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PE I don't know. Indians don't talk about size of gardens or anything. They just say gardens.

CF And then he had sunflowers, did you say?

PE Oh, the sunflowers were wild.

CF Oh.

PE And they were just growing wild all through where the water was coming down from the ditches. They stayed there up till I would say, oh . . . I would say, into the '30s again when were over there on the other side where the Visitors' Center now stands 'cause I remember we used to come up in there and play around with the sunflowers and, also, there was a small plant growing alongside the streams, and we'd pick these little things and eat um, and then we was told that they were grapes. Those were the two things that I remember them talking about. That little lower part of this area here is named after sunflower. They call it akibitsi . . . aki for the sunflower. That's about all I know. You guys know anything else?

GG [Neg.]

CF What's the name for the upper part?

PE Oh, they call that . . . oh . . . it refers to plant . . . oweagonotsi ('clay formation that goes laterally - clay - anything - naming it.') [A horizontally oriented formation.] When we moved from the place where we were just at up on the creek, this was our next move over here. You have to visualize it without any of these trees or any of the buildings here or these roads, which now is the Park Service Visitors' Center. [Pause - car passing.] If I remember correctly, I think my family was living right in here. And a lot of these trees weren't here. We planted some of the trees, but not all of them. And then that was my family. Got pictures of my father who was non-Indian and my mother, Rosie Boland . . . my mother who was Rosie Boland and then my brother and myself. The next family closest to us was Sally Boland's family with her husband Vic Seballos. And they lived right about here I would say . . . in the middle of this road here. And that consisted of Sally and her two girls, Grace Boland and Annie Boland. And then from there you look directly across to where that old fruit tree's standing was the Shoshone family . . . John Shoshone and Molly and Annie Shoshone. Some of the children that was already born. Then north from there . . . straight . . . I would say almost directly north of there was the Kennedy family, which was my aunt, Mary Ann Kennedy, and Joe Kennedy and their children. And from where Sally and her family lived in the middle of this road, over through here somewheres back in here was Uncle John Boland who then was a bachelor. And then kind of north from his house was the Patterson family . . . my aunt, Margaret

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PE Patterson, and Hank Patterson and their children. And then further . . . kind of westerly . . . north of them . . . was Bob Thompson family. Bob and his wife. And then, of course, and then there was with . . . at that time living here was Mamie Joaquin and Tom Joaquin also living there with their family. And Fred Thompson was also there with Nellie, his wife . . . with, I think at that time, they had two children. And then before my grandfather died, his house was over in that direction which we cannot see from this angle here. Who have I forgotten, Grace? Forgetting somebody.

GG No, that's it.

PE So we were very close to the ranch, and we were also close to the airport which was directly straight up this direction here where Sunset Campground is now located. So this is where we lived up to the year of 1936 . . . when we made our third move . . . south of the ranch area. The Park Service was already here then by 1936. They came here in 1933. Right after 1933 then they held these meetings and . . . I can't remember who all was at the meetings, but anyway they were talking about relocating the people. And that's where we are today, south of the ranch area. We were moved here by the Pacific Borax Company [to the Visitors' Center camp area.] Bill Boland, who was around here then . . . was acting more or less like a spokesperson. He was employed by the borax company. He was told that we will never again be asked to move . . . they will never ask us to move again. But finally Bill Boland's been passed away for so many years after we moved here, and then other people took his place as spokesperson, and they worked with the company here . . . borax company and with the Park Service. And then we started talking with the BIA. That was our first encounter with them. That's what happened. Made false promises that we was gonna get sanitation and all this on the other side. We were gonna live like . . . you know, have all the facilities.

CF When people were living here, were they still working for the ranch primarily?

PE They were workin' for the ranch because the ranch was then beginning to develop into a resort area. It was already resort area, and they brought in more facilities, such as the golf course. They wanted to expand their golf there. Golf course is what the borax company was sayin', and that is the reason why they asked us to move. You don't see that land that we were on is a golf course. So they lied to Bill Boland . . . or I don't mean Bill Boland, but . . . the later people. So that's what I remember. This is where we were up to the year of 1936.

MD Where did you go to school then?

PE I mentioned to you guys before that we went to school in that little place that was adjacent to the Greenland ranch house. That was north of us. So we didn't have too far to walk to school. And then after 1936 they decided, well, they'll build another school so it was more convenient for the majority of the pupils, and at that time the Indian children were the majority. So they moved the schoolhouse to the south side of the ranch but still within their own property line, and then we went to school there. Of course me, I was one of the older ones . . . oldest ones . . . I only went to school there two years. Some of the others, they went to school there for quite a few years, but that school doesn't exist any longer.

[In the Tribal building.]

GG We remember the pit. After you mentioned it, I remembered the pit.

EE Ah hah.

GG Why don't . . . why can't we remember coming down here, but we remember those things there? [Laughter.]

EE I don't know. I just mentioned the pit.

GG Okay. I remember the pit, and I remember the . . .

EE We used to play in there.

GG Yeah. We used to play in there. Ah hah. That's when they're going to move us, I think, they put that in there. And then I know . . .

PE [Comment in Shoshone. ('It's going to belong to us [the tape].')

GG . . . nobody's gonna say this or hear about this or what? I mean all this that were gonna take. How many _____. Okay. I remember all those pack saddles that Mom had behind the old house and saddles, bridles . . .

EE Oh, yeah. Other things in boxes. I remember that.

GG Okay. And the boxes, too. You hook um on there.

EE Ah hah.

GG Those. And they went to the pit. And like you said the motorcycle . . . the one you . . .

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EE Went in there. They go down on motorcycles and they . . . [inaudible comment].

CF What kind was it?

GG Harley Davidson.

EE Yeah, Harley. No motor on it. They took the motor out because it was . . . Charley Shoshone did that. He took the motor out so he could push it up the hill and coast all the way down. 'Bout three or four guys on it, too.

PE I remember you guys . . . yeah.

EE We got brakes. We got brakes.

GG That was pretty good. The pit was built there so they could put all our . . . what we left behind. Then they covered the whole thing up.

EE Right.

PE What about our little old houses?

GG Those were tore down.

EE Ah hah.

GG And they probably shoved them into that big hole.

PE And where is this pit?

GG Well . . . let's see.

EE Down . . .

GG Down there . . . let's see. It's down between . . . by Molly on this side, huh?

EE Yeah. Right. Yeah.

GG This side somewhere in that area. In that wide open area.

PE That's between your place and . . .

GG Molly's and Shoshone's . . . [GG and PE both speaking at once.]

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PE And the Kennedy's.

GG Yeah.

EE Ah hah.

PE Right about in there.

GG Right in there is where it's,at because I remember that now that Ed mentioned it.

PE Yeah. I didn't even remember that . . . till Ed mentioned that pit.

GG Ah hah.

PE Then he mentioned the motorcycle. Then . . .

GG Me, too. [Laughter.] I remember that motorcycle. Yeah, that's where all that stuff went to.

PE And our little toilet houses probably went in there.

GG Yeah, everything. Tore it up and . . .

PE Chicken coops. Mom had chickens.

GG My hotel? I used to go to sleep in there . . . walk away from my bed . . . in my sleep.

PE Sleepwalker. Yeah, we caught you all tangled up in there.

GG I was in the chicken house.

EE Wood stove went in there, too.

GG I'll bet all the wood stoves went in there. Everything went in there. Boy, I'd sure like to dig it up. [Laughter.] That's it.

[At Furnace Creek Inn at the Bedrock Mortars.]

PE & GG [Comments in Shoshone.] ('This is where they used to gather when they are going to leave this Valley. The old one's, not our mothers.')

PE The real old people, but not in our mother's generation. They told me, those old people, used to after they picked all the mesquite beans, they're ready to move out of here. They would all gather up here and then they would like . . . how do you say? Give their thanks, and they would dance all night, and their dancing was up here . . . a dancing ring near where the Furnace Creek Inn now stands . . . can't see it now. And they danced till morning. This is the time when the men are supposed to dance real hard, go down to their knees and come up in time with the beat, and my mother used to say that they have to dance so hard to make the dust fly up into the air. Then they feel that they've been accepted, you know, by the spirit of the land, and then that's when they would stop dancing. But they didn't dance only one night. They danced . . . I forget the number of nights they danced. Then after that, then they're ready to move out. Then they'd all gather around here, and then they would pound the mesquite beans into these little holes, and then they would cover it up with something . . . forget what it was. And this was their way of saying that we have done this for what they believe in . . . the spirit of land. And then they're ready to move out of here then to go up into the Panamint Mountains for their summer place where they'll be hunting up there for big horn sheep and gathering other plant life up there, and, of course, the pine nuts. I remember some of us, you know, we used to play around on here, right?

GG Ah hah.

EE Right.

PE We'd run up over here and run up high and down the other way. And it was up higher, huh?

GG Ah hah. It was high. And more holes.

EE That's only thing they used to put in there . . . mesquite beans? Or something else?

PE That's all I've been told. They probably put other things in there, too. But it was their way of giving thanks.

EE Yeah.

CF So people would have been down below in the mesquite getting their mesquite, and then they would bring it up here?

PE They'd come up here because they felt that this was the best spot for it because . . .

CF Then would they store their mesquite beans up here when they went to the Panamints?

PE They didn't talk about storing it up here. Just these little things that they left here, you know, to give back to the land. And they felt free then that they have already done their . . . they had great feelings. They felt stronger, and then they're ready then to walk up across the salt pan up to the Panamint Mountains. They did not store um here. They store um down lower. Like, where we live today there were some storage areas there, and up further at different elevations up on the hillside. But they did not store here. But they felt that this was a good place to do this. And, I guess, it was passed on through the different generations. But it all stopped at my mother's generation. And this is what's left of that. [If] you look at it, you'd probably see . . . it was much bigger than this. Like these two said, we used to run around and play around on top of it. And this back here was up higher, also. They cut into this and brought some of that down in here . . . to level this. They hauled in sand . . . gravel to better their parking lot here for their guests. This area here was never, you know, flat like the way it is. Been filled in, and some of it has been taken away and moved elsewhere. You used come up here and clean around here, weren't you, when you were with the borax company?

EE Yeah, this wasn't here though. This here, this part is just the way it is _____. There was dirt around it. They . . . [inaudible.]

PE It was covered up.

EE Yes.

PE During those years when you was working?

EE Yes.

PE But before you was working, it was here . . . when we used to play around.

EE Yeah. It was here. Yeah.

PE So that means then that there's been a lot of excavation around here. And also a lot of flood waters that used to come down through here bringing in a lot of gravel and a lot of rocks and stuff, so there was continuous, you know, working going on here. Removing or moving in materials that you see here now.

CF Now, when you were children and used to play here, you would come from down below?

PE Yes. Ah hah.

CF There wasn't a camp up here or anything?

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PE No, no.

CF So what time of the year would people come here for the ceremony?

PE It'd be during the hot weather. Real hot. Because the mesquite beans were known to be fully ripened and dried up by the end of May, and then that's when the harvest would start is in June. And they'd pick as much as they possible can, and then just move out of here. Go up into the higher elevations for other foods.

CF I think you once told me there are no screw beans down this low.

EE No.

CF Only mesquite?

EE Yeah.

PE Only . . . down in the Valley floor is only the honey-sweet mesquites. And around in higher elevations, such as the springs up here, there will be some screw beans growing there. And that was known to the people and they also used the pod for food.

CF [Comment inaudible - vehicle passing] . . . have to rebury it?

PE Yeah, it's reburied. We dug it up . . . several of us, by hand. [Vehicle passing] . . . manager for the resort told us that he would help us. Had the backhoe come up here, scrape away as much as he possibly could get without hurting it. You can see what the backhoe has done . . . see those marks there, scratch marks from the back hoe. And, also, you know, bulldozer banging up against it . . . [vehicle passing] . . . so it's been hurt a lot. So that's what the company did anyway. They were very agreeable in preserving, and so was Park Service, of course, and our Tribal administrator said that she had funds to form a platform out there and then build up something. And Jim Heptner here said that he would come across with a plaque for the Tribe and would also have a fence that would be high enough to keep people out, but still, you know, a fence they can see the through and read the plaque. We have everything all drawn out like that. But it didn't materialize, not completely. So we just dug it up . . . [vehicle passing] . . . to where you guys are standing now, the bedrock extends over there, and I would say it extends, oh, about five feet over that way and right in here . . . on this side I would say it extends further than where Grace is standing because it kind of comes down to a slope and goes up again. Over in here it's the same, it comes down and goes up again. And then it cuts off. And the same over here, but this part here seems like it extends continuously down into a flat and stays down. We had piles of dirt sky high around here. And this portion of

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PE it when I was down in there diggin' was way up higher than I am. So that's how deep it is. The Park Service, of course, they took down all of the data . . . the data on that work. So if anybody really wanted to find out what took place, the data is there to make sure of that. And then there was some photography taken of us as we were digging. That was about I would say three years ago?

GG I think so.

PE I think it was three years ago. Anyway, the money never came across. So then what do we do now? So, let's cover it up. So that's what we did. But the holes that you see, there's a lot of them down in there on a level spot . . . where this levels off. There's a lot of holes, and I stuck my hand down in one and it came up to here, and I still never touched the bottom. But anyway that's the part I know of. That was my most recent experience . . .

End of Side 1, Tape 2

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CF When you dug it up did you find any pounders that went with the holes?

PE No. We kept on the lookout for those, but we didn't . . . but pieces like this that came off of it. Huge chunks of it down in here, where over the years they have just been chipped off. But this is known as Furnace Creek Wash where the flood waters come down here, so there was always a lot of work going on here. After that one flood . . . you said you could have seen this . . . when he was working here.

CF So it got buried by that flood.

PE It got buried. But we knew that it was here 'cause we used to play around with it. Play on top of it . . . children. And, of course, people being people, into these little holes they threw in old cans, pop cans, beer cans and cigarette packages . . . stuff like that. We cleaned those out. And then we just reburied it.

CF Does anyone come up and clean it now?

PE No [neg.] And we were saying that even if we built something here, you know, we'd have to go through the management first thing because it is on private property. But he was really cooperative. [Inaudible comments] . . . offer, you know, so much money for the . . . [inaudible comments]. So this is what happened to this.

CF Okay.

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[Still at Bed Rock Mortar.]

EE Right in here. Right here. [Points to marks on surface of rock.] This undercoating here . . . must have been a gas tank or something.

PE [Comments in Shoshone.] Over there?

GG Back up in there?

PE So he backed up into here or something.

EE Yeah. Hoped to get that . . .

PE And that was a truck, huh?

EE Must have been a camper.

PE Camper?

EE Yeah.

[In Tribal Building]

EE Oh, you want to talk about the dance . . .

GG [Inaudible comment.]

PE Oh, you never knew about the dancing circle then.

EE No.

GG Me neither.

EE My mother used to tell me that was a bunch of Chinese over there.

GG [Laughter.]

EE Chinese over there . . . Chinese and . . .

PE [Inaudible comment.]

EE This is way on the other side?

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PE You know where Mustard Canyon Road is?

EE Yeah. Around that bend up there.

PE Ah hah. Around the little bend. You pass Mustard Canyon Road north, and then look to your left as you go over that little mound, and there's a hill there. And it's within that hill anyway. And Aunt Mamie's the one that told about it. And then she had danced there as a young girl. And I asked her, I says, "Why did you people dance over here?" And she said, "We did that on account of the hot springs." Either when they're coming back or going over, and usually, she said, it was when they're coming back because some people, you know, were sick, and they went up there to get healed, to get well. And then coming back, they would have a dance there. And Aunt Mamie and I, we parked across from it, and we walked over there, and she said, "It was right about here." You couldn't see the circle any more, but she said, "I remember it being right in here," she says. And I kinda of remember it just a little bit as a kid, you know. I did see it, but I won't say that I did, but it just seems like a dream, you know, that I did see it. But anyway that was . . .

EE When you was a kid you seen it.

PE Yeah, I think I did. It seems like a dream to me. But she's the one that was telling me that that's where they did their dancing, and it's on that hillside, and she said, "But it looks to me like . . ." I asked her, "Do you think when they were putting in the road that they cut into the dancing circle?" And she said, "I don't think so," she says, "because the cut on that hill isn't too far over that way." She still thinks that it was still there, you know. The location of it was still there, but when we was there we could barely make anything out it, you know. It's been like that many years due to the rain and the wind and everything like that. But, anyway, she goes on and says that when they would go back there to do more dancing, why then, there would be flowers growing in that circle [laughter] . . . 'cause it's holding water real good and all that. And she says lotta times, she says, when they did their dancing they would dance right on top of the flowers. I asked here, "Well, what did you do with the flowers?" She says, "Oh, we danced on um," she said.

EE Smash um down.

PE Yeah. And I says, "Did you guys pick the flowers?" She says, "No, why should we? Belongs here." And they just danced right on top of it, she says. That's a place that we all decided . . .

EE Go out to a certain place all the time, not just any place?

PE No. Just one place.

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EE That ring, huh? Is it a ring?

PE Yeah.

GG But after they've been to the hot springs first?

PE She says sometimes they did it before they got up there. But sometimes it was when they were coming back, she says. Because sometimes, she says, people were sick going up there. But when they got healed and everything, coming back they would dance there, she said.

GG Oh, I see.

PE And I said, "Well, who sang the songs?" And she said, "Whoever knew how to sing." And I asked her if she knew how to sing. She said, "Well, I used to sing with um," she says. But, you know, she was real young. Just a young girl when she used to dance there. Several times, she says, she danced there. And she says there was other people, too, you know, that came there, you know, like the Beatty people. And people from the Thompson family and the Billson family, they would come up here, you know, to do their bathing, too.

— [Inaudible question.]

PE So . . . springs? We call it . . .

GG timbídanau ('rock hunting blind') [named after the rock blind]

PE timbídanau . . . known today as Nevares Springs after the Mexican man that lived up there . . . this was in recent years.

CF Did the dance ground have a name?

PE No, they just called it nukatua . . . you know, 'dance place.'

EE That's a long walk . . .

End of Tape 2

TAPE 17

[] - Added during editing by
Pauline Esteves and/or Mary Rusco

() - Pauline Esteves translating.

PE - Pauline Esteves
GG - Grace Goad
EE - Ed Esteves
Kathy

CF - Catherine Fowler
MR - Mary Rusco

Mesquite Processing, Timbisha Tape 17, Side 1, June 23, 1993

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CF Okay. I think we're ready. So do you want to talk about the processing while we're doing it?

PE [A few inaudible comments during set-up.] . . . and you guys are supposed to be sitting facing one another.

EE Get this powder all over when you do that. See what I mean?

PE Start pounding the mesquite pods so that we can do sifting afterwards. It's sort of a long process this kind of thing. Takes quite a while because first of all you can see what these two young people are doing. They're trying to get rid of these little points on each one of these. So that's the first thing we do, and then we put them on to the wooden mortar. Then we just pound it with the rock pestle till finally then what happens is that all the seeds and all the outside of the mesquite pods is separated away from what's inside. There's a matter that is inside sort of like a meal-like form matter. That is what they're trying to get away from all the seeds and outside of the whole pod itself. Just a very small pounding that we're doing right now which is just the beginning. And they pound like this so that they won't be flying out of the container here, out of the mortar. Later on they'll do more pounding. And another thing that is very important, these should be kept away from any kind of moisture. And that's why I'm trying to rush this today because we are sweating. It's very hot. Our hands are wet with sweat. And this way the matter that is within the pod, the dry matter is very water absorbent. It'll absorb water right now and it will stick together. And, therefore, you cannot sift away the seeds and all the pod. That is what is very important. That's what I was taught. Right now you can see some of this flour-like stuff starting to go up into the air, and you can actually smell it. What is gathered off the mesquite trees, these pods, is the very sweetest. If there isn't enough sweet to go around, they will go ahead and gather some sour ones and mix it up with very sweet

ones so you can get a balance of sweetness. Right now you can see the powdery form starting to fly in the air. This is when then more extensive pounding takes place. They'll start pounding harder and harder. And they try not to fill it up too high because sometimes if you pound real hard, why then it'll fly out. Usually it's two people. Sometimes there's three people sitting around at the wooden mortar doing this. They all take turns. Right now I could be doing what he's doing, and they in turn do these other things, like breaking them up. It's very important because we're always low on the broken up ones. This year's crop was very bad. They're not very uniform in size. You look at the trees and due to the climatical changes, I guess, some of the trees are still blooming with no pod, and some are just beginning to develop the pods and some are in this form here that you see on this tree, just green and hanging. But usually, naturally, or from what I have been told throughout the many generations when they did this, that by the end of June all of the pods are fully ripened and have dropped down to the ground in this dry form. This is when the Valley's getting very hot, and they do a lot of fast picking. And they'll pound up as many as they possibly can. Starting in the wee hours of the morning while it's still cool, and then possibly starting to stop right now or doing their sifting right about this time. There's still room. Still can get some more. Put a few more in. We could start the sifting. [Comments in Shoshone. ('Look at me.')] Do you understand me? I said, "We're going to pull this stuff out of here. And we're going to show you what we do next . . . the sifting" . . . to get the flour away from all the powdery form away from these things and some _____ [inaudible word] itself. Usually we will keep pounding, and we will keep adding more into it till it's way up high. But this time it's better to starting pulling it out so we can start sifting 'cause it's getting very hot and pretty soon we're going to be in the sun. In the days before they had boxes like these and all this kind of stuff, what they did was . . . the women that wore skirts, you know, real short skirts . . . they would put different materials over their legs so the stuff that's flying around will not stick to their legs 'cause it's very sticky, very sugary. And this would be stuck down into the ground about like so. So it'd be real low, and they'd be sitting on the ground with their legs spread out like this. And they kind of sat rather far apart, because when they started to do the extensive pounding, they just didn't go just up and down like this, they would go far back depending on which way they're going to pound and then bring it down real hard, and they told me you pound it hard enough that you can feel the vibration of the ground itself. That's the way I was taught. So then they start doing extensive pounding, and this is why I say that we have to be careful so they won't go flying out because if you hit in the wrong place, they will. So it's always supposed to be secured properly in the proper position, and you're supposed to do proper pounding. And you do it as hard as you can and see that's just why I said the women were protected, you know, from the stuff around them. 'Cause unprofessional ones such as me, I hit it in the wrong place and that's what happens then. You're supposed to keep hitting in the same place and then it won't splash. Because what it does, it'll just rotate back in there by itself. You don't have to be sitting over here. But sometimes they will do

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PE this. Then they'll keep hitting in the same place. Then lotta times they'll hit the sides of this. They'll miss. Then they'll say to the women, "You're going to make a very bad wife." And this stuff will get on your hair. It'll get on your face, and you have to have this protection like I was talking about. You're supposed to be covered. And to go picking it is also another thing that is very hazardous because they didn't wear pants and they didn't have long sleeves, so they had whatever they had . . . hides or whatever . . . and they made strappings out of it, and strapped their legs . . . covered up their legs with it so they can go into the mesquite. So they won't get stuck by the thorns. 'Cause it is very hazardous. Do you want to do it now, Grace?

GG Yes.

PE . . . turn. This should have been cut off. High on the side.

CF Now, do you always wait for the beans to fall from the trees before you get them?

PE No. As long as they're yellow, fully formed, you can pick from the trees. I know what I'll do. I'll go get some that are still rather very . . . that are fully matured, but still has been picked just from the trees. Some of it still rather very damp. I can go get um and show you.

GG Whoa! I'm not very good at this. Make a very bad wife. [Laughter.] [Comments in Shoshone. ('It's coming along nicely.')]]

EE [To Grace.] I'm gonna sit over there where you are because it's blowing over there; ain't over here. [A few inaudible words.] Blowin' on me.

GG Boy, I could taste it.

PE These are this year's crop. You can see the difference between the two. This is still damp inside, and it has started to dry. And this hangs on the tree in this form, and you can go ahead and pick it off of the tree and then sack it, and it'll dry, and then to be used for pounding like this. And then it can be picked from the tree is what I'm trying to say. But these were picked not in the location down here, but in a different location where it was away from it's natural environment, like away from the hot winds that blow. We had some extensive winds this spring that blew a lot of the blossoms away from the tree, and we knew something was going to happen. The climate was variable. We didn't have a natural spring, and this is the reason why some the trees like I said, the pods are very immature. But this was where it was getting a lot of water, a lot of protection from the winds and all this. That's what I believe in . . . that this is the reason why they are so nice and big. But if you break it and go inside . . . and this is how they checked to make sure that it's solid inside with the matter that they're after which is the meal-like corn inside.

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CF So the beans will be discarded ultimately.

PE That's right. The seeds?

CF Yeah.

PE The seeds will be discarded, and that's what we're going to be doing. Right now I think we should do it.

GG I know it. Look at it.

EE Hotter now.

PE Josh . . . get the sifter and get the pot. Get the pot over there. And, Grace, you could take this out . . . or Josh . . . one of you guys. No, put it in the pot. And then this will go in here to sift it. Then you can see what it looks like after it's been pounded up. And you're supposed to pound so hard so that you'll split actually the seed open, which is a very hard thing to do. But they do it. And they told me, "No, it's not ready yet. Keep pounding till the little seeds split open." And the little seeds that I'm speaking of are these things here. These little things. And says, "Keep pounding," he says. "You haven't split um open yet." So that's the way I was taught. So this stuff here on my hand . . . it's starting to absorb moisture already. It's sticking, and it's very sticky, and eventually the seeds and all this is going to be sifted away. So that's what were going to do next. Before metal sifters, of course, they had the basketry sifters. And some of those are still on display . . . held within a lot of museums. But we do not have that with us, so we're using a metal sifter which isn't the ultimate sifter. It is very coarse. It's a very open sifter, and possibly we would have to sift it again to either double this or go ahead and use another one. So this is how they do it. And they'll bring this down in here and put a whole bunch of this stuff down in here, and with a spoon, rotate around, and you can see this stuff actually falling down in there. Then they'll kind of tap it around like this. And I think most people know how to sift. Use a spoon. I think I got a little too much in there. You can see that we didn't do a very good job 'cause still some are laying around in here that hasn't been pounded enough. But we're doing this just to show you that this is the process that you have to go through in order to get what is desired. And what is desired is this stuff here. And this is what we call . . . well, we call the whole thing *óbi*. And this then *óbi* is put into a solid form into huge cakes so it can be preserved. The something that has been sifted away from it is not thrown away. They're piled up in one place to be used as a coating for these huge cakes that they're going to bake. It's pressed down in there with a little moisture, and then they're set out to dry. And after it's dried, it's put away for storage or packed out of here . . . picking them up. And then after this then they pry away all the seeds, the coating of this hardened *óbi*, and then inside then the *óbi* is solid, and it can be broken up into

PE pieces and eaten in that form. So this is the final process of the mesquite pods. And like I said, it can be stashed away, buried underground in this form or in the form that I'm speaking of where they harden it with a little moisture. So this would be set aside.

MR Could you show the powder again . . . so I can get a close-up of it?

PE This in the pan is like this. Now, you can see it's really rather tan in color compared with the white of the pan. It should be lighter. It should be more lighter than the color it is now. And then they'll tell you, "Well, this is very bad. This stuff here must have been very old." And it is true. We've had this for quite awhile. And so it should be a little lighter than this, not so tan.

MR And then you take that and make it into cakes.

PE Yes. Ah hah. With moisture. Added moisture. Very little moisture. And then this stuff here is then pressed on top of it . . . the moistened *óbi* . . . just as a coating to protect it from dirt or anything else.

CF Are these big, flat cakes that they make or . . . ?

PE They made um as big as they possibly could, not so big so you couldn't pack it away. Back in the days where they used the burden baskets for packing, they would possibly make it no bigger than a burden basket. Most of them they would make about so high, and the bottom of it would be about . . . oh, like this and sort of in a conical shape. It's not flat though. 'Cause what they do . . . the long process is done on top of a flat basketry material, and the seeds and all of this stuff is laid right on top of the basketry material and sprinkled with a little water . . . a layer of it about a half-inch thick. Then this stuff here is also sprinkled on top of it. And from the little bit more moisture and some more of this . . . it finally gets up so high, and then with more moisture . . . more of this is pressed right along on top of it and all around it, then it's set out within the basket . . . the flat basket . . . to dry. And after it's dry, then it's ready for storage or ready to be packed out of here. That was the solid form. But they also had it in this form.

CF Now how would people eat it once it had been prepared?

PE In the flattened form, why they took away the coating and then they chipped off pieces of it and ate it that way. And it could also be used as a juice. They would drop a piece of it in water and feed it to the very young people that way, like babies. And this here . . . most of the people, older people, would eat it the way it is. And you just put some in your mouth, and it'll gather it's own moisture within there, and then you swallow it down. And the small children are told not to eat it that way because

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PE it does bring on a choking effect. And then they're told to moisten it with water and just eat it that way.

GG [Pause.] [Comments in Shoshone. ('These [holes in sifter] are too large!')]

PE That's what I tried to explain, that this is very coarse . . . a coarse sifting we did because there's still some of the matter in here that you can see. Those little things . . . which is the pod itself. Those needed to come out. So this would be resifted again through a finer sifter.

EE What about the juice? You can make it out of this, too.

PE Oh, you can put this into a juice form. I think I said that, didn't I? Yeah, you can use it in a juice form. But they did not cook it, let's say. I don't think they cooked it at any time . . . just only at the very beginning when they're very flat [speaking of the mesquite bean pods themselves]. And like these here [flat and green] . . . already have the seed form inside of them. Real flat ones with no forms at all, real slim ones. They gathered those, and then they would roast those in the little rock ovens and eat it just like greens. And that's the only time it was ever cooked in any way that I know of. But you can use it as a juice when you dilute it with water or these here can be used for juice. If these were a little bit more moist while they're still hanging on the tree, they're gathered before they're dry. They're put into the wooden mortar again and then with a rock pestle, then it's ground up into a pulpish-like form. Then it's pulled out of there, thrown into some water, and all the goodness of it is squeezed out of it, and the juice is made, and then it's ready to be used after they have thrown out all the seeds and the whole pod itself, and all of the goodness of it is already into the water. So that's . . . have I missed anything?

MR Now here . . . you would stay until about this time of the year to do the processing . . .

PE Mainly the good healthy ones are the ones that stayed on. And the older ones have already traveled out.

MR Traveled out and on their way . . .

PE They've traveled out already. Those are the very first ones that moved out. And the healthier ones stayed on, and right about now, which is almost towards the end of June, this is the time when they are really harvesting as fast as they possibly can. But, like I said, by the end of June everything is down to the ground.

MR How much would a family gather say in the first processing?

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PE They didn't have measurements in those days.

MR So you would just . . .

PE It is always very hard for me to answer a question like that. What I can say though is just that they gathered just as much as they possibly could. They never kept track of how many . . . whatever it is . . . bushels or pounds, but you can gather a lot.

MR Would they cure the cakes here and leave them for winter, or would they take them with them when they traveled?

PE They'd leave some here on the Valley floor, and then they would take some with them . . . as much as they possibly can pack out. But they had people that could very easily take heat and come down here in the heat of the summer and dig away down into their stashes . . . wherever they're stashed at and pack them out back up into the mountains where they're at.

GG Those guys came from Las Vegas to get some. Mom had four big bags of mesquite besides for ourselves. I remember that . . . gunny sacks. Big old gunny sacks filled with mesquite. [Comment in Shoshone. ("These, they came to pack out.")] That was quite a bit to me 'cause I was little, I guess. I thought, "Oh, boy. That's quite a bit."

EE Would this spoil when they get wet . . . when you leave it out?

PE To some extent, of course. We're not supposed to be leaving it out in the open anyway. It's supposed to be covered at all times the way I was taught.

EE Mattie don't even cover it. I pulled it up.

CF So when you're leaving them out to dry to get ready to pound, you still try to cover them a little?

PE Well, he was talking about rain.

CF Oh, for rain.

PE You know that rain came up. We don't let any extensive sunlight on them either.

CF Oh, so you dry them in the shade?

PE You know when these were brought in?

CF Ah hah.

PE I told Grace that where am I going to put um? And she was going to put um out here, and I says, "Go put them on the porch. They'll be out of the sun." 'Cause we just want them to dry, you know, air dry it.

CF So they'd be better to dry in the shade.

PE Ah hah. Like they say, if it receives too much sun, like I said, it turns rather too deep of a tan color. In some cases, you can pick one up that's been laying out there in the sun for quite awhile, and it'll be brown inside. You break it, and it's all brown inside. So we try to keep it out of the sun after we pick it.

CF Can they ever go bad?

PE What?

CF Can they go bad. Get rancid or anything like that?

PE They'll get rancid if there's moisture around and it's covered. Just like anything else, it will. Down here it's so dry that . . . There is some rain, and if they did get rain, right now, and it's laying on the ground, they would say it wasn't enough to hurt it. Just as long as they picked it up right away from the sun. So they won't become cooked like they used to say. You know, when it's still damp and the summer sun right on it, it'll ruin the taste of it.

CF Now, these right here at Furnace Creek are the sweet ones. Right? The best?

PE This area here, yes, is known for it's sweetness. I guess the White people, they do call it the "honey-sweet mesquite." You travel out of here up the Valley north of here, Mesquite Flats, you go up there and try to find a sweet one . . . no. 'Cause I've tried it myself. I doubted if there were. I thought I still could find a sweet one, but I couldn't. So this is the area that's known by other tribes also that this is sweet. This is the sweet mesquite. Like Grace mentioned some people, Southern Paiutes, came over and hauled out bags of this stuff. There used to be Southern Paiutes coming here.

CF They would trade with the old people?

PE Trade with us . . . our people. We observed this just a few times where they would come down here and get some business. Some of the Darwin people did the same. They would come here, and they were given some of the *óbi* in this form or in the

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PE hard form or that form. Depending on what . . . [inaudible comment.] So do you guys want to taste this?

CF I'll taste it.

GG I already taste it. Some of it's kind of . . .

EE Some of it's soggy . . . doesn't taste . . .

PE Has an awfully sweet and sour taste. See, this is old mesquite pods, not this year's crop. This one down here. And you can taste . . . there is an aftertaste to it that tells you that it has been out here too long. And I've tried to protect it. But if we was to have this completely dried, air dried and pounded, this would be really excellent. Did you get the aftertaste, Kathy?

Kathy Ah hah.

PE Do you want to taste?

EE Sure.

GG [Inaudible comment] . . . the real powdery. Said, "Well, I like the juice." And I said . . . What?

Kathy I like the juice.

GG You like the green ones.

Kathy [Inaudible comment] . . . just take the juice out of it.

GG But that's got to be the green. Oh, you could do this with the powder. I like the green.

Kathy Tastes like some kind of . . . [inaudible comment].

PE See, this is what it should be like, Kathy. This thin. And then you can . . .

End of Side 1

Mesquite Processing Tape, side 2

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PE It might.

EE Got all that coarse out of it.

PE Because this coarseness is out of there now. This coarse stuff. Really blows.

EE Tastes about the same.

PE Really blows out here. So what we need to get for our little class that we're going to have for the young people is to get sifters that is as fine as this one here. That big one is good to start with . . . do the rough sifting. But this is the tortuous one. Usually the older people were the ones that done the sifting. 'Cause the younger ones is the ones that are doing all that heavy pounding. All the hard work.

CF Do people say where they got their pounding pestles?

PE Oh, yeah. We have our own area up here in the Panamints. In the lower part there's an area there known . . . named after the pestles, the rock pestles . . . *tapáku* is what we call it. And there are formations, rock formations that stand up . . . you know, like this. And they're all over. And I said, "Well, how did you get um?" And they says, "Oh, we just go up there and knock off a piece of it and bring it on home. And then they would work it down to whichever form they wanted it . . . whether they wanted a long one or a short one or a fat one or a slim one. So they tried to get it as long as they want it where it would be comfortable for them to handle. And then, of course, their mortar . . . so much of it has to be outside of the mortar. And I have seen wooden mortars like this that is so deep . . . and just a little bit of the rock pestle will be standing out of the opening.

CF And the mortars are from the mesquite tree.

PE Ah hah. Yes.

EE Pretty near even with this . . .

PE Not this one. Not this particular one. This is a foreign wood. But the mesquite, you know, theirs is about this round, the big ones. You can see um down here where the old trees have fallen. And you know how old stumps get . . . like the inside of it . . . you will see a hollowness to it. And so that was the beginning of them, but they didn't want it too old. And so they did it with fire. They would burn a little fire in the hole and start whittling all around it. And that's what my mother and I, we did this one with fire.

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CF What about the one up by the inn . . . the rock one. Did the people use that one, too?

PE No. They said that they never worked with rock against rock. And their mortars was rock. And they said that was mainly used just like a going away . . . a Thanksgiving ceremony or whatever you want . . . a gathering that they have in there before they departed out of there. Just like they did after they picked pine nuts. You know, they all gathered. Put on a dance and their offerings and all this kind of stuff, and that's the same thing they did up there. So then down into that bedrock where you talk about those mortars there, why then that's why they did the mesquites. They left the mesquites down in there. This was to show their respect to the land.

CF Did they have a ceremony before they went out to get the pods . . . or just the one after?

PE Individually they would. They would prepare themselves whoever was going to do this. It wasn't a thing where they all would gather all together. They would go out two by two or three by three to gather. But before they did this, it took quite a while for preparing it because they would sit back and talk and say this is where we're going to go first and all this. "We got to make sure that we're going to do this in a good way" . . . and all this kind of stuff, the way that they believe in. And some of the women, you know, they would hold back due to their time of the month and all this kind of stuff, because we do not touch food. In those days they were very strong in that belief that a woman during that monthly period would not touch food at all. But it was no big thing. Because, like they said, they were always prepared because they knew when they had to go out there and start picking.

End of Side 2