible]

RR: Would this be used for –

AH: Yes, and I got a pestle they'd use instead of [unintelligible] you know and I have a pestle that I got in Mexico

Transcription stopped. In this section of the tape, the sound is very bad.