

CALIFORNIA STATE COLLEGE, BAKERSFIELD

CALIFORNIA ODYSSEY
The 1930s Migration to the Southern San Joaquin ValleyOral History Program

Interview Between

INTERVIEWEE: Charles M. Newsome

PLACE OF BIRTH: Fort Gibson, Muskogee County,
Oklahoma

INTERVIEWER: Michael Neely

DATES OF INTERVIEWS: March 23 and May 12, 1981

PLACE OF INTERVIEWS: Visalia, Tulare County

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Preface

Mr. Newsome lives on a dairy farm with his home in the midst of fields. He is a very large man. He dresses simply and is unpretentious in speech and manner. We sat in a room surrounded by pictures of his record breaking milk cows. Mr. Newsome proved to have an excellent memory. He wanted to participate in the Project and was an easy subject to interview. He made sure we were uninterrupted and fully cooperated when asked to elaborate on a particular subject or event. Mr. Newsome was not feeling well. He had been out of the hospital for a few weeks. Although he was better, he still seemed tired. Mr. Newsome is an interesting man of considerable accomplishment.

Michael Neely
Interviewer

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INTERVIEWEE: Charles M. Newsome (Age: 55)

INTERVIEWER: Michael Neely

DATED: March 23, 1981

M.N.: This is an interview with Charles M. Newsome for the California State College, Bakersfield CALIFORNIA ODYSSEY Project by Michael Neely at 25199 Road 164, Visalia, California on March 23, 1981 at 2 p.m.

M.N.: What's the first thing you can remember?

Newsome: I was born December 24, 1926. The house where I was born was on the White Ranch and now it has been torn down piece by piece and moved into Fort Gibson museum and that's for the relics of the early times of how the people lived there.

This was outside of Fort Gibson, Oklahoma. The earliest thing in my memory is when we lived in Arizona in 1929. I can remember finding a big chicken nest over there. We folks went out there for two years and lived in Arizona in 1929 and part of 1930.

M.N.: Why did they move to Arizona?

Newsome: Oh, family problems I guess. I don't know why. There was times of hardship or something and they went to Arizona and worked on a big cotton ranch there in Glendale, Arizona across the street from Sun City. That's the earliest thing I remember. I have a picture standing there by the big old saguaro cactus and there's an old plow leaning up there and hen's nest. Maybe it's just relating the picture but I must have been two and a half years old or three but that's the first thing I can remember. I can't remember anything about that trip going to Arizona. When we went back, my next memories were where we lived on a place that belonged to my aunt. Dad had a big six horse team of mules that he worked on a road grader. He graded roads, county roads and state roads there and these old mules had to always be twitched and I was just big enough to hold a

twitch and the mules while he harnessed them.

M.N.: What's a twitch?

Newsome: It's a thing you put on the mule's nose. You leave the halter bridle on him all the time because he can't play with his ears. He won't let you bridle him on the ears. You put this little piece of wood about yea long which has a little loop of rope that goes through the end of it. You reach up and twist it up on his nose and you can hold him that way. He'll let you get him by the nose but you can't touch him by the ears.

M.N.: The piece of wood is about a yard long?

Newsome: Oh, about two feet long. After you twist anybody can hold it that way and he'll stand real still while you put the bit in their mouth. He had an old dog who always went with him. He wasn't no kid's dog. He was strictly Dad's dog. My mother and I never touched him.

M.N.: What kind of dog was it?

Newsome: It was just a dog. Dad's own dog.

M.N.: He wouldn't let anyone touch him.

Newsome: No, he was strictly Dad's dog, strictly a man's dog and that's all he was. One time my brother was about two years old and he got out of the yard and got out there in the pen with the mules. All of them were chasing him around there and back in those times the mules weren't no easy thing like these horses the kids play with nowadays. They were really after him and I was running and screaming like a mad man. It was just like yesterday. The mules were after him in the pen there where they kept them. That must have been 1931 or somewhere around there. For keeping your milk and stuff we had a sulfur well on the place where water would come up real cold. Most sulfur wells are hot but this was a real cold spring and they had it fixed up where it went through this little building on a rock and that's where we kept all of our meat and milk and stuff that way. You'd separate your cream and make butter to go to town to trade on Saturday and that's where they kept all that stuff.

M.N.: You say sulfur well. Had it been dug out?

Newsome: No, it was a spring that came up. They had dug the well and the well water was good but this sulfur spring came up right out of the ground and it was cold. Most of them were hot but that was cold to my memory.

M.N.: Did it come up in a flat place?

Newsome: Came up out of a crevice of a rock, a little rocky cliff probably twenty feet high and about 100 feet from the house. That's my memory. We went back to visit in 1938 and we went and checked all that stuff out and my brother and I walked down from an aunt's house up on top of a hill about three miles away into this place to see if our memory was good on that thing. Today there's an old gal who lives on that place and if you turn into it, well, first thing you know there's a big rifle bullet just flying over your car. We found that out last time I was out there. The wife and I were going to go back and look at the place. We turned up this lane, overgrown and just big enough for a car to go down through there and the next thing this old gal was at the end of it with a gun pointing down that way. We decided that we didn't want to talk to her none at all.

M.N.: Was it normal to have problems with mules?

Newsome: All mules were broke that way. Most of them were very unusual in that you had a team of mules that you didn't have to break at least all the mules my dad ever had. That's why he never did work mules too much.

M.N.: How did he break mules?

Newsome: I don't know how he broke them. He just broke them. Our grandfather worked mules all the time but most of the time worked horses. I've learned how to drive a team of horses. I never learned how to work with mules because Dad had horses all the time.

M.N.: Were horses easier to work than mules?

Newsome: All depended on whether you believed in working mules or horses. Each had it's own following. The old saying is that you can't ever work a mule to death but a horse will kill itself working because mules have more sense than to work themselves to death but that was the only time I can remember my dad owning mules.

M.N.: What was your father like back then?

Newsome: He wasn't a great big man. He was probably 150 pounds, five feet ten inches and I think one of the better respected men in the country back there at the time. He was always a deputy sheriff or constable. If there were troubles they always came looking for Hobe. That was his name. That was short for Hobert. If two guys got in a fight up in the mountains or something or got into trouble why they'd always come looking for my dad and evidently he was fairly well respected that way. He never did have anything to speak of but it was just one of those things, you know. Some people in neighborhoods are that way and some aren't.

M.N.: What was his temperament like?

Newsome: Very easy, until he got mad. When he got mad he could tear your hind end off. But he was a fellow you could push for a long, long ways before he would fight or get mad. He had a very level temper but when you pushed him over the brink, why, my brother and I always knew when it was because he could sure tear your hind end right off right quick but you had to push him a long ways to ever get him over the brink. He didn't have a short quick temper like a lot of people do.

M.N.: Did he carry a weapon when he went out?

Newsome: Oh yeah. I have an old gun that he used to carry.

M.N.: What was it?

Newsome: Colt 45, but he never needed that. He could usually take care of troubles without that back in those times. If you needed tougher why go get the big boys, let them take care of them. He didn't need to go but he could pretty well take care of himself. Like one time quite a bit later we had firewood. When my brother and I were carrying it in Bill tripped and this piece of hickory [went up under his eye]. You'd just take an ax and ax off the limbs when it gets down like that where you split it. He'd lop these off and it left a real sharp thing sticking out and it went up under Bill's eye. When he fell with it it hit under his eye and cut it open. Dad took a needle and silk thread and took a coal oil lamp and held the needle over it and held it over it with a pair of pliers until it was almost red hot and then let it cool back down and took that needle and threaded it and put two stitches in his eye. That's the only way you ever went to the doctor. He has a very little scar from it to this day from doing that. But he had been in the medics in World War I. He spent a couple years in the medics and he could do about anything. He'd doctor the livestock. He'd go out and sew up a cow or hog that way that got tore up from dogs after it or a wolf. He could fix that up all right.

M.N.: Did the neighbors call him for help?

Newsome: Yes. He'd go help people out that way and do different things. It was before I was born but he must have been the chief barber around the country because he finally had to quit because everybody in the country came in and cut their hair on Saturdays and didn't want to pay anything and would shoot. By the time you get your scissors sharpened and keep a pair of clippers up and he got tired of it and said, "No more of that nonsense I can't afford it." Said, "I want to rest too."

They used to go play ball before I was born. They'd drive off 25 or 30 miles to some little town somewhere and play ball.

He had a guy who had his leg off just below the knee who was the catcher. Usually they'd go there and dance all Saturday night and drink and then Sunday morning they'd be playing ball and quit in time to get home to go to work Monday morning and usually end up in a fight or something. This old boy with the leg off when a fight got started why he'd just back up against the backstop and jerk his old peg leg off and he could whale them up pretty good so I'd always heard. I never saw it but I've always heard that tale about old peg leg. When he'd back up against the backstop and jerked that leg off well, watch out.

M.N.: What was your mother like back then?

Newsome: She was more of a nervous individual than Dad ever was and still is. They didn't get married until fairly late in life. Dad was 31 when I was born and Mom was 30.

M.N.: What year were they married?

Newsome: 1921. They'd been married five years before I was born.

M.N.: Any brothers and sisters?

Newsome: I only have one brother. I don't know why they didn't have a big family but that's the way life is.

M.N.: What did she look like?

Newsome: She was a woman who weighed 140 pounds when she was young and I guess at that time wasn't too bad a looking woman. She's old and bent over now but she's not that bad looking. She's no Elizabeth Taylor but Elizabeth Taylor may look that bad or worse when she's 83 too.

M.N.: Was she a hard worker?

Newsome: Yeah. They always worked. They canned fruit and vegetables and everything like that and put it up that way and she did all that kind of work and did all the laundry by the rub board. I can remember helping doing that.

M.N.: How did she do that?

Newsome: A rub board is a little piece of metal about fourteen inches wide and about two feet long and it has two legs. The last eight or ten inches on it has two legs and then it's in waves and you take that and put it in a tub, a number three wash tub and you take it with your knuckles, rub it back and forth until you get your clothes clean. They didn't have detergent at that time. There was no such thing. It was just plain old yellow lye soap. We used to make the soap when we killed hogs.

M.N.: Was that soap any good?

Newsome: I guess we thought it was. It was all the soap we had. It must have been pretty good. We thought it was all right anyway.

M.N.: Do you remember how it was made?

Newsome: All I remember is that we had a big old kettle that they heat the water in and we get through and you'd put lye and some part of lard in it or something and boil it until it hardened up and you'd go out and cut it up and you'd have caked yellow soap that way. Then they did buy some soap for the kitchen. I don't remember exactly but I remember making that lye soap anyway.

M.N.: What else about your mother? Do you remember how she dressed?

Newsome: When we came to California she gave it away but she had a full length leather split skirt. She was quite a horse woman and she wore it riding horseback. When you'd walk it would almost drag on the ground, big heavy leather stuff. I don't remember ever her wearing jeans before we came to California. She always wore dresses kind of long below her knees. Back in them days I don't think women wore pants. But she did have that big old leather skirt that she wore that way.

M.N.: Did she ride very much?

Newsome: When she was a young girl, just after the turn of the century, why, her folks run a lot of cattle there in that country just before World War I. Well, I guess she was about as good a cow-girl as there was in that country back there because she and her dad would go all over that country within 50 miles away from home and gather up cattle and bring them home all the time every year. So she did ride horseback and later on just before we came out here I can remember we were going to thrashing crew. Dad always ran a thrashing crew in the summer and be gone six days a week and come in on weekends. So we were going over to our cousins where they were thrashing that day and had this big old gray mare that we were going to ride over there. Mom went out and wouldn't let me ride the horse I usually rode. We all three had to go on one horse that day. So we got out there and got the saddle on old Minnie and Mom crawled up and got Bill on behind and told me to crawl up. Every time I'd get on, old Minnie would start humping up a little. She'd kick her hind end up a little bit. For about eight miles I'd slide off. Every time that old horse would pump up a little bit Maw would say, "Slide off, slide off." I walked most of that trip instead of horseback riding.

M.N.: Why did you have to slide off?

Newsome: Well, she was trying to buck and my little brother was always

kind of delicate being the little brother. Whether he was delicate or not, she wasn't going to get him thrown. Every time we'd go horseback riding and she'd buck why I'd have to slide off over the back end.

M.N.: You called that horse Minnie?

Newsome: She was a part of the team that Dad had. We had a team of mares there--Maud and Minnie.

M.N.: They were pretty large horses?

Newsome: Yeah. They weighed 1500 pounds. Minnie weighed 1500 and Maud probably 1400. Maud was a thoroughbred crossed with something else. I don't remember what it is but she wasn't all work horse. She could have been ridden and we used her for a riding horse quite a bit.

M.N.: Was it unusual to have that kind of a horse?

Newsome: No, I don't think so. They were a good team of mares and everything but that was as good a team of horses that we ever had I guess because we came out here in 1935 and Dad sold them for \$500 then with a harness and that was a lot of money at that time.

M.N.: A good team was quite an asset.

Newsome: Well, it was making a living or not. But long before that it was from the mules. I was probably five or six years when I first [went to school]. The first school I went to was the Maneard School which was off of a little town called Perkins. Perkins was a grocery store and filling station and we ran it.

M.N.: Your family did?

Newsome: Yeah. My mom ran it during the daytime and when she had time. When she got through doing her housework why she'd go down and open it up. It was just out in the country where them old wild hillbillies boys wouldn't go to town and they'd come and buy stuff there instead of going to town because I can remember them coming down out of the hills--four or five of them. One would come in and get his cotton boll twist of tobacco. It's a piece of tobacco about that long bent around and then it's all twisted up. It's real strong. They'd come in and get a twist of that and these other guys would stay way back off 100 yards out away from the place and when he got through buying what he wanted why he'd go back up and another one would come down.

M.N.: Why?

Newsome: I don't know I guess they were wild. We called them wild

and mean. When them dudes would come in she told us to hide out back in the pantry somewhere. Us boys were told to hide out.

M.N.: Were they mean?

Newsome: I guess so. They told us they were mean so I believed them. I didn't mess with them.

M.N.: Were they armed?

Newsome: Oh yeah, every one of them had a rifle. They didn't go anywhere if they didn't have a rifle with them. I don't even remember their names but they'd come out of the hills from somewhere.

M.N.: Did your mother have a weapon in the store?

Newsome: I don't remember. Dad always had a weapon around the house somewhere but as far as in the store I don't know. I know we were a lot more afraid of them when they came in than we were the time that Pretty Boy Floyd came by and bought gas.

M.N.: You remember that?

Newsome: I can remember Mom and Dad talking about it. When she went to get the gas she knew who it was and told us to stay in the store. We stayed inside. We didn't come out. We were pretty well trained at that time. Later on we didn't mind that good but at that stage we minded good.

M.N.: Was there anymore to the story?

Newsome: No, he just came in and bought a tank of gas. I guess the gas was \$1 and they left a \$10 or \$20 bill and down the road they went. As I remember there were five of them in an open touring car.

M.N.: How did the people feel about it?

Newsome: I don't know what the rest of them felt. I never heard them talk. I was too little to remember. I know my mom was scared. That's the only thing I can remember is that she was scared at the time.

M.N.: She didn't call the police?

Newsome: No phone--didn't have a phone to call anybody. After they left it was lunch time and Dad came in and she told him about it. He said, "Well what happened?" She said, "Well, nothing, they just bought gas and gave me whatever money it was" and he said, "Well, if they come back again do the same thing just don't get excited about it. Let it go."

M.N.: I've heard stories that people respected Pretty Boy Floyd.

Newsome: Well, they could have but I don't remember that part of it.

M.N.: What was your house like?

Newsome: At that place it was just a frame house. It was painted white with four rooms because we had the school teacher living with us. The school teacher slept around behind the kitchen. The kitchen faced west I believe and that was the entrance into the house. Then you went out of that into a great big room and turned to your right and went around and there was a bedroom there and at that time we were boarding two school teachers-- one was real tall and slim and one was short and heavy set. Every time my folks would correct me I'd run to those school teachers and they'd say, "Now that's all right. Leave him alone. He didn't do anything." They'd stand between me and getting a licking many times. My mother's name was Jo, short for Josephine, and these teachers would tell her, "Now, Jo, that's all right. He didn't do nothing wrong." Whatever I did didn't matter. I ran to the teachers to get out of the way.

M.N.: What kind of kitchen did you have?

Newsome: Wood stove and table and that's all I can remember about it. I think they had water in it at that time because there was a big old Franklin stove. I heard my mom and dad talk about it later. I guess that was the one extravagance that they did buy when they got married. He went to town and bought her a Franklin cook stove. I guess it was the fanciest thing that ever was made that way. We had it until we came to California. Moved it and had it until we came out here.

M.N.: How did you keep your water in the kitchen?

Newsome: You'd usually have a dug well outside somewhere and a windless up over it. It would either have rock built up around it or boards and then it would have a lid over it with some kind of opening that would keep it open and closed and a windless over it and a bucket. You'd let a bucket down in and get your water, fill your bucket up and take it into the house. You kept it just in, as I remember, a wooden bucket that would hold two and a half to three gallons of water.

M.N.: Did it have a ladle in it?

Newsome: We always used a dipper. It wasn't a ladle but used a dipper which probably had a fifteen inch handle. That was how you got water out of the bucket in the house. I thought it was good. My memory says that was the sweetest, best water I ever drank. The wife and I up until last year we'd been going back every

year for the last six, seven, eight years with our travel trailer. I'd go back and I'd say, "Can't you guys go back in the hills somewhere and find one of those good, cold springs of water?" Shoot, them guys they don't know where cold springs are. They don't know where there are wild onions growing any more--nothing. They all got more modern than we have out here.

I just knew we'd go back there. These people never left there. Here they'd lived there where they were born and never left to do anything. I even got to the service and I thought, "Old L.D. will know right where all the good spring cold water is that we used to go out and get that way and was so good." I asked him, "Well, where's that spring off over in such and such a place over there?" He said, "I don't know. I don't remember." "Well, it was over there back on the face of the creek over there by where Wallace Huggins lived." He said, "I haven't been there and I wouldn't know whether it's there or not." They didn't know nothing like this--everything was that way.

M.N.: How did you sleep?

Newsome: We had regular iron bedsteads with feather mattresses. I know my mom always had a feather bed--feather mattress on her bed.

M.N.: Did she make it herself?

Newsome: Oh, yes. I was number one goose catcher. I'd run the geese and catch geese for her.

M.N.: You had geese?

Newsome: Oh yeah. We always had anywhere from ten old geese and one or two ganders and let them lay and set and hatch every year and we'd sell them or eat them or whatever. We always had enough to keep ourselves in feather beds and pillows. She made her own pillows and ticks and everything that way. There was a knack I guess to it because she could make them and sell them once and a while. She would have a real big feather bed and somebody in town didn't have any geese so she sold them once and a while.

M.N.: Was there any particular way that she prepared the feathers for the geese?

Newsome: Oh, I don't know, just used real heavy ticking and you'd pluck them at a right stage. You have to catch them when their feathers were just right. Me and my brother used to run them things down. I've got a scar on my foot now from running and jumping over a barbed wire fence trying to catch the damn things.

M.N.: Weren't they pretty mean sometimes?

Newsome: I guess they were but we didn't pay any attention to them. We

had our bluff on them. They didn't have their bluff on us thank goodness. Anyway we'd run these old geese down and it seems to me that we plucked them in the spring. It seems as though it would have been in May or maybe earlier but I guess it would have been in the fall because you wouldn't have plucked them after they'd been laying and setting because they would have lost all their feathers. It must have been in the fall sometime when you'd run them down and catch them that way and pluck them because the feathers would have been lost when they were setting and they would have come in and would have been just right or they didn't pluck them that way. What it was I don't remember but somehow or other those feathers had to be just about right.

M.N.: How did you hold them? They didn't willingly cooperate with you?

Newsome: Oh, no, you take one of them and you turn them. I've got too big a belly anymore but you put your knees together and take the goose and stick his head under your arm over there and lay him right down on his back there or put his head down here and his butt up on your tummy there and you just jerk them right out. You only pluck the place from his vent up between his legs. There's probably a place there, oh, five inches across. The circle there that was about all they plucked. They didn't pluck the whole goose. That's where all the good down was so that's where you get down feathers right in front of the vent there.

M.N.: Take quite a bit of plucking to get a mattress.

Newsome: Oh yeah, to get a feather bed would take two years plucking to make a good feather bed from what geese we had. As I remember we all slept in it. You'd crawl in a feather bed and it would be freezing outside. Jump in that thing and just settle down into it and that old thing would just go up around you. I guess like getting into a water bed about half or third full. I've never been in a water bed but just like the water tube would come around you and that's the way a feather bed would do. After you jumped into it the feathers would just float right up around you and lock all the cold air out.

M.N.: How many people slept in a bed?

Newsome: Well my brother and I slept together and my mom and dad slept together and that's all we ever did have. If we had company maybe a company kid or visitor would come and sleep with us that is all. We had two to a bed until I guess I went in the service.

M.N.: Did you have an outhouse?

Newsome: Yeah, we had three-holers and outhouses--even had those after you'd come to California.

M.N.: At that time how far was the outhouse from the house?

Newsome: It was quite a ways from the house always. That was always a long walk and a good place to get exercise. That was something we had to move about twice a year as I remember it.

M.N.: Was toilet paper hard to come by?

Newsome: No, not if you were in good with Montgomery Wards or had a newspaper. I think that's all they ever used. I don't remember toilet paper being in an outhouse back then.

M.N.: You had a barn?

Newsome: Yeah, we had a barn.

M.N.: How far was the barn from there?

Newsome: Well, we had different ones. Now this house before I first started school up there on Maneard Creek it was probably 100 yards from the house and it was great big tall hip roof barn but it had a big board fences around it. We all lived up there one year. They had rented a place up there one year. Then he came back and rented a place there about eight miles from Fort Gibson and about fourteen or fifteen miles from where this Perkins was and it belonged to my mother's dad and her sister and he rented. As far as I can remember that place comprised 60 acres that he rented there.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 1

Newsome: Where we started to school at that place at Perkins, this dog I told you about at first, well, that's where he got stolen. The mean dog that my dad thought so much of--them old boys that had come in from the hills they stole him. Before they did this stray cow came into our place and Dad was trying to run it off and it wouldn't run off. It had found a good place to eat and it wasn't going back. It looked like it had been eating hot air and nothing else so Dad got this dog out there one day and the last time we seen that old cow was whenever she jumped the fence and that old dog jumped up and caught her by the tail about a foot from her butt and when he got on the fence he came back for the tail and she kept going and that's the last time we ever saw the cow.

M.N.: He took her tail off?

Newsome: He just took her tail right off when she went over the fence. That was the last time we ever saw that cow. These guys who stole the dog--the funny thing was they left one in return. They left a dog there for us. When they'd steal something that way they'd usually leave something in return.

- M.N.: Why would they take a dog?
- Newsome: I don't know. They thought he was a good squirrel dog or something back in the hills.
- M.N.: Did they leave a pup?
- Newsome: No, they left a dog probably two or three years old and it chased every Model T car that came down the road. He'd chase that thing. There wasn't too many cars but he chased every one of them. So somebody came down the road and Dad was mad and didn't want the dog anyway and he told the guy to do something about that dog to get rid of him. Evidently the guy went out and got a tow sack of some kind and tied it onto the hub of his car and when he came by that old dog grabbed that and we didn't have no dog anymore. That was the end of that dog.
- M.N.: Broke his neck?
- Newsome: Yeah, it did something to him. We didn't have that dog around no more. When we moved from there we moved back down toward Fort Gibson down there and we lived in a log house then.
- M.N.: What was that like?
- Newsome: It was longer than it was wide. As I remember it was three rooms long this way and then in the back it had a lean-to the full length of it. The kitchen was on the east end of it and in the middle we had a fireplace where our heating was in that center section. Mom and Dad slept on the west end and then there was another bedroom in there somewhere or living room where Bill and I slept and in the summer we slept out under the lean-to which it was enclosed but that's where we would sleep in the summertime.
- M.N.: Was that a nice place?
- Newsome: Oh it was just an old log house that was probably 100 years old when we lived in it.
- M.N.: Did your father buy it?
- Newsome: No, he was renting it. That would have been in 1933.
- M.N.: Do you remember what the rent was?
- Newsome: I've got a card where he borrowed \$100 to make a crop and they gave him \$80 and he paid back \$120--50% interest. He borrowed \$80 to make a crop and live on for a year. Somewhere I've got it when we were looking for genealogy stuff we found that card but anyway we had three years in a row in this place there. There was what we call bottom land. There was 30-35 acres that

was down under a bluff down in there where the creek went down through there and was real good, rich land and then up on top we raised cotton and oats on top and the bottom was corn. When the third crop year went floating down the river that was when we decided to come to California. Three years in a row in the dust bowl country the corn was flooded out after he raised to harvest.

M.N.: Just an unseasonal rain?

Newsome: The part of Oklahoma we came from in the Ozarks there wasn't any dust storms. Since you first contacted me I had three cousins here in their sixties and we've talked to some extent and none of us ever remembers any dust. We could maybe the little bit in the air once. The other two cousins could remember but none of us really remembers what you call dust storms or dust bowl days around Fort Gibson where we came from in the hills there. What it was was we were on this Manear'd Bayou on the Arkansas River. It would rain away off up in Colorado or somewhere in Arkansas or Kansas and the flood waters would come down and back up in the bayou there and flood our place out and that's how it flooded it out those three years.

M.N.: So it created enough hardship.

Newsome: Well, I guess hardship or aggravation. I can remember riding the horse out there and Dad wading in water waist deep and somehow or other I don't know why he shocked the corn. One year we went through and picked it by hand after the flood and the other two years he had shocked it for some reason.

M.N.: What is that?

Newsome: Cutting it off and standing it up in shocks probably four rows each forty or fifty feet long. You stand it up in one spot. Why he did it I don't know but it was done that way and I can remember riding one horse and he'd have two tow sacks tied together hanging over the withers of the horse and he would pick those two tow sacks full of shock and while I would take that to the house and dump it in a corn crib he'd get one full then I'd just change horses. I can remember doing that that winter along in September when that flood hit that last one. I can remember that just like it was yesterday riding old Minnie and Maud back and forth to the corn crib dumping that in there and Dad down there up to his waist over in that water shaking that corn out of there. That was the way of life.

We had about 50 head of Jerseys and I guess white face cows-- mostly Jerseys. Cattle were out on open range and we milked them and brought them in and always had a bunch of yearlings there. You'd let the old cows out and feed them for the night

when they'd come in and let the calves suck on them in the night so the cows always want to come back home but it was my job always to get on a horse and go and get them and bring them in every evening. They'd get within two or three miles or something like that--three or four miles--and then you'd have to go get them or they would be all night getting there. What milk we could get from them in the morning we separated. Mom would churn it. Hell, we all churned it because I can remember standing at a five gallon churn that way and running the dasher up and down that blooming thing.

M.N.: The churn was made out of wood?

Newsome: No, it was a crock made out of some kind of stone I guess. Anyway, it was ten inches in diameter and two feet tall and we usually had a cross in it and a handle that went up through a hole in the center at the top and you'd just take and churn the butter and she had a mold as I remember. Every woman who took butter in and traded that way had their own mold. I think they had a two pound mold but it had a floral design and each woman had her own design and it would be molded onto the butter and some people that's the only butter they would buy in town.

You never churned on Friday because you always took fresh cream in and when you sold the butter you had a little fresh cream. Thinking back on it, why, that was so people could buy fresh cream to have whipping cream on Sunday. That's the only reason it must have been but you never had to churn on Friday. You always took fresh cream when you went to town Saturday morning with half a case of eggs, and ten or fifteen pounds of butter and maybe four or five old hens to trade for what you needed that week or just to sell for money. You always took that fresh cream in on Friday and Saturday. If the weather was good we didn't churn Thursday because of the fact that the cream would sell fresh that way.

M.N.: Do you remember what it was worth?

Newsome: No. I remember the first farm journal I'd ever seen. Dad traded it for two Dominicker chickens. A year's subscription to the first farm journal I ever saw was two chickens off the road.

M.N.: Can you remember the animals on your farm?

Newsome: We had a team of work horses, then we had a riding horse that Dad and I rode all the time and we usually had anywhere from ten sows, maybe more, always anywhere from eight to ten sows because Dad sold the corn and fed our hogs in the winter--sold fat hogs and anywhere from 35-50 head of cattle that run on open range.

M.N.: That's quite a bit of stock.

Newsome: We wasn't the rich Okies and we weren't poor. We were kind of average.

M.N.: How about chickens?

Newsome: Oh we had chickens all the time.

M.N.: What kind?

Newsome: I remember Plymouth Rocks and Rhode Island Reds. They were always either Bard Rocks or Reds. Once and a while if Mom wanted a laying chicken she got some White Leghorns. We had an old sow that every time a chicken would get in the pen she'd kill that chicken, I mean she was death on chickens so Uncle Jim, my mom's oldest brother, came out there--he was an outlaw, tough one in the family, tough nut.

M.N.: How old was he then?

Newsome: Oh this was in 1935 and he would have been 50 or 55. He was born in 1888 or 1890--but anyway he came out and he went off back to the hills there up from the house 200 to 300 yards, started up into the hills there and he went up there and shot a hawk. Somehow or other he wounded it I don't know how he did it but he must have been good enough shot that he just shot and broke this hawk's wing and brought it in and threw that hawk in there where that old sow was and she never did kill the hawk but she didn't kill no more chickens either. That hawk taught her somehow or other balling up on it and pecking it's eyes and nose. He said, "I'm going to break this chicken-eating sow" and I can remember thinking, "Boy, what's he talking about?"

M.N.: He did it on purpose.

Newsome: No, he did it for my dad--just did it to do it. He went back and was good enough shot with a hand gun or with a rifle. He'd lost his wife in a flu epidemic of 1919 and he had four children that his mother was raising and he lived in Tulsa. He was a machinist and always had a good job. He never did do without a job up there he'd come down to the ranch that way and he'd take us squirrel hunting and do things like that. He was always a good shot with that gun.

M.N.: What kind of gun was that?

Newsome: I don't know some kind of rifle. He always carried a pistol all the time and he could knock a bird out the top of a tree with it anytime he wanted to but us kids always thought when Uncle Jim came we'll go shoot squirrels. My dad never did like cooked squirrel anyway but Mom did and we thought it was the greatest when Uncle Jim would come and go kill a squirrel and we'd have squirrel dumplings for a night or something.

- M.N.: Did you go with him?
- Newsome: Oh yeah, my brother and I tagged along. Here we are seven or eight years, you think we're not going to go with him?
- M.N.: How did you hunt them?
- Newsome: We'd just walk along and watch for them in the tree and when he'd see one why he'd shoot the things.
- M.N.: Did you go down to the river bottom?
- Newsome: Well, where we lived on this Maneard Creek, the bayou came through there and went through kind of a bottom and then Braggs Mountain started there off up the hills there and then there was another little creek that ran right in front of the house that went right off through that and ran most of the year. In the spring if we got a real dry year why it didn't run but most of the year it had a little water in it all the time coming from springs up there and we'd just go either up that or up along the edge of the farm land. If there were hickory trees there were lots of squirrels in there just about anytime he wanted them and he knew there were squirrels in there.
- M.N.: Did you have to run up and down the creek to get them?
- Newsome: No, we just followed the farm land and ran up around in the woods that way where they were at and that was up where Dad cut all his firewood off. There was open land up in there and lots of timber. It was good for firewood and that's where he cut firewood and split it and hauled it out of there. That way he didn't have to go quite a ways off to get it and everything.
- M.N.: Were the squirrels large?
- Newsome: They weighed half a pound, I guess three quarters. They weren't very big. Usually take two of them to one or two I remember. He'd usually take one home for him because he liked it fried and then he'd take one and cook it up and make dumplings out of it. Boil it until the meat came off the bone and then they'd make dumplings out of it--put a little milk or something in it I guess and roll out biscuit dough real thin and drop in in there and make squirrel dumplings.
- M.N.: Did you like it?
- Newsome: I thought it was good eating--still good eating yet today if we had it.
- M.N.: Did you ever eat frog?

- Newsome: Eat frog? Oh yeah, sure. My brother and I were pretty good frog hunters. We were fishermen, frog hunters. We were the wildest two kids in the country. What we didn't do we didn't think of to do. We'd take a cane or willow pole for fishing and try to swipe a piece of red cloth off of Mom and go on down and find a bank with a lot of roots sticking out of it down around the water line and we'd go along and find these big old bull frogs that would get up on those roots and we'd let that fish hook down that way until the old frog would reach out and lap it in.
- M.N.: Because of the red cloth?
- Newsome: He'd reach out with his tongue and jerk it in his mouth, then we'd jerk him and we had a frog. That's how we caught frogs and we went fishing all the time. We were frog hunting one time there and had been walking along--we were hot on it with about three or four frogs a piece and we were about ready to go in and here come a couple of alligator gars--it's a fish--swimming up through the thing and they must have weighed twenty pounds and gills on them maybe fifteen, sixteen inches long. When we saw those things they looked like the longest thing we ever seen. We ran a mile and a half home scared half to death --something was after us going to get us. Looking back and knowing what alligator gar fish are that's the only thing it could have been but, man, they looked like they were fifty feet long and twenty miles high after us when they come up the river--we looked up and here these two alligator gar swimming up that bayou.
- M.N.: Were you in any real danger?
- Newsome: No, they were just fish--no danger to anybody--just kids' imagination--getting scared and running off. We got scared and ran away.
- M.N.: Did you get out in the creek and hit them with a pole?
- Newsome: No, I never did do any of that. My brother was a fisherman and Dad used to take what we called a trot line and there was a nice big curve and water was fairly deep in a bend of the bayou there and he'd throw the trot line out. We'd go down and throw a trot line out at night, bait it up, fix it up, and we caught catfish and put them in a number three washtub and they'd go across and bend half way around and as I remember it those things would bring \$2.50 to \$5 in Muskogee on Saturday mornings. If you could catch one up, get it dressed right and take it to town you could get a good price for it. That was a lot of money then. If you'd only brought \$1 why it was an added income that you got that way by catching them and doing it that way.
- M.N.: Did you hunt in the winter?

- Newsome: No, my dad never was much of a hunter. He didn't hunt any that way. He was more on work. His avocation was work, his vocation was work and his hobby was work. Work was all he cared about. He didn't care too much about going fishing or hunting or anything that way. He played ball with us kids and stuff like that but he didn't like hound dogs and I always dreamed of having a hound dog but that was a "no no" so you never got one of them.
- M.N.: Did you do a lot of work as a child?
- Newsome: Oh, no more than necessary. We all worked, put it that way-- we all worked. I remember one time back when we had the mules over there Dad raised a lot of produce and hauled it into market in Muskogee which was the biggest, nearest town which was twenty miles away.
- M.N.: What kind of food?
- Newsome: Garden stuff. He'd raise string beans, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, carrots, bell peppers, tomatoes, anything that the people in town didn't have. He called it a truck garden. It was produce and we were setting out sweet potato slips one time and I guess I was five maybe six years old anyway we were going over there and Dad once and a while instead of smoking why he chewed Day's Work tobacco. So, man, I had growed up and got hair on my chest then and I wanted a big chaw of that Day's Work tobacco. Dad said, "Now you sure?" I said, "Yup, I want a bite of that tobacco." Dad cut me off a piece and gave it to me and my brother said, "I got to have one too," so he gave Bill a cut of that stuff. I guess I was making the holes for the sweet potatoes to be put in and then water. You go along stick a hole every so often and put them in, then you put water and come along and stuff dirt around it so it will grow. I'll bet I didn't make a dozen holes till I lost everything I'd eaten for six days--sick--God, I was never so sick in my life.
- M.N.: How was your brother?
- Newsome: Shoot, he can eat that stuff to this day. He never was sick on tobacco and I smoke a cigar very once and a seldom and everything else makes me sick--not him. I'd forgotten about this one. When we had that little store up there we'd go through and back in those days they had hard rock candy and they had these drawers like that and you'd keep flour in one and beans in another one and something else in another one and candy in this one.
- M.N.: More like a bin?
- Newsome: Kind of like a bin. The door was square like that desk over there, a square door and then there was a hinge back in there and the thing was curved that way and you'd tip it out and it

out and it would hold stuff in it and then you'd push it back in to close it. Anyway, there was hard candy and licorice or whatever there was in that. We would always sneak and go around through and swipe candy that way. Well, Mom had gotten tired of that. She said, "Quit going through the store and swiping candy." This day we got caught. She said, "I'll fix you boys. You're going to get up there and I'll get out an old corncob pipe and that cotton boll twist and I'm going to fill it up and you've got to smoke that pipe full of tobacco. That will be good punishment for stealing candy." About the third puff I was sick and it took her three days to clean the store up and that brother of mine finally ended up getting a whipping because he never did get sick. He as about three years old that time. Tobacco just never made Bill sick but me it got my goat all the time. I was so sick I didn't care whether I died.

M.N.: Do you remember how you dressed in those days?

Newsome: I should have brought some pictures. I found them in there when I was cleaning Mom's house the other day--bib overalls, blue work shirt, button at the collar. We looked wild. These pictures are when we were four and six and we looked wild. In the summertime we didn't have a shirt on and pants were usually cut off and as little as you could wear. Most of the time it was a pair of bib overalls like I've got on now and a shirt. Dad kept our hair cut up way high just a little bit of hair up there on top and that was so you didn't get them little bugs running around when you went to school.

M.N.: Lice?

Newsome: Yeah, you'd get lice. Back in those days it was like going into the army, you keep your hair cut up short. These boys with long hair now I don't see how they keep the lice down but that was so you didn't get lice. You kept your hair cut way short and just have a little bit on top up here.

M.N.: What would they do if you got them?

Newsome: Scrub with sheep-dip and everything else. That was bad news in our family. If we brought in lice from the school my mama would have died of mortification and have killed us to boot. That was the low of the low if you got lice. Coming in from school with lice was the low of the low.

M.N.: What was your school like?

Newsome: One room school. The one up in Maneard had two rooms and had two teachers up there but there was a whole bunch of Cherokee Indian kids that lived around there and went to school there. That was the first year I was in school and I was learning how to play dominoes so that my folks didn't fuss over playing

dominoes. As soon as I could play dominoes or a card game they taught me because that would be a three handed game instead of a two handed game and back in them times with a coal oil lamp you didn't have much time to do anything else. I can remember playing dominoes when I was four years old, learning how to play dominoes and trying to count up the numbers whether they made anything or not. That was so they didn't get in a fight over them playing because they never did play unless I played. We went to what they called the Valley School which was in the second and third grades there.

M.N.: What year would that have been?

Newsome: That would have been 1932-1933, 1933-34, 1934-35. The old gal that taught was named Pearl Tripler and she's still alive and lives in Muskogee and last we were there I went to see her. She didn't remember me. She put the fear of death in me in school because I ran around with a little boy named Paul Cooper who was the youngest man ever executed in the state of Oklahoma. When I was in the second and third grade he was my number one dub. I don't know whether I was involved but I didn't get a whipping anyway but he did. He went up and tried to take the pants off of this little old gal on the way home. He went one way home from school and I went the other and it happened on the way home from school. Anyway she took him up in front of the class and whipped him until there was blood running down his leg and he still wouldn't cry. Here he was not more than seven years old and I thought, "That's the toughest kid I ever seen." It wasn't very soon after that that my folks took us out of school and boarded us in town and we had to go to the town school.

M.N.: Why was that?

Newsome: Too tough an element. She didn't want us associating with that tough an element. I guess that's what I've always heard anyway.

M.N.: Were other kids like that?

Newsome: Yeah, they were all pretty tough kids. This one gal, old Pearl would make her stand out in the anti-room. Her father was a skunk hunter and skinned skunks all winter long. She stunk like skunk. She stank so bad she had to stand in the anti-room. They pretty near ran you out of the school when it got hot.

M.N.: Why did her father hunt skunks?

Newsome: Only way to make a living I guess.

M.N.: People would buy skunk pelts?

Newsome: Skunk pelts or possum pelts or whatever there was. He was a

hunter and he didn't live there long. He was one of those like what we have here today in this country they refer to them as "Okies". They may be from New York or Washington state now but they're migrants and they may only work a day or two here and a day or two there and they get \$1 and they're gone. They had those kind of people back in those days too-- only then they either walked or maybe had an old wagon or something they got around. I tried to remember that girl's name but I can't remember.

M.N.: Was she nice?

Newsome: It was during the time when boys didn't give a dang about gals. I don't remember.

M.N.: What happened to this friend of yours who got executed?

Newsome: Well, he committed murder at about sixteen years old and was convicted of it.

M.N.: You were surprised?

Newsome: No, he came from a tough family. His background was people that were known to be that if you say something be sure and smile and don't come up and say it with a frown, say it with a smile because they were known to tend to their own business and you be sure to tend to your business or they'd get onto you real quick.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 2

M.N.: What was this Camp Gruber you were talking about?

Newsome: Well, that was an Army base that was developed there for World War II. That's why I think none of our relatives ever came out here because most of our relatives on my mother's side all worked out there sometime or other and nowadays they've built it up and opened it up in there. Part of it is a Tinkiller Reservoir. They built a dam in there and they took part of it for that and it's a big recreation area but part of Camp Gruber is still there and it's leased to Texas cattle that come in there and eat and the National Guard uses it but they first opened that right around the start of World War II. I think that's why a lot of relatives never came out here. That's why we were probably the only ones who ever came out here.

M.N.: Before we get into your family leaving and coming out here do you remember any of the illnesses that people had at that time?

Newsome: Oh yeah, my dad had an acute attack of appendicitis--liked to died and had to be rushed to the hospital and I guess his

appendix had ruptured and he had peritonitis. He was at the hospital for a long time. I don't know how much it cost but it set us way back. One time it was flooding, I guess it was in the spring of the year, he had a great habit of going around taking little cans two or three inches in diameter and three or four inches long and he'd nail it up on posts. They had a lot of wrens and these wrens liked to nest in these cans. He'd put one up this next spring and he'd put a clevis in it too that fall and he reached up to get it and a yellow jacket or a wasp came storming out and stung him in the throat and paralyzed his throat. He liked to strangle to death and they sent me off on the horse. We didn't have any telephone naturally so they sent me on a horse to the nearest phone about five miles. I had to go up the road about a mile and a half then turn left and go north around by what they called the Waterfield Ranch. My uncle and stepbrother of my dad's lived there and I went to his house, then we had to go across and swim the river on horseback to get across up there and I swam this little horse across and got across over there. That was the narrowest place in it and I got on the phone and the old doctor came back and by the time the doctor came back why it had gone down quite a bit where we didn't have to swim going back--flash flood or whatever it was. If it would have been speed getting there Dad would have died. The doctor got there before he died and gave him something to counteract that sting in his throat.

We had the chicken pox and everybody got the seven year itch in the winter--at least we did one winter.

M.N.: What's that?

Newsome: You get the itch in the winter and it's a disease of wearing heavy clothing--trying to keep warm I guess. Mom's favorite treatment for the itch was you'd go out and dig up poke roots--it's a vegetable. Poke root grows wild and it's a kind of a shrubbery and you dig these roots up from the plant and you beat them up and put them in a pot and boil them and then heat up some water and dump a quart to a quart and a half of this down in this tub and the soapy water she's got ready. She souses you down in a number three wash tub and gets you wet real quick and scrubs you all over and that usually killed the seven year itch. The time it did on me I remember very plainly it was snowing outside--four or five inches of snow and icicles two feet long hanging off the eaves. I went out and rolled in the snow trying to cool off. I've never been that hot in my life as that poke root got me in that bath.

M.N.: Was it like a liniment?

Newsome: The itch would give you a little raw space like a gall or a strawberry or something and she took that and bathed you around your privates, under your neck here and the back of your hair where it would be at, under your arms and nothing burned like that.

M.N.: Did it cure it?

Newsome: Dang whistling it cured it. That was the end of that. That was from playing with the wrong kids at school. From then on Mom went to school and found out which kids and from then on we had orders which kids to play with at school.

M.N.: You caught it from the other kids?

Newsome: Caught it from the other kids. It was not being too clean basically was what caused it. So when she went to school she found out which kids it was. They knew, then you didn't play with them kids. When we were going to school here where Pearl Tripler taught when I was in the third grade, out there I had a cousin Patricia, Patsy, who lives in Bakersfield now--my brother was in the first grade--her dad and her mother always lived there during bad times with her grandfather, Tom Taylor, but anyway her and Bill wouldn't come in the class-room.

M.N.: Taylor is a name?

Newsome: Yes, it's a family name. It's a family that my uncle married into. Anyway this cousin and my brother--they were that dumb ---a stile going over the fence--that's stair steps built up to get over the fence without crawling over it--they were playing on this stile and they were not going into class. When they got there old Pearl must have whipped them three or four times that day because they were not going into school. Every time she'd get them into class and they got out to recess why they were back on the other side of that stile and they wouldn't come back in. When Bill got home that night Mom gave him to understand that he'd better get in school the next day and that was the end of that nonsense. I tried to get him to come on in. I was always one that never did want a whipping at school because Dad always said, "Whatever you get in school, you'll get twice that at home" and I kind of half way believed him so I would always try to get him not to do those things.

M.N.: Did you remember anyone died at that time?

Newsome: I never thought about that one. No, I don't remember. There had to be funerals that we went to. We went to Shipley's funeral, some old folks lived way up there.

M.N.: What was it like?

Newsome: About like today out in the open. They had the funeral at the graveyard--didn't have it at church or nothing as I remember it. Cemetary was the Citizens Cemetary about two miles east of Fort Gibson out there on the hill where all my mother's folks are buried and some of mine too on my dad's side.

M.N.: Was there a lot of grief?

Newsome: No more than today. I don't think there was as much. Certain people carried on then and certain people carry on today. There are some people that don't show their grief emotionally that way and then there are some that do. The ones that go to church and get all emotional in church are the ones that get all excited at a funeral as I remember. We go to church in town and they wouldn't have it in the church building it would be out under an arbor or open air things. Those people who had gotten all excited in church would get all excited at a funeral or a Fourth of July picnic or anything else.

The funniest thing--got to get this in--when we lived on this creek down there in 1933, 1934 and part of 1935 the colored people out of Muskogee and there was a big group of colored people lived in Muskogee and they'd come out there and have picnics. Church picnics, Fourth of July picnics, anything you could think of they'd have a picnic out there. Where they got the food and money I don't know. It was quite an excursion out there. They had to have ridden the railroad over to Fort Gibson and then hiked out that way and maybe had wagons but anyway they'd come out there and have these picnics. Usually have a baptizing or church service involved along with the picnic. When my brother lived under a half a mile from where this creek was and where they'd do this. There was a big island probably an acre or an acre and a half island in the center of the bayou and we'd take our cows down there and graze them every two or three weeks. Why the grass would get up big enough so you could go down and get a day, day and a half of grazing with forty or fifty head of cows off that thing. It was beautiful grass. We'd sneak off and go down to these picnics. Whenever they had a picnic or baptizing Bill and I would somehow sneak off and go down there and our folks would raise heck with us. Nobody went to school with a colored person even then. They had their own schools.

M.N.: What did you do there?

Newsome: Eat, man. They had the best.

M.N.: Did they accept you?

Newsome: Did they accept you? We knew a lot of them and one old granny there I can't remember her name but anyway [when my folks would come to get us] she got up there and said, "Now, Miss Jo, you know we not going to mistreat these boys. We're just trying out our good cooking on them." We'd have ice cream, chocolate cake, fried chicken. It didn't matter. Whatever they cooked was the best in the picnic there that's what they put us up on the table. We were the king and queen--Kings of Siam up there. They really treated us royally.

M.N.: Did you play with their children?

Newsome: We played with their children at home but we didn't do it when we went anywhere else. That was a "no no". We had a colored man, an old, old colored man named Preacher Noble that lived with us. He lived in the lean-to in the back of the house there and stayed there most of the summer all of the time when Dad would be gone running the harvester. We'd feed the hogs and the heavy work--otherwise Noble did it.

M.N.: How old was he?

Newsome: He was probably in his seventies or older.

M.N.: Was he a good man?

Newsome: Yeah, he was a preacher and he'd start a sermon out and he'd say, "Now folks, don't do as Noble do, do as Noble tell you to do because Noble goes into dark places and does damnable deeds." That's the way he'd start 99% of his sermons but he was a good old man. We used to be ashamed of what we did. My brother and I mistreated that old fellow something fierce if a six and eight year old can mistreat an old man that way.

This Uncle Jim had brought out this old Dod Magneto or something anyway you could take that thing which had a wire or two off of it and you can crank that thing like that with your hand. It would just flat lay out the juice out there and it would really shock you. This time Mom went off looking for peaches, rode the horse way back off somewhere in the mountains where this fellow raised peaches to can. When she'd go do that why she'd leave Noble in charge of us boys and the house and what we couldn't think of to aggravate and do to the poor old preacher that wasn't dreamed up. Anyway, we sneaked in and stuck it through the crack where the chinking was out between the logs and the house and he snuck up that way and he'd take the wires and put them on that old man's feet and I'd crank that thing and shock him. Then when he'd get up and go to whip Bill why I'd grab a pitchfork and aim it--wasn't nobody going to touch my brother--especially no nigger man. That was the bad thing about it. He was such a good old fellow and we just flat mistreated him. That was all there was to it. We shouldn't have done it and we were kids and we didn't know better.

M.N.: Why did he stay with you?

Newsome: He didn't have no other place to live. The folks bed and fed him the year-round. He worked there and they gave him a little money. When we came to California I can remember that old man crying and begging wanting to come.

M.N.: Did he eat in the house with you?

Newsome: No, he ate under the same roof but he ate out in this lean-to out there. Right off the kitchen was an enclosed part there and that's where he slept and he had his table out there and when we'd sit down to eat why Mom would dish up his plate first--a big plate full of food and take it out to him and come back and we'd start eating. About the time we'd get half done she would get up and go out ask Noble if he wanted something else. If he wanted more he handed her his plate and she came in and got it and he'd go back and eat that way. He never ate at the table with us.

M.N.: Did he teach you boys?

Newsome: We just practiced meanness on him but he read the Bible a lot and we'd run him off. After Mom went off for her peaches and after we'd shocked him and took a pitchfork and run him off up the road probably a quarter of a mile or better, Mom came in and found him up there she said, "What are you doing off up here away from the house?" and Noble said, "Mrs. Newsome, them damnable boys done runs me off." So Mom would light into him about letting two little boys run him off and he'd say, "Now, Mrs. Newsome, you know them little boys, what they cain't think of they will think it up next time." I guess we must have been characters.

Another funny thing happened these big old calves we'd keep to make these cows come in and one time my dad was talking to my mom's old boyfriend. Before he married her old Louie Binge was her number one boyfriend. He never got married and I was I guess eight years old or something like that. Well, anyway Bill and Louie came up and he always rode a stud horse or stallion for some reason, why I don't know but he did, and him and Dad were setting and talking under some trees outside of this wire corral we had to keep these big old calves in. The fence there was barbed wire probably fifteen inches off ground around it and then there was hog wire up there and then three or four strands of barbed wire on top of that.

I was a number one cowboy. I thought I was a real cowboy and anytime I went anywhere I had a rope so my brother he always had a lid. He's a truckdriver today and he was practicing to be a truck driver when he was five years old. Everywhere he'd go he'd have a lid off of a lard bucket and URRR URRR--running around playing like he's a truck driver. He was setting in the number three wash tub that we watered these calves in and he was driving the truck so I sneaked over and tied my rope into the bale on that thing and this old big yearling came walking by and WHAM I roped that thing and scared it and there the race was on. That old calf hadn't been roped and he was scared and around and around that pen he'd go and there were rocks in it about like that and that old tub would hit one of

those rocks and go CHRRRR off this way and off that way and it would go under the fence and zip out. About the second time when it got around good I looked up and here come my dad off over there from a flat standing jump. He went over the top of the fence over where he was at and when he went over it I went under it on the other side screaming for My Jo to the house. I never called my mother Mom until we came to California it was always My Jo. I was screaming, "My Jo" as loud as I could to get away from there and I knew he was going to tear me up for tying that calf to that tub.

M.N.: Did he get you?

Newsome: No. That old calf ran that tub around and around there and my brother had the best ride and as he remembered it I never had so much fun in my life but Dad sure stopped it. When dad finally got the calf stopped and untied and came to the house looking for me he was going to clean house on me, old Louie came around up the road by the gate and said, "That was kind of funny. You don't need to whip that boy. You got him scared enough. You don't need to whip him no more." I was scared to death he was going to get a hold of me anyway. We did a lot of things and had a lot of fun that way.

M.N.: Do you remember any kind of problems you had with the livestock?

Newsome: This big mare was bred and another horse kicked her in the belly and killed the colt in her and the regular vet came and they couldn't deliver the colt. As I remember half the country was there for some reason. I guess this old mare must have been a pretty valuable horse. There were people all over there and my mom wouldn't let me and my brother go down where they were at. There was a little colored man there that was called Buster Van and he was probably 25 years old or something like that and I guess he went around with this veterinarian. The veterinarian drank a little bit but anyway Buster went and took care of the colored people's stock if they were sick or something. Anyway this veterinarian went in there and cut the front legs off the colt clear up to the shoulders and it was an excessively large colt and then I guess it had been dead long enough in the mare to have swollen up quite a bit but anyway they couldn't get it out and instead of doing Caesarian--nowadays my veterinarian would have done a Caesarian on one of our horses or cows--he just said, "Well, the mare is going to die and can't do nothing about it." He just packed up his duds and got in his buggy and went to town.

They'd had her tied up over a tree limb with blocking line trying to pull it and everything. Old Buster standing there says, "Hobert, if you don't care, let me gives a whirl at that. I think I can get that colt if you'll let me try." The old mare was so wore out she couldn't get up no more so he went to pull and he had the colt out in thirty minutes. That

veterinarian had been working 24 hours messing the job up. Old Buster took a single tree clip, a hook off of a single tree, and hooked on his hand someway and he went in and got a hold of the head of it.

M.N.: What's a single tree?

Newsome: Single tree is where you hitch one horse up with and then a double tree to work a team that way. It's a piece of wood or metal that you hook your horse up to pull things with. They have metal clips on the end of them to hook the trace chains on. He just went in and hooked it in someway and worked it around from what I've been told since. It wasn't thirty minutes and he had the colt out. Dad sold the mare to a cousin's husband of our and I guess she raised ten or twelve mules afterwards. He bred her with a great Percheron stud he had and he raised horse colts out of her but the other mare wouldn't breed to a horse. She always bred to a mule.

M.N.: Why was that?

Newsome: I don't know. The bay mare we had never did have a horse colt. When you'd breed her to a stallion she'd never have a colt. Breed her to a jack and she'd have a mule colt. I don't know why that was--just one of them stupid things. I remember this team. Dad was hauling some kind of feed stuff which he'd raised over in another field somewhere and you had to come down and go down into a gully and then right straight up. When we'd go to come up out of that thing well this one he called Maud she had hit that blasted thing when she'd come up and start to pull the wagon up out of there. She'd lunged into it and hit and she either broke a single or double tree every time he went after a load of grain or maize. He was cutting high gear and bringing it in and making feed for winter out of it. High gear is milo which grew about eight to ten feet tall with a head on the top of it with grain in it and they hauled it in and stacked it in the barn. Cut it green and they used it for feed for cattle in the winter. Anyway he was constantly making single and double trees for that mare hitting that thing all the time.

M.N.: What kind of diseases did the animals get?

Newsome: We had hog cholera. I guess when that hit that wiped you out but anything else I don't remember. I don't remember anything else.

M.N.: What about insects in the crops?

Newsome: We had boll weevil I know. I remember one time we did something that was strange--dusting for potatoes. We had these potatoes and bugs somehow got in when he was growing a potato crop and

we'd dust these potatoes. Dad took a pole and rigged it up across the top of the saddle and he went and got this arsenic. Mom took flour sacks and sewed these little sacks up about five to ten pounds in each one and he took a string down and right over each row and made this pole long enough to get over four rows and he tied the strings down so that this little bag would hang right over the row of potatoes and he'd take this horse and trot it down through the field.

M.N.: You mean he hung the string so he could tell that the bag was over the rows.

Newsome: Yes. Then he'd take the horse and let her trot and balance this pole across there and trotting down through the field it would shake that arsenic out and he dusted the potato crops that way and saved our crop. It worked. He killed them off of the potatoes. Anyway but I don't remember him doing anything else in the line of spraying or anything that way.

M.N.: What was it like just before you came to California?

Newsome: Well we lived there on this place on the street the summer before we came out here. I know three times we went down picnicing with our colored folks.

M.N.: But do you remember your parents making the decision?

Newsome: No, no I don't remember them talking. When they talked decisions even up till we were grown they made up and us kids was told later.

M.N.: What did they tell you?

Newsome: As I remember we came in from school one day and here was this Model A truck parked there and it had a ten foot bed on it and a canvas over it and arches on it like a covered wagon over it. I came in and I can remember my brother and I and my mom was crying and going on and stuff.

M.N.: When was this?

Newsome: That would have been October or September of 1935 and we said, "Well, what's wrong?" She said, "We're going to sell out and move to California."

You were asking diseases, when Roosevelt came in as President a year or so later they had killed off hogs and cattle and I can remember riding with my dad going to one of those big dug out things. They had cats or bulldozers or something and they dug great huge pits and they would take your cattle and pay you so much a head and shoot them and bury them.

M.N.: Was it a fair price?

- Newsome: I don't know, probably better than none--had too many of them anyway and they was better than nothing and at least he got some money into people's hands.
- M.N.: Did they sell them for food?
- Newsome: No they'd cover them with quick lime.
- M.N.: Why wouldn't they let people eat them?
- Newsome: Don't ask me. That was one of Roosevelt's programs. They buried hogs.
- M.N.: Couldn't people have eaten them?
- Newsome: I guess they could have but this was one of the things they did. They buried cattle killed that way, quick limed them and buried them that way and gave the farmers so much. I think back I don't know why if they had all these food lines why in the world they did that but they did. I remember riding over there it was on Phil Hunter's place where they had it bulldozed out. It was about ten miles from where we lived.
- M.N.: If they bulldozed that means they had a tractor.
- Newsome: Yeah, they had a tractor of some kind and had this huge pit there and drove the cattle down in it and a guy would stand up on the side with a gun and shoot them and then they'd go down and pour quick lime all over them and cover every one and then when they got all through they'd cover them all over with dirt. We went over there and the guy was supposed to have been there at nine o'clock to kill them and we set around there and I did most of the keeping the cows in a group there--our bunch--Dad stood around and talked and around 3:30 p.m. he came over and said, "I'm going to go home and take my chances. If they're worth nothing today why six months they might be worth a whole bunch." Six months later he sold them for \$55 a head.
- M.N.: How much were they paying then?
- Newsome: \$5-\$10 something like that but it was nothing.
- M.N.: That must have been hard on those people who raised all that cattle to see them just thrown away.
- Newsome: I didn't want to see them butchered that way. I was just a kid and some of them things we had raised because for anything that had little bitty short teets it was my job from the time I was old enough to walk around the trail--I had little bitty hands--and I had to milk. Anything that had little short teets on the cows that was mine to milk because they were hard to get a hold of. If I had kids today I'd make them milk them too I wouldn't milk them.

- M.N.: What you're saying is like even if the person needed money it was probably hard to see this because that was waste.
- Newsome: Oh yeah, sure. It was pure waste but they killed a lot of hogs and cattle that way. He came home and sold his and when we came out here he sold every cow he had for \$55 a head and that was pretty good money. That about covers about as much as I can remember from back there. We'd have hog killings and Dad was always the number one butcher in the country. If they were going to have a hog killing he had to go and do the shooting and he did the butchering and all that kind of stuff. I've always wondered after he came out here, why it's a shame that we didn't do more to pass that on. I know a little bit but I don't know how to go and cut a hog up and salt and fix the shoulders or a ham for curing. I don't know how to do it but he did. He was a cracker jack at doing that kind of work.
- M.N.: Sounds like quite a guy.
- Newsome: That's what he did. When the hog killing come up over at Grannies or that place over there and they always called Hobert Newsome to come and help.
- M.N.: We're up to about the time you came to California.
- Newsome: Well, that's when the corn floated down the river and the Model A truck setting in the yard ready to come to California.

END OF TAPE 2, SIDE 1

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- M.N.: Let's start with getting ready to come to California.
- Newsome: Had to sell the livestock. This fellow came to buy a bunch of fat hogs that we had and I didn't talk plain. I run up and was showing him the hogs. Mom had sent me out to show him the hogs in the pen there. I jumped up and said, "That's old Stick over there", and he thought I was saying Sick so he didn't buy the hogs until Dad went and got him and brought him back to tell him that I didn't talk plain to get the man to buy them. We had a team of mares that we were going to sell--harness and horses that way. Dad would always see us kids running around he'd say, "That old team of balky mares." This fellow come out from Muskogee way over there to buy them. Mom sent us down where they were running out down the pasture down there. As any guy would he was asking us boys what kind of horses they were and we said, "Dad just calls them old balky mares." No way did he ever take them. He turned around and went back--no way would he buy them horses then.
- M.N.: Where was your family living at that time?
- Newsome: Out on Maneard Bayou out east of Fort Gibson, Oklahoma about

six, seven miles east of there. Those are some of the things that I remember real plain that happened when we were getting ready to come out here. When we came out Dad had bought a 1931 Model A Ford truck and he put bows up on it and canvas over it like a covered wagon. When they came out here it was pretty well new and pretty well fixed up but on the way out though--I'm trying to remember where we stayed because I couldn't remember ever camping on the side of the road. We would rent cabins along that would be partly furnished. You had to furnish your own bed linens and we'd go in and cook and we always cooked along side of the road or ate driving.

M.N.: What would you eat?

Newsome: For lunch you'd buy the stick bologna like that much. For 10¢ or 15¢ you could buy a whole stick of it and a loaf of bread for a nickel and that's what we'd usually had along the road. We brought a bunch of Irish potatoes and sweet potatoes along that we had grown from back there and at night we'd bake the sweet potatoes and have them cold during the day. There was an aunt and her daughter and son that came with us out here and my dad and mom and brother and I and then another fellow Cyril Taylor to help do the driving. I don't know how to spell it all I ever heard was just Cyril and that's what they called them coming along the way. In the back there'd be four kids and my aunt and maybe my mom would be in the back. It would come time to go to the bathroom and this cousin who was seven was most embarrassed. No way was she going to do nothing in front of boys or anything. You'd have to go in the pot in that big old chamber pot. They'd drive down the road and the first curve they'd come to out the side of the truck they'd dump the pot.

When we got to the border of California at that time we had border searches and especially Okies had to take and tear everything [apart]. They took away our sweet potatoes and Irish potatoes. They took all of that away from us there then we came on in. I can remember going through the desert. We'd worry about getting through the desert. We came out of Oatman, Arizona down to Blythe and crossed there--down at Needles rather and crossed at Needles to San Bernardino. Supposed to be all desert across there and my dad and mom worried about that. We went off over that like nobody's business.

Then they'd been scared of the Grapevine coming down the Grape Vine into Bakersfield. They had good equipment because they had no trouble. We were headed for Woodville where an uncle was suppose to have this house rented for us and we got there where we found him was in a cotton tent camp up there with a bunch of other single men. Kids all jumped out of the back of the truck when we found him up there. The first thing we landed in was these goat heads or puncture vines.

M.N.: You didn't have shoes on?

Newsome: Oh no. We were barefooted naturally and we'd never seen one of them before. We didn't know what to try to get out of or get into. We just knew we were a bunch of stuck up little Okies there with those feet and those puncture burrs in our feet. They had dried and already had frost and they were plenty stickery too, boy. My little brother was bawling. He didn't know all he could do was sit down and when he sat down he was in that much worse shape sitting down. That was how we got out here.

M.N.: Tell me how many people were with you when you got here?

Newsome: There were the four of us--my dad and mother and my brother and I. Four in our family then we brought my aunt and her two children and the youngest one was born in November 1932 so he would have been about three years old. Then my brother was six and I was eight and this other cousin was seven and Cyril Taylor who was a cousin of my aunt.

M.N.: Do you remember how much money your parents had when they left?

Newsome: Yes, they had sold all their cattle and livestock and put everything in the bank but \$100 and they said if they can't go to California and get a start and make it on \$100 we'll wire back and get enough money to get back and that's it. But \$100 if we can't make it out there and get enough work and make it on \$100 why there's no way of spending anymore.

M.N.: What month and year was it?

Newsome: October of 1935--we got to Woodville on my dad's birthday October 22, 1935.

M.N.: How did things go when you got here?

Newsome: They were still picking first cotton.

M.N.: Did you get a place to stay?

Newsome: Oh yeah, it was Saturday because they went to Porterville. Dad found my Uncle John there and that was the only time in my life I ever seen when he wanted to whip him. He was really mad about him not having a house but he didn't have a house anyway. So they rushed to Porterville to a lumber yard and bought a tent and enough stuff to make a floor for it and a plane for it--twelve by fourteen size tent. We had that boxed up and that's where we stayed for a month and then they had a house.

M.N.: Where did you get the land for the tent?

Newsome: Well, at that time it was in between the two branches of the Tule River right straight north of Woodville about a mile and a half.

M.N.: Was it on public property?

Newsome: No, it was on property. This fellow that they were picking cotton for, George Bolls, probably had 800 acres of cotton around there and he had a camp for the people to live in and it was down in the willows and between the two creek beds there. He furnished water--happened to be a well or something around there where everybody could get water. Each guy would have a camp somewhere and have it set up where there was water and toilet facilities. I think they'd lived that way for the people who worked for them that fall to pick cotton. We were picking cotton for them and my dad could pick 400 pounds a day and Mom could pick a little better than 300 pounds and my brother and I was suppose to pick 100 pounds a day which I could do pretty well at eight years old and he'd get 50 to 75 pounds and we lived off of what I made 90¢ per hundred. We could live for 90¢ a day and the rest of it Dad saved the money up because he wanted to be in farming out here soon as he could. When the cotton picking was over [they were] ready to make another crop. We didn't start school till after New Years. From October till after New Years they kept us out of school so he went to work for Geroge Bolls at \$50 a month then on January 1 and we started school after New Years at Tipton.

M.N.: So your father got a permanent job?

Newsome: Yeah, he had a permanent job. He wanted to work for wages for one year to see how they farmed out here. Then he thought he had enough money back east in the bank why he could get started if he could find some land somewhere he could start farming which he did. We started school in Tipton and I can't remember the teacher's name. I was in the third grade. I'd been in the fourth grade back east but come out here my mom said, "They're so much smarter in California and everything and advanced in school. You kids go to the school" and they put us back a grade which I guess was the best thing but they weren't no smarter than we were back there.

Anyway the teacher was a crippled lady and there were a couple of guys I know around Tulare here that remember her. The principal of the school was A.B. Stewart. He was the principal of the Tipton Elementary School at the time. I'd never went to school with a Mexican or Indian or colored man or nothing. Where we went to school back there why they had their school and we had our school. [The first day] the teacher assigned me and told me to go sit in this desk--back then we didn't have these nice seat desks everything was in a row--and it was right behind the only colored kid in the class. So I

was a little smart ass Okie and I never had much school with them so no way was I going to sit behind no colored kid so I went to the back of the room where there was an open desk and no seat and took it. Pretty soon she looks up and says, "I thought I told you to sit over here." I didn't answer but I didn't go over there either so she got onto me the second time. By then I was getting scared and I told her, "Teacher, I don't sit behind no nigger."

So when recess time come naturally that's when a fight got started--that colored kid and I fought for the rest of the school year. Then he went somewhere else--moved and went to another school for the start of that fall. We started school at Tipton in the fall but we graduated from high school together and played football in high school together and he's one of the best friends I ever had. He's already passed on now but he was one of the best friends I ever had in life. We came out from different areas and these people out here looked down on the Okies but the Okies looked down on other people too at the time. Then the next fall when we started school we had some friends around the country and we'd worked that summer. Dad had worked irrigating and us kids had helped him irrigate and do whatever a nine year old kid could do that way.

M.N.: Did you work when you came home from school?

Newsome: Oh yeah, we'd help him. We didn't go out and work for pay or anything but if Dad was irrigating or whatever he was doing why if he was out working and there was an old broken handled shovel of some kind a kid could run or carry pipe and stuff like that there were always something a kid could do to help his dad. As far as working for pay we never got paid for it. It was just helping Dad make his job easier.

M.N.: Your father was still working on the farm?

Newsome: Yeah, he worked all that year starting in January and worked until the crop was laid-by for this George Bolls. He was a real nice old fellow, one of the best friends my dad ever had.

M.N.: What kind of house were you living in this time?

Newsome: It was just a house. It's not there now. They've torn it down about twenty years ago but it was a fairly nice house. The roof didn't leak and it was big enough that for a while my uncle and his family lived in part of it and we lived in part of it and that was a funny thing about this cousin--Jimmy, he's the youngest boy of this uncle at that time but they've had two since--but Jimmy was three years old and he didn't talk too plain and he'd come around. He had a puppy and as usual with two brothers and two sisters-in-law living in pretty close proximity they usually get to be a little fuss fighting

somewhere and my aunt was one of these kind of people that kind of got her nose out of joint easy.

Anyway, here was this Jimmy come around and he wasn't suppose to come around to our part of the house but he come around and shoved his little puppy in the door. He'd have to come in and get the puppy and we'd be having biscuits for supper. We'd have some kind of meat, potatoes and biscuits and gravy. Mom back then didn't buy bread and it was easier to make biscuits. He'd come in and he always said his mother didn't make the best gravy and my mom made a lot better gravy and he called biscuits and gravy "bodatin." He'd push the puppy in and he could come in then to get his puppy and we'd always give him some bodatin. He's 48 years old and we still call him that. Nobody else does but my brother and I call him Bodatin but he don't let nobody else call him that. He don't like his nickname that well.

It was fun during the summer when we were helping Dad irrigate we were playing in this water. Well, water came around and there was sandy ground and the ditch would wash out real white and we were sitting there playing in the water because it was hot in the summer and it was a way to cool off and my brother--his wife wears a wedding ring--he found a gold band wedding ring that was almost a half inch wide. When he got married then he had that ring cut in two and part of it fixed up as an engagement ring and the other one as a wedding ring and that's what he had made up for his wife's wedding ring.

M.N.: He found it down there?

Newsome: He found it in the ditch just playing there. It was a fairly small ring but it must have been seven--six and a half or seven because it was real small. He had to have it stretched a little bit for his wife to wear it. When he got married he had it fixed into an engagement and wedding ring for her.

M.N.: Did you have trouble when you went into the school with kids looking down on you?

Newsome: Oh God, yes. They thought there was nothing lower than the Okies and then we'd tell them why we weren't Okies we were Oklahomans and they'd better start fighting right then. We were somebody back where we came from. We weren't no ["Okie"]. What the real "Okie" was called came from all states and California as well which it was a lower class of people just like today. Why if you call somebody an Okie today you're not necessarily referring to any state or anything you're referring to a class of people. At that time they just lumped us all together.

M.N.: You didn't like to be lumped?

Newsome: We didn't like the lumping part and we tried to stop that part. There was a favorite saying around back then that Okies come to California for two things and one of them to cut down sun flowers and [the other to] kill S.O.B.s. The sun flowers were disappearing but the S.O.B.s were multiplying. When they called you an Okie that was usually a stock answer. You either had to prove that you could do it and as the Missourians always said, "It was show me time." They wanted to be showed everything. Well, the Okie was the one that could show them so that's why there were a lot of little tough Okie kids running around schools because they had to be tough because they really did try to look down on you and tried to treat you that way.

M.N.: Was there any reason?

Newsome: As I said, they [Okies] were a certain class of people come from all states that even we looked down on but we didn't like to be looked down on just because we had to be from some segment of the area. I guess the people who came out here all came from somewhere else before us and they felt challenged or something. I think it was that more than anything else because the people who came from Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Tennessee or wherever it was at--there were some New Mexicans--those people were willing to work. And they'd work long hours trying to get ahead and some of the people out here had been raised on a silver spoon and had been for generations. Their grandparents came and got land and these people had learned how to live on a silver spoon and they didn't know how to get up there and compete with these people. I'm quite sure that that was it. In our neighborhood here I can look around the community, the people who were here when we came here 45 years ago or 47 years ago they were the big shots. Well, today they've done lost all their property and they couldn't hang onto it and it's changed and gone somewhere else. It must be quite degrading to them looking back over it that way because that's the only reason I can see.

M.N.: That's a very interesting idea.

Newsome: I think they really felt challenged because it's like all civilizations in life--that's my own philosophy of life--that after a while you live such a soft life that some that's had a tough wack at it why that tough old boy is a lot tougher than you. You'd better get with it or he'll wack you down and take over. You'll be out and he'll be in. I think that's what it was. They definitely got soft and these little guys were tough and they wanted something and they were willing to give up anything to get it.

M.N.: You and your family certainly did well.

Newsome: Well, we haven't done as well as a lot of others. I know a

lot of people--take the Maddox's from Riverdale. They came out here a little later than we did and they didn't have anything and my gosh, they own half the country in Riverdale, California. Some of those guys from back there well they were willing to give it--take the Tulare Lake bed farming. Most of those guys who have got anything down there came from somewhere else. They're not native here. When the cotton came why they came from somewhere else.

M.N.: They got it by hard work.

Newsome: They were willing to work for it and they accumulated and got it. There are people all over this Valley, southern San Joaquin Valley and they're well to do, well off and well respected people in the neighborhoods today that came from back there. They went through this same thing. Some of them rode rails--rode the rods on freight cars coming out here. Anyway to get here but when they got here they were willing to work and it was the land of opportunity.

M.N.: How did things go for you then?

Newsome: I was going to tell you about little kids getting let off at these neighbors there named Killingsworth. They worked for a fellow named Davis when Dad was working for George Bolls. This boy named Melvin Killingsworth--I guess I was in the fourth grade that year. We had to walk about a mile to catch a bus to ride to school so he talked us the next fall--there were a couple of girls, one in my grade and then another one younger and Melvin coerced us to walk to school this day. It was long and they were picking cotton must have been in October, late September, sometime. Anyway we were picking cotton already and my mom was working weighing cotton for George Bolls and Dad was doing something--spotting trailers or helping pull trailers to the gin. He was getting ready to quit because he could make so much more money picking cotton than working by the month.

We were going to walk to school and not ride that bus and so by the time we got to school it was almost dead noon. We got there about 10:30 or 11:00 and the first place they took us was Mr. A.B. Stewart. He was getting ready to give us a licking for ditching school and he took Melvin in and whipped him so hard that by the time he got to us he felt sorry for us. Anyway we didn't get a licking out of it. The attendance officer had been to the cotton field out where we lived looking for us and when we got home that night--I would have lot more [rather] gotten a whipping at school than the one I got at home but we didn't ditch school anymore that was for sure. At least Melvin didn't tell us to go off and ditch school anymore.

M.N.: How did your dad whip you?

Newsome: I don't remember but he had a razor strap and I guarantee you when he got through with something like that you knew you weren't going to ditch school no more. He knew how to take care of it--you got the message and you got it fast. We had a lot of fun. One time a real good friend of my mom's got acquainted with these people named Hudson and there was a boy my age and every time he'd come over he'd swipe our marbles and when he went home we wouldn't have any marbles. He'd take the marbles home and we were always told that when you had guests you treated them nice and wasn't suppose to accuse them of stealing your marbles or anything so every time he'd go home we'd complain, "Mom, he took half of our marbles" so she says one time, "Well, next time he does it don't let him do it and we'll buy you a Gene Autry holster and gun." So the next time it happens I wanted that Gene Autry gun bad so I whipped his butt and didn't let him steal the marbles. Thank God I didn't go in the house and tell Mama, "Now I want my gun and holster." I whipped Dewey right in front of his mother and dad. At least I had sense enough not to do that because he was scared to death I was going to do it anyway and he never did steal any more of our marbles. I never did get my Gene Autry gun and holster either. I've griped about that for 40 some years--45 years.

We had a lot of fun growing up. I know a lot of people will tell you sad stories about it and how tough it was. I guess it was but we worked our fannies all the time. In 1937 Dad rented 40 acres over by Visalia to farm and bought a tractor. He worked for wages in 1936 for George Bolls and in 1937 he rented this place over by Visalia and he bought a little old C.C. Case tractor and the tools to do it with. It had steel gougers on the wheels and somehow or other it was late and I guess somebody had financed a crop or piece of land or something from the same gin or something off southwest of Tulare out there about twelve miles from this 40 acres. Anyway Dad got a hold of that kind of late in the spring and was awful late getting cotton in and he ended up with 160 acres that year.

After the first cotton chopping we kept all the weeds hoed out of it after school and he would then--I was eleven or ten and Bill was eight in the spring--we irrigated the 40 acres of cotton and kept the weeds out of it and still had time get in all kinds of mischief and still go help down at the other place because it was real unlevel and took one or two men to irrigate the place. It was such hard work down there but he went on and made it then at the end of that crop year. I guess Dad had paid for his tractor, paid for all the equipment and got Mom a radio--one of those great big console radios that was in effect at that time. I remember that thing was three and a half feet wide looking at it and four feet tall. It was a big fancy piece of furniture in them days. He got that for her and I don't remember what it cost but he got my brother and I each a bicycle and had \$40 left out of the crop. He

worked all that year and paid for a tractor and whatever equipment he had to go with it. That's what we ended up with out of farming a cotton crop in 1937.

END OF TAPE 3, SIDE 1

M.N.: Did your father have to borrow money then for the next year?

Newsome: These gins would finance, you know, and I think cotton [seed] was seven or eight cents per hundred pounds. Next year I knew it got up to twelve cents a pound but anyway we farmed that then the next year, 1938, we moved over here about a mile and a half from where I live now. There were 40 acres at the end of Prosperity Avenue, then 105 acres down the road just almost a mile and on the opposite side of the road. It was owned by Ed Holbrook who was a gin manager for Anderson Clayton Cotton Gin and Dad moved over there and rented that place and maybe had 145 acres to farm that year and put it all in cotton and we did well enough that that year, 1938, that fall he bought it and paid \$1,000 down on it the Christmas of 1938. He took off and had a new pick up--he'd bought a new Ford pick up at the time. Somehow or other, I don't remember what kind of cab it had, but anyway there was some kind of a box built on the back end of it and we went back to Oklahoma to visit Christmas that year.

Then we came back in 1938 and we finally got us a milk cow to milk. We could have hogs and butcher your own hogs and do everything like we did back in Oklahoma. In 1939 we got into more hogs and he really went to feeding hogs, working to raise hogs and bought a few steers. He put in about half of the place in alfalfa and we'd sell the alfalfa until July then we'd bale it up. He'd bought a hay baler and us kids were big enough to fork hay into the baler and with Mom driving the tractor and him tying out and one man working for him why we farmed that 145 acres and baled hay out on the side quite a bit three or four days a week. At the end of 1939 that place was paid for. He hadn't paid too much for it, I think \$16,000. To pay for 160 acres of land in a year's time was pretty good accomplishment back then even and today why there's no way you could do it. Now you'd have to sprout gold to have done it but he paid for it in a year's time. We all worked and what the heck--we worked like mad.

When we got all our work done we'd get in the pick up and Saturday morning and we'd go up around Three Rivers somewhere and go fishing and swimming in the river--trout fishing and you could go then anywhere. There was a dam in there where you could get to the river and catch trout and there would be nice big fish along in there. We'd go up there and camp out and cook out and sleep in the back of the pick up or on the ground. We didn't mind working hard. We went to 4H Club

and we didn't mind getting out and working our fannies off to get there because we always got to go somewhere when we got the work done.

Everybody worked and that's what paid off in life or at least I think it was. By then we were going to school and about then folks started going to church at Farmersville at the Methodist Church. We grew up in it at that time. A funny thing talking about people looking at Okies then--there were some people over here they came out, oh probably in the 1860s, from Missouri and settled over here. This fellow still living on the same place this man does and he's up in his eighties. They came out here in 1860--great-grandparents did. The fellow that's 80 plus years old, his parents came as young children out there and they settled and acquired this land over here. Anyway [there was] this little girl up there--they had two daughters and a son. Naturally when you're ten, twelve or thirteen years old, you're always sweet on some gal so I was kind of sweet on this gal. Anyway she'd go home and say, "Well, Mama, how can they be Okies and be such nice people?"

Talking about this class of people who were classified as Okies, even we were calling them Okies then in 1938 and 1939. We'd gone in and built up twelve of these tent frames to get people to come and live in them to help pick cotton because the people would leave in the spring when the fruit would start getting ripe where they'd go from here to Manteca and Stockton and pick cherries then they would go into Live Oak and Marysville and thin peaches and stay and pick peaches. Then we worked our way back to get back here to pick cotton in the fall and come back and cut grapes in the Fresno and Selma area, then come in here then toward the last week of September and want a place to live and pick cotton until it's time to go back the next spring.

So we'd build up probably twelve or fourteen or fifteen of these frames that were twelve by fourteen and had tents stretched over them and had them fixed up. Actually wasn't too bad to live in--put up a nice tent over it and keep it treated and have the boards up four feet high and the wall of the tent another and two and a half foot would give you six foot walls around the base of the thing and fix it up through the chimney out through the side for the stove pipe to go out from a stove. They would be man and his wife or most of the time bachelors. There would be anywhere from four to six people living in those tents and pick cotton for us. We had a lot of them come and pick cotton that way and they'd go to an old dance hall over where my wife used to live. It was called the Bloody Bucket and they'd go to the Bloody Bucket and get drunk on Saturday nights and all this. We've had people live [there and] they'd left a couple of little kids--one three or four months old and one less than two--with somebody else there in the area and when they came in to take them home the next morning, the

little baby was dead.

M.N.: How did that happen?

Newsome: Oh, just from these people--just like today--how did this happen here two or three days ago where this judge up here let these two young people out of jail for Mother's Day just this last Sunday and they got home and beat their baby to death and killed him? Same thing happened back then only they never beat theirs to death. They just died from exposure--being taken out to the field and lack of caring and stuff. I can remember two or three instances like that happening there. Just people who shouldn't have children just like today and didn't take care of them. I know my folks were stuck two or three times for funeral bills trying to help pay for funerals for these children to be buried. That was the way it went.

That's the way you got people to come and pick cotton during the fall for you. Some of them would stay and some of them were darn nice people. Some of those same people that lived in tents are well off and own good businesses all around the country today. It was just a period in time when it was that way and as times got better well they worked their fannies off to get somewhere. It was just something that was not caused by an individual. It was a state of the country--the way the country was. It was just hard times all over the world I guess at that time--looking back over history. Hard times was no lover of an individual. Everybody got hurt and those individuals that had the intestinal fortitude to do better, why, when times got better, they did better. Those that didn't fell by the wayside and are the ones now that are four and five generations welfare recipients. As soon as you get on welfare it takes all of the pride and respect that a man has for himself. Welfare takes that away. That's the first thing welfare does is take a man's pride and self-respect. Once he loses that he can't get out of the rut. That's why welfare survives to this day. I think the rest of us allowed it to get that way are more guilty than the people who are on it--that's my own personal philosophy. When you get on welfare you lose all pride and self-respect and when you do that you lose all care--you don't care. You just say, "Well fiddle on it. I can live this way and I'm not going to try to get better." That becomes a way of life for them.

Might as well talk about going to school--when I graduated there were only three boys and five girls over at a school called Sundale now but it was Oakdale then. The old man that was principal at the time why he is retired and lives in Oildale down where you live in Bakersfield. He was a strict taskmaster.

M.N.: When you say grammar school, do you mean junior high school?

Newsome: Well, I guess it would be that now but anyway then it was all eight grades in three rooms. One time in the seventh grade old man Ripple [principal] came in there. They always said he was the longest substitute teacher in the history of the Oakdale School which is probably true because there was a lady there named McPherson who was teaching and had been hired for the principal when I was in the sixth grade--that would have been 1938. We were playing soccer and she got knocked down and broke a hip and he was hired for replacement at that time. He came out of western Oklahoma and was graduated from Weatherford College around Elk City, Oklahoma and out in that country. He always bragged that he was the longest substitute teacher in the history of the Oakdale School. He lasted about twelve, thirteen years.

An incident happened there that one year when we seventh and eighth grade boys were talking about going to ditch Halloween and ride our bicycles up to Rocky Hill over here east of Exeter which would have been a good day's [ride]. About a week or ten days before he heard rumor going around through school that we were going to do this. He said, "Boys, a word to the wise--I would caution anyone who ditched school on Halloween to not do it and not go to Rocky Hill." He said, "There might be severe consequences. A word to the wise is sufficient." That was one of his famous sayings. When he did that he scared me half to death because I'd seen him give other boys a whipping in school. I didn't want one of them whippings like he got. A bunch of them did ditch school and went over to Rocky Hill on Wednesday, came back, and wasn't anything said for a week or ten days after they got back. Everybody was bragging said, "Man, we did that and got away with it. Ain't nothing going to happen." One afternoon when it was time to get out of school he let school out a few minutes early and he said as he was letting everybody out and giving lessons for homework to do that night and stuff he said, "Oh, Paul, would you stay after school a minute? I would like to talk to you." So next morning while riding to school I came along and here's Paul going along and he couldn't sit down on the seat of his bicycle or nothing. He was standing up pumping that bicycle to school when he got to school he was walking kind of cagey and easy around school and went in to sit down in class. When the school bell rang at quarter to nine you kind of eased yourself down into the bench. Everybody was looking around at Paul, "What happened to him?" First recess come, why, everybody ganged up, "Paul, what's the matter with you? Why are you walking so easy for?" He says, "You'll find out" and he wouldn't tell us what had happened but some of them boys were beginning to get an idea. So it went on four, five days, a week. Later he said, "Red" he always called him Morris--he said, "Morris, would you stay after school tonight? I want to talk to you." Next day Morris was walking around awful easy and setting down. It took him until Christmas and after to get all them boys who got a licking

but each one of them about once a week got it and I mean that old man knew how to lay a strap on your fanny.

He had one a little over half an inch wide and he'd double that thing up--it was six feet long. When he doubled that thing up and brought it down he knew how to take and make your pants hot. Each one of them old boys got one good licking out of that. That was another one of his lessons that got me. I always listened when somebody said, "A word to the wise is sufficient." That's when your ears should get straight up and down and listen. Whenever somebody used those words with me I heard them--"a word to the wise was sufficient." It was time to sit up straight and listen to what's going on around you. But he was honest about it and that's the only way. I guess today the old man would have been in jail if he whipped anybody like that.

But he was a good teacher--he taught us. He was a strict states' rights constructionist and in teaching you everyone had to pass the Constitution test. Teaching you history, he taught it that way. I guess that would be wrong today to teach it that way because he taught you a philosophy. When you went through three grades under him why you had developed thoughts on the way government should be. You were either pretty much a states' righter or constructionist that way or something. You believed in states' rights and believed in the government in order to form a government because that's what he taught you and he was really emphatic and strict about it. It just wasn't something--well this is the way they do it nowadays, my kids went through it--I think we would have been better if that old man had gone through the Constitution to teach them. I think we'd have been better off if we'd had that all the way through.

When we got to high school all kids want to play football and the war broke out. I was a sophomore I guess when it broke out in 1941. I graduated from high school and I got to go out for baseball and football. It was strict not like it is today--no eleven, twelve games and 25-30 baseball games. Baseball we played one game a week somewhere else--the rest of the time it was when he could coerce our parents into furnishing the gas and transportation to get somewhere. Other than that it was just inner-squad games that way but my brother and I did get to go out and when I graduated in 1944 I'd got to play quite a bit of football that way. My brother went on and played on the teams when Bob Mathias went through. He was a year ahead of Bob Mathias and he played two years after the war with Bob Mathias and Bob played one year after he did.

M.N.: Where was that?

Newsome: At Tulare Union High School. We got to go out for sports. We lived nine miles from town and if we got through and got

out there on time there used to be a fellow that had a man's store in Tulare by the name of McCort and they lived in Porterville and then the other fellow that owned Legget's which was a lady's store then but now it's a general--I guess it's still basically a lady's store. Legget and McCort and they both lived in Porterville and if my brother and I would happen to get out of practice and were walking home and if we got out there just right why McCort or Legget would give us a ride home. They worked at the store until football practice was over and my mother had bought our clothes there so they'd pick us and we'd get a ride home which saved. We always had to do chores when we got home and everything but we did get to go out for sports and we were in FFA [Future Farmers of America] so high school for us was just like any other kid. Like today there was no segregation or anything in high school.

M.N.: Except that when you went home you had to do your chores.

Newsome: Yeah, all farm boys did. When they went home there were a lot of farm boys whose fathers had dairies and they didn't get to go out for sports and stuff like that but we had hogs and a few cows--eight or nine to milk which didn't take long but those chores had to be done when we got home. You didn't get out of school in those days at two o'clock to go practice football. You got out at four o'clock and football practice was from four o'clock until dark--usually dark was 6:30 or 6:45--sometimes later. Pete Biden became a very famous baseball coach then through Fresno State in later years and he was our high school football and baseball coach and he was quite a task master. If he didn't like what was going on he didn't give a dang if it was eight o'clock--you still got out there and that's when you got through. We got to go out for sports which a lot of other kids didn't get to do and we participated and had a lot of fun at it that way.

Then I went into the service. I graduated and got a diploma but I was old enough and as soon as I was eighteen why I was put in the service in 1945. By the time I got out of basic training they passed a law that no eighteen year olds could be sent off into combat. Anyway the war was won in Europe and was winding down in Japan and I was put in the armada that was forming for the land strike on Japan when they dropped the atom bomb in August 1945. I never did have to wade ashore and do any fighting. We were diverted and we were sent into the Philippines and served the rest of my term there in the Philippine Islands while I was in the Army. Then I was out and came home. I went back for another two years and served two more years in the service.

M.N.: Where did you serve that time?

Newsome: Camp Stolman up by San Francisco and all I did up there was play football and goof off. I played football over in the

Philippines for the last year I was there and traveled all over. I got detached duty and played with Clark Air Force base and traveled all over the islands with them. The battalion there that I was assigned to was a heavy automotive maintenance battalion and it was scattered from Manila almost the full length of the Luzon. Then I came back and was out awhile and went back in and played up here at Camp Stolman. I tried out with the Forty-Niners [professional football team] --I had been injured--had a leg injury--and couldn't pass the physical up there. I thought I was pretty much a cat around the boys in them days. Got out and got married and we raised four children.

M.N.: How did you meet your wife?

Newsome: First time I saw her she was seven years old.

M.N.: So you kind of grew up together.

Newsome: I watched her grow up. I've five years older and part of the time I'm six years older than she is. Right now I'm six years older than she is.

M.N.: What year did you get married?

Newsome: We got married July 12, 1950 and we've been married 31 years. Back then everybody belonged to the Farmers Grange and all the farmers around here belonged to the Grange and there was a good clean family place to go for relaxation.

M.N.: It's a lodge?

Newsome: It's a fraternal organization of farmers. The Grange in its inception years ago helped get rural electrification and it worked to get fair railroad rates. They established central irrigation projects and reclamation law. So it's an organization for fraternal things and also it works in lobbying for the betterment of farmers--not so much anymore but back in the history of it it has been a strong lobbying organization for farmers. It was a nice place to go with the family. We had some members who could play square dance music and the kids could dance. They had a Junior Grange* in 1940. I knew the wife for a couple of years--she was born in 1932. I probably knew her when she was six years old--anyway Junior Grange takes you from five to fourteen and I was just at the break even point and I was one of the older kids that had been in forming the Junior Grange and she was one of the younger ones. We were both elected that year when they organized it July 4, 1940. We were both elected officers in the Junior Grange and we grew up that way in the Grange so we've known each other basically most of our lives. That's how I met her.

END OF TAPE 3, SIDE 2

*Formerly the Juvenile Grange

Newsome: Getting back to the Grange--the Grange officers instead of having a president you have a master and thirteen officers. There are three offices reserved strictly for women and anyone can hold any of the offices. There's another office that should be a man--a steward should be a man but that's not always possible. There are three offices in the Grange strictly reserved for women and those are Pomona, Flora and Ceres and when they do degree work and get into the subordinate --there are seven degrees in the subordinate in the Grange and when you go up through these three signify like in Greek mythology each one of these has a place in it in the degree work.

M.N.: What was that subordinate?

Newsome: Yes, the subordinate Grange is the first four degrees that's your local part and then the Pomona is fifth degree and it is a group area and then you have the state Grange which supposedly operates in the sixth degree and then the national operates through the seventh degree. Ceres is the fourth degree, Pomona is the fifth degree and Flora is the thing that you honor in the sixth degree. One of those from Greek mythology comes into each one of those things. It works into the secret work and the degree work of the organization. Then the seventh degree, you can get that if you attend a national Grange convention and you have to be a holder of the lower six and then you get the seventh degree.

I've served and was elected first master of the Junior Grange and then I served as subordinate up through the Pomona. That's the highest I've served as master. My wife has served in many offices and when our kids were little my son was master of the Junior Grange. One of them then they got to where there were so few kids and the interest lagged and they let our Junior Grange lapse here but the Grange is a good organization. Now it's turned into mostly for senior citizens but when we were young nobody had that much money to spend going to fancy places and they had a pot luck and dances or card parties and there was always something going on that you could do and work around. We worked in the Grange that way for many years and we did a lot of things. We enjoyed and met a lot of real nice people and still have a lot of them for friends up and down the state of California also in the nation. We're not active anymore.

M.N.: After you got married how did things go?

Newsome: The first year we got married my dad, brother and I were farming and I had 80 acres of cotton--that was my part of the farming thing that year. We came out there and had a little money. We got married and only took three days for a honeymoon. When the wedding [plans] were made by mother-in-law went in and ordered \$120--in 1950 that was a tremendous amount of money--\$120 worth of pictures at this studio and mailed them

all over to their relatives all over the United States. We didn't know these people. Then she wouldn't pay it and said I had to pay it. I said, "There ain't no way I'm going to pay the bill. I didn't order them and I didn't know the people they went to and they didn't care whether they got them or not most likely."

I worked on from July until cotton picking started that year. There was nothing else to do and I could always pick between 500 to 600 pounds of cotton a day and they were paying \$4 per hundred that fall for picking cotton and I'd go out and make \$25 a day--that was big money. So the fellow that worked for my dad since 1940 or 1941--Big Bill Staley we always called him --why him and I picked cotton together. We'd go out and we'd get 3,000 a week by Friday night. If we lacked 100 pounds having it on Friday night why we'd go to the field and pick 100 pounds on Saturday morning. That's what we picked--that's \$120 a week. My wife could barely get 100 pounds a day and she worked all fall that way picking her 100 pounds a day till she got her pictures paid for. She paid for them--that \$120 paid for the pictures. That was a lot of perseverance for a little old gal eighteen years who never had to pick cotton and had always worked in the house because as her mother's number one slave taking care of five younger brothers and sisters. She always did the housework while the others did something else. Why, she stayed in the house and did the cooking and cleaning and laundry and everything that way and never had to really get out and do much outside work.

The next year we were still farming the same area and life progressed and I had a couple of cows and a couple of sows. We'd raise these pigs and we could make enough money milking a couple of cows and feeding pigs that way and we could live that way and pay for our groceries off of selling pigs. I had a bunch of friends who'd fought chickens all over and they'd bring these wild game hens out and a half a dozen of them and one rooster and put them around that way and let the old hen just set all around the place and raise these chickens and they were mine to eat. We'd just go out with a .22 and you'd get enough shots you could shoot the head off of them with a .22 and have chicken about any time you wanted to that way.

M.N.: They just ran wild.

Newsome: They just ran wild around the place. Then the roosters would always come and catch them. You always had to have a barn or tree or something for them to roost in and when one of these cocks would get six months they'd go to catching them because they'd sell them and they'd be worth \$5, \$10 or \$15 apiece. They'd sell them for fighting purposes especially if they had an old rooster that had won half a dozen fights

and to breed these hens, why, then it made them more valuable. So we stayed in chicken that way for the first three years we were married. That's how we had all the chicken we wanted to eat.

M.N.: When was your first child born?

Newsome: September 19, 1951.

M.N.: How many children did you have all together?

Newsome: We had four. We had three boys--next son was born February 19, 1953, and the next boy was born October 12, 1954 and our girl was born December 2, 1955. That was the end of producing. Our youngest one--our daughter will soon be 26 and all we've got now to worry about is grandkids to play with.

M.N.: You have a large farm here. How did you start that?

Newsome: Well, we were always in farming. I was always in love with cows. I liked cows and in 1952 we had a bunch of permanent ditches--old ditch lines that never worked. The place was leveled up years and years ago and you'd run water on the high spots and instead of having to have men in there to hold these ditches back then you'd have chemicals to spray them the way you do today. Instead of hoeing them to keep the grass off of them we bought heifers--six or seven month old heifer calves and when they got big enough to breed we bred them. So when they went to milking why I started milking cows and shipping milk from four cows and moved to another place in 1954 and rented a little place that had a barn on it and by then I was milking about ten or twelve cows. You'd have to get up and do something before breakfast. I'd get up and milk these cows and sell the milk from them and come back in and that way we didn't have to borrow any money. The cows would make enough money to feed themselves and keep groceries on our table and you could always raise a calf to butcher and have meat that way and a hog too so that's how we got started in the dairy business.

In 1956 we bought the place where we live now and it had a dairy barn on it and I think I was milking seventeen or eighteen head then and we started on from there and built up to now. We've milked as many as 160 but we're milking about 140 head of milk cows and milking about 110 of registered Holsteins now. In the 26 years we've been here well we've built those registered Holsteins up to where we have one of the highest producing herds in the state of California and we're one of only five herds that received the Progressive Breeders Award in the state of California. There's only 387 nationwide. So in the 26 years since we bought the place we live on now we've developed our herd to where we're

pretty well recognized state-wide and nation-wide for our production and for the classification of animals and the type of herd that we have.

M.N.: How much milk will one of these cows produce in a day?

Newsome: Well, we're averaging seven and a quarter gallons per day per cow. We have one cow that we'll test tonight--this May 12-- we have one cow out there this will be her fourth month on test and she's had 128, 142 and 151 pounds of milk on weigh day and divide that by 8.6 and you can see that's seventeen, eighteen gallons of milk a day that one cow is giving.

M.N.: How do you get them to give so much?

Newsome: Genetics has been bred into it and feeding them and the good Lord looking out for you is mainly it.

M.N.: No trick to it?

Newsome: Well, I guess there's tricks to every trade but we're not doing anything that anybody else can't do. We never had no money but we raised four children and put them through college. The wife and I stayed home and milked the cows and farmed 80 acres of ground while all four kids were going to college. Two of them got married. One time we were taking care of six kids at Cal Poly at one time.

Two daughters-in-law and four of mine--our two oldest boys had gotten married and we were basically supporting them. They were working and helping to a certain degree but we were also the main support for all six of them that one year. They all had better than a 3.2 grade average at that one time.

M.N.: You seem to have a scientific attitude toward the breeding of this cattle. Where did you get that experience?

Newsome: When you go to the school of hard knocks and the professor's name is experience why you learn as you go.

M.N.: You must have learned well.

Newsome: Well, I've always been of an inquiring nature and curious. I go to meetings and I'll be the only nut that will get up and ask all kinds of questions because I don't understand things sometimes and that's the only way I can understand and find out things is to ask questions. I've always asked questions. I've also read a lot. I've read everything I could get my hands on about how other people have bred up herds of cows to develop them and what they had done and tried to ask questions of how they did it. When I could [I would] talk to them personally if they would talk to you and answer. As I said we never had any

money to go and buy big animals. We bought ten animals from Joe Bono to start at two different times, bought four one time and eight another time--twelve--and that's where we got the start and they weren't the best cows. We bought whatever. One time I got some picking on it but the other time it was just cows and we tried to breed them to the best bulls and used artificial insemination. There's always ways you'd try to get it and there's always fool proof things that you could use to try to increase your heard.

The only race on the face of the Earth that doesn't breed for the improvement of the future generation is humans. All other animals have a selection process of some kind for improvement of the species for the next generation except the human race. With our tender hearts we're always striving to keep the weak and the ailing that way. Any other species, why, it always dies--the weak and the ailing. In breeding cows you just can't be in love with any of them. If it don't produce you've got to throw her away and do something else because you can't go on with that weakness. The only thing to do is throw it away and start out with something else. You don't breed it to generate the race on down because once it has something wrong with it, why, if it don't produce enough milk or the type is bad--we have an old cow here that only classifies 79 points which is only good. It's not very good but the old cow is 220,000 life time. She has eight daughters in the herd that are some of our highest producing cows. They're not the highest classified but they're all classified way better than she is and they all produce.

M.N.: Why did you keep her?

Newsome: It was one of those things at the time. We had to have the milk and she gave a lot of milk and the first calf she had was a heifer and it was something else. It was one of those cases where the old cow had some breeding power. She herself was not a fancy individual but she had the genes in her that would have been thrown away and should have been thrown away but with the first heifer you could see the genes where she was breeding on. When she had the second heifer the next year it definitely was a case of maybe she may not be pretty, but she sure getting pretty. So we kept her that way and she's fourteen years old and she's going to have to go--getting all [crippled] up. This is the end of her. This year she'll go to. We're going to have to sell her and get rid of her because she's all crippled up.

M.N.: Sounds like you've become attached to her.

Newsome: You don't really get attached to her but you respect her for what she's done. Now she's getting a little arthritis and don't get around real good--get her out of her misery. She might live five years but would stand around here and hurt

and not be in thrifty condition. It's more humane to let her go down and somebody have a nice Wendy's Hamburger that way.

M.N.: You sell it for meat?

Newsome: Yeah, we sell them for beef. I always say they go to McDonald's or Wendy's or Jack-in-the-Box or Taco Bell. It's a lot better to get \$600 for them than to see them stand out there suffering and die. That's not humane to let an animal stand out there and suffer for a year or two when she's in misery. Only people get that privilege. Animals--most people when their animal suffers then they do something about putting it out of its suffering. I firmly believe that I don't think that you should leave an animal standing around suffering--get it out of its suffering.

M.N.: Let's look back to kind of finish things up. How do you feel about everything that's happened to you?

Newsome: To me, I've lived a wonderful life. I went back to Oklahoma a few years ago and there was a cousin that I thought the world of back before we came out here. He was younger than I was from December to February. His mother was my first cousin. She was almost as old as my mother and they were real good friends. My mom was four or five years older than she was and had raised Mabel. Edward and I were real good friends. We went back there and the first thing he said when we walked in, "Are they still picking money off the trees out there in California?"

That was always something that made me kind of half way mad because nobody picked no money off the trees unless they first sweated for it. We'd like to brag and say, "Everything we've got, well, we've worked for and earned it" but you can only earn and work and acquire what the good Lord will let you acquire and that's for everybody. You have to also put yourself out a little bit. But California has been good to a lot of people. When we look at the southern San Joaquin Valley, many, many of the better businessmen, better farmers, politicians--just like up here in the next congressional district north of us why Bernie Sisk* served for 24 years and he rode the rails out here from Texas. That's how he got to California. There are a couple of Supervisors serving in Visalia now that they came out at a little later stage from back in Oklahoma or Texas to this country. One of them has an orange grove over here south of Exeter and the other one has a clothing store out of Dinuba. That's just here in Tulare County and I'm quite sure when you get into Kern County there are a number of politicians that served that way.

I believe Harlan Hagen is one of the boys who came out of

*Congressman Bernice Frederick Sisk (D-Fresno, 1955-1979)

the east that way and served here in the congressional district for a long, long time. There are a lot of big farmers-- Hollis Roberts who came out here and turned into the Roberts Farms--I think he was one of those who came here in the 1930s and worked his fanny off to acquire. I'm quite sure there's been a tremendous impression made on the southern San Joaquin Valley by the Okie migration out here in the 1930s as well as other ethnic backgrounds that had a tremendous impression on the southern San Joaquin Valley--also the state of California. Some of them have become highly respected members of the community.

M.N.: I look at you and I'm impressed.

Newsome: I thank you for the compliment. I look back and I think that no one can be ashamed of what's happened. There's nothing to be ashamed of. Hold your head high and progress on forward.

M.N.: You don't feel that life has treated you poorly.

Newsome: No, no, no. No way. Take some of the ethnics now--Mexicans and colored people--they're the ones who are hollering discrimination. In this area the Spanish or the Mexican or the Negro has never been treated any worse than we were when we first came here. When we first came here in the 1930s the Negro people looked down on us--"Awh, you Okies"--I have some very good colored friends that own property and came out here back when oil was struck back in Oklahoma and Texas. They were mixed with Indian and they came to California even before and they owned a lot of land and some of those people are just as nice but they all looked down on us at the time and it's a matter of getting your head up and saying, "Hey, I can be just as good as anybody. Nobody is no better and I'm no better."

M.N.: They don't look down on you now do they?

Newsome: No. Some of them do but that's neither here nor there. There are always people looking down their nose at somebody else. I don't have the empathy for these ethnics hollering discrimination the way they are and not trying to do something about it. I look around and see a whole bunch of Mexican and Spanish decended people. Those that are working like the brothers who've got a big dairy down here and there's another one over there and then Sanchez they've all got big operations. Then there is many more that I can't think of and then in business. Those who have said, "Hey, I can do this" and went on. But, the white ethnic teaching that the black man and the Mexican is down there is [what some] have believed. The white theory [says] that they are inferior. The white people say, "You're black, you're Mexican, you're brown, you're inferior. You just can't hack it." Well, those that believe that stay in that

social level and those that say, "Hey, I'm just as smart as you are," those are up in there--like Phil Sanchez up here at Fresno. [He is] one of the brighter young lights out of Fresno and a whole bunch more of them that you could go through and name.

M.N.: You're really talking about yourself back in those days.

Newsome: Yeah, and I'm talking about something that they can do. There's no such thing as an ethnic background holding you down. Today there's just as much opportunity in this country as there was anytime since we've been a country if you'll look for it and get with it.

M.N.: That's what you did.

Newsome: We think we did that. We hope we did and there are many others who have done the same thing.

M.N.: When they tried to put you down it didn't work.

Newsome: They just put us down but it didn't really work. We said, "No way you're going to keep us down. We're going to keep going." I think that's what needs to be done today. People need to take a little pride in themselves and say, "Just because you say I'm dumb that is a bunch of hooey. I'm just as smart as you are and I'm going to show you." When they do that then there's no keeping that person down.

M.N.: It took more than just work. It took courage.

Newsome: It takes courage. Everybody has courage.

M.N.: You seem very positive about people.

Newsome: Well, I'm very positive--like they say, about the time you say you're positive about something is the time you turn up to be a nut. There's no such thing as getting too positive because once you say, "Hey, I ain't going to do that" that's the very thing you're going to be doing tomorrow. I firmly believe that if you will do these things you can acquire and do this and be a success.

END OF INTERVIEW

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