RELEASE FORM

I hereby give and grant to the Butte Historical Society as a donation for such scholarly and educational purposes as the Society shall determine, according to the regulations of the Society, all rights, including copyrights, to my tape-recorded memoirs, except for such restrictions specified below.

I also specifically grant Teresa Jordan, for valuable consideration, the right to use all or any part or paraphrase of any of my statements (with the exception of restrictions listed below) in connection with her proposed work of non-fiction provisionally titled Butte, America: Lessons From a Deindustrialized Town, as well as related articles. I understand that, unless restricted below, my name and photo may be used in the work and in related advertising and publicity.

Restrictions:

6/22/86
Date of Agreement

x Bert Skinner Donnetta Skinner
Narrator

Box 28
Address

Carlin Nevada 89822
City, State, Zip

Teresa Jordan
Interviewer

Butte Historical Society
PO Box 3913
Butte, MT 59701

12 Apr 1988
Accession date

Mary Murphy
Archivist

NOTES ON USING MATERIALS FROM

"IS THERE LIFE AFTER COPPER?" ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Because of limited funds available for this project, audited transcriptions of the tapes were not possible. However, there are detailed notes for most of the interviews. The user should be aware of a few limitations on the use of these notes. Unless otherwise specified, the notes were taken at the time of the interview and were not later audited against the tape. They can give you a good idea of what was covered in the interview. However, if you find something specific that interests you, you should verify it with the tape. Because the notes were taken quickly during the interview, they may include inaccuracies. If you use information for attribution, you must go back to the original tape.

There are rough transcriptions for many of the interviews. Again, because of time and funds available, these transcriptions were not later audited against the tape. They are more accurate than the notes, but again, if you use information for attribution, check it against the original tape.

A few interviews have restrictions against use of the tape. The notes for these have generally been read and corrected by the subject of the interview and are accurate. Check the releases for further information.

Bert and Donnetta Skinner, interviewed in their home in Carlin, Nevada, 6/22/86, by Teresa Jordan. Burt is a former Anaconda/ARCO employee. Notes from tape; not a transcript except as noted.

Bert born and raised in southeastern Idaho. His father worked for Anaconda Co at Conda, ID, and when they closed Conda, moved to Butte w/ Company. When B got out of army, went up there and went to work. Father moved to Butte in 1955 or 56. Bert started with them, for the second time on December 7, 1960, after army and after he went to Pocatello to college -- Idaho State College at that time; they've changed the name to U of ID or something since.

Father was a hard rock miner, contract, underground. Attitude in family toward B going to work for Co -- encouraged or discouraged? Wasn't talked about a lot; father told B he didn t really want him to be a miner, but other than that, not discussed a whole lot.

Q: Did he push education for you rather than mining?

Not really. Said he would help B go through school, but it wasn t pushed. B studied auto body and fender repair in college.

Q: what did you think about going to work for the Company?

B thinks that in the back of his mind he thought a great deal about going to work for the Co. When tthey closed down Conda, he put it aside for a good long time until he got tired of making a living as a body man; then he went as a mechanic at the Berk. Pit. Mechanics union. He had enough time as an auto-body repairman to go right in as a mechanic and body man up there; didn t need additional training. Married at time; got married May 29, 1959.

Donnetta from Idaho also. Didn't really want to go to Butte, but "I was just a kid so I didn t have any choice."

B was in machinist union for 14 years, then went as a foreman, got out of union at that time. Foreman in Berk. Garage -- around 1974. Salaried. Hard to make switch from being union to salaried, "to go from one side of the fence to the other, leave your friends and have to tell your friends that on the job it would have to be business, it was rather difficult." Doesn't remember exactly how he made adjustment -- I got with a couple of my best friends that I had hunted and fished with for years, and kind of gave them the choice, if they wanted to remain my friend off the job or not. I just told them that I felt since I was foreman and it had

to be strictly business, but when we left the shop if they wanted it to be, it could be friendship. I can't say I enjoyed it, but it had to be done, and after awhile it got to be second nature.

Q: Did you remain friends with them?

B: "Yeah." Made decision to go salaried for security. "At that time, when someone went on salary, he was pretty much assured of a job permanently, there was no more walking the picket lines, and if you were sick you could stay home and get paid for it. . .of course, things changed a few years after that." Bert was with Co 22 years all together, so a foreman for about 8 years. Stayed at Berk garage until layoffs. Laid off in last part of April or first part of May, 1982.

Q: Had you seen the layoffs getting up as high as you, with 22 years?

B had watched the Berk Pit and the whole Anaconda Company die for a number of years before that, had watched the workforce go from thousands down to just a few hundred. It transpired over a number of years. Prepared? Was and wasn't. B knew it was happening and it was going to happen, but it was still a shock when it did happen.

Q: How were you told?

B: "I was working swing shift and my foreman called me and told me there was a meeting the next morning at 8:00. He wouldn't tell me what the meeting was for, but I knew. I said, what is it? The layoff?" And he said, well, I don't know. But of course he had to say that, I guess. I knew what it was then.

Q: What was your reaction.

B: I think anger, mostly. Anger was probably the major feeling I had. . .I don t know, just it felt unfair. If I'd stayed in the union, I would have been number 2 on the union list at that time, and I'd been there a great deal longer than just about anyone at that time -- there was a few that was older than I, but not very many. And for awhile, I just felt a lot of animosity, anger.

Q: Was the Co helpful in terms of finding employment?

B: They looked for openings; didn t find them. Some laid off prior to B got offers from other parts of the Company. B got $29,000 severance, figured on the number of years, but B doesn t know just what the formula was. He got two months pay plus $29,000. Got resumes in order, started making phone calls. Fellow at Ticapoo (sp?), Bill Collins, called B, told him about the mine at Carlin; B sent a resume, the

supt of mechanical dept called him, B came down for an interview -- drove down for first one. A month later, supt called B back, flew him down for a second interview. Before he got home from that interview, they had called Donnetta and said they wanted him down there to work. Ticapoo is new town, down in southeastern corner by Lake Powell. That was Carlin Gold Mining Company; now called Newmont Gold Company. Newmont had been parent company; just changed name of Carlin about amonth ago.

B was unemployed about four months. B was unemployed shortly after he got out of the service, for two or three months (can't remember just how long), but that was about 25 years before laid off from Co. because he was in school, worked in Butte for awhile, then left Butte for awhile. When B went to work for the Berk, that was the second time he was in Butte. He was worried in '82 with being laid off. Carlin was the first real prospect. He talked to several other people; they said they would get back to him, but Carlin was the first that offered him an interview. Donnetta was working for the 88 ¢ store in Butte.

Q: Did you have to change your lifestyle because of the layoff?

B doesn't know. They didn't dare do much because they didn't know if they would have money coming in other than what D was making. They were cautious.

Q: How did you feel about the possibility of having to relocate?

B didn't like it. They were pleased with Butte; B liked hunting and fishing, and Butte itself is a good place. After coming down for first interview, didn't know if wanted to live down here or not. D did not come down on either of the interviews. Bert was living here before D came down. B moved down on labor day in '82. D came down to help him find a place to live, went back up; had one son who was a senior in high school and she stayed there until he graduated so he could graduate up there; moved down the following June ('83). Move was difficult. "It was hard to tear away from Montana. I would have went back in a split second."

Q: How did you like working for Carlin?

B: Compared to the Anaconda Company, they are about 30 years behind... like the Anaconda Company was about 30 years ago, as far as tools and supplies and equipment. It's backward. We had everything we could work with up there, and down here we don't -- didn't. It's getting to where we do now.... Wages were quite a bit lower than what it was up there." B is salaried here -- field maintenance foreman.

Q: Company policies?

Pretty much the same, except that the firing process is quite a bit easier down here: the hiring is also quite a bit different . Up there, you had to give an employee several written repremands with time off progressing from three to five days before you could dismiss him. Down here, you give him three days off; the next one, he's gone. And if the offense is severe enough, you can discharge him right there.

Q: Which system do you find easier to work with?

B: "Probably this one down here. People are a little more inclined to do what you ask them to do if they know you can do something about it."

Q: How is hiring different?

B: "In Butte, they had central hiring. People hired mechanics who had no idea what a mechanic even was. Down here, we interview the mechanics, or the welders, and we make the welders take a test. People that are working with them, down here, turn in reports on them every 20 days, and if they are unsatisfactory by the end of 60 days, they no longer work for us. In Butte, they had a 20 day policy, and the foreman had nothing to say about it. So consequently, a lot of people came in who were not mechanics, let me put it that way."

Q: Again, which system do you find easier to work in?

B: "The one down here, because we get a better grade of people down here. We get people that we need, people that we can use, because *we* ask the questions."

Q: How about the overall comaraderie here as compared to Butte?

Pretty much the same here. People are pretty easy to get along with in both places. "People are friendly here like they were in Butte, like they are in Butte."

Q: Did it come as a surprise that people were friendly here?

It was kind a surprise to Bert -- when he was living here alone, would walk to the PO each night, to the grocery store, people would wave, talk to him -- they didn't know who he was. It surprised him. It was a lot like it was in Butte. That helped while he was down here alone.

Q: How about productivity on the job here as compared to Butte?

B: "It's a whole lot easier, because down here anybody can use a torch or a welder if they have the knowledge. In Butte, you had to have a boilermaker to cut a bolt. Down here, anybody who is working on the job can cut it. If you had an electric wire to unhook, you had to have an electrician do it. Here, a mechanic can do it, or a laborer. In that respect, it's a good deal easier here. In Butte, I've seen people stand and wait for an hour for somebody to come along and remove one bolt or undo one wire or something like that, which is not very productive."

Q: Is it easier to keep a workforce motivated when there aren't the slack times?

B: yes. You can give a man a job, tell him what you need to have done, what you want done, what you expect him to get done by the end of the shift, and most of the time they will be ahead of schedule or awful close to schedule because they know what you expect of them.

Q: I understand that at Carlin you either belong to the union or not. Do you know how many belong and how many don't?

B is not sure; probably about 40% union; 60% non union. Just one union -- Operating Engineers Local 3. That covers everybody who wants to join a union. When it comes to electricity, they pretty well let electricians take care of it, because it's dangerous -- the high voltage electricity. 12 and 24 volts, the mechanics take care of.

Q: You just look at the Butte situation with 13 unions, and it looks complicated. In talking with people, with the exception of some union officials, almost everyone I've talked to expressed some disatisfaction with the system. On the other hand, *if* it should have been changed, how *could* it have been changed to something more simple?

B doesn't know. If they could have combined the metals trades unions into one union, it would have helped -- boilermakers, machinists, steelworkers, ironworkers, pipefitters -- that would have simplified things. The productivity that the Company was asking for on the last contract would have helped. If the unions would have given it, B thinks that the Co probably would have run for awhile longer.

Q: what is the attitude here between labor and management?

Pretty good, really. They had a beer party the other night in the shop, management and labor side by side; they've done it several times with the people in the shop. They get along real good. Better than in Butte, as a whole. "In Butte it

seemed it was an unwritten law to be against management, and down here, it doesn t seem to be."

Q: You were on both sides of that -- union and salaried. Looking back now, what stands out to you about that conflict?

B says that's kind of tough. "One of the things I've thought about quite often is the fact that when I was on the union side, I fought against things that I was for after I was on salary, but I could see differently from the other side of the fence. There's a whole different picture, in other words. From the union side it looks one way, and from the salary side it looks another way."

Q: Is there any way to bridge that gap?

B doesn t know if there is or not. Surely there is someway, there has to be a way, but he doesn't know how. Some of the big auto companies have done it; some of the steel companies have done it. So there has to be a way.

Q: Do you see the roots of that sort of conflict here?

B: "No, not really. We have mangement-union arguments here, but they don't get strong like they did up here, and it's not a shouting match here like it was up there. If one of my men grieves something, the first step is with me, and if I can see any way of working it out, we do, and that's as far as it goes. If not, then it goes to my superintendant and he'll decide and so on up the ladder. But with me, it's never gone beyond me, yet."

Q: With the same sort of grievance in Butte, what would the process be?

It would have been cut off with me, because everytime I had a grievance up there, the guy came up and hollered and carried on and screamed and I just said, hit the trail, I won't be talked to like that.

Tape 1, Side B

Q: How many people do you manage here?

Six all the time in the pit; then there are occassions when he goes into the shop, and he has about 20 more. It's about the same as he had in Butte.

Q: How secure do you feel?

B doesn't know. He doesn't have the feeling of security he had in Butte. He had 22 years up there.

Q: How has it been for your family to move?

They didn t care too much for it; they don t care for it right now, as far as that goes. All B's boys are working for the mine. As far as B knows, they don't mind it too much, but his wife and daughter don t care for it.

Q: Why is that, D?

D says it because they really don't have anything here. There is nothing to do because it is such a small town. Coming from Butte where you could do anything you wanted to do through the day, to where there s nothing to do is hard. As far as their daughter, a lot of it is that she had so many other kids her age in Butte and here there are so few. In her senior class, when she graduated, there were just 13 graduating as compared to over 500 in Butte. It's a different life style -- quieter. Hard to get used to after you lived in the city. D works at the little grocery store in Carlin.

Q: Have you found friendship circles here like you had in Butte?

D: "No. But I think that's because you really don t want to make friends like that again. You don't want to have to leave them again, so it's easier just not to. You just make acquaintances, and that's it. I think the hardest part of the whole thing -- we didn t really have any family in Butte -- and I think the hardest part is leaving your friends and leaving the lifestyle that you had."

Q: Washington Corporation is hiring some people at this point. Have you thought at all at the possibility of going back to Butte?

B: "I wouldn t go back to work in Butte unless they would give me a written guarantee of employment until retirement, because I feel it s too insecure up there right now."

Q: Donnetta?

D: "I d go back to Butte in a heartbeat, but I don t want to go back and live under that threat of not having a job. We lived like that for so long, waiting for the mine to shut down, and that s just too hard. I wouldn t want to go back to that, either. But if we could go back to the job that we had before, that would be great, be gone in a minute. But I can t go back and live under that kind of pressure. It s just too hard.

Q: How do you feel about ARCO's termination of you now, looking at it from a distance of several years? Do you think they treated you fairly or unfairly?

B says that he has no problem with the severance. They were fair about that. He would have liked to stay with the Co. because he had a good retirement building and he would have liked to keep it up because it would have paid off in the long run. But he has no animosity toward them.

Q: Could anything have kept that operation going?

B says he really doesn't know. He feels that it would have had to start happening years ago when the Co first started asking for productivity. If the unions would have seen the light and started giving a little instead of being so hard nosed, possibly it would have helped. The price of copper was so far down, and moly went so far down, he hesitates to say it would have stayed open. But if a few years ago the unions could have seen the light, it would have helped -- even if it only kept the operation going another year.

Q: Have your ideas about unions changed over the years?

Both: Yes. B: "Most definitely. I am so anti-union now, you couldn't believe it, and I used to be very pro-union when I was in the union."

Q: Is that a matter, do you think, of your changing job, which casts things in a different light, or do you think it's a matter of changing conditions?

B: "I think probably the major thing that made me feel the way I do right now, is the shutdown in Butte. Because I can see that it didn t need to happen the way it did. I blame the unions -- not for all of it, but for part of it. Management was part of it, of course. They've got to take their share, too.

D: "I think a lot of it had to do with the men's fault, too. Because the Company treated us like a big family for years. And then when they started getting really in a pinch, they still had the parts of the company that was losing money, and yet if their men are wasting money and time -- I don't think they really went about stopping it like they should. They treated the men like they were part of a family, this company was taking care of all these people, and when ARCO took it over, it changed it. Of course, it was then a big company, not just a family organization. And I think that may have changed the attitude of the people. The ACM needed to start on these people years before, and it just gradually started slipping and they couldn t get it back."

Q: By getting "it" back, you mean a sense of shared destiny? Or...

D: I don t think that the people really thought that they were losing it. I think we all thought -- people would say that copper was going down and you'd say, oh, big deal, you know, because the Company will always be here, and then all of a sudden they weren t and then I think we realized -- and we would talk about it, you know, with different people in Butte, and they'd say "well, we really didn t realize it was this way, that it was this bad."

B: I don t know how many times I've heard people say, 'they can't do this! they can t shut down. Really. I've actually heard people say this -- 'they can't do this.' People that got laid off."

D: "You just didn t think it was going to happen. They had protected us for so many years, the company was there if anything went wrong -- we knew that this company was going to be there for us, and all of a sudden they weren't and it was hard to take, it was hard to accept."

B: "It went right back to the sense of security for the salaried people -- once you go on salary, you had your job, that was it. Then all of a sudden, when ARCO took over, it was no longer that way. Of course it wasn t that way because they couldn't keep all of the salaried people and lay off all the day's pay, that was for sure. But we watched the Company die."

D: "I think they worked hard to keep us together. I think they spent a lot of years, especially the last 10 years, trying to keep us all together and all there, keep it running. I think they just couldn t do it, they weren t making any money."

Q: What was your attitude when ARCO bought Ananconda?

B: "I was on salalry on that time, and we got a pretty good pep talk, they told us that things was going to go, that it was ARCO's policy to pay salaried people at least 30% above their highest day's pay employee that was working for them. That was a pretty good boost, for us. Of course, we didn't get that, but... They gave us a good pep talk, and we were all anxious for it to happen, because we thought it was going to be a going concern again like it had been 15 years before. Of course, it didn t work out like that.

D: "I think that all of us had the impression, though, that ARCO was going to support our company, and not take it over. Because I remember talking about it to people and people would say, yeah, it going to be our backup. But I don t think we ever expected it to change the name like they did."

Q: Did the salaried people get a significant wage increase?

B says they got a pretty decent wage increase every year, but nothing like the pep talk indicated. Still, the smallest wage increase was about 11% each year, up to 15%. 'We got good raises, there was no two ways about it. And too they gave us a stock ownership plan. They gave us stock -- we didn't have to buy it, they just gave it to us. The amount they gave us was based on our base salary, something like 2% of your base salary times the amount of capital spent for expansion or improvement in the area. It came out to maybe 10 or 15 shares a year. Not a great deal, but it was a free gift, anyway. I ended up with almost a hundred shares when I left, I think.

Q: When did it become clear that Butte wasn't going to be a going concern?

B doesn't remember exactly, but within a couple years of the takeover, people began getting laid off, the Kelley closed down, then it reopened, then it closed again. All of the underground mines were closed. People at the Berkeley started getting laid off. Every few months, there was a new layoff. 'Everybody knew what was coming. We all talked about it and said that the end was coming, that they were going to shut down.' [D. interjects: 'We talked about it, but we didn't believe it.'] 'We all kept saying that it was going to happen, but in the back of our mind, we kept thinking, no, it won't happen. We wouldn't admit it, I guess, to ourselves, is what it amounted to... Like my wife said, [the Anaconda Company] was kind of like your big brother. It was like we were all one big happy family, and the company was going to take care of us, that's all there was to it. And they did. For years they did.'

D: 'And they did. They had Columbia Gardens for us, that was just beautiful. The Company did things for these men that a big Company couldn't do, because they just don't do that kind of stuff. So they really did take care of us as long as they could.'

B: 'I think, when I got laid off, the price of copper was 67c a pound, and it was costing the Company -- I used to say, "us." -- $1.30 a pound to mine it, from mine to consumer. And we operated that way for quite a number of years, not quite that extreme, but at a loss, for quite a few years.'

Q: What did you think when they closed Columbia Gardens?

D says that it made you sick, it was so beautiful, so fun. The family spent many many hours, many years there. 'It's one of our best memories I think, of when the kids were small. It was beautiful.' [More about Gardens.]

Q: Bert, do you have any Butte men working for me now?

Yes. One who used to work for B in Butte is now a salaried foreman in the shop on swing shift -- Craig Monroe.

Q: Did you bring him down here?

He asked B's wife if B would send him an application; B sent him one, he used B's name as a reference, and B recommended him, he's a top notch mechanic. "The superintendant called him, told him to take his physical up there, and come on down to work. It was that easy. But he is a top notch mechanic, he's real good. But he's now a salaried foreman on swing shift. There's several more people from up there that work in the mill that I know, but I don't know, if you know what I mean. I know them from sight, I know they are from Butte, but I dont really know them personally."

Q: Have you, or has anyone here tried to recruit Butte people down here.

B: They kind of shy away from too many of them because of the union. The superintendant that I had when Craig got hired made the statement to me one day that he would not hire any people from Butte because of the unions, and he didn't want them to come down here and get started like they were up there. I feel that that was kind of unfair, but there was nothing I could do about it."

Q: Was he from Butte?

B: "No. He had, one time, working for a crawler-type tractor dealership, Euclid Tractors, had been in Butte and serviced some machines that we had up there, and some of the guys weren't too friendly with him, and so he carried a grudge, is what it amounted to. He come right out and told me about it one time. Not a very nice guy."

Q: I know that a lot of Butte people feel it's been harder for them to get jobs because of Butte's reputation. Do you think that's true beyond this one particular situation?

B: I do think so, yes. Butte's reputation for unions, strong unions, is all over the country. There's quite a few drivers down here that drove up in Butte, too, that I've run into."

Q: For all the Butte people who are here, have they caused any problems?

No.

Q: And do they have a pretty good reputation as far as good, solid workers?

Yes.

D: "I don't think it's the people in Butte that got this reputation in the first place. I think that it is that we believed in the union and we followed what they said, and I think a lot of us got suckered in, we didn't do anything about it to change things, and it just got too bad. I think a lot of times we did things -- I know a lot of times the men would go out on strike and afterwards they's say, 'I didn't want to go out on strike. And a lot of them would say that they didn't want to, but they felt that they should. I really don't think that it was the people. I think that the union snowballed and it just got out of hand. And a union is a good thing. It's something, I know, that it had to be, that the men needed it when it first started. And it did a lot of good things for the men. But I think that they got too -- where the men weren't involved in it enough. It was all the unions decisions. It got a little carried away."

Q: Do you think that that happened when the union negotiations went to big table and started being held outside of Butte?

B: "When it went National is when it happened. We all voted no strike one year, we wanted to work and negotiate, and the vote was very plain -- this was while I was still in the union -- the International called, said, 'Tough. You're going on strike at 12:01, lock it up.' It happened again twice after I was on salary, too. One International or another called their local, told them to lock it up at 12:01. They just had no say. It got to be big business rather than what the men wanted.

Q: Do you remember the years?

D: "We went on strike so many times that it got to be old hat. You knew every three or four years that it was going to come up. Sometimes we were out for a long time -- 9 months. Sometimes it was really hard. It got a little bit -- I think after we left there and I really thought about the unions and what had happened to us, I think that's when you get a little bitter about the union and what they -- how it could have been different."

B: I think back in the deep, dark recesses of my mind, I blame the union for the loss of my job, really. I think that that is partly where the animosity comes in toward the unions right now."

D: "And it was really hard when our boys get down here and they say they want to join the union, and the one boy wanted to be union steward and gad! I almost

wanted to beat him to death when he said he wanted to be the union steward. I mean, what can you do about it? I mean, that's how he believes. And he has to have the same chances that his dad did.

B: That s a decision we can t make for them, they ve got to make the decision themselves. I wanted to tell him not to, but that wouldn t be fair, either, so I kept my mouth shut."

Q: Do you think that as Butte people work around the country in other places that some of that reputation of Butte will fade? Butte has that reputation as a union town; on the other hand, there s a real strong work ethic.

B says he thinks it will. "The people were hard working people, the majority of them really were. Of course, you had a bad apple in every barrel. But the Butte people as a whole were very dependable and very hard working people. I shouldn t say were, shouldn't talk about them in the past tense. But really, they are. And I think the reputation that we as Butte union members gain for ourselves, I think will fade, eventually, as people get a bird's eye look at it.

Q: What do you think will happen w/ Washington Corps.

B says he doesn t think they'll operate very long. He hopes he s wrong.

Q: What do you think will happen in terms of unions if they do get it started up?

B hasn t thought much about that. He expects that each union up there will try to get their foot in the door, just like with the Anaconda Co.

D: I would be really disappointed with them if they didn t."

B: "I honestly think that they will *try* to get back in just like with the Anaconda Company. But if the men let them, then I'll be disappointed in the men."

Q: Your life certainly took a turnaround with the shutdown. Have their been any benefits?

D: Oh it was good, it was good for our family. Of course, one good thing is that one of our sons married one of the local girls, and we have a granddaughter from this. But it has been good for us -- in Butte we had this secure, like a security blanket around us. We didn t think about the outside world at all. And when we came down here, we had to change our life almost completely. It has been good. It's been a growing experience for most of us. It has been really different. I think it's been good for the kids because it s made them look at people in a different view

than they did before. They grew up with the same kids from the time they started kindergarten until they graduated, and I think that to come and meet new people is always a real change. But I think it's been good, and I think it's made everybody grow a little bit, but it's just been really hard. Well, it would have been really easy just to stay in our own little world, grow old in our Butte. And I think that moving, after living so long in one place, I know that for me, I resented it. I just really hated it. I felt that I wasn't only leaving a job that I had done for 12 years, but I was leaving all my friends, and I think I kind of resented going to a new place and having to do it all over again, have to start all over again. We had our home paid for in Butte, and we had to start all over again, you know you go up there in years, and you have to start making house payments all over again, and it's kind of hard, puts you right back to what you were doing when you were a kid. But it's been good for us. The move didn't hurt us any; as a matter of fact, I think we grew a great deal from it. But if I had to do it again, and I had a choice of not doing it, I wouldn't. But of course, you can't do that. You just have to keep going along.

Q: How about you, Bert? Anything to add or change?

B: "No, I don't believe so. It was hard to come down here, it was hard to go to work in a strange place where I knew nobody, I didn't know the operation, I didn't know what some of the terminology was here -- I'd never worked around a mill before, for instance, and some of the terminology they use for some of the machinery at the mill. I had no idea what they were talking about."

Tape 2, Side A

[Talk about isolation in Elko/Carlin area.]

D: When we first moved here, I thought the silence would drive me crazy. I hated it. One of our sons and I would sit out here and watch the coyote come down into the yard to chase rabbits down here by the front of the yard, and I thought, my gad, where have we moved to?

B: The meadowlarks wake us up in the morning, and like she said, the coyotes, in the wintertime, wake you up at night. We've had snowshoe rabbits run over right out here in front of the house in the winter at night. I guess they are jack rather than snowshoe.

Q: Why did you decide to live in Carlin rather than Elko?

B: Convenient to the mine, mostly. We've got two shops here, we've got five open pit mines here. When I first moved down here, I was working at the upper mine, at the upper shop, that's 22 miles NW of here. That was the main reason because

Elko is another 22 miles away. Right now I work at the lower mine, and that's only seven miles from here to the shop so that's not quite so bad."

[more about commute.]

Q: Were you one of the first of those who worked for the company a long time to move from Butte?

D: "Yes."

B: "Not really. Bill Cullins was gone for almost a year before I left, down to Ticapoo. He was one of the very first. Over the years, you can't say that, either, because over the years, people have been leaving up there, as they've been laid off -- we bought a trailer from a miner that was leaving to come to Nevada somewhere, a camp trailer, and that must have been about 68 or 69. But out of the group that I worked with, probably I was 10th or 12th to leave, somewhere in that neighborhood, I would guess, out of the Berekely bunch. Everybody thought they were going to stick around and go back to work because they were the group that kept saying, 'They can't do this.' One guy told me, 'It's just like a strike, they'll go back to work.' Long strike!

Q: How much did the move end up costing you -- for instance, did you sell your house in Butte, and did you get fair market value for it?

They sold their house, they "gave it away." They just got the papers on it about a month earlier, they had been sitting on it all that time. Rented it for a short time and the renter tore it up, so it's been vacant.

Q: Do you have a sense of what you got for it compared to what the market value was before the suspension?

B: "About half what it was worth."

Q: How about other costs? Did Carlin move you down here?

Carlin paid for their move. Having to start out with house payments again was about the only other expense.

Q: At this point, is your salary about at a par with what you were making in Butte?

B is a little ahead now from what he was when he got laid off. D makes less than half what she did in Butte. Minimum wage and lower down here; women's wages

are not that great. "One thing about the union, they did see to it that you got good wages and your raises were pretty often, pretty regular."

B: "They had benefits up there, too, that they don t have here."

D: "You lose all that stuff when you go to no union."

Q: How about your benefit package at Newmont?

B's isn't quite as good as Butte. There was 100% vision at ARCO, 90% dental for the family, 80 or 90% medical. Down here, 85% medical, 50% examination for vision and have to pay the rest of it, 85% dental. So fringe there was better; however didn t have transportation to and from work, which they have here, but the distance wasn't as great -- 2 miles to work there.

Q: Do you go back to Butte much?

D: "When we first got here, I think we went back once a month. But it's too hard to go back. Our kids are up there right now. Some of us go back maybe every few months or so. But it s really hard to go back. It's hard to come back when you get there, so it s easier just to stay away.

B: "I don t think I've been back for three years now. When I was down here by myself, I made the trip once a month. But after I got them down here, I didn't go back very much. Went back and moved my son. He's been down here a little over two years, I think. So I guess just a little over two years since I was up there. But each time I went back, it was harder to leave the next time. I had to grab myself by the nap of the neck and the seat of my britches and throw myself out of town to get going."

Q: Do you think you would still feel that way if you went back right now?

B: "I don t hardly think I would. No, I'd kind of like to go back and go to the Black Angus for dinner -- of course, it isn't up there anymore. No, I don t think I would have as much trouble leaving now as I did then.

Q: Mrs. Skinner, you had said earlier that you thought, overall, the changes were good for the family, that you had all grown a lot. In the course of everything, was there stress on the family?

D says it was hard for the kids. "When we were all sitting around the table and I asked them what they would think if we had to leave Butte and there was silence for a few minutes and then the kids said, 'No way. I m not leaving. I don t want to

go." And the longer they sat there, then pretty soon they said, "Well, yeah, if we have to, we'll go." And the kids never complained about leaving. I did more than they did. I know I bitched and moaned about it from the minute I knew it was going to happen until it was over. And yet I kept thinking to myself, it won't happen, something will stop it before I have to go. But I think the kids adjusted to it pretty good. When they had to leave, they were all really sad about going, but they accepted it better than I did. They just knew they had to do it. And it has been good for the kids, because all the boys are working for Newmont, all of them have good positions and they make good money. So for them to start their own lives and their own families, it's been easier for them because if we'd have stayed there, they wouldn't have been able to -- I don't know what they would have done for jobs. So really, it has been good for us for that. I think when we moved down here, it was really hard for me because I know I kept moaning and groaning about having to be here until I realized what it was doing to our daughter and our youngest son, and I thought, I can't let them know how miserable I really was. And after awhile, when we really started talking about it and stuff, the kids had a hard time until I decided I couldn't show them how bad I wanted to go home. And then they seemed to be OK. Then they could go back, and they could talk about going back there to stay, and pretty soon they weren't talking about going back to stay anymore. We've only got one son that says every day he's going to go back. But the rest have kind of adjusted, and now this is getting to be their home, they have really settled into it."

Five kids -- Bill, 26; John, 23; Dan, 22; Mike, 21; Debbie, 19.

Q: Did you feel stress in your marriage over the move?

D: Yeah, I hated it. I thought it was Bert's fault that I had to come down here, that it was a dumb joint that didn't have any trees and nothing green -- it just seemed, like when we moved down here, we'd gone to hell's basement because there was nothing here. It was just dirt. And when I first moved in, when Bert and I first came down here, when we drove through Elko, I thought, you know, this isn't bad at all, I thought, it's going to be OK, it's not going to be so bad. And then I didn't want Bert to think that I was really blaming him, and yet I really did. As we were driving around, I'd try to tell him, well, it's OK, and underneath I was thinking, oh brother, what a bunch of garbage to have to leave and come like this. But when I got down here and Bert had gone to work and the people were really good to me -- they were really friendly and they really tried to help me to settle in and to get used to it, it was like they knew that [I was] having a hard time with it, you know, and that helped a great deal, too. But I think you do blame them [your husband]. And I don't think you ever really lose that feeling, either, that it's their fault that you had to move. Because without him, of course, we would have never survived. We had to go wherever he had to work. And I felt like that when we

went to Butte, because I had to leave my family and everything, and I thought, he gets to live with his, and it is hard. But I think you really do blame them, you think it's their fault you gotta leave everything. And it's easier just to lay it on them; you don't really know what else to do with it, I guess. But it is hard to just uproot and leave."

B: "When I first drove into this country for my first interview, I looked around, I thought, my God, the mountains are naked. There isn't a tree nowhere. I couldn't believe it."

One of the sons says, "I thought that, too. I wanted to go home."

Q: What have I missed that's important.

One of the sons: "We chase lizzards."

D: "I think the most important part is that even though we left Butte and we had to relocate to a different place, I think that Butte people will always keep their strength and -- I don't know -- their beliefs in things."

B: They will keep their identify, I think."

D: Because Butte people will always come through anything. And I think that when we get down here I think, we can do it, we're from Butte, we're tough, we've been through a great deal, and we can do it. And I think that's part of it, that will always stay with us. Butte will always be a part of these people."

Q: A man I interviewed recently said to me, 'Have you ever met someone who left Butte who wasn't successful.' There does seem to be something to Butte people that they land on their feet.

D: 'That's because we've been through a great deal. I mean, anytime you go on strike and you have five little kids that you wonder how you're going to feed them or how you are going to clothe them to go to school in September."

B: 'That 9-month strike we was on up there, we ate seven deer during that strike. And the game wardens knew we was going after them, too, me and a friend of mine, we each killed seven deer that year."

D: 'You know that you can do it. And I think that's a lot of it, too, that Butte are strong people."

B: "I think we will always be Butte people at heart. Because Butte is always a part of us, and we're not afraid to say we're from Butte, either. We're Butte people, that s all there is to it. 'Where are you from?' We're from Butte."

Q: And do you think if you lived in Elko another ten years . . .

B: "I'd still be from Butte."

One of the sons: "I'm still from Butte."

D: When we first got down here, people would say, where are you from, and we'd say 'we re from Butte,' and they'd say, 'Oh, my gad, gang fights. . . ' and good grief, I lived there 24 years, I don't remember having any of these. A lot of things, a lot of stories that happened up there, they'd tell you about that you never even heard of, and we'd been there a long time. But it's really different living here, but Butte will always be home, it'll always be the place that we raised our family, we had all of our sons except Bill up there, so all our kids, so it will always be home.

Q: Would you like to retire there?

D would like to, but Bert wouldn't. B doesn't want to retire there because of the cold winters; would like to live there in the summers and the fall. It gets cold in Carlin -- one night it was 20 below -- but not like Butte. When it was 20 below here, it was 64 below in Butte, Elk Park.

B says he didn't mind the winters when he was up there, but he thinks now that he would. Because down here, it snows today and it's gone tomorrow. [more talk about winter in Carlin.]

End of interview.