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Oral History Collection

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Kelly, Van

November 19, 1985

Interviewed by Stan Francis

DF: Today is November 19, 1985. This is Stan Francis. We're talking with Van Kelly concerning the Rosita area. Van, maybe we'll start out, how did you come to move to the Rosita area?

VK: Oh, we came to teach school in 1941. We started out in Oklahoma. That was the winding up of the Great Depression.

DF: I see.

VK: So, we came through an agency. We never had seen the place, never had seen Colorado, but that's why we came.

DF: Ok, during your time there, you were teaching in a one room schoolhouse I guess at the first, or was it a bigger schoolhouse?

VK: No, that was the last schoolhouse. They had a schoolhouse there before that during the mining days. It burned down but this one came about later.

DF: Ok, do you, you know why they formed the town of Rosita and what the name stands for and so forth.

VK: Well, Rosita is a Spanish name for little rose, so it's always a fictional name for it too connected to the Spanish calling it sweetheart but the city fathers named it Rosita because many wild roses that grew about there at the time. They decided to name it thataway instead of after the fictional name.

DF: What do you know about the last treaty that was signed concerning that area?

VK: Well, of course, the last treaty, I think we're talking about is the removal of the Indians over to the reservation in southwestern Colorado, that changing very much civilization when the whites are involved, the Indians were there before, possibly anybody else what sign was enabled to dig up round there somewhere in the stories that's been handed down. After the Indians were moved out, we say they went out on their own accord, either that or they didn't get beef, but it was furnished them in the reservation and they stayed over there. But even so, they come over here in the summertime, from what we could find out and they'd hunt. It's a good place, cool in this climate. They'd come over here to hunt and they'd come over here to run horse races but they'd come over to the Huerfano country for that quite a bit cause they had horses, the Spaniards down there had horses and liked to trade and they liked to run horse races. But the Indians would usually get beat in the horse races. They had a weakness for that and they, the story, one story tell about the Indians have got a hold of a good race horse somewhere one time in New Mexico. They'd go down there and swipe them, you know. They came over to the Gardner country one time to run a race and this good horse, he put him in there and he just outrun everything and these Indians just cleaned 'em out down there. A fellow said it reminded him of a bunch of children, just overjoyed, you know, and jump up and down and hoot and holler, and that's one time they went home lucky.

DF: What type of Indians were they? Were they Utes?

VK: Southern Utes.

DF: Southern Utes?

VK: Yeah.

DF: They got moved over to Cortez area over by southwestern?

VK: Ute reservation.

DF: Well, how did the white men finally move into this area?

VK: Well, the first white men moved in. They got interested in mining in this country. Pueblo was settled at that time and I think about the first fellows that was interested in mining, they knew about Rosita for some reason or other. Word gets around. It's a big spring up there, Irwin and let's see, Jim Kringle, fellow by the name of Robinson, they was just some of the very first. That Irwin, he was the most instrumental in getting things done around there it seemed like. Of course, it was Fremont County at that time so that's the way he got Rosita started.

DF: It got started mainly as a mining-

VK: Interested mining.

DF: Irwin, where did he come from? Do you know?

VK: I don't know where Irwin come from but he's been over the state. He's pretty well educated and he was a representative for Fremont County but he stayed up here most of the time.

DF: What is unique, let's say, about the town plat or they had the name changed from little rose to Rosita?

VK: Yep, the town plat there, they got a committee together 1873 to apply for a town plat. Of course, it wasn't any 360 acres to it then, just about made up 36 town lots and they made up their own plat. Fellow by the name of Holmes was the head of the committee and they got this plat fixed out and I think Mr. Irwin helped them get it laid out and I think Karl Wulstein is a mining engineer and a surveyor at that time, and he helped survey it out too.

DF: Well, they had to do this in order to like to build hotels and banks and-

VK: Yes, it's sort of a promotional thing at that time I think, like just later on to get a town started there and the mining and sell claims and set up mining companies, so of course, they had different ones that helped to set up the mining company, but I believe in the mining, that outlined a little different there to some of them cause the first men set up the mining companies, D.J. Roberts and Jim Kringle and they had all this to sell, you know, advertise, that's why they wanted to get a town and they did start a town, and they did hit ore too around there.

DF: What were some of the, in the peak of the mining, what type of businesses did they have going there, you know?

VK: Oh gosh, they had, at the peak, they had all kinds of businesses around Rosita there. At the height of

it, I'd say around 1875 on, is the height of it, they had five general stores, drugstore, meat market, three saloons, had a brewery and the name of that brewery company was the Rosita Brewing Company. So, I've seen some of the labels-

DF: You ever found a bottle or anything?

VK: Well, there's one bottle been found and a fellow down in Las Animas has it, La Junta, has the bottle. He sent me a picture of it and it's Rosita Brewing Company on the side.

DF: I'll be.

VK: So, then you had, Rosita had two different restaurants, five hotels. The hotels, one was called the Windsor and the other one was called Snowy Range and the Windsor Hotels.

DF: So, it was a pretty good size town at that time?

VK: Yeah, and they had three blacksmith shops, wagon shop, lumber yard and a brickyard, three assay offices and three lawyers, three churches. Those churches were the Methodist church and the Episcopal and the Catholic church, so they had their share of churches.

DF: How many people were living in the Rosita area about that time?

VK: I would say around 1500, different figures on that.

DF: But as more or less permanent residents in that area.

VK: There were, as long as the mining lasted, they were permanent residents. I noticed another thing. They didn't have, in the town, there wasn't any insurance companies there. People didn't go in for it them days like they do now. Another thing too, they probably weren't, wouldn't be classified to be insured, cause they didn't have any fire fighting equipment. They had water, but they hauled it in barrels.

DF: Yeah, I heard they didn't have a central source of water that was a lot of water. They had a spring but they, if they had a fire, they didn't have a lot of water there.

VK: They hauled it in barrels. A wagon and team would deliver it for .25 a barrel. If they got a fire, why, they couldn't even hitch up a horse and get down there and back. They had a sort of a bucket brigade, just wasn't anything there to insure in the business part of the town. Another thing I noticed they didn't have, what they talk about, is beauty parlors. They didn't-

DF: Too rugged-

VK: No=

DF: Too rugged a life to worry about beauty. OK, what about the law enforcement, the sheriff?

VK: The first sheriff in the county of that area, his name was Schoolfield. That Schoolfield Lane as you come-

DF: I wondered where that name came from.

VK: That's came from the first sheriff there. He was active, common-law enforcement. Something serious

happened, why the vigilante committee took over.

DF: Well, how did that work? Who was on the vigilante committee?

VK: I don't know who was on that. They had a citizens' committee, they called it up there, but it didn't taken them long to get together when they had to.

DF: If something really serious came up that the sheriff couldn't handle, then they would gather-

VK: Seemed to be absent.

DF: He wasn't around when he was needed. When did that become a county seat? When was it separated from Fremont? How did that come about?

VK: It became a county seat there in about 1877. That's about the year it became a county seat. Of course, Fremont County prior to that. It didn't hold its place too long in that respect too long because Silver Cliff was trying to get it down here.

DF: I see.

VK: Of course, the real, the first county seat is in Ula but it didn't last but a few months till they got it moved over to Rosita. They had more inducements over there. They had more people. It was about 1877 along there.

DF: Well, did they have a lot of law problems? I remember reading somewhere about having a mine somebody trying to take over but that might have been in Querida.

VK: No, it was in Rosita.

DF: Was it?

VK: Pocahontas, so well, that Pocahontas war was during the busy time there in Pocahontas mine was producing real well and some outlaws wanted to come in by the name of Graham. I think he was an ex-convict, so he and his hatchet men came into Rosita and they liked what they saw and they wanted to get a hold of Pocahontas mines some ways, however they could, so they bought some vacant lots just around that adjoined the mine lots. I don't know what they had in mind but they finally couldn't wait any longer to get hold of the Pocahontas, so they stationed their own men on these lots that abutted the mine and wouldn't let anybody cross them to get to the mine. So, the fellow that owned the mine by the name of Herr, I believe he and his brother, they had to quit the mine. The mine remained then in the hands of outlaws for possibly a week, something like that. They finally got organized, people around there, and the vigilante committee and went up there. The shooting started and Graham came out of the mine why, they killed him.

DF: Was he the head of the bad guys?

VK: Bad guys. Then, after he was killed, they rounded the others up and took them out of the county and told them if they ever come back, they'd kill them.

DF: They didn't come back, did they?

VK: Well, there's no record of it but there's a banker there kind of slung in with them after he was found

out a little later, his name was Stewart. The name of the bank was the Farmers and the Miners Bank. Stewart, he was sort of a crook. He was a big fat man. Some Saturday evening late, after banking hours, he had absconded with funds. He left the country. He was big and fat but by the time the vigilante committee found out about it, which they knew Sunday and then Sunday night and Monday, why he was gone, Stewart was, but the vigilantes took off to Canon City. Well, he'd give them the slip. He'd gone to Pueblo. He might have had a horse. Some of them think he might have, they paid everybody then in gold or silver, so they thought he might have had enough that it weighed him down and he might have stashed that somewhere and come back later, they don't know, and picked it up. But some of them believe that. He might have stashed it. It might still be out there. He went off, they said, skipped the country and went to Texas. From there, they thought he went to Europe.

DF: He must have taken quite a bit with him.

VK: Must have, if he was able to live in Europe you know. But the first prospect up there I suppose was a couple of fellows from Pueblo, 1860s. Deputy sheriff down there and his brother, and their name was Smith. Had some record in Canon City. But no one every knew where they prospected around Rosita so they must not have found very much. But they didn't follow that.

DF: Well, that's back to, what was his name, Irwin and a couple other guys, they really started the mining business, right?

VK: Yeah, they-

DF: They're the ones who must have found the silver.

VK: They had some idea it might be around there and word goes along, too.

DF: What were some of the main characters or people that you have recollection of that came out of the Rosita area?

VK: Wulstein, he was the head of the German colony, it failed here in the valley, 1870, and he was fortunate in a way in Rosita. So over there, he was a mining engineer, metallurgy and he was well educated and that fit right into his schemes over there. Early colonists, early people here I talked to years before, they looked on him as sort of a schemer, city slicker, but he was just well educated. He knew how to make money without getting his hands dirty. So, he lived in Rosita and-

DF: I understand they sort of threw him out of the German colony. That's why he went there, is that right?

VK: Well, they could have when the colony busted up. I don't know about that. They could have. So, he made his way up to Rosita and he was buried there in 1912, Rosita cemetery and-

DF: Yeah, I've seen his headstone up there.

VK: Yeah, Miss Lowen, Mary Lowens, I learned quite a bit from her. She got out and took up a collection, bought a stone, put it there. So, Herman here, we spoke of him some and he was a state legislator and he was very instrumental in getting this turned into Custer County. First, they wanted to name it Humboldt County and they had took several votes up at the legislature, two or three days, he finally got it over. Another character out there is Mr. Putnam. I talked to him quite a lot, knew him real well. He's been dead since 1915. Putnam, he claimed to be grubstake and of course, a grubstake was a fellow that'll work for his board more or less. People furnished him food and ammunition, not the ammunition, but they did furnish him ammunition (laughing)

DF: Check what you got.

VK: Furnished him dynamite to be prospecting with. That was the height of his ambition is to prospect. Of course, he'd go out on his claims they'd buy and he'd prospect for people, see, he didn't make anything but he had the satisfaction. He's quite a Putnam. That's all he studied in his life was being a prospector. He liked to drink liquor once in a while. He had a pool hall there cross from the post office in Rosita. People go in there and play pool. They give him any whiskey, sometimes he'd get wild with it. He accidentally shot his own boy's eye out. There was someone banging on the door and he just shot through the door and it was his boy, and he put his eye out with a six shooter. He'd get stirred up once in a while. They'd clear that pool hall in a hurry you know. They got quite a kick out of that. When we was living there, he had-

DF: Did he have a little ranch down the road there from Rosita?

VK: No, I don't think so. But just across from the post office, the postmaster was Miss Hunt at that time and he just lived across the street from her, and she had a lot of chickens, hens, and he had some buildings around there and those hens would get out there and lay in his outbuildings and his shop. So, he put up a sign one day – Eggs for sale. (laughing) He's telling me too about a fellow went out there when he was a young man. Fellow went out trapping for bear back out east of Rosita there and he had a boy. This fellow went out one day and his boy's with him and the bear was in the trap, he said, when that bear saw these fellows, why he begin to buck. He tore himself loose from the trap and got a hold of that fellow. Yeah, he got a hold of him, said this boy was along, got a hold of his dad's gun, just a single shot rifles they had. He got a hold of that gun and in his excitement, he got around where he could hit that bear in the head, he did. He caved his skull in with that rifle. He said that was such a force that it bent that barrel a little bit, but he got the bear.

DF: He hit him with the rifle instead of shooting him, huh?

VK: Well.

DF: He shoot him first and then hit him.

VK: He didn't have time to shoot him first. This boy couldn't shoot him without hitting his dad.

DF: Oh, I see.

VK: So, he took the chance on hitting him in the head and he was lucky enough to kill the bear. So-

DF: What do you know about, I heard one time that they were trying to make that Silver Cliff, they wanted to make a state capital.

VK: Yeah, Silver Cliff, they wanted to make it the capital. I don't think, Rosita was very strong idea when it was brought up, but it was Silver Cliff.

DF: Mainly Silver Cliff. Then what happened along in the years when they went off the silver standard, was that-

VK: It begun to fold up then. Rosita begin to go down anyway. Veins begin to get smaller and mines deeper and further back and due to the lower price of that silver, well, Russia and some of the foreign countries begin to dump silver on our metal markets. That was about 1890, in 1890 I believe it was. Silver

went down and the mines begin to play out too.

DF: So, it was sort of a gradual process.

VK: It was gradual.

DF: When did our nation go off the silver standard, do you know? It was about 1912 or something like that?

VK: I forget, Stan, just when it was.

DF: But all that working together-

VK: Coming in foreign countries, that was the final blow. Of course, there's a fellow here, fellow up there by the name of Shorty Robinson had in Rosita. Now that would be in the Great Depression era or just prior to it, he was a chief whiskey man around there. That's when people that was hard up made whiskey. Of course, the law didn't get in after them unless it was reported. Then they had to do something. This Shorty Robinson, he went underground with his whiskey making up there in Rosita and he finally caught on. He had it dug from his basement out, he had a tunnel dug out from the basement, come out out there in the bushes, had some willows out there. The law just sat out there and caught him, you know. They didn't do a lot to him in them days. They didn't have anything and had to do something to live.

DF: Yeah, that's a pretty rugged area around there. There's not a whole lot there except trees and rocks-

VK: No, and we moved there-

DF: Pasture land-

VK: 1941 there was five or six families around there.

DF: So, it pretty well dwindled down to nothing by the time you got there.

VK: Oh yeah.

DF: Lot of the buildings had been moved out and-

VK: Moved out and one is moved down there close to the big spring. That log building that's there now and, but just still had a few characters around there. Find this fellow Piltz' boys, was one of the old families and Oscar, he was one of them. He got a good memory about the history around there, more than any of the rest of them. He told me quite a bit about Rosita and Oscar though, wrote his own Bible. I used to have some of the papers from it but we'd a destroyed them now.

DF: How did the town enlarge itself? I understood that it went from like 36 lots up to 360 acres.

VK: Well, they went wild over the mining.

DF: Ok, was that a promotional scheme that'd make money-

VK: Sell lots. Stock was their bread and butter.

DF: They sold stock then.

VK: Oh gosh, that was more important, didn't sell as many mine claims as they did stock, you know.

DF: I see.

VK: Cause Wulstein and fellows that went in, W.J. Robinson and Jim Pringle, they's in on that hardscrabble mining company. They organized it.

DF: Where was in it? Was that in Rosita? Harscrabble mining?

VK: Yeah. They probably had an office there, so-

DF: Yeah, I wondered where that name came from. But, finally, just sort of faded away because of the lack of the price for silver and exports-

VK: Mines begin to develop. Silver Cliff came in and about five years after Rosita, so you can see-

DF: They started to move into Silver Cliff from Rosita.

VK: A lot of the houses were moved down here from up there, so-

DF: Let's talk a little bit about the mining.

VK: All right. Well, of course Rosita, that area's probably one of the newest mining areas in the state really cause Cripple Creek is-

DF: Pretty old.

VK: Getting right along.

DF: Central City.

VK: Yeah, you wonder why they ever come to Rosita in the first place. Old mining men, mining engineers, they'd known for a long time that all your best minerals are found in the mountains. The mountains are created by volcanic action.

DF: Right.

VK: That's where you find the best. You find minerals on the flat land too but not much gold. Best to stand on in there. Of course, the early Spaniards first came into this county, not necessarily Rosita, but you've heard of the Marble Caves.

DF: Right!

VK: Came up there. Nobody's ever found anything they got out of the Marble Caves. That's more of a legend, never been thoroughly explored, just never been any riches found in the Marble Caves. They found some pieces of ladder, pieces of chow in there-

DF: Apparently someone was doing some mining around here for them to build a Marble Cave.

VK: Some reasons to come into that area. Well, we were in the Spanish country at that time, south of the

Arkansas River but the Spaniards didn't go north of the river very much and even up in here. That's, the legend of the marble caves is quite a story on its own.

DF: Yeah, I've heard a number of accounts. What kind of mines do they have over there? Were they like shaft mines, straight down-

VK: Yeah, you got the shaft, that would be straight down. It can go on into tunnels, wings to the side, most of the mines up around Rosita were shaft mines. The Humboldt was one of the biggest. I went at a little bit of an angle. It was 700 feet deep and then the about the first productive mine around Rosita there was the Senator mine, Humboldt, Virginia, that's the very first ones in there, right close in there. They were real productive.

DF: Did they do any of the processing of the ore in Rosita or did they send it out?

VK: Well, they couldn't take out the ore; it's too much. They'd have to take it to Pueblo and shipped it away. They had their own smelters. They could see what they'd have to do. The finished product, why, they'd haul it down there in a wagon. They probably had five or six smelters around there. Some of them Smelters were built, reduction works, they never turned a wheel.

DF: The goings on, the business things, were more to sell stock and make a fast buck that way than was really producing silver.

VK: After it got going the other way, went down, why naturally, they did everything they could. There was a smelter's reduction works. There was quite a few of them. There's one over Wilmer Gulch. It's a foundation and a big wall are still built up there. They never turned a wheel, they said on there. Wilmer Gulch, they used to pan a little gold over there.

DF: Is that the stream that runs right through Rosita and heads off down past the cemetery?

VK: It's over east, it's over the hill, Wilmer Gulch.

DF: Oh, ok.

VK: That's down through by Stella Smith's.

DF: Ok.

VK: They claim they could pan there and make wages. Well, wages then was a dollar or two a day. But that's when there was more water in the creek bed, more rainfall and snow.

DF: There's not a whole lot running through there right now.

VK: No, not now.

DF: When it runs through, it's a thunderstorm, I really think. Ok, so they smelt it and then they, what'd they do, make bars out of it and then ship it out?

VK: Yeah, they make the ingots out of it and haul it out, so they did very well there for quite a while. The average output of a mine there, I'd say, is around, in its lifetime, around \$100,000 more or less. Of course, the Bassick mine over to Querida is quite a bit more than that. Oh, and the mining, some of the terms they used in the mining was 'float', that's just what's on the outside of the surface of the earth, that's the way

the Bassick mine was found. A fault in the mine is where a slip in the structure, underground slippage, rocks may strati, overslide the others. That's what they call a fault and they like to prospect in those places. The chances of finding ore where the springs. A dyke is more or less a little hill there in that little valley in Rosita. Some dykes goes underneath it's a hill, it's a little hill underneath that comes up. It's a barrier, is what it is. And there's quite a few of those around here.

DF: Yeah, there's a lot of bob catting action around here.

VK: Of course, the mine claim is the area you could make off legally and have it surveyed.

DF: Did it have to be a certain size or-

VK: No, in all sizes, 700 yards, a mine, 100 yards wide and half a mile long some of those mine claims. They had claim jumpers out there. They had fellows that'd salt there with a little ore, try to sell claims that way, so patenting a claim is like they still have patent claims. You don't have to go work them. Keep them year after year after year, but ordinary mine claim, you're supposed to put \$100 worth of labor a year to keep it. But they don't do that anymore. The interesting mining is a died down the last 30 years. When we first came there, it's quite a bit of prospecting in the summer on the claims.

DF: But nothing worthwhile enough to really start mining again.

VK: No, not unless it'd be some unknown mineral. They was some prospecting for rare earth but I never heard anymore about it. That was for using rare earth for medicinal purposes.

DF: Oh, I see.

VK: Never found out any more about that.

DF: Well, there was a fellow that was on that back road, you know, heading to Rosita straight over to Querida? And I think you told me the name of that gulch in there one time.

VK: Hungry Gulch.

DF: Yeah, Hungry Gulch.

VK: Poverty Gulch, they called it.

DF: Poverty Gulch. There was a fellow back there a couple years ago, in fact, up to just about a year ago, he was working on the tannins in the mine.

VK: Yep, they had a hearing about that at the courthouse.

DF: Yeah, he was using, I think, sulfuric acid-

VK: He was going to mine those dumps.

DF: Yeah.

VK: They had quite a meeting about it but I think he got permission to go ahead but-

DF: He did, but it's shut down now. So, I guess-

VK: He got sick.

DF: Oh, did he?

VK: Yeah, he got sick. Ulcers. So, they never did develop.

DF: No, I don't think they ever made anything off of it.

VK: So, there's another mine, what, the main mines there is two discovered by accident. One was the Humboldt mine, Mr. Putnam, he's telling me about that.

DF: Where was that located from the crossroad there? Can you tell me?

VK: Right on east, as you make the turn, big yellow dump.

DF: OK. Up at the top of the fields-

VK: About halfway up.

DF: Is that the one that's got an opening right in the side of the hill or is that a different one?

VK: No, no.

DF: You can see-

VK: Humboldt is a shaft.

DF: Shaft, ok. I know where it is. A little bit down from that hill.

VK: It's, so, Humboldt, Pocahontas, all those mines are on the same strata, right on the west front of Humboldt. Putnam said, this fellow going up to the Victoria or some of those other mines there once, he kept laying the rocks in the road and kept, and the boss finally says, you fellows get up there and knock those rocks out of the road, so to make the road a little smoother. Come to find out, it was the way they found the Humboldt mine.

DF: Those rocks were-

VK: Those rocks were heavy and anything that heavy had ore in it so they had it assayed and that's the way the Humboldt mine got started. The Bassick mine, the famous Bassick over to Querida, it was discovered by accident. Of course, the fellows found it, was looking for ore but he didn't know what he had found when he did. Finally found some rock on top quite a bit heavier than all the other, fellow by the name of Bassick, and when he had it assayed, why, he'd hit the jackpot. That's the only two that was discovered by accident.

DF: Well, I've heard that a lot of times they're looking for a volcanic chimney in the ground because that's where a lot of the ore, lines the sides of it.

VK: The Bassick mine was what they call a chimney all right and they've dug around there years since that and tried to find another chimney but they never did.

DF: I remember, I guess it was two years ago, there was a Canadian drilling all over the Bassick mine area looking. I don't know what he found but he did a lot of core drilling.

VK: Yeah, they've done that too, lot of core drilling.

DF: But they never been back so I guess they didn't find anything.

VK: There's quite a bit of ore in the bottom of that mine yet.

DF: That's what I've heard. It's a low-grade ore but there's lots of it.

VK: Low grade and the wages are nowadays, they couldn't come out on it, ore in the dump. They'll develop a way someday to get some of that ore out of that dump.

DF: I always wanted to know, how do they know what to dump on the ground and what to run through the process, by the way it looked?

VK: Well, it's yellow but a few years ago, Leonard Kattnig worked for a company that was going to work those dumps. They never did come out. They worked there six months and had a shop and a building down there, but it never did work out.

DF: Is that the one in Rosita? Or in Querida?

VK: Yeah, they worked down there a long time.

DF: Oh yeah, I did see that, yeah.

VK: Them fellows got a way from there and owing Leonard quite a bit of money. They didn't pay him but they turned the shop over to him, a metal shop, and he moved it down to his ranch here in the valley. So, he got what he could.

DF: Well, can you think of anything else on the mining that might be of interest?

VK: Well, I notice, I don't believe they were too strict on safety regulations.

DF: They probably didn't have anybody checking on them, did they?

VK: Well, I think the mining companies themselves set up some kind of a system to make them safe. They couldn't get people to work in them too well, so I noticed in some of them that the shafts built down and part of that same hole is lumbered and inside that other little shaft, is stair steps going clean to the bottom. So, it's something that happened to the hoist, you know, they could get out by the ladder.

DF: Did you ever go down in any of those mines up there?

VK: No, it's too far gone for me, but Mr. Putnam, when we moved there, he'd go back in those tunnels, but he always leave his walking stick outside, and he said, right after the crip mining, some of the other fellows wanted in there and to go back in there and high grade, get the best ore out by hand, I mean, the tunnels they could, and he said they made quite a bit of money thataway.

DF: Just pick it out-

VK: What was left. On those mines, they had the shaft now, it's quite humorous in a way. They let those fellows down to work, you know, down the mines, sometimes the water'd come up. They wouldn't know anything about it and they'd get soused. So of course they didn't hurt them, they haul and jerk them right up with that hoist.

DF: How did they get the water out of those mines? I heard they-

VK: They'd pump it out.

DF: Did they, they had regular pumps.

VK: Oh yeah. So, at night, you know, they'd come back up. Of course, their wages then wasn't too high by today's standards. They make three dollars a day, that was about average from working in the mines. Some of the mines paid them every day when they came out, paid them in silver. Some of them paid them once a month. At the Bassick, I think they paid them a little bit more than three dollars a day. That was beyond farm labor. Farm labor was probably a dollar a day.

DF: I see. So, they did attract people because of the wages.

VK: Yeah, that's good wages then. Of course, since that though, we come on up to the 40s and 50s, 1940 and 50, they discovered perlite out there. Is a little vein of that perlite down around the Rosita cemetery. It's about two miles across. Just under the surface of the ground. There's still plenty of perlite there yet on those hills.

DF: I know there's a couple mines over there.

VK: They went down because so much perlite found in other states, New Mexico was lots of perlite.

DF: What's perlite used for?

VK: Insulation. It had poppy, heating, made good insulation. Here in Rosita, they had to haul it down to Florence, pop, heat it and then shipped it. It's quite a process so the expenses is quite a bit. They do use perlite some for road work around here but not as much as they did because it won't stay on the road.

DF: It gets wet and it gets slippery too. We had some up by us and it's like driving through oatmeal.

VK: Yes, on ice, why, you could go anywhere. But it did alright in the summer but it'd wash off.

DF: Yeah. But even in the summer, when it gets wet, it gets real soggy and slippery.

VK: There's a bit of that runs straight across the Rosita cemetery, just under the surface.

DF: Is that right?

VK: Cause you see, you dig a grave, they hit that. It's hard digging, very hard digging. Poor old fellow, those mines are now, you know, the big dumps, they're all that country out there and you're all running northwest and southeast directions, clean across the county. Get up high and you see the dumps out over Silver Cliff, so all you sees now is where the has been and it reminds him of pretty exciting past. Of course, a fellow it its history, you'd never cover everything you'd like to cover and it's a session of talk this way.

DF: Well, you notice now if you've been out there recently that all those little lots that were platted in Rosita are now being sold and they're building cabins on them and it's starting all over again.

VK: Well, I counted possibly 28 out there one day.

DF: It's quite a few.

VK: Quite a few summer people, some of them are permanent.

DF: Our doctor just moved out there, you know, Carlton West.

VK: Yeah, he moved.

DF: Six months or so.

VK: So, I hope, in that area out there in Rosita, Antelope, all south of there is probably a hundred buildings.

DF: Yeah. I think somebody told me one time there's like 4000 lots out there so, between Rosita and Blumenau and East Cliffe and Antelope Valley and all those places, Cuerno Verde-

VK: Ranchers sell out, developers are able to give more for it than anybody else.

DF: Sure. They'll buy it for \$200 and they can subdivide it and get \$2000.

VK: All the way from \$500 to \$2000 an acre.

DF: Depending on how big a ranch. Ok, man, well, you have anything else you'd like to add or?

VK: I believe that's all. Next time,

DF: We can go if you have something else like we've been talking about, we'd like to-

VK: Next time. The school system.

IF: Van Kelly has been known over the years for his beautiful violin playing, playing at many of the gatherings around the community. We will now hear a few of his renditions. (Violin plays)

We do truly thank the Van Kellys, Thelma and Van, for inviting us into their home.