FRED KUHNHENN

MEMOIR NO. 10

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ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

MEMOIR OF : FRED KUHNHENN

INTERVIEWER: RAY F. CALKINS

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Interviewer: Start with your parents and where you were born.

Narrator: I can tell you who I am and where I was born. My name is Fred Kuhnheen and I was born April 12, 1908. at Zortman , Montana and my parent was George Kuhnhenn and my mother was , was Isabel. They are both dead now.

I had two brothers and sisters but they're both dead. Got one sister living. She lives at Fort Belknap and she's Editor of that little Indian paper that's called "The Camp Crier." She's Editor there. Her daughter works for her. She was born on the Fort Belknap Reservation too. But I was born in Zortman like I told you.

That's wild country and outlaw country. Well my grandfather lived there, see, he lived off the Reservation so we used to go visit him . One day I went with him to the little town of Zortman . I was a little boy. We only lived about two miles from there. So I walked with him to town one day.

He was an old Civil War soldier. And he'd get his pension check, see. Well, he goes up there in town so he went to get it. So we walked up there about two miles, got up there, that's before-------that's when they had saloons. So he went in the saloon, like you know. I went in too and I sit down by the door. He had to bring me in. He couldn't leave me outside. So the saloon man said "Bring the kid in and he can sit there by the door."

I was sitting there and they was drinking beer, drinking whisky at the bar, you know, and pretty soon there was some cowboys come in there from some wheres around there. All liquored up and they got into a fight in there. God Damn but , pardon that word, well, anyhow it must have been pretty wild there because there was one guy pulled a gun out, a revolver, and he started shooting at this other guy. (laughs). And this guy took off, out of the door. I remember that bullet hit right by the door. A log wall , hit there. I could feel it. Plunk, you know . This guy took off, then they took this guy's gun away from him. Kicked him out. So I don's know what ever happened to him. Then it went on like that and finally my grandfather died. My grandmother was dead.

Interviewer: Well, now, he was an Indian?

Narrator: He was an Indian ?

Interviewer : And he was in the Civil was?

Narrator: Yeah, That's right. He as a non-Reservation Indian. He didn't belong to no Reservation. He was Indian-French is what he was. He was from Minnesota, Chippewa. Chippewa-French. There's a lot of them down there. That's where he was from.

He enlisted, I guess in them days you could have somebody to go for you. You know,a substitute. Well, he went in for some big rich fellow there in Saint Paul or Minneapolis, had a big store, was well off. So he went in for him. This guy promised him $5,000 if he'd go. When he'd come out he'd have it. By God, he came out all right, so he got his $5,000. There was nothing said. He said he seen Lincoln, he shook hands with Lincoln somewhere down there in the South.

Hey, just think, he was way down there in the South. Fought over the south. He used to tell me. Well, he used to tell different one how they'd go through them Southern plantations where some big rich fellow had all them colored guys, slaves, and he said the slaves, they'd take old boy's best teams and buggies everything. Wagons and all, and they'd follow the Northern Army. They were free then and they'd follow them. He said, "Boy, I don't know how much but it sure cost the Government a lot to feed them." They followed the Northern Army, you know, and these Northern soldiers would tell them, "Well, go get in. Get the best he's got." So I guess they'd get what he had. Everything. He couldn't say a darned thing,you know,He never had nothing to say about it.

He'd lost all his help.

Anyhow, they went on like that. Finally he drifted out to this country and got married and my mother was born. I had another aunt. She's dead, too. Then her and my dad got married. They're all dead now. I been shifting for myself since I was about, say, about twelve years old, I guess. I never went to school very much. They couldn't hold me in school. I'd run away all the time.

Interviewer: Was it a school for Indians?

Narrator: Yeah, oh yeah. Boarding school. You stayed there.

Interviewer : Where about's was that?

Narrator: That's on Fort Belknap where I come from. Aaron Perry went to school there. So was that Mrs. Skinner you're going to interview. I went to school with her there. Her and her husband. Her husband is dead now. He's been dead a couple years. When I went to school---just like home. We were there nine months out of a year. Board and room right to school. Of course, we didn't get much of an education there because we only went to school half a day and worked the other half of the day. See, one boy group worked in the morning when we went to school, the other group worked in the afternoon.

Interviewer: What kind of work did you do?

Narrator: Everything, All kinds of farm work. The boys done the farm work. The engine room too. Then they had a big dairy farm there. We worked on that, the boys did. Then they had a big steam laundry there. Some boys worked there and some girls worked there. Then they had a sewing room there. And a bakery. All of that.

Interviewer: Is that school still in operation?

Narrator: No, no, it's all torn down now and it's into something else. Most of the buildings are tore down. Now something else. Most of the buildings are all gone. There might be one building left. Yeah, there is 'cause I went back there last year. See, I'd been gone from there for over twenty years and I went back there last year. There's just one building left that used to be the boy's building. And I didn't know the place. I went down there and they'd all remodeled inside, you know,. I didn't know a darn thing when I got in there. I couldn't find where things used to be. It's all enclosed offices now, small rooms.

I went back there, about a year ago. I went to visit my sister and stayed with her a while. But I've been around. I've been gone so darn long, you know. I don't think I'd want to live there any more. Everything is changed. Lot of people I knew are dead and gone, moved away.

Harlem is a little tiny town. There's not many people living there. So when I got to Harlem, well, I saw a lot of Indians but I didn't know a darn one, you know, young people. So I was thinking to myself "Wonder if I'm in Harlem?" (laughs). 'Cause it changed so. Some of the buildings burnt down. They'd built new ones and they've got a freeway right close there now. When I left they didn't have no freeway, only a two way road. And that was was all graveled. It wasn't no oil or blacktop. No there's a blacktop right by it, close to it. I got there and I looked around, and Jeeze, it looked funny to me. Different. So I went into a hotel there, there's a hotel there, and I went in and looked around.

It's in an indian town you know, all Indians controlled mostly by Indians. Anyhow, seeing all there young people and I didn't see a darn one I knew, so I finally did find a guy my age and he said "Boy, where did you ever come

from?"

I told him I come from Butte. I told him "Is this Harlem?" He laughed, "Yeah, this is Harlem (laughs). He laughed, you know. He said "What's the matter?" "Well, it's different. I didn't know it. I didn't know the town." "Yeah", he says, "A lot of things burnt down. A lot of things changed since you were living here." "We've got a freeway there now, a big bridge across the Milk River."

When I was there , there was only a little old wooden bridge, just enough for one car. If there was somebody coming you had to stop and let them come by. But now they've got a great big four lane bridge there. Whiz right on through.

So anyhow, he says "What you going to do ?" I told him I come to visit my sister across the river over there. We he said, "I'm going to Chinook now." That's twenty miles this way. See, I passed Chinook going down. I said "You know what, I've a notion to ride back with you. I'm going back to Butte." "No,you're here now and you'd better stay, he says. "I'm going to take you up there ." He says "You stay here . When I come back here I'll pick you up."

You know,he was kind of a teacher , like. He was going to some seed house up there. So he says "You stay here. I don't want to take you up there. You might do that ." He says, "You might buy a ticket back to Butte from there."

So I stayed there. A friend of mine came along and he took me across the way to the old Agency, where I went to school. That's where I found that I noticed a lot of new buildings there. Cause when I was there,when I left there, there was just that old school and the old hospital and the new hospital. Now when I went back there after over twenty years later, a lot of new housing projects. New buildings, new stores, all the old buildings were tore down. It really looks kind of sad to me.

Anyhow I went to visit my sister. The next day I went on out to where I used to live. In the Little Rocky Mountains. And, by golly, there's roads all over up there, you know. I only seen about those guys that I knew, about my age. That's all I seen out there, about three fellows. So I stayed out there overnight, you know, and they wanted me to hang aroung. I said, "Oh no, I won't hang around out in the sticks." Lonesome looking country, you know. "I don"t know how you people live here. I've been gone over twenty years. I've been all over the west coast," I said. "I see a lot of nice places. I come back and you guys are still here. Don't you ever go past Harlem, when you go anywhere?" (laughs).

"Oh,"they say, "Don't get smart with us. You've been all over. You lived here."

"Sure, I lived here at one time, but after I went." ----It was about twenty-five years ago, see, since I'd been out there.

I told him I'd been gone all those years.I told him, "I'm going back to Butte."

So I hung around there about three or four days and then I went down to Wolf Point. I had an aunt living down there. Wolf Point, that's Fort Peck Reservation. I went down there and I visited my aunt . I hadn't seen here in about thrity years.

Interviewer: What was her name?

Narrator: Minnie Bear. Yeah, I hadn't seen here in about thrity years, when I went back last year. So I visited with her for a while. I think I lived with her about nine days and her daughter and son-in-law. They were coming to Harlem, you know. I thought, "There's my chance to get away."

I caught a ride back towards Harlem and didn't go to see my sister

I went right to Harlem, got a ticket and I came right up here. (laughs). I wanted to get away from that bad Darn lonesome. People live different, you know. It's all different, so I came back here and I've been back here. I've been hanging around here ever since. Yeah, what else do you want me to tell?

Interviewer: How long did you go to school?

Narrator: Oh, I went to school, let's see, not too long. Well, I quit school, well, I was ready for the fifth grade. I didn't go no more. I just finished the fourth grade and I was ----- the heck with it. I think I was fourteen years old. No more school, no more after I was fourteen. I never did go back to school again. Been gadding around, been bumming around.

Well, when you're on the Reservation you're sent to go to school, you know. So I ran away from school. And I took off. I ran to the outside of the Reservation where they couldn't find me. I stayed away. I don't know. I guess I was sixteen years old and I come back to the Reservation, you know. They didn't bother me no more.

No, they let me go then. So I haven't been to school since I was fourteen, that's where I give it up. Quit the school altogether. So I only finished the fourth grade. And I had a hard time doing that

Yeah, they couldn't keep me in school. I'd run away every change I'd get. And they'd bring me back, you know. But I finally finished the fourth grade. I don't know how I ever done it. Maybe they wanted to get me out. They just passed me. (laugh). Kicked me out of fourth grade. I was fourteeen years old, you know. Now days they are in Highschool when they're fourteen. Aren't they?

Interviewer: They might be.

Narrator: I think they are now. But those old boarding schools, they were slow. Yeah, you didn't get very far there.

Interviewer: Well, if you worked half time------.

Narrator: Well, you didn't learn very much. You didn't learn a darn thing, you know. 'Cause you might learn something now and this afternoon , why, you forget about it. Start over on something else. Yeah, that's what they done, I suppose. Yeah, I never did learn anything. Right now I have a hell of a time writing my name. But anyhow I'm here on this Indian board, Indian Alliance Center. I'm on that board down there. I like that. I've got to be down there at 4:30 this afternoon.

Interviewer: What did you do then, between the time you were at school and when you came to Butte?

Narrator: Oh, I worked on trucks. Well, I finally got married. Finally wound up getting married. I was thrity-one years old when I got married. I was with my wife nine years and I got a boy, no he's thrity-nine years old. He lives in Seattle. He drives a bus for the Seattle Transit Company. A bus driver. The big buses , you know. Works for the Seattle City Bus Lines. He's married and my wife, she's living up there. I never did get a divorce. It's been thrity years now since her and I broke up. But I know I'd never get married again so why get a divorce? Why spend all that money?

Interviewer: When did you come to Butte?

Narrator: Oh, I first came here in 1926. Come here when I was eighteen years old. I came here in November. I saw my uncle in Chinnok, Montana. I don't know what he was doing down there . He was a miner. He just wanted to get away. I seen him down there and I was down there and he says he was coming here. "As soon as you get a chance come to Butte," he says. "Nice Place". So I got up here not long after he did.

And I found him. They lived down here on East Copper Street. Down that way some place. It's all gone now, where they lived. There used to be a mine right above them. What they called the St. Lawrence Mine. They lived right below. Anyhow, that's where he worked. I come up here bumming around. I stayed with these people. Finally he says, well, I told him I was going to go look for work. He says, "Why don't you try the mine."

So up here on North Main there's an office where you could get a rustling card. That building is gone too. I never could find it after I came back. I went up and got a rustling card and I'd get in line every day, you know, different mines. Finally I did get on at the St. Lawrence, where he worked.

I got a job on top, working on the surface 'cause I told that fellow that hired me, that fellow says, "You want to go underground or stay on top."

I said, "I'll stay on top. I don't want to go down there."

So I stayed on top. They put me to work up there. There was an old man, he was a teamster, you know, had a big old mule up there. He drove that mule. He was dumping these cars. Filling these cars, ore cars. This mule, he pulled two cars and all I'd have to do was hook the mule on - to the cars. I'd hook two cars--hook them together and I'd stay behind. There was a brake on that last car. When it gets close I'd just pull that brake down and stop them. Then we'd unhook the mule and he'd step to one side. Smart! We'd dump these cars. There was a dump there, there where the cars were. We were filling these cars with ore.

Interviewer: These were mine cars?

Narrator : Yeah, mine cars. Small ones. You see them now. They've got them for souveniors. That kind. Well, this mule could pull two and once in a while I'd try to make him pull three. He wouldn't do it. (laughs). He'd tighten up, you know, and by God he'd stop. That old man he'd say,"Sonny Boy, you can't ~~foil~~ fool him." So I'd unhook one.

"Giddup," and he'd go with them. He'd pull them two , but try to give him three and , oh no. No sir, boy. He would not budge. And you couldn't make him. You didn't dare hit him at all. At noon how the whistle would blow and by God, you couldn't hardly hold him. He had a barn right close there. The old man took care of him. He took him in there and fed him and give him his hay and oats and water. You know.

He'd make all that noise. You know the noise they make. When that whistle would blow. You'd have to get him over there. You couldn't make him work no more. You couldn't keep him out there. So we'd eat our lunch there and at one o'clock we'd go get him. He'd come out at one o'clock. Bring him out to work and hook him up again.

Yeah, I thought I'd have fun with him. I'd try to make him pull three(laughs). You know they've got two links about that long, hooked on each car. And I don't know. He must have heard those links when I'd hook them. I'd hook two and then the third one. I'd be darn careful I didn't make any noise hooking the third one. Start up and he'd tighten up and stop. He knew it. You couldn't hook and make him pull three. I'd push it, too, you know. No use. That old mane--he was an old fellow. Them days they don't have what they got now, age---

Interviewer: Retirement age?

Narrator: They didn't have that. I bet this fellow was sixty-five years old, maybe seventy. Real old fellow. Well, I worked with him. Yeah, that was when Butte was wide open, you know. Was you here then?

Interviewer: No.

Narrator: Yeah, your're darn right, Butte never slept, you know. Then I went away and I came back in 1950. ~~We~~ She was just the same. She was wide open yet. A lot of men here. When I first came here they didn't have these buses. Thay had tem street cars.

They had the rails. You could see the rails once in a while. They had them old street cars. There was nothing on the Flat. No building on the Flat. There might have been a few past the railroad tracks down here. Living was cheap. I used to stay with my aunt up there after I went to work. It was $4.25 or $4.75 a day that we got. That's days pay. Somewhere that same place where we used to get our rustling card, that's where we got our pay.

We used to have to go up there and get it. And I gave my aunt $10.00 a week for my room a board and I was young, you know, the rest of it was mine and maybe Sunday moring I'd borrow that back from her. (laughs).

See, we didn't work--yeah, we worked Saturday. We only had one day off--Sunday. One day off--worked Saturday. We'd get paid on Saturday. That's right. I'd her $ 10.00 and maybe the next day I'd borrow it back. (laughs). I don't know if I was ever square with her.

I'd give her another $10.00 next Saturday, but you see, I still owed her. I get to figuring it up one time. Well, I still owed her for the week before but I never thought about that . I just five her another $10.00.

She never said anything to me. Yeah.

Them days there was theaters, you know. A lot of theaters here. Go to shows. Somewhere on North Main there used to be a big pool hall. I don't know--I never could find that. I think it was six tables in there. Yeah,six pool tables. See, there was no taverns then, you know. A lot of bootleggers. Oh, yeah. That uncle of mine, he used to drink. He'd get a bottle on Saturday. He'd get a bottle of White Mule. He'd get drunk Saturday night. 'Cause he had all day Sunday to get well. Sometimes he couldn't get well on Sunday. Maybe he might miss Monday. But I never missed. See, I just had to go up the hill to work. I never drank. I was never sick the next day. Never had no hangover.

I just managed to make shift every day. Just run up the hill there a ways. Sometimes I wouldn't take lunch. At noon hour I could just run back down the hill. Just like running across the street. Right Close. Come running down and eat and run back up. I was young. Didn't bother me.

Interviewer : Were there many Indians in Butte then?

Narrator: No there wasn't too many. No, then I came back here in '50 and, gee-whiz, there was a lot of them. There was a lot of them around here. Well, I guess what brought them in here was that, what do you call it, the defense work. A lot of them came in here and went to work in the mines and got froze in here. A lot of them here when I can back in 1950. Gee, there was a lot of Indians here. Some from the Reservation that never did leave the Reservation. They were here even when I came back. When I came back in '50. So I came back here and went to work in the Mountain Con Mine. Between, let's see, November, December, January, Februrary and March, five months. Boy, I hated that every day , too. Going down there, you know, in the dark. Somehow I didn't know if I was going down not to come back up. Half scared.

Interviewer: What were you doing underground?

Narrator: Oh, just ordinary work. Whenever they needed men they put me to work. Worked with the miners, sometimes, with the motorman, electricians. Just wherever they wanted somebody to work, you know. They'd tell me where to go and so, then I worked on the 5,200. That's 5,200 feet down. I worked on that. Then I worked on the 3,600 and the 38. The furthest I went down was the 5,200. That was the deepest then. At that time, I had worked down there. Worked at whatever they wanted me to do. Sometimes I worked with a good guy and sometimes I worked with an old grouch. Sometimes I had a good boss. Well, the bosses were usually all good. I stayed there till March. No I stayed there 'till April and I got out of there.

Went out on a ranch in the Big Hole. I never did come back to the mines no more. There was an old man, an old dry man, worked on top. He worked in the dry. He's full of arthritis, you know. "That 's what it done," he said.

"You get out of here when you--get out of here right away . Look at me. Knuckles all big,"he says.

I say,"How many years you been underground?"

"Oh", he says,"about thirty"

All I put in was about five month and I got out of there. (laughs). I never regretted it.

"Stay the heck out of there", he says. "Never come back here," he told me. "It's no good".

Different guys I used to work with that had been there a long time. I told them,"Why don't you get out of here?'

"Well", he says, "I've been here a long time and it's all I know". "I'll just stay here until I retire, until I get retired."

Which they did. I don't see them any more. Passed away, you know. No, I don't see none anymore . Those I used to work with up there, I don't see a darn one any more. That worked underground with me. Not a one. So I guess they're all gone. Died. Now what else shall I tell you?

Interviewer: Was there every any predjudice against Indians in Butte?

Narrator: No,I never heard of any. No

Interviewer: Were you always treated fairly?

Narrator: Yeah,all treated fairly. The only thing, when I came back here in '50, they had all them taverns and all them Indians drinking. They tried to stop them. Tried to stop us. These tavern owners says, "How are we to know he's a government ward. [illegible], "You put a tag on them and we won't serve them." So they give that up.

That's the only thing they ever tried to stop. If they didn't want us to drink; we'd drink anyhow. Yeah, all these taverns, you know. They didn't care. They didn't give a darn what you are. But there used to be ----- a lot of the coons couldn't get anything. It's still that way here. 'Cause I see some come here, you know, going through, colored people. They don't like them around. They usually don't stay too long. Yeah, there's been a few come in here. I notice they don't stay'cause they're gone right away. So I guess they don't get a very good welcome.

But they never did do that to us. You know a lot of times we'd get drunk, get in jail here, you know. That old blind Judge, he's dead now--Selon. He use to be City Judge. Well, he'd bring a bunch of us up out of the City Jail, for ~~trail~~ trial or hearing or whatever you call it. He couldn't see, you know, somebody would have to read out loud.

"Well", he'd say, "What is this fellow?"

"This one's a white man", they'd tell him.

Well he'd give him hell and if this fellow would come around too much like that, before him, he'd give him a floater. Next one come along and he'd be told that he was an indian. How many time you been up here he'd ask.

"Well, a dozen times or so."

"Well, " he says I can't give you a floater but I don't know what you are up here for so many times."

The judge would say,"I can't tell you to leave, and I can't float you out of town. "

He says, "If you come back again it's five dollars or two and half days in jail. "

They'd put us back in. They never used to float anyone. Never did they float an indian. I've been in jail a lot of times for being drunk. This old City Jail.

One time I was in there three times in one day (laughs). Yeah, three times in one day. Picked up early in the morning, then they let me go. I talked my way out of it.

That old Judge, I'd tell me to go to work.

"Going to work drunk?" he'd say.

I told him I'd sober up.

"All right, I"ll let you do that. "

I went right back across the street, found the same bunch again.

"How 'd you get out?" they'd ask.

I told them what I'd come. All right, so I was drinking again and here they grabbed me again. (laughs).

By golly, the thirs time I went before him , he kept me over night. (laughs).

He said , You 're not going to get out time . Two and a half days in jail."

But I only stayed there that one night and the next morning. The jailer let me go. He's dead now. Tone Neouahau was his name. He let me go .

He says, " I'll let you go but you stay out of here at least a couple of days anyway. Don't come back no more."

Then I worked in Seattle. I left here in '66 and I went up to Seattle and I got a job, up there, working for the Pinkertons. I worked for them. I've got a picture. I was a guard. Rheumatism got the best of me I couldn'd hardly walk. That's me (referring to the picture.) I'd wear that old uniform. That was a good job. I liked that job. There was a lot of walking to it and that is rainy country. Well,you know. Finallly got the best of me. I had to quit. That's my son there and his family. That's me right there. I worked there three years I think. Three years and I had to guit and come back here. I was about ready to quit and retire anyhow. I retired when I was sixty-two. I was having a hard time to walk about that time. As long as I had it coming, I retired at sixty-two. So I've been retired ever since. Been right around here. Once in a while I go up to .Seattle. Once a year and visit my son but I don't like to stay up there. Just got a letter from him. It's really raining up there. Real rainy and cold. So Ive decided not to go up there,

Interviewer: "When did you start this Indian Alliance here? "

Narrator: They started that about '71 or '71. I think it was '72. That started from scratch. We went out and rented a room, a little place down there on East Park by the-- below right near the Montana Bar there. Rented a roon right there. That's where we started from. We didn't have much roon there. A little bigger than this. And we got, you know, we got too too crowded. Didn't have room for everyone, for all the workers so we're over there now. At the old Standard Building. That's where we're at now. We got a good place over there.

Interviewer: " What sort of work do you do with it?"

Narrator: Over there. Oh, just have meetings and decide you know, something might come up. We better act on. Maybe somebody got a job. Then we've got to interview him. See if he's capable of handling it. Just like some big corporation. Of course,we've got a director there and a board of directors,. We've got one there. So we work with him,That's what we do and like not, like yesterday, there was a guy come from Missoula. We had a meeting with him. The day before that there was some girls come from Washington D. C. Two from Washington, D. C. and one from Denver. We had a meeting with them. Different things. You know, that's got to do with Indians. Indian works and projects, grants and stuff like that. That's what we work on. We have a general meeting once a month. I think it's the first Sunday in every month. Or first Monday in every month we have a general meeting down there. But we sure have had a lot of them lately. We had one the other day, Monday, yesterday, and another one today. I don't know what's going to happen Monday. I don't know yet if we don't finish this one today(Friday), you know, they'll come back Monday. Yeah, They have seven board members, that's counting the Chairman of the board. We meet with him, well, he's with us. We have three girls and four men. We meet with whoever comes. This guy's

coming today from Missoula. And if we don't finish with him he'll come back at us Monday again. I hope he don't.

Interviewer: Do you think this is beneficial to the indians here.

Narrator: Yeah, it is. It is. Oh yeah, it's beneficial to the Indians here.

Interviewer: Is it well received by the general public of the Indian population?

Narrator: Yeah, it's well received.

Interviewer: Popular.

Narrator: Oh yeah, we never had no grievances. We all hit it off good. That's the first thing they'll ask us. When a new---- you know, like yesterday that fellow came . He said, how are you fellows all getting along here?

"We get along good," we told him.

See , they got an Alcholic Center there, too. For the indians and so every Thursday night they have a meeting. Then after the meeting they have a movie. They have a movie that show some drunken Indians. (laughs). Well, that's all it is. Some drunken women or men. That's all they show is drunken Indians. I was down there last night. I didn't get back here 'till nine o'clock. I went down from here about four o'clock. Anyhow, then they have that, well we had the meeting you know. We started at four o'clock and that guy asked how long we wanted to meet. We told him we would have the A.A. meeting over here at seven-thirty. I told him we usually take that in. So at seven-thirty we went over here and we had another meeting over here and everybody got up and had something to say.

They ask you to get up and talk. Then you have that drunken movie. It call it. (laughs).

There's Aaron Perry. You probably had to meet with him. He's a councilor down there at the A.A.

Interviewer: Is the alcbholic unit down there accomplishing much? Do you think they're doing good?

Narrator:

Well, I guess so. I don't drink anymore, so you know, I don't notice that. But, I guess it's doing some good. Then they're to have a Halfway House up here; North Main. Yeah, Indians. They're up here on the 700 block--705 No. Main.

Up there near that old Post Office, somewhere up that way.

I've never been up there 'cause I'm not a drunkard So I don't go up there. (laughs). I don't have to go there. But, you've got to get--not everybody can go in there, you know. You got to get permission from them down there. Before they'll let you in. You just can't come off the streets and go in there. I think you've got to come out of Galen first, before they'll let you in.

I don't know how it works. It's for three or four guys up there now. They've got a caretaker up there, a fellow that takes care of the place. He got on a big drunk here not long ago. (laughs). He had a hard time getting back up there. They let him back in though. He got on a big drunk and he's suppose to take care of that up there. They let him out for a while. They pitied him. So he's back up there now. That's his first offense, so he's got two more. Yeah, . We got to act on that too, see.

If he get drunk again, he'll have to come before us. Probably that third time we'll have to kick him out. But I'd hate to do that. You know, kick anybody out like that 'Cause I've been like that myself. So, I don't know.

We was talking that over one day down there and we

thought. Well, if he gets drunk the third time, we'll let him fire himself. (laughs).

Just ask him in a nice way to quit. "Cause, he knows we've got to have somebody there to watch that. It's a home, you know, where they've got groceries there and sleeping' quarters and pay them fellows that's there. They've got a radio up there. They've got a big T.V. got donated to them They've got a nice home up there. They've got to have somebody there to watch that. If they don't, they might burn it down or steal everything that's in there.

But anyhow, he's back up there now. So he might be good. He's on the board down there too, with us. He's told me that he's going to quit. He had a job coming up the first of the month and I told him.

"What about the building? Will you still be up there?"

He said he'd still take care of the place and I told him not to get drunk any more. By golly I told him, "You're just hanging in there."

One or two more like that and he'll be gone. You know, get drunk and they'll let him go. He's got a government job. What they call CETA. It's kind of a project down there. Well, I don;t know what he's going to do but he's going to work the first. That's the Government. That's a project that we've got down there for him, employment project that we've got down there from him. I don't know what he'll do.

Interviewer: Are they many Indians in Butte Now?

Narrator: There might be a thousand .

Interviewer: A thousand, Is that right.

Narrator: Maybe, I'm not too sure. They've all got different nationalities, you know. All different. Down there we've got one girl from Arizona. She's working down there with us. I don't know how the heck she ever got here.

Probably got lost. I told her one day, "What you doing way up here."

" I"don't know", she says.

Interviewer: Navaho?

Narrator: Yeah, Navaho. Pretty darn smart, though. Pretty smart girl. Secretary down there. We've got a couple of white people working there. Couple of women and more working there. Yeah, We've got ten there. They kind of, you know, mix it up. They've kept it going, paying taxes. So we give them a chance to work. What else you want me to tell you?

Interviewer : Any other interesting things happened to you?

Narrator: No, nothing. Not interesting, no. Just what I've told you. Nothing ever happened. Of course I've never been in trouble, only over here in jail for being drunk. Everybody does that. But, no, I've never been in any criminal offense of any kind. No, I've never been in trouble, really with the law. Only being drunk. There I think they just tried to keep me out. Get me off the street. 'Cause, you know, I never did hold that against them. You know, they throw me in jail they're helping you. Staggering around there on the streets; get run over or get killed.

So I never did hold that against those officers. Police , 'cause when I come out of there I'm sober. Of course, I've not gotten well, but not drunk anymore. So I don't hold that against them when they throw me in like that. No, Oh no. I've been in a lot of times. I don't remember being picked up. So I wasn't darn drunk and staggering around, but I wake up in jail. Wake up and see them bars in front of you. (laughs). Then I know where I'm at. They used to sure fill that old City Jail down here. Holy Smoke, now Jesus. They don;t do that any more.

use to pick up drunk. They don't pick up drunks any more. Not like they used to. There must be something wrong.

Interviewer: In the police news , I don't see anybody. Not very often.

Narrator: Not very often, but at one time, boy. As soon as you stagger down the street, "Get in here." Drive up along side and , "Get in here."

Interviewer: Maybe there was more drinking then.

Narrator: I guess so. Well, there's a lot of drinking now. I see a lot of drinking now.

Interviewer : They stay off the streets. I guess.

Narrator: They probably stay off the streets. Then, you know, most of these fellows now that's here, they belong here. At that time there was a lot of strangers coming in. Miners, you know.
Interviewer: Single men.

Narrator: Yeah, single men. Oh, yeah, a lot of them. A lot of single men here then. You don't see them any more. I guess that's why. It was easy to get a job or get in jail. Easy to get out, too, you know. A lot of them miners, single men that were miners had these sign-overs.

Get in jail, wake up in jail, they'd just call the store where they had the sign-over and they'd just send down five dollars to get them out. 'Cause I've done that losts of times.

I used to have a sign-over down there at, way down there,

a fellow named Cavanaugh on East Mercury. A lot of us had sign-over down there at, way down there. Get drunk and maybe I'd wind up in jail with them. And maybe I'd get out and they say,

"Go down there and tell so-and-so I'm in jail."

"Go down and tell Mike Cavanaugh", they'd say.

Or they'd send me to some other store, maybe down to the Main Public.

"You do go down and tell them so I'm in jail up here," they'd say.

So I'd go down and tell so-and-so there, then they'd ask if I knew the fellow real good and would I take up five dollars to him.

Take it to the Judge and the Court over there.

So I'd take it up there and pay the five dollars to so-and-so. Pretty soon they'd let him out.

I think that's what they used to do, you know, 'cause it was easy to get money them days. But now days nobody'd got money. No work here. So I think that's why. Now what else shall I tell you? I've just about run out . (laughs).

End of interview.